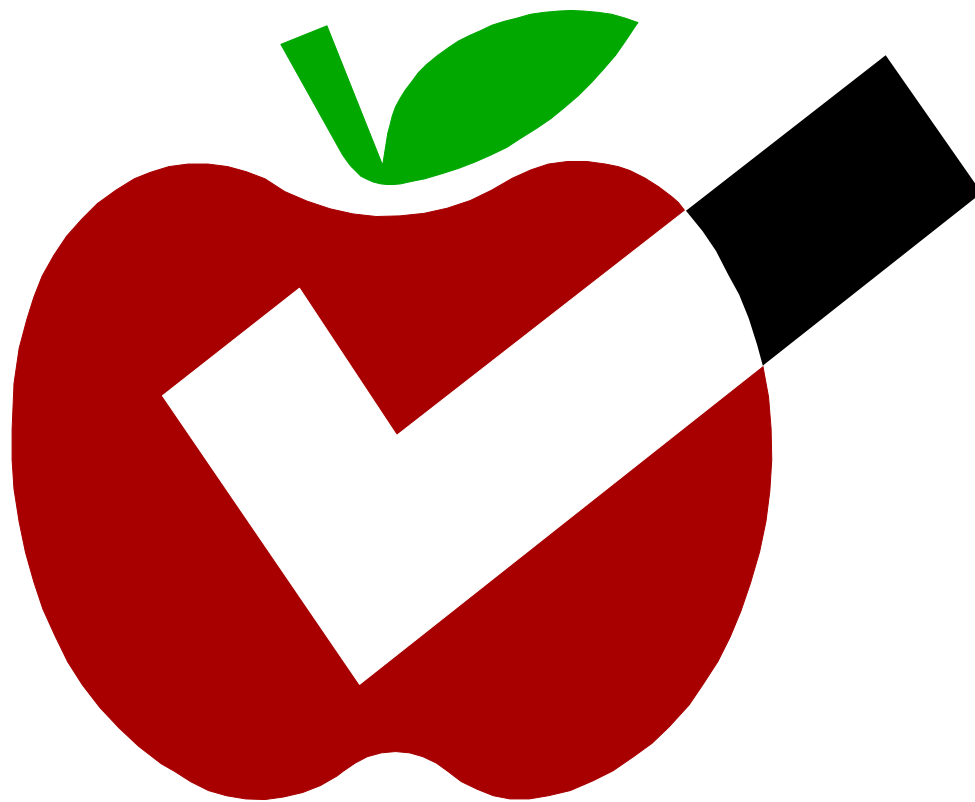


Performance Review and Best Financial Management Practice Review

*Martin County School District
August 1999*



oppaga

GIBSON | consulting group
Austin, Texas

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



The Florida Legislature

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

John W. Turcotte, Director

August 19, 1999



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

I have directed that a Combined Performance Review and Best Practices Review (Combined Review) be conducted of the Martin County School District. The 1998 Legislature directed that OPPAGA contract for a performance review of the district, and the Martin County School Board voted to request a best practices review simultaneous with the performance review. The results of this Combined Review are presented in this report. This review was made pursuant to ss. 230.2302 and 230.23025, F.S.

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

This review was conducted by Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., of Austin, Texas, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, and the Auditor General. Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., was primarily responsible for fieldwork and developing report findings and recommendations. OPPAGA and the Auditor General attended site visits to monitor fieldwork, conducted meetings with district staff to receive input on the draft, and reviewed and edited the report. OPPAGA made the final determination on the district's use of Best Financial Management Practices, based on information in the final report and in consultation with Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

David Summers was the contract manager for this review. Other OPPAGA staff included Cynthia Davis, Kira Honse, Royal Logan, and Don Wolf under the coordination of Jane Fletcher. Auditor General staff included Jim Kiedinger and Jim Stultz under the supervision of David Martin.

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

Sincerely,

John W. Turcotte
Director

111 West Madison Street ■ Room 312 ■ Claude Pepper Building ■ Tallahassee, Florida 32301

850/488-0021 SUNCOM 278-0021 FAX 850/487-3804

Web Site: <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us>

Table of Contents

Digest.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1-1
Overview.....	1-1
Scope.....	1-2
Methodology.....	1-3
Chapter 2: Statistical Profile of Martin County School District	2-1
County Profile.....	2-1
District Profile.....	2-3
Chapter 3: Management Structures	3-1
Conclusion.....	3-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	3-1
Background.....	3-2
Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels.....	3-4
Decision Making and Resource Allocation.....	3-20
Chapter 4: Performance Accountability System.....	4-1
Conclusion.....	4-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	4-1
Background.....	4-2
State Has Education Accountability Mechanisms	4-3
Accountability to Parents and Taxpayers.....	4-6
Chapter 5: Use of Lottery Proceeds.....	5-1
Conclusion.....	5-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	5-1
Background.....	5-1
Using Lottery Proceeds	5-2
Chapter 6: Educational Service Delivery.....	6-1
Conclusion.....	6-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	6-1
Background.....	6-2
Standards and Measurement.....	6-3
Student Performance	6-11
Curriculum	6-21
Instructional Technology.....	6-26
Special Programs.....	6-35
Program Staffing and Allocation of Instructional and Non-instructional Staff	6-49
Educational Support Programs	6-58

Chapter 7: Community Involvement	7-1
Conclusion.....	7-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	7-1
Background.....	7-1
Communications	7-2
Volunteer Management	7-7
School Advisory Counsels	7-13
Fund Raising.....	7-14
Chapter 8: Use of State and District Construction Funds	8-1
Conclusion.....	8-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	8-1
Background.....	8-1
Chapter 9: Facilities Construction	9-1
Conclusion.....	9-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	9-2
Background.....	9-2
Long-Range Facilities Planning	9-4
Facility Needs, Costs, and Financial Methods	9-14
Selection and Acquisition of School Sites	9-19
Enrollment Projections	9-23
Existing Facilities - Alternatives to New Construction.....	9-27
Architectural Services for Facility Planning and Construction	9-32
Educational Specifications Development.....	9-38
Architectural Planning and Financial Management	9-54
Facilities Use	9-61
Chapter 10: Facilities Maintenance	10-1
Conclusions	10-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	10-2
Background.....	10-2
Cost-Effective Methods	10-4
Legal Responsibilities.....	10-7
Staffing	10-10
Budgeting	10-21
Standards	10-24
Safety and Energy Efficiency	10-37
Community Use of Facilities	10-41
Chapter 11: Personnel Systems and Benefits.....	11-1
Conclusion.....	11-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	11-1
Background.....	11-2
Personnel Systems and Benefits	11-4
Chapter 12: Cost Control Systems.....	12-1

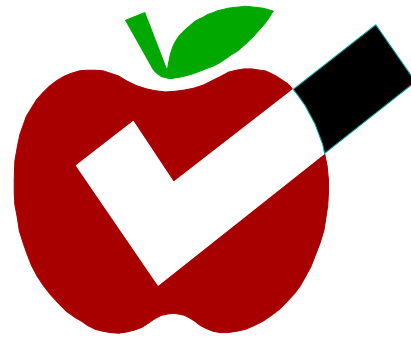
Conclusion.....	12-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	12-1
Background.....	12-2
Auditing and Financial Management	12-3
Internal Auditing.....	12-3
Financial Auditing.....	12-7
Financial Management	12-7
Information Systems.....	12-8
Purchasing.....	12-27
Requisitioning, Authorizing, and Receiving	12-27
Purchasing Process	12-35
Asset and Risk Management	12-38
Asset Management	12-39
Inventory Management	12-44
Risk Management	12-47
Chapter 13: Student Transportation	13-1
Conclusion.....	13-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	13-2
Background.....	13-2
Appropriate and Cost-Effective Transportation	13-4
Transportation Adequacy.....	13-26
Routing Efficiency and Safety	13-39
Chapter 14: Food Service Operations	14-1
Conclusion.....	14-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	14-1
Background.....	14-2
Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness.....	14-4
Financial Accountability and Viability of School Nutritional Program	14-23
Meal Preparation Service	14-33
Health and Safety.....	14-38
Chapter 15: Security and Safety	15-1
Conclusion.....	15-1
Fiscal Impact of Recommendations	15-1
Background.....	15-2
Truancy Program	15-3
School Resource Officer Program.....	15-6
Security	15-13
Shared Services.....	15-17
Appendix A: Action Plans.....	A-1

This page intentionally left blank.



Digest of the Combined Performance Review and Best Financial Management Practice Review

Martin County School District



Report No. 99-04

August 1999

Results in Brief

This review was conducted by Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., of Austin, Texas, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), and the Auditor General. Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., was primarily responsible for fieldwork and developing report findings and recommendations. OPPAGA and the Auditor General attended site visits to monitor fieldwork, conducted meetings with district staff to receive input on the draft, and reviewed and edited the report. OPPAGA made the final determination on the district's use of Best Financial Management Practices, based on information in the final report and in consultation with Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

By implementing report recommendations, the Martin County School District could improve district operations, save money, and demonstrate good stewardship of public resources. Currently, the Martin County School District is using approximately 64% (105 of 163) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner and at this time is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. (See Exhibit 1.) A detailed listing of all the best practices that identifies the district's current status in relation to each is on page 13. In addition, the school district can make several improvements in the areas of Educational Service Delivery, Community Involvement, and Safety and Security.

As shown in Exhibit 2, implementing report recommendations will have a positive fiscal impact of \$3,199,640 in Fiscal Year 1999-2000 and \$16,426,000 over a five-year period.

Exhibit 1

Overall the District Is Using Approximately Two-Thirds of the Best Practices

Best Practice Area	Is the District Using Individual Best Practices?	
	Yes	No
Management Structures	8	5
Performance Accountability System	2	6
Personnel Systems and Benefits	5	4
Use of Lottery Proceeds	2	3
Use of State and District Construction Funds	3	1
Facilities Construction	29	11
Facilities Maintenance	11	13
Student Transportation	11	3
Food Service Operations	10	5
Cost Control Systems	24	7
All Areas	105	58

Exhibit 2

The District Could Experience a Positive Fiscal Impact of \$16,426,000 Over Five Years

Recommendations by Area	Projected Cost Savings ¹ or (Investments) for Fiscal Year 1999-2000	Projected Five-Year Net Fiscal Impact ¹
Management Structures		
Hire FSBA to provide training to the board.	(\$1,150)	(\$1,150)
Hire a consultant to provide training on strategic planning.	(2,000)	(2,000)
Hire a grant writer.	(50,000) ²	(250,000) ²
Performance Accountability System		
Hire a facilitator to help the district more fully develop its goals, objectives performance measures, and benchmarks.	(2,000)	(2,000)
Personnel Systems and Benefits		
Fees for consultation with attorney specializing in ADA.	(300)	(300)
Installation of sprinkler fire protection system for personnel records room.	(1,500)	(1,500)
Estimated annual savings through reduced salaries by improved labor negotiations.	1,200,000	6,000,000
Estimated annual savings through reduced benefits for employees.	2,000,000	10,000,000
Facilities Construction		
Conduct a facilities audit.	(100,000)	(100,000)
Pay for all architect copying costs directly.	2,500	12,500
Facilities Maintenance		
Reduce custodial staff to achieve a productivity level of 20,000 square feet per custodian.	225,000	1,125,000
Increase trade association memberships.	(2,500)	(12,500)
Student Transportation		
Evaluate and discontinue courtesy bus service unless riders can be accommodated on routes needed to transport other students.	211,000 ³	1,055,000 ³
Food Service Operations		
Revise meal prices and increase participation in schools not meeting the benchmark indicator for overall and free or reduced-price breakfasts and lunches.	136,079	680,395
Cost Control Systems		
Hire a full-time property control specialist.	(25,785)	(128,925)
Educational Service Delivery		
Create and fill a position for a coordinator of Research and Evaluation.	(55,000)	(275,000)
Create and fill two Curriculum coordinator positions. One in language arts, the other in mathematics.	(149,976)	(749,880)
Add a site-based technical assistant at every school.	(161,071)	(805,355)
Safety and Security		
Create a position for an additional truancy officer.	(23,657)	(118,285)
Totals	\$3,199,640	\$16,426,000

Note: Over a five-year period the district could avoid \$55,000,000 in costs associated with building additional schools. Because this is a potential deferral of construction costs, it is not included in this table.

¹Fiscal impacts include estimated increases in revenue and cost avoidance associated with the implementation of report recommendations. “()” indicates a cost investment.

²The fiscal impact does not reflect the additional revenues the grant writer is expected to raise.

³Discontinuing courtesy transportation could save up to \$211,000 per year and \$1,055,000 over five years.

Purpose

The purpose of this combined performance/best financial management practice review ("combined review") is to

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

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

Background

The overall goal of the Martin County School District is to focus its many and diverse resources into the best possible educational opportunities for its students. District priorities are to prepare students to succeed at the highest levels in the world that awaits them; to use technology and community resources to expand and enhance the classroom; and to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment for learning and growing.

The Martin County School District has 22 schools including 9 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 2 high schools, and 7 alternative schools. The district employs over 1,889 full-time staff and serves about 15,443 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. In Fiscal Year 1998-99, the district's budget was \$94,595,236 million.

In the last three fiscal years, the Florida Legislature appropriated funds to pay the cost of performance reviews to assist Florida school districts in identifying ways to save funds, improve management, and increase efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, the 1997 Legislature created the Best Financial Management Practice (BFMP) Review program, another

mechanism to review school district performance. 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 1998 Legislature directed that OPPAGA contract for a performance review of the Martin County School District. As required by law, a majority of the members of that school board voted to undergo a performance review. The school board also voted to undergo a best practice review simultaneous with the performance review and meet the financial requirements associated with a combined review. This approach incorporates the best practices within the framework of the current performance reviews and furthers the legislative goal to obtain a comprehensive assessment of school district operations.

In accordance with Florida law, OPPAGA contracted with Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., a private consulting firm, to conduct this review. OPPAGA and Auditor General staff monitored the consultants throughout the review process to ensure the best practices and indicators were applied consistently between the districts. OPPAGA and Auditor General staff attended site visits and provided assistance to the consultant during the course of the review, which included report drafting.

In addition, pursuant to s. 230.23025, F.S. OPPAGA made the final determination whether the school district is using best practices based on information in the final report and the independent assessment of the district's use of each best practice. Thus, in this combined review, the best practices and indicators adopted by the Commissioner of Education on September

4, 1997, were used to lay the groundwork for OPPAGA's determination on the use of best practices.

In developing findings in areas for which the Commissioner has not adopted best practices, the consultant assessed items specified in the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued for this project. OPPAGA identified these items based on input from the district. In addition, for all review areas the consultant was encouraged to develop findings that extended beyond the minimum requirements set forth in the RFP.

To meet the goals of the combined review, the consultant's report contains a detailed action plan to implement each recommendation. Action plans were developed with input from the school district and detail the specific steps the district should take if it decided to implement the recommendation within two years.

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

Conclusions For Areas With Best Practices

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

If the Martin County School Board agrees to implement the action plans,

- the district would need to report annually on its progress toward implementing the plan and on any changes that would affect its use of best

practices to the Legislature, the Governor, the SMART Schools Clearing House, OPPAGA, the Auditor General, and the Commissioner of Education, and

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

Conclusions by best practice area are presented below.

Management Structures

The Martin County School District has many elements in place that will enable them to have a very successful management structure. The district meets 8 of 13 best practices for management structures. The district has a clearly defined organization structure at the high level, sound purchasing practices, and an in-house attorney.

The district is in the process of implementing several other elements that, once they are in place, will further strengthen its management structure. For example, the district is in the process of revising its Strategic Plan to add additional details, developing performance measures, and developing procedure manuals. The district also has recently contracted with a consultant to assess the district's administrative staffing ratios as well as to develop benchmarks, which can be used to assess staffing on an on-going basis.

In addition to completing projects currently underway, the district should consider taking several other steps. These actions also will enable the district to meet more of the best practice standards in this area. The district should hire a grant writer. The district also should contract with the Florida School Boards Association to provide training to the board members to assist them in carrying out their responsibility to oversee district finances. With the assistance of an outside consultant, the district should establish

performance reports for operational areas so that performance can be evaluated on an ongoing basis and for instructional areas so that the most successful ways of improving student performance can be identified.

Performance Accountability System

The Martin County School District has in place some elements of an effective performance accountability system and is currently using two of eight best practices in this area. The district does a relatively good job of ensuring that school improvement plans translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives. In addition, the district has strategies in place to assess the reliability and accuracy of data. However, the district needs to make substantial improvements to ensure that each major program is held accountable for its performance and cost efficiency.

The district has some high-level goals and few measurable objectives for its major educational and operational programs. For instance, the district could improve its ability to meet basic education goals by developing objectives that clearly specify the measurable outcome the district is trying to achieve by implementing each initiative. The district has developed fewer goals and objectives to guide its operational departments.

In addition, the district has too few performance and cost-efficiency measures to support its goals and objectives. These measures would provide information on program quality and performance, enable the school district to determine whether each program's goals and objectives have been achieved, and provide additional information on productivity that links performance and quality to cost. The district also should continue to establish benchmarks for its performance and cost-efficiency measures.

The development of clearer goals, measurable objectives, performance measures, and benchmarks would assist the district to more thoroughly analyze

performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs.

The district could improve its performance accountability system and meet additional best practice standards by

- requiring that each program and department have effective goals with objectives; the goals should be achievable and reflect the intent of the program;
- establishing performance and cost-efficiency measures for each program that can be used to assess performance, cost efficiency, and progress towards achieving goals and objectives;
- developing a process for conducting routine program assessments and a process for conducting program performance evaluations of programs and departments on a scheduled basis; and
- producing and distributing easy-to-understand management performance reports that reflect the district's progress towards its goals and objectives as well as its performance according to these indicators.

Personnel Systems and Benefits

The Martin County School District has a strong personnel system and currently is using five of nine best practices in this area. However, it should strengthen its performance appraisal system, better protect records, and establish employee compensation level benchmarks.

The Martin County School District has in place several components of a strong personnel system, which ensures that it recruits, hires, and retains qualified personnel. For instance, the district has established a comprehensive staff development program, communicates performance expectations to employees, and uses appropriate cost-containment practices for its Worker Compensation Program. The district periodically evaluates its personnel practices and makes needed adjustments.

The district could improve its personnel system and benefits and meet additional best practice standards by

- adopting benchmarks for district salaries;
- aligning performance appraisals to the duties set forth in the job descriptions;
- considering installing a fire sprinkler system in the file room of the Human Resources Department;
- proceeding with a decision on an archiving system for permanent records;
- using market studies and district cost of living indices for adjusting salary scales and cost of living adjustments; the system for determining administrative salaries also should be altered to include, as a minimum, a range of salary per position; and
- reducing benefits to some classes of employees and reduce the retirement package to reduce the cost to the district.

Use of Lottery Proceeds

The district is meeting two of the five best practices for use of lottery proceeds. The district uses these funds, which totaled \$1,263,501 in 1998-99, to provide enhancement programs such as art, music, physical education and guidance counseling programs that are not part of the statutory education program for the elementary grades. As required by Florida law, the district also provides lottery funds to each school based on the unweighted count of full-time equivalent students.

The Martin County School District has defined “enhancement”, but without clarifying guidelines the district cannot effectively assess if an initiative meets its definition of enhancement. In addition, the district has not yet established a comprehensive process of evaluating the benefits of either districtwide or school-based projects implemented with lottery funds and the extent to which these funds enhance student education.

The district could improve its use of lottery proceeds and meet additional best practice standards by

- developing written guidelines to clarify and implement its definition of “enhancement”;
- developing and implementing written guidelines that specifically identify procedures that will allow the state discretionary lottery funds to be identified and tracked throughout the receipt-to-expenditure-to-reporting cycle; these guidelines would help ensure that the district distinguishes between enhancement positions funded with lottery dollars and those funded from general operating funds; and
- requiring that, prior to allocating lottery funds for a program, that any new program have an evaluation component, and that on-going programs demonstrate that they continue to be effective in improving student achievement.

Use of State and District Construction Funds

The district is meeting three of the four best practices for use of state and district construction funds. The district properly uses state and local capital project funds to meet its construction and maintenance priorities. However, the district needs to be more aggressive in pursuing alternatives to construction for meeting facility needs.

The district uses capital project funds for designated purposes. However, the district needs to improve its use of more cost-effective options to meet facility needs such as year-round education, changing grade configurations of existing schools and changing attendance zones. In addition, although the district is using capital outlay funds for facilities construction projects and major maintenance and repairs, it should limit the capital project transfers to the maintenance department.

The district could improve its use of state and district construction funds and meet additional best practice standards by

- establishing a target for capital project fund transfers to the general fund, not exceeding 25% of the Maintenance Department budget and
- evaluating alternatives to new construction.

Facilities Construction

The Martin County School District is using 29 of 40 best practices in the area of facilities construction. Overall, the most critical area facing the district is the assessment of facility capacity. If the district pursued options besides constructing new buildings, it could defer the new buildings being considered at this time.

The district has established a framework for long-range facilities planning to meet the needs of the district in a cost efficient manner. However, it needs to include a broader base of stakeholders on its long-range planning committee.

The district balances facilities needs, costs and financing methods through a capital budget. The district also selects school sites well in advance of expected need using site selection criteria and has established a system to ensure it pays fair market value for land. In addition, the facilities planner has developed a plan to serve as a decision making tool for future facilities needs. However, the board needs to consider the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs.

The district has developed educational specifications for each project and uses generally accepted architectural planning and financial management practices. The district has re-used the same school design for the last three elementary schools it has built and has re-used the educational specifications each time. The board, however, needs to consider alternative construction management techniques such as design/build.

The district could improve its facilities construction program and meet additional best practice standards by

- conducting a district-wide demographic study to better project growth in particular areas of the district;
- conducting evaluations of existing facilities and to consider alternatives such year-round education;
- establishing an evaluation process for its architect selection committee to follow upon the completion of projects;
- conducting a comprehensive building survey after the first year of use and periodically thereafter collecting information on building operation and performance; it should use this information to determine if buildings are fully utilized and operating costs are minimized and to change future construction projects as needed;
- analyzing maintenance and operations costs to identify areas needing improvement for use on future projects; and
- customizing educational specification documents for each school built.

Facilities Maintenance

The district is meeting 11 of the 24 best practices for facilities maintenance.

The district may be able to increase the cost efficiency of maintenance and operations services by periodically review maintenance and operations costs. In addition, the school board could better ensure that maintenance and operations functions are performed in accordance with legal responsibilities by providing procedural guidance in areas such as equipment replacement, level of maintenance expectations and budget criteria.

The district generally is accomplishing maintenance program goals and objects through the use of qualified maintenance and operations personnel, but needs to improve its staffing formulas and use them when making staffing decisions. Based on a generally accepted custodial standard, the district could eliminate nine custodial positions. The district does not have performance standards to communicate to the staff. The district has a staff

development program; however, it should be expanded.

The district has broad budget categories for maintenance and operations and a reserve for one-time expenditures, but does not have budget subcategories for areas such as repairs and preventative maintenance.

The district could make substantial improvements by establishing standards to use in planning, managing and evaluating the maintenance program. The district does not have standards in its short- and long-term plans and is unable to evaluate maintenance needs using standards. The district does not have a system for prioritizing maintenance needs. The district does not utilize all methods for accurately projecting cost estimates for major maintenance projects. The district does not have a computerized control or tracking system for inventory. The district does not update standards to implement new technology and procedures. The district does minimize costs through purchasing practices and maintenance and provides the staff necessary tools for completing assigned tasks.

The district generally is operating facilities in a healthy, safe, energy efficient and cost-effective manner, but does not use external benchmarks to determine a cost-effective manner for meeting health and safety standards. In addition, the district does not use external benchmarks to achieve energy efficiency

The district makes facilities available to the entire community. The district follows established procedures for the use of facilities. The district also meets accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities.

The district could improve its facilities maintenance program and meet additional best practice standards by:

- developing specific goals and objectives for the maintenance department;
- improving its custodial staffing standard for better allocation of custodial staff;

- developing and track cost performance benchmarks; and
- implementing a work order tracking system.

Student Transportation

The district is using 11 of 14 best practices for student transportation. The Martin County School District routes its school buses efficiently to achieve a very high average bus occupancy, uses a cost effective system to replace buses, and maintains buses in accordance with requirements to ensure safe operations. However, key information on cost and performance has not been consistently monitored over time. This information could be used to help improve program performance and monitor the performance of the private contractor.

The district routes its buses efficiently and has achieved the third highest average bus occupancy in the state. In addition, the district adopted a comprehensive five-year plan for replacement and management of school buses based cost-effective criteria through its five-year capital budget. Further, Martin County has implemented inspection and maintenance practices to meet state safety requirements. Both drivers and inspectors had a role in conducting routine inspections and mechanics made repairs in accordance with state safety standards.

The school board recently voted to privatize transportation services and awarded a contract to a private vendor, Laidlaw, Inc., to provide all student transportation and vehicle maintenance services for a three-year period beginning with the summer 1999 semester. Privatization is an effort to reduce costs, ensure safety, and improve employee incentives, and administration of the transportation department.

Key information on performance and cost has not been monitored consistently over time. It will be increasingly important to monitor performance to ensure that the privatized transportation program is performing up to district expectations. In most areas, information about student

transportation has not been comprehensive or reported systematically. The district has not used the information it does have to develop performance benchmarks.

In the contract with Laidlaw, the district has established average bus occupancy as a performance indicator. This indicator is particularly important because it affects funding. In addition, the contract lays out performance information that Laidlaw must maintain and report to the district. This information can be used to track additional performance indicators. The district has not established expectations that Laidlaw must meet for other areas such as, number of accidents per 100,000 miles, vehicle breakdowns per 100,000 miles, or on-time performance to deliver students to school.

To improve program performance and implement additional best practice standards, the district should take actions described below.

- Review information maintained by Laidlaw and adopt performance and cost indicators to be monitored periodically by the district. This should provide the district with information needed to monitor the contractor's performance and determine whether performance meets district expectations.
- Request Laidlaw to report maintenance expenses by important performance categories. For example, school buses should be reported separately from expenses of the white fleet.
- Assign an individual the responsibility to monitor the performance information reported by Laidlaw on a periodic basis.
- Modify accounting systems to ensure that it will identify district expenses for student transportation in addition to the private contract.
- Evaluate the use of courtesy bus service and discontinue this service unless the courtesy riders can be accommodated on routes necessary to transport other students. Discontinuing courtesy transportation could save as much as \$211,000.

Food Service Operations

The Martin County School District is using 10 of 15 best practices for Food Services Operations. Overall the program is financially sound and well managed with good cafeteria-level practices and procedures in place, comprehensive plans covering most of its areas of interest, sound procurement practices, and providing nutritional meals to students of the district.

The Food Services program operates efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis. The recently hired program director is well qualified and highly motivated. Along with her staff, the director developed a comprehensive plan with mission statement, goals, objectives, and strategic tasks. Although the program is using most of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education, the report identifies several of these practices that were only recently documented in a procedures manual. Written procedures are needed to ensure consistency when conducting repetitive tasks, provide continuity when there is turnover of key staff, and assist in the training of new staff.

The Food Service program meets the nutritional needs of students of the district but may be able to do an even better job by opening communications with students, parents, and district staff. Attaining input from these stakeholders should assist in improving participation rates of students. The district is not currently meeting most of its participation benchmarks.

During this review, the district was in the process of transitioning to a new information system, TERMS. The system will reportedly provide some much-needed information to better manage district programs, including Food Service Operations. During this transition year to its new information system, the Food Service administrators were limited in the availability of information needed to oversee the Food Service program. The district anticipates that the full implementation of TERMS should help ensure that staff can better evaluate program performance and cost efficiency.

The director has developed a plan to purchase food production equipment needed in various cafeterias throughout the district, which should address the district's need to replace worn or outdated equipment. Implementation of this plan should help ensure that food service staff have functional and efficient equipment in order to provide meals in a timely and cost-effective manner. In addition, during this review the director was in the process of designing and coordinating a preventive maintenance program. This program is a sound investment of resources and, once in place, should help ensure food production equipment remains operational.

The district could improve its food service operations and meet additional best practice standards by

- developing a formal process for obtaining input from students and parents about the food service program at each school;
- developing a formal process for obtaining input from students and parents about the food service program at each school;
- using actual food and labor costs to determine meal cost data, and revise meal prices as necessary to ensure the district is operating on a break-even basis; and
- linking budget projections to departmental goals, revenue, and expenditure projections based on current participation rates and on updated expenditure and revenue data.

Cost Control Systems

The Martin County School District has generally established adequate cost control systems. The district uses 24 of 31 best practices related to cost controls systems. Improvements are recommended for best practice areas of internal auditing, asset management, risk management, financial management, and information systems.

The effectiveness of the district's internal auditing function could be improved by making three enhancements. First, the

district should ensure that the internal auditor receives additional technical training in school district operations. Second, the risk assessment process needs to be better documented and should include input from appropriate district personnel. The internal audit committee should review the documented risk assessments provided by district personnel and assist the internal auditor in preparing long-range and short-range (annual) plans for audits of district operations. Additionally, the board should enhance the independence of the internal auditor by making organizational changes so that the internal auditor reports to the board-appointed internal audit committee.

The district is currently in the process of replacing its existing financial accounting and information system. Transition problems in changing to the new system have contributed to several of the recommendations made in this report. In the asset management area, we noted that reconciliations between property records and general ledger accounts should be made periodically to enhance accountability of reported assets. Additionally, the district should promptly investigate property items that are determined to be missing during annual inventories of fixed assets.

In the financial management and purchasing areas, the district has generally established controls to ensure that its financial resources are properly managed. However improvements are needed in the communication to district staff of management's commitment to and support of strong internal controls. Also, we recommend that the district develop comprehensive, written procedures covering day to day operations of all district financial operations including purchasing. In the financial management area, we also noted that, due to problems encountered during the conversion to the new accounting system, monthly financial statements were not timely presented to the board. Additionally, the controls in payroll process would be enhanced if the district implemented the position control feature available in the new accounting system's human resources module. Control

improvements also are needed within the payroll system to ensure that only authorized changes are made to the payroll. This can be achieved by limiting update access to the personnel records to only those Human Resources employees that need such access to perform their job responsibilities and by providing for supervisory review or independent verification of changes made to the computerized personnel records.

In the purchasing area, we noted that effectiveness could be enhanced if, prior to the distribution of checks to vendors, that the voucher packages supporting the checks were reviewed by someone other than the employee who processed the check for payment. Also, update access to the computerized master vendor file should be limited to purchasing department personnel.

In Information Systems, the district attempts to maintain its major computer systems in a manner that should ensure quality data. However, controls could be enhanced by requiring security statements from all educational technology department employees and by developing procedures to ensure that the access rights of all terminated employees are timely removed from the password listing. Currently educational technology personnel can access the software code without authorization being required or any review of changes made to the software code. The district needs to restrict access to the software code to only those educational technology personnel that must have access to carry out their job responsibilities. Additionally, procedures need to be developed to ensure that all changes are reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the changes made.

As similarly noted in financial management area, the district should develop comprehensive, written procedures covering day to day operations of all district information systems operations. Similarly, procedures should be developed to ensure that computer operators are properly supervised for all shifts.

Conclusions For Other Areas—

The report presents conclusions for Educational Service Delivery, Community Involvement, and Safety and Security, which are areas beyond the scope of the Best Financial Management Practices. A summary of these conclusions is presented below. The district should consider report findings and recommendations in these areas to identify additional opportunities to save funds; improve management; and increase efficiency and effectiveness. However, the district is not required to implement action plans presented in these areas to receive the Seal of Best Financial Management.

Educational Service Delivery

The Martin County School District uses many processes to facilitate delivery of educational services. These processes include site-based decision-making to address issues specific to individual schools and the use of curriculum that corresponds to the Sunshine State Standards. Martin County is one of only five districts in Florida to earn accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for its use of district improvement plans that are focused on improving student performance.

The district currently uses student performance data to evaluate district-wide and individual school performance. However, increased use of performance data that looks at various subgroups of students should improve the district's ability to determine which instructional practices should be enhanced, extended or modified. The creation of three positions should improve the district's evaluation and curriculum coordination efforts; a coordinator of Research and Evaluation, and Curriculum coordinators in both language arts and mathematics.

Martin County School District's has increased its integration of technology into the curriculum. The district's efforts include increasing student usage of Internet-based research and lab- and classroom-based computer instruction in core subject areas. The district will have all

of its schools accessing the Internet by the year 2001. This increased use of technology in schools requires that the district develop standards that will guide the purchase of instructional software and monitor acquisitions.

The School District's special programs include Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and gifted education. These programs follow both state and federal mandates for direct service delivery. Instruction in these special programs is designed to meet the individual needs of each student. In addition to using co-teaching, separate classrooms, and resource rooms for exceptional students, Martin County also provides educational services to students with severe disabilities in a separate school, *Challenger*.

The district allocates instructional and non-instructional staff according to well-established guidelines. The district also ensures that the educational support programs (such as counselors, library and media services) are effective and efficient in their operation.

The district could improve its delivery of educational services in several ways, which include

- creating and filling a position for a Coordinator of Research and Evaluation; this person should collect cohort data for targeted subgroups of students to determine if instructional practices are improving student performance;
- expanding its guidelines for implementing board policy regarding curriculum evaluation; the guidelines should (a) delineate specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum, (b) require long-range planning, (c) specify monitoring of curriculum delivery, and (d) require data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning; and
- hiring two curriculum coordinators, one specializing in the language arts and the other specializing in mathematics. The coordinators would help ensure

that districtwide and individual school curricula address the instructional needs of all students based on student performance evaluations; and

- establishing a site base technical assistant at every campus as outlined by the support plan.

Community Involvement

The Martin County School District has established several effective mechanisms to encourage community involvement in the district, but some parents responding to a survey said that they would like to be more informed about district issues.

The Martin County School District effectively manages volunteers within the schools. The volunteers in the Martin County School District contributed 226,589 volunteer hours during the 1998-99 school year, which amounts to the equivalent of almost \$2.9 million in services provided by volunteers.

School Advisory Councils (SACs) are involved in at each individual school and district-wide. SACs membership includes parents, business and community members, and teachers. The Martin County School District provides assistance to SACs to facilitate their role in school based decision making.

In addition, the district has established a partnership with an education foundation, which provided the district with almost \$41,000 in grant funding for the 1998-99 school year. These monies are used to fund various education programs such as "Teacher of the Year." The foundation seeks donations from individuals, businesses and other foundations.

The district could improve its community involvement program by

- distributing bimonthly "items of interest" that individual schools can include in their newsletters;
- expanding the responsibilities of the Special Projects Coordinator for Volunteer and Community Involvement

to include the role of a liaison for parents and community members;

- establishing guidelines for district committees; and
- continuing to work with schools with lower involvement to find creative ways to increase involvement.

Safety and Security

In general, the Martin County School District is effective in providing for the safety and security of people and property. For instance, the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program is well managed and effective at deterring delinquent behavior. In addition, to save costs, the district has found alternative ways of providing safety and security services. While the district has adequate staffing and alarms in place, it could improve the overall coordination of its security efforts. Further, the district could more effectively address truant students.

The district could improve safety and security by

- creating and filling a position for an additional truancy officer;
- linking School Resource Officer Program performance measures with its goals and objectives and should develop a way of interpreting the significance of changes in performance data over time;
- identifying a district-level position responsible for coordinating all safety and security functions; and
- developing a central visitor check-in process and assign responsibilities for overseeing this process to an existing employee.

Martin County School District

Best Financial Management Practices

Currently, the Martin County School District is using 64% (105 of 163) of the best practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and at this time is not eligible for a Seal of Best Financial Management. This appendix provides a detailed listing of all the best practices and identifies the district's current status in relation to each.

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?		
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority. These are reflected in the district's organizational charts and job descriptions which are reviewed periodically and updated as necessary.		✓	3-4
2. The district periodically reviews its organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes.	✓		3-9
3. The Board members exercise appropriate oversight of the district's financial resources.	✓		3-12
4. The district has 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.	✓		3-16
5. The district has a multiyear strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected enrollment, and revenues.		✓	3-19
6. The district has a system to accurately project enrollment.		✓	3-24
7. The district regularly assesses its progress toward its strategic goals and objectives.	✓		3-25
8. The district has an ongoing system of financial planning and budgeting linked to achievement of district goals and objectives, including student performance.		✓	3-27
9. The district's management information systems provide data needed by management and instructional personnel in a reliable, timely, and cost-efficient manner.	✓		3-28
10. The district periodically evaluates operations and implements actions to improve the quality of education and reduce administrative and other costs.		✓	3-32
11. The district considers local options to increase revenue.	✓		3-34

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES	YES	NO	PAGE
12. The district uses cost-efficient legal services to review policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits.	✓		3-37
13. 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.	✓		3-38

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for its major educational and operational programs. These major programs are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Operational:</u> Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Personnel, Asset and Risk Management, Financial Management, Purchasing, Transportation, Food Services, and Safety and Security. • <u>Educational Programs:</u> Basic Education (K-3, 4-8, 9-12), Exceptional Student Education (Support Levels 1-5), Vocational, At-Risk (Dropout Prevention, Educational Alternatives, English for Speakers of Other Languages). 		✓	4-6
2. The district uses appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures to evaluate its major educational and operational programs and uses these in management decision-making.		✓	4-11
3. The district has 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.		✓	4-17
4. The district regularly evaluates the performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs and analyzes potential cost savings of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization.		✓	4-20
5. District management regularly reviews and uses evaluation results to improve the performance and cost efficiency of its major educational and operational programs.		✓	4-25
6. The district reports on the performance and cost efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.		✓	4-26
7. The district ensures that school improvement plans effectively translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives.	✓		4-29
8. The district has established and implemented strategies to continually assess the reliability of its data.	✓		4-31

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND BENEFITS	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district recruits and hires qualified personnel.	✓		11-4
2. The district bases employee compensation on the market value of services provided.		✓	11-10
3. The district uses a comprehensive staff development program to increase productivity.	✓		11-13
4. The district communicates personnel expectations to each employee and elicits feedback for improvement.	✓		11-17
5. The district formally evaluates employees to improve performance and productivity.		✓	11-18
6. The district periodically evaluates its personnel practices and adjusts these practices as needed.	✓		11-21
7. The district properly and efficiently maintains personnel records.		✓	11-25
8. The district uses cost-containment practices for its Worker Compensation Program.	✓		11-27
9. The district regularly evaluates employee salaries and benefits, using appropriate benchmarks that include standards derived from comparable school districts, government agencies, and private industry.		✓	11-29

USE OF LOTTERY PROCEEDS	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has defined "enhancement."	✓		5-2
2. The district uses lottery money consistent with its definition of enhancement.		✓	5-4
3. The district allocates lottery funds to school advisory councils as required by law.	✓		5-6
4. The district accounts for the use of lottery money in an acceptable manner.		✓	5-9
5. The district annually evaluates and reports the extent to which lottery fund expenditures have enhanced student education.		✓	5-10

USE OF STATE AND DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district approves 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.	✓		8-2
2. The district uses capital outlay funds for facilities construction projects and uses operational funds for facilities maintenance and operations. If the district does not implement this practice, it demonstrates that there are no unmet facilities needs.		✓	8-3
3. When designing and constructing new educational facilities, the	✓		8-5

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?		
----------------------	---	--	--

USE OF STATE AND DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION	YES	NO	PAGE
district incorporates factors to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility.			
4. The district uses, accounts for, and reports the use of educational facilities construction funds in a proper manner.	✓		8-6

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has established authority and assigned responsibilities for educational facilities planning.	✓		9-4
2. The district has allocated adequate resources to develop and implement a realistic long-range master plan for educational facilities.	✓		9-5
3. The District has established a standing committee that includes a broad base of school district and community stakeholders.		✓	9-11
4. The district has assigned one person with the authority to keep facilities construction projects within budget.	✓		9-13
5. The district has assigned budget oversight of each project or group of projects to a single project manager.	✓		9-14
6. The district uses a capital planning budget based on comprehensive data collected in early stages of the master plan.	✓		9-14
7. In developing the capital planning budget, the district considers innovative methods for funding and financing construction projects.	✓		9-16
8. The capital planning budget accurately lists facilities needs, costs, and recommends methods of financing for each year of a five-year period.	✓		9-17
9. The district brings school site selection well in advance of expected need with the establishment of a broadly representative site selection committee.	✓		9-19
10. The district has developed school site selection criteria to ensure schools are located to serve the proposed attendance area economically, with maximum convenience and safety.	✓		9-21
11. 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.		✓	9-22
12. The district has a system to assess sites to ensure prices paid reflect fair market value.	✓		9-22
13. 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.	✓		9-23
14. The district can demonstrate that its identified facilities needs are based on thorough demographic study.		✓	9-23

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION	YES	NO	PAGE
15. The district uses the official Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) inventory to analyze student capacity and classroom utilization.	✓		9-27
16. The facilities planning leader, in cooperation with the instructional leader and the director(s) of maintenance and operations, conducts an evaluation of the physical condition and education adequacy of existing facilities and ensures that school facilities' inventories are up-to-date.		✓	9-29
17. In determining actual space needs, 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 relocateable facilities (portables) to help smooth out the impact in peaks and valleys in future student enrollment.		✓	9-30
18. The district uses an architect selection committee to screen applicants and identify and evaluate finalists.	✓		9-32
19. The district involves architects in all key phases of the planning process.	✓		9-36
20. The architect selection committee reviews and evaluates the architects' performance at the completion of projects and refers findings to the board.		✓	9-37
21. The district develops 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.		✓	9-38
22. Educational planners, instructional staff, and the architect develop a complete set of educational specifications before the architect begins to design a facility.	✓		9-40
23. 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.	✓		9-42
24. 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.	✓		9-46
25. The district communicates general building considerations, including features of the facility and the school campus in general, to the architect.	✓		9-49
26. The district uses the educational specifications as criteria for evaluating the architect's final product.	✓		9-52

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?		
FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION	YES	NO	PAGE
27. All School Board-approved program requirements are communicated to the architect before final working drawings are initiated.	✓		9-52
28. The Board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final working drawings are initiated in order to minimize project costs.	✓		9-53
29. The Board determines 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.		✓	9-54
30. The architect prepares the building specification document.	✓		9-56
31. The architect coordinates plans, specifications, and questions concerning the project.	✓		9-58
32. 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.	✓		9-58
33. The district requires 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.	✓		9-59
34. The architect recommends payment based on the percent of work completed. A percentage of the contract is withheld pending completion of the project.	✓		9-60
35. The district requires continuous inspection of all school construction projects.	✓		9-60
36. Buildings are not occupied prior to the notice of completion.	✓		9-61
37. The district conducts a comprehensive orientation to the new facility prior to its use so that users better understand the building design and function.	✓		9-61
38. The district conducts 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.		✓	9-62
39. The district analyzes building evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed.		✓	9-64
40. The district analyzes maintenance and operations costs to identify improvements to the district's construction planning process.		✓	9-64

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district periodically evaluates 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.		✓	10-4
2. The Board provides 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.		✓	10-7
3. The maintenance and operations departments have adequate staff to meet their program goals and objectives.		✓	10-10
4. The maintenance and operations departments have a written job description for each position within the department.	✓		10-15
5. The district clearly communicates performance standards to maintenance and operations staff.		✓	10-16
6. The district provides appropriate supervision of maintenance and operations staff.	✓		10-17
7. The district provides a staff development program that includes appropriate training for maintenance and operations staff to enhance worker job satisfaction, efficiency, and safety.	✓		10-19
8. The administration has developed budgetary guidelines to provide for funding in each category of facilities maintenance and operations.		✓	10-21
9. The Board has an established provision for a maintenance reserve fund to handle one-time expenditures necessary to support the maintenance and operations.		✓	10-24
10. The district has established maintenance standards in its short- and long-term plans for providing adequately maintained facilities.		✓	10-24
11. The district uses its maintenance standards to evaluate maintenance needs.		✓	10-25
12. The district has a system for prioritizing maintenance needs.		✓	10-27
13. The district accurately projects cost estimates of major maintenance projects.		✓	10-28
14. The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance.	✓		10-30
15. The district provides maintenance department staff the tools, training, and instructions required to accomplish their assigned tasks.	✓		10-32
16. The district has established a computerized control and tracking system to accurately track inventory and parts and materials used, and provide a reordering system.		✓	10-34
17. The district ensures that maintenance standards are updated to implement new technology and procedures.		✓	10-35

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?		
----------------------	---	--	--

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	YES	NO	PAGE
18. The district has established standards for health and safety.	✓		10-37
19. The district uses external benchmarks to determine a cost-effective manner of meeting its health and safety standards.		✓	10-37
20. The district uses external benchmarks to achieve energy efficiency.		✓	10-38
21. Hazardous materials management complies with federal and state regulations.	✓		10-40
22. The district has a comprehensive and systematic program for dealing with school safety and security.	✓		10-40
23. The district follows established procedures for making school facilities available to the community.	✓		10-41
24. The district meets accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities.	✓		10-41

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The district has established cost-comparison benchmarks based on standards from similar districts and other organizations, taking district conditions into consideration.		✓	13-4
2. The district uses cost comparisons to increase efficiency by identifying alternative methods of providing transportation and maintenance services, such as privatization and outsourcing.	✓		13-7
3. The transportation program accurately accounts for direct and indirect costs, while excluding costs attributable to other district vehicles or programs.		✓	13-8
4. The district regularly reviews and reports on its student transportation performance in comparison to its established benchmarks and adjusts its operational structure and staffing levels to improve efficiency.		✓	13-11
5. Costs are routinely analyzed and controlled based on reliable projections and conditions in the district that influence costs.	✓		13-18
6. The district continuously improves purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase the efficiency of the procurement of goods and services.	✓		13-22
7. The district uses 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.	✓		13-26
8. The district has implemented inspection and maintenance practices to ensure that all vehicles in service meet or exceed state safety operating requirements.	✓		13-31

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	YES	NO	PAGE
9. The district has procedures and practices in place to ensure that vehicles are garaged, maintained, and serviced in a safe and economical manner.	✓		13-32
10. 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.	✓		13-38
11. 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.	✓		13-39
12. Staff, drivers, and pupils are instructed and rehearsed in the procedures to be used in an accident or disaster.	✓		13-45
13. The district has implemented hiring and training policies to employ and retain an adequate number of appropriately qualified bus drivers.	✓		13-46
14. The district has a policy on drugs and alcohol for all transportation department employees and enforces that policy.	✓		13-50

FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS	YES	NO	PAGE
1. The Food Services Program has clear direction of and control over resources and services.	✓		14-4
2. The district identifies barriers to student participation in the school meals program and implements strategies to eliminate the barriers.		✓	14-9
3. The district has established cost-efficiency benchmarks based on comparable private and public sector food service programs and other applicable industry standards.	✓		14-12
4. The district regularly evaluates the school nutrition program based on established benchmarks and implements improvements to increase revenue and reduce costs.		✓	14-15
5. The district regularly assesses the benefits of service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization, and implements changes to improve efficiency and effectiveness.		✓	14-21
6. The program budget is based on departmental goals, revenue, and expenditure projections.		✓	14-23
7. The district's financial control process includes an ongoing review of the program's financial and management practices.	✓		14-24
8. The district accounts for and reports meals served, by category.	✓		14-26
9. The district regularly evaluates purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency.	✓		14-26
10. The district has developed an effective inventory control system that is appropriate to the size of the school nutrition program.	✓		14-28

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS	YES	NO	PAGE
11. The district has a system for receiving and storing food, supplies, and equipment.	✓		14-30
12. The district has a long-range plan for the replacement of equipment and facilities that includes preventative maintenance practices.		✓	14-32
13. The district provides school meals to ensure that the nutritional needs of all students are met.	✓		14-33
14. The district's food production and transportation system ensures the service of high quality food with minimal waste.	✓		14-35
15. The district follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations.	✓		14-38

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

COST CONTROL SYSTEMS	YES	NO	PAGE
<u>INTERNAL AUDITING:</u> The district has an adequate internal auditing function.			
1. The District has established an internal audit function with its primary mission to (1) provide assurance that the internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively, and (2) where appropriate, offer recommendations and counsel to management that improve their performance. (IIA, GFOA)		✓	12-3
<u>FINANCIAL AUDITING:</u> The school district ensures that it receives an annual external audit and uses the audit to improve its operations.			
2. The district obtains an external audit in accordance with government auditing standards.	✓		12-7
3. The district provides for timely follow-up to findings identified in the external audit.	✓		12-7
<u>ASSET MANAGEMENT:</u> District management has established controls to provide for effective management of capital assets.			
4. Segregation of Duties: The District segregates responsibilities for custody of assets from recordkeeping responsibilities for those assets.	✓		12-39
5. Authorization Controls: The District has established controls that provide for proper authorization of asset acquisitions.	✓		12-39
6. Project Accounting: The District has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors.	✓		12-40
7. Asset Accountability: The District provides recorded accountability for capitalized assets.		✓	12-41
<u>RISK MANAGEMENT:</u> The District has established procedures that identify various risks and provide for a comprehensive approach to reducing the impact of losses.			
8. General: 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.	✓		12-47
9. Commercial Coverage: The District has comprehensive policies and procedures relating to purchasing and reviewing insurance coverage.		✓	12-47
10. Self-Insurance Programs: The District regularly monitors and evaluates its self-insurance program to ensure the feasibility of its self-insured coverages.	✓		12-48

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

COST CONTROL SYSTEMS	YES	NO	PAGE
<u>FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:</u> The District has established controls to ensure its financial resources are properly managed.			
11. Management Control Methods: District management communicates its commitment and support of strong internal controls.		✓	12-8
12. Financial Accounting System: The District records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards.	✓		12-10
13. Financial Reporting Procedures: The District prepares and distributes its financial reports timely.		✓	12-11
14. Budget Practices: The District has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures.	✓		12-12
15. Cash Management: The District has adequate controls to provide recorded accountability for cash resources.	✓		12-13
16. Investment Practices: The District has an investment plan that includes investment objectives and performance criteria, and specifies the types of financial products approved for investment.	✓		12-15
17. Receivables: The District has established controls for recording, collecting, adjusting, and reporting receivables.	✓		12-15
18. Salary and Benefits Costs: The District has established controls that provide accountability for employees' compensation and benefits pursuant to an approved compensation plan.		✓	12-16
19. Debt Financing: The District has procedures for analyzing, evaluating, monitoring, and reporting debt financing alternatives.	✓		12-18
20. Grant and Entitlement Monitoring: The District adequately monitors and reports grants activities.	✓		12-18
<u>PURCHASING:</u> The District has established a defined purchasing function with controls over requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions.			
21. Segregation of Duties: The District segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing, and receiving functions.	✓		12-27
22. Requisitioning: The District has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions.	✓		12-29
23. Purchasing: 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.	✓		12-29
24. Receiving: The District has established controls to ensure that goods are received and meet quality standards.	✓		12-31

Best Practice	Is the District Using Best Practice?
----------------------	---

COST CONTROL SYSTEMS	YES	NO	PAGE
25. Invoice Processing: The District has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices, and terms coincide with purchase orders and receiving reports.	✓		12-31
26. Disbursements: The District has established controls to ensure disbursements are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.	✓		12-33
27. Accounts Payable Encumbrances or Obligations: The District has established controls to ensure payables/encumbrances (obligations) are properly authorized, documented, and recorded.	✓		12-33
<i>INFORMATION SYSTEM: The District maintains an information system to provide quality data.</i>			
28. Segregation of Duties: The District segregates duties to prevent unauthorized transactions by appropriately limiting access to data systems processes and functions.	✓		12-18
29. User Controls: The District's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure all output represents authorized and valid transactions.	✓		12-21
30. Application Controls: The District has established appropriate data controls between the user and the data system department.	✓		12-21
31. General Controls: 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.		✓	12-22

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

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

Contract managed by David Summers (850/487-9257), OPPAGA

OPPAGA staff included – Cynthia Davis, Kira Honse, Royal Logan, and Don Wolf under the supervision of Jane Fletcher (850/487-9255)

Auditor General staff included – Jim Kiedinger and Jim Stultz. under the supervision of David

1 Introduction

Overview

Combined Best Financial Management Practice and Performance Reviews are designed to help school districts meet the challenge of educating their students in a cost-effective manner. This review was conducted by Gibson Consulting Group Inc. of Austin, Texas, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, and the Auditor General. Gibson Consulting Group Inc. was primarily responsible for fieldwork and developing report findings and recommendations. OPPAGA and the Auditor General attended site visits to monitor fieldwork, conducted meetings with district staff to receive input on the draft, and reviewed and edited the report. The Martin County School Board voted to undergo a combined Performance and Best Financial Management Practice Review. A combined review includes elements of both a Performance Review as described in s. 11.515, F.S., and a Best Financial Management Practice Review (BFMP) as described in s. 230.23025, F.S. Florida statutes direct that performance reviews address 11 specific areas, and that BFMP reviews addresses the 10 areas in which the Commissioner of Education has adopted best practices. This combined review merges the requirements of both reviews into one review.

Performance Reviews

The 1996 Florida Legislature created the School District Performance Review Program to assist Florida school districts in identifying ways to

- save funds,
- improve management,
- increase efficiency and effectiveness.

School districts that undergo performance reviews are either designated in the General Appropriations Act or selected by OPPAGA. Martin county school district was designated in the 1998-99 General Appropriations Act. OPPAGA uses a formal request for proposal process to select private consulting firms to conduct each review and seeks input from each school district to develop the review scope. Gibson Consulting Group Inc. of Austin, Texas was selected to conduct this review.

Best Financial Management Practice Reviews

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 Martin County School Board was the third 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. Martin 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.

In 1997 the Florida Legislature created 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 to request 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 are 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.

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.

Exhibit 1-1 details the managerial and operational areas that are included in the Combined Best Financial Management Practice and Performance Review of the Martin County School District.

Exhibit 1-1

Managerial and Operational Areas Included in the Combined Best Financial Management Practice and Performance Review

-
- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| • Management Structures | • Personnel Systems and Benefits |
| • Performance and Accountability Systems | • Cost Control Systems: |
| • Use of Lottery Funds | Auditing and Financial Management |
| • Educational Service Delivery | Asset and Risk Management |
| • Community Involvement | Purchasing |
| • Use of State and District Construction Funds | • Food Service Operations |
| • Facilities Construction | • Safety and Security |
| • Facilities Maintenance | |
-

Methodology

In conducting this review, a wide variety of methods were used to collect information about the district's use of the Best Financial Management Practices. Gibson staff conducted numerous interviews with district administrators and staff, facilitated discussion groups with district staff, and conducted site visits to schools. OPPAGA staff and Auditor General staff collected information through a district self-assessment instrument, attended site visits and participated in interviews. 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 the Martin County School District's programs and activities in context with other Florida school districts, staff gathered information from five peer districts around the state that are similar to the Martin County School District. Refer to Exhibit 1-2 for a timeline of major project activities.

Exhibit 1-2

Martin County School District Best Financial Management Practice Review Timeline

Activity	Date
Self-Assessment Site Visit OPPAGA and Auditor General staff provided technical assistance to district staff on how to complete the self-assessment.	November 1, 1998
District Self-Assessment Received by OPPAGA and Auditor General	December 18
Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., OPPAGA, and Auditor General Conducted First Site Visit Team members reviewed the district's self-assessment with district staff, conducted numerous interviews, collected additional data, identified issues and potential cost savings.	February 15-19, 1999
Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., Completed the Preliminary Written Assessment	March 5
Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., Completed the First Draft of the Report	April 9
Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., OPPAGA, and Auditor General Conducted Second Site Visit Team members shared the first draft of the report with district staff for feedback and to collaboratively develop an action plan in instances where the district was not using a best practice.	April 19-23
Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., OPPAGA, and Auditor General Conducted Final Site Visit Team members provided school board members and district staff an opportunity to review the draft report before it was published.	July 26-30
Presentation of Final Report to Martin County School Board	August 19

Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Surveys

To understand the Martin County School District's practices and programs, the review team conducted numerous interviews. The team conducted more than 100 on-site interviews with 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. The team conducted three on-site focus groups with teachers, principals, and business leaders to identify issues and gather feedback. The team also sent 770 surveys to teachers and school administrators and parents to obtain additional feedback (Exhibit 1-3). Because of the small sample size and low response rate, the results of the surveys should be used with care and in conjunction with other information available in the district.

Exhibit 1-3

School Visits

Martin County School District

Category	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Returned	Response Rate
Teachers and School Administrators	370	94	25.4%
Parents	400	42	10.5%
Total	770	136	17.7%

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

On-Site Observations

Team members conducted on-site observations of district operations. These observations included central administrative operations, the district's service center housing the district's purchasing, warehouse, transportation, and food service operations, and individual schools located throughout the district.

Peer School Districts

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

OPPAGA identified Charlotte, Citrus, Indian River, St. Johns, and Santa Rosa county school districts as peer districts for the Martin County School District. Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., compared data from these districts to that of Martin County to better understand demographic characteristics, resources, expenditures, and performance. In identifying these peer school districts, OPPAGA obtained input from Martin 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 staff in other Florida school districts.

School Visits

Review staff visited 15 of the 22 district schools. During these visits team members spoke to school staff, such as teachers, transportation and food service staff, and other support staff, to obtain a better understanding of issues confronting the district and to identify ways the district could improve. Exhibit 1-4 identifies the schools the review team visited during on-site visits to the Martin County School District.

Exhibit 1-4

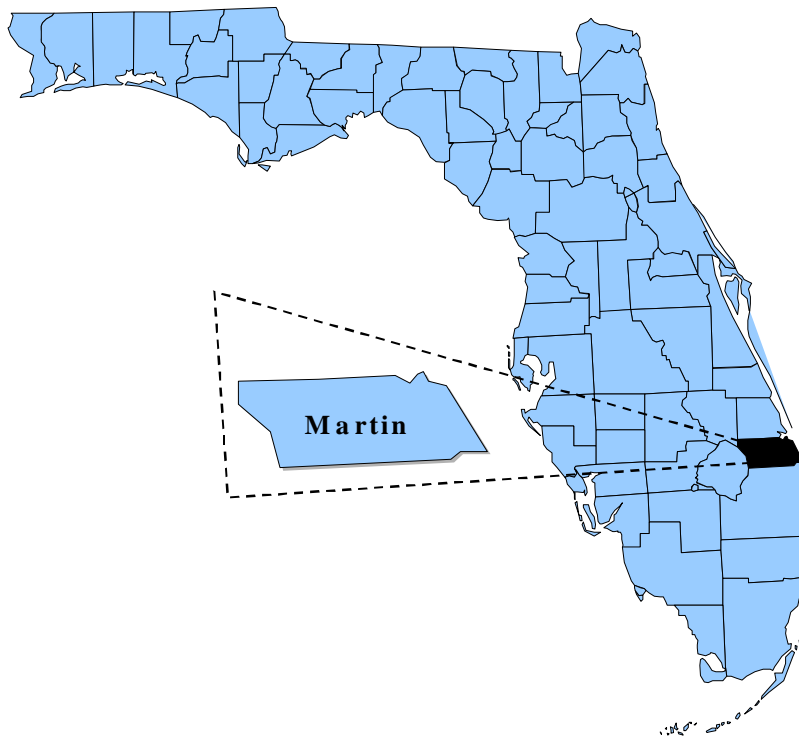
School Visits Martin County School District

Elementary Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bessey Creek• Crystal Lake• Felix A. Williams• Pinewood• Port Salerno• SeaWind• Warfield
Middle Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indiantown• Murray• Stuart
High Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Martin County
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applied Technology, Career Development and Continuing Education• Challenger• Dizzy Gillespie School of the Fine and Performing Arts• Environmental Studies Center• J.D. Parker of Science, Math, and Technology• Spectrum Junior / Senior High

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

2

Statistical Profile of Martin County School District

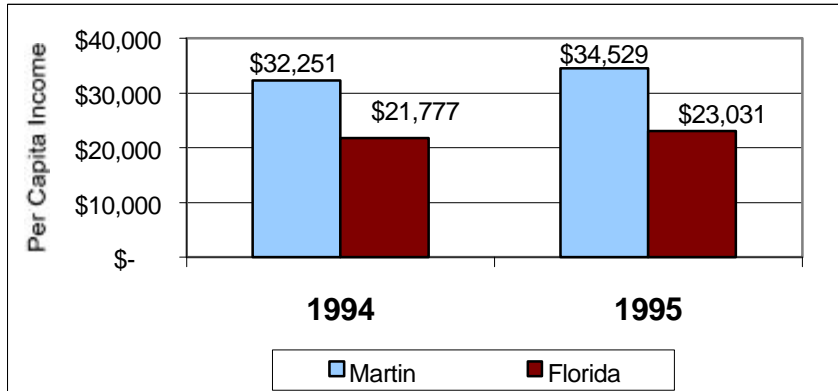


County Profile

Martin County is located in southeast Florida on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean between St. Lucie and Palm Beach counties and east of Lake Okeechobee. The county's primary sources of employment are local government, local service industries, and the retail trades. The Martin County School District, Martin Memorial Health Systems, Martin County, and Publix Super Markets are the top four employers in the county. In 1994 and 1995, the per capita income of residents in Martin County was \$10,474 and \$11,498 above the state average. The state's per capita income in 1994 and 1995 was \$21,777 and \$23,031 respectively. While the per capita income for Martin County was \$32,251 and \$34,529 respectively (Exhibit 2-1).

Exhibit 2-1

**Per Capita Income of Martin County
Is Well Above that for the State**



Source: Florida Education and Community Data Profiles, Florida 1998

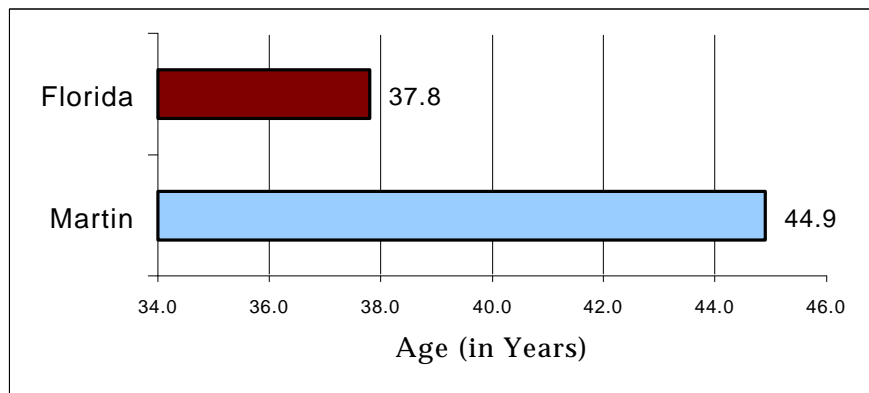
Martin County has two major population centers. Stuart is the largest incorporated municipality and the county seat. Other incorporated municipalities are Seawalls Point, Jupiter Island, and Ocean Breeze Park. The school district offices are located in Stuart.

In 1995, the county population was 114,464. The projected population for the year 2000 is 125,302.

The population of Martin County has a large number of elderly residents. As shown in Exhibit 2-2, the median age of its population is 44.9 years; the state average is 37.8 years.

Exhibit 2-2

**The 1995 Median Age in Martin County
Is Higher than in the State**

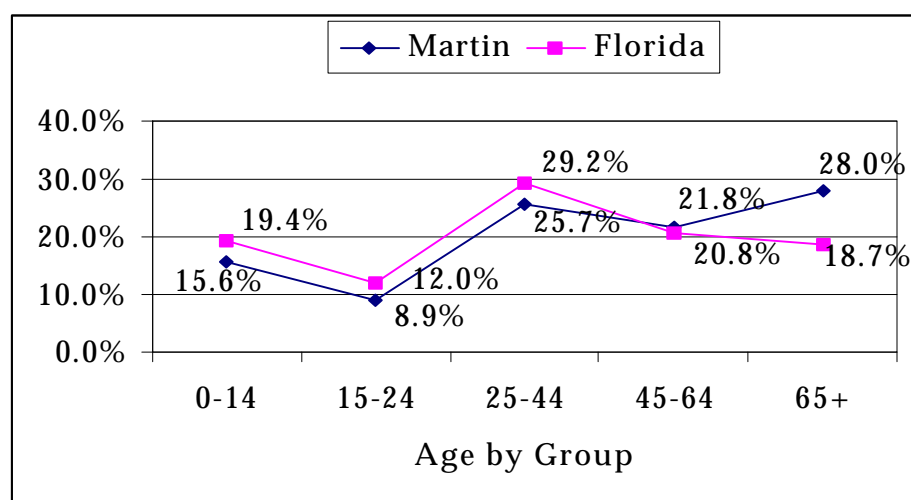


Source: Florida Education and Community Data Profiles, Florida 1998

Exhibit 2-3 compares the age groups of the county's residents. In 1995, the largest difference between Martin County's residents and the state's was in the over 65 group. The size of this group in Martin County was 9% higher than the state average.

Exhibit 2-3

Based on 1995 Population Data, the Largest Difference in Age Groups Was in those Over 65



Source: Florida Education and Community Data Profiles, Florida 1998

District Profile

The following section provides a profile of the Martin County School District in comparison with its peer districts: Charlotte, Citrus, Indian River, Santa Rosa, and St. Johns County School Districts. The peer districts were selected based on their similarities with the Martin County School District across a number of categories including the size of the student population and geographical location. Information in this section is presented across four main areas:

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

District Information

The Martin County School District has twenty-two schools, including two high schools, four middle schools, nine elementary schools, and seven alternative schools. The Department of Education reports a student membership of 15,443 students for Martin County School District in 1997-98. Exhibit 2-4 provides a comparison of student membership of Martin County with its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-4

Student Membership, Martin County School District and Peer Districts, 1997-98

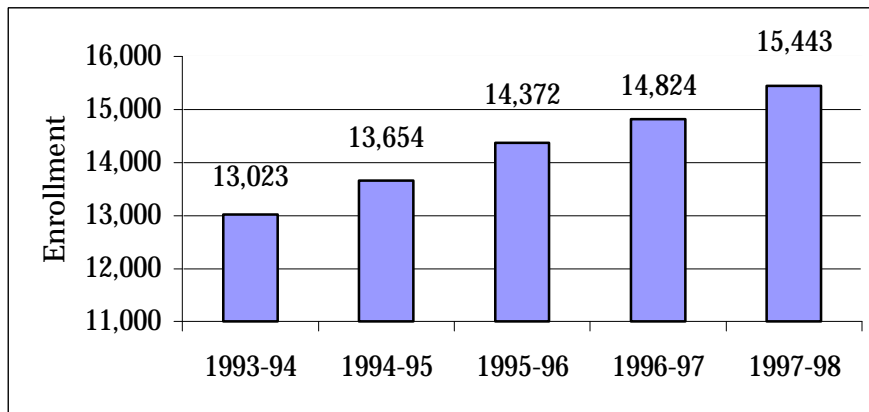
School District	Student Membership
Santa Rosa	21,563
St. Johns	17,402
Charlotte	16,306
Martin	15,443
Citrus	14,597
Indian River	14,320
Peer Average (without Martin)	16,838

Source: Florida Department of Education.

The student membership of Martin County School District increased by an average annual rate of 4.35% over the last four years, from 13,023 in 1993-94 to 15,443 in 1997-98 (Exhibit 2-5).

Exhibit 2-5

Student Membership has Increased Steadily in the Martin County School District, 1994-98



Source: Florida Department of Education.

The school district receives revenue from federal, state, and local sources. Sixty-seven percent of revenue for the 1998-99 district budget is from local sources. The district also receives 22% of its budgeted revenue from state sources (Exhibit 2-6).

Exhibit 2-6

Local Revenues Account for Two-Thirds of District 1998-99 Resources

Source	Amount	Percent
Federal	\$ 83,909	0.1%
State	21,382,569	22.6%
Local	63,987,652	67.6%
Total Revenue Sources	\$85,454,129	90.3%
Incoming Transfers	1,540,060	1.6%
Beginning Fund Balance	7,601,047	8.0%
Total Funds Available	\$94,595,236	100.0%

Note: Due to rounding percentages may not equal 100%

Source: Final Budget 1998-99, Martin County School District.

Almost one-half of state revenue is from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). FEFP is established by the Legislature annually and provides 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. FEFP also includes restricted funding called 'categoricals.' These funds are specified by the Legislature for selected district services, such as textbooks.

As detailed in Exhibit 2-7, 63.4% of the district's budgeted appropriations are allocated to instruction, curriculum, and staffing training expenditures. Operation and maintenance of plants is the second largest expenditure category, followed by administration and pupil personnel services.

Exhibit 2-7

Sixty-Seven Percent of the District's 1998-99 Budget Allocated for Instructional Activities

Appropriations	Amount	Percent
Instruction, curriculum, and staff training	\$59,944,680	63.4%
Operation and maintenance of plant	10,539,046	11.1%
Administration	5,836,477	6.2%
Pupil personnel services	4,105,652	4.3%
Fiscal and central services	412,3249	4.4%
Pupil transportation services	4,070,008	4.3%
Community services	1,275,928	1.3%
Debt service	335,588	0.4%
Facilities acquisition & construction	317,965	0.3%
Subtotal	\$90,548,593	95.7%
Capital projects funds	144,380	0.2%
Trust funds	89,478	0.1%
Subtotal outgoing transfers	\$ 233,858	0.2%
Fund balance	3,812,785	4.0%
Total	\$94,595,236	100.0%

Note: Due to rounding the percentages may not equal 100%.

Source: Final Budget 1998-99, Martin County School District.

Student Characteristics

Student Characteristics provides an overview of the student population at Martin County School District as well as information about the five peer districts. Knowledge of the size and demographics of a district's student membership facilitates an understanding of the challenges the district faces. Exhibit 2-8 outlines the growth in student membership from 1993 to 1997 at Martin County School District and its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-8

Similar to its Peers Martin County's Student Membership Grew Consistently from 1993 to 1997

School District	Fall 1993	Fall 1994	Fall 1995	Fall 1996	Fall 1997
Santa Rosa	18,056	18,972	19,779	20,668	21,563
St. Johns	13,743	14,559	15,396	16,365	17,623
Charlotte	14,650	15,092	15,593	16,083	16,294
Martin	13,023	13,654	14,369	14,823	15,350
Citrus	13,106	13,566	13,934	14,194	14,598
Indian River	12,597	13,165	13,669	13,972	14,317
Peer Average (without Martin)	14,430	15,071	15,674	16,256	16,879
State	2,040,835	2,107,514	2,175,233	2,240,283	2,290,726

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Student membership has grown consistently over the last five years for Martin County School District. This is consistent with the statewide trend and its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-9 provides information on the racial/ethnic composition of the student membership of Martin and its peers. The majority of Martin's students, 76% are White, Non-Hispanic. This percentage is higher than the state average of 57%, but lower than four of Martin's peer districts. Although lower than the statewide average, Martin County School District has a relatively high percentage of Hispanic students compared with its peer districts.

Exhibit 2-9

A Majority of Martin County's Student Membership Is White, Non-Hispanic, Fall 1997

School District	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
Citrus	91%	5%	3%	1%	100%
Santa Rosa	91%	5%	1%	2%	100%
Charlotte	86%	9%	3%	2%	100%
St. Johns	85%	12%	2%	1%	100%
Martin	76%	12%	10%	1%	100%
Indian River	74%	18%	7%	1%	100%
Peer Average (without Martin)	86%	9%	3%	1%	100%
State	56%	25%	16%	3%	100%

Note: Due to rounding percentages may not equal 100%.

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Approximately 30% of the students at Martin County School District qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches. As indicated in Exhibit 2-10 Martin has a lower percentage of its students receiving Free or Reduced lunches than its peers.

Exhibit 2-10

A Smaller Proportion of Martin County's Students Receive Free or Reduced Price Lunches, 1997-98

School District	Student Enrollment	Number of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch	Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch
Martin	15,443	4,696	30%
Charlotte	16,306	6,973	43%
Citrus	14,597	5,380	37%
Indian River	14,320	5,689	40%
St. Johns	17,402	4,905	28%
Santa Rosa	21,563	6,616	31%
Peer District Average (Without Martin)	16,837	5,913	35%
State	2,294,160	991,417	43%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

As shown in Exhibit 2 -11, 6% of Martin County's student population have limited English proficiency. This is a larger proportion than peer districts but is similar to the state average.

Exhibit 2-11

The Percentage of Martin's Students that Have Limited English Proficiency Is Similar to that of the State, 1997-98

School District	Student Enrollment	Number of Students with Limited English Proficiency	Percent of Students with Limited English Proficiency
Martin	15,443	941	6.1%
Charlotte	16,306	125	.7%
Citrus	14,597	83	.6%
Indian River	14,320	517	3.6%
St. Johns	17,402	92	.5%
Santa Rosa	21,563	45	.2%
Peer District Average (Without Martin)	16,838	172	1.0%
State	2,294,160	146,368	6.4%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Student Performance

One of the most important aspects of a school district's mission is to provide a high quality education that is cost effective and that sets high standards for all students, including those in special populations, to enable each to achieve his or her potential. Indicators of how well the district is accomplishing this include test scores, graduation rates, and dropout rates. This section compares these indicators for Martin County School District and its peer districts.

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 2-12 provides results from the Spring of 1998 for Martin County School District and its peer districts. The Florida Writes! scores for Martin are equal to or better than those of the state. The scores for Martin County are higher than several of its peers.

Exhibit 2-12

Martin County Florida Writes! Scores Are Equal or Better than the State Average and Better than Many of Its Peers, Spring 1999

School District	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Charlotte	3.3	3.8	3.7
Citrus	3.4	3.3	3.6
Indian River	3.1	3.3	3.3
Martin	3.1	3.7	3.7
St. Johns	3.2	3.7	3.8
Santa Rosa	2.9	3.4	3.5
Peer Average (without Martin)	3.2	3.5	3.6
Florida	3.1	3.4	3.6

Source: Florida Department of Education

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

Exhibit 2-13 illustrates the 1997-98 and 1998-99 FCAT scores for students in Martin County and peer districts. When considered district wide, students in Martin County School District scored at levels 2 and 3 which was very similar to the peer districts and at higher levels than the state as a whole on three of the 6 tests. Students in Florida scored at level 2 for all FCAT tests. A level three score indicates that students have partial success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards but performance is inconsistent. A level two score indicates that students have limited success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.

Exhibit 2-13**Martin County's FCAT Scores Are Similar to Those of Peer Districts in 1997-98 and 1998-99**

1997-98	Reading (level)			Mathematics (level)		
	4th	8th	10th	5th	8th	10th
Charlotte	3	2	2	3	3	3
Citrus	3	2	2	2	2	2
Indian River	3	2	2	2	2	2
Martin	3	3	2	2	3	2
St Johns	3	3	2	2	3	3
Santa Rosa	3	3	2	2	3	2
Peer average (without Martin)	3	2.4	2	2.2	2.6	2.4
Florida	2	2	2	2	2	2
1998-99						
Charlotte	3	+3	2	3	3	3
Citrus	3	+3	2	2	+3	+3
Indian River	3	2	2	2	2	2
Martin	3	3	2	2	3	+3
St. Johns	3	3	2	+3	3	3
Santa Rosa	3	3	2	2	3	+3
Peer average (without Martin)	3	2.8	2	2.4	2.8	2.8
Florida	2	2	2	2	2	2

Note: "+" sign indicates the 1998-99 test score increased over the previous year.

Source: Department of Education

In the spring of 1997, all school districts in Florida administered nationally norm-referenced tests to students. A norm-referenced test is designed to compare individuals to others with similar characteristics, e.g. individuals of the same age and grade level. Exhibits 2-14 and 2-15 contain the following information regarding the results of the achievement tests for the Martin County School District and its five peer districts.

- The number of students who were administered the test in the in the spring of 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 percent of the students in the nation.
- The percentage of students with a NPR from 1-25 and the percentage with a NPR from 76-99 is shown. Percentage of students scoring in the NPR range from 1-25 and the percentage scoring in the NPR range from 76-99 is shown. This shows the percentage of students scoring in the lowest and highest quarters in comparison to national norms.

Martin's scores for both the fourth and eighth grades are relatively high compared to its peer districts (Exhibits 2-14 and 2-15). Martin has particularly high scores for both reading and mathematics in the eighth grade.

Exhibit 2-14

Grade 4 Norm-Referenced Tests Martin County School District and Peer Districts, Spring 1997

School District	Reading				Mathematics			
	Number of Students	Median NPR	1-25	76-99	Number of Students	Median NPR	1-25	76-99
Charlotte	880	62	13%	29%	903	63	14%	37%
Citrus	838	55	14%	22%	832	56	12%	25%
Indian River	960	50	22%	24%	961	66	16%	40%
Martin	982	59	19%	32%	982	69	16%	42%
St. Johns	1,163	64	16%	37%	1,183	62	14%	32%
Santa Rosa	1,373	61	11%	34%	1,371	71	12%	44%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit 2-15

Grade 8 Norm-Referenced Tests Martin County School District and Peer Districts, Spring 1997

School District	Reading				Mathematics			
	Number of Students	Median NPR	1-25	76-99	Number of Students	Median NPR	1-25	76-99
Charlotte	1,137	54	23%	28%	1,122	57	22%	27%
Citrus	838	57	13%	27%	834	62	12%	31%
Indian River	824	66	13%	36%	822	56	19%	29%
Martin	906	66	13%	37%	906	67	12%	39%
St. Johns	1,113	64	16%	33%	1,111	59	19%	30%
Santa Rosa	1,330	61	12%	28%	1,321	66	14%	40%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Dropout and Graduation Rates

Martin County School District has relatively low dropout rates compared with its five peer districts. The dropout rates and total number of diploma graduates for Martin and its peer districts are compared for the last three years in Exhibit 2-16. Martin's dropout rates have dropped over this time period, while the graduation rate has increased and then decreased.

Exhibit 2-16

Dropout Rate and Graduation Rates Martin County School District and Peer Districts, 1996-98

School District	Dropout Rate			Graduation Rate		
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Charlotte	3.58%	3.96%	3.21%	76.48%	74.46%	70.98%
Citrus	6.39%	7.38%	6.84%	77.26%	66.73%	65.40%
Indian River	3.24%	3.09%	3.60%	72.85%	75.93%	65.32%
Martin	2.57%	2.32%	1.82%	70.86%	78.11%	68.30%
St. Johns	3.42%	7.05%	1.47%	76.07%	84.75%	75.35%
Santa Rosa	2.86%	3.82%	2.47%	73.59%	76.36%	69.73%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Staff Characteristics

Staff Characteristics provides an overview of the personnel employed by the Martin County School District and its five peer districts. Exhibit 2-17 compares the number and percentage of full-time staff in three categories—Administrators, Instruction, and Support—at Martin and the five peer districts. Martin County School District has a similar percentage of instructional staff when compared to its peer districts. In 1998-99 the district added 42 teaching positions.

Exhibit 2-17

Martin's Full-Time Staffing Is Consistent with Peer Districts, 1997-98

School District	Full-Time Staff							
	Administrators		Instruction		Support		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Santa Rosa	68	3%	1,611	73%	529	24%	2,208	100%
St. Johns	87	4%	1,441	68%	599	28%	2,127	100%
Charlotte	71	4%	1,304	67%	559	29%	1,934	100%
Indian River	61	4%	1,021	66%	474	30%	1,556	100%
Martin	69	4%	1,237	65%	583	31%	1,889	100%
Citrus	58	3%	1,015	56%	743	41%	1,816	100%
Peer Average (without Martin)	69	4%	1,278	66%	581	30%	1,928	100%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit 2-18 provides information regarding the race and gender of full-time staff at Martin and its peer districts. The staff at Martin is relatively diverse compared to the average of its peer districts. Martin's staff is 84% white, 13% black, and 3% Hispanic.

Exhibit 2-18

Martin's Full-Time Staff Is Relatively Diverse Compared to Its Peer Districts, 1997-98

School District	Race								Gender				Total	
	White		Black		Hispanic		Other		Male		Female			
Santa Rosa	2,089	95%	91	4%	6	0%	22	1%	458	21%	1,750	79%	2,208	100%
Citrus	1,704	94%	84	5%	18	1%	10	1%	527	29%	1,289	71%	1,816	100%
Charlotte	1,807	93%	82	4%	29	2%	16	1%	549	28%	1,385	72%	1,934	100%
Martin	1,581	84%	238	13%	66	3%	4	0%	457	24%	1,432	76%	1,889	100%
St. Johns	1,803	85%	288	14%	28	1%	8	0%	571	27%	1,556	73%	2,127	100%
Indian River	1,204	80%	264	18%	27	2%	5	0%	370	25%	1,130	75%	1,500	100%
Peer Average (without Martin)	1,721	90%	162	8%	22	1%	12	1%	495	26%	1,422	74%	1,917	100%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Exhibit 2-19 details the number of teachers by degree level for Martin and its peer districts. The educational attainment of Martin's teachers is similar to statewide and peer averages.

Exhibit 2-19

Education Level of Teachers in Martin County Is Similar to Its Peer Districts, 1997-98

School District	Type of Degree (No. and % of District Total)							
	Bachelor's		Master's		Specialist		Doctorate	
Indian River	522	68%	206	27%	38	5%	6	1%
Santa Rosa	868	65%	433	33%	19	1%	7	1%
Martin	574	62%	332	36%	19	2%	6	1%
St. Johns	737	62%	441	37%	0	0%	6	1%
Citrus	541	56%	399	41%	16	2%	10	1%
Charlotte	491	51%	446	46%	16	2%	9	1%
Peer Average (without Martin)	632	61%	385	37%	18	2%	8	1%
State	84,221	62%	47,408	35%	3,686	3%	1,441	1%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

3

Management Structures

Martin County School District has many elements in place that will enable it to have a very successful Management Structure. However, the district should improve organizational charts, address the limitations of its Management Information Systems, and develop a plan for the formal evaluation of its programs and operations.

Conclusion

Martin County School District has many elements in place that will enable it to have a very successful Management Structure. The district has a clearly defined organization structure at the high level, a strategic plan, sound purchasing practices, and an in-house attorney.

In addition, the district is in the process of implementing several other elements that, once in place, will further strengthen its management structure. For example, the district is in the process of revising its strategic plan to add additional details, developing performance measures, and developing procedure manuals. In addition, the district has recently contracted with a consultant to assess the district's administrative staffing ratios as well as to develop benchmarks which can be used to assess staffing on an ongoing basis.

In addition to completing the projects that are currently underway, the district should consider taking several other steps. The district should hire a grant writer and establish performance reports for operational and instructional areas so that performance can be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

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, two recommendations will have fiscal impacts.

Exhibit 3-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Management Structures Will Have the Following Fiscal Impacts

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Hire FSBA to provide training to the board.	Hiring FSBA will cost \$700 in fees and \$450 in travel expenses.
Hire a consultant to provide training on strategic planning.	This recommendation will require a one-time investment of approximately \$2,000.
Hire a grant writer to support efforts at raising additional funding.	This recommendation will require an investment of approximately \$50,000 each year in salaries and benefits.

Background

An elected superintendent and a five-member school board lead Martin County School District. These six individuals are responsible for ensuring that the district's \$95 million annual budget and 2,036 employees are successful in providing a high-quality education to the district's 15,843 students.

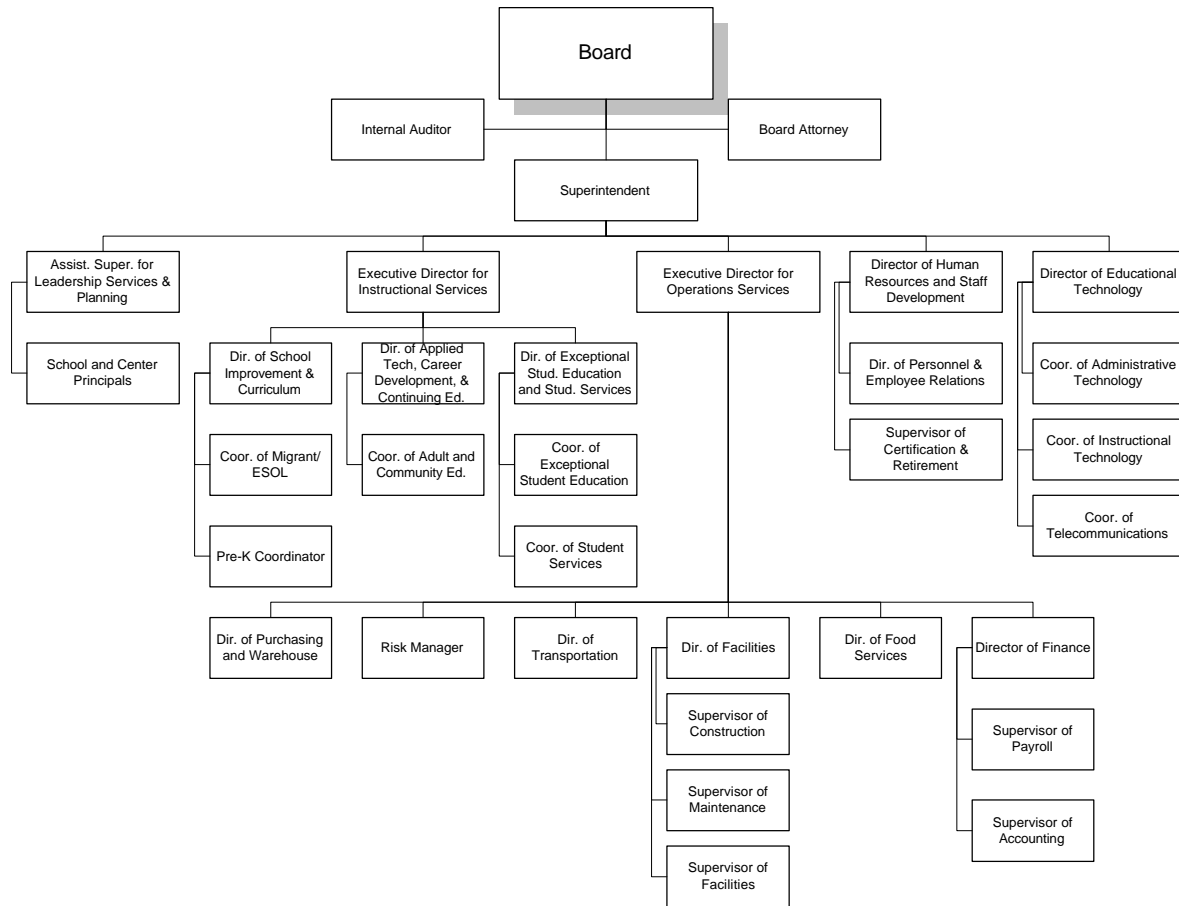
The Superintendent is responsible for the daily operations of the district. There is 1 assistant superintendent, 2 executive directors, and 6 directors in the district. The Assistant Superintendent for Leadership Services and Planning oversees the district's school-based personnel, including the principals. The Executive Director for Instructional Services manages the district's curriculum and program staff. The Executive Director for Operations Services oversees the district's purchasing and warehousing, risk management, transportation, facilities, food services, and finance. The Director of Human Resources and Staff Development oversees the district's personnel function. The Director of Educational Technology manages the district's instructional and administrative technology.

The board is responsible for guiding the district's budgeting, planning, and policy making. To accomplish this, the board meets the first and third Tuesday of each month. These board meetings are publicized and open to the public.

The district also has an internal auditor and a school board attorney who report directly to the board of trustees. Exhibit 3-2 presents the district's current organization structure.

Exhibit 3-2

District Organization Chart



Source: Martin County School District.

The school board and management team have made several notable accomplishments over the past several years related to the district's management structures. Exhibit 3-3 describes some of these accomplishments.

Exhibit 3-3

Notable Accomplishments in Management Structures

- The district's organization chart reflects all high-level district positions.
 - In the last four years, the district has initiated several external reviews of its organizational structure, staffing levels, and processes
 - The district surveys employees to determine the level of customer satisfaction with various departments.
 - The policy manual is available on-line.
 - The district has a five-year Strategic Plan, and it develops mid-point assessments to report on the progress of the plan.
 - The district has recognized the need for additional performance measures and is in the process of developing some.
 - The district has an in-house attorney that provides the district with cost-efficient legal services.
 - The district uses alternative purchasing arrangements to secure low prices.
-

Source: Martin County School District.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

1 The district has clearly defined units and lines of authority in operation. However, they are not as well documented as they could be.

Job Descriptions Should Be Reviewed and Updated More Regularly

All high level administrators are included in the district's organization chart. The organization chart includes the following levels of positions: board, superintendent, assistant superintendent, executive directors, directors, coordinators, and supervisors.

There are job descriptions, but many are out-of-date, inaccurate, or lacking detail. The Review Team examined 226 position descriptions and found that 35 (15%) have no creation or revision date. Those that had dates were created and/or last revised between 8/7/90 and 12/8/98. One hundred forty-two (62%) have not been revised since August 7, 1990. (See page 11-5, Personnel Systems, for further details). However, district administrators indicated that as part of the compensation study completed during the course of this review all of the administrative job descriptions were updated.

In some cases, the job descriptions do not adequately reflect what people do. For instance, the job description for the Coordinator of Student Services includes 18 relatively generic performance responsibilities; however, he has a separate list of 20 programs for which he is

at least partially responsible. The job description includes the following responsibilities: “Coordinate the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the district’s comprehensive program of student services. Coordinate and supervise the development and implementation of the student services plan to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services.” Yet, nowhere in the job description does it list what the student services are. The only documentation of the programs the position is responsible for is a list compiled by the individual in the position. The programs for which the position has some responsibilities are presented in Exhibit 3-4.

Exhibit 3-4

Programs Under Responsibility of the Coordinator of Student Services

Attendance/ Truancy	Home Education	School Resource Officer Program
Boot Camp	Homeless Students	Services Agencies/ Social Services
Child Abuse Prevention	Juvenile Justice Re-Entry Hearings	SHOCAP
Code of Student Conduct – Elementary and Secondary	Learnfare Students	STOP Camp
Driver’s License Requirements	Missing Children – Reports, monitor and Dissemination	Student Literature Distribution – Approval/Non-Approval
Dropout Prevention/ Alternative Education Programs	School Calendar	Student Records
Extended Day	School Health Services	

Source: Coordinator of Student Services.

There are only three responsibilities listed in the job description that vaguely reference any of these programs:

- Coordinate programs with school site personnel to analyze attendance.
- Coordinate programs with school site personnel to evaluate the alternative programs.
- Coordinate the services of the school district and multi-cultural agencies to meet the needs of the students.

This job description does not adequately specify the responsibilities of the position.

There is no process in place to review and update job descriptions regularly. Job descriptions were reviewed (although not necessarily updated) as part of an organizational and management study conducted in 1995, but many have not been reviewed since then.

When asked whether their job descriptions accurately reflect their responsibilities, three of the six administrators said they were not sure since they had not reviewed their job descriptions since they were hired.

Since there is no process to review job descriptions on a regular basis, they are not updated as necessary.

Job descriptions should be reviewed in conjunction with employee performance evaluations to ensure their accuracy. Ideally, this would take place annually. If a review finds that the job description is accurate, there is no need to revise the job description. If a position's responsibilities have not changed in years, there is no need to change the job description. However, a review should be done so that changes can be made when necessary.

Accurate job descriptions are helpful not only in clarifying expectations and responsibilities for current employees, but they also make it easier for the organization as it hires new employees. For new employees, job descriptions are the most appropriate mechanism for communicating specific expectations and responsibilities of the job.

The District's Organization Chart Reflects High-Level Positions and Lines of Authority

The district has a high-level organization chart that identifies units and lines of authority for all high-level district positions. However, some organizational charts do not contain other key positions, which has caused confusion among district staff. For example, the organizational chart for the Food Services Program does not reflect cafeteria manager positions. Thus, it is not clear to whom these individuals report. Some managers we spoke to believed they report to the principals; others believed they report to the Food Services Director. As a result, there may be unintentional inconsistencies in how various kitchens and cafeterias operate. While this is a common problem among school districts, a clear organizational chart may help eliminate confusion.

In addition, while the organization chart accurately reflects most lines of authority, there are exceptions. For instance, the Assistant Superintendent for Leadership Services and Planning is on the same level as the Executive Director for Instructional Services, the Executive Director for Operations Services, the Director of Human Resources and Staff Development, and the Director of Educational Technology. However, the assistant superintendent has authority beyond that which is depicted in the organization chart. The assistant superintendent serves as the superintendent's "right-hand man," and as a result, has some authority and influence over the executive directors, directors, and coordinators that is not shown in the organization chart.

According to the survey conducted of teachers and school administrators, lines of authority are relatively well defined and clear. (Exhibit 3-5.)

Exhibit 3-5

Results of Teacher and School Administrator Survey

	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	No Opinion
Lines of authority are well defined and clear. (n=94)	50.0	14.9	34.0	1.1

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

Most Departments Could Improve Their Procedure Manuals

In general, the district needs to better document procedures followed by its major educational and operational program staff. While the district has procedure manuals for instructional programs, some are not dated, and of those that are, some have not been updated since 1994. The district has curriculum guides, and it communicates procedures through memos; however, these memos are not incorporated into a procedures manual.

Manuals for other operational areas are lacking. Some departments, like Food Services, are currently developing a procedure manual. Other departments, like human resources, have a few documented procedures—such as how to complete an evaluation, how to maintain a drug-free workplace, and how to file a complaint—but no complete procedure manual. Written procedures are needed to consistency when conducting repetitive tasks, provide continuity when there is turn over in key personnel, and assist in training new staff. Exhibit 3-6 provides an overview of procedure manuals by department.

Exhibit 3-6

Existence of Procedure Manuals

Department	Documented Procedures
Financial Management	"In process" of documenting procedures. Off to a good start, and approximately 25% complete.
Facilities Construction	"In process" of documenting procedures. Off to a good start, but less than 25% complete.
Facilities Maintenance	No.
Instruction	Procedures in memos and curriculum guides, but no complete manual.
Food Services	Food Services' comprehensive procedures manual is nearly complete. The director of Food Services expects the manual to be finalized and available on their public server by August 1999.
Transportation	The Transportation Department recently worked with the School Board Attorney to update Board policies to be consistent with DOE regulations and actual district practice. The director of Transportation has prepared a draft procedures manual. The manual emphasizes operations procedures for drivers and is updated by the director on a regular basis.
Personnel	Few documented procedures. No complete manual.
Purchasing	The department has documented procedures.

Source: Interviews and procedures manuals.

Recommendations

- *Martin County School District should develop a process for reviewing job descriptions on an annual basis as part of its performance evaluation process. As part of this process each year, each employee and his or her supervisor should*

review the employee's job description to ensure that it is accurate and that it clearly defines the expectations of the position. The job description should also define all lines of authority above and below the position.

- *The district should develop and/or update procedure manuals for all areas. These manuals will require that the district to define their procedures and this process can assist in streamlining activities and ensuring people understand their roles and responsibilities in these activities. To the extent possible, these procedures should also be made available on-line. As long as individuals can access procedures through the computer, updates can be made without having to distribute hard copies throughout the district.*

Action Plan 3-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Martin County School District should develop process for reviewing job descriptions on an annual basis as part of its performance evaluation process. As part of this process each year, each employee and his or her supervisor should review the employee's job description to ensure that it is accurate and that it clearly defines the expectations of the position. The job description should also define all lines of authority above and below the position.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Executive Director of Human Resources develops and documents a procedure for reviewing job descriptions as part of the annual evaluation process.</p> <p>Step 2: The Executive Director of Human Resources should train all directors, principals, and other managers in how to incorporate the job description review into the annual evaluation process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Executive Director of Human Resources, all directors, principals, and other managers
Time Frame	Ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should develop and/or update procedure manuals for all areas. These manuals will require that the district to define their procedures and this process can assist in streamlining activities and ensuring people understand their roles and responsibilities in these activities. To the extent possible, these procedures should also be made available on-line. As long as individuals can access procedures through the computer, updates can be made without having to distribute hard copies throughout the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Each department director should meet with members of the department's staff to identify all activities conducted by the department to develop a complete list of what procedures are needed.</p> <p>Step 2: The director and the department staff should then gather all documentation of procedures that exist (including those in memo format, old procedures manuals, handbooks, draft format, etc). In some cases, procedures may be sufficient in</p>

	their current format. In other cases, they can serve as a basis for refinement.
Step 3:	Procedure development should be distributed among various department members. Procedures should be developed by those most familiar with the activity. Procedures that require actions of several members of the department should be developed with input from each of these members.
Step 4:	Once all procedures are developed, they should be stored on a shared drive in a single folder as read-only files. They should also be printed and kept in a single binder.
Step 5:	The procedure manual should be updated as procedures change and reviewed annually to ensure the information in it is current and complete.
Who Is Responsible	All department directors.
Time Frame	January 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

2 The district periodically reviews its organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes.

The District Reviews Staffing Levels and Processes as Needed

Like other districts in the state, Martin County has access to the *Profiles of Florida School Districts* report. However, the district does not use the report as part of any evaluation process. Martin County is concerned about using the statewide data in this report since districts categorize and title positions differently. Meaningful comparisons require knowing what each position does, not just what the position is called, and these state-level reports include only the titles and categories of the positions; they include no descriptions of the accompanying responsibilities.

In the last four years, the district has initiated several external reviews of its organizational structure, staffing levels, and processes. In 1995, the district hired the Florida Association of District School Superintendents to conduct a Management and Organizational study of the district. The study included a survey of principals and administrators and resulted in a series of recommendations for the district including staffing changes and reorganization.

In 1996, the district hired a consulting firm to conduct reviews of the district's information technology function. The review incorporated input from on-site interviews with district staff and included:

- an evaluation of the current staffing allocation;
- an assessment of staff efficiency;
- a five-year district technology plan;
- an evaluation of the district's hardware and software needs; and
- projected costs to the district to implement the plan.

In 1996, the district also hired a consulting firm to study the district's personnel and payroll processes. This review, which also incorporated input from personnel interviews, assessed existing processes, identified opportunities for streamlining processes, and developed recommendations for improving process efficiency.

During the 1998-99 school year, the Superintendent's Cabinet developed a list of processes that they believed could be streamlined. The cabinet is now working through the list and implementing changes as they are developed.

Recently, after several board members expressed concern over the district's staffing levels and administrative salaries, the Superintendent called peer districts to collect information about staffing levels and salaries and distributed this information to the board. This information packet provided useful information about staffing levels and salaries for several central administration positions (such as Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, Directors, Coordinators, Supervisors, Principals, and Assistant Principals). The information packet also included school enrollments and length of work years; however, it provided no ratios and lacked the details about specific position responsibilities that would allow for more useful comparisons of data. Ratios are important in an analysis like this because it puts the data in perspective. Obviously, districts with more students, more schools, and a larger budget are likely to have higher staffing levels. Ratios adjust for these differences to make the information meaningful and comparable.

In 1999, the board commissioned two studies to evaluate its organization structure. The Florida Association of District School Superintendent's conducted a job analysis and organizational review of the district. This review will include procedures for promotional increase and an analysis of the differences in job descriptions from one district to another.

A private consulting firm also conducted a review comparing Martin County School District's administrative ratios to other districts. The administrative ratio study compared Martin County School District to five peer districts (Citrus, Charlotte, Indian River, St. Johns and Santa Rosa counties) on the following ratios:

- District administrators: as a percent of total employees
- School-based administrators: as a percent of total employees
- Total administrators: as a percent of total employees
- Instructional staff: per district administrator
- Instructional staff: per school based administrator
- Instructional staff: per total administrator
- Students: per district administrator
- Students: per school based administrator
- Students: per total administrator

The administrative ratio study indicates that Martin County School District compares favorably to other districts on most ratios. The district should use these ratios to establish benchmarks for comparison.

Study Results Are Presented to the Board and Recommendations Are Implemented

When the district conducts reviews of organization structure, staffing and processes, the board members receive the information. They assess the recommendations, and they implement those that they believe to be appropriate.

A 1995 organizational study provides several examples of this. The district's organization chart today is much more similar to the organization that was recommended in the 1995 report than it is to the organization chart that was in place in 1995 when the report was written. In other words, the district has implemented the majority of organizational changes recommended by the report.

Recommendations

- *The district should incorporate the benchmarks developed through the administrative ratio study into an annual evaluation process of the district's staffing levels.*
- *The district could target its resources more effectively if it had better information on program performance and district operations and if it conducted regular assessments and evaluations. To this end, the district should develop a plan for producing management reports and conducting routine assessments and program evaluations. Management reports, routine assessments, and program evaluations are discussed in greater detail later in Chapter 4, Performance Accountability System.*

Action Plan 3-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should incorporate the benchmarks developed through the administrative ratio study into an annual evaluation process of the district's staffing levels. This evaluation should be incorporated into the annual management reports and progress reports recommended in the Management Structures chapter.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Based on the results of the administrative staffing study, the Executive Director of Human Resources should work with the Director of Educational Technology to determine how staffing ratios should be calculated.</p> <p>Step 2: The Executive Director of Human Resources and the Director of Educational Technology should develop an automated report that calculates staffing ratios and compares them to benchmarks.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Executive Director of Human Resources and the Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should develop a plan for producing management reports and conducting routine assessments and program evaluations.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Assistant Superintendent should work with directors to develop a framework for the how the management reports, routine assessments and program performance evaluations should be coordinated and incorporated into district planning,

	budgeting and decision-making.
	Step 2: Present the plan to the school board annually for review and approval.
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent with input from the school board, internal auditor, superintendent, and department directors.
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

3 The School Board exercises appropriate oversight of the district's financial resources, but additional training would improve its effectiveness.

The District Has Adequate Procedures to Identify Items With Significant Financial Impact for Board Review

The district has a policy and a procedure in place to ensure that the school board reviews items with significant financial considerations. The district policy manual (6Gx43-7.10) states, "Purchases of any item costing more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) must first be specifically approved by the School Board and follow a prescribed bid procedure. Any authorized purchase of a group of items costing more than \$10,000 must also follow the prescribed bid procedure. The Superintendent and his/her designees are authorized to approve all contracts or purchase order for items up to \$5,000. The Superintendent's designation of this authority must be in writing. Purchases over \$5,000 will be submitted to the School Board for approval." The policy also includes procedures for bidding and purchasing.

School Board Members Should Better Direct Staff on Information Needed

The district has several documents—the bid renewal request, financial statements, budget amendments, budget workshop documents—which provide information to assist the board in making financial decisions for the district. In general, these documents provide information about the district's historical expenditures, current expenditures, and prices of various bidders. However, these documents do not consistently include performance measures of the district or vendor, background, or trend information about the vendor. In addition, in some cases, the documents do not even provide a per unit cost or comparisons with other vendors.

The board may be better prepared to make decisions with large financial implications if they were given additional information on the background of the product or service provider, trends, performance measures or other information to better understand the details of the bid.

In addition, the school board reviews significant financial issues that are identified in audits and reviews. All recent reviews—the internal auditor's report, Auditor General's report, the Organization and Management Review—have been presented to the school board members for their review. While several board members are comfortable that they have all the information they need to make decisions, at least one board member was not. This

board member would like more information to explain the details of the cost, but has not yet made this request formally to district staff.

The School Board Needs Additional Training on Overseeing Financial Resources

The most relevant training received by the board on financial oversight is delivered to the board by the district's finance department. This training is delivered through presentations to the group and on a one-on-one basis to board members. One recent example was the district's Budget Presentation for the 1999-2000 school year. This presentation included:

- a summary of operations;
- historical information on revenues, expenditures, and fund balances;
- an overview of the Florida Education Finance Program;
- information about the district's FTE;
- millage information;
- tax information;
- Truth in Millage information;
- the budget calendar; and
- an explanation of where lottery funds go.

While the training delivered to-date is useful for understanding the district's financial situation and budgeting process, the board could benefit from receiving additional training specifically targeted at overseeing the district's financial resources. For instance, they would benefit from being trained in how to monitor and understand key indicators of financial status.

The School Board Solicits Feedback on Financial Issues

In considering issues with significant financial implications and proposed budgets, the School Board is open to feedback from the public, district and school administrators, and teachers. For instance, the district's budget calendar ensures that the district meets the requirements of the Truth in Millage (TRIM) rules. The board conducts public meetings on its budget and millage and advertises these meetings.

The Responsibilities of the School Board and Superintendent Are Adequately Defined

The district's policy manual defines the responsibilities of the School Board and the superintendent.

Policy 6Gx43-1.03 defines Powers, Duties, and Main Function of the Board. It states, "As prescribed by law, the general powers of the Board are to operate, control, and supervise its schools and to determine education policies. To this end, the Board will adopt such rules as will contribute to the more orderly and efficient operation of the school system." Regarding the Formulation and Adoption of Rules, the policy states, "The board shall determine and adopt such Rules considered necessary for the efficient operation and general improvement of the school system," and "All Rules shall be consistent with Federal and State law and the Rules of the State Board of Education." Finally, the policy states, "The Superintendent is responsible for the administration of rules adopted by the Board."

The Board's role is further defined in Policy 6Gx43-1.04 which addresses the role of the individual, orientation of new members, attendance at meetings, district school membership, remuneration, and conflict of interest and conduct while in office (Exhibit 3-7).

Exhibit 3-7

Policy 6Gx43-1.04 Defines the Role of Board Members

Role	Description
Role of Individual	As representatives of the community, individual board members are encouraged to bring their concerns to the superintendent and the board. While the board is not bound by any statement or action on the part of an individual board member, upon appropriate board action, a member may be delegated the task of representing the board's position before community groups or other governmental bodies or representatives. When visiting school facilities, members are encouraged to coordinate their visits with the principal or appropriate administrator.
Orientation for New Members	The superintendent and board attorney shall provide an orientation program for newly elected board members to commence as soon as possible after their new term begins. This orientation shall reflect among other things, the purpose and role of the board, the conduct of individual board members, an overview of organizational functions and responsibilities, a survey of current and planned educational programs, and review of board policies.
Attendance at Meetings	The board members should attend all regular and special meetings, work sessions, and committee sessions, unless circumstances intervene. Absent members should notify the chairman or the superintendent at the earliest possible time.
District School Board Membership	The board will maintain institutional memberships in appropriate state and national organizations, which it determines to be of potential benefit to the district and to public education.
Remuneration	Board members shall receive compensation based upon the population of the county, as determined by the most recent census and as provided by law.
Conflict of Interest and Conduct While in Office	Board members shall adhere to standards of conduct and avoid conflicts of interest as defined by statute.

Source: Martin County Policy Manual.

The policy manual defines the role of the Superintendent in 6Gx43-2.01 (Exhibit 3-8). This states, "The Superintendent of Schools for Martin County, Florida, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties as authorized by constitutional and statutory authority to efficiently operate the school system, and in so doing shall advise and counsel with the School Board." The policy further describes the three functions of the Superintendent.

Exhibit 3-8

Policy 6Gx43-2.01 Defines Functions of Superintendent

Function	Description
Administrative Functions	The superintendent shall recommend the assigned duties and responsibilities for efficient management of the school system
Instructional Functions	The superintendent shall recommend the supervisory direction, coordination, and articulations of the curriculum of the school and of the methods and materials used in teaching.
Service Functions	The superintendent shall recommend a system of services designed to augment the school program which shall encompass the following areas; personnel, transportation, school plant planning, maintenance, and construction, food services, finance, purchasing, warehousing and distribution, plant and personnel security, property records, and other areas as needed.

Source: Martin County School District Policy Manual.

Finally, 6Gx43-2.02 defines the primary responsibility of the superintendent (Exhibit 3-9). The policy states, "It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to enforce the rules and regulations of the Board; to prepare and submit the annual budget to the Board for adoption, to approve and to direct all expenditures within the appropriations adopted by the Board; to recommend an annual calendar for adoption by the Board; to make continuous study of development and needs of the schools; to prepare reports to the Board on the conditions and needs of the schools; and to acquaint the public with the said activities and needs." The policy also defines four areas of duties for the superintendent.

Exhibit 3-9

Policy 6Gx43-2.02 Defines Four Areas of Duties for the Superintendent

Function	Description
Administrative Duties	The superintendent shall be directly responsible for the administrative duties of this office. The superintendent shall assign teachers to their respective teaching duties and shall appraise the qualities of their respective services. The superintendent shall assist with the organization and internal operation of the schools. Upon recommendations submitted by principals, the superintendent shall assist in securing facilities and materials necessary to assure effective functioning of the educational program.
General Supervisory Duties	It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to direct and supervise the work of all the schools, offices, and employees of the board. Said employees shall be subordinate to the superintendent in all matters, including those specifically assigned by those rules and regulations to a particular department.
Delegation by Supervisory Duties	When it becomes expedient the superintendent may delegate authority of the staff; the superintendent shall assume full responsibility for the execution and satisfactory completion of such delegated activities. The superintendent may not delegate authority in any matters which are by statute or by terms of resolutions of the board to be direct responsibility

Function	Description
	of this office. All board action delegating responsibility to any employee shall be directed to the superintendent.
Board-Employee Communication	All reports and recommendations to the board from any employee under the direction and supervision of the superintendent shall be made through the superintendent except when otherwise specifically directed by the board. All written communication between the board and its employees shall be directed to the superintendent.

Source: Martin County School District Policy Manual.

While these responsibilities are defined only at a high level, they are documented. In addition, board members also feel that their responsibilities and those of the superintendent are clearly defined.

Recommendations

- The district should provide training to the board on district budgeting and finance. The district should hire the Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) to conduct the training. FSBA can provide this training in a one- or two-day on-site workshop.

Action Plan 3-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should hire FSBA to provide training in district budgeting and finance.
Action Needed	Step 1: The superintendent should hire FSBA to provide training. Step 2: FSBA should deliver the training.
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent, the board
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Hiring FSBA should cost the district approximately \$350 per day in fees and \$450 in travel expenses. Assuming two-day training, the total cost would be \$1,150.

4 The district has clearly assigned responsibilities and authority to school administrators in the areas of instruction, instructional support, site-based decision-making, and other operational areas.

The District Has Clearly Communicated Authority to School Administrators

The district has job descriptions for principals and assistant principals. These job descriptions clearly define the authority assigned to school administrators. As an example, the job description for a high school principal identifies responsibilities for the position. Several examples are provided in Exhibit 3-10.

Exhibit 3-10

Principal Responsibilities

- Provide training opportunities and feedback to personnel at the assigned school.
 - Manage the operation and all other activities and functions which occur at the assigned school.
 - Develop positive school/community relations and act as liaison between the school and community; communicate effectively both orally and in writing with parents, students, teachers, and the community.
 - Develop, implement, and assess the instructional programs at the assigned school and coordinate with district instructional staff in program planning.
 - Establish procedures for an accreditation program and monitoring accreditation standards at the assigned school.
 - Participate in developing the district strategic plan, district school calendar, district staffing plan and manpower plans; manage and administer school functions relating to these items.
 - Interview and select qualified personnel to be recommended for employment.
 - Conduct performance appraisals and make reappointment recommendations for school personnel.
 - Implement and administer negotiated employee contracts at the school site.
 - Develop long-range and short-range facility needs at the assigned school.
 - Coordinate facility and support service requirements.
 - Coordinate plant safety and facility inspections at the assigned school.
 - Coordinate all maintenance functions at the assigned school.
 - Coordinate and supervise transportation services at the assigned school.
 - Manage and supervise the school's financial resources, including the preparation and disbursement of the school's budget, textbook budget, and school's internal accounts.
-

Source: Principal Job Description.

The job description for assistant principals includes different responsibilities. Several examples are presented in Exhibit 3-11.

Exhibit 3-11

Assistant Principal Responsibilities

- Provide assistance and feedback to school personnel.
 - Develop and implement the school's instructional program with assistance from district personnel and provide its articulation among school personnel as assigned by the principal.
 - Develop the master teaching schedule and assign teachers according to identified needs.
 - Utilize current educational trends in the planning and preparation of the school instructional program.
 - Understand and adhere to school board policy, state statutes, and federal regulations.
 - Implement the accreditation program for the assigned school.
 - Coordinate in the selection of textbooks, material, and equipment needed at the assigned school.
 - Manage and administer the testing program for the school.
 - Facilitate personnel development to assure that the school will realize maximum value from each of its employees through inservice, the Professional Orientation Program and other developmental activities.
 - Facilitate process of positive communication among students, parents, teachers, and clerical staff in daily interactions.
 - Assume responsibility for control and direction of pupils related to suspensions from school, suspension from the bus, and school in accordance with board policies and statutes.
 - Provide leadership in the event of school crisis and/or civil disobedience.
 - Provide leadership in the school improvement process.
 - Administer and develop teacher duty rosters for the school.
 - Provide supervision while maintaining visibility about the campus and classroom.
 - Establish guidelines for proper pupil conduct and effective disciplinary procedures and policies for the school.
 - Interpret and enforce the district's Code for Student Conduct.
 - Supervise all facets of the registration process, including but not limited to, the production of the curriculum guide and related materials.
-

Source: Assistant principal job description.

During interviews and the principal focus group, principals expressed that their authority was clearly defined.

In addition to these job descriptions, policy 6Gx43-4.00 (Principal) further defines the role of the principal by stating, "The principal shall be the administrative and supervisory head of the school to which assigned by the Board and shall be responsible for the enforcement of all Board Regulations and Florida State Statutes which pertain to the office."

Exhibit 3-12 provides sample responsibilities from the job description for each position relating to each of the areas—instruction, instructional support, and site-based decision-making.

Exhibit 3-12

The Authority of Administrators With Regard to Instruction, Instructional Support, and Site-Based Decision-Making Has Been Clearly Defined.

Position	Instruction	Instructional Support	Site-Based Decision Making
Principal, High School	Develop, implement, and assess the instructional programs at the assigned school and coordinate with district instructional staff in program planning.	<p>Coordinate facility and support service requirements.</p> <p>Coordinate plant safety and facility inspections at the assigned school.</p> <p>Coordinate all maintenance functions at the assigned school.</p> <p>Coordinate and supervise transportation services at the assigned school.</p> <p>Manage and supervise the school's financial resources, including the preparation and disbursement of the school's budget, textbook budget, and school's internal accounts.</p> <p>Establish and manage pupil accounting and attendance procedures at the assigned school.</p> <p>Coordinate the school food service program at the assigned school.</p>	Provide leadership in the school improvement process and implement school improvement plan.
Assistant Principal	<p>Develop and implement the school's instructional program with assistance from district personnel and provide its articulation among school personnel as assigned by the Principal.</p> <p>Manage and administer the testing program for the school.</p> <p>Coordinate the production of pre-planning materials, including handbooks.</p>	<p>Maintain adequate property inventory records, key control, and security of school property.</p> <p>Coordinate plant safety and facility inspection at the school.</p> <p>Manage and administer the maintenance function for the school in a manner that ensures maximum life and use of facility.</p> <p>Coordinate transportation services at the assigned school.</p> <p>Manage and administer the attendance policy and procedures.</p>	Provide leadership in school improvement process.

Source: Job descriptions.

Interviews with school administrators support the finding that the district has defined the authority school administrators have for these basic functional areas. However, while the job descriptions are relatively specific regarding the administrators' roles in instruction and instructional-related responsibilities, they are not as specific in the area of site-based decision making.

While the level of specificity may be lower in this area, it may still be sufficient. According to principals, their authority in the area of site-based decision making is sufficiently clear to them. In addition, the district has reasons for not providing additional guidelines in this

area. The district has been reluctant to specify their level of authority because it does not want to limit the authority in any way. There is a waiver process in place through which schools can seek approval for less traditional decisions. This allows the district to serve as a check on the decision, but it also encourages school to be innovative. The district wants to encourage these innovative ideas so it does not want to take any steps to limit the waivers it receives.

5 The district's policy manual is thorough and up-to-date.

The District's Policy Manual Kept Current and Is Available On-Line

An on-line policy manual not only provides greater and easier access to policies, but it ensures that the policies that people have access to are the most up-to-date versions. When policy manuals are kept as hard copies, rather than on-line, every update must be copied, distributed and inserted. This is not only time-consuming, but it increases the likelihood that updates will not be made in the manual and that people will refer to out of date policies.

Decision Making and Resource Allocation —————

1 The district has a multiyear strategic plan that with revisions can provide a clear direction for the district.

The District's Strategic Plan Could Be Improved by Adding Additional Details

The district has a written, multiyear strategic plan with goals (which they call objectives), objectives (which they call strategies), and strategies (which they also call objectives). The plan links state and district education goals. However, it is not clear what is to be accomplished, by whom, by when, or with what resources. Without these details, the plan provides only a general direction for the district.

The plan does have goals, strategies and objectives, although they are called by different terms in the plan. The plan has:

- Objectives - These are defined as "an expression of the desired, measurable end results for the organization" and are similar to more traditional goals. Therefore, for purposes of the discussion below, plan objectives will be referred to as "goals."
- Strategies - These are defined as "broadly stated means of deploying resources to achieve the organizations objectives" and are similar to traditional objectives. Each strategy has several objectives and each objective has an action plan. Thus, for purposes of the discussion below, plan strategies will be referred to as "objectives."
- Action Plans - These are defined as "the explicit portion of a given strategy that outlines the tasks required to implement the program, the person responsible

for each task, the due date for the completion of each task, and an analysis of the benefit and costs for the specific action plan” and are similar to traditional strategies. Action plans will be discussed below as “strategies.”

A strategic plan’s goals should reflect the long-term goals of the district and they should be realistic. While the district’s strategic plan goals are ambitious and long-term, they are not always clear. For example, the plan also states, “Martin County School District will rank in the top five districts in the state in student performance related to academics, vocations, humanities, and athletics.” Again, this is ambitious, but it is not clear exactly what it means to rank in the top five districts in the state in each of these areas or where the district ranks now.

A strategic plan’s objective should be specific, achievable, and measurable. Objectives should be stated in a way that so that the district knows when it has been achieved. The objectives in Martin County’s Strategic Plan are again ambitious, but some are not stated in a way that would enable the district to know when they have been achieved, and some are not realistic. For example, the plan states, “We will create learning environments that ensure student achievement, well being and character development.” This is not sufficiently specific or measurable. Another objective states, “We will ensure total participation and support with the community.” Total participation and support is probably not achievable.

Finally, each objective has several sub-objectives. For instance, “We will create learning environments that ensure student achievement, well being and character development”—has the following four sub-objectives.

1. The learning environment will positively influence student achievement to ensure that 100% of all students graduate.
2. The learning environment will ensure that 100% of the students and staff will participate in activities and programs that promote character development.
3. The learning environment will ensure that 100% if all students and staff are safe physically and emotionally.
4. Learning environments will include facilities that provide a safe and positive learning climate for 100 % of all students and staff.

Each of these has an action plan. For instance, the strategies for “the learning environment will ensure that 100% if all students and staff are safe physically and emotionally,” include the following steps:

1. Implement a security and supervision plan that includes:
 - ID badges for all employees and visitors
 - Security cameras (as needed)
 - Security personnel (as needed)
 - Security checks on all volunteers
 - Teacher and student safety
2. Review, understand and adhere to all existing safety regulations.
3. Activate a school safety committee broadly representative of the school community.
4. Provide staff with yearly updates regarding current health and safety issues or concerns determined by each school site and or the district.

5. Create a video (10 – 15 minutes) to make staff aware of the health and wellness benefits and programs made available to them by the district. Videos will be available in all media centers.
6. Conduct a needs-assessment at each school site to determine the need for services in regards to student mental and/or emotional health.

These strategies are very specific and are appropriate for achieving the objective for which they were developed. To be even more effective, the district should assign each step to an individual, and identify what the step will cost and how it will be funded.

The District Will Establish Time Frames for Its Strategic Plan

The strategic plan was developed to provide goals for a five-year period, and the district has identified priorities to accomplish in the first year. The district will identify time frames for objectives in years two through five after the end of the first year. The planning model that the district is following recommends establishing priorities each year. In accordance with this model, the district determines the annual priorities each year and then identifies which parts of the plan will be implemented during that year to support these priorities.

While the plan should be revisited each year and revised as necessary, it would be useful to assign at least tentative time frames to each task in the plan. It will enable the entire district and community to set expectations about what will be done by when. It will also enable the district to consider the financial implications of the plan and to budget accordingly.

Several board members and district employees described the strategic plan as a ‘wish list.’ These individuals believe that the plan is a long list of things that people would like to see done and that it is unlikely that all will happen in the next five years. This perception is fueled by the plan’s lack of specific time frames for years 2 through 5.

The District Should Specify How Achievement Towards the Plan’s Goals Will Be Measured

The district has recognized that there are few, if any, measurable objectives in the plan. In response to this, the Director of School Improvement and Curriculum is developing a list of performance measures that can be used to assess progress. Exhibit 3-13 presents the indicators in their draft form.

Exhibit 3-13

Performance Measures Under Development

Area	Indicator
Student Membership, PK-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By grade• By ethnicity• Growth over five years• Free/reduced lunch eligible• Minority rate• State rank by size• By school
Enablers vs. Barriers to Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduation rates

Area	Indicator
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop rate • Student attendance • Suspensions • Promotion rate • Readiness to start school • Successful completion of academic improvement
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total by ethnicity • Turnover rate • Advanced degree • Attendance • Teachers with national certification • Teachers earning performance pay incentive
Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class size • Computers • Number work orders opened/closed/% completed • Capital outlay projects completed on schedule • Capital outlay projects completed within budget • Incidents of crime and violence
Preparation for Post-Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness for college • Adult students earning high school diplomas • Follow-up of graduates • Advanced placement results • SAT and ACT scores • Vocational programs enrollment/completions • Apprenticeships • ESE job coaching placements
Achieving Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCAT scores • Florida Writes! scores • NRT scores • HSCT scores • Coaches rating • School performance levels • State and regional competitions (academics, athletic, arts, vocations) • National merit scholars

Source: Performance Indicator Draft.

Once these are developed, the district plans to distribute the list to planning team members and incorporate into the plan as measures of the appropriate objectives. While identifying performance measures is an important step for the district, the district should be careful not to let the performance measures drive the plan. The plan, along with its strategies and

objectives must come first. The plan's objectives should be described in measurable terms, and then performance measures should be developed to support these objectives.

The Plan Could Better Incorporate the District's Projected Revenues

While the development of the plan incorporated identified needs, projected enrollment and revenues were not incorporated into the process. The district stated that projected enrollment was not included because the district's population is relatively stable. This is reasonable at this point in time, because the district's enrollment has been stable, but the district should continue to monitor its enrollment projections so that they can be incorporated into the plan when changes are expected.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the plan is that it does not address how the accomplishment of these objectives will be funded or what sources of revenue will be used. Quantifying costs and benefits of objectives is one of the most difficult parts of any strategic planning process. While the district's committees attempted to develop a cost-benefit analysis for each objective, it is not clear that the costs are justified by the benefits or that the district can afford the costs of the plan.

While the district has been relatively accurate in its enrollment projections, it should develop a system—which includes periodic demographic studies—to ensure more accuracy. (See page 9-23 Facilities Construction for additional detail).

Recommendations

- *Martin County School District should revise its strategic plan so that each action step includes a time frame, an estimated cost, the sources of revenue that will be used, the person responsible for completing the task, and measures that will be used to determine when the task has been completed. Making these updates will also require that the district review the current goals and action plans and prioritize them. The review and revision of the strategic plan should also include a consideration of projected revenue to ensure that the district's funding will support the needs identified in the plan.*

Action Plan 3-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Martin County School District should revise its strategic plan so that it contains the necessary level of detail.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: With the assistance of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Assistant Superintendent, the Superintendent should reconvene a strategic planning committee.</p> <p>Step 2: The district should hire a facilitator to train the committee on the elements of a successful strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 3: The committee should meet as a whole to review and revise current high-level goals and objectives and should then meet as sub-committees to focus on each individual area.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented at the cost of hiring a facilitator to provide the training to the committee, \$2,000.

2 **The district has a system to accurately project enrollment, but it could be improved.**

The district has not conducted a districtwide demographic study over the past five years, and its enrollment projections are not based on a thorough demographic study. While the district works closely with the county and uses county data to develop its projections, the projections do not factor in migration or demographic characteristics such as ethnicity or economic status. The projections also do not use a cohort survival method. Instead, the projections are developed by the Supervisor of Construction in coordination with the Long Range Planning Committee.

The District Relies More on Its Own Enrollment Projections than Those Developed by the Department of Education

The state requires that the district conduct an Education Plant Survey at least every five years and that the district use state enrollment projections for these surveys. Martin County is in compliance with these requirements, but the district also maintains its own enrollment projections. The district has used state-approved spot surveys to obtain waivers from using the state enrollment projections.

Historically, the district's projections have been more accurate than the Department of Education projections. The state's numbers exclude the district's Head Start student population, which is more than 350 students. The state's projections also apply end of year enrollment data. The district believes that they must have adequate facilities to house the number of students at the beginning of the school year.

Since the district is in the first year of its strategic plan, it is only now beginning to assess progress toward its strategic goals and objectives. However, this assessment will be difficult since the Strategic Plan does not include any measurable objectives that can be used to assess progress.

Recommendations

- *The district should include available demographic data in enrollment projections. Refer to Facilities Construction page 9-26 for a more detailed discussion of enrollment projections and a detailed action plan to implement this recommendation.*

3 The district is assessing the progress made towards implementing its strategic plan.

The district is only in the first year of the plan's implementation, and it has just recently documented its progress through its first mid-year assessments. While the information being compiled will provide the district with some sense of what has been accomplished, it will not enable the district to clearly assess the status of the plan's implementation.

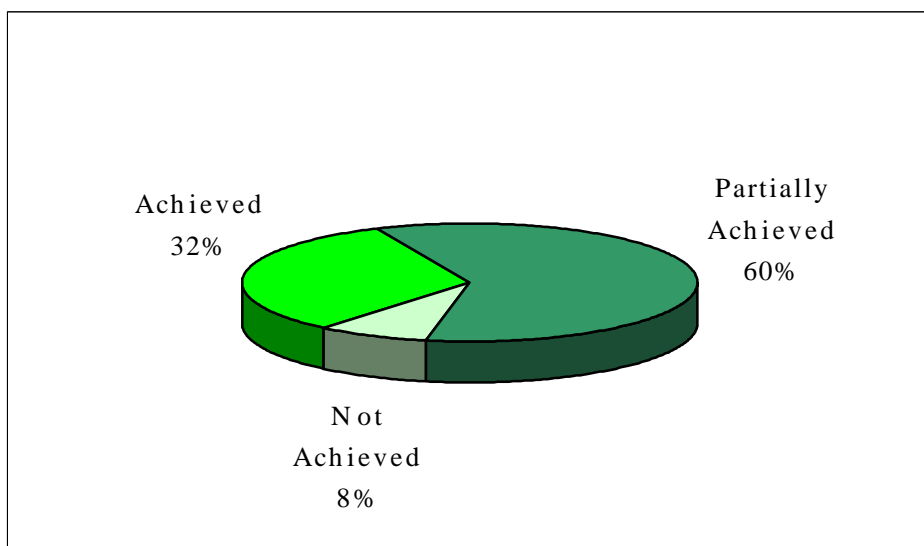
First, the plan does not identify how progress towards goals will be measured. For instance, for Strategy 1 (Learning Environment), Objective 3 states, "the learning environment will ensure that 100% if all students and staff are safe physically and emotionally." However, the plan does not define what this means, nor does it define how this will be measured, so it is very difficult to assess whether progress is being made.

Second, while the mid-year assessments reflect progress towards completion of specific action steps, the updates are not being thoroughly reported. For instance, the mid-year assessment form asks for the status of each action step and for supporting information or comments.

The reports addressed progress on 13 action plans for 8 different goals. For each action plan step, the status report form asks for status (achieved, partially achieved, not achieved) and supporting information or comments. Of the 62 action steps on these reports, 37 (60%) were partially achieved, 20 (32%) were reported as achieved, and 5 (8%) were not achieved (Exhibit 3-14).

Exhibit 3-14

Strategic Plan Progress Report Summary



Source: Martin County School District, 5-year Strategic Plan, Year One, Mid-point Assessment.

Although the format provides the opportunity to provide details of the status, this was frequently left blank. While 70% of the 'achieved' tasks were accompanied by explanations, only 65% of the 'partially achieved' tasks received explanations, and only 60% of the 'not

achieved' tasks received supporting comments. The lack of supporting information makes it impossible to know whether the step is 99% complete or 1% complete or what is being done to complete it.

In addition, while the mid-point assessment includes performance measures for students (such as graduation rates, dropout rates, attendance, results of advanced placement tests and other standardized tests, suspension rates, and readiness for college rates), staff (such as degrees, turnover, and absentee rates), and financial (such as various per pupil expenditures), the report does not frequently provide last year's numbers, peer district numbers, or goals for each measure. By adding these pieces of information, the reports of performance measures would be more meaningful.

Recommendations

- *The district will need to further develop its strategic plan progress reports and the related performance measures so that progress towards the implementation can be assessed on an annual basis. The district will have to determine how and when the data will be collected and how and by whom it will be interpreted. The district should ensure that progress reports are meaningful. In other words, if a step is not accomplished as expected, the update should include an explanation of why it was not met and the plan for meeting it.*

Action Plan 3-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district will need to further develop its strategic plan progress reports and the related performance measures so that progress towards the implementation can be assessed on an annual basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Based on the goals, objectives and performance measures included, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the assistant superintendent should develop a format for the progress reports.</p> <p>Step 2: The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the assistant superintendent present the draft of the progress report format to the strategic planning committee for input and to the board for review.</p> <p>Step 3: The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the assistant superintendent will meet with the Director of Educational Technology to determine how the report can be produced (by determining what data is already collected, what is needed, etc.)</p> <p>Step 4: The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the assistant superintendent oversee the production of the first report.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the assistant superintendent
Time Frame	December 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

4 Martin County's system of financial planning and budgeting are linked with district priorities, but should be better linked with the strategic plan.

The Link Between Financial Planning and Budgeting Should Be Strengthened

The district is in its first year of its strategic plan, so there has not been the opportunity yet to link the budget to the strategic plan. However, the district plans to use the strategic plan to drive the budget. The development of the performance measures also should assist in this process. The measures will enable to district to assess progress and then use this assessment to adjust financial resources as necessary.

Prior to this year, the only goals that existed for the district were the priorities developed by the board and superintendent. These priorities are not documented; yet, because they represent what is important to the board, they also affect the district's financial planning and budgeting. For example, one of the priorities during the last few years was to reduce the amount of money transferred from the capital budget into the operating budget. While this goal was not part of the strategic plan and while it was not documented as part of any formal planning process, it was a priority for the district. Accordingly, the district has reduced its capital transfer into the operating budget from \$5.4 million in 1994-95 to \$3.6 million in 1995-96 to \$1.1 million in 1997-98.

Recommendations

- *The district's strategic plan should be used to drive district financial planning and budgeting. In addition, a system should be established through which the financial planning and budget could be revised based on the outcome of this assessment.*

Action Plan 3-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district's strategic plan should be used to drive district financial planning and budgeting.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent and her cabinet should develop a procedure for incorporating the strategic plan into the budget process.</p> <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendent should document this process and communicate it to the board and to district administrators.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

5 The district is in the middle of its TERMS implementation, so currently, it is not able to provide the data needed in a reliable, timely, and cost-efficient manner.

The District Has Limited Performance Reports Generated from Its Computer Systems

In the past, the district's management information system has produced very few standard reports that could be used to assess program performance and results. While the system contained data about test scores, students, staff, and expenditures, it did not routinely compile or report the information in ways that made it easy for district administrators, school administrators, and teachers to assess program performance, progress or results. Administrators and schools periodically requested ad-hoc reports, and others analyzed the data themselves (sometimes with paper and pencil to get the information needed). These methods of using the data are inefficient and may be more likely to produce incorrect results.

Despite the lack of standard reports that would facilitate the process, some administrators and teachers currently use ad hoc reports to improve program management and results. For example, the Director of School Improvement and Curriculum uses test scores to evaluate progress and to improve student performance. Her analysis of Florida Writes! results indicated that while more students were scoring threes, there was not a significant increase in the number scoring above a three. The Director's conclusion was that the district had been teaching students how to score at the three level, but not above. As a result, the district is now focusing efforts on higher scores. The same Director used test score analysis to determine that math scores were increasing slower than reading scores. As a result, the district has begun offering a summer math institute.

The opportunity to improve standard performance reporting will improve once the TERMS implementation is complete.

The District's Strategic Plan Lacks Sufficient Detail

The district's strategic plan lacks sufficient detail to address many of the district's short- and long-term technology needs. For instance, the district's strategic plan states, "We will integrate innovative technology into all aspects of our instructional and support services." The plan includes nine objectives for this goal. (Exhibit 3-15.)

Exhibit 3-15

Sample of District Strategic Plan Objectives for Technology

-
- Utilize the Martin County School District Technology Plan as the basis for implementing technology.
 - Expand technology delivery systems.
 - Implement districtwide physical plant automation system.
 - Incorporate technology to improve administrative productivity.

- Expand the Martin County School District Technology Support Personnel System.
 - Establish technology competency levels for all personnel.
 - Integrate distance learning opportunities into the school curriculum.
 - Ensure technology competency levels for all students.
 - Integrate technology into classroom instruction.
-

Source: Martin County School District's Strategic Plan.

In addition, there are other objectives and action steps throughout the plan that identify other technology tasks. For example, under Life-Long Learning, the plan states that the district will "acquire computer programs that will allow middle and high school students to explore careers." The plan also states that the district will "Develop computer skills useful at home and at work." To accomplish this, the plan includes steps that would require that the district have sufficient hardware and software so students have access to email the Internet and career exploration software.

For Family Involvement, the plan includes steps to provide hardware and software for computer based portfolios and to provide hardware and software for the development of teacher web sites.

Finally, in the legislative area, there is a step to "use automated telephone message system to (1) provide community with a description of current legislation and the impact it is expected to have on education, and (2) advise of specific action(s) possible to influence legislation."

In addition to the tasks being vague, the technology tasks identified in the Strategic Plan have not been associated with specific time frames. Like other strategies from the plan, some technology strategies were identified as year one strategies, but no timelines are identified for the remaining step. So, while some could be implemented quickly and easily and others would take a longer time, it is not clear exactly if or when the district expects to implement them.

On the other hand, the district's Technology Plan does reflect short- and long-term management information system needs. The 1997-98 Technology Plan is based on technology needs identified through surveys and focus groups and with input from the district's technology department. The plan identified the following three technology goals.

- The use of technology will optimize student achievement
- The use of technology will improve administrative productivity efforts
- Students and staff members will become technologically literate

The plan also includes action steps for achieving these goals. These action steps are grouped into three phases (short-term, medium-term, and long-term). Each action step includes the person responsible, evaluation mechanisms, status and cost. While the goals from the strategic plan were vague, the action steps in the Technology Plan are more specific (Exhibit 3-16).

Exhibit 3-16

Sample Action Steps from the Technology Plan

Action	Person Responsible	Evaluation/ Successful When	Status	Cost
Develop job descriptions for technical support personnel.	Director ET/ Director HRMD	Board approval is obtained	Ongoing	None
Develop technical pay scale for board approval.	Director of Personnel			
Employ two district Technology Resource Teachers to support schools.	Director ET	Specialists are in place to assist schools	Ongoing	\$150,000 per year
Employ two Instructional Systems Specialists to support schools.		A cost/benefit analysis (after two years) has been conducted	Planned	

Source: Martin County School District Technology Plan.

As the exhibit above illustrates, the technology tasks in the Technology Plan are more specific and include details for implementation and evaluation.

The District Should Establish a Structured Feedback Process

The district has taken several steps to evaluate its management information systems, and it was an awareness of the district's technology needs that led the district to purchase the TERMS system.

First, the district hired a private consulting firm to evaluate its technology. The review was conducted in 1996 and included:

- an evaluation of the current staffing allocation;
- an assessment of staff efficiency;
- a five year district technology plan;
- an evaluation of the district's hardware and software needs; and
- projected costs to the district to implement the plan.

Second, the assistant superintendent conducts a process each year through which he solicits feedback from school sites on the performance of district administrators. He asks each respondent to grade each administrator (including the technology director) on the following topics.

- Timeliness of returning phone calls
- Timeliness of response to questions or concerns
- Quality of response to information requested

- Courtesy in dealing with school site
- Administrative support services

In addition, each week the superintendent and her cabinet review a list of the top 10 priority tasks for the Technology Department. This ensures that the department is focused on the tasks that are most critical to the district.

While these actions help the district in guiding technology, the district does not have a mechanism in place through which it can evaluate the efficiency of its management information systems on an ongoing basis. There are no performance measures or performance reports in place that would enable the district to assess the costs, benefits and performance of the management information systems. These measures and reports would better enable the district to ensure that it is maximizing the benefits of its technology investment.

The Conversion to TERMS Should Address Many of the District's Information Systems Needs

The district is in the process of implementing TERMS which should help improve its ability to provide data in a more reliable, timely, and cost-efficient manner. While system conversions are always difficult, the district has made significant progress in implementing TERMS. At the beginning of its TERMS implementation, the district had difficulty providing accurate data in a timely manner; however, it has gotten significantly better in recent weeks. Staff can access their budgets and financial statements are being printed.

Once TERMS is fully operational it will provide the district with better, more reliable, and more timely data than was available from its previous system. After working on the implementation of TERMS over much of this past year, the district has completed implementation of the majority of the TERMS system including the financial and student modules. The Human Resources Management Department is operating on an older version of TERMS since the newer version is not yet available, and the final module—the warehouse/ordering module—is scheduled to be implemented this fall.

Implementing the system is the first step in producing performance reports. Once the system is implemented and the data is being collected, the district must identify which reports are desired, determine whether these reports are already part of the TERMS system or whether they will have to be developed by the district. The district will also have to determine a schedule for the report generation, ensure that the necessary data is being collected, and verify the accuracy of the data.

Martin County School District plans to use TERMS to produce reports that will allow employees to use the data to assess program performance and results. However, while the district has already begun to identify reports to be produced from TERMS, there is no specific mechanism in place for assisting administrators to identify useful performance reports on an ongoing basis.

The district has internal controls and procedures to ensure reliable data in its management information system. (See page 12-18, Cost Control Systems, and page 4-31, Performance Accountability System, for additional details).

Each user department is responsible for the entry, edit and approval of all data transactions. In addition, there are system level controls available under the new system (data entry screens will not accept invalid data elements, accounts payable feature identifies duplicate payments) and edit controls (via edit report listings) used by individual

departments. Further, each transaction is indexed to avoid duplication of entry. Finally, there are various levels of password security in the TERMS systems to restrict access to data entry to authorized employees.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop management reports to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of its instructional and operational areas. Further details of this recommendation, including the action plan, can be found in Chapter 4, Performance Accountability System.*

6 The district evaluates operations through informal internal processes and an occasional formal external process; however, there is no formal process in place in the district to thoroughly evaluate operations on an ongoing basis. (See page 6-3, Educational Service Delivery, for additional details.)

The District Should Expand Evaluations of Its Operations and Specific Educational Programs

The district should develop a process for evaluating its operations on an ongoing basis in order to improve the quality of education and services and to identify ways to reduce costs. Currently, the district's evaluations of its operations include informal internal evaluations and a few formal external evaluations. The informal internal evaluations are conducted by individual departments and are part of regular management duties. For example, by creating a budget, conducting individuals' performance evaluations, and developing goals for the year, directors generate ideas about how services could be improved. Other informal, internal assessments come during the budgeting process and as the Assistant Superintendent prepares the annual report cards for district administrators.

The formal external reviews include the 1995 Organization and Management Study, the 1996 study of the Information Technology Department, the 1996 review of personnel and payroll processes, and the current reviews of compensation and administrative ratios. Each of these studies assessed at least one aspect of the district's operations, but none assessed the overall efficiency of each of the district's operational functions.

The district has used these internal and external reviews to implement changes to improved the quality of education (such as decreasing class size) and to reduce costs (such as reorganizing and eliminating positions). However, there is no formal, on-going process in the district for evaluating operations or identifying opportunities for improving the quality of education or reducing costs. The district collects some operations data—primarily staffing and expenditures—and maintains historical data; however, the district could use this data more effectively to analyze its operations.

The District Should Expand Its Efforts to Identify Cost Savings

The district should establish a formal mechanism to encourage staff to recommend cost savings opportunities. Several years ago the district had a program that encouraged staff to identify cost savings; however, this program is no longer in place. While this formal mechanism is no longer active, ideas about cost savings opportunities are solicited and generated at the department level and the district level during other decision-making and budgeting processes. Some of these cost savings measures have included modifying the extended year for Exceptional Students; applying for Medicaid reimbursements for ESE services; obtaining additional revenue for students placed by other public agencies; contracting out for transportation services; reducing the number of calendars; lowering phone bills; eliminating positions, and reducing allocations. While the district has identified cost savings using its current process, additional ideas could be generated by encouraging a broader range of district personnel to look critically at their activities and departments to identify even more savings.

Recommendations

- *The Technology Department should provide training to district administrators on the performance reporting including the benefits of it and how to do it. This training should include communicating to the administrators the reports that are currently available from TERMS as well as on how to identify other data or reporting needs. In addition, the superintendent and the cabinet should work together to establish a mechanism for soliciting ongoing input from district employees on changing data and reporting needs.*
- *The district should formalize the process for soliciting ideas about cost savings opportunities and should track ideas and savings and reward contributions. The program should include a reward for the employees whose ideas save the district money. The district must also ensure that the program is well publicized.*

Action Plan 3-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The Technology Department should provide training to district administrators on performance reporting.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Educational Technology delivers training to administrators on performance reporting, how to identify and prioritize data needs, and on the reports already available from TERMS.</p> <p>Step 2: The superintendent and the cabinet should work together to establish a mechanism for soliciting ongoing input from district employees on changing data and reporting needs; prioritizing these needs; communicating them to the Department of Educational Technology; and creating performance reports.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	December 1999

Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should hire a grant writer to support its efforts at raising additional funding.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendent, the Director of Curriculum and Development and the Executive Director for Human Resources develop a job description for the position.</p> <p>Step 2: Human Resources advertises for the position.</p> <p>Step 3: The superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the Director of Curriculum and Development interview for the position.</p> <p>Step 4: The district fills the position.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Creating a grant writer position will cost the district approximately \$50,000 each year in salary and benefits. This assumes a salary level equivalent to the district's programmer/analyst position.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The district should implement a cost savings identification program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendent should develop procedures for soliciting ideas about cost savings.</p> <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendent should publicize the program, including its incentives, to district employees.</p> <p>Step 3: The district should begin to collect, analyze, implement, and track these ideas.</p> <p>Step 4: The district should reward the employees whose ideas saved money.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The assistant superintendent
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented at no cost to the district, but should generate savings each year.

7 The district considers options for increasing revenue.

The District Pursues Funding Opportunities from State and Federal Sources

The district pursues additional funding. The district's Strategic Plan states, "We will aggressively pursue and obtain increased legislative funding and alternative resources." This strategy includes 16 action plans. As shown in the examples below, several of these

plans specifically address the need to obtain additional funding from state, federal, and other sources.

- To maximize Martin County District/Martin County Government coordination in long-range planning.
- To maximize Martin School District/post secondary education joint facilities.
- To review and refine the process for the funding allocation system to include identifying the costs and associated benefits of all current and proposed programs.
- To expedite the hiring of an experienced grant writer for Martin County School District with responsibility to facilitate school grant teams and to aggressively pursue and write state, federal, local and foundation grants.
- To hire a part-time employee to coordinate and enhance the Martin County Partners in Education Program.
- To hire a community relations professional to plan, direct and coordinate communications between Martin County School District and the community including the development of support groups for legislative lobbying.
- To establish a Martin County Education Foundation Charitable Gift Annuity Program. This should be viewed as a long term funding strategy, designed to provide an alternative source of income for education improvement over a 10- to 20-year period.

These action plans show that the district has a plan for soliciting additional funding, and the district has already begun to implement several of these steps, including investigating the possibility of maximizing joint facilities with institutes of post secondary education in the area.

In addition to the commitment expressed in the strategic plan, the district has taken steps to increase revenue. For instance, the assistant superintendent challenged each principal to raise \$100,000 in grant funds during the 1997-98 school year. Furthermore, the district has established written procedures explaining how to get board approval for a grant. The memo, which was sent from the Executive Director for Instructional Services to all directors, principals, and coordinators, provides general instructions for receiving board approval for a grant. The instructions require that a grant abstract/ information form must be completed and available in the Superintendent's office before the item is put on the board agenda.

As a result of the district's emphasis on increasing grant revenue, the district has obtained significant financial resources through its grant efforts, some of which are listed in Exhibit 3-17.

Exhibit 3-17

District Receives Grants from Various Sources Since September 1998

Month Approved	Grant
September 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent-to-Kids Grant to expand Indiantown pilot program throughout county by utilizing the Family Learning Centers and other community resources• Florida First Start Amended Plan for 1998

Month Approved	Grant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title II – Dwight D Eisenhower Professional Development Program Grant
October 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1999 Camp W.E.T. Grant – Water, Environment and Technology Community Based Family Resource and Support Grant
November 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program Head Start Continuation Grant for 1999 Calendar Year Competitive Grant for Reading Initiatives
December 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental Awareness/ Knowledge of Sunshine State Standards Continuation Grant Shared Services Network Grant
January 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Region V Area Center for Educational Enhancement Media Access Grant for Port Salerno Elementary School, Palm City Elementary School, Felix A. Williams Elementary School, Hidden Oaks Middle School, and Martin County High School Approve Family Resource and Support Grant to provide parenting education at the Family Learning Centers from the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida Post-secondary Education Planning Commission Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant from Automotive Technology, Expansion of Family Learning Centers and the Culinary Arts Program Reading Readiness Grant – Florida Department of Education
February 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title VII Grant for Port Salerno Elementary, Warfield Elementary Safe and Drug Free Schools 1998 Enhancement Indiantown Community Trust Fund Martin County Career Apprenticeship Program Project CHILD for Jensen Beach Elementary BRIGHT for Indiantown Community Trust Fund for Warfield Elementary
March 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parker Community Learning Center 1999 Head Start Quality Improvement Grant Literacy First/ Professional Development Pew Grant for Warfield Elementary Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program for Indiantown Middle School Summer Adventure Pew Grant for Warfield Elementary
May 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and Drug Free Schools for 1999-2000 school year Martin County Career Apprenticeship Program Title I Targeted Assistance and School-wide projects, Title I Migrant Education: State Migrant Pre-School; Title I Delinquent and At Risk Students; Title I Migrant Education
June 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Florida Water Management District for South Fork High School Water Resources Technology Center FIRM Technician Position

Month Approved	Grant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental Awareness/ Knowledge of Sunshine State Standards Local Education Reform Goals 2000 Continuation Grant

Source: Martin County School District.

The district has been relatively successful in obtaining grant funds, although there is no districtwide grant writer on staff. The district has recently approved a position for a grant writer and is expecting to fill the position for the 1999-2000 school year.

The District Adjusts Tax Rate to Obtain Needed Revenue

The district annually assesses and adjusts its tax rate, when necessary, rather than relying on bonds or raising sales taxes, to increase revenue. The district's total millage is a combination of its required local effort operating millage, discretionary operating millage, capital outlay millage and voted bond millage. The district has no debt, nor has it considered a sales tax. But, since its tax rate has provided the necessary revenue, it has not needed other funding sources. The district's schedule of taxes levied and collected shows that each of these millages has changed each year (Exhibit 3-18).

Exhibit 3-18

Millage

	1996	1997	1998
Required local effort	6.532	6.745	6.306
Discretionary Local Effort	.510	.612	.695
Supplemental Discretionary	.100	0	0
Special Tax School District No. 1	.118	.118	.112
Local Capital Improvements	2.000	2.000	2.000
Total	9.253	9.475	9.113

Source: Martin County School District.

8 The district uses cost-efficient legal services to review policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits.

The School Board Has an In-House Attorney and Guidelines on When to Use Outside Counsel

The school board has a full-time, in-house attorney whose primary responsibilities are to advise the school board, review policy, and reduce the risk of lawsuits. The current attorney was hired in February 1998 and also is responsible for: advising and counseling the superintendent and staff; reviewing contracts; interpreting statutes, rules and regulations; interpreting acts; and providing litigation support when appropriate.

The district also has guidelines that it uses to determine when to use outside counsel. The district's use of outside counsel is driven by the following guidelines:

- In the event of potential insurance coverage for a suit, the carrier(s) are provided immediate notice of suit. The school board attorney is also notified and confirms notification of the carrier(s). The school board attorney monitors pleading deadlines to ensure timely response pending reply from carrier(s) as to the extent of coverage.
- In the event of apparently adequate insurance coverage, including all costs of defense, outside counsel is selected from the insurance carriers list of authorized providers;
- In the even of no or inadequate insurance coverage, the school board attorney is responsible for defending the district, unless the school board authorizes the use of outside counsel due to unusual complexity of the suit.
- In the event particular expertise is needed.

These guidelines were developed to minimize the cost to the district. In other words, if insurance covers the cost, the district hires outside counsel, which is paid for by the insurance carrier. If insurance does not cover the cost, the district's attorney will defend the district unless the school board authorizes use of outside counsel. The district has no written policy or procedure that describes how this decision is made.

The District's Use of a Staff Attorney Is Cost-Efficient and Practical

According to school board member interviews, when hiring the current attorney, the district issued a request for proposals to either hire an in-house attorney or contract with outside legal counsel. The district received bids for both options. The district interviewed and evaluated the applicants and selected the current attorney.

While board minutes provide no documentation of the analysis that led to the hiring of an in-house attorney rather than the contracting of a firm, one board member explained that the history and the analysis that took place. According to this board member, for many years, the district used the legal services of outside law firms. As the cost of these services continued to increase, the district chose to hire an in-house counsel. To assess the cost effectiveness of this decision, the district conducted a cost assessment annually. Even with the cost of developing a legal library and employing a paralegal to assist the attorney, the arrangement saved the district \$100,000 over the previous year's costs. Even four years later, with salary increases included, the in-house position was less expensive that the contracted services had been. When this attorney left the district, the district hired an attorney for the interim and issued the RFP. The district received three bids from outside law firms—one from North Florida, one from Orlando and one from Port St. Lucie. The Port St. Lucie was the best of the options, but based on the rate structure presented and the district's historic use of legal services, it would have been more expensive than hiring an in-house attorney unless the district strictly restricted access to their services.

According to several board members, not only was hiring an in-house attorney less expensive, but it provided additional benefits and security to the district.

The District Provides Needed Information to Its Legal Counsel in a Timely Manner

The form used to place an item on the agenda for a school board meeting includes a question about whether the item requires review by the school board attorney. If a relevant item requires a review by the attorney, the attorney's signature is required before the item is placed on the agenda. Since the attorney meets with the cabinet and superintendent to

review the agenda before the board meeting, he can catch any items that may have bypassed him. According to the attorney, this process works well. He receives most documents with sufficient time to review them before the board meeting.

9 As part of its purchasing process, the district evaluates the prices it pays for goods and services and is successful at securing low prices through standard purchases as well as through alternative purchasing arrangements.

The District Periodically Examines Costs and Enters into Arrangements to Save Money

The superintendent has delegated authority to the Director of Purchasing and Warehousing to approve “all purchase orders and other purchasing related documents” under \$5,000. Board approval is required for purchases valued at more than \$5,000. The district has incorporated approval policies for bidding / purchasing and construction contracting in its policy manual (6Gx43.7.10 and 6Gx43.7.11).

The district contracts with and collaborates with several agencies and school districts to save money. Some of these arrangements are highlighted below.

- The Director of Purchasing and Warehousing has historically “piggy-backed” on the competitive bids issued by other government entities. Piggybacking is a process through which Martin County purchases goods or services at rates negotiated by a third party. For example, in its bid calendar, the district planned to piggyback on the Volusia County bid for park and playground equipment in January 1999 and the Palm Beach County bid for food service equipment in July 1999.
- The food services department piggybacks with Palm Beach County School District for expendable equipment and capital equipment, and they participate in a purchasing cooperative with other counties. Also, the transportation department participates in the state's pool purchasing program to buy vehicles and has investigated privatizing the vehicle maintenance parts room.
- In the educational area, the district has an agreement through which Martin County provides an Orientation and Mobility Instructor to St. Lucie and Okeechobee school districts. There is also an agreement through which St. Lucie District serves Martin County students with specific handicaps.
- More recently, the district entered into a consortium for TERMS. The consortium saved the district \$148,700 in the original purchase of the software and will save the district \$28,212 annually in maintenance costs.

In addition, the district regularly considers outsourcing and privatizing selected services to increase cost effectiveness. For instance, four years ago, the district issued a Request for Proposal to outsource food services. The district decided not to privatize this function when the process showed that it could be provided more efficiently in-house. More recently, the district went through a similar process to privatize transportation. The district hired a private consulting firm to conduct a review of its transportation services. This time, the

district did decide to privatize the function when proposals showed that a private company could provide the services more efficiently.

In addition, the district contracts its alarm system maintenance to SVI Systems, Inc., of Stuart, Florida.

The District Should Formalize Purchasing Practices

Despite general board policies on purchasing, historical bidding practices, and proposals for contracting food service and transportation services, the district does not have any written and approved procedures for purchasing. The lack of formal purchasing procedures limits the ability of the district to ensure the best prices on purchases. For example, the district has no approved purchasing procedures concerning price quotations for non-construction purchases, cooperative purchasing agreement, or an independent review of purchase prices. The district has a draft purchasing procedures manual—which may have been prompted by this best practice/performance review—but the manual has not been completed by the Director of Purchasing and Warehousing and has not been reviewed or approved by the superintendent or the board. Although the district can demonstrate through its actions that the prices paid for the district's goods and services are reasonable, more formal procedures would ensure that the district is receiving the best possible prices for goods and services.

4

Performance Accountability System

The Martin County School District has in place some elements of an effective accountability system. However, the district needs to make substantial improvements to ensure that each major program is held accountable for its performance and cost efficiency.

Conclusion

Martin County School District has a few elements—goals and objectives—that are critical in the initial development of an accountability system. However, these elements should be more fully developed in order to have a more complete system through which performance can be improved, costs can be monitored, and the district can be held accountable for successfully doing both.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most recommendations in this chapter can be implemented with existing resources. However, as shown in Exhibit 4-1, one recommendation will have a fiscal impact.

Exhibit 4-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Performance Accountability System Will Have the Following Fiscal Impacts

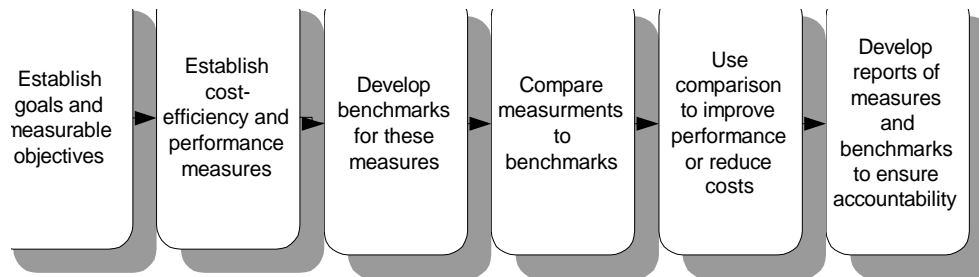
Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Hire a facilitator to assist the district in fully developing goals, objectives, performance measures and benchmarks.	(\$2,000)

Background

Like other public entities, school districts must be accountable to parents and other taxpayers for the performance and costs of their academic programs such as basic education and At-Risk programs and support services such as transportation, food services, and safety and security. While Chapter 3 examined whether the district has a broad, strategic plan to guide major district initiatives and financial decisions, this chapter covers whether the district has established adequate mechanisms to hold staff accountable for individual program performance and cost efficiency. Exhibit 4-2 summarizes how the different mechanisms should work together to support program-level accountability.

Exhibit 4-2

Accountability Mechanisms



As the exhibit illustrates, a good accountability system must start with goals and measurable objectives. From these, the district should identify performance and cost-efficiency measures that can be used to assess progress towards the goals; however, identifying these measures is only one step. To effectively use the measures, the district must establish benchmarks against which these measures can be assessed and the district must conduct these assessments, use the results in decision-making, and report the results to parents, district employees, and other members of the community.

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

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

The school board and management team have made several notable accomplishments over the past several years related to the district’s performance accountability systems. Exhibit 4-3 describes some of these accomplishments.

*Exhibit 4-3***Notable Accomplishments in Performance Accountability Systems**

- The district has a multi-year strategic plan for which it is producing regular progress reports.
 - The district is in the process of developing other key elements of a successful accountability system. The district is in the process of developing a broad range of performance measures for its educational program. The district has hired a consultant to develop staffing ratios measures and benchmarks for the district.
-

Source: Martin County School District.

State Has Education Accountability Mechanisms

The state of Florida established School Improvement Plans (SIPs) in 1991 as part of an effort to ensure greater local level accountability. The initiative was designed to allow schools greater control over their individual learning environments and activities so that they could better plan to meet their specific needs. The Legislature established the State Education Goals (shown in Exhibit 4-4) as framework for school improvement at the individual school level. Accountability of school effectiveness is analyzed separately as one of the best practices in this chapter.

*Exhibit 4-4***There Are Eight State Education Goals**

1. Readiness to Start School – Communities and schools collaborate to prepare children and families for children's success in school.
 2. Graduation Rate and Readiness for Postsecondary Education and Employment – Students graduate and are prepared to enter the workforce and postsecondary education.
 3. Student Performance – Students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful and healthy lifelong decisions.
 4. Learning Environment – School boards provide a learning environment conducive to teaching and learning.
 5. School Safety and Environment – Communities provide an environment that is drug-free and protects students' health, safety, and civil rights.
 6. Teachers and Staff – The schools, district, all postsecondary institutions, and state ensure professional teachers and staff.
 7. Adult Literacy – Adult Floridians are literate and have the knowledge and skills needed to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
 8. Parental involvement – Communities, school boards, and schools provide opportunities for involving parents and guardians as active partners in achieving school improvement and education accountability.
-

Source: Section 229.591, Florida Statutes.

In July 1999, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) established criteria for identifying schools with similar performance characteristics through the use of letter grades, based primarily on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reading and writing scores and Florida Writes! writing scores. These criteria are presented in Exhibit 4-5. The statewide annual *School Accountability Report*, published by DOE, grades each school in Florida in this manner:

- “A” - meet all grade “B” criteria and the percent of students absent more than 20 days, percent suspended and dropout rate (high schools) are below state averages and there is substantial improvement in reading and there is no substantial decline in writing and math and at least 95% of the standard curriculum students were tested.^{1,2}
- “B” - current year reading, writing, and math data are at or above high performing criteria and no subgroup data are below minimum criteria and at least 90% of standard curriculum students were tested; and^{3,4}
- “C” - current year reading, writing, and math data are at or above minimum criteria;
- “D” - current year reading or writing or math data are below minimum criteria; and
- “F” - current year reading, writing, and math data are below minimum criteria.

Exhibit 4-5

DOE Has Established Minimum and Higher Performing Criteria for Schools

School Level	Minimum Criteria			High Performing Criteria		
	FCAT Reading	FCAT Math	Florida Writes!	FCAT Reading	FCAT Math	Florida Writes!
Elementary	60% score level 2 and above	60% score level 2 and above	50% score level 2 and above	50% score level 2 and above	50% score level 2 and above	67% score level 2 and above
Middle	60% score level 2 and above	60% score level 2 and above	67% score level 2 and above	50% score level 2 and above	50% score level 2 and above	75% score level 2 and above
High	60% score level 2 and above	60% score level 2 and above	75% score level 2 and above	50% score level 2 and above	50% score level 2 and above	80% score level 2 and above

Source: Florida Department of Education.

¹ “Substantial improvement” in reading means more than two percentage points increase in students scoring in FCAT levels 3 and above. If the school has 75% or more students scoring at or above FCAT achievement level 3 and not more than two percentage points decrease from the previous year, then substantial improvement is waived.

² “Substantial improvement” in reading means more than two percentage points increase in students scoring in FCAT levels 3 and above. If the school has 75% or more students scoring at or above FCAT achievement level 3 and not more than two percentage points decrease from the previous year, then substantial improvement is waived.

³ Current subgroups include disadvantaged Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian students.

⁴ Standard curriculum students include language impaired, speech impaired, gifted, hospital homebound, and limited English proficiency student who have been in an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program more than two years.

As Exhibit 4-6 shows, none of the Martin schools received an “F” and four received a “D.” In comparison to its peers, Martin had the second lowest percentage of schools that received a grade of “C” or lower.

Exhibit 4-6

Few of the Martin County School Districts Have Students Performing Below State Minimum Standards (as of June 24, 1999)

Grade	Martin	Charlotte	Citrus	Indian River	St. Johns	Santa Rosa
A	3	2	0	3	6	6
B	5	9	3	1	2	1
C	5	6	10	12	10	16
D	4	0	3	1	2	2
F	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total Schools in District	17	18	16	17	20	25
Percentage of Schools with a grade of "C" or below ¹	53%	39%	81%	76%	60%	72%

¹ As of the date of the data, scores for all schools in all districts had not yet been made available.

Source: Florida Department of Education.

An Overview of the District's Management Information System

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, and 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 3-28 and 12-18 of this report.)

The Martin County School District has organized its computer services under the Department of Educational Technology. The mainframe is an AS 400, housed in the district headquarters, and is the repository of the programs and databases district personnel use to aid them in making management decisions and generating reports.

Accountability to Parents and Taxpayers

1 The district has some high-level goals and a few measurable objectives for its educational programs, but it has fewer goals and objectives for its operational programs.

Goals and Measurable Objectives Should Provide a Framework for Decisions

Goals and measurable objectives at the program and department level are critical for evaluating whether the district is effectively delivering its services and whether these services are being delivered in the most efficient ways. Without these elements, the district and the community have no way of knowing how well they are doing at educating students or how well they are managing their resources.

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

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

Program-level goals and objectives also enable senior district administrators 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 4-7 describes the basic elements of program goals and objectives.

Exhibit 4-7

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

Source: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

The District Has Goals But Few Measurable Objectives for Its Major Educational Programs

Program-level goals and objectives provide clear direction and expectations for staff administering programs by ensuring a connection between what district staff do on a daily basis and each program's overall purpose. At the district level, goals and objectives for major educational programs can be found in the district's strategic plan (Exhibit 4-8).

Exhibit 4-8

In Its Strategic Plan, Martin County Has Established High-Level Goals for Major Educational Programs

- 100% of our students will graduate.
 - 100% of our students, one year after graduation, will be employed or in post secondary education.
 - Martin County School District will rank in the top five districts in the state in student performance related to academics, vocations, humanities, and athletics.
-

Note: Strategic plan "objectives" are more similar to traditional goals and, therefore, for purposes of this review were analyzed as such.

Source: Martin County strategic plan.

The plan also includes objectives for these goals. However, the objectives established for major programs are not measurable (Exhibit 4-9).

Exhibit 4-9

In General, District Strategic Plan Objectives Established for Major Educational Programs Are Not Measurable

-
- We will create learning environments that ensure student achievement, well being and character development.
 - We will design, implement and evaluate a comprehensive student centered curriculum that ensures high achievement and encourages life long learning for all students.
 - We will integrate innovative technology into all aspects of our instructional and support services.
 - We will ensure that our students have high performing, well trained caring teachers and staff.
 - We will ensure effective family involvement in the education of all students.
 - We will ensure total participation and support with the community.
 - We will aggressively pursue and obtain increased legislative funding and alternative resources.
 - We will establish high expectations for students and employees.
-

Note: Strategic plan “strategies” are more similar to traditional objectives and, therefore, for purposes of this review were analyzed as such.

Source: Martin County strategic plan.

While the districtwide strategic plan contains goals that broadly apply across all educational programs, such as “100% of our students will graduate,” program administrators have established additional goals for the district’s basic educational program. These goals are located in various program documents that were provided to the Review Team by the Instructional Services Department and include to “improve student performance (priority reading)” and “increasing the degree that all students succeed is the major goal of improvement efforts.” However, the district has not established objectives for each goal and those objectives that do exist generally describe activities and strategies. The district could improve its ability to meet basic education goals by developing objectives that clearly specify the measurable outcome the district is trying to achieve by implementing each initiative.

The district has established goals for other major educational programs as well. For example, the district has established a strategic plan for At-Risk Programs such as Title I and ESOL, which is a good first step in establishing accountability for these programs. In addition, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Program staff have developed program-specific goals and strategies, which are included in the ESE Program’s strategic plan. The ESE strategic plan, developed in 1994, covers 11 broad areas including curriculum, continuum of services, and administrative, teacher, and paraprofessional training. While these plans include goals, some objectives, and strategies for each program, they could be improved by developing additional objectives and revising existing objectives to be more measurable and outcome oriented. Such changes would enable program staff to answer questions such as “How will we know that we have affected students as intended by implementing plan strategies?” Program staff acknowledge these weaknesses and will develop measurable objectives when they revise their plan next year. Vocational education does not have stated goals or measurable objectives.

In addition to strategic planning goals and objectives, administrators often identify individual goals and objectives each year. Some of these are measurable (for example: providing leadership and technical assistance that supports Martin County’s strategic goal of scoring in the top five districts in the state on Florida Writes! and FCAT assessment). Others, while they are noble, are not measurable (for example: will demonstrate commitment and responsibility for (1) accurate data, (2) timeliness of

reports, and (3) increase minority teachers and administrators). Exhibits 4-8 and 4-9 present educational goals and objectives contained in the district's strategic plan.

The District Has Even Fewer Goals and Measurable Objectives For its Operational Programs

There are fewer goals and objectives to guide the district's operational departments, but those that do exist, reflect the intentions of the program. For instance, the Food and Nutritional Services Department has identified the following three objectives:

- To financially break-even annually.
- To provide nutritionally sound meals to students that meet State and Federal guidelines.
- To insure sanitation and safety standards are met in all school center kitchens.

In addition, the Food and Nutritional Services Department has also identified the following goals and measurements for 1998-99 (Exhibit 4-10).

Exhibit 4-10

Food Services Goals and Measurements

Goal	Measurement
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have at least a break-even status – June 1999. • To have school centers keep labor costs within guidelines. • To attain the cost per plate for labor and food.
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and present to cafeteria managers an in-service on customer services • To develop a dress code for all school center food service employees.
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a policies and procedures manual for the Food and Nutritional Services Department. • Develop an Excel program to calculate school center food service operations MPLH. • Develop an Access program to keep track of Food and Nutritional Services substitute employees. • To purchase, and install computer hardware and software to allow the school center food service operations to communicate via the network. • To do a five-year plan for the replacement of school center food service equipment.

Source: Martin County Schools Food Services Department, Food and Nutritional Services Goals 1998-99.

However, what the department calls goals are really more topics, and it is not clear how the measurements map to the objectives. So, while the Food and Nutrition Services department appears to be identifying these accountability elements— goals, objectives and measures— these elements would be more useful if they were more closely linked. For example, when there are no measures for an objective and no objectives for a goal, it is difficult to determine how the district will pursue its objectives or goals or how it will measure progress. For example, for two of the three Food Services objectives— to provide nutritionally sound meals to students that meet state and federal guidelines and to insure sanitation and safety standards are met in all school center kitchens— the department has not defined how progress will be measured.

Goals and objectives for the Department of Educational Technology are contained in the district's Technology Plan. These goals are:

- The use of technology will optimize student achievement.
- The use of technology will improve administrative productivity efforts.
- Students and staff members will become technologically literate.

The technology plan also includes a series of actions that will lead to the achievement of these goals. For each action, the plan includes an indicator that can be assessed to determine whether the action has been accomplished. Some indicators show that a step has or has not been taken. For example, "Re-networking of sites is complete," or "Specialists are in place to assist schools."

While other operational departments have not identified goals and objectives at the department level, many department directors have identified personal and annual goals and objectives. Generally, however, these are broadly stated and not measurable. For example, one director's goal is to "demonstrate commitment and responsibility for increased efficiency" by purchasing needed technology, reorganizing, and providing training. Again, it is not clear how the director can demonstrate the extent to which the overall goal has been met.

The District Should Improve Its Reporting of Progress Toward Its Goals

While individual departments and programs, like Food and Nutrition Services, may track progress towards their own goals, the only true reporting of progress is for the district's Strategic Plan. Since the district is in its first year of its strategic plan, it has produced just one progress report. The report provided useful information on several of the first year goals, but the report format could benefit from the inclusion of additional objective measures. As previously mentioned, the district is in the process of developing other performance indicators to evaluate the progress towards the plan's goals.

Recommendations

- *Require that each program and department— instructional and operational— have effective goals with objectives. The goals should be achievable and reflect the intent of the program. The objectives should be measurable and specific.*

Action Plan 4-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Require that each program and department— instructional and operational— have effective goals with objectives. The goals should be achievable and reflect the intent of the program. The objectives should be measurable and specific.
Action Needed	Step 1: The superintendent and the assistant superintendent hire a facilitator to train department directors in goal and objective setting. Step 2: The department directors work with their departments to identify goals and objectives.

	Step 3: The assistant superintendent reviews the goals and objectives to ensure they satisfy the criteria for effectiveness. If necessary, departments revise their goals and objectives.
	Step 4: The department directors incorporate these into a plan for their department.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Personnel
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	\$2,000 for the facilitator

2 The district should develop additional performance and cost-efficiency measures to support its goals and objectives.

Measures Should Be Used to Assess Program Performance and Cost Efficiency

To be held accountable for resources invested in public education, school districts must assess and provide information to the public on the performance and cost efficiency of major programs. Performance measures provide information on program quality and performance. Performance measurement enables a school district to determine whether each program's goals and objectives have been achieved. Efficiency measures provide additional information on productivity that links performance and quality to cost. Efficiency can be measured in a number of ways, including average time per unit or cost per unit. Improving cost efficiency means that a school district can produce more with the same or fewer resources. Exhibit 4-11 summarizes the basic elements of program performance measures and cost-efficiency measures.

Exhibit 4-11

Basic Elements of Program Performance and Cost-Efficiency Measures

Performance and cost-efficiency measures are 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 cost efficiency; and
- able to link program performance to program costs so they are useful for budgetary decisions.

These performance indicators should also link inputs, outputs and outcomes. Inputs include elements that feed into the process or program like staff and financial resources. Outputs are the products of a program like the number of students graduating, the number of meals served by the district, and the number of people hired by the district. Outcomes reflect the extent to which the program is accomplishing its true goals. For example, an outcome would be the percent of students showing mastery of skills on standardized tests or the percent of vocational certificate completers who were placed in a job related to their education. Exhibit 4-12 provides a description of input, output and outcome measures.

Exhibit 4-12

Input, Output, and Outcome Measures

There are three categories of performance and cost-efficiency measures.

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

Source: Adapted from the Governor's Budget Recommendations, Fiscal Year 1996-97, and literature review.

Cost-efficiency measures should reflect the cost of providing services in meaningful and comparative ways. Good efficiency measures are often per unit costs like operational costs per student, maintenance cost per square foot, human resources cost by employee, or technology cost per computer.

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 have insufficient information to answer basic questions related to program performance and cost efficiency 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?

The District Should Develop Performance and Cost Efficiency Measures

Currently, the only performance indicators that are regularly reported in Martin County school district are those that are included in the Florida School Indicators Report, the School Accountability Report and the School Advisory Council Report. These include student progress indicators and other school indicators. (Exhibit 4-13.)

Exhibit 4-13

Indicators from School Accountability Report and the School Advisory Council Report

Area	Indicators
Student indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students meeting expectations for Kindergarten • Students who graduate from high school • Graduates passing college placement tests for reading, writing, and math • Students 16 years or older who drop out of school • Students who are followed up by the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program • California Achievement Test scores • High School Competency Test scores • Adult students earning a diploma • Students absences • Safety incidents
Other school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff • Teacher absences • Administrator absences • Staff receiving satisfactory evaluations • Teachers who have earned degrees beyond a bachelor's degree

Source: School public accountability reports.

The School Accountability Report compares each school's performance data with the school district as a whole and with state averages; the School Advisory Council Report provides similar data with additional detail on each indicator. The Florida School Indicators Report provides enrollment numbers, test scores, staffing levels, and per pupil expenditures for a few high-level functional areas. While these indicators provide useful information and are available to the public, they are not adequate to assess the effectiveness or efficiency of specific educational programs such as Exceptional Student Education and Vocational Education or major operational programs such as Student Transportation and Facilities Construction.

In addition to these reports, school staff has access to more complete testing data and financial data, but this data is not compiled or reported in a way that makes it easy to evaluate the cost-efficiency or performance of a program. When administrators want to use this data to evaluate educational programs, they frequently have to request performance data or manipulate the data themselves to make it useful.

On the operations side, only a few areas utilize performance measures. As previously mentioned, Food and Nutrition Services tracks meals per labor hour, cost per plate, and participation rates, and the Transportation Department tracks average bus occupancy.

The District Has Taken Some Steps to Establish Measures to Assess Educational Program Performance

The district has recognized a need for additional performance measures, in recognition of this, the Director of School Improvement and Curriculum is developing a list of academic performance measures (Exhibit 4-14). It is the director's intent to incorporate these, as appropriate, into the district's Strategic Plan. While these measures will better enable the district to assess districtwide educational performance, they are not tied to program-level goals and objectives and, therefore, generally will not enable individual staff to assess whether they are meeting the specific performance and cost-efficiency expectations for individual programs. In addition, the proposed measures do not pertain to district operational services but should provide educational program staff with some direction in developing program-specific performance measures, once they establish adequate goals and objectives. Furthermore, while these indicators should significantly help the district monitor progress on educational performance, the district should ensure that the strategic plan and program goals drive its development of measurable objectives and that performance indicators are then identified to measure progress towards these objectives. In other words, it is the goals, not the indicator that should drive the process.

Exhibit 4-14

Performance Measures Under Development

Area	Indicator
Student Membership, PreK-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By grade• By ethnicity• Growth over five years• Free/reduced lunch eligible• Minority rate• State rank by size• By school
Enablers vs. Barriers to Student Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduation rates• Drop rate• Student attendance• Suspensions• Promotion rate• Readiness to start school• Successful completion of academic improvement

Area	Indicator
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total by ethnicity • Turnover rate • Advanced degree • Attendance • Teachers with national certification • Teachers earning performance pay incentive
Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class size • Computers • Number work orders opened/closed/% completed • Capital outlay projects completed on schedule • Capital outlay projects completed within budget • Incidents of crime and violence
Preparation for Post-Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness for college • Adult students earning high school diplomas • Follow-up of graduates • Advanced placement results • SAT and ACT scores • Vocational programs enrollment/completions • Apprenticeships • ESE job coaching placements
Achieving Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCAT scores • FL Writes scores • NRT scores • HSCT scores • Coaches rating • School performance levels • State and regional competitions (academics, athletic, arts, vocations) • National merit scholars

Source: Performance Indicator Draft.

Several Factors May Limit Performance Measurement

Despite the fact that the data do not get reported in a way that is easy to evaluate, the district does use student performance data to make educational programming decisions. For example, when an analysis of data revealed that students were not performing well in math, the district decided to implement a summer math institute.

In addition to decisions made at the district level, campuses are also expected to evaluate the performance of their students as part of their decision making process. The district provides campuses with student performance data— some of which is desegregated. The extent to which this data is used to make decisions varies by campus.

Interviews with administrators identified several factors that limit the district's ability to evaluate student performance data in a meaningful way.

- The district has no research and development division or full-time position dedicated to research and evaluation.
- No software is available to track cohorts of students to determine the degree to which they are mastering the Sunshine State Standards.
- No agreed upon districtwide discrete measures exist to evaluate specific educational programs.
- Each School Advisory Council determines if students are making adequate progress.
- While the district has a policy that requires a review and revision of the curriculum on an as needed basis, the board has not directed that regular assessments or formal evaluations be conducted. While the policy manual requires that the district test its students, it does not describe how these test results should be used.

On the operational side, cost saving measures have been taken, but they have resulted more frequently from overall evaluations of departments and processes, and less frequently from an assessment of performance measures or cost-efficiency measures.

The District Should Increase Integration of Accountability Components

District management should more thoroughly integrate accountability system components into its decision-making processes and into its evaluations of program effectiveness and costs. For instance, the district should more closely link program goals and performance to program costs. Currently, the district has the financial information to determine department and program costs; however, there are no performance measures that link the program performance to program cost. In addition, while the district occasionally uses performance measures to assess the effectiveness of educational programs, and while the district does implement some cost-saving measures, the district has not fully integrated the cost-efficiency measures into its decision-making process.

Recommendations

- *Each program should establish performance and cost-efficiency measures that can be used to assess performance, cost efficiency, and progress towards achieving goals and objectives. These measures must be specific, measurable, easy to track (in terms of time and money) and easy to understand. These measures should link the relationship between the program's inputs, outputs, and outcomes so that program performance can be evaluated in terms of the program's cost. For example, measures could include: construction cost per square foot, maintenance cost per square foot, human resources cost per employee, technology expenditure per employee, and response time for work requests.*

Action Plan 4-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Each program and department should establish performance and cost-efficiency measures that can be used to assess performance, cost efficiency, and progress towards achieving goals and objectives. These measures must be specific, measurable, easy to track (in terms of time and money) and easy to understand. These measures should link the relationship between the program's inputs, outputs, and outcomes so that program performance can be evaluated in terms of the program's cost. For example, measures could include: construction cost per square foot, maintenance cost per square foot, human resources cost per employee, technology expenditure per employee, and response time for work requests.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent and the assistant superintendent hire a facilitator to train department directors in identifying performance measures. This will be part of the training described in Recommendation 1 under Best Practice 1 in this chapter.</p> <p>Step 2: The department directors work with their departments to identify performance measures that support their goals and objectives; with the Director of Educational Technology and the Director of Finance to ensure that the performance measures can be calculated; and with the assistant superintendent to ensure they satisfy the criteria for effectiveness.</p> <p>Step 3: The department directors incorporate these performance measures into a plan for their department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Department directors, department staff, Director of Educational Technology, Director of Finance, assistant superintendent
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources. The cost for the facilitator is reflected in Recommendation 1.

3 The district should continue to establish benchmarks for its performance and cost-efficiency measures.

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 and are program or service costs reasonable?
- Have we met program performance and cost-efficiency expectations?

- 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 4-15 summarizes the basic elements of benchmarks.

Exhibit 4-15

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;
 - clearly define acceptable performance targets/standards (in the top 10 school districts, in the middle of peer districts, within 10% of the industry average, etc.) to assess whether performance and cost expectations have been met ;
 - 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 Should Increase Performance and Cost-Efficiency Benchmarks for Its Major Programs

Currently, the district has limited benchmarks to which it can compare program performance, and even fewer cost-efficiency benchmarks. On the educational performance side, the district is able to compare test scores, attendance rates and dropout rates with historical information, state averages and other districts. Although this data exists, there are only a few benchmarks— like a 3% dropout rate and specific percent passing rates on tests— to which it compares itself. The benchmark comparisons that are done are conducted at the high level. The district has not established benchmarks for comparing performance of sub-populations to benchmarks, thus limiting its ability to evaluate the success of educational programs. In addition, while these broad benchmarks may, to some extent, enable the district assess basic education overall, the district has not established adequate benchmarks to assess the performance of specific educational programs such as Gifted and Talented, Exceptional Student Education, and ESOL.

Currently, the district evaluates the performance of only one operational program— Food and Nutrition Services— against benchmarks. Not only does the department collect and track meals-per-labor hour and participation rates, but it compares these measures to benchmarks.

On the cost-efficiency side, there are no benchmarks for instructional services, but the district has a few benchmarks in Food and Nutrition Services (like cost per plate), and, the district uses staffing formulas to keep the staffing levels at schools (and costs) at appropriate levels. Although it has not identified specific benchmarks for major educational programs, the district conducted an allocation study of its ESE program in 1998 during which it compared the staffing levels of its ESE program to staffing levels of the program in other districts. This review calculated average staffing levels for the counties and found that Martin County's staffing was in line with other districts.

Several Factors May Have Limited Benchmark Development

The district has attempted to identify other cost-efficiency or staffing benchmarks, but has run into difficulties. For instance, the district had considered using state average staffing ratios as a benchmark for staffing levels, but there is concern that districts do not use consistent definitions of positions, so these ratios are not meaningful and they are not used as benchmarks. Also, a similar concern exists in the transportation department. The state produces the Quality Links report, but the director of Transportation is cautious about making comparisons of transportation programs using the data in this report. The director believes the quality and accuracy of the data varies too much by school district and is especially concerned that districts do not report costs comparably by category.

The district has hired a consultant to conduct a study of administrative staffing ratios. Once these are developed, the district can use them to establish benchmarks. The district is also undergoing a review of administrative salaries. Once this review is complete, the district will be able to set benchmarks identifying where the district's salaries should be in relation to the market. For example, the district might set as a benchmark to pay at a certain percentage of the market to ensure they remain competitive while keeping personnel costs reasonable.

Recommendations

- *The district should establish performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks to which it can compare its program's performance and cost-efficiency measures. These benchmarks should reflect standards from comparable school districts, governmental agencies, and private industry. The district should evaluate its performance against these benchmarks, and, when necessary, program changes should be made to improve performance or reduce costs.*

Action Plan 4-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should establish performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks to which it can compare its program's performance and cost-efficiency measures. These benchmarks should reflect standards from comparable school districts, governmental agencies, and private industry. The district should evaluate its performance against these benchmarks, and, when necessary, program changes should be made to improve performance or reduce costs.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Department directors, with help from their staff, should contact peer districts, national organizations, private industry, research organizations, and other groups to identify benchmarks for their performance measures.</p> <p>Step 2: The department directors should work with their supervisors in identifying these benchmarks.</p> <p>Step 3: Department directors should incorporate these benchmarks into their plans.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Department directors
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

4 The development of clearer goals, measurable objectives, performance measures, and benchmarks would assist the district to more thoroughly analyze performance and cost of its major educational and operational programs.

Regular Evaluation Can Identify Ways to Improve Programs

Evaluation, including routine assessments and formal performance evaluation, is an essential component of an effective performance accountability system because it enables a school district to identify ways to improve performance and save resources. Routine program assessments provide a means to pull together basic data on a regular basis to determine and communicate to district management how well a program is meeting its goals and objectives. Formal program evaluations are more comprehensive and generally less frequent than assessments. Formal program evaluations focus on program results and effectiveness, are independently conducted, and examine broad issues such as program structure and administration and whether the program is meeting its intended purpose. Without evaluative information from assessments and formal program evaluations, 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. Exhibit 4-16 summarizes the basic elements included in ongoing program assessments.

Exhibit 4-16**Basic Elements of Routine Program Assessments**

Program assessment is the periodic review and reporting on how well a program is accomplishing its goals and objectives. Program assessments should include the information below.

- Program purpose, goals, objectives, delivery methods, and program resources (dollars and staff)
 - The extent to which the program achieved its annual goals and objectives using performance and cost-efficiency data and established benchmarks
 - Amount of workload accomplished (outputs)
 - Numeric indicators of program results that indicate quality, effectiveness, and amount of “need” that is or is not being served (outcomes)
 - Amount of input related to (divided by) amount of output or outcomes (efficiency)
 - Elements substantially out of the control of the school district or program that affect program accomplishments
 - Elements over which the district has significant control, such as staffing patterns
 - 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
-

Source: OPPAGA.

Exhibit 4-17 provides an overview of the focus of a formal program evaluation.

Exhibit 4-17**The Focus of Formal Program Evaluations**

Formal program evaluation is comprehensive and should focus on program results and effectiveness, be independently conducted, and examine issues including

- economy, efficiency, or effectiveness of the program;
 - structure or design of the program to accomplish its goals and objectives;
 - adequacy of the program to meet its needs identified by the school board, governmental agencies, or law;
 - alternative methods of providing program services or products;
 - adequacy and appropriateness of goals, objectives, and performance measures used by the program to monitor, assess, and report on program accomplishments. Program objectives are measurable and adequately define the specific effect the program is expected to have, including on student achievement especially on student performance;
 - program goals and objectives clearly link to and support department, division, and district priorities and strategic goals and objectives;
 - adequate benchmarks and comparisons have been set for student outcomes, program cost efficiency, and cost effectiveness; and
 - compliance with appropriate policies, rules, and laws.
-

Source: OPPAGA.

The District Should Conduct More Regular Program Assessments and Performance Evaluations to Improve Performance and Cost Efficiency

The district conducts limited assessment and few formal program evaluations primarily because it has not established clear goals and measurable objectives, performance and cost-efficiency measures, and benchmarks to evaluate its major educational and operational programs. Without measurable objectives, for instance, program staff often must focus their assessments on the implementation of activities and initiatives. For example, ESE program staff conduct regular assessments to determine whether strategies contained in the program's strategic plan have been implemented rather than focusing on whether these strategies affected student performance as intended. ESE program staff plan to revise their strategic plan next year to include measurable objectives. Once the ESE Program develops measurable, student outcome-based objectives, staff will be in a better position to focus these assessments on results rather than activities. It should be noted, however, that the district conducts studies of several educational initiatives. For example, the district conducted self-assessments of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and ESE Program staff have evaluated the effects of specific initiatives. We reviewed the district evaluations of the Learning Strategies Program and the Job Preparatory Education Course and Supported Competitive Employment Course. The two studies varied in the extent to which they evaluated program performance. For instance, one study established clear evaluation objectives and reported on the extent to which student achievement improved as a result of the program. However, the second study was more descriptive in nature and did not provide evidence that clearly indicated whether students actually progressed toward program objectives.

In addition, the district could better tie available assessment data to the achievement of existing program goals and objectives. The district generally does not conduct formal evaluations of major programs to determine whether they are effective in increasing student achievement or whether an initiative is meeting its intended purpose. Furthermore, when Martin County does conduct or hire consultants to conduct formal evaluations, these studies do not always incorporate performance and cost-efficiency benchmarking data as well as they could. Once the district identifies the appropriate performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks, it should incorporate them into the district's evaluation, budgeting, planning and decision-making processes. For more information on evaluations conducted by the school district, refer to page 3-32.

The District Conducts Few Cost Benefit Analyses of Operational Programs and Educational Programs

The district has conducted several cost benefit analyses in its operational areas. Primarily, these were conducted as the district considered outsourcing or cooperating with other entities to deliver or purchase a service or product. For example, a study was done to assess the costs and benefits of privatizing the Food Services department. Based on a cost benefit analysis, the decision was made not to privatize and the question has not been reopened. A cost-benefit analysis was also conducted when the district was deciding between hiring an in-house attorney or contracting with an outside law firm.

On the instructional side, the district has conducted a few cost studies. For example, in addition to the ESE allocation study previously mentioned, the district conducted cost-benefit analyses for various tasks within the Strategic Plan, but many of the analyses include either very rough estimates or no quantification at all. With an Instructional Research and Evaluation position (see related recommendation in Chapter 6-Educational Service Delivery), the district would be in a better position to conduct sufficient cost benefit analysis of its educational programs. In addition, while some

principals examine costs as part of identifying initiatives to include in their school improvement plan, these are not formal cost-benefit analyses.

The District Evaluates the Potential of Alternative Service Delivery Methods to Save Costs

The district has examined contracting out or privatizing several services. For example, the district researched the possibility of outsourcing food services several years ago but decided that it was more cost effective to keep the program in house. Prior to hiring the current attorney, the district investigated the option of contracting with an outside law firm for legal services; through this process the district determined it would be more cost effective to hire an in-house attorney. In addition, the district has decided to outsource its transportation department.

In addition, the district has entered into several cooperative relationships with other school districts from which the district benefits financially. For example, in the educational areas, the district has entered into the district has an agreement through which it provides an orientation and mobility instructor to St. Lucie and Okeechobee school districts. The district also has an agreement through which St. Lucie District serves Martin County students with specific handicaps. More recently, the district entered into a consortium for TERMS. The consortium saved the district \$148,700 in the original purchase of the software and will save the district \$28,212 annually in maintenance costs. Food Services is in a cooperative purchasing arrangement with four small districts for the 20 most main line foods and with Palm Beach county to piggy-back on expendable and capital equipment.

For more information on alternative service delivery methods, refer to page 3-38.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop a process for conducting routine program assessments. These assessments should incorporate the management performance reports along with additional input and data. The format for these assessments should be useful and thorough, but should be sufficiently streamlined so that it does not require excessive time. Once a format is developed for the assessments, the district should be able to conduct them with minimal effort. The assessments could*
 - *compare staffing levels and salaries to peers, benchmarks and previous years;*
 - *track per student or per staff costs by department and/ or function, evaluate costs against peers and benchmarks;*
 - *evaluate progress on other performance indicators established by individual departments and programs;*
 - *incorporate ideas from staff on cost saving opportunities and improved efficiency; and*
 - *incorporate results of customer satisfaction survey (this can include internal or external customers).*
- *These assessments should be provided to the board to be used in planning and decision-making and to the public to ensure the district is held accountable.*
- *The district should also develop a process for conducting program performance evaluations of programs and departments on a scheduled basis. These evaluations should be conducted department directors (under the direction of the superintendent)*

or outside consultants, and they should include a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the district's organization, staffing and processes. As previously mentioned, these evaluations are more thorough than the routine assessments, and should be conducted every several years.

Action Plan 4-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should conduct routine program assessments.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The department directors and their supervisors should develop a general format for these assessments, including what types of data and input will be incorporated.</p> <p>Step 2: The format for assessments should be presented to the superintendent and board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The format should be documented and distributed</p> <p>Step 4: Department directors will work with the Director of Educational Technology to identify what data is necessary for these assessments, who will collect it, when they will collect it, how they will submit it, and how it will be calculated.</p> <p>Step 5: Each department director will calculate baseline data for each measure and will establish their own procedures and schedule for ongoing evaluation of the measures.</p> <p>Step 6: The department directors will use this information to evaluate progress made towards department goals and objectives, document the progress, and update the plan based on this analysis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Department directors and their supervisors, the Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	March 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should develop a process for conducting program performance evaluations of programs and departments on a scheduled basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The department directors and their supervisors should develop a general framework for these evaluations including types of input and analysis to be included. Since departments and programs will only be reviewed every few years, the framework should also define how the evaluations of departments and programs should be scheduled. This could include a consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence that the program is not performing according to expectations, • program funding level; • number of students served by the program; • cost to the district to conduct the evaluation, • availability of resources to conduct the evaluation, • potential for program improvement or cost savings,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential risk or consequences that may result from ineffective program performance, • length of time since the program's last evaluation, and • public input or concern.
	Step 2: The assistant superintendent should present this framework to the Superintendent and Board for approval.
	Step 3: The framework should be documented and distributed.
Who Is Responsible	Department directors and their supervisors
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

5 **The district should use performance evaluations and routine assessments to improve performance and cost efficiency of its major educational and operational programs.**

Although It Uses Available Evaluation Information, the District Needs More Performance and Management Information

Periodic performance or management reports are a key piece to routine program assessments. These reports present data on progress towards goals and objectives as well as reporting on standard performance and cost-efficiency measures. While there are no standard performance reports in place to provide the board with information on the performance of its major educational and operational programs, the district conducts performance evaluations occasionally, as they believe they are needed. These reviews include the 1995 Management and Organization Study; the 1996 studies of payroll and personnel processes and information technology; and the current OPPAGA study, compensation study, and administrative ratios study. For more information on evaluations, refer to page 3-32.

While evaluations are not done regularly, once they are done, board members and administrators review the results and the district responds appropriately. For example, the district implemented many of the recommendations presented in the 1995 Management and Organization review of the district performed by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents. Comparing the organization chart that was in place when the review was done to the district's organization today best demonstrates these changes.

There have been significant changes in the district's high level organization since the study was done in 1995. In addition, today's structure is very similar to the one recommend in the study. For instance:

- There is no longer a comptroller position between the superintendent and the directors of Operations, Finance, Purchasing/Food Services, and Information Services.
- The Director of Operations and the Director of Educational Technology now reports directly to the superintendent and finance, purchasing and food services are under the director of operations.

- There is no longer a Director of Purchasing and Food Services; these two functions each have their own director.
- There is now an Executive Director for Instructional Services who oversees the directors of the instructional programs.
- There is now an Assistant Superintendent for Leadership Services and Planning who oversees all school and center principals.

In addition to the changes made to the organizational chart based on the 1995 study, the district has instituted instruction initiatives based on assessments and evaluations of test scores by Instructional Services Department staff. As a result of these studies, the district implemented recommendations to create a summer math program and to improve the district's writing program.

Finally, based on an evaluation, the transportation department has made several changes to improve its operations and efficiency. These include the following.

- Restructuring the routes to reduce the number of daily driver assignments from 74 to 71.
- Assigning three buses to be stored overnight at a school in south Martin County. Drivers report morning and evening by radio. Reduces daily non-productive miles and saves about \$15,000 annually. Buses are brought in every 20 days for inspection and as needed for repairs.
- Recommending assigning classroom teachers' assistants in lieu of bus aides with special education bus routes to save 14 budgeted positions. This recommendation has not been adopted.

These reviews were done by individual departments or by outside consultants; they were not part of a systematic review process. Accordingly, while the district is willing to implement identified changes, it needs a systematic process to identify the need for these changes on a systematic, proactive basis.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop a process for conducting performance evaluations and produce performance reports that reflect each program's progress towards its goals and objectives. Refer to Action Plan 4-4 and 4-5 for the actions needed to implement these recommendations*

6 The district should develop a series of performance reports that reflect the district's performance and operating costs to ensure accountability.

The District Needs to Provide More Performance and Cost Data to the Public

The district regularly provide to the public state level reports, such as the Florida School Indicators Report, the School Advisory Council Report, and the School Accountability Report, which include some performance information. The Florida School Indicators Report allows comparisons among

schools and districts. Data included in this report include student counts, test scores, staffing levels and demographic information, and per pupil expenditures for various educational programs. The School Advisory Council Report covers test scores, graduation rates, information on school staff, attendance figures, readiness to start school, and other types of data. The School Accountability Report summarizes information about school achievement, learning environment, and student characteristics.

In addition to these reports, the district provides high-level information on student performance when it is available. Also, parents and other taxpayers may hear reports on programs at school board meetings. However, there are no standard reports presented to the school board on performance or cost efficiency, so it is difficult for parents and taxpayers to have the information necessary to hold the district accountable.

Several Avenues of Feedback Exist to Ensure Accountability

There are several avenues available to parents and taxpayers to provide feedback to the district to assist with ensuring accountability. For instance, parents and other taxpayers have the opportunity to provide feedback to the board at the school board meetings. Their input is logged into the board minutes. In addition, the public participates in various committees. The district has the following committees.

- District Advisory Committee
- Strategic Planning Committee
- Long Range Planning
- School Advisory Council Committees
- Environmental Studies Council
- Charter School Committee
- District Insurance Committee
- Sallie Mae First Year Teacher Award Selection Committee
- Principal/ Assistant Principal Selection/ Site Analysis Committee
- Student Code of Conduct Committee - Elementary
- Student Code of Conduct Committee –Secondary
- Calendar Committee
- Academy Advisory Boards
- DCT Advisory Board
- Insurance Committee
- Business Advisory Boards for Secondary Vocational Programs

Additional Accountability Information Would Increase the Ability of the Public to Hold the District Accountable

Through the board meetings and district committees, parents and other taxpayers should have ample opportunity to provide feedback to the district. However, their input may be limited to the information available to them. So, without easy-to-understand, periodic reports on program performance and cost, their ability to hold the district accountable will be limited.

Recommendations

- *The district should produce and distribute easy-to-understand management performance reports that reflect the district's progress towards its goals and objectives as well as its performance according to these indicators. The reports should include a series of performance measures for each department and program in the district. These indicators should be developed by department staff and the Technology Department and should thoroughly and accurately describe the performance of the department. Indicators could include the level of customer satisfaction (arrived at by surveying the users of the service), the cost of operations (by student, by staff, by other unit), and staffing ratios. The information in the report could be compared historically or to other peer districts. The reports should be presented to the board on an annual basis unless the board feels that it is necessary to review the information more frequently. These reports should be used by district management in decision-making and planning to improve performance and decrease costs. These reports should also be used by the community to hold the district accountable.*

Action Plan 4-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Produce and distribute easy-to-understand management reports that reflects the district's performance according to these indicators. These reports should be used by district management in decision-making and planning to improve performance and decrease costs. These reports should also be used by the community to hold the district accountable. The report card should include indicators such as: pupil: teacher ratios (by grade, by school); student: employee ratios (by school; total); total expenditures per student (by school); total expenditures per student by functional area; the percent of total expenditures spent on central administration; and the percent of expenditures spent on school administration.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendent, department directors, the Director of Educational Technology develop a format for an annual management report. The report should include the goals, objectives, and measures for each instructional and operational area.</p> <p>Step 2: The complete report should be produced once a year, presented to the board, and made available to members of the community.</p> <p>Step 3: The progress reports should be produced at the mid-point of each year. These reports should be brief updates on the performance measures for each department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The assistant superintendent, department directors, the Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	June 2000 (for the formats and the first management report)
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

7 The district does a relatively good job of ensuring that school improvement plans translate identified needs into activities with measurable objectives.

The District Has Established a Process to Review School Improvement Plan Quality

There are several essential elements to a good school improvement plan. The plan should

- be based on a needs assessment,
- have measurable objectives,
- have clearly-defined strategies, and
- be based on the extent to which the school achieved its goals and objectives.

To verify that the plans are adequate, the superintendent and representatives from the superintendent's cabinet review all school improvement plans and then provide feedback to the schools. In addition, School Board Rule 6Gx43-1.24 states that one of the responsibilities of the District Advisory Council is to "review annual school center improvement plans and make recommendations for improvement."

Most School Improvement Plans Are of High Quality

The district has a process in place that ensures that most plans are of high quality. While a more detailed analysis of the district's 19 school improvement plans can be found on page 6-61, the review team's overall conclusions are presented below.

- All of the schools based their objectives on a needs assessment. However, the discussion of the needs assessment in most plans was vague, and the methods used to collect data did not make the link between the needs assessment and the development of the objectives of the plan.
- Fifteen of 19 had measurable objectives, 3 had some measurable objectives (in other words, there were not measurable objectives for each need or goal), and 1 did not have measurable objectives.
- Five of 19 had clearly defined implementation strategies that identified responsible parties and 12 had implementation strategies with some of these elements.

It should be noted that the review team found it difficult to ensure that plans address essential elements of quality because plans reviewed were formatted differently. For example, in some plans it is difficult to map the needs to the objectives and strategies. However, the district has instituted a template for the development of school improvement plans, which should better ensure that plans contain required components. This template was used for plans developed for the 1999-2000 school year.

Some school improvement plans do not specifically document the outcomes of their needs assessment. While the plans state that their goals are linked to the identified needs, it is difficult to determine whether this is the case. In addition, the measurable objectives are not always tied to the

identified needs. For instance, the measurable objectives from one school's improvement plan are presented below.

- Forty percent of the fourth grade students will score a 3.0 or above on the Florida Writes test by the year 1998-99.
- Using the base-line data from the 1996-97 California Achievement Test, the number of students scoring in the upper two quartiles in the Reading Total Battery section will increase by 10% the 1998-99 school year.
- Using the base-line data from the 1996-97 California Achievement Test, the number of students scoring in the upper two quartiles in the Science section will increase by 15% by the 1998-99 school year.
- Using the base-line data from the 1996-97 California Achievement Test, the number of students scoring in the upper two quartiles in the Math Total Battery section will increase by 10% by the 1998-99 school year.

While these could be used to assess students' academic performance, they do not track progress towards meeting the school's identified needs in the areas of communication, discipline, school and grounds, homework, instructional materials, and the need for recess.

Recommendations

- *The district should strengthen its School Improvement Plan (SIP) review process to ensure that all SIP's are based on identified needs, have sufficient measurable objectives identified, and provide sufficient detail in their implementation strategies.*

Action Plan 4-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should strengthen its School Improvement Plan (SIP) review process to ensure that all SIPs are based on identified needs, have sufficient measurable objectives identified, and provide sufficient detail in their implementation strategies.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Principals should be included in the training on setting goals, objectives and performance measures.</p> <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendent and the Director of Curriculum and School improvement should review each plan to ensure that the critical elements are in place.</p> <p>Step 3: Schools should revise their plans as necessary.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The assistant superintendent, the Director of Curriculum and School improvement, school advisory councils
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

8 The district has strategies in place to assess the reliability and accuracy of data.

The District Has Reasonable Procedures to Ensure the Accuracy and Reliability of Data Submitted to the Department of Education

Because computer-processed data are an integral part of the decision-making process, it is crucial that data are 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. The district has established reasonable procedures to ensure the reliability of data submitted to the state Department of Education. For instance, the district has a process in place through which district and state reports are reviewed prior to the final submission. The process and individuals' responsibilities are documented in the district's FTE/State Reporting and Verification Summary. Exhibit 4-18 presents a summary of the process and identifies responsibilities and a time line for school sites, program specialists and the Department of Educational Technology.

Exhibit 4-18

District Has Established a Process for FTE Reporting and Verification

School Sites (Principals, Assistant Principals, Data Entry)	Program Specialists (ESE, DOP, LEP, Adult Ed., etc.)	Educational Technology (School Improvement Office as appropriate)
Run reports periodically to verify correctness of data.	Train school site personnel on program reporting.	Send preliminary reports to school sites and program specialists for review.
Three weeks prior to FTE week, run and review verification reports to be sure all students are reported accurately.	Prior to FTE week, review program rosters.	Data Provided to Educational Technology.
Check attendance during FTE week.	Notify school sites of corrections prior to DOE processing.	Transmit data to DOE.
Check special classifications for appropriate FTE and program data (ESE, LEP, etc) and make corrections.	Data Provided to Educational Technology.	Pull down edits and review for gross errors.
FTE week: make no changes on the database until notified by ET. Do not withdraw any students.	Correct errors during DOE processing period and notify school and Superintendent of corrections made on "x" screens.	Forward edits to program specialists for review.
Correct errors as flagged by Program specialists on "s" screens.		Re-submit corrected data to DOE.

School Sites (Principals, Assistant Principals, Data Entry)	Program Specialists (ESE, DOP, LEP, Adult Ed., etc.)	Educational Technology (School Improvement Office as appropriate)
Maintain audit copies with appropriate signatures.		Check to ensure DOE has latest updated data.
Data Provided to Educational Technology (Friday of FTE week).		Print reports for review by Superintendent and staff.

Source: Martin County School District.

In addition to this summary, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction distributes a calendar with critical dates identified for data verification. Finally, district administrators verify the reliability of data.

The District Has Minimal Data on Personal Computers

In addition to data contained on the district's mainframe, some staff store data on personal computers. One reason that staff store information on personal computers is to ensure they can access, manipulate, and report the data as needed to effectively manage program resources and evaluate performance. Information kept on isolated personal computers is at higher risk for error because it is not subjected to the same procedures as other district data to ensure its accuracy and reliability. However, in Martin County the volume of data kept in isolated databases is minimal, it does not duplicate data on the mainframe, and it is not used by program managers or the school board to make crucial decisions. For instance, the Applied Technology, Career Development, and Continuing Education Program maintains data such as addresses and phone numbers of Business Advisory Council members and fee collections on personal computers. However, staff indicated that reports used to assess performance and data provided to the school board and public are generated from the district's mainframe. As the district converts to TERMS, it is essential to ensure that program managers have access to data in useful report formats to minimize the proliferation of isolated databases.

The District Could More Effectively Use the Data It Submits to the Department of Education

The district uses data in its mainframe to assess how well its educational program performance compares to state averages and peer districts. As previously mentioned, the district used DOE data to conduct an evaluation of math scores that revealed that students were not performing well in math; as a result the district implemented a summer math institute. In contrast, operational programs generally do not use similar comparisons to assess their performance. The one area in which the district has attempted to use DOE data to make comparisons is in the area of staffing levels. However, the district has determined that these comparisons are of only limited usefulness since they do not accurately reflect district staffing and positions.

For related information on data used to manage programs refer to pages 3-28, and 12-18.

5

Use of Lottery Proceeds

Although the district has defined “enhancement,” it needs to develop guidelines to ensure lottery funds are expended appropriately and establish a process to evaluate the benefit of lottery-funded initiatives.

Conclusion

By statute, lottery proceeds are to be used to enhance educational programs and to provide funding to the School Advisory Committees (SACs) at each campus. The Martin County School District does provide funding for the SACs and allocates money in its budget to programs that are beyond the required curriculum, but the district needs to have a formal, well-developed written definition of enhancement. In the absence of this definition it is difficult for the district to comply with many of the best practice indicators.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

By establishing procedures to evaluate the educational impact of enhancement programs provided with lottery funds, the district will be able to evaluate the cost effectiveness of program in terms of the educational improvement per dollar spent, and make more informed decisions about the use of lottery proceeds. However, all chapter recommendations can be implemented within 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 money 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 Florida Legislature allocated \$1,263,501 in lottery funds to the Martin County School District. The district uses these funds to provide enhancement programs such as art, music, physical education and guidance counseling programs that are not part of the statutory education program for the elementary grades. Martin County feels these are important enhancements to the curriculum. Working from this agreed upon policy, district staff and the board have developed an unwritten definition of “enhancement” that is used in allocating lottery funds to campuses and programs.

The school board and district management have made several notable accomplishments over the past several years related to the use of lottery proceeds. Exhibit 5-1 describes some of these accomplishments.

Exhibit 5-1

Notable Accomplishments in the District’s Use of Lottery Proceeds

-
- Martin County School District has made an effort to use lottery funds to provide programs, especially at the elementary school level, that are beyond the required statutory program.
 - The district has required each school to have a School Improvement Plan approved by the School Advisory Council (SAC) and provides the required amount of funding (\$10 per pupil) to SACs.
 - The district has provided clear and comprehensive documentation to the SACs concerning the legal uses of discretionary lottery funds.
 - The district has created unique accounting codes to track discretionary lottery funds and enhancement funds
 - The district makes available to the public information about the use of lottery funds through its web site at <http://finance.sbmcc.org/lottexpnd.html>
-

Source: Martin County School District.

Use of Lottery Proceeds

1 The Martin County School District has that defined “enhancement” but needs to clarify its definition.

The School Board Needs Written Guidelines or Criteria to Clarify Its Definition of “Enhancement”

According to Florida 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 district relies on a September 1992 Board Resolution to define enhancement. The definition states:

“Enhancement is defined by the School Board of Martin County as the provision of educational programs or related activities above and beyond those programs required by Florida Statute, State Board Rules, or the District Pupil Progression Plan.”

The definition provides no guidelines or criteria for campus personnel or advisory committees to use in assessing if a program or project meets the definition of “enhancement.” However, the Director of Finance and the Director of School Improvement and Curriculum, indicate that for purposes of budgeting and allocating funds to school campuses, the district has defined enhancement to include services and staff for elementary education in the areas of art, music, physical education and guidance counseling. This definition is not available in any board or district policy document. Exhibit 5-2 shows that unlike Martin County, a review of a sample of other Florida schools or districts generally do not define enhancement and only identify types of board approved expenditures.

Exhibit 5-2

Unlike Martin County, a Review of a Sample of Other Florida Districts Found That They Generally Do Not Define Enhancement and Only Identify Types of Board Approved Expenditures

School District	Educational Enhancement Definition
Alachua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> programs that were previously funded through state categorical funds which are no longer mandated a supplement to partially funded state categorical or mandated programs the enrichment of existing programs through cultural activities, academic competitions, computer and other equipment, and supply acquisitions innovative programs such as magnets, alternatives, compacts, or special projects aides and instructional assistants to support the educational program art, music, and physical education activities activities and/or programs designed to improve the safety of schools increases in employee compensation
Manatee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop and implement school improvement plans and to fund salaries and benefits of school-based instructional support services personnel
Martin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of educational programs or related activities above and beyond those programs required by Florida Statute, State Board Rules, or the District Pupil Progression Plan.”
Sarasota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to fund all educational programs whose costs exceed the minimum financial effort required by the Florida Education Finance Program

Source: Martin County School District and school district survey

Stakeholders Were Involved in Defining Educational Enhancement

Although staff did not document the process, the district's definition of enhancement was developed in conjunction with stakeholder representatives such as teachers, parents, business representatives, and district staff. In addition, the school board has taken input from the public on the use of lottery funds as a part of the budgeting process. The Director of School Improvement and Curriculum indicated that in previous school board discussions concerning funding allocations, there has been support for the use of lottery funds for the expanded elementary programs. When the district clarifies its definition of enhancement, it needs to provide its stakeholders an opportunity to review and provide suggested revisions to the district's current definition of educational enhancement. As part of this process, the district should document how its used stakeholder input in revising its definition.

The District Has an Unwritten Working Definition of the Types of Expenditures That Have Been Identified as “Enhancement”

The district has identified services beyond those required in statute for elementary education (art, music, physical education, guidance counseling) as expenditures that meet its definition of enhancement. While not in writing, these services and spending patterns are consistent over time and, thus, constitute the district's working definition of enhancement. In the absence of written policy there may be questions of interpretation concerning that definition. With a formal, written definition of “enhancement” the district would be in a better position to demonstrate that expenditures of lottery funds meet the definition of “enhancement.”

The District Is Developing Written Procedures on the Use of Educational Enhancement Funds

The district has no policy documents that are part of district board rules or any other formalized materials that relate to the appropriate use of Educational Enhancement funds. The absence of any documentation makes it difficult to determine whether or not these funds are being spent on appropriate programs. The district is currently working with legal counsel to develop these procedures. Such procedures would better enable the district to ensure that lottery funds are appropriately used and should help the district identify the benefits derived from lottery expenditures.

2 Although the district has a process for allocating lottery funds, without clarifying guidelines the district cannot effectively assess if an initiative meets its definition of enhancement.

The School Board Approves the Use of Lottery Funds

The school board approves the use of lottery funds for classroom teachers and other instructional personnel for elementary schools as a part of the budget process. The Director of School Improvement and Curriculum reviews and approves all expenditure requests for other lottery fund uses. The Finance Department requires that monies be budgeted and approved by project code (in this case code 0057) in order to be expended. The Finance Department also requires that the request be approved by the Director of

School Improvement and Curriculum and by the Executive Director for Instructional Services before funds can be released.

A Portion of the Lottery Funds Are Provided to Each School for Implementing School Improvement Plans

As required by Florida law, the district provides lottery funds to each school based on the unweighted count of full-time equivalent students (UWFTE). In 1998-99, lottery funds allocated to district schools amounted to \$154,287 (see Exhibit 5-3). Schools request expenditure approval for funds from the district to be used for implementing the school improvement plan. The district has a process by which the school submits a purchase request to the Office of School Improvement and Curriculum where the request is reviewed. If the request is approved, it is forwarded to Finance; where budgeted funds are released to the school or paid to a vendor. The director of School Improvement and Curriculum indicated that because the School Advisory Councils have great discretion in spending these funds, the review is generally to ensure that funds are being spent for a legal purpose.

In addition, the district has established procedures to ensure that school board members and appropriate district administrators are aware of how schools use lottery enhancement funds. These procedures require that district staff provide budget and expenditure reports on the use of lottery funds to the school board on a quarterly basis.

Exhibit 5-3

The District Allocated Lottery Dollars to School Advisory Councils and Districtwide Enhancement Programs

Lottery Allocation	1998-99 Amount
School Advisory Councils (SACs)	\$ 154,287
Portion of Districtwide Enhancement Programs Funded from Lottery Dollars	1,109,214
Total	\$1,263,501

Source: Based on data provided by Martin County School District.

Recommendations

- Martin County School District should develop written guidelines to implement its definition of "enhancement. These guidelines should be included in the School Board Policy document. The district and school board should revise its definition of "enhancement," as a part of the district's overall strategic planning process, and hold public hearings to provide an opportunity for community members to offer input. At the end of the public process, the district should refine its definition of "enhancement" to reflect the desires of the Superintendent, School Board and community.*

Action Plan 5-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a definition of “enhancement” that is clearly articulated, placed in writing, and included in the School Board Policy document
Action Needed	Step 1: The district staff and the school board develop a definition of “enhancement” as a part of the district’s overall strategic planning process. Step 2: The school board holds public hearings to provide an opportunity for community members to offer input.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; director of School Improvement and Curriculum; School Board
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This plan can be implemented within existing resources. District will have greater fiscal accountability with a definition of “enhancement.”

3 The district allocates lottery funds to school advisory councils as required by law.

Each SAC Receives \$10 Per Student

Florida law requires that each school in the district have an approved school improvement plan and that beginning in Fiscal Year 1997-98, school districts allocate at least \$10 per unweighted FTE to be used at the discretion of school advisory councils. School Board meeting minutes reflect that each district school has an approved school improvement plan, and these plans are on file with the district. In addition, the district allocates \$10 per unweighted FTE of lottery funds to be used at the discretion of the SACs. As shown in Exhibit 5-4, in Fiscal Year 1998-99, each of the 19 Martin County schools (including Challenger Exceptional Student Education Center) received \$10 per unweighted FTE. The total amount allocated in Fiscal Year 1998-99 to SACs was \$154,287.20. Since the number of unweighted FTE students varies by school, the amount of lottery funds allocated ranged from \$1,971.30 at Spectrum Jr./Sr. High School to \$22,459.30 at Martin County High School. The district is aware of the restrictions concerning allocation of the discretionary lottery funds to School Advisory Councils and provides the schools with this information as a part of the district budgeting and funding process.

Exhibit 5-4

The Martin County School Board Allocated \$154,287 in Lottery Funds to SACs in Fiscal Year 1998-99

School	Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	Lottery Fund Allocation
Seawind Elementary School	661.71	\$ 6,617.10
J.D. Parker School Science and Math Tech	573.68	5,736.80
Palm City Elementary School	829.58	8,295.80
Port Salerno Elementary School	551.10	5,511.00
Hobe Sound Elementary School	624.26	6,242.60
Warfield Elementary School	729.24	7,292.40
Jensen Beach Elementary School	582.88	5,828.80
Pinewood Elementary School	760.35	7,603.50
Crystal Lake Elementary School	726.39	7,263.90
Bessey Creek Elementary School	585.19	5,851.90
Felix A Williams Elementary School	718.91	7,189.10
Elementary School Total	7,343.29	\$ 73,432.90
Stuart Middle School	1,079.80	10,798.00
Murray Middle School	920.08	9,200.80
Indiantown Middle School	445.02	4,450.20
Hidden Oaks Middle School	1,346.20	13,462.00
Middle School Total	3,791.10	\$ 37,911.00
Martin County High School	2,245.93	22,459.30
Spectrum Jr./Sr. High School	197.13	1,971.30
South Fork High School	1,766.80	17,668.00
High School Total	4,209.86	\$ 42,098.60
Challenger ESE Center	84.47	844.70
Other School Total	84.47	\$ 844.70
Grand Total	15,428.72	\$154,287.20

Source: Martin County School District.

The District Provides Detailed Information to SAC Members Regarding the Legal Expenditure of Lottery Funds

The district has effectively communicated the legal requirements regarding uses of lottery funds to the schools and the advisory committees. The district provides a copy of a question and answer document prepared by the Florida Department of Education to all principals and SAC chairmen to be shared with each school council. The question and answer document is quite clear and addresses what appear to be common questions about how the discretionary lottery funds can be spent by schools. Additionally, when a request for funding appears questionable to a district staff person reviewing a funding requisition, clarification is provided to the SAC and principal. When a request is made that does not meet the legal requirements for expenditures of school improvement funds, district staff do not approve the request and work with the school to find alternative sources of funds.

SACs Typically Are Not Spending All of Their Funds

In addition to allocating \$154,287.20 lottery funds to school advisory councils in 1998-99, the district rolled forward \$126,508.93 in unexpended funds from the previous year (refer to Exhibit 5-5). On average, unexpended balances constituted 45% of each SAC's 1998-99 budget. For three schools, Martin County High, Spectrum Jr./Sr. High, and South Fork High, the unexpended amount rolled forward exceeded their 1998-99 allocation. Only one school Palm City Elementary School had no unexpended funds from the previous year.

Exhibit 5-5

On Average, Half of Each SAC's 1998-99 Total Lottery Budget Is Composed of Unexpended Funds

School	1998-99 SAC Allocation	Unexpended Balance Rolled Forward From Previous Year	Total Budget (Allocation Plus Unexpended Balance)	Unexpended Balance as a Percentage of Total Budget
Seawind Elementary School	\$ 6,617.10	\$ 6,189.76	\$ 12,806.86	48%
J.D. Parker School Science and Math Tech	5,736.80	5,442.72	11,179.52	49%
Palm City Elementary School	8,295.80	0.00	8,295.80	0%
Port Salerno Elementary School	5,511.00	4,165.53	9,676.53	43%
Hobe Sound Elementary School	6,242.60	3,757.26	9,999.86	38%
Warfield Elementary School	7,292.40	3,969.48	11,261.88	35%
Jensen Beach Elementary School	5,828.80	5,807.68	11,636.48	50%
Pinewood Elementary School	7,603.50	2,663.23	10,266.73	26%
Crystal Lake Elementary School	7,263.90	4,674.68	11,938.58	39%
Bessey Creek Elementary School	5,851.90	1,232.21	7,084.11	17%
Felix A Williams Elementary School	7,189.10	4,483.71	11,672.81	38%
Stuart Middle School	10,798.00	9,815.98	20,613.98	48%
Murray Middle School	9,200.80	7,407.01	16,607.81	45%
Indiantown Middle School	4,450.20	1,737.00	6,187.20	28%
Hidden Oaks Middle School	13,462.00	9,804.52	23,266.52	42%
Martin County High School	22,459.30	28,935.71	51,395.01	56%
Spectrum Jr./Sr High School	1,971.30	3,563.53	5,534.83	64%
South Fork High School	17,668.00	21,748.28	39,416.28	55%
Challenger ESE Center	844.70	1,029.51	1,874.21	55%
Totals	\$154,287.20	\$126,508.93	\$280,715.00	45%

Source: Based on data provided by the Martin County School District.

4 The district should improve how it accounts for its use of lottery funds.

The District Should Distinguish Between Enhancement Positions Funded With Lottery Dollars And Those Funded From General Operating Funds

Florida law requires districts to use a unique fund source accounting code for accounting for the receipt and expenditure of all Education Enhancement Trust Funds (Lottery). The district has two project codes that are used to track lottery funds. Using these funding codes, the district accounts for the receipt and expenditure of all Educational Enhancement Funds. Project code 0057 is used to track and account for all lottery enhancement funds, and project code 0058 is used to track and account for all school improvement funds. Using project codes in the accounting system the district tracks the receipt and expenditure of all Educational Enhancement Funds.

The district identifies positions and programs that constitute its districtwide enhancement programs. In 1998-99, enhancement programs accounted for 55 positions, which totaled \$2,911,935. According to district administrators, if the lottery funds appropriated to the district by the Legislature minus the required allocations to schools are less than the amount needed to fund the earmarked positions and programs, the district supplements the lottery funds in order to fully fund the earmarked positions and programs. For example, of the \$1,263,501 in lottery funds the Florida Legislature allocated for the Martin County School District to use for enhancement in 1998-99, the district allocated \$154,287 to school advisory councils and used the remaining lottery funds, \$1,109,214, to fund a portion of districtwide enhancement programs. Since the total earmarked for districtwide enhancement programs in 1998-99 was \$2,911,935, the district made up the difference with general operating funds. However, because the district does not separately account for these supplemental funds, it does not distinguish between those districtwide enhancement positions funded with lottery funds and those enhancement positions funded from general operating funds.

Exhibit 5-6

The District Funds Districtwide Enhancement Programs With Lottery and General Operating Budget Dollars

	Fiscal Year 1998-99	
	Positions	Salaries and Benefits
Districtwide Enhancement Program		
Elementary Education Enhancement – Art, Music, and Physical Education – Salaries and Benefits	26	\$1,210,772
Elementary and Middle Schools – Pupil Services (Guidance and Health)	21	1,237,590
Elementary and Middle Schools – Media Services	8	463,573
Subtotal Districtwide Enhancement Programs	55	\$2,911,935
Portion of Districtwide Enhancement Programs Funded from Lottery Dollars (Total Legislative Appropriation of \$1,263,501 Minus Amount Allocated to School Advisory Councils of \$154,287)		\$1,109,214
Balance Funded from General Operating Budget		\$1,802,721

Source: Based on data provided by Martin County School District.

Recommendation

- We recommend that the district develop and implement written guidelines that specifically identify procedures that will allow the state discretionary lottery funds to be identified and tracked throughout the receipt-to-expenditure-to-reporting cycle.

Action Plan 5-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use written guidelines to ensure the appropriate management of lottery funds.
Action Needed	<p>Implement a coordinated, broad-based effort to develop a set of standard procedures to account for the receipt and expenditure of all state discretionary lottery funds. These guidelines should, at a minimum, include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 unique project or account numbers for the expenditure of state lottery funds to include designation of the specific programs, activities, or accounts to which state lottery funds will be allocated; and c. procedures that explicitly describe the process of how to account for lottery fund expenditures when a program or activity may be funded by more than one source, e.g., when a portion of teachers' salaries are funded by lottery funds in support of the district's school improvement activities.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Finance
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

5 The district should improve its process of evaluating the benefits of projects implemented with lottery funds and the extent to which these funds enhance student education.

The District Annually Reports Its Lottery Fund Expenditures to the Department of Education

As required by Florida law, within 60 days of the end of each fiscal year, the district reports actual expenditure of lottery funds to the Department of Education. The most current year for which the report was prepared was the 1997-98 school year.

Benefits of Projects Supported by Lottery Funds Are Unknown

The district should improve its process of ensuring that schools evaluate the specific benefits of projects implemented with lottery funds and the extent to which lottery fund expenditures enhanced student education. This stems from the fact that the district does not have a centralized research and evaluation function, and has not developed a process to evaluate the benefits to student achievement of projects implemented with lottery enhancement funds. While school improvement plans contain an evaluation component at the school level, the district does not require schools to evaluate the specific benefits of lottery-funded initiatives. As a result, schools generally do not assess the benefits of lottery-funded initiatives and this information is not compiled districtwide. 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.

Recommendations

- *The district should require that, prior to allocating lottery funds for a program, that any new program have an evaluation component, and that on-going programs be required to demonstrate that they continue to be effective in improving student achievement.*
- *The district should develop written policies for the expenditures of funds by the School Advisory Committees that are clearly articulated, placed in writing and included in the School Board Policy document. While use of these funds is at the discretion of the SACs, the district could provide more guidance to the committees, and require additional documentation and evaluation of the use of these funds.*

Action Plan 5-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Require that, prior to allocating lottery funds for a program, that any new program have an evaluation component, and that ongoing programs be required to demonstrate that they continue to be effective in improving student achievement.
Action Needed	<p>The director of School Improvement and Curriculum develops quantifiable accountability criteria for evaluating enhancement programs.</p> <p>The director of School Improvement and Curriculum provides training relating to program review and evaluation to those district and campus personnel who are responsible for developing and implementing enhancement programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of School Improvement and Curriculum
Time Frame	January 2000

Fiscal Impact	Developing program evaluation criteria and training will likely require the addition of a staff person dedicated to research and evaluation in the Office of School Improvement and Curriculum. The costs associated with creating and filling this position are included in Chapter 6, Educational Service Delivery.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop written policies for the expenditures of funds by the School Advisory Committees that are clearly articulated, placed in writing, and included in the School Board Policy document. The district should implement procedures for more extensive evaluation of programs provided with SAC funds.
Action Needed	<p>The director of School Improvement and Curriculum provides district level support to SACs in the form of assistance in developing school improvement plans that include measurable goals and evaluation components.</p> <p>Principals create and use forms that allow for more accurate tracking of SAC discretionary funds.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of School Improvement and Curriculum; principals
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This plan can be implemented within existing resources.

6

Educational Service Delivery

The Martin County School District uses many approaches to increase the performance of all students. The district has correlated its delivery of educational services to correspond with Sunshine State Standards and other state initiatives. However, the district needs to improve the evaluation of its efforts.

Conclusion

The delivery of educational services should be effective and efficient in order to promote student learning. The Martin County School District has many effective practices in place such as strong site based management, a model environmental studies program, and a curriculum correlated with Sunshine State Standards. The Martin County School District has responded to state initiatives related to accountability, but could improve procedures to directly link instruction, state accountability measures, and evaluation of ongoing practices. The school district has significantly increased its use of instructional technology in the last five years.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most of the recommendations for the educational service delivery area can be accomplished without using any additional district resources. However, Martin County will gain the ability to do more frequent and detailed analyses of student performance data by adding a new position, the coordinator of Research and Evaluation. This will require that Martin County School District allocate \$55,000 in salary and benefits for this new position. The district will benefit from adding two curriculum coordinator positions, one in language arts and the other in math. These positions will require the allocation of a total of \$149,976 for salaries and benefits. In addition, adding a site based technical assistant at each campus at a total cost of \$161,071 would improve the district's ability to use technology in instruction. The fiscal impact is shown in Exhibit 6-1.

Exhibit 6-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Educational Service Delivery Will Have a \$366,047 Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Create and fill a position for a coordinator of Research and Evaluation	\$ (55,000)

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Create and fill two curriculum coordinator positions. One in language arts, the other in mathematics	(149,976)
Establish a site based technical assistant at every campus as outlined in the support plan	(161,071)

Background

Martin County School District is located on the southeast coast of Florida with an enrollment of 15,843 students. The district consists of eleven elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools, and one alternative junior/senior high school for students at risk. Special schools include Challenger for students with disabilities, and other special care facilities, Boot Camp for students who are incarcerated, Stop Camp for troubled students, Teen Parenting, and the Environmental Studies Center. In addition, the district has an extensive Adult Education program.

The school district has made several notable accomplishments over the past few years related to education service delivery. Exhibit 6-2 describes some of these accomplishments.

Exhibit 6-2

Notable Accomplishments of Martin County School District

- The district has earned accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which requires districts to develop district improvement plans that are focused on improving student performance.
- The district has strong and effective site based management and uses it to make effective decisions concerning student performance on each campus.
- The district implemented a writing program called Write On! that is effective in raising student performance in writing.
- The district has completed the alignment of its curriculum to the Sunshine State Standards that will assist in the improvement of student performance on the FCAT.
- The district students scored well in relation to their peers on the FCAT. Martin County eighth graders' reading scores ranked second in the state. The tenth graders' reading scores ranked third in the state.
- The district has an exemplary Environmental Studies Center that motivates students to excel in the sciences.
- The district has an effective shared service agreement with Indian River Community College to provide technology training to its teachers. The district provides many of its teachers with laptop computers to use for instructional purposes, which should improve the quality of teaching.
- The district has designated one school as a Science, Math, and Technology school with Internet access in every classroom. The school serves many students who are economically disadvantaged and often do not have access to computers at home.
- The district has two schools with ESOL computer labs and uses its instructional aides effectively to assist in the education of its ESOL students.
- The Council for Exceptional Children has recognized Martin County's ESE program at South Fork High School as being designed to promote independent functioning of students with moderate and severe disabilities.

-
- The district is equitable in its allocation of instructional and non-instructional staff and bases this allocation on FTE based formulas, growth and special needs.
 - The district has an effective counseling program that assists students in making good choices during their years in the district and after graduation.
 - The district practices a “preventive mode” of case management in order to avoid litigation regarding ESE placement and service delivery. The district provides detailed implementation plans with multilevel monitoring responsibilities for the inclusion of ESE students in regular classroom settings.
 - Martin County implements various training programs to facilitate inclusion of ESE students in regular classroom settings and provision of least restrictive placement services for all student needs. The training includes districtwide, individual school-based as well as individual ESE student need-oriented training programs.
 - The district has an ongoing cooperative agreement with the “Parent – Child Center” which provides \$250,000 worth of ESE services as a Medicaid reimbursement program.
-

This chapter relies on the results of a survey conducted by the review team. Because of the small sample size and low response rates, the results of the survey should be used with care and in conjunction with other information available in the district.

Standards and Measurement

1 The Martin County School District is using the state accountability standards and students’ progress toward mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, but would benefit from additional focus on the evaluation of educational programs.

Florida school accountability standards were developed as part of Florida’s continuing progress toward greater education accountability and school improvement. The Florida School Indicators Report allows comparisons among schools and districts. Data reported include student population totals, test scores, staffing levels, demographic information, and per pupil expenditures for various educational programs. The School Advisory Council Report covers test scores, graduation rates, information on school staff, attendance figures, readiness to start school, and other types of data. The School Accountability Report also summarizes information about school achievement, learning environment, and student characteristics.

The Sunshine State Standards identify what students are expected to know for grades Pre-K through 12. The standards encompass seven subject areas: the arts, foreign language, health and physical education, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students’ mastery of the Sunshine State Standards is measured primarily through the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), a student achievement test that specifically addresses a student’s ability to perform on the Sunshine State Standards for his or her grade level. Test items measure specific Sunshine State Standards benchmarks in the areas of reading for grades 4, 8, and 10 and math for grades 5, 8, and 10.

The High School Competency Test (HSCT) is given to all students in grade 11 if they do not score at a specific level on the FCAT. The HSCT is designed to measure the performance levels of Florida grade 11 and determine if they have the minimum skills necessary to receive a Florida HCST diploma. The HSCT is standardized and norm-referenced and was developed in response to changes in the law made by the 1990 Florida Legislature.

Finally, schools in Florida give the Florida Writes! test and a norm referenced achievement test. The Florida Write! test is taken by students in grades 4, 8, and 10. Students have 45 minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The writing sample is scored holistically using a rubric. The district uses the California Achievement Tests-5 (CAT-5) as its norm-referenced achievement test. The CAT-5 is a series of norm-referenced, objective-based tests for grades 2 through 8. It measures achievement in the basic skills commonly found in state and district curricula in the subject areas of reading, spelling, language, mathematics, social studies, science, and study skills.

Martin County School District Is Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

Martin is one of only five districts in Florida to have earned accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The Commission of elementary and Secondary Middle Schools have given Martin special recognition for this achievement. Accreditation is a three-step process for continuous school improvement noted below.

- Develop standards by which a district can be measured and to assess the district in relation to those standards.
- Develop and implement a district improvement plan focusing on improving student performance.
- Conduct an evaluation of the district by an outside peer review team. The team validates the standards and the district improvement plan.

This process is rigorous and has many values for a district. A district that is successfully accredited has the advantage of a collaboratively developed improvement plan that includes methods for measuring student progress and involves key school stakeholders. This process ensures a district's use of standards to evaluate its educational programs.

Site-Based Decision Making Techniques Foster Improved Decision Making

A current trend in education is to place more of the decision making at the school level rather than the district level. This is based on the rationale that stakeholders of a school have a better understanding of the needs of their particular students. In addition, schools within a district can be quite diverse demographically, which effects decisions about programming and budget. Site based decision making allows schools greater autonomy in budget and programming decisions. Good site-based decision making results in improved student performance as well as good morale.

Florida State law requires that school boards establish an advisory council for each school in the district. In addition, the school board is to develop procedures for the election and appointment of advisory council members. According to s. 229.58(1)(a), "The school advisory council shall be the sole body responsible for final decision making at the school relating to implementation of the provisions of ss.229.591, 229.592, and 230.33(16)." These three state statutes relate to the comprehensive revision and the implementation of Florida's system of school improvement and education accountability. The statutes include procedures for preparing and evaluating school improvement plans (SIPs). In addition, by

1999-2000, each school advisory council is to assist in preparing the school's annual budget and plan with part of the budget being used for implementing the school improvement plan.

School advisory councils in Martin County School District assist in the preparation and evaluation of the school improvement plan (SIP). Councils also provide input in preparing the annual school budget. Several examples of effective school advisory councils and site based management decision making exist in the district. These examples illustrate the manner in which schools are implementing site-based decision making in efforts to improve student performance.

J.D. Parker has formed a School Improvement Leadership Team to monitor progress toward SIP goals. Members of the team chair subcommittees who monitor SIP goals. During 1998-99, each team developed an action plan related to their particular SIP goal. The School Improvement Leadership Team held monthly meetings to review each team's progress towards the goal, review time lines and any corrections or adaptations made. All progress was published in the monthly newsletter to the staff as well as the school newsletter, *The Rocket*.

During 1997-98, the faculty and School Advisory Council of Pinewood Elementary engaged in a school renewal process. This process was designed to make beliefs about teaching and learning explicit and to develop a shared vision. Based on this shared vision, the school developed a three-year SIP. Much of Pinewood's SIP requires the faculty and administration to examine how students learn and the resulting implications for teaching. In addition, professional collaboration is emphasized.

Board Policy Needs to Provide Direction for Evaluation of Educational Programs

Per Florida law, every school district in Florida administers the FCAT, Florida Writes! and the HSCT to its students and reports the results to the state. The state reports the results to the public through the state accountability standards. According to Florida Statute, Chapter 229.57, the purposes of the student assessment program are to "(a) Identify the educational strengths and needs of students. (b) Assess how well educational goals and performance standards are met at the school, district, and state levels. (c) Provide information to aid in the evaluation and development of educational programs and policies."

Martin County School District tests its students according to state law and provides this information to the DOE, which includes it in accountability and performance reports. This information is also readily available to individual campuses and the public. Some schools and programs are effective in using this information to evaluate educational programs. This is clearly evident in the development of SIPs and the evaluation of progress toward goals. However, other schools and programs clearly need more direction in using these data to make sound instructional decisions about educational programming.

The Martin County School Board needs to adopt a policy that requires the district to evaluate educational programs based on student assessment linked to the Sunshine State Standards. Current board policy contains no references to evaluation of educational programs. One reference was found in the policy manual related to testing. Policy 6Gx43-5.03 states: "There shall be a county-wide testing program which measures curricular progress by testing general ability and academic achievement. Results from such standardized tests shall be related to state and national norms and shall be reported to the Principals, Directors, Superintendent and the Board."

Increased Evaluation of Specific Educational Programs Is Needed

Although Martin County does not have a specific unit responsible for evaluating educational programs the district does evaluate the overall effectiveness of its education programs and evaluates the effectiveness of individual schools through the school improvement planning process. However, as evaluation resources are limited little evaluation has been conducted on individual programs.

One example of the district's effort was an evaluation of performance data in 1997. This evaluation presented test results by skill area, by grade, and by school, to develop strategies for improving student achievement and program improvement. This evaluation was used to develop a curriculum map for math. This process identified the FCAT benchmarks, curriculum to be covered, and tools for monitoring success. The evaluation tool was provided to schools.

The Martin County School District does not have a research and evaluation unit. At one time the district had a position in this area; however, due to budget constraints, the position was cut. Currently, two central administrators, the director of School Improvement and Curriculum and the executive director for Instructional Services have as part of their job descriptions the responsibility to assist in the evaluation of education programs.

According to the director of School Improvement and Curriculum's job description, one responsibility is to analyze existing district data regarding established instructional programs in order to identify program needs and assist in program implementation. In addition, the director has other assigned duties that include but are not limited to overseeing Head Start and all other programs related to readiness, student achievement, the learning environment, and Safe and Drug Free Schools.

According to the executive director for Instructional Services' job description, one responsibility is to direct the overall activities of planning, developing, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating all district instruction and instructional support programs. In addition, the executive director has 27 other assigned duties listed in her job description. There is one clerk position related to accountability reporting to the director of School Improvement and Curriculum. This clerk assists by generating reports of student assessment data. In interviews with these administrators, the points below concerning evaluation of educational programs were made.

- Martin County School District has no research and development division to assist in the evaluation of educational programs.
- No software is used in the district to track cohorts of students to determine the degree to which they are mastering the Sunshine State Standards.
- No agreed upon districtwide discrete measures exist to evaluate specific educational programs.

There is evidence that some evaluation of educational programs occurs. Every school does an end of the year report evaluating the amount of progress made toward its SIPs. The Mid-Point Assessment of the district's five-year strategic plan is a report on the progress that has been made in the first year of implementation. The assessment includes a collection of statistical information, the identification of baseline data, and a report on the status of each action plan being implemented in this first year.

New Instructions Should Improve SIPs

Most of Martin Counties 1998-1999 SIPs were based on school needs and included measurable objectives. However, improved instructions adopted for the 1999-2000 school year should further improve the SIPs quality and usefulness and provide clear links to state accountability standards and the State Sunshine Standards.

Every school in Florida is required to write a School Improvement Plan (SIP) stating goals, objectives and strategies designed to meet those objectives. These goals and objectives should be related, in part, to student performance data and should state how the school intends to evaluate the extent to which the goals and objectives are met.

The Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) has developed criteria to review the adequacy of School Improvement Plans. Three of these criteria follow.

- Is there evidence that the SIP is based on the school's needs?
- Does the goal generally contain measurable objectives? (e.g., Are indicators of results/outcomes defined in measurable terms?)
- Does the goal generally contain clear implementation strategies(action steps)?

Martin County schools are meeting some of the criteria in the development of SIPs. All of the schools based their objectives on a needs assessment and most wrote measurable objectives (Exhibit 6-3). There were several problems that cut across many of the district schools; however, many of these are addressed in the new guidance provided to schools on how to develop a school improvement plan, and included those discussed below.

- The discussion of the needs assessment in most SIPs was vague and the methods used to collect data did not make the link between the needs assessment and the development of the objectives of the plan. For example, many SIPs contained a one or two paragraph discussion of this process. A common statement included, "A comprehensive needs assessment process was conducted and the results provided the basis for determining our school goals and objectives." The new template for school improvement plans should provide schools the help they need to correct these deficiencies.
- Most schools wrote measurable objectives. However, the rationale for choosing the measurement was seldom discussed. For example, an objective might read, "Improve scores on the Florida Writes test by 0.2." Seldom was there a rationale given for choosing this amount of increase.
- Action steps often did not include a timeline and the persons responsible for implementation of the strategy or step were seldom assigned.
- Many of the strategies developed to improve student performance were not clear about what would change in the classroom in order to achieve objectives.
- The SIPs did not always include a well-defined process for determining adequate progress which focused on the measurable achievement of results.

Exhibit 6-3

Most 1998-99 School Improvement Plans Were Based on Needs and Included Measurable Objectives

School	Based on Needs	Measurable Objectives	Action Steps
Bessey Creek Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned nor a timeline developed.
Crystal Lake Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion met. A rationale for each objective is included.	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned nor a timeline developed.
Hobe Sound Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion met
Jensen Beach Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned nor a timeline developed.
Palm City Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Strategies are lumped together. There is no clear delineation of which strategies go with which objective. No responsible person assigned, no timeline. Evaluation based on any 17 strategies and 2 of the 3 objectives met.
JD Parker Elementary	Criterion met provided results of survey and incorporated major concerns.	Criterion met	Criterion met
Pinewood Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion met. Excellent clear objectives tied to staff development, written for three years.	Criterion partially met. Overall timeline and responsible person assigned, but not for each strategy. However, evaluation of objectives is very clearly defined.
Port Salerno Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Not all objectives are written in measurable terms.	Criterion not met. No individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.

School	Based on Needs	Measurable Objectives	Action Steps
Sea Wind Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Not all objectives are written in measurable terms.	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.
Warfield Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion not met, objectives are not written in measurable terms.	Criterion met.
Felix A. Williams Elementary	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.
Indiantown MS	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion met. Benchmarks are also defined for each strategy.
Hidden Oaks MS	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Not all objectives are written in measurable terms.	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.
Murray MS	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.
Stuart MS	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion met. Excellent strategies that also define documentation needed to provide evidence of accomplishment.
Martin County HS	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion met. Excellent format, clear and detailed. Documentation of meeting each implementation strategy is identified.
South Fork HS	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met, Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.

School	Based on Needs	Measurable Objectives	Action Steps
Spectrum	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.
Challenger	Criterion met	Criterion met	Criterion partially met. Strategies are well written; however, no individual strategy has a responsible person assigned or a timeline developed.

Source: Martin County School Improvement Plans, 1998-99.

Previously only two schools in Martin County School District used FCAT results to develop SIP objectives. However, for the 1999-2000 school year, all schools are required to use FCAT in the SIPs. In its review of SIPs the district checks to ensure that the schools are using FCAT data. The FCAT was developed to determine the degree to which students are mastering the State Sunshine Standards and every school should use it as part of their assessment of educational programs. In addition, there were few references made to the Sunshine State Standards. The district is aware of the need to improve its SIPs and has developed a template to provide clear guidance on the components that should be included in each SIP. For the 1999-2000 school year the district provided schools with templates available on computer disks. These templates will greatly enhance a school's ability to write quality and meaningful SIPs. The templates include blank data tables to assist a school in developing goals and objectives. Two example data tables are for analyzing student performance data and for examining student demographic characteristics. Another template is a format to assist in writing goals and objectives. Using this template, the school can document what is meant by adequate progress, what the baseline data are, strategies/action steps, a timeline, measurement of each action step, persons responsible, a budget, and a source of the funds. Finally, there are several supporting pages such as the approval page and a matrix of state goals/district strategies that schools use to show how their objectives relate to state goals and district strategies.

Recommendations

- *The Martin County School District's board should write and adopt policy to direct evaluation of educational programs.*
- *The Martin County School District should create and fill a position for a coordinator of Research and Evaluation. This position should have experience in program evaluation and statistical analysis in public education.*
- *The district has made progress in the development of school improvement plans and should continue to move forward to ensure that schools base SIPs on the state accountability standards and students' mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, ensure that all objectives are founded in an analysis of data, are measurable, have a responsible person designated, and have a timeline.*

Action Plan 6-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Write and adopt board policy to direct evaluation of educational programs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of School Improvement and Curriculum drafts policy for the evaluation of educational programs.</p> <p>Step 2: The superintendent reviews the policy and submits the policy to the school board.</p> <p>Step 3: The school board holds public hearings to provide an opportunity for community members to offer input.</p> <p>Step 4: The school board approves the policy and includes it in the School Board Policy Manual.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for Instructional Services; Martin County School Board
Time Frame	March 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Create and fill a position for a coordinator of Research and Evaluation
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent, executive director for Education Services, executive director for Operations, and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations propose a position and job description for coordinator of Research and Evaluation.</p> <p>Step 2: The school board approves the position and job description.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Personnel and Employee Relations posts the job.</p> <p>Step 4: The superintendent, director of School Improvement and Curriculum, and director of Personnel and Employee Relations interview and hire the coordinator.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, director of Personnel and Employee Relations, director of School Improvement and Curriculum
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	\$55,000 in salaries and benefits
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Write SIPs based on district objectives, base them in part on the state accountability standards and students' mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, ensure that all objectives are based on an analysis of data, are measurable, designate a responsible person, and develop a timeline.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Schools begin to use the new SIP template for the year 1999-2000.</p> <p>Step 2: The School Advisory Councils ensure that each SIP is written using the guidelines provided and incorporates the state accountability standards and the Sunshine State Standards.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Director of School Improvement and Curriculum, school advisory councils
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources.

Student Performance

1 The Martin County School District uses effective practices designed to improve student performance. Increasing the use of these practices would contribute to improved student performance.

A school district's top priority should be to improve performance of all students. To do so, the district must consider not just overall performance, but the academic progress of specific subcategories of students. In particular, subcategories of students who may be at greater risk for failure or whose academic performance does not equal that of the larger group should be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of specific educational programs and curricula. The subcategories that the state accountability measures target include, but are not limited to, students who are Limited English Proficient, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students with exceptionalities.

Effective use of performance data assists districts in making sound decisions concerning programming and instruction. Districts should follow five steps to use data effectively.

- Disaggregate data by school, program, and subpopulations of interest.
- Track cohorts of students over time.
- Disseminate results to stakeholders.
- Use data to plan programming and instruction.
- Re-evaluate.

The District Has Implemented Programs to Improve Student Performance but Should Increase Its Use of Data to Determine Which Instructional Practices Should Be Enhanced, Extended, or Modified.

The Martin County School District's management information system contains performance data from various sources. These data are reported to schools, as they are available. The district does not currently have the technology available to report data to schools in additional formats that make student performance data more accessible and useful to schools and administrators. Several district employees stated that they have to request performance data or that they have to manipulate the data themselves. One program director used MIS data and manipulated it with paper and pencil to get the information needed to assess student performance. In addition, the district relies on individual campuses to evaluate student progress and does not provide a system, resource, or procedure for consistent evaluation at all campuses. The result of these practices is that

some programs and schools in Martin County are consistent in tracking student performance effectively in an effort to improve student performance, while others are not.

Martin County schools have used several programs to improve student performance. For example, the district increased the Florida Writes! scores (Exhibit 6-5) in part as a result of its development of the Write On! Program. This program illustrates Martin County's effective use of student performance data to make instructional decisions that improve student performance. The program, developed in 1997-98 (revisions 1998/99), is a comprehensive plan for developing successful writers and is correlated to the Florida Writes! assessment program. Major components of the program include those below.

- All students, Pre-K through grade 12 write on the Florida Writes! assessment administration date.
- Parents were provided an orientation on the skills and scoring of the Florida Writes! assessment.
- Rubrics and a bank of prompts were developed as teaching tools.
- Teachers were trained to use the rubrics to score students' writing and in how to provide direct instruction to students in the interpretation of writing prompts.

The Martin County School District has been successful in increasing math FCAT scores at most schools. In 1995, the district adopted an Emerging Model Classroom theme in math and science. This program was an outgrowth of the Improving Student Learning Outcomes in Elementary School Mathematics Program which allowed the district to get the Goals 2000 grant and implement the Emerging Model Classroom program. The Emerging Model Classroom goals are to create a rich and meaningful learning environment in mathematics and science, increase the number of students who are successful in mathematics and science, form a community and school partnership, model change, and align instructional practices with national and state standards. Schools develop model lessons in math and science and host math and science family nights. The Emerging Model Classroom has several components, which have been instrumental in raising student performance in math including those below.

- Content that emphasizes the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics math standards. The standards focus on mathematical problem solving, communication reasoning, and connections
- A learning environment that is challenging and promotes active participation
- Opportunity for diagnosis and assessment through procedures such as informal and structured observations, performance tasks, self-evaluations, and projects
- Self-assessment and progress review using student portfolios
- Effective teaching practices including discovery learning and collaborative interactions among students

In addition, the district is targeting improvement activities to raise the performance levels at poorly performing schools. For example, the district has recently developed and is implementing a plan to target educational improvements at the two schools in Indiantown and create a team effort to raise student performance. Both of these schools received a "D" in the recently published statewide school grades. The strategies for improvement include items noted below.

- A requirement that all teachers reapply, and interview for positions. Thirteen teachers were transferred to other schools, three additional teachers requested transfers, and 2 teachers went to another district.

- A salary increase equal to 4% of base for each teacher employed at these schools
- A \$2,000 signing bonus for hard-to-fill positions
- Assigning a new assistant principal to Warfield Elementary School
- All teachers must commit to working in the school for three years
- Each teacher will receive 10 additional days of staff development
- An additional position at each school to monitor instruction and work with staff to evaluate student gains and testing throughout the year to help focus learning strategies.
- School goals set by the district
- A \$1,000 incentive bonus to each teacher if the school meets the goals set by the district

To focus on increasing reading scores Bessey Creek Elementary School implemented the Accelerated Reader program in 1995-96. Reading scores on the FCAT improved from an overall average of 3 in 1998 to a 4 in 1999 (Exhibit 6-5). Accelerated Reader focuses on reading fluency. Students independently read increasingly difficult reading passages. As students complete a reading passage, they take a computer based comprehension test over the passage. Students meeting mastery continue to the next level.

Student Performance Data Indicates That Overall Performance Is Increasing

The 1997-98 school year was the first year that most Florida students in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10 were tested with the FCAT. Florida has defined five achievement levels for the FCAT. Cut-off scores for both the FCAT reading and math at different grade levels are defined, but are different from grade to grade and test to test.

- Level five, the highest level, indicates that students have success with the most challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. Students at this level answer most of the questions correctly, including the most challenging questions.
- Level four indicates that students have success with challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. Students at this level answer most of the questions correctly, but have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.
- Level three indicates that students have partial success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards but performance is inconsistent. Students at this level answer many questions correctly but are generally not successful with questions that are most challenging.
- Level two indicates that students have limited success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.
- Level one indicates that students have little success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards.

FCAT data were collected for the norming process during 1997-98 and to measure performance in 1998-99. The 1997-98 data are used as the baselines to examine changes in performance.

- Exhibit 6-4 illustrates the 1997-98 and 1998-99 FCAT scores for students in Martin County and peer districts. When considered as a large group, students in Martin County School District scored at levels very similar to the peer

districts and at higher levels than the state as a whole on three of the 6 tests. Students in Florida scored at level 2 for all FCAT tests.

Exhibit 6-4

Martin County's FCAT Scores Are Similar to Those of Peer Districts

1997-98	Reading (level)			Mathematics (level)		
	4th	8th	10th	5th	8th	10th
Charlotte	3	2	2	3	3	3
Citrus	3	2	2	2	2	2
Indian River	3	2	2	2	2	2
Martin	3	3	2	2	3	2
St. Johns	3	3	2	2	3	3
Santa Rosa	3	3	2	2	3	2
Peer average (without Martin)	3	2.4	2	2.2	2.6	2.4
Florida	2	2	2	2	2	2

1998-99	Reading (level)			Mathematics (level)		
	4th	8th	10th	5th	8th	10th
Charlotte	3	+3	2	3	3	3
Citrus	3	+3	2	2	+3	+3
Indian River	3	2	2	2	2	2
Martin	3	3	2	2	3	+3
St. Johns	3	3	2	+3	3	3
Santa Rosa	3	3	2	2	3	+3
Peer average (without Martin)	3	2.8	2	2.4	2.8	2.8
Florida	2	2	2	2	2	2

Note: a plus sign (+) preceding the score level indicates an increase over the previous year's performance.

Source: Department of Education.

Scores on individual campuses in Martin County vary from level 4 to level 1 (See Exhibit 6-5). Approximately 75% of the district's schools performed at level 3 or higher on either the reading or mathematics FCAT. Seven of the district's schools increased their FCAT scores enough to move up to a higher level. One elementary school increased its reading score from a three to a four. This indicates that the students at that school have success with challenging content. Three of the four middle schools increased their mathematics scores from a 2 to a 3. Finally, both high schools increased from a 2 to a level 3, one in reading and the other in mathematics.

Exhibit 6-5**1997-1998 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test Results by School***

School	Reading (Level)		Math (Level)	
	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99
<i>Elementary Schools</i>	<i>Grade 4</i>		<i>Grade 5</i>	
Bessey Creek	328 (3)	342(4) +	338 (3)	335(3)
Crystal Lake	316 (3)	311(3)	321 (2)	321(2)
Hobe Sound	310 (3)	305(3)	314 (2)	311(2)
Jensen Beach	306 (3)	316(3)	335 (3)	333(3)
Palm City	325 (3)	319(3)	332 (3)	332(3)
JD Parker	297 (2)	278(2)	294 (2)	311(2)
Pinewood	299 (3)	302(3)	304 (2)	314(2)
Port Salerno	281 (2)	284(2)	271 (1)	313(2) +
SeaWind	313 (3)	299(3)	315 (2)	325(2)
Warfield	267 (1)	251(1)	253 (Indiantown MS, 1)	267 (Indiantown MS, 1)
Felix A. Williams	323 (3)	324(3)	342 (3)	341(3)
Martin County School District	307 (3)	305(3)	312 (2)	319(2)
Florida	294 (2)	296(2)	300 (2)	310(2)
<i>Middle Schools</i>	<i>Grade 8</i>		<i>Grade 8</i>	
Indiantown	271 (2)	285(2)	267 (1)	269(1)
Hidden Oaks	320 (3)	328(3)	322 (2)	325(3) +
Murray	314 (3)	315(3)	316 (2)	324(3)+
Stuart	318 (3)	324(3)	320 (2)	320(3) +
Martin County School District	313 (3)	320(3)	315 (3)	319(3)
Florida	298 (2)	302(2)	299 (2)	304(2)
<i>High Schools</i>	<i>Grade 10</i>		<i>Grade 10</i>	
Martin County	320 (2)	327(3)+	320 (3)	328(3)
South Fork	310 (2)	310(2)	311 (2)	315(3)+
Martin County School District	315 (2)	319(2)	314 (2)	322(3)
Florida	299 (2)	306(2)	301 (2)	312(2)

Note: a plus sign (+) following the score level indicates an increase over the previous year's performance.

Source: Department of Education.

Most students in Florida also are assessed in the area of writing. For the Florida Writes! Assessment, students are given 45 minutes to respond to a topic in writing. Students are scored holistically by two raters on a 6-point scale ranging from 1, the lowest score to 6, the highest score. Martin County Florida Writes! Scores are Equal or Better than the State Average and Better than Many of its Peers (See Exhibit 6-6).

Exhibit 6-6

Martin County Florida Writes! Scores Are Equal or Better Than the State Average and Better Than Many of Its Peers, Spring 1999

District	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Charlotte County School District	3.3	3.8	3.7
Citrus County School District	3.4	3.3	3.6
Indian River County School District	3.1	3.3	3.3
Martin County School District	3.1	3.7	3.7
St. Johns County School District	3.2	3.7	3.8
Santa Rosa County School District	2.9	3.4	3.5
Peer Districts (without Martin)	3.2	3.5	3.6
Florida	3.1	3.4	3.6

Source: Department of Education.

Exhibit 6-7 illustrates individual Martin County Schools, the Martin County School District, and Florida scores on the Florida Writes! for four years, 1995-96 through 1998-99. As these data illustrate, Florida Writes! scores in the Martin County Schools increased from 1995-96 to 1998-99 at every elementary school, at three middle schools and one high school. Exceptions include Indiantown Middle School, and South Fork High School. In many cases Florida Writes! scores decreased from 1995-96 to 1996-97, but then increased from 1996-97 to 1997-98 and increased again in 1998-99.

Exhibit 6-7

Florida Writes! Scores Increased at the Majority of Schools from 1995-96 Through 1998-99

School	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	Increased Scores
Elementary Schools, Grade 4					
Bessey Creek	-	2.8	3.2	3.8	X
Crystal Lake	2.5	2.8	3.2	3.1	X
Hobe Sound	2.6	2.2	3.0	3	X
Jensen Beach	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.2	X
Palm City	2.8	2.7	3.5	3.7	X
JD Parker	2.3	2.2	2.9	2.7	X
Pinewood	2.5	2.8	2.8	3.1	X
Port Salerno	2.3	1.8	2.8	2.8	X
SeaWind	2.9	2.7	3.1	3	X
Warfield	2.1	2.1	2.5	2.4	X
Felix A. Williams	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.3	X
Martin County School District	2.6	2.5	3.0	3.1	
Florida	2.5	2.6	3.0	3.1	
Middle Schools, Grade 8					

School	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	Increased Scores
Indiantown	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.2	
Hidden Oaks	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.9	X
Murray	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.5	X
Stuart	3.7	3.2	3.3	3.8	X
Martin County School District	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.7	
Florida	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.4	
High Schools, Grade 10					
Martin County	3.6	3.8	3.9	3.9	X
South Fork	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.6	
Spectrum	-	-	2.1	2.2	X
Martin County School District	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.7	
Florida	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.6	

Source: Department of Education, 1997-98.

In addition to the FCAT and Florida Writes! all districts in Florida administer a norm-referenced test, although all districts do not use the same norm-referenced instrument. Martin County School District administers the California Achievement Test (CAT) to its students. The Florida Department of Education collects and reports the results of these tests at grades 4 and 8.

As Exhibit 6-8 illustrates, elementary students in Martin County generally do better on the math portion of the CAT than the Reading portion. In middle school, most students' scores improved on the math portion (See Exhibit 6-9).

Exhibit 6-8

Martin County's Students Performed at Higher Levels on the Mathematics Portion of the 1999 California Achievement Test

School	Reading Percentiles				Math Percentiles			
Grade Levels	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
Bessey Creek	63	77	81	79	83	81	92	80
Crystal Lake	52	72	66	61	75	71	74	73
Felix A. Williams	70	76	71	77	63	84	84	92
Hobe Sound	55	75	60	60	45	73	69	64
Jensen Beach	60	77	64	62	71	84	69	74
JD Parker	47	50	33	60	80	66	43	54
Palm City	71	77	77	76	80	87	93	82
Port Salerno	35	44	50	46	66	70	60	61
Pinewood	50	62	60	57	64	65	76	70
SeaWind	52	67	55	61	67	75	78	74
Warfield	34	37	26	24 (IMS)	48	50	55	41 (IMS)

Note: Warfield Elementary School serves grades preK to 4. The 5th grade scores are from Indiantown Middle School (IMS).

Source: Department of Education, 1998-1999.

Exhibit 6-9**Middle School Students' Scores Improved More on the Math Portion of the 1999 California Achievement Test**

School	Reading Percentile			Math Percentile		
Grade Levels	6	7	8	6	7	8
Hidden Oaks	69 +	73 +	72 +	74 +	72+	68
Indiantown	24	26 -	40	27 +	36 +	27
Murray	52	58	67	65 +	64 +	66
Stuart	60 +	71 +	68+	62	65 +	67

Note: a plus sign (+) indicates an increase in score level over the 1997-98 results

Source: Martin County School District.

Students in high school also take the High School Competency Test (HSCT) (Exhibit 6-10). Students in grade 12 retake the HSCT if they do not pass it during grade 11. This explains the low passing rate in grade 12.

Exhibit 6-10**1998 Percent Passing the HSCT by High School for Communications and Math**

School	Communications		Math	
Grade Levels	11	12	11	12
Martin County	86	56	83	48
South Fork	81	35	83	35
Spectrum	68	60	43	60

Source: Department of Education, 1997-98.

The District Should Examine Student Performance Data From a Cohort Group to Improve Its Use of Student Data

Although Martin County does use several effective practices designed to improve student performance it does not examine its achievement data by cohort (a group of students that stays together as they progress through school), by subpopulation such as students who are economically disadvantaged, or by comparison to peer districts. The Martin County School District does have data available to examine strengths and weaknesses among its schools, and they do collect several years of data, but these are not cohort data.

Increased Use of Disaggregated Performance Data Would Foster Efforts to Improve Performance

The district receives disaggregated FCAT data from DOE and the California Achievement Test, and provided training to school site personnel on how to read and interpret the test data. Florida's Department of Education supplies student performance data to districts that is disaggregated so that school districts can better evaluate how well they are serving student populations. The FCAT results for the total scores and subtest scores are provided by campus. The scores are further disaggregated to indicate scores of Limited English Proficient students and exceptional students. Students' scores are also provided by

ethnicity, language spoken, gender, and some specific categories of exceptionalities. The HSCT results for the average number of questions answered correctly and the percent passing are provided by campus for the same categories as the FCAT. The California Achievement Test results for percentage of students above the median and other percentile ranks are provided by campus for low SES students (based on eligibility for free and reduced price lunch), gender, ethnicity, and exceptional students.

Examining scores of student sub-populations can help Martin County direct resources to improve student performance. There is a large degree of variability among the mean scores for subcategories of students, with levels ranging from 1 to 4 (Exhibit 6-11). For example, students in Martin do better on the FCAT in the earlier grades than the upper grades and some large sub-populations are performing at level 1. This gives information on where intensified activities may need to be focused. As Exhibit 6-12 illustrates reading mean scores for students in the standard curriculum decrease at grade 10. In addition, students' math scores are at level 2 at grades 5 and 10 and level 3 at grade 8.

Exhibit 6-11

1997-98 and 1998-99 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Math Test Results by Subgroup

Subgroup	Grade Level 5		Grade Level 8		Grade Level 10	
	Year: 1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	*	282 (1) N=13	*	258 (1) N=12	263 (1) N=9	258 (1) N=8
Exceptional Students	286 (1) N=112	274 (1) N=129	248 (1) N=113	240 (1) N=135	276 (1) N=78	274 (1) N=87
White	325 (2) N=765	330 (3) N=768	323 (3) N=768	326 (3) N=817	320 (3) N=680	325 (2) N=726
Black	254 (1) N=100	275 (1) N=109	267 (1) N=85	262 (1) N=90	269 (1) N=68	275 (1) N=65
Hispanic	266 (1) N=88	230 (1) N=102	280 (2) N=71	284 (2) N=58	276 (1) N=37	269 (1) N=47
Asian	321 (2) N=6	314 (2) N=8	322 (3) N=13	330 (3) N=10	343 (4) N=12	317 (2) N=11
Female	310 (2) N=497	317 (2) N=521	313 (3) N=481	316 (3) N=513	315 (3) N=452	320 (2) N=428
Male	314 (2) N=467	320 (2) N=474	317 (3) N=450	322 (3) N=465	314 (2) N=343	323 (2) N=478
Language Impaired	195 (1) N=8	*	*	*	*	*
Gifted	369 (4) N=79	*	367 (4) N=78	*	*	*
Section 504	292 (2) N=39	-	303 (2) N=22	-	297 (2) N=12	-
All standard curriculum students	312 (2) N=965	318 (2) N=995	315 (3) N=939	319 (3) N=978	314 (2) N=796	322 (2) N=847

*N<6 (no data reported) -scores not available.

Source: Department of Education, 1997-98.

Exhibit 6-12

1997-98 and 1998-99 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Reading Test Results by Subgroup

Subgroup	Grade Level 4		Grade Level 8		Grade Level 10	
	Year: 1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	*	282 (1) N=13	*	258 (1) N=12	263 (1) N=9	258 (1) N=8
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	278 (2) N=10	232 (1) N=4	*	231 (1) N=12	274 (1) N=9	241 (1) N=6
Exceptional Students	273 (1) N=131	252 (1) N=119	246 (1) N=108	245 (1) N=133	252 (1) N=79	252 (1) N=90
White	-	-	321 (3) N=759	327 (3) N=818	320 (2) N=680	325 (2) N=726
Black	-	-	276 (2) N=85	275 (2) N=92	282 (1) N=68	275 (1) N=65
Hispanic	-	-	278 (2) N=70	288 (2) N=56	281 (1) N=37	278 (1) N=47
Asian	-	-	326 (3) N=13	340 (3) N=10	334 (3) N=12	327 (3) N=11
Female	-	-	319 (3) N=473	325 (3) N=506	318 (2) N=455	323 (2) N=432
Male	-	-	307 (2) N=455	315 (3) N=489	310 (2) N=346	314 (2) N=420
Language Impaired	-	-	*	*	*	*
Gifted	-	-	366 (4) N=77	*	*	*
Section 504	-	-	315 (3) N=23	-	307 (2) N=11	-
All standard curriculum students	307 (2) N=919	-	313 (3) N=932	320 (3) N=975	315 (2) N=802	319 (2) N=852

*N<6 (no data reported) -scores not available.

Source: Department of Education, 1997-98.

Recommendations

- *With the new coordinator of Research and Evaluation, the Martin County School District should collect cohort data for targeted subgroups of students to determine if instructional practices are improving student performance. These steps should be implemented.*
 - *Collect student performance data for selected subgroups and document in report form.*
 - *Disseminate reports to interested stakeholders.*
 - *Plan to develop, modify or enhance instructional programs as needed.*

Action Plan 6-2**Student Performance**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Collect cohort student performance data of targeted subgroups.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of School Improvement and Curriculum , the director of Educational Technology, and the recommended Coordinator of research and evaluation should meet and develop a plan including the types of data to be collected.</p> <p>Step 2: The school board and the superintendent approve the plan.</p> <p>Step 3: The recommended director/coordinator of Research and Evaluation oversees the process of collecting the cohort data by subgroup and generating reports.</p> <p>Step 4: Acquire software to enable cohort tracking.</p> <p>Step 5: Provide training on the use of the software.</p> <p>Step 6: The staff enhances or modifies instructional programs as needed.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of School Improvement and Curriculum; director of Educational Technology; school board
Time Frame	March 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Curriculum

1 **The Martin County School District's curriculum is aligned with subject area standards and correlated to the Sunshine State Standards.**

A quality educational program should start with a quality curriculum, which spells out what students are to learn at each grade level. In education, curriculum includes long and short term goals; a description of the instructional strategies; suggestions for instructional materials, textbooks and supplementary materials; and the assessments used to measure progress toward learning the content. Many curricula provide scope and sequence. Scope and sequence represents written hierarchy of skills in the order in which the skills should be taught. It is a description of what to teach and how to teach it. Almost all textbooks and supplementary educational materials include a scope and sequence. Curriculum has two major purposes in schools. It provides a focus by identifying what is essential and it connects learning leading to mastery within and across grade levels and schools. A school district must carefully design and implement the curriculum so these two purposes are met.

Martin County School District Has a Board Policy Regarding Curriculum. However, the Guidelines for Implementation Should Be Expanded

Effective instructional program delivery requires a sound instructional management system. Well-written board policies are important to establish commonly understood standards for the district curriculum. These standards ensure consistency in the curriculum across the district and provide a systemic basis for decision making in all instructional settings. The Martin County School District has recently approved a school board policy regarding curriculum and its evaluation based on student performance. However, current guidelines for the implementation of this policy do not specify (a) how or when the evaluations of curriculum will occur, (b) specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum, (c) processes for long-range planning, (d) monitoring of curriculum delivery, and (e) a requirement for data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning.

Curriculum Is Linked to Standards. The Establishment of Grade to Grade and School to School Consistency Is in Process

The process of linking the curriculum from school to school has begun with the alignment of the district curriculum to Sunshine State Standards and national standards such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and National Council of Teachers of English standards. The district should continue to be diligent in ensuring that schools throughout the district are all using the standards as a guide for delivering curriculum and instruction to students.

Because of the strong site based management system, it is important for Martin County School District's central administration to provide guidance to its schools and to ensure the basic standards and objectives of the districtwide curriculum are linked from grade to grade and school to school. Martin County has developed its curriculum in correlation with the Sunshine State Standards. The district has developed lesson plan checklists, student expectations cards for language arts and math, and revised the student progression plan.

Two working drafts of the curriculum alignment are available to schools within the Martin County School District, one for elementary schools and one for secondary schools. The elementary standards document is divided into six sections, the arts, physical/health education, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The secondary standards document is divided into seven sections, the six previously mentioned and foreign languages. Each section was developed under the guidance of a subject area Leadership Team. The teams consisted of teachers and assistant principals from all Martin County schools.

The correlation guide is organized around strands within each subject area. Each strand is linked to one or more standards. For each standard, the guide provides links to district-adopted textbooks and curriculum guides, benchmarks, and sample performance descriptors, all organized by grade level. This guide will greatly assist Martin County in linking its curriculum from grade to grade and school to school.

According to the review team's survey, teachers and administrators believe that the curriculum is coordinated from grade to grade within a school, but are less certain about the coordination of the curriculum from school to school. The vast majority (71.2%) of teachers and administrators surveyed agreed that the district's curriculum is coordinated from grade to grade within a school. On the other hand, a smaller proportion (42.5%) agreed that the district's curriculum is coordinated among all schools (Exhibit 6-13).

Exhibit 6-13**Teacher and Administrator Responses Indicate That Curriculum Could Be Better Coordinated Among Schools**

Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	No Opinion
The district's curriculum is coordinated from grade to grade at my school.	(%) 71.2 (N) 67	(%) 13.8 (N) 13	(%) 8.5 (N) 8	(%) 6.4 (N) 6
The district's curriculum is coordinated among all schools.	(%) 42.5 (N) 40	(%) 19.1 (N) 18	(%) 29.7 (N) 28	(%) 8.5 (N) 8

Source: Review Team Survey.

The Martin County School District provides adequate resources (e.g., curriculum guides, scope and sequence, support) to its instructional staff for the effective delivery of the curriculum. The district correlated its curriculum with the Sunshine State Standards during the spring and summer of 1997. During phase I of the project, prototype curriculum guides in math and science were developed. These contained correlations to benchmarks, resources, activities, accountability instruments, and pupil progress. During phase II, guides in language arts, social studies, the arts, PE/health, and foreign languages were developed. Phase III occurred during the 1997-98 school year with the implementation of the working draft of the correlation guide in the Martin school classrooms. Progress was monitored on a monthly basis through communication with Leadership Teams and/or Principals. These guides are now available to all classroom teachers and provide a system wide basis and rationale for curriculum delivery. In addition to these guides, the district has correlated the district's character education and technology education to the Sunshine State Standards.

The results from the survey conducted by the review team indicated that teachers and administrators responding agree that the curriculum matches the academic needs of the school. Teachers and administrators also feel very strongly that the school's teaching staff does a good job of presenting the curriculum to students. According to the survey, 94.7% agreed with this statement. Parents also agree that the teachers know the material they teach. Of those surveyed, 76.2% agreed with this statement and only 7.1% disagreed.

Of the statements on the survey related to curriculum, one statement received a less favorable response from teachers and administrators. While more than half (57.4%) of the teachers and administrators believe they are given adequate guidance by administrators in implementing the curriculum, about a fourth of those surveyed were neutral and 13.8% disagreed with this statement (Exhibit 6-14).

Exhibit 6-14**Teachers and Administrators Agree That District Curriculum Matches Needs and Is Well Presented**

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators	The curriculum matches student academic needs at my school.	(%) 69.2 (N) 65	(%) 19.1 (N) 18	(%) 9.6 (N) 9	(%) 2.1 (N) 2
Teachers and Administrators	I am given adequate guidance by administrators in implementing the curriculum.	(%) 57.4 (N) 54	(%) 23.4 (N) 22	(%) 13.8 (N) 13	(%) 5.3 (N) 5
Teachers and Administrators	Our school's teaching staff does a good job of presenting the curriculum to students.	(%) 94.7 (N) 89	(%) 5.3 (N) 5	(%) 0 (N) 0	(%) 0 (N) 0
Parents	Teachers in my child(ren)'s school know the material they teach.	(%) 76.2 (N) 32	(%) 16.7 (N) 7	(%) 7.1 (N) 3	(%) 0 (N) 0

Source: Review Team Survey.

In addition to its curriculum alignment efforts, Martin County School District has made other effective decisions concerning the use of district resources for curriculum. Martin County School District has allocated funds for curriculum. For example, the district made a strong commitment to the alignment of the district curriculum to the Sunshine State Standards. This required both financial resources and professional staff members' time.

Another example of Martin County's commitment to innovative curriculum is the Environmental Studies Center. The Environmental Studies Center began in 1972 with a federal grant and the passion of two teachers and has evolved into a state recognized environmental program. The environmental program serves students in kindergarten through seventh grade and involves them in hands-on experiences with the center's science curriculum. The program is designed to provide students with knowledge and appreciation of the environment. Programs include classroom teaching and visits to the St. Lucie Estuary, the Indian River Lagoon, and the beaches and mangrove swamps of Hutchinson Island. The center itself consists of six rooms, three pavilion-style outdoor classrooms, the courtyard, and the tidal pool. Here students can use microscopes to study plankton and other life found in the river, examine collections of local specimens such as seahorses, hermit crabs, and pipefish, and view fish and other invertebrate marine life of the nearby River Lagoon and Atlantic Ocean.

Recommendations

- *The Martin County School District should expand its guidelines for implementing board policy regarding curriculum evaluation to (a) delineate specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum, (b) require long-range planning, (c) specify*

monitoring of curriculum delivery, and (d) require data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning.

- The Martin County School District should hire two curriculum coordinators, one specializing in the language arts and the other specializing in mathematics. The district has made progress in coordinating the districtwide curriculum to meet Sunshine State Standard. The Curriculum coordinators will help the district ensure that the districtwide and individual school curricula address the instructional needs of all students based on evaluations of student performance.

Action Plan 6-3

Curriculum

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Expand the implementation guidelines for the board's current policy related to curriculum, 6Gx43-5.02.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of School Improvement and Curriculum drafts expanded policy guidelines that (a) delineate specific roles and responsibilities for curriculum, (b) requires long-range planning, (c) specifies monitoring of curriculum delivery, and (d) requires data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning.</p> <p>Step 2: The superintendent reviews the policy guidelines.</p> <p>Step 3: The superintendent approves the guidelines.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of School Improvement and Curriculum; superintendent
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Create and fill two curriculum coordinator positions.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations propose two positions and job descriptions for curriculum coordinators of mathematics and language arts.</p> <p>Step 2: The school board approves the positions and job descriptions.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Personnel and Employee Relations post the jobs.</p> <p>Step 4: The superintendent, director of School Improvement and Curriculum, and director of Personnel and Employee Relations interview and hire the coordinators.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; director of Personnel and Employee Relations; school board
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	The fiscal impact of this recommendation is based on the average salary of a coordinator position Martin of \$56,382 and a benefit rate of 33% for a total fiscal impact of \$149,976.

Instructional Technology

1 The Martin County School District is improving its integration of technology into instruction so students become capable information technology users.

Technology and its integration into instruction is no longer an option for schools. It is essential for students to become technologically capable so that they can live and work successfully in an increasingly complex and information-rich society. Schools should assist students to become capable information technology users, information seekers, analyzers, and evaluators, creative and effective users of productivity tools, and informed and responsible users of technology.

It is important for schools to go beyond drill and practice when integrating computers into instruction. Students are motivated by interacting with programs when they can influence the outcome of an activity. In addition, the best type of feedback is also instructive. Teachers who use computers for more sophisticated activities are more likely to report higher teacher and student attendance, less tardiness, and better morale¹.

Martin County School District Uses Several Strategies to Provide Adequate Technology Training for Instructional Staff

Martin County School District has a shared service arrangement with Indian River Community College (IRCC). IRCC provides technology training for Martin County teachers at a cost of \$42.00 per class. The district will also pay for substitutes for teachers who want to go to the Florida Education Technology Conference. Finally, the district has an Educational Technology Advisory Committee. The media specialist from each campus is typically a member of this committee. Members of this committee provide onsite training to teachers. The district pays for substitutes during this training and professional leave to attend.

In addition, the district purchased 200 laptops and provides them to teachers to use for instructional purposes. Currently, one in four or five teachers have a laptop.

The majority of teachers and administrators (67.0%) responding to the survey agree that they feel comfortable using computers as part of their class. Only 17% disagreed with this statement (Exhibit 6-15).

¹ Archer, J. (1998.) The link to higher scores. Education Week, 18(5), 10-11, 13-14, 18, 20-21.

Exhibit 6-15**Teachers and Administrators Are Comfortable Using Computers**

Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
I feel comfortable using computers as part of my class.	(%) 67.0 (N) 63	(%) 9.6 (N) 9	(%) 17.0 (N) 16	(%) 6.4 (N) 6

Source: Review Team Survey.

Innovative Strategies for Using Technology Instituted

The Martin County School District has designated one school, JD Parker School of Science, Math, and Technology, as a theme school. During the 1997-98 school year, the school was awarded \$500,000 through the Technology Literacy Grant. This grant was a state competitive grant and 16 schools in Florida received funding for technology. JD Parker used its money to retrofit the school and to provide Internet access to every classroom. This process was completed in April 1999. Currently every teacher is receiving training on Internet use, including email. Students will soon have their own email addresses. In addition, the school houses two computer labs and two technology labs, one for primary grades and one for intermediate grades. Primary students use Legos and machines, while intermediate students use robotics and lasers.

For school years 1997-99, the Martin County School District received a Title VII Program Enhancement grant of \$300,000. Two schools, Port Salerno Elementary and JD Parker School of Science, Math, and Technology split this award. The funds were used to develop a fully operational computer lab with English as a Second Language software to aid in the acquisition of the English language. The lab will remain in the school after the grant is completed. Funds were also used to hire a computer assistant to manage the computers and software purchased, to provide technology training to faculty, and to conduct Parent Literacy evenings and parent meetings.

Plan Developed to Provide Better Technical Support for Teachers and Schools

Teachers indicated that technology assistance can be slow but district staff has developed a new user support plan to address this issue. The Martin County School District has a director of Educational Technology and a coordinator of Instructional Technology. The coordinator of Instructional Technology oversees the technical support available to the schools. In an interview, he stated that when a teacher or campus administrator is having a technical problem, he/she calls the Help Desk. At that time a work ticket is completed with the job description and time and date of the call. Technicians are sent out to sites in chronological order. This method of assignment can be very ineffective because technicians may run from one end of the district to another. The coordinator further stated that the technicians try for a 1 to 2 day turn around time. However, in the teacher focus group meeting conducted by the review team, the teachers stated that they often had to wait months for a technician to resolve a technology problem.

During the course of the review the district changed its policies and implemented a "modified" chronological processing of technical support work orders. This change resulted in work orders being processed according to geographic location and chronological order.

The coordinator of Instructional Technology reviews the work orders weekly to ensure that the technical support staff responds to all concerns as soon as possible. Less than 5% of the work orders take less than thirty days.

A user support plan has been developed and consists of a three-tier approach.

- Tier one consists of a school site based technical assistant who will be trained in trouble shooting and simple repair. Currently, there is no funding for this position.
- Tier two consists of software support and network specialists who will support the site-based technical assistant. This team will go to the sites to troubleshoot problems or seek other expertise.
- Tier three consists of technical experts in the area of voice and data. This group will maintain the LAN and the WAN for the district.

If this plan were fully implemented, the district would provide adequate support of technology for its teachers and schools.

Increased Microcomputers Foster Effective Use of Technology

The Martin County School District has significantly reduced its PC to student ratio over the last six years to one computer for every 4.3 students. In addition the district plans to purchase an approximately 1,000 additional computers during the 1999-00 school year. Exhibit 6-16 shows how the ratio has improved even as student population has increased over time. District staff indicated that the district actually has a greater number of computers because not all older computers were included on the report submitted to DOE.

Exhibit 6-16

Number and Ratio of Instructional Microcomputers to Students for the Martin County School District, 1993-99

Year	Number	Ratio
1998-99	3,711	1:4.33
1997-98	2,220	1:6.96
1996-97	2,063	1:7.19
1995-96	2,001	1:7.18
1994-95	1,877	1:7.27
1993-94	1,994	1:6.53

Source: Coordinator of Instructional Technology, 1997-98.

During the 1997-98 school year, Martin County School District had fewer microcomputers per student in comparison to its peers but the district has recently purchased enough computers to bring its ratio in line with those of its peers. Martin had a ratio of 1:7 computers per student; its peers have ratios of either 1:4 or 1:5 (Exhibit 6-17).

Exhibit 6-17**In 1997-98 Martin County Had Fewer Microcomputers Per Student Than Its Peers**

District	Ratio
Martin	1:7
Citrus	1:5
Indian River	1:5
Santa Rosa	1:5
Charlotte	1:4
St Johns	1:4

Source: Microcomputing Resources Survey. Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Although the numbers of computers available for instruction in Martin County has increased significantly, teachers and administrators do not always feel that they have technology readily available to educate students. Approximately half (46.8%) of the respondents indicated that they do have technology readily available, but 37.3% disagreed with this statement (Exhibit 6-18).

Exhibit 6-18**Less Than One-Half of Martin's Teachers and Administrators Believe Technology Is Readily Available**

Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Technology is readily available for me to educate students.	(%) 46.8 (N) 44	(%) 12.8 (N) 12	(%) 37.3 (N) 35	(%) 3.2 (N) 3

Source: Review Team Survey.

In the past, the district has placed most of its computers in lab settings rather than distributing them among classrooms. Labs can be an efficient use of computers; however, labs also reduce the amount of time a student can access a computer and the types of instructional activities in which students can engage. At four schools labs are equipped with subject area drill and practice programs developed by Josten's Learning Corporation.

Currently, Martin is placing more computers in the classroom as the budget allows. According to the district's technology plan, by this school year (1998-99) 30% of the schools will be retrofitted and have at least one connected teacher workstation with software per classroom. By the year 2001, the district will complete the retrofit wiring at all school sites. All classrooms will contain at least one connected student workstation per classroom.

Technology Opportunities for Students Are Improving

Martin County School District is improving in providing opportunities to its students to (a) learn basic operations and technology systems, (b) use technology productivity tools and telecommunications; (c) use technology to locate information, process data, and report results; and (d) employ technology in solving problems in the real world.

Martin does have a high percent of students using microcomputers in the main academic core areas in comparison to its peers. This may be indicative of the high number of lab settings. More students are able to access the labs, but for shorter periods of instructional time (Exhibit 6-19).

Exhibit 6-19

In Several Core Areas Martin Has a Higher Percentage of Students Using Computers Than Its Peer Districts, 1997-98

District	English	Foreign Languages	Math	Reading	Science	Social Studies
Santa Rosa	85.5	2.3	77.2	62.5	70.4	67.9
St Johns	82.7	3.9	66.9	54.9	71.5	65.6
Martin	79.9	4.5	77.2	71.4	64.8	51.7
Citrus	76.1	0.9	59.4	49.5	54.1	51.0
Charlotte	74.4	8.6	66.3	55.1	49.4	58.2
Indian River	-	0.7	67.6	66.5	44.2	45.0

Source: Microcomputing Resources Survey. Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

However, when examining the percent of students using microcomputers for computer instruction in business education, computer applications, computer literacy and computer programming, Martin has a very low percent of students receiving this type of technology instruction in comparison to its peers (Exhibit 6-20).

Exhibit 6-20

Martin Has a Low Percentage of Students Using Microcomputers for Computer Instruction Compared to Peers, 1997-98

District	Business Education	Computer Applications	Computer Literacy	Computer Programming
Indian River	23.0	68.0	60.1	2.9
Citrus	17.7	68.6	56.2	4.0
Santa Rosa	13.4	67.4	65.1	8.0
Charlotte	12.9	80.0	73.4	9.3
Martin	12.0	48.5	64.9	1.4
St. Johns	4.5	58.7	55.0	6.3

Source: Microcomputing Resources Survey. Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

In the Florida Microcomputer Resources survey, four settings are identified that may have Internet access for students. These four settings are the classroom, the media center, the computer lab, and other instructional settings (e.g. Reading Mastery Center). During 1997-98, Martin County School district had very few classrooms with Internet access. (JD Parker is the exception to this rule.) Martin had a much larger percentage of classrooms with no Internet access in comparison to its peers (Exhibits 6-21 through 6-24). Instead, the district focused its Internet access in media centers, computer labs, and other instructional settings. In most cases, each media center, computer lab or other instructional setting has only one computer with Internet access, which makes it difficult for students to conduct

Internet based research. This lack of access is changing with the implementation of the technology plan. As stated in an earlier section, during 1998-99, 30% of Martin County's schools have been retrofitted. This process will be complete by the year 2001.

Exhibit 6-21

In Comparison with Its Peers Martin Has the Highest Percentage of Classrooms with No Internet Access, 1997-98

District	Classrooms Having Zero Computers With Internet Access		Classrooms Having One or More Computers with Internet Access	
Santa Rosa	N=290	26.0%	N=826	74.0%
St. Johns	N=103	9.6%	N=972	90.4%
Charlotte	N=130	18.2%	N=586	81.8%
Indian River	N= 41	6.1%	N=630	93.9%
Citrus	N=283	35.8%	N=507	64.2%
Martin County	N=619	82.5%	N=131	17.5%

Source: Microcomputing Resources Survey. Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Exhibit 6-22

Unlike Its Peers All of Martin's Media Centers Have Internet Access, 1997-98

District	Media Centers Having Zero Computers With Internet Access		Media Centers Having One or More Computers with Internet Access	
Santa Rosa	N=1	3.6%	N=27	96.4%
St. Johns	N=1	2.6%	N=38	97.4%
Charlotte	N=0	0%	N=17	100.0%
Indian River	N=10	28.6%	N=25	71.4%
Citrus	N=7	25.0%	N=21	75.0%
Martin County	N=0	0%	N=28	100.0%

Source: Microcomputing Resources Survey. Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Exhibit 6-23

Unlike Its Peers All of Martin's Computer Labs Have Internet Access, 1997-98

District	Computer Labs Having Zero Computers With Internet Access		Computer Labs Having One or More Computers with Internet Access	
Santa Rosa	N=2	4.3%	N=44	95.7%
St. Johns	N=4	6.1%	N=62	93.9%
Charlotte	N=5	14.7%	N=29	85.3%
Indian River	N=62	35.6%	N=112	64.4%
Citrus	N=29	46.4%	N=45	53.6%
Martin County	N=0	0%	N=20	100.0%

Source: Microcomputing Resources Survey. Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Exhibit 6-24

In Martin County Other Instructional Areas Such as Reading Labs Have Internet Access, 1997-98

District	Other Instructional Areas Having Zero Computers with Internet Access		Other Instructional Areas Having One or More Computers with Internet Access	
Santa Rosa	N=22	34.9%	N=41	65.1%
St. Johns	N=3	6.1%	N=46	93.9%
Charlotte	N=5	33.3%	N=10	100.0%
Indian River	N=0	0%	N=46	90.2%
Citrus	N=5	9.8%	N=12	100.0%
Martin County	N=0	0%	N=131	17.5%

Source: Microcomputing Resources Survey. Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

In general, a majority of teachers and administrators agree that technology is used effectively in instruction districtwide and in their classrooms. Most teachers and administrators (64.9%) feel that students use computers effectively as part of the instructional program (Exhibit 6-25). Less than a fourth of the teachers disagree with this statement. Fewer teachers and administrators feel the district effectively uses technology to support instruction and student learning, although slightly more than half (51.1%) of those responding to the survey agree with this statement. Slightly more than one fourth (26.5%) disagree with this statement. Most parents (81%) state that their child is comfortable using the computer and the Internet. However, fewer parents (66.6%) feel that their child is using computers and the Internet at school. This discrepancy may be a result of parents having home computers that students can access.

Exhibit 6-25

The Majority Agree That Technology Is Used Effectively

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators	Students at my school effectively use computers as part of their educational program.	(%) 64.9 (N) 61	(%) 10.6 (N) 10	(%) 21.3 (N) 20	(%) 3.2 (N) 3
Teachers and Administrators	The district effectively uses technology to support instruction and student learning.	(%) 51.1 (N) 48	(%) 22.3 (N) 21	(%) 26.5 (N) 25	(%) 0 (N) 0
Teachers and Administrators	I feel comfortable using computers as part of my class.	(%) 67.0 (N) 63	(%) 9.6 (N) 9	(%) 17.0 (N) 16	(%) 6.4 (N) 6
Parents	My child(ren) is using computers and the Internet at school.	(%) 66.6 (N) 28	(%) 4.8 (N) 2	(%) 26.2 (N) 11	(%) 2.4 (N) 1

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Parents	My child(ren) feels comfortable using computers and the Internet.	(%) 81.0 (N) 34	(%) 2.4 (N) 1	(%) 14.3 (N) 6	(%) 2.4 (N) 1

Source: Review Team Survey.

Standards for Aligning Instructional Software With Curriculum Should Be Developed and Purchases Monitored

There is no consistent set of standards in place to align instructional software with the teaching environments at various grade levels or for each discipline. In addition, there is no clear procedure for monitoring the procurement of instructional software throughout the district.

The procurement of instructional software must remain fluid, allowing users to take advantage of price reductions and technological advances as they become available. At the same time, the process must be carefully monitored to ensure equity of resources across the district and to maintain integrity. By monitoring the process, technology is more likely to effect teaching and learning. Therefore it is imperative that the district develop a set of standards and consistently communicate these standards to the schools. Adherence to these standards will allow the district to purchase instructional software suitable to teachers' teaching needs and students' learning needs.

The Martin County schools have a wide variety of instructional software available, both in the classroom and in computer labs and media centers. However, there are no consistent standards in place to ensure that the software purchased is both suitable for the students' needs and compatible with the schools' hardware. Schools purchase microcomputers with a standard set of software and then put whatever they want on the machines once they have them at their campus.

Recommendations

- *The Martin County School District should provide funds to establish site based technical assistant at every campus as outlined by the support plan.*
- *The Martin County School District should develop a set of standards to guide the purchase of instructional software and monitor acquisitions.*

Action Plan 6-4

Instructional Technology

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide funds to establish a site based technical assistant at every campus as outlined in the support plan.
Action Needed	Step 1: The superintendent, the coordinator of Instructional and Technical Support, and the principals determine the

	requirements of a site based technical assistant.
	Step 2: The principals appoint a teacher on each campus as the site based technical assistant.
	Step 3: The teachers are given released from teaching one extra class period a day to provide technical assistance and are provided three days of training.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, coordinator of Instructional and Technical Support; principals
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	<p>The fiscal impact of this recommendation includes release time for teachers to perform the duties of a technical assistant and training costs. The cost for release time assumes that a teacher will spend one-fifth of each week performing the duties of a technical assistant ($0.20 \times \\$43,228 \times 18 \text{ schools} = \\$155,621$). The technical assistants should be provided with three days of training in the summer. The training will cost the district approximately \$750 per day for an outside consultant plus \$500 in expenses. In addition, teachers should be paid a \$150 stipend for attending the training. This amounts to \$5,450 to train 18 technical assistants.</p> <p>$\\$750 \times 3 = \\$2,250$ (consultant fees)</p> <p>$\\$2,250 + \\$500 = \\$2,750$ (consultant fees and expenses)</p> <p>$\\$150 \times 18 \text{ (schools)} = \\$2,700$ (stipends for training)</p> <p>$\\$2,750 + \\$2,700 = \\$5,450$</p> <p>$\\$43,288 \times 0.2 \times 18 = \\$155,621$ (cost of teacher relief time)</p> <p>The total fiscal impact for this recommendation is \$161,071</p>

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Develop a set of standards to guide the purchase of instructional software.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Educational Technology and the Educational Technology Advisory Committee will establish a set of standards.</p> <p>Step 2: The Educational Technology Advisory Committee will ensure that the standards are aligned with the teaching/learning environments at various grades and disciplines</p> <p>Step 3: The Educational Technology Advisory Committee will establish a system for regularly informing teachers and campus administrators about current standards.</p> <p>Step 4: The coordinator of Instructional and Technical Support will consistently inform all district stakeholders about procurement rules.</p> <p>Step 5: The district will prepare principals through professional development to improve their strategies for purchasing instructional software.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Coordinator of Instructional and Technical Support; Educational Technology Advisory Committee
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Special Programs

1 Martin County School District's special programs provide students with quality educational services that meet their individual learning needs.

Special programs include exceptional student education (ESE), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and gifted education. These programs have federal and/or state mandates that direct service delivery to students. Each program is unique in that the students have individual needs that require special services that go beyond those usually offered in the regular education classroom setting. This section will discuss three areas: the instructional settings in which students receive instruction, student performance, and the identification and assessment of students.

The Martin County School District was highlighted in a publication of the Council for Exceptional Students (CEC) called *Technology Links to Literacy* (CEC, 1998). The publication discussed a South Fork High School program for students with moderate and severe disabilities, including mental retardation, physical disabilities and speech and language disorders. The program serves approximately 15 students and uses a variety of technologies to increase students' ability to interact independently with the world around them. For example, two nonverbal students use the alternative communication device AlphaTalker. In addition, many students spend much of their day in general education classrooms.

The district has received a Grant 2000 to implement innovations designed to improve student performance. The district was able to improve student performance by focusing on the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students at Port Salerno and J.D. Parker elementary schools. The Martin County School District extended the school day by 90 minutes in order to provide tutoring to LEP students. The students benefited from special software for Reading, Language Arts and Math. The district also provided a bilingual person to assist in the supplemental instruction of the students. These efforts resulted in 77% of the students achieving more than a one year growth in math skills and 57% of the students showed at least one year's growth in reading skills.

A Majority of Teachers, Administrators, and Parents Believe That Special Programs Identify the Right Students to Receive Services

The majority of teachers, administrators and parents feel that most special programs do a good job at identifying the right students to receive services, especially for special education and ESOL. When responding to questions regarding whether the district identifies the right students to receive special education, gifted, and ESOL services 50% or more of the parents had no opinion or were neutral (Exhibit 6-26).

Exhibit 6-26**Responses to Survey Questions Related to Identification of Students for Special Programs**

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators	The special education program at my school identifies the right students to receive services.	68.1% N=64	16.0% N=15	9.6% N=9	6.4% N=6
Parents	The special education program at my child(ren)'s school identifies the right students to receive services.	40.5% N=17	26.2% N=11	9.6% N=4	23.8% N=10
Teachers and Administrators	The gifted program at my school identifies the right students to receive services.	50.6% N=48	21.3% N=20	7.4% N=7	20.6% N=19
Parents	The gifted program at my child(ren)'s school identifies the right students to receive services.	23.8% N=10	21.4% N=9	7.2% N=3	47.6% N=20
Teachers and Administrators	The ESOL program at my school effectively identifies the right students to receive services.	69.1% N=65	14.9% N=14	1.1% N=1	14.9% N=14
Parents	The ESOL program at my child(ren)'s school does a good job of identifying the right students to receive services.	16.7% N=7	26.2% N=11	0% N=0	57.1% N=24

Source: Review Team Survey.

Teachers and Administrators Believe Special Programs Are Effective While Parents Are Neutral or Have No Opinion

According to the survey results, most teachers and administrators agree that the special education program at their school is effective at educating special education (64.9%), gifted (59.5%), and ESOL (53.2%) students. In addition, 71.3% of the teachers and administrators agree that ESE teachers and regular education teachers collaborate to meet the educational needs of special education students (Exhibit 6-27).

A majority of teachers and administrators indicated that special education, gifted, and ESOL programs do a good job in educating students. Forty-two percent of parents feel that special education programs at their children's schools do a good job in educating students. However, a large proportion of the parents expressed no opinion or were neutral when asked about the special education, gifted and ESOL programs at their children's school. This may be due to parents' limited knowledge of programs that do not involve their own children.

Exhibit 6-27**A Majority of Teachers and Administrators Believe Special Programs Are Effective**

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators	The special education program at my school effectively educates students.	(%) 64.9 (N) 61	(%) 17.0 (N) 16	(%) 13.9 (N) 13	(%) 4.3 (N) 4
Teachers and Administrators	The exceptional student education teachers and the regular education teachers collaborate to meet the educational needs of special education students.	(%) 71.3 (N) 68	(%) 14.9 (N) 14	(%) 11.7 (N) 11	(%) 1.1 (N) 1
Parents	The special education program at my child(ren)'s school does a good job at educating students.	(%) 42.8 (N) 18	(%) 19.0 (N) 8	(%) 9.5 (N) 4	(%) 28.6 (N) 12
Teachers and Administrators	The gifted program at my school effectively educates students.	(%) 59.5 (N) 56	(%) 19.1 (N) 18	(%) 8.5 (N) 8	(%) 12.8 (N) 12
Parents	The gifted program at my child(ren)'s school does a good job at educating students.	(%) 21.5 (N) 9	(%) 16.7 (N) 7	(%) 14.3 (N) 6	(%) 47.6 (N) 20
Teachers and Administrators	The ESOL program at my school effectively educates students.	(%) 53.2 (N) 50	(%) 24.5 (N) 23	(%) 9.6 (N) 9	(%) 12.8 (N) 12
Parents	The ESOL program at my child(ren)'s school does a good job at educating students.	(%) 11.9 (N) 5	(%) 31.0 (N) 13	(%) 2.4 (N) 1	(%) 54.8 (N) 23

Source: Review Team Survey.

The District Has Begun to Track the Performance of Students in Special Programs

Earlier we stated that the Martin County School District is not always effective at tracking subgroups of students' achievement scores. The district has just begun receiving student performance information for ESE students. Districtwide ESE students scored at level 1 on grade 4, 8, and 10 Reading and grade 5, 8, and 10 Math. Gifted students scored at Level 4 for grade 4 Reading and level 4 for grade 5 and grade 10 Math. Scores for LEP students ranged from level 2 in grade 4 Reading to level 1 for grade 10 Reading and Math.

In the past the district was not provided performance data for ESE students. This new information will help the district track cohorts of special program students' scores to

determine how to improve instruction and evaluate the effectiveness of special programs. The Martin County School District will be able to more effectively analyze the increased amount of performance data once it fills the recommended coordinator of Research and Evaluation position.

There are many ways that Martin County could use the information it currently has to evaluate and improve special programs.

- Staff could look at district wide student achievement for special populations, identify trends at each school, and then work with campus leaders on how to improve scores through instructional strategies and curriculum guidance.
- The district could identify schools that have low numbers of students exempted from testing and high test scores. Then determine what those schools are doing and replicate their programs at other campuses that have similar student populations.
- Staff could track the number and percent of students exempted from taking tests by school and compare that to the district average so the district can tell which schools exempt high numbers of students. A review of this data could help the district ensure that all students that should be taking the tests are. This would enable the district to effectively evaluate its students' performance and design program improvements.

Students with Disabilities

Martin County School District Uses State Board Rules and Guidelines Developed by the Department of Educational to Identify Students with Disabilities

The Martin County School District has a set of procedures in place for the identification of students to the Exceptional Student Education Program. The process begins with the teacher determining that a student is experiencing difficulty in the regular education classroom. The following are some of the difficulties a student may be experiencing:

- student is functioning below ability level;
- student's behavior is detrimental to his/her own or others learning;
- student is functioning above grade level and needs stimulation or challenge beyond those provided in the regular education curriculum; or
- student displays problems that may be medically linked.

During this time the teacher conducts observations to gather information and document evidence of the difficulty. Next, the teacher meets with the student's parents and develops and initiates interventions in the regular classroom. After interventions have been implemented, the teacher and parents have a follow-up conference during which the intervention and their successes or failures are reviewed. If the problem is resolved no further action is taken. However, if the problem persists the Child Study Team (CST) convenes. Before meeting, the teacher completes the pre-referral child study form and the CST decides on appropriate pre-referral strategies.

The Child Study Team (CST) is a transdisciplinary team consisting of an administrator, guidance counselor, school psychologist, mainstream consultant, ESE teacher(s), speech/language pathologist, and others as needed. All grades, kindergarten through 8,

have active CSTs. The CST reviews available data on students and makes recommendations about meeting the needs of these students. When indicated the CST refers students for ESE evaluation. After evaluation, the CST meets with the parent to discuss eligibility in the ESE program and develop, if eligible, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

Determining eligibility for a disability category requires professional judgment and a determination of the degree to which the student has met eligibility criteria. For example, the CST examines the following to make a determination that the student is hearing-impaired:

- an audiological evaluation (less than one year old),
- academic achievement-includes strengths and weaknesses,
- social and developmental history,
- receptive language evaluation,
- expressive language evaluation, and
- individual assessment of intellectual functioning.

The Martin County School District has fewer students identified for ESE than three of its peers and more than two of its peers (Exhibit 6-28).

Exhibit 6-28

The Percentage of Students Identified as ESE in Martin County Is Consistent with the Peers, 1998-99

District	Exceptional Student FTE	% of Total FTE that Are Exceptional Students
Citrus	3,660.09	25.3
Indian River	3,074.81	21.1
Charlotte	3,086.68	19.0
Martin	3,008.60	18.7
St. Johns	3,991.89	18.1
Santa Rosa	3,316.47	17.7
Florida	433,634.32	18.9

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Martin County Serves More Students with Disabilities in Less Restrictive Environments Than in Previous Years

Martin County uses the least restrictive environment (LRE) concept to determine appropriate educational placement for each student with a disability. According to Public Law 105-17,

Section 612(a)(5)(A), each local education agency shall ensure that "To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate school, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." The LRE issue is a complicated one for states and for local school districts. Decisions about how and when to include students with disabilities into regular education must consider equitable allocation of resources, effective and efficient service

delivery models for all students, vulnerability to legal challenges based on current court rulings, and philosophical beliefs about how best to balance meeting the needs of students with disabilities with those of non-disabled students. The LRE concept is supported by a continuum of placements ranging from the general education classroom to home/hospital care. The decision making process concerning placement decisions for students with disabilities is unique for each student and is based on his or her need for instructional accommodations and related services.

According to district staff, approximately 99% of the students with disabilities spend some part of the week in a classroom with non-disabled students. Students often do not spend all of their time in one specific setting. All students in resource rooms and many of the students in separate classes receive instruction for some part of the day with their non-disabled peers. The amount of time individual students spend in the regular classroom, in resource rooms or in other education settings is determined based on the needs of the individual student. Exhibits 6-29 and 6-30 illustrate the variety of placements for students with disabilities for Martin and its peers for 1996-97 and 1997-98 respectively and show that students with disabilities spend increasing amounts of time in the regular classroom setting. Martin County has made significant progress in serving its students with disabilities in less restrictive environments. For example, during 1996-97, 35.3% of the FTE students with disabilities were in the regular classroom and by 1997-98, this number increased to 45.8%. Students that were served in co-teaching environments prior to the 1998-99 school year may be captured in the Separate Classroom category. Co-teaching involves an ESE teacher and a regular teacher sharing the responsibility for instructing students based on individual student needs.

Exhibit 6-29

In 1996-97 Martin County Placed Fewer Students with Disabilities in the Regular Classroom Than Its Peers

Placement	Charlotte		Citrus		Indian River		Martin		Santa Rosa		St. Johns	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Regular Class	1011	35.2	2004	53.8	1295	45.4	980	35.3	2360	64.2	1195	42.4
Resource Room	996	34.6	923	24.8	705	24.7	860	31.0	558	15.2	1027	36.4
Separate Class*	708	24.6	669	17.9	668	23.4	806	29.0	742	20.2	593	21.0
Public Separate School	133	4.6	113	3.0	70	2.5	77	2.8	0	0	0	0
Public Residential	11	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homebound/Hospital	17	0.6	19	0.5	23	0.8	25	0.9	16	0.4	5	0.2
Correction	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0.6	0	0	0	0
Private Separate School	0	0	0	0	93	3.3	3	0.1	2	0.1	0	0
Private Residential	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0.3	0	0	0	0

*Separate class numbers may include ESE students that were co-taught (regular and ESE teachers share instructional responsibilities based on individual student needs) in a regular classroom setting

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1996-97.

Exhibit 6-30**In 1997-98 Martin County Placed Students with Disabilities in Regular Classroom at a Rate Consistent with Its Peers**

Placement	Charlotte		Citrus		Indian River		Martin		Santa Rosa		St. Johns	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Regular Class	996	38.1	1541	51.3	1245	53.6	1118	45.8	1970	63.2	1395	54.9
Resource Room	1090	41.7	1001	33.3	534	23.0	815	33.4	492	15.8	651	25.6
Separate Class*	407	15.6	361	12.0	467	20.1	452	18.5	631	20.3	482	19.0
Public Separate School	71	2.7	80	2.7	55	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Residential	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homebound/Hospital	45	1.7	13	0.4	19	0.8	15	0.6	18	0.6	11	0.4
Correction	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0.4	0	0	0	0
Private Separate School	0	0	1	<0.1	1	<0.1	5	0.2	5	0.2	0	0
Private Residential	3	0.1	6	0.2	3	0.1	29	1.2	0	0	0	0

*Separate class' numbers may include ESE students that were co-taught (regular and ESE teachers share instructional responsibilities based on individual student needs) in a regular classroom setting

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Martin County's Students with Exceptionalities Are Generally Classified in Service Levels Consistent with State Projections, Although It Exceeds Projections at the Highest Levels

In order to determine the level of service in which to report students for funding purposes, the district completes a matrix, which requires an evaluation of the services provided. The matrix requires an evaluation in five domains: curriculum and learning environment, social/emotional behavior, independent functioning, health care, and communication. The district determines which of five support levels within each of these domains is appropriate for the student. The levels are hierarchical from least amount of intervention and services required (Level 1, requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students) to greatest amount of intervention and services required (Level 5). Each student is rated in each domain and the ratings are added. Additional points are added to the total of the domain ratings for special considerations. For example, 13 points are added for students who are receiving individual instruction at home or at a hospital. After the ratings and the special consideration points are added, the cost factor is determined.

The matrix not only provides information concerning the amount of funding a district receives, but also information concerning the level of services and assistance a student receives. For example, students at level 5 require continuous supervision and personal assistance and supervision in activities of daily living, self-care, and self-management for most or all of the day.

The service levels in which Martin County has identified its students are generally consistent with state expectations. However, the district identified slightly fewer students at levels 1 and 2 and more students than expected at levels 3 and 4. (See Exhibit 6-31.)

*Exhibit 6-31***Martin County's Service Levels Are Close to State Expectations**

State Expectations	Level I Program 251	Level II Program 252	Level III Program 253	Level IV Program 254	Level V Program 255
Percent ESE Student Population	58.2%	27.7 %	9.3%	3.3%	1.5%
Martin 1997-1998	1,667 (55.5%)	775 (25.8%)	292 (9.7%)	174 (5.8%)	88 (2.9%)
Martin 1998-1999	1,667 (55.4%)	780 (25.9%)	296 (9.8%)	178 (5.9%)	87 (2.9 %)

Source: Martin County School District; Florida Department of Education.

The Martin County School District has a higher percentage of ESE students at funding levels IV and V than its peer districts (Exhibit 6-32). Martin County serves 8.8% of its ESE students at these two levels, slightly more than 3% higher than the closest peer district.

*Exhibit 6-32***Martin Evaluated a Larger Proportion of Its Students with Disabilities as Needing Higher Levels of Support, 1998-99**

District	Level I (251)		Level II (252)		Level III (253)		Level IV (254)		Level V (255)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Martin	1,666.87	55.4	779.89	25.9	296.36	9.9	178.28	5.9	87.20	2.9
Charlotte	1,798.90	58.3	811.07	26.3	301.02	9.8	120.53	3.9	55.16	1.8
Indian River	1,672.86	54.4	910.12	29.6	336.37	10.9	100.30	3.3	55.16	1.8
St. Johns	2,392.44	66.8	591.01	19.9	204.71	8.6	78.14	3.0	50.17	1.7
Citrus	1,750.04	47.8	1,397.02	38.2	372.78	10.2	86.88	2.4	53.37	1.5
Santa Rosa	2,666.00	72.1	794.72	17.8	342.69	6.2	120.31	2.4	68.17	1.5

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1998-99.

Ethnic/Racial Distribution of Martin County's Students with Disabilities Is Generally Consistent with the State

The Martin County School District's student population is 76.2% white, 12.2% black, and 10.4% Hispanic. The other 1.3% of the students is Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan, or Multiracial (Exhibit 6-33).

*Exhibit 6-33***25% of All Students Are Minorities, October 1998**

Ethnicity	All Students	
	N	%
White	12,075	75.9

Ethnicity	All Students	
Black	1,850	11.6
Hispanic	1,730	10.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	137	0.9
Multiracial	93	0.6
American Indian/Alaskan	20	0.1

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

As seen in Exhibit 6-34, the ethnic/racial distribution of ESE student subpopulations in Martin County is not proportional to the general student population. However, the district's ESE student population is generally consistent with the state's ESE racial and ethnic distribution.

Exhibit 6-34

Number and Percentage of ESE Students by Disability Category in the Martin County School District Compared to the State, October 1998

Disability		White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/ American Indian		Multiracial	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Specific Learning Disabled	Martin	960	82%	119	10%	90	8%	2	0%	3	0%
	State	89556	59%	37920	25%	23900	16%	1182	1%	527	0%
Speech Impaired	Martin	378	90%	27	6%	11	3%	0	0%	3	1%
	State	38224	71%	9693	18%	4996	9%	657	1%	495	1%
Language Impaired	Martin	121	53%	41	18%	62	27%	2	1%	1	0%
	State	13018	41%	12937	41%	4898	15%	494	2%	279	1%
Emotionally Handicapped	Martin	166	68%	59	24%	16	7%	0	0%	3	1%
	State	15117	52%	10913	38%	2601	9%	137	0%	175	1%
Educable Mentally Handicapped	Martin	52	35%	57	38%	40	27%	1	1%	0	0%
	State	9443	33%	15508	55%	3058	11%	60	0%	92	0%
Hospital/Homebound	Martin	48	63%	20	26%	6	8%	0	0%	1	1%
	State	1486	62%	546	23%	330	14%	34	1%	19	1%
Severely Emotionally Disabled	Martin	37	56%	24	36%	4	6%	0	0%	1	2%
	State	3734	49%	3036	39%	827	11%	36	0%	57	1%
Developmentally Delayed	Martin	41	64%	11	17%	12	19%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	3894	52%	2284	30%	1145	15%	89	1%	129	2%
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	Martin	30	64%	10	21%	7	15%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	3677	45%	3044	37%	1336	16%	116	1%	21	0%
Established Conditions	Martin	2	50%	0	0%	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	106	68%	30	19%	14	9%	4	3%	1	1%
Autistic	Martin	10	67%	3	20%	1	7%	0	0%	1	7%
	State	1629	50%	831	25%	685	21%	87	3%	29	1%
Visually Impaired	Martin	4	57%	1	14%	2	29%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	771	61%	300	24%	170	13%	22	2%	9	1%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Martin	4	57%	2	29%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%

Disability		White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/ American Indian		Multiracial	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Traumatic Brain Injured	State	1766	54%	809	25%	615	19%	61	2%	30	1%
	Martin	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	195	54%	105	29%	50	14%	6	2%	4	1%
Orthopedically Handicapped	Martin	17	77%	3	14%	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	3306	62%	1154	22%	765	14%	67	1%	18	0%
Profoundly Mentally Handicapped	Martin	14	78%	3	17%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	1359	48%	915	32%	493	17%	44	2%	14	0%
Other Health Impaired	Martin	6	86%	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%
	State	1921	70%	577	21%	220	8%	19	1%	20	1%
Total	Martin	1890	74%	380	15%	258	10%	5	0%	13	1%
	State	189202	55%	100602	29%	46103	14%	3115	1%	1919	1%

Source: Director of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services, Department of Education, 1998-99.

Program for Gifted Students

The program for gifted students is comprehensive and meets the needs of its students. However, the district should update its resource manual to reflect the services provided. For example, the resource manual states that the curriculum for gifted students is based on "Bloom's taxonomy, Blueprint 2000, and various curriculum designs for the Gifted Program..." There is no mention in the manual that the district is using accelerated curriculum or curriculum compacting two principal means of delivering services.

The Martin County School District clusters its elementary gifted students for services at three elementary schools, Palm City Elementary, SeaWind Elementary, and Felix A. Williams Elementary. These schools provide full time services to students identified as gifted using accelerated curriculum, curriculum compacting, and centers. Students identified as gifted choosing not to leave their home school (if their home school is not one of the three cluster schools) receive enrichment five hours a week. Middle school students receive full time course offerings. At Hidden Oaks Middle School three courses are offered in Language Arts, Math, and Science. At Murray Middle School, two courses are offered in Language Arts and Reading. At Stuart Middle school five courses are offered in Science, Math, Language Arts, Reading, and Social Studies. High school students identified as gifted receive services through Advanced Placement, honors classes, International Baccalaureate or dually enrolled (e.g., taking courses at a junior college while in high school).

The Martin County School District uses an educational plan (EP) for gifted students. The content of the plan must address present level, student outcomes, evaluation criteria, procedures and schedule, amount of time in the gifted program, and projected initiation and duration dates. All gifted students in kindergarten through eighth grade have the same set of outcomes by which they are evaluated. The four areas in which they are evaluated are

- information management,
- communication of creative thinking,
- numeric information and resources, and
- cooperation, leadership, and acceptance of diversity.

The specific goals linked to these four areas are grouped for gifted students in grades k-2, 3-5, and 6-8. An example of a k-2 goal in the area of numeric information and resources is “organize and process information to demonstrate logical conclusions and multiple solutions to problems”.

Martin County Currently Uses Two Strategies to Identify Gifted Students

Procedures for identifying students as gifted are slightly different than for other categories served under the ESE program. The two strategies are commonly referred to as Plan A and Plan B. Plan A is the traditional means for identifying gifted students. Plan B, is an alternative strategy that seeks to increase the identification of gifted Black, Hispanic, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, Limited English Proficient, and economically disadvantaged students.

According to State Board rule 6A-6.03019, in order to place a student in a gifted program through Plan A, the criteria below must be met.

- The student has an intelligence quotient of two (2) standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence.
- The student demonstrates the characteristics of gifted student according to a standard scale or checklist.
- The student demonstrates a need for a special program.

Florida allows school districts to develop and use a Plan B to identify students in under-represented groups. Martin County implemented Plan B in the 1992 -93 school year. The school district must submit the plan to the Florida Department of Education for approval. According to Florida State law, Section 6B-6.03019, criteria for determining eligibility under Plan B should be based on the student's demonstrated ability or potential in specific areas of leadership, motivation, academic performance, and creativity.

Martin County's Plan B allows a variety of nomination sources and strongly encourages that students from the targeted underrepresented subgroups who score at least at the 85 percentile rank on an achievement test be screened further. When a request for screening is made, the checklist of behaviors of gifted characteristics called the *Gifted Traits Screening Checklist* (GTSC) is completed by all personnel who provide instruction to the student. If the student has 60 checks in the columns for strongly agree and agree the student is evaluated further. The evaluation consists of the *Renzulli-Hartman Rating Scale of Gifted Characteristics* for students in grades 4 and 5 or the *Early Childhood Checklist of Gifted Characteristics* for students in grades K through 3. The district has set cut-off scores for these two checklists. In addition, academic performance for four grading periods must demonstrate that the student received a minimum of a B average. Other indicators include an intelligence test with a minimum score of 120 and a portfolio of student work. The district uses a matrix which weights each score received by the student and combines the weights for a total. The minimum score for determining eligibility is 21. Using a matrix system can obscure talent. Some students may have one or two very high scores, but low scores in other areas. The low scores suppress the overall matrix score. Instead, scores should be examined individually to determine students' strengths. This will allow students who excel in two or three of the criteria to qualify and should increase minority representation.

Martin County provides a gifted program for its students in grades K -8. For these grades, Martin County identifies a similar proportion of its students as gifted when compared to its

peers (see Exhibit 6-35). When Martin's gifted students are in grades 9 through 12 they are counted in other appropriate programs (e.g., honors, advanced placement, and International Baccalaureate).

Exhibit 6-35

Number and Percentage of Gifted Students in the Martin County School District and Peer Districts 1997-98

District	Number of K-8 Gifted Students	% of Total K-8 Student Population
Citrus	474	4.6
Indian River	361	3.6
St. Johns	561	4.4
Santa Rosa	547	3.5
Martin	435	3.9
Charlotte	469	4.2
State	80,232	4.8

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Plan B is designed to identify gifted students who are minorities, of limited English proficiency, or economically disadvantaged. Statewide the percentages of gifted students that are in these targeted populations are low but higher than in Martin County. Exhibit 6-36 shows that the district has increased its representation of minorities in the gifted program since implementing Plan B in 1992, but needs to continue working on this issue and focus their efforts toward identifying gifted students in the targeted populations.

Exhibit 6-36

The Number of Targeted Students in the Gifted Program Has Increased Over Time

Ethnicity	Fall 1992			Fall 1998		
	N	%	State %	N	%	State %
White	276	97.2	86.0	463	94.1	70.4
Hispanic	2	.7	5.3	14	2.8	14.4
Black	3	1.1	6.0	9	1.8	9.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	.7	2.8	5	1.0	4.3
Multiracial	--	--	--	1	.2	.8
American Indian/Alaskan	1	.4	0.1	0	0	.3
Limited English Proficient	1	0.4	0.2	0	0	0.4
Low SES family						
Free Lunch	12	4.1	7.0	25	5.0	12.7
Reduced Lunch	6	2.1	3.2	14	2.9	5.8

Source: Florida Department of Education

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Students identified as ESOL are clustered and served in the regular education classroom. Teachers who teach these classes must have ESOL training in the instruction and use of ESOL strategies. Schools with more than 15 students who speak the same second language are assigned a teaching aide who speaks the second language. At Martin County High School, one teacher teaches two ESOL English classes a day and at South Fork High School, two teachers teach ESOL English.

Training for ESOL language arts teachers include 300 hours of in-service in ESOL instructional strategies, linguistics, and multi-cultural issues. Training in the other academic content areas, including computer literacy, include 60 hours of in-service training in ESOL instructional strategies and multicultural issues.

Martin County Serves More Students with Limited English Proficiency Than Its Peers

Identification of LEP students begins with the completion of a Language Survey. The Language Survey typically asks parents to respond to three questions: "Did the student have a first language other than English?", "Is a language other than English used in the house?" and "Does the students most frequently speak a language other than English?" According to Florida State law, a student with an affirmative answer to any of these questions would be placed in the ESOL program pending further screening. Within 20 school days of registration, that student would be given an aural/oral test. This assessment directs the district to take one of three actions. If the aural/oral test determined that the student was LEP, the student would remain in the ESOL program. If the student, in grades K-3, were determined to be fully English proficient, than that students would be placed in the regular program. If the student, in grades 4-12, were determined to be fully English proficient, that student would remain in the ESOL program and within 20 days of the administration of the aural/oral test, the student would be given a reading/writing test. The results of these test would determine the students continued placement in ESOL or placement in the regular program. In order for the student to be placed in the regular program, that student must score at the 33rd percentile or above in both reading and writing.

The Martin County School District serves more students in ESOL than any of its peers (Exhibit 6-37).

Exhibit 6-37

Unweighted FTE, K-12 and Percentage of ESOL FTE Students in Martin County School District and Peer Districts, 1998-99

District	ESOL	
	N	%
Martin	687.90	4.3
Indian River	479.67	3.3
Charlotte	71.59	0.4
Citrus	40.50	0.3
St. Johns	1.42	0.0
Santa Rosa	10.92	0.0

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1997-98.

Recommendations

- *Consistent with the need to evaluate performance of the districts overall student population, the Martin County School District should collect, disseminate and use , cohort achievement data for its ESE and ESOL programs to determine effectiveness of instruction.*
- *Martin County School District should continue to review and modify Plan B for the identification of students in under represented groups as gifted.*

Action Plan 6-5

Special Programs

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Collect, disseminate and use cohort achievement data for ESE and ESOL programs to determine effectiveness of instruction.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Exceptional Student Education, coordinator of Research and Evaluation and Student Services, coordinator of Special Education, the coordinator of Title I/Migrant/ESOL and the director of Educational Technology meet and develop a plan including the types of data to be collected.</p> <p>Step 2: The school board and the superintendent approve the plan.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Educational Technology oversees the process of collecting the cohort data by subgroup and generating reports.</p> <p>Step 4: The staff enhances or modifies instructional programs as needed.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Exceptional Student Education, and Student Services; coordinator of Research and Evaluation, coordinator of Title I/Migrant/ESOL; director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	Spring 2000 through Spring 2001
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should continue to review and modify Plan B for the identification of students in under represented groups as gifted to ensure that district goals are being met.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Exceptional Student Education and Student Service and the coordinator of Exceptional Student Education should continue to review and evaluate the district's Plan B to ensure district goals are being met.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Exceptional Student Education and Student Service and the coordinator of Exceptional Student Education should examine other district's Plan B to determine other instruments and procedures to use in the identification of gifted students.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Director of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services; coordinator of Exceptional Student Education
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Program Staffing and Allocation of Instructional and Non-instructional Staff

1 Martin County School District has the appropriate level of staffing in several areas and allocates instructional and non-instructional staff according to well-developed guidelines. However, it needs to increase the number of minority teachers and examine its allocation of exceptional education teachers.

A district's staffing plan should be a guide to provide for an equitable distribution of staff resources. In addition, the staffing plan should provide advanced information for planning in relation to staffing levels and program planning.

Staff in Florida are divided into three major categories, administrative, support, and instructional. Administrative staff includes:

- officials, administrators, and managers,
- consultants and supervisors of instruction,
- principals,
- assistant principals, and
- Community Education coordinators.

Support staff include:

- other professional staff – non-instructional,
- deans, curriculum coordinators, and registrars,
- educational paraprofessionals,
- technicians,
- clerical and secretarial,
- service workers,
- skilled crafts workers, and
- unskilled laborers.

Instructional staff includes:

- classroom teachers,
- exceptional education teachers,
- other teachers (teachers who cannot be easily classified in the elementary or secondary classroom teacher categories and includes full-time permanent substitute teachers and adult education instructors),
- guidance staff,
- school social workers,
- school psychologists,
- librarians and audio-visual workers, and
- other professional staff-instructional.

This section will discuss the staffing levels and allocation of non-instructional and instructional employees of the Martin County School District, particularly the appropriateness of the staffing levels of the Exceptional Student Education program. Non-instructional staff is considered support staff and is made up of the school district's professional staff, whose activity assignments cannot be included in the administrative or instructional categories.

Clear Guidelines Used to Allocate Instructional and Non-Instructional Staff

The Martin County School District has a clear procedure for allocation of instructional and non-instructional staff. The instructional unit calculation is determined by dividing the projected Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for each category (e.g., basic K-3) by the allocation factor. The allocation factor is the student-to-employee ratio determined by the district. Staff members are assigned based on this calculation. In addition, updates are made on an ongoing basis to take into consideration growth or special needs.

Martin County's Staffing Is in Line with Peers

The Martin County School District has a lower percentage of elementary teachers than all but one peer district. In addition, the Martin County School District has a higher percentage of secondary teachers than two of its peers and a lower percentage than three of its peers (Exhibit 6-38).

Exhibit 6-38

Number and Percentage of Elementary and Secondary Teachers for Martin County School District and Its Peer Districts, Fall 1998

District	Elementary Classroom Teachers		Secondary Classroom Teachers	
	N	%	N	%
Santa Rosa	497	41.4	533	44.4
Indian River	324	42.1	302	39.3
Citrus	377	42.0	342	38.1
St. Johns	439	38.0	538	46.6
Martin	349	37.1	386	41.0
Charlotte	312	35.8	390	44.8

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1998.

The Martin County School District has a higher student-to-teacher ratio than two of its peers. However, all districts are at a reasonable level (Exhibit 6-39).

Exhibit 6-39**Teacher-to-Student Ratio Consistent with Martin County's Peers, Fall 1998**

District	Teacher: Student Ratio
Charlotte	1:18.72
Martin	1:16.41
Santa Rosa	1:17.95
Citrus	1:16.27
St. Johns	1:15.06
Indian River	1:18.62

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1998.

Interestingly, the Martin County School District has a higher ratio of non-administrative to administrative staff (Exhibit 6-40). This should be viewed as a strength because administrative functions operate smoothly. In addition, there is room to add administrators to Martin County for needed areas, such as adding a coordinator for Research and Evaluation.

Exhibit 6-40**Martin County's Ratio of Administrators to Non-Administrators Is Leaner Than Its Peers, 1998-99**

District	Administration: Non-Administration Ratio
Martin	1:28.5
Santa Rosa	1:27.7
Indian River	1:25.9
Charlotte	1:25.6
Citrus	1:23.8
St. Johns	1:16.2

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1998-99.

Martin County also has a reasonable percent of instructional aides when compared to its peers. Exhibit 6-41 illustrates that Martin County has the second highest percent of instructional aides in comparison to its aides, although this percent is not out of line. In fact, five of the six districts illustrated are within 4.4 percentage points of one another.

Exhibit 6-41

**Number and Percentage (in Comparison to all Teachers)
of Educational Paraprofessionals for Martin County
School District and Its Peer Districts, 1998-99**

District	Instructional Aides	
	N	%
Charlotte	276	31.7
Martin	202	21.5
Indian River	159	20.7
Citrus	184	20.5
Santa Rosa	238	19.8
St. Johns	198	17.1

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1998-99.

On the other hand, Martin County has a high percentage of other teachers in comparison to its peers. This is because of its strong environmental studies program, vocational education, and adult education (Exhibit 6-42).

Exhibit 6-42

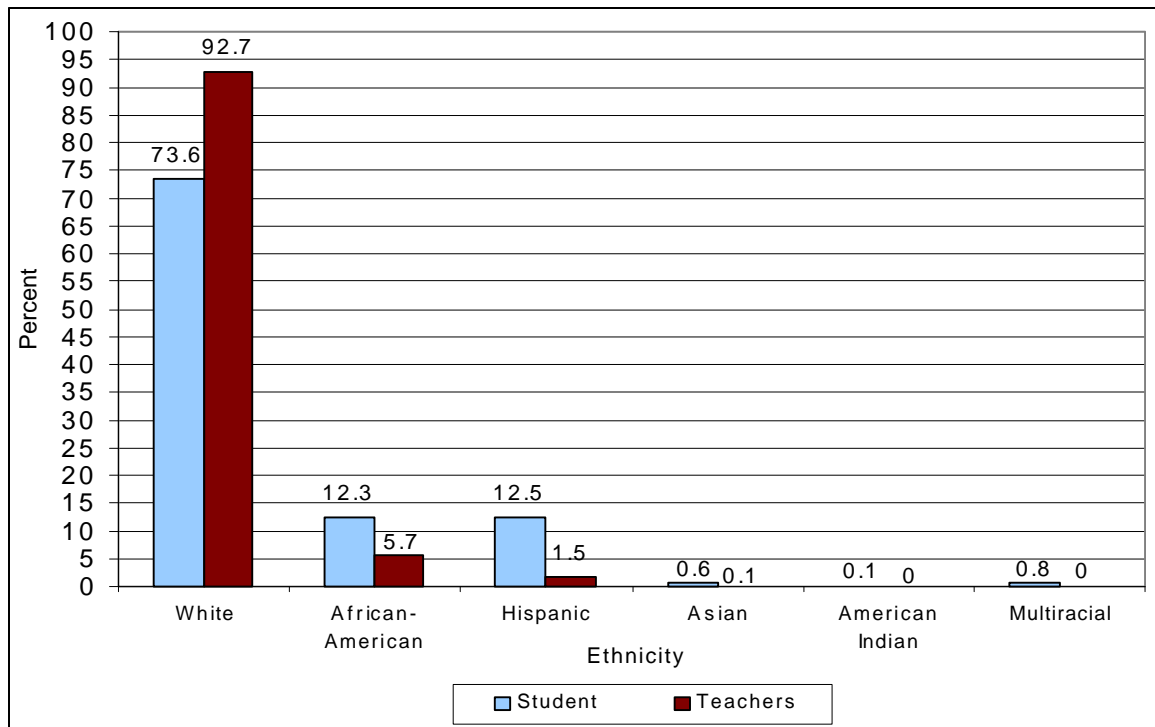
**Number and Percentage (in Comparison to all Teachers)
of Other Teachers for the Martin County School District
and Its Peer Districts, 1998-99**

District	Other Teachers	
	N	%
Martin	48	5.1
Citrus	28	3.1
Charlotte	13	1.5
St. Johns	15	1.3
Indian River	10	1.3
Santa Rosa	4	0.3

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1998-99.

**The Martin County School District Has Revised a Plan to
Increase Minority Teachers**

The Martin County School District has a small number of minority teachers in comparison to its student population. Exhibit 6-43 illustrates the percent of students and teachers by ethnicity for 1997-98. As can be seen by the exhibit, Only 7.3% of the teachers were minority in 1997-98 as compared to 26.4% of the student population.

Exhibit 6-43**Percentage of Teachers and Students by Ethnicity in Martin County School District, 1997-98**

Source: Florida Department of Education and School Advisory Council Reports, 1997-98.

In addition, this under representation is not improving over time. Exhibit 6-44 illustrates the percent of teachers by ethnicity for 1995-96 through 1998-99. In 1995-96 4.1% of the teachers were minority, which was the lowest percentage of minority over the four years. In 1996-97, 7.8% were minority, in 1997-98, 7.3% were minority and in 1998-99 5.9% were minority.

Exhibit 6-44**Percentage of Martin County School District Teachers by Ethnicity, 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99**

Ethnicity	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
White	95.8	92.2	92.7	94.2
African American	1.9	6.1	5.7	4.4
Hispanic	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.4
Asian	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.1
American Indian	0.2	0	0	0

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99.

The district developed a minority and critical shortage area recruitment plan to rectify this situation in 1996. This plan was revised in 1999. The committee in charge of implementing the plan is charged with recommending strategies for hiring more African American and Hispanic teachers and staff in the critical area shortages. Some of the strategies recommended to date include on-line postings of vacant positions (web page and Troops to Teachers), recruitment trips, using existing recruitment networks at United Negro college fund-affiliated Colleges and Universities, advertising, and dissemination of information. In addition, the committee has recommended the consideration of implementation of Teacher Academies at Martin County's two comprehensive high schools.

In spite of these efforts, the district has not increased the percent of African American and Hispanic teachers. In fact, over the last three years, African American teachers have decreased by 1.7% and Hispanic teachers have decreased by 0.2%.

The Martin County School District has a good student to exceptional student education (ESE) teacher ratio, although in two program areas of ESE the allocation factor is not in alignment with its peers.

As Exhibit 6-45 illustrates, Martin County seems to be in alignment with the percentage of ESE teachers to total teaching staff and the percentage of ESE students to total student population. However, looking at the ESE teacher to ESE student ratio, Martin has the smallest ESE teacher to ESE student ratio of all its peers. This may be due in part to the high percent of ESE students served at Level IV and V on the Matrix of Services. These students typically need more intensive assistance and services. Therefore, more teachers would be needed to provide services to these students.

Exhibit 6-45

Ratio of ESE Teachers to ESE Students for Martin County School District and Its Peer Districts, 1998-99

District	Teacher: Student Ratio
St. Johns	1:24.5
Citrus	1:24.4
Indian River	1:23.1
Santa Rosa	1:19.9
Charlotte	1:19.8
Martin	1:19.0

Source: Florida Department of Education, 1998-99.

In 1997-98, Martin County School District conducted a staffing allocation study of its own and several other school districts' ESE programs. As part of the study, the district examined the allocation of staff by program number (prior to matrix system) for elementary, middle, and high school. Two of Martin County's peers for this review, Charlotte and Indian River, were included in this study.

In elementary schools, the Martin County School District has a lower (or equal to the lowest) allocation factor than its two peers in nine of the twelve program areas; a higher (or equal to the highest) allocation factor in the other three program areas. It has the highest allocation factor in the gifted program (Exhibit 6-46).

Exhibit 6-46

Elementary Allocation Factor in Exceptional Student Education Programs in Martin County School District, Charlotte County School District, and Indian River County School District, 1997-98

Program	Charlotte	Indian River	Martin
Educable Mentally Handicapped	12:1	13:1	13:1
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	9:1	8:1	8:1
Physically Handicapped	8:1	8:1	7:1
Speech/Language Developmentally Delayed, Language Impaired	9:1	9:1	9:1
Visually Impaired	6:1	5:1	5:1
Emotionally Handicapped, Part Time	7:1	9:1	6:1
Emotionally Handicapped, Full Time	10:1	9:1	9:1
Specific Learning Disabled, Part time	10:1	13:1	10:1
Specific Learning Disabled, Full time	14:1	13:1	14:1
Gifted, Part Time	15:1	14:1	16:1
Homebound Hospital, Part Time	3:1		2.5:1
Severely Emotionally Disturbed, Autistic, Profoundly Mentally Handicapped	6:1	6:1	6:1

Source: Martin County School District, 1997-98.

In middle schools, the Martin County School District has a lower (or equal to the lower) allocation factor than its two peers in eight of the twelve program areas; a higher (or equal to the higher) allocation factor in the other four program areas. Martin and Charlotte have the highest allocation factor in the gifted program (Exhibit 6-47).

Exhibit 6-47

Middle School Allocation Factor in Exceptional Student Education Programs in Martin County School District, Charlotte County School District, and Indian River County School District, 1997-98

Program	Charlotte	Indian River	Martin
Educable Mentally Handicapped	13:1	13:1	14:1
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	10:1	8:1	10:1
Physically Handicapped	9:1	8:1	7:1
Speech/Language Developmentally Delayed, Language Impaired	10:1	9:1	9:1
Visually Impaired	6:1	5:1	5:1
Emotionally Handicapped, Part Time	8:1	9:1	6:1

Program	Charlotte	Indian River	Martin
Emotionally Handicapped, Full Time	10:1	9:1	9:1
Specific Learning Disabled, Part time	10:1	13:1	10:1
Specific Learning Disabled, Full time	15:1	13:1	14:1
Gifted, Part Time	16:1	14:1	16:1
Homebound Hospital, Part Time	3:1		2.5:1
Severely Emotionally Disturbed, Autistic, Profoundly Mentally Handicapped	7:1	6:1	6:1

Source: Martin County School District, 1997-98.

In high schools, the Martin County School District has a lower (or equal to the lower) allocation factor than its two peers in eight of the twelve program areas; a higher (or equal to the higher) allocation factor in the other four program areas (Exhibit 6-48).

Exhibit 6-48

High School Allocation Factor in Exceptional Student Education Programs in Martin County School District, Charlotte County School District, and Indian River County School District, 1997-98

Program	Charlotte	Indian River	Martin
Educable Mentally Handicapped	16:1	13:1	14:1
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	11:1	8:1	10:1
Physically Handicapped	10:1	8:1	7:1
Speech/Language Developmentally Delayed, Language Impaired	11:1	9:1	9:1
Visually Impaired	7:1	5:1	5:1
Emotionally Handicapped, Part Time	9:1	9:1	6:1
Emotionally Handicapped, Full Time	12:1	9:1	9:1
Specific Learning Disabled, Part time	12:1	13:1	10:1
Specific Learning Disabled, Full time	17:1	13:1	14:1
Gifted, Part Time		14:1	
Homebound Hospital, Part Time	3:1		2.5:1
Severely Emotionally Disturbed, Autistic, Profoundly Mentally Handicapped	8:1	6:1	6:1

Source: Martin County School District, 1997-98.

The Martin County School District consistently has the lowest allocation factor for its emotionally handicapped program, especially in its part time program.

Recommendations

- *The district should continue to review and revise strategies to recruit African American and Hispanic teachers.*
- *Examine the allocation of teachers to the ESE program, particularly, the emotional handicapped to determine if the allocation factors should be adjusted.*

Action Plan 6-6

Program Staffing

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Continue to review and revise district strategies to recruit African American and Hispanic teachers.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The committee in charge of the minority and critical shortage area recruitment plan, the director of Human Resources and Staff Development and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations should continue to examine the strategies developed to date to hire more minority teachers to determine which strategies are effective.</p> <p>Step 2: The committee in charge of the minority and critical shortage area recruitment plan, the director of Human Resources and Staff Development and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations examine other district's hiring practices to develop other effective strategies for hiring minority teachers.</p> <p>Step 3: The committee in charge of the minority and critical shortage area recruitment plan, the director of Human Resources and Staff Development and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations implement the Teacher Academies at Martin County's two comprehensive high schools.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resources and Staff Development; director of Personnel and Employee Relations; committee in charge of the minority and critical shortage area recruitment plan director
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Review the allocation factors of the ESE program.
Action Needed	The director of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations review the allocation factors for the ESE program particularly the part time emotionally handicapped program.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services; director of Personnel and Employee Relations
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Educational Support Programs

1 Martin County School District's educational support programs (i.e., counselors, library and media services) are effective and efficient in their operations.

Counselors in schools provide many services to students. A few of these services include

- counseling with students on an individual or group basis;
- coordinating group testing, participate in several committee such as the Child Study Team, and the Crisis Intervention Team;
- monitoring school attendance;
- consulting with outside agencies such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters;
- screening for possible ESE and ESOL referrals; and
- assisting students in transitioning from elementary to middle or middle to high school.

The Martin County School District Uses an Allocation Formula to Assign Guidance Counselors

The Martin County School District is in line with the assignment of its guidance counselors-to-students ratio when compared to its peers. Martin County has a higher guidance counselor-to-students ratio than four of its peers and a lower ratio than one of its peers (Exhibit 6-49).

Exhibit 6-49

Guidance Counselor-to-Students Ratio for the Martin County School District and Its Peer Districts, 1998-99

District	Guidance Counselor: Student Ratio
Indian River	1:636.5
Martin	1:474.5
Charlotte	1:471.2
Santa Rosa	1:427.2
Citrus	1:393.8
St. Johns	1:351.7

Source: Florida Department of Education.

The district does not include Pre-K students in the total enrollment numbers when allocating guidance counselors. Exhibit 6- 50 illustrates the enrollment, the staffing allocation of guidance counselors, the number of guidance counselors, and the difference between the allocation and actual number of guidance counselors of each Martin County school.

Exhibit 6-50**Enrollment, Allocation, Number, and Difference Between Allocation and Number of Guidance Counselors by School, 1998-99**

School	Enrollmen t	Allocatio n	Number	Differenc e
Indiantown Middle School	537	1	1	0
Jensen Beach Elementary	612	1	1	0
Bessey Creek Elementary	613	1	1	0
Port Salerno Elementary	631	1	1	0
JD Parker School of Science, Math, and Technology	646	1	1	0
Hobe Sound Elementary	655	1	1	0
SeaWind Elementary	694	1	1	0
Felix A. Williams Elementary	720	1	1	0
Crystal Lake Elementary ²	730	1	1	0
Pinewood Elementary	757	1.5	1	-.5
Warfield Elementary ¹	777	1.0	1	0
Palm City Elementary ³	858	1.5	1	-.5
Murray Middle School	920	2	2	0
Stuart Middle School ⁴	1,060	2	3	+1
Hidden Oaks Middle School	1,347	3	3	0
South Fork High School	1,726	4	4	0
Martin County High School	2,191	5	5	0

* Note: ¹ The FTE allocation for guidance counselors do not include Pre-K students in the calculation of total enrollment at all elementary schools and Indiantown Middle School. ² Pinewood Elementary has used the .5 FTE to hire a social worker. ³ Palm City Elementary used the .5 FTE for another position. ⁴ District allocated an additional guidance counselor position since the school was within three students of the required minimum student population for three guidance counselors.

Source: Director of Personnel and Employee Relations, 1998-99.

Counselors at the high schools begin working with students while they are in grade 8 in the ways noted below.

- Conduct information meetings during the day for faculty and evenings for parents and students
- Visit students at their school site for high school registration
- Make placement recommendations
- Provide a follow-up orientation evening program at Martin County High School

In grades 9, 10, and 11, counselors mainly visit with students for placement purposes. By grade 12, counselors are responsible for post high school planning including scholarship information.

Martin's ratio of librarians-to-teachers is consistent with its peers (Exhibit 6-51).

*Exhibit 6-51***Librarian-to-Teachers Ratio for Martin County School District and Its Peer Districts, 1998-99**

District	Librarian:Teacher Ratio
Indian River	1:59.2
St. Johns	1:52.5
Citrus	1:49.8
Martin	1:47.1
Charlotte	1:43.6
Santa Rosa	1:41.4

Source: Florida Department of Education.

The Martin County School District Uses Its Media Specialists Effectively

The mission of the library media program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. This is accomplished by providing intellectual and physical access to materials, providing instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest, and working with other educators to design learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students.

The goals of the library media program should focus on offering programs and services that are centered on information literacy and that are designed around active, authentic student learning. In addition, the program should function as the information center of the school and provide resources and activities for learning that represent a diversity of experiences, opinions, and social and cultural perspectives.

The Martin County School District employs at least one media specialist at each campus. This position is held by a certified teacher. Two responsibilities of the media specialist are to operate and supervise the media center and supervise the computer lab. Elementary media specialists are placed "on the wheel". "On the wheel" is a term used to designate special teachers such as music, art, and physical education. The media specialists are part of this group. These four teachers rotate throughout the school day to provide students with instruction in the arts (music, art), physical and health education (P.E.), and library skills (Media Specialists). Exhibit 6-52 illustrates the amount of time per day the elementary media specialists are "on the wheel." When media specialists are "on the wheel" classes come to the media center to work on library skills and use the library.

*Exhibit 6-52***Elementary School and Average Daily Time Media Specialists Provide Instruction 1998-99**

Elementary School	Daily Time "On the Wheel"
Jensen Beach Elementary	.75 hours
Bessey Creek Elementary	1.5 hours
Port Salerno Elementary	0 hours

Elementary School	Daily Time "On the Wheel"
JD Parker School of Science, Math, and Technology	.75 hours
Hobe Sound Elementary	3 hours
SeaWind Elementary	.75 hours
Felix A. Williams Elementary	4.5 hours
Crystal Lake Elementary	0 hours
Pinewood Elementary	2.25 hours
Warfield Elementary	0 hours
Palm City Elementary	4.5 hours

Source: Coordinator of Instructional & Technical Support 1998-99.

The Martin County School District Has a System to Inventory Library Books That Could Be Improved If It Tracked Publication Dates

Each school in Martin County conducts an annual mapping collection survey or inventory of its library collection. The inventory includes the number of books and which titles have been purged from the collection. However, the inventory does not include the publication date of each book in the collection. It is recommended by the American Library Association that at least one half of the books in a library collection be less than 10 years old. In addition, when the review team asked for the number of books by type, the inventory arrived in a variety of formats. This practice makes it difficult for the district to track purchases.

Recommendations

- *The Martin County School District should develop a central online tracking system of its library collection and conduct an annual collection mapping survey.*

Action Plan 6-7

Educational Support Programs

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Revise the central online tracking system of its library collection to include a publication date .
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The coordinator of Instructional and Technical Support and the management information system (coordinator?) will use TERMS or another software database to include a publication date in the online tracking system.</p> <p>Step 2: The coordinator of Instructional and Technical Support and the school media specialists will use the online database to determine which books and other media to procure for the media collection.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Coordinator of Instructional and Technical Support
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources unless another software database, rather than TERMS, is used.



Community Involvement

While the Martin County School District has several mechanisms of a very effective community involvement program in place, opinions vary on whether the school district should do more to increase community involvement in decision making.

Conclusion

The Martin County School District has several mechanisms in place to inform members of the community on school district issues. For instance, the district produces several newsletters and distributes press releases. However, some community members believe the district could better inform parents and more meaningfully incorporate public input into decision-making. The district effectively encourages and manages its volunteers and provides assistance to School Advisory Councils to ensure they understand and fulfill their roles in school-based decision making. The district also houses the Martin County Education Foundation that enables it to tap into community resources to raise supplemental funds for the school district.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

The recommendations in this chapter will strengthen the district's community involvement function, but are neutral in terms of their fiscal impact.

Background

A school district's community involvement function typically involves communicating with and involving different segments of the community, including parents, local businesses, and other local groups.

In the Martin County School District, the communication function is managed by the Volunteer and Community Involvement Office that is staffed by the Special Projects Coordinator for Volunteer and Community Involvement and by an administrative assistant. During the 1997-98 school year, more than 3,000 volunteers contributed more than 165,000 hours of recorded volunteer service, and more than 800 business partners actively sponsored and/or participated in school activities.

Per Florida law, every school in Martin County has a school advisory council. According to the law, “the school advisory council shall be the sole body responsible for final decision-making at the school relating to implementation of the provisions of ss. 229.591, 229.592, and 230.23(16).” Councils typically consist of the principal, teachers, education support employees, students, parents, and other business and community citizens; however, there is a requirement that the majority of council members be people not employed by the school. Martin County School District has a District Advisory Council and school advisory councils at each school.

The Martin County School District also has a partnership with the Education Foundation of Martin County, a non-profit organization that has been raising funds for school district programs since it was founded in 1992.

The school board and management team have made several notable accomplishments over the past several years related to community involvement. Exhibit 7-1 describes some of these accomplishments.

Exhibit 7-1

Notable Accomplishments in Community Involvement

-
- The district does a good job of informing its school staff, volunteers, and the media.
 - The level of volunteer involvement in the district is high.
 - The district does a good job of sharing ideas about successful practices and providing support and avenues for communication to its volunteers.
 - Parents feel welcome at district schools.
 - Volunteer time is well tracked.
 - The district recognizes volunteer efforts.
-

Source: Martin County School District.

This chapter relies on the results of a survey conducted by the review team. Because of the small sample size and low response rates, the results of the survey should be used with care and in conjunction with other information available from the district.

Communications

1 Martin County has several mechanisms in place to inform members of the community. However, some community members believe that the district could better inform parents and increase public input in making decisions.

School district communication is a two-way street. It requires informing the community of what is happening in the district, but it also requires that the district solicit and incorporate input from the community.

Martin County Has Several Mechanisms in Place to Inform Members of the Community

The Volunteer and Community Involvement Office produces two newsletters on a regular basis. *Class Report* is a quarterly publication for the Martin County community. It is distributed to teachers, administrators and community members and contains general information about district activities including updates of district projects, announcements of upcoming events, recognition of district personnel and programs, and information about district initiatives and test scores. The *Five Star News* is produced each month and distributed to principals, volunteer coordinators, and school volunteers. The newsletter includes information about Department of Education programs, descriptions of successful district programs, tips for effectively using volunteers, announcements of upcoming events, and recognition for schools, volunteers and business partners. While schools produce their own newsletters for parents, there is no district newsletter targeted at parents (Exhibit 7-2).

Exhibit 7-2

Martin County Has Several Publications to Inform the Public

Publication	Audience	Frequency	Method of Distribution
Superintendent's Newsletter, <i>Class Report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all teachers all administrators community members (elected officials, business partners) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quarterly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> most through interoffice mail 100 through US mail
<i>Five Star News</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> principals volunteer coordinators 50 copies for school volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monthly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interoffice mail

Source: Office of Volunteer Services and Community Involvement.

In addition to these publications, the school district employs several other methods to provide information to the public. For example, the district issues press releases and holds a monthly press conference. Press releases provide updates on district events as well as announcing accomplishments, like spelling bee contest winners. This conference provides the district with the opportunity to provide in-depth information to local news agencies and to answer questions from the agencies. The Volunteer and Community Involvement Office prepares an agenda for these press conferences and faxes the agenda to the news agencies. The agenda is useful not only for the agencies that attend, but also for those that do not. The agenda highlights topics of interest to the community, and agencies that cannot attend the press conference can call the district for additional information. Also, each week the local newspaper, the *Stuart News*, prints a school digest which includes a variety of education information provided to it by the schools.

Half of the Parents Surveyed Believe that the District Keeps Parents Informed

According to the survey conducted by the review team, 62% of teachers and school administrators agreed with the statement, "The district communicates well with the

community,” and 50% of parents agreed that “The district keeps me informed about what is going on in the district. However, 28.6% of parent disagreed with this statement (Exhibit 7-3).

Exhibit 7-3

50% of Parents Surveyed Believe the District Keeps Them Well Informed

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators (n=94)	The district communicates well with the community.	61.7%	20.2%	16.0%	2.1%
Parents (n=42)	The district keeps me informed about what is going on in the district.	50.0%	16.7%	28.6%	4.8%

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

While teachers and administrators surveyed believe that the district effectively involves members of the community in district decision-making, generally parents do not. Some parents believe that that while the community offers at least some input, the district does not encourage this or incorporate it into their decision-making or planning. As Exhibit 7-4 illustrates, of the 42 parents who responded to the survey, slightly more parents agreed than disagreed that community members provide input to the district; however, more parents disagreed than agreed with the statements, “The district often asks the community for comments and suggestions,” and “The district takes advantage of community comments and suggestions.”

Exhibit 7-4**In General, Parents Believe That the District Could Use More Community Input When Making Decisions**

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Parents	The community often provides suggestions and comments to the district.	35.8 %	31.0 %	26.1 %	7.1 %
Parents	The district often asks the community for comments and suggestions.	21.5 %	38.1 %	35.7 %	4.8 %
Parents	The district takes advantage of community comments and suggestions.	16.7 %	33.3 %	33.3 %	16.7 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

Teacher and administrator responses to similar questions reflect a different perspective. As Exhibit 7-5 shows, a majority of the 94 teachers and administrators who responded believe that the district solicits community input and that the community provides this input. On the other hand, a lower percentage believe that the district incorporates this input. According to the survey, 57% agreed that the district solicits input, 66% believe that the community provides the input, and 48% believe that the district takes advantage of this input.

Exhibit 7-5**School Employees Generally Believe That the District Obtains Adequate Community Input**

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and administrators	The district often solicits comments and suggestions from the community.	57.4 %	20.2%	10.6 %	11.7 %
Teachers and administrators	The community often provides comments and suggestions to the district.	66.0 %	19.1 %	5.3 %	9.6 %
Teachers and administrators	The district takes advantage of community comments and suggestions.	47.9 %	24.5 %	16.0 %	11.7 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

The Influence of Committees on District Decisions Is Unclear

There are several district-level committees that include members of the community, but it is not clear that the input from these committees is influential in district decision making. The district has a District Advisory Council (DAC) which is made up of members from each School Advisory Council (SAC). According to its mission statement, the DAC is responsible for monitoring and directing “the development of each School Improvement Plan. Direction is provided through the ongoing support of the School Advisory Councils. The DAC will provide technical assistance and guidance to each SAC. The DAC will review all available information and provide that which is necessary to complete and maintain a School Improvement Plans.” While this is a useful role for this committee, the committee is not influential in the development of district-level plans or decisions.

The district also has a Strategic Planning committee that includes parents and community representatives. While these community members participated in the development of goals and action plans, in general board members indicated to the review team that they view the final plan as a wish list which the board and superintendent will shape into something more realistic and useful. So, while the board will consider the community’s input, it will develop the final plan without consulting the community on the priority or benefits of various goals.

In addition, the district has numerous other committees including the

- Charter School Committee;
- Long Range Planning Committee;
- Board of Trustees for the Environmental Studies Center;
- Sallie Mae First Year Teacher Award Selection Committee;
- Principal/Assistant Principal Selection/Site Analysis Committee;

- Calendar Committee;
- Academy Advisory Boards;
- DCT Advisory Board;
- Insurance Committee;
- Business Advisory Boards for Secondary Vocational Programs;
- Code of Conduct Committee; and
- Shared Services Network Committee.

Further, the Martin County Taxpayers Association has a committee that works with the school district on budget issues and worked on the privatization of transportation.

However, forming committees does not automatically lead to meaningful community involvement. For committees to be effective, their purpose must be clearly defined, reports or outputs must be specifically identified, deadlines must be established at the beginning, and their findings must be seriously considered in the decision making process. Without these mechanisms in place, significant member time can be wasted. While some of these elements are in place for many of Martin County School District's committees, some committee members interviewed in focus groups conducted by the review team did not feel that their input was valued or incorporated into the decision-making process.

Recommendation

- *The district should distribute bimonthly "items of interest" that individual schools can include in newsletters that are sent home to parents.*
- *Expand the responsibilities of the Special Projects Coordinator for Volunteer and Community Involvement to include the role of a liaison for parents and community members. This person should act to ensure that they are satisfied that input and concerns are heard. There will be times when the district cannot do what parents want, but in situations like this, it is important that there is somebody who can explain the reasoning to the parents or community members.*
- *Establish guidelines for committees. These should require that all purposes, deliverables and deadlines be established at the beginning. The guidelines should also require that some individual be assigned responsibility for the committee's work and that that person be held accountable for completing the work on time. The process should also require that the district report back to the committee on how their input was used.*

Action Plan 7-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Distribute bimonthly "items of interest" that each school can include in the school's newsletter to parents.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Survey parents about the information they are most interested in.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop a format to distribute "items of interest".</p> <p>Step 3: Distribute district-wide "items of interest" to each school for inclusion in the school's newsletters to parents.</p>

Who Is Responsible	The Special Projects Coordinator for Volunteer and Community Involvement
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented within existing district resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Expand the job description and responsibilities of the Special Projects Coordinator for Volunteer and Community Involvement to include the role of a liaison person for parents and community members.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Include and define these responsibilities in a job description.</p> <p>Step 2: Publicize the role with parents and the community to ensure they know that the position exists.</p> <p>Step 3: Attend PTA meetings at the schools to become more familiar with parents so that they are comfortable with the individual.</p> <p>Step 4: Establish an email address and publicize it.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented within existing district resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Establish guidelines for committees
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendent drafts a set of guidelines.</p> <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendent presents them to the board.</p> <p>Step 3: The guidelines are incorporated into policy.</p> <p>Step 4: The guidelines are implemented.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent and the assistant superintendent
Time Frame	November 1999
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented within existing district resources.

Volunteer Management _____

1 Martin County effectively encourages and manages its volunteers.

At the district level, the Volunteer and Community Office coordinates and supports volunteer management function. The office oversees the recruitment, training, development, recognition, and evaluation of volunteers and community involvement activities. The office produces a *Volunteer Handbook* for each volunteer and a *Faculty Volunteer Handbook* that provides guidance to teachers on how to best use the services of volunteers.

In addition, there are Volunteer Coordinators at each school. This position may be filled by a staff person or by one or more volunteers. The position is responsible for recording volunteer hours as well as recruiting, registering, training, placing and following-up with campus volunteers.

Volunteer Hours Increased Greatly from 1997-98 to 1998-99; However, They Vary Among District Schools

Volunteer hours increased from 164,555 hours in 1997-98 to 226,598 in 1998-99. Given the district's enrollment of 15,474, this is an average of 10.6 hours per student. The Florida Department of Education estimates that each volunteer hour is worth approximately \$12.71. At this rate, the district's volunteers contributed over \$2.8 million in services during 1998-99.

The number of volunteer hours varies by school. For example, the number of volunteer hours at elementary schools ranges from 28,078 at Palm City to 4,244 at Warfield Elementary. When the number of hours is adjusted for enrollment, it ranges from 24.6 hours per student at Felix Williams to 5.4 hours per student at Warfield (Exhibit 7-6). At middle schools, the difference is not so drastic. It ranges from a total of 8,907 at Hidden Oaks Middle School to a total of 2,250 at Indiantown Middle School, and from 6.7 hours per student at Hidden Oaks Middle School to 3.6 hours per student at Stuart Middle School. A similar gap exists between the two high schools. South Fork High School reported 12,147 volunteer hours during 1998-99 (7.6 per student), and Martin High School reported 48,040 (23.1 per student).

Exhibit 7-6

Volunteer Involvement Hours Vary Greatly Among Schools

School	1997-98			1998-99		
	Hours	Enroll-ment	Hours per Student	Hours	Enroll-ment	Hours per Student
Elementary Schools						
Warfield Elementary	3,127	777	4.0	4,244	780	5.4
Pinewood Elementary	6,200	757	8.2	15,686	753	20.8
Port Salerno Elementary	6,000	631	9.5	5,269	630	8.4
Jensen Beach Elementary	9,400	612	15.4	9,693	607	16.0
J.D. Parker School of Science, Math and Technology	10,000	646	15.5	8,250	637	13.0
Crystal Lake Elementary	12,000	730	16.4	14,865	728	20.4
Hobe Sound Elementary	13,600	655	20.8	9,693	655	14.8
Seawind Elementary	15,000	694	21.6	16,270	703	23.1
Bessey Creek Elementary	14,700	613	24.0	14,915	613	24.3
Palm City Elementary	25,208	858	29.4	28,078	857	32.8
Felix A. Williams Elementary	22,378	720	31.1	17,480	710	24.6
Middle Schools						

School	1997-98			1998-99		
	Hours	Enroll-ment	Hours per Student	Hours	Enroll-ment	Hours per Student
Hidden Oaks Middle School	4,157	1,347	3.1	8,907	1340	6.7
Indiantown Middle School	1,750	537	3.3	2,250	526	4.3
Stuart Middle School	3,993	1,060	3.8	3,782	1050	3.6
Murray Middle School	7,422	920	8.1	3,965	905	4.4
High Schools						
Martin County High School	1,860	2,191	0.8	48,040	2082	23.1
South Fork High School	7,760	1,726	4.5	12,147	1591	7.6
Other Schools						
Challenger Schools				224	86	2.6
Headstart				319		
Environmental Studies Center				2,604		
Spectrum Jr./Sr. High School				184	322	0.6
Total	164,555	15,474	10.6	226,589	15,575	14.6

Source: Office of Volunteers and Community Involvement.

Different levels of volunteer hours can be attributed to two primary factors: the school's ability and interest in encouraging involvement and the community's ability and interest in participating. The lower volunteer levels at schools like Warfield and Indiantown may be attributed to some extent to the demands on the parents in these communities, many of whom are farm workers who spend long hours in the fields which prevent them from volunteering at the schools. The district has recognized this limitation and as a result has implemented several incentives, such as pancake breakfasts and other events to increase volunteer rates at the schools. The district has also provided interpreters to attend meetings and facilitate the involvement of limited-English speaking parents at Indiantown Middle School. The district is quick to point out that while the number of hours at these schools may be lower, this does not mean that the quality of volunteer involvement is lower. For instance, the Indiantown Education Coalition, which consists of business people in the Indiantown area, is actively involved in the schools in that community.

The District Is Taking Steps to Increase Volunteers in Secondary Schools

Not only does involvement vary from school to school, but it drops off significantly in the middle and high schools. This decrease in involvement is typical for school districts, but Martin County is taking steps to address this. At a recent meeting, the special project coordinator solicited input from school volunteer coordinators on how to improve the transition of volunteers from one school to the next. In addition, the special project coordinator distributed a handout with tips on how to improve volunteer recruitment and retention. The handout included the following tips:

- promote a sense of "belonging;"
- present a detailed list of volunteer "jobs;"

- have sign-up tables for volunteers;
- ask existing volunteers to call and welcome new recruits; and
- encourage parents to volunteer at each grade level as children transition from the primary to secondary level.

The recommendation for transitioning volunteers states:

Many parents who have regularly volunteered at the elementary level don't continue when their children progress to middle and high school. Reasons may include that they don't know how they can volunteer at the secondary level, or feelings of intimidation at a new school. One suggestion is for the volunteer coordinator or representative from the middle and high schools to attend the volunteer appreciation activities at their feeder schools. At this time, the coordinators can say a few words regarding the need for parents' continued involvement at the next level.

While the number of volunteer hours varied by school, 83% of parents surveyed agreed with the statement, "I am encouraged to be involved at my child(ren)'s school," and 60% agreed with the statement, "I feel welcome at my child(ren)'s school." Teachers responded even more positively to similar questions. Ninety-five percent of teachers and administrators surveyed agreed to the statement, "My school encourages parents to be involved," and 75% agreed that "Parents are actively involved in my school." (Exhibit 7-7)

Exhibit 7-7

Parents Are Encouraged to Participate in Schools and Feel Welcome

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	No Opinion
Parents (n = 42)	I am encouraged to be involved at my child(ren)'s school	83.3 %	16.7 %	11.9 %	0.0 %
Parents (n = 42)	I feel welcome at my child(ren)'s school	59.5 %	21.4 %	14.3 %	4.8 %
Teachers and administrators (n = 94)	My school encourages parents to be involved.	94.7 %	5.3 %	3.2 %	0 %
Teachers and administrators (n = 94)	Parents are actively involved in my school.	74.5 %	8.5 %	17 %	0 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

In addition, the district has over 1,000 business partners that participate in programs ranging from Adopt-A-Class to Academies and Internships, and serve as mentors, speakers, and science fair judges.

The District Provides Training to Volunteers and a Forum for School Volunteer Coordinators to Share Ideas

Volunteer training is provided at the beginning of each school year. During the training, the school Volunteer coordinator discusses district procedures and policies and distributes the district's *Volunteer Handbook*. When volunteers begin after the start of the year, the volunteer coordinator meets with each individual and distributes to each a *Volunteer Handbook*. The handbook includes a community profile, program goals, a code of ethics, procedures and guidelines to follow (including signing-in and signing-out of schools), the school board policy on volunteers, and a description of the district's specialized volunteer programs, like the Retired and Senior Citizen Program (RSVP) and business partnerships. The handbook also provides a list and description of established volunteer activities.

Once each month, the special projects coordinator holds a district-wide meeting of volunteer coordinators. These meetings provide the opportunity for the special projects coordinator to provide training and to inform the school volunteer coordinators about new district or Florida Department of Education (DOE) initiatives. These meetings also provide an opportunity for volunteer coordinators to learn what is working and what is not working on various campuses. The special projects coordinator for volunteer and community Involvement prepares an agenda for each meeting and then, after the meeting, summarizes the topics covered in the Volunteer TEAM newsletter. This not only serves as a good reminder for those who attended the meeting, but is extremely valuable for those who were unable to attend as it updates them on volunteer efforts and upcoming events in the district.

Martin County Effectively Tracks Its Volunteers Hours

Volunteer efforts in Martin County are tracked at the school and district level. Schools establish community involvement goals and objectives into their School Improvement Plans and monitor the progress of these goals throughout the year. In addition, schools submit reports to the district on the total number of volunteer hours performed each month. The district then compiles this data and submits it to the Florida Department of Education for its Golden and Silver School Awards. The district also submits an annual report to the Florida Department of Education each year.

Martin County Provides the Support to Encourage Productive Use of Volunteers

The district produces the *Faculty Volunteer Handbook* that provides direction to teachers on how to most effectively use volunteers. This handbook is presented by the principals at the faculty orientation meeting at the beginning of each school year. Like the *Volunteer Handbook*, the *Faculty Volunteer Handbook* includes program goals, a code of ethics, procedures to follow (including signing-in and signing-out of schools), the school board policy on volunteers, and a description of the district's specialized volunteer programs, like the Retired and Senior Citizen Program (RSVP) and business partnerships. The handbook also provides a list and description of established volunteer activities including those below.

- after school program
- arts and crafts
- attendance
- business partner
- classroom assistant
- clerical assistant
- clinic volunteer
- community resource
- exceptional student
- library/media center
- mentor
- speakers of other languages
- special activities
- supervision
- career/ technical skills

As Exhibit 7-8 illustrates, survey results indicate that teachers, administrators and parents believe that the schools effectively use volunteers. Sixty-two percent of parents and 88% of teachers and administrators believe that schools effectively use volunteers.

Exhibit 7-8

Respondents Believe Schools Effectively Use Volunteers

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	No Opinion
Parents (n=42)	The district effectively uses volunteers	61.9 %	16.7 %	16.7 %	4.8 %
Teachers and administrators (n=94)	Volunteers are used effectively in the schools	88.3 %	11.7 %	4.3 %	0 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

Martin County Effectively Recognizes Volunteers

Martin County does a good job of effectively recognizing volunteers and showing appreciation for their efforts, which is essential to keep volunteers active in the schools. The Office of Volunteer and Community Involvement also recognizes district volunteers through two annual events—the annual Holiday Luncheon honoring the school volunteer coordinators and the annual District Volunteer Recognition Awards ceremony to honor the outstanding youth, adult and senior volunteers from each school.

In addition to these lunches, the district participates in several other award programs to recognize volunteers. In 1998, the 5-Star School Award was awarded to five Martin County Schools (Bessey Creek Elementary, Felix Williams Elementary, Port Salerno Elementary, Jensen Beach Elementary, and J.D. Parker School of Science, Math and Technology). This award recognizes outstanding performance in business partnerships, family involvement, volunteerism, community service, and school advisory councils. Also in 1998, 17 schools earned the Department of Education's Golden School Award for volunteer hours. This includes all Martin County Schools except Martin County High School and Spectrum School. The special projects coordinator feels confident that these two schools are on the road to receiving this award next year. The district also recognizes the outstanding support and commitment of its business partners by hosting the Annual District Outstanding Business Partner Award Reception. The business partners receive a certificate of appreciation and their names are published in the newspaper.

Recommendations

- *The district should continue to work with schools with lower involvement to find creative ways to increase involvement.*

Action Plan 7-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Continue to work with schools with lower involvement to find and implement creative ways to increase involvement.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify schools with lower than average volunteer hours.</p> <p>Step 2: Work with volunteer coordinators at these schools to determine if volunteers are really low.</p> <p>Step 3: Continue to research successful practices from other schools in the district and elsewhere and try to increase volunteers.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Special project coordinator for Volunteers and Community Involvement
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This can be accomplished with existing resources.

School Advisory Councils

1 The Martin County School District provides assistance to school advisory councils to help them understand and fulfill their role in school-based decision making

School Advisory Councils Receive District Assistance

The district provides a handbook and training to all members of the school advisory councils to assist members in understanding and fulfilling their role in the decision-making process. The *School Advisory Council Orientation Handbook* includes:

- a description of the role of the school advisory council, the school board, the principal, the school advisory council chair, and school advisory council members;
- copies of district policies regarding the school advisory council;
- instructions for developing a school improvement plan;
- copies of Florida Education Goals;
- a sample school improvement plan development calendar;
- description of the needs assessment process;
- accountability criteria for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools;
- description of what makes a SMART objective;
- definition of what constitutes adequate progress; and
- instructions for evaluating a School Improvement Plan.

School District Employees Believe That School Advisory Councils Are Effective

According to the survey administered by the review team, 65% of teachers and administrators responded that school advisory councils are effective, and almost 48% of parents stated that they are involved in decision making at their child(ren)'s school (Exhibit 7-9).

Exhibit 7-9

Employees Believe That Councils Are Effective, But Parent Opinions Are Mixed on Their Involvement at Schools

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators	School advisory councils are effective	64.8 %	17.0 %	14.9 %	3.2 %
Parents	I am involved in decision making at my child(ren)'s school.	47.7 %	26.2 %	21.5 %	4.8 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

For more information on school advisory councils, refer to page 3-14 in Management Structures, and page 6-4 in Educational Service Delivery.

Fund Raising

1 Martin County taps into community resources to raise supplemental funds for the school district.

Martin County Has a Successful Partnership with the Education Foundation of Martin County

Like many school districts in the state, the Martin County School District has a local education foundation, the Education Foundation of Martin County, that assists in raising funds from local resources. The Education Foundation of Martin County, which was founded in 1992, seeks donations from individuals, businesses and foundations to fund innovative and successful programs for the Martin County School District. The foundation has office space in the district's central administrative building and is staffed by one full-time employee, the executive director. This position was created in August 1998. The school board transferred \$60,000 to the foundation to pay salary and benefits for this position.

The foundation assists with the Teacher of the Year program and with the Senior Recognition Banquet for all high school seniors with a 3.5 grade point average, but its

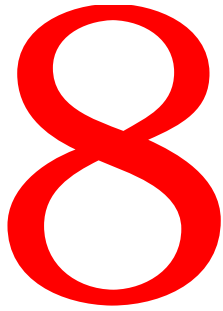
largest program is the enhancement grant program through which it provides grants, usually in the amount of \$500, to teachers with innovative program ideas. During 1997-98, the foundation awarded approximately \$20,000 in grants. The foundation has recently begun a new impact grant program through which a single business can provide larger grants (the minimum is \$1,000) for a particular subject or grade level. The schools can then apply for these grants. Exhibit 7-10 provides an overview of foundation expenditures in 1998-99.

Exhibit 7-10

The District Foundation Provided \$40,000 in 1998-99 to Supplement District Educational Funds

Expenditure	Amount
Teacher of the Year	\$ 3,413.13
Enrichment Grants	1,699.78
Other Grants	2,750.00
Events	1,467.03
Other	545.84
Payroll	24,587.50
Labor and Professional Fees	2,648.00
Insurance	2,357.37
Printing	1,429.81
Total	\$40,898.46

Source: Martin County Education Foundation.



Use of State and District Construction Funds

Through its long-range planning process, the district has met its facilities needs without issuing significant debt. To improve cost efficiency, however, the district should consider alternatives to new construction that could reduce costs.

Conclusion

The district properly uses state and local capital project funds to meet its construction and maintenance priorities but should aggressively pursue more cost-effective options to meet facility needs.

Historically, Martin County School District (MCSD) has operated its capital outlay program with state and local revenues without the need to issue significant debt. The district has been able to bring new facilities on line in a just-in-time fashion through the use of portable buildings and unfinished shell space. As the district enrollment has grown, new facilities have been built in response. The district has used a long-range planning process to develop and implement its construction program.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

The district could defer millions of dollars of new construction by changing attendance boundaries, grade configurations, timing of the school day, or by implementing year-round education. These options are used by other school districts to reduce facilities costs and should be considered by the Martin County School District and the citizens of Martin County. If the school district implements one or more of the above methods to improve capacity at the high schools and middle schools, approximately \$55 million in construction costs projected over the next five years can be deferred. Because this is a potential deferral of construction costs, it is not included in the overall fiscal impact of this report.

Background

For the 1998-99 school year, Martin County School District has a budget of \$45.97 million for maintenance and construction of school facilities. The district is reaching the end of the projects set out in the 1995 Educational Plant Survey and is in the process of developing a

new five-year Education Plant Survey. It should be noted that the district has been developing five-year plans for facilities prior to the legislative requirement to do so.

- The district uses several documents to plan and report the use of construction funds. The Educational Plant Survey, which is required a minimum of every five years by the state, defines five-year facility needs based on state standards and state enrollment projections. This document is prepared with assistance by the State Office of Educational Facilities.
- The Five-Year Facilities Work Program is a comprehensive list of local construction projects for a five-year period that is updated annually and approved by the board. The district's current plan covers 1998-99 through 2002-03.
- The Project Priority List is a subset of the Facilities Work Program covering a single year that includes projects funded by certain sources of funds. Its purpose is to help ensure compliance with state established priorities.
- The Truth in Millage Advertisement List details projects that will be funded with a 2.0 mill property tax. The list satisfies a legal disclosure requirement.
- The Capital Budget is based on the first prospective year of the Facilities Work Program, plus or minus any adjustments approved by the board. Upon approval of the capital budget by the board, the district can assign project numbers to individual projects.

During the past several years the district has focused on major maintenance and renovation projects in the absence of any significant new construction. For the coming five years the district plans to build an elementary school (\$5.2 million), a middle school (\$19 million) and a high school (\$35.8 million). These school projects have not been approved by the state and will be considered during the update of the Education Plant Survey in 1999-2000.

Exhibit 8-1

Notable Accomplishment in the Use of State and Local Construction Funds

-
- Through the use of portable buildings and unfinished shell space, the district allows for enrollment at a campus to expand without overcrowding while new buildings are brought on-line.
-

1 The district properly uses state and local capital project funds to meet its construction and maintenance priorities, but should aggressively pursue more cost-effective options to meet facility needs.

The District Uses Capital Project Funds for Designated Purposes, but Should Improve Its Process for Analyzing Alternatives to New Construction

The district's long-range planning process for new construction does not adequately consider alternatives before using construction funds. The district's Long-Range Planning Committee routinely considers the use of temporary buildings to meet temporary needs. When building new schools the district also constructs unfinished shell space to avoid major renovations when additional classrooms are needed. Currently, the district is evaluating a shared campus arrangement with Indian River Community College. All of these options lower the cost of new construction for the district.

The abundance of capital project funds, however, has not pressed the district to seriously consider other alternatives to new construction, such as changing attendance zones, year-round education, revising the timing of the school day and grade configurations. These options, while more challenging from a community acceptance standpoint, provide opportunities to significantly avoid or defer the use of construction funds. This topic is also discussed in Chapter 9 of this report, page 9-30.

The District Uses Construction Funds According to the Designated Purpose of the Funds

The director of Finance develops the capital outlay budget based on items in the Facilities Work Plan, which includes the priority list and the 2.0 mill levy projects as well as the district plant survey that details construction projects for a five-year period. Only projects that are approved by the board and set forth in one of these documents are included in the budget or assigned project numbers.

The director of Finance assigns each construction project a unique project number and funds can only be released with an approved purchase order for that project. Using this method, all expenditures are tracked to ensure that they are in compliance with the designated purpose of the funds.

Recommendation

- *(See recommendation to consider alternatives to new construction in Chapter 9 – Facilities Construction, page 34.)*

2 The district uses capital outlay funds for facilities construction projects and major maintenance and repair. However, it should limit capital project transfers to the Maintenance Department.

The District Employs Procedures to Ensure that Educational Facilities Construction Funds Are Used Only for New Construction Renovation, Remodeling, or Upgrading Existing Facilities

The district uses capital outlay funds for new construction, renovation, and to upgrade and maintain existing facilities. During the past five years the district completed a significant renovation program; for the next several years the district anticipates using the majority of capital outlay funds for the construction of three new schools.

In the past the district transferred funds from capital outlay to the general fund to support facilities maintenance costs as allowed by law. For the 1998-99 school year, \$1.5 million was transferred to support facilities maintenance costs. The district should determine staffing levels for ongoing maintenance needs and fund those needs through the operating budget. The Maintenance Department should be reimbursed for capital projects, but this reimbursement should not exceed 25% of the Maintenance Department budget. This percentage will ensure that sufficient Maintenance Department resources are dedicated to recurring maintenance activities. See related discussion in Chapter 10, page 21.

The district's construction funds are expended only for capital outlay projects that have been approved by the district school board.

The district develops a Five-Year Facilities Work Program that is updated and approved annually by the board. Each year, district staff prepares a capital budget for expenditures planned for the following year. Projects cannot be assigned project numbers until the board approves the capital budget.

As a part of the budget preparation process, the finance department conducts workshops for the board, including a workshop on capital outlay. The board is presented with and reviews all items in the district Facilities Work Program during the workshop.

The District Uses a Variety of Methods to Determine Facility Needs

The district uses state enrollment projections to develop the Educational Plant Survey submitted to the Department of Education, as required by law. The district uses the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) data to determine a baseline estimate of facilities capacity. The district also prepares its own enrollment projections and completes "spot surveys" if facility needs are different from the Education Plant Survey. All spot surveys must be approved by the state. District staff indicated that the state estimate of total enrollment does not include certain special program students, such as pre-kindergarten, and some special education students. Martin County School District staff includes these students in estimates of enrollment for facilities planning purposes. Also, the district has historically grown faster than state projections. These factors have prompted the district to maintain their own enrollment projections and capacity estimates.

Recommendations

- *The district should establish a target for capital project fund transfers to the general fund, not exceeding 25% of the Maintenance Department budget. Also see recommendation in Chapter 10 to monitor Maintenance Department resources dedicated to capital projects, page 23.)*

Action Plan 8-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should establish a target for capital project fund transfers to the general fund, not exceeding 25% of the Maintenance Department budget
Action Needed	Adopt policy for capital project fund transfers. Monitor percentage of time incurred by Maintenance Department on capital projects.
Who Is Responsible	School board
Time Frame	September 1999

3 When designing and constructing new education facilities, the district incorporates factors to minimize the maintenance and operations requirements of the new facility.

The District Identifies Equipment Standards for New Facilities, but Should Improve Its Analysis of Maintenance and Operating Costs

The district follows the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, which contributes to operating efficiency by restricting size of spaces. The district also developed General, Mechanical, Electrical and Other Specifications that are applied in the construction of new schools. These standards were most recently updated in October 1998. The ten major categories of Equipment are covered by these standards.

- Heating, Venting and Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- Energy Management
- Pumps
- Chilled Water Lines
- Electrical Loads and Wiring
- Lighting
- Fire Alarm
- Intercom
- Television
- Sound Equipment

Maintenance Department staff provide significant input into school design and equipment selection that is not reflected in the district's documented specifications. The district architect stated that the district uses acceptable industry standards and district-established maintenance standards when designing, constructing, equipping and furnishing new facilities to minimize maintenance and operations costs.

Other than reports on chiller performance, the district does not have the information it needs to determine how effective these standards are in lowering facility operating and maintenance costs. The district is in the process of developing other operating and maintenance cost performance measures so that this information can be tracked and used. This issue is also discussed in Chapter 10, page 4 – Facilities Maintenance.

4 The district uses, accounts for, and reports the use of educational facilities construction funds in a proper manner.

The District Relies on Florida Statutes and State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) to Define Educational Facilities Construction and Identifies Projects as Capital Outlay Before Expending Facilities Funds

The district applies the following SREF definitions in its use of capital project funds:

Educational Facility - Buildings and equipment, structures, and special educational use areas that are built, installed, or established to serve primarily the educational purposes and secondarily the social and recreational purposes of the community.

Remodeling - The changing of existing facilities by rearrangement of space and/or of use. The use and occupancy of the spaces may be changed.

Renovation - The rejuvenating or upgrading of existing facilities by installation or replacement of materials and equipment. The use and occupancy of the spaces remain the same.

Maintenance and Repair - The upkeep of educational and ancillary plants including, but not limited to, roof or roofing replacement short of complete replacement of membrane or structure; repainting of interior or exterior surfaces; resurfacing of floors; repair or replacement of glass and hardware; repair or replacement of electrical and plumbing fixtures; repair of furniture and equipment; replacement of system equipment with equivalent items meeting current code requirements providing that the equipment does not place a greater demand on utilities, structural requirements are not increased, and the equipment does not adversely affect the function of life-safety systems; traffic control devices and signage; and repair or resurfacing of parking lots, roads, and walkways. Does not include new construction, remodeling, or renovation except as noted above.

In order to expend funds for a capital outlay project, that project must be on the board-approved Facilities Work Program and included in the Capital Budget. See discussion of these planning documents in Chapter 9, page 14.

The finance office does not release funds unless the projects have been approved. The finance office reviews all expenditures to ensure that they represent a capital project item. The finance department requires that all expenditures for capital outlay show the correct object code so that these can be properly tracked and reported.

The Board Should Adopt a Policy Defining Educational Facilities Construction Funds and Their Use

The district does not have a board policy describing educational facilities construction funds and their use. The Facilities Work Program provides a host of funding sources available for capital projects.

- Local Millage
- Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds – new construction
- PECO funds – maintenance
- State capital outlay and debt service
- Capital Outlay Bond Issues (COBI)
- General obligation bonds
- Impact fees
- Fuel tax rebate
- Interest income on balances in capital projects fund
- Contingency reserves

The Facilities Work Program distinguishes these line items in two categories - recurring and non-recurring sources of funds. Defining these sources in board policy would provide board members with necessary information regarding the nature of the funds and restrictions on their use.

With the exception of transfers to the general fund allowed by law, the finance office has a process to ensure that capital outlay funds are spent only on approved capital outlay projects. The process by which the priority list and facilities work program are addressed in the Facilities Construction and Facilities Maintenance sections of this review.

The School District Has a Unique Funding Source Code to Account for Receipt and Expenditure of All Educational Facilities Construction Funds

The district uses funding codes to account for the receipt and expenditure of facility construction funds. All projects with a total value of \$10,000 or more are assigned a unique project code. For smaller projects, a code is assigned for the type of project, for example, project code 0524 is Countywide Minor Roof repair, and code 0530 is Countywide Minor Renovation. Each funding source also has a unique code. Bond funds all have a fund number beginning with 200, and Capital Projects funds all have a fund number beginning with 300.

The school district uses an accounting system with codes for Fund, Function, Object and Project and has a unique funding source code to account for receipt and expenditure of all educational facilities construction funds

The District Should Adopt Policies and Procedures that Relate to the Use of Educational Facilities Construction Funds

Section 2.1 of the SREF defines the proper use of PECO funds and state capital outlay and debt service funds. Section 236.35 of the Florida Statutes defines the source and use of the district capital improvement fund. The actual uses of these and other funds are reviewed and approved by the board as a part of the budget development process. However, the board does not have a formal written policy that defines the use of funds or refers to state definitions of funds. Establishing a formal policy would help guide the board and district management in their decisions regarding capital project spending and help ensure that all sources of capital project funds are identified.

The district submits an annual report to the Department of Education showing expenditures of all educational facilities construction funds.

The district submits an annual Superintendent's Financial Report to the Department of Education. This report includes expenditures and changes in fund balances for all capital projects funds.

Recommendations

- *The board should adopt policies relating to the definition and use of capital project funds, including a requirement to periodically evaluate alternatives to new construction.*

Action Plan 8-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The board should adopt policies relating to the definition and use of capital project funds, including a requirement to periodically evaluate cost-efficient alternatives to new construction.
Action Needed	Step 1: Draft a policy defining funding sources and their use based on state law, SREF and State Board of Education guidelines. Step 2: Submit the draft policy to legal counsel for review and approval. Step 3: Present the draft policy to the board for adoption.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Operations, director of Facilities, school board
Time Frame	October 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

9

Facilities Construction

Although the district effectively planned and built facilities that met its needs, this success was due more to district management's experience than to its system of management practices. The district needs to formalize and document its procedures to ensure continued success in the facilities construction area.

Conclusion

The Facilities Construction area has been effective in planning and building facilities that meet the needs of the school district. However, many of the district's planning and management practices are informally applied, and although they may be effective, they may not be meeting all the best practice standards of excellence. The department's success has been due more to the experience of management rather than an effective and structured system of management practices that are independent of individuals. Because the Supervisor of Construction is retiring in December 1999, these management practices need to become institutionalized so they are not dependent on the performance of an individual. The new Director of Facilities is already working to formalize and document many of these procedures in the facilities construction area.

The state of Florida has a very structured facilities program that guides much of the decision-making for school facilities. Through state required reports, prescribed building specifications and approvals of individual projects, this program helps the district be more effective in all its facilities management functions.

The district needs to improve its documentation of procedures, criteria and standards with respect to planning construction projects, site selection and evaluation, contractor evaluation, verifying legal compliance, and development of educational specifications. The role of the Long-Range Planning Committee needs to be expanded to include all facilities planning responsibilities. The district also needs to incorporate available demographic data into the enrollment projections used for facilities planning.

The most critical issue facing the district is the assessment of facility capacity. Because of adequate capital outlay funds, the district has not been forced to pursue more aggressive options to increase capacity, such as the change of attendance zones and alternative grade configurations. The district is effective in using portable buildings to meet short-term facility needs.

Over the next five years, the district is planning to spend \$125 million for new construction, major renovations and repairs and other capital projects. Included in this amount are three new schools. Based on the school district's own data, it is not clear whether all of these schools need to be built in the next five years. If other options to increase capacity were used, the district could defer millions of dollars in capital expenditures or allocate them for other purposes.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most of the recommendations in the construction management section will improve district performance. Exhibit 9-1 shows the fiscal impact of the recommendations.

Exhibit 9-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Construction Management Will Have the Following Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
• Conduct facilities audit	• (\$100,000)
• Pay for all architect copying costs directly	• \$2,500

(Parenthesis indicates an investment by the school district.)

Background

The mission of a construction management department is to plan and construct adequate facilities that meet academic needs and legal requirements in a cost efficient manner. This mission is consistent with that of the Construction Management Department of the Martin County School District.

The Martin County School District has 2 high schools, 4 middle schools, 11 elementary schools, other special purpose schools and administrative and maintenance facilities. Of the facilities used today, the oldest was constructed in 1919 and the newest, Bessey Creek Elementary, was finished in 1996. The district's schools contain approximately 2.4 million net square feet of space and serve a population of 16,331 students, or approximately 147 square feet per student. The district's square feet per student ratio is slightly higher than the 143.5 average square feet per student ratio in peer districts. (Exhibit 9- 3).

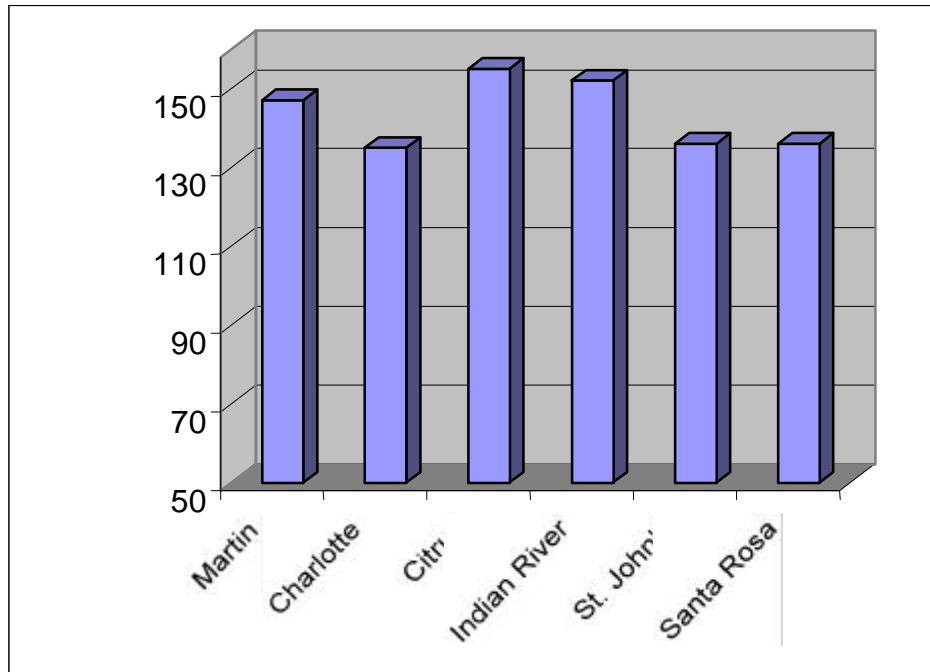
Exhibit 9-2

Notable Accomplishments in Facilities Construction

-
- The district has a track record for completing approved construction projects on time and within budget.
 - The district has been successful in acquiring sites at less than market value.
 - The reuse of existing plans has lowered architect costs for the school district.
 - The district has been able to construct new facilities without incurring significant debt.
-

Exhibit 9-3

Martin County's Facilities' Square Feet Per Student Compares Favorably With Other School Districts with Peer School Districts



Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, February 10, 1999.

Martin County School District's Schools Have Slightly More Square Feet Per Student Than the Average Square Feet Per Student Ratio in the Schools of its Peer Counties

The construction management function of the district falls under the Director of Facilities and is managed by the Supervisor of Construction. Two other employees are also in this department - a Supervisor of Facilities and a secretary.

The Supervisor of Construction is primarily responsible for all facilities planning and construction activities and is also responsible for monitoring the work of architects, contractors and other third parties. Separate committees exist to support long-range facilities planning, the development of educational specifications, and the selection of building sites and architects.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into nine sections. While the sections are evaluated separately, it is important to note that they are highly interrelated and to some degree overlap.

- Long-Range Facilities Planning
- Facilities Needs, Costs and Financial Methods
- Selection and Acquisition of School Sites

- Enrollment Projections
- Existing Facilities – Alternatives to New Construction
- Facilities Planning and Construction
- Educational Specifications Development
- Architectural Planning and Financial Management
- Facilities Use

Long-Range Facilities Planning

Facilities planning responsibilities are divided among the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) and the Facilities Department. The district works closely with Office of Educational Facilities, Martin County and other entities to plan and coordinate the construction of facilities. Long-range planning responsibilities of the LRPC need to be expanded and more members of the Martin County community should be involved in the planning process.

1 The district has established authority and assigned responsibility for facilities planning.

Although Not in Writing, the District has Established Responsibilities for Facilities Planning

It is important to clearly establish roles and responsibilities for facilities planning since so many people are involved and a significant amount of district resources are at stake. Clearly defined responsibilities also support accountability to the board and to the public.

The district's policy manual makes no reference to facilities planning. The policy manual contains a Facilities and Operations section; however, this section only addresses use of school facilities by third parties and professional services. The district has not developed documented procedures relating to facilities planning. However, facilities planning is addressed in the district's written job descriptions. The job description for the Director of Facilities includes a responsibility to "develop and coordinate short- and long-term plans for School Board facility needs." The Director of Facilities confirmed that he is primarily responsible for this function.

Facilities planning responsibilities are also included in the job description for the Supervisor of Construction. The Supervisor of Construction confirmed that he is responsible for the following activities.

- Coordination of all short- and long-range facilities planning for the district's construction activities
- Coordination of the development and implementation of the district's master plan for site acquisition, facilities design, construction and improvements, including forecasting population growth

- Supervision of the development of the district's long-range plan for major and minor renovation, remodeling, new construction, and equipment replacement
- Coordination of the planning of educational facilities, including the annual review of school plant and facility needs and the recommendation of priorities

Board responsibilities for facilities planning are not documented in board policy. Chapter 230 of the Florida School Laws includes general facilities management responsibilities for school boards, but states that "the board may adopt policies providing for the management of the physical campus." Despite the lack of policies, board minutes demonstrate that the board approves the Education Plant Survey and the Five-year Facilities Work Program. The board is also provided minutes from the Long-Range Planning Committee. This committee is discussed on page 9-11.

Recommendations

- *The board should adopt a policy outlining authority and responsibility for facilities planning and the Long-Range Planning Committee, and outline specific reporting responsibilities to the board.*

Action Plan 9-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adopt a policy outlining authority and responsibility for facilities planning and the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC).
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Draft policy outlining responsibilities and authority for facilities planning, including required reporting to the state.</p> <p>Step 2: Submit to general counsel to verify legal and regulatory compliance.</p> <p>Step 3: Submit to board for adoption.</p> <p>Step 4: Revise job descriptions as needed.</p> <p>Step 5: Develop formal charter for LRPC. The district began this process in June 1999.</p> <p>Step 6: Review policy and charter annually to ensure legal compliance.</p>
Who Is Responsible	General Counsel
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 The district has allocated adequate resources to develop and implement a realistic long-range master plan for educational facilities.

The District Has Established a Long-Range Master Plan in an Appropriate Manner

State law requires school districts to prepare an Educational Plant Survey at least every five years. This survey represents the district's master plan, and it is the primary facilities planning document for Florida public schools. The Martin County School District prepared its most recent survey in 1995. This survey was approved by the Florida Department of Education, indicating compliance with the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF).

While meeting legal requirements, the facilities plans for the district do not meet all the indicators of a best practice. Exhibit 9-4 presents an assessment of the district's facilities planning. Many of these items are discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

Exhibit 9-4

Assessment of Facilities Planning

Attributes of Effective Facilities Planning	Assessment
1. The district's data in the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) are accurate and up-to-date.	1. The district has an electronic link with the state of Florida to update its FISH data. However, there is no independent verification of this data. (see page 9-27)
2. The district is using all available building capacity to the fullest extent.	2. The district is not maximizing capacity. (see item 3 below and page 9-24)
3. Attendance boundaries have been changed to achieve full utilization of existing school plant capacity.	3. Attendance boundaries are only changed with the addition of a new school to the district. (see page 9-30)
4. The long-range plan addresses projected "peaks" and "valleys" in school enrollment.	4. Although the enrollment projections in the Educational Plant Survey have "peaks" and "valleys," the document does not discuss the implications for these enrollment fluctuations.
5. The facilities lists use square footage allocations identified in the "State Requirement of Educational Facilities" where required by the Legislature.	5. The Educational Plant Survey of 1995 complies with the State Requirements for Educational Facilities.
6. Projects that include student instructional capacity are given higher priorities than administrative or support projects.	6. The state approves the Project Priority List, which must give priority to instructional related needs.
7. All projects are given estimated budgets and the items within each program's budget are prioritized in the event that the estimated budget will not be adequate for the stated program.	7. The Project Priority List includes the estimated cost of the project.
8. The plan has been reviewed with local government relevant to proposed new sites,	8. As part of the County Planning Committee, the Supervisor of Construction briefs the

Attributes of Effective Facilities Planning	Assessment
<p>new schools, projected growth, land use, projected infrastructure requirements, etc.</p> <p>9. The renovation and repair needs of aging facilities have been identified in the plan.</p> <p>10. The district can demonstrate that new school campuses and proposed sites have been planned by an architect and the district's facilities planner to accommodate siting of portables or expansion of permanent facilities.</p>	<p>county on district growth, facilities plans, and construction projects on a regular basis.</p> <p>9. The Educational Plant Survey describes the general condition of each school in the district and includes remodeling and renovation recommendations for each school.</p> <p>10. The district has used the same model school design for the last three school construction projects. Based on site visits, the district appears to have planned for the siting of portables and expansion of permanent facilities. In fact, two of the three new schools have unfinished classrooms in anticipation of future growth.</p>

The Educational Plant Survey presents an assessment of school facilities, identifying needed major repairs and renovations, major equipment replacements, and the need for additional space or schools based on SREF guidelines. The survey incorporates enrollment projections made by the state, as required, to determine needs for additional space and/or schools.

The survey results include a cost estimate of facility needs and a description of specific needs by school or location. Most of the items on the 1995 survey will be completed by the end of 1998-99. Any facility improvements not specifically listed or prescribed in the 1995 survey require a "spot" survey justifying the need for the improvement or addition. This provides the district with sufficient flexibility to make, or at least propose, needed changes to the five-year plan based on changing circumstances.

For example, the district uses spot surveys to amend facilities needs based on different enrollment projections. In the Education Plant Survey, the district must use state enrollment projections; however, the district also maintains its own enrollment projections, which have historically been more accurate. Spot surveys have been used to obtain waivers from using the state enrollment projections—the state has approved this practice on specific projects through the approval of spot surveys.

The Education Plant Survey items are used to develop a Five-Year Facilities Work Program, which shows more specific estimates of costs of individual projects, and identifies sources of funding. This report is required annually by state law but does not have to be approved by the state. The first year in the Facilities Work Program becomes the capital budget for the school district's applicable budget year.

The 1998-99 Facilities Work Program reflects \$125 million of capital projects over the next five years (Exhibit 9-5). These projects have not been approved by the state, and are based on the district's own assessment of its needs. Upon completion of the Education Plant Survey later this year, the Facilities Work Program will be amended to reflect needs identified in the survey.

Exhibit 9-5

Five-Year Facilities Work Program 1998-99 through 2002-03

Purpose	Amount
Additional Student Stations (new schools)	\$ 61,618,108
Major Maintenance/Renovation	11,272,300
Technology	7,137,000
Other Capital Projects	45,077,824
Total	\$125,105,232

Source: Five-Year Facilities Work Program, 1998-99.

The district is required by law to give priority to instructional facilities. The state requires a Project Priority List identifying priority projects by school. This report identifies those projects that support instructional programs, and includes the estimated cost of each project. The state approved Martin County's priority list for 1998-99.

The Plan Is Reasonable and Addresses the Requirements of Florida Law

The 1995 Education Plant Survey specifically states that the plan meets "the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF), 1995, Florida Department of Education, Office of Educational Facilities and the requirement in Chapter 235, and Section 236.25(2), Florida Statutes" that define the eligibility for the expenditures of funds. This survey was approved by the Department of Education, as evidenced by a letter from the department, and was developed with the department's assistance.

The Five-Year Facilities Work Program shows the source of funds assigned to each project, and this document serves as the basis for the capital budget. (Also see related chapter regarding use of state construction funds.)

State law also requires districts to develop 10-year and 20-year Facility Work Programs, but has not held them accountable for these work programs. The district has not prepared, and the board has not adopted 10-year or 20-year programs.

Ten- and twenty-year work programs do not require the level of effort involved in the five-year plan, but are important in long-range facilities planning. A five-year horizon is insufficient given that most facilities are used for more than 30 years. These longer-range facilities plans can establish baseline scenarios for facilities needs under alternative growth assumptions, and help local government authorities in their long-range planning efforts.

In calculating estimated costs for new facilities, the district uses the inflation-adjusted cost per student station amounts as prescribed by HB 17A. The district has included the construction of three new schools between 1999-2000 and 2002-03 in its Five-Year Facilities Work Program. Renovation and major repair projects are not inflation adjusted; these expenditures are merely spread out evenly over multiple years. Major equipment replacements, however, are inflation adjusted. During this study, the district updated all estimates to be inflation adjusted.

All Available Capital Sources Are Being Applied Towards Achievement of the Long-Range Plan

The Five-Year Facilities Work Program is approved by the board annually and is linked to the capital budget (See page 9-14). The Director of Facilities does not provide the board a full, detailed accounting of the use of all capital funds each year; however, this information is available if requested by the board. The board also approves all change orders on construction projects, regardless of the size of the change order; however, this practice is not documented in board policy.

The 1998-99 budget shows a transfer of \$1.5 million from the capital projects fund to the Maintenance Department—this transfer supports capital projects performed by the Maintenance Department as allowed under Florida law. The Maintenance Department is spending the majority of its time on capital projects such as roof replacements and small renovations, not routine maintenance. While the transfer of funds to maintenance is legal, it does not represent the best use of capital funds, and it provides a disincentive to perform needed routine maintenance. (See separate chapter on Facilities Maintenance.) The board should establish target levels for ongoing maintenance needs and support these needs with operating funds. Maintenance resources dedicated to capital projects should be reimbursed. However this should not exceed 25% of the maintenance budget. The long-range plan has realistic time frames for implementation.

According to the Five-Year Facilities Work Program, the district is planning to build three new schools over the next five years. The district has not developed documented milestones regarding how long a project should take; instead, it has relied on the past experience of individuals to establish time frames for planning purposes. The district applies a checklist and other informal procedures to ensure that the timeframes are reasonable and that all steps are considered in the process. The last three elementary schools were built in less than a year (250 calendar days), which is consistent with industry standards.

Most tasks for achievement of the phases of each project have been incorporated into a district checklist, which has recently been updated. This checklist includes the 20 major categories.

1. Project listed in Education Plant Survey
2. Project listed on Project Priority List
3. Permission to start is received
4. Selection of architect / civil engineers
5. Spot survey is performed and approved, if necessary
6. Education Specifications are developed and approved
7. Phase I Plans and approval by school board
8. Professional advertisement for soil tests, engineering
9. Fleet Report, Soil Test – performed and approved by state
10. Phase 2/3 Plans and approval by school board and state
11. Advertising for contractor bid
12. Bid opening and acceptance
13. Site preparation
14. Space facility chart given to Purchasing for furnishings order
15. Order to proceed
16. Close out unsuccessful bidders

17. Construction period, contract management
18. Carpet, signs, landscaping, lamps, change orders and fire extinguishers
19. Substantial completion
20. Contractor's final package

The current checklist does not include a timetable for performing these activities. Instead, the Supervisor of Construction relies on his experience to begin project activities in time to meet projected timeframes. A timetable is key to sequentially ordering the required steps and ensuring that deadlines are reasonable. Timetables for facilities planning are particularly important since it is highly preferable for schools to open at the beginning of the school year. Even though current checklists do not have timetables, Martin County has consistently finished new school construction before the school year begins.

The checklist also does not cover other important aspects of construction management. For example, it does not address site purchase procedures or interfaces with local and state entities. Thus, although the checklist is a useful tool for the district, it does not provide a guide to ensure that all tasks will be performed on schedule and within a reasonable time period. The new Director of Facilities is improving this checklist to include more events and a timetable. In addition, the district is requiring the architects to submit their timetable for projects to the Director of Facilities on the same project management software the district uses.

The 1995 Educational Plant Survey does not specifically provide assurances to the board or to the public that the projects addressed in the plan will be implemented at the proposed budget levels within the time frame prescribed. Accountability is achieved through a Schedule of Capital Outlay Project Expenditures (SCOPE) report. This report is prepared every three months for each construction project and presented to the board. The report contains information on project budget status, schedule, and any issues that need to be addressed. Specifically, the SCOPE report compares scheduled completion date with actual completion date. The status column on SCOPE indicates the reasons for any project delays. The SCOPE reports for the last three schools constructed show that these schools were built within planned timeframes.

The board has delegated adequate decision-making authority to the Director of Facilities and the Supervisor of Construction, and uses the SCOPE reports to hold them accountable for achieving the goals outlined in the Facilities Work Program on time and within budget.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop 10-year and 20-year Education Plant Surveys as required by law.*
- *The district should include an accountability component in Education Plant Survey that presents a summary of completed work in previous survey.*

Action Plan 9-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop 10-year and 20-year Education Plant Surveys as required by law.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Obtain copies of other districts' 10-year and 20-year plant surveys from the Office of Educational Facilities.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop 10-year and 20-year enrollment projections based on alternate growth scenarios.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop baseline facility needs for major repair, renovation and new construction for a 20-year period.</p> <p>Step 4: Request assistance from the Office of Educational Facilities in completing the 10-year and 20-year plant surveys.</p> <p>Step 5: Submit plant surveys to board for approval.</p> <p>Step 6: Obtain approvals from the State Office of Educational Facilities.</p> <p>Step 7: Make updates to 10-year and 20-year surveys as required by law.</p>
Who Is Responsible	LRPC, Executive Director for Operations, and Director of Facilities, with assistance from the Supervisor of Construction
Time Frame	July 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Include accountability component in Education Plant Survey that presents summary of completed work in previous survey.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Collect SCOPE reports for all projects performed during the last five years.</p> <p>Step 2: Compare previous plant survey to actual construction, renovation and repair projects completed.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify and explain variances from survey.</p> <p>Step 4: Include results in next plant survey.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Construction
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

3 The board has established a facilities planning committee, but the committee should include a broad base of community stakeholders.

The Facilities Planning Committee Should be More Reflective of the Community

The district has established the Long-Range Planning Committee, which is responsible for the site location and size of new schools. This committee comprises 12 members, including parents, teachers, a representative from the county, the Director of Facilities, the

Supervisor of Construction, and two board members. The general counsel is currently drafting a new policy statement refining the make-up of the committee and its' responsibilities.

Although the committee does include some representatives of the community, it does not include members of the civic or business community. Involvement of these representatives on the committee would help ensure that community needs are being addressed. Both business and community members represent voting constituencies, and they represent key stakeholder interests in the facilities planning process. Business representatives also tend to provide input on economic development issues.

The Committee's Role Has Been Adequately Defined in Writing

The following responsibilities of the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) were approved by the board and are documented in the LRPC meeting minutes on March 13, 1989.

1. Formulate and develop a sound demographic data base from which needs can be identified and development plans to meet those needs;
2. Function as a liaison between the school system and the community;
3. Determine current status regarding land acquisition, donated land, etc., that may be useful as school sites;
4. Assist in selection of site property and implementation of new school

The role of the LRPC is too narrow, and should be expanded to include all facility planning activities. Currently the LRPC does not review or approve Education Plant Surveys, Five-Year Facilities Work Programs, Project Priorities Lists and Capital Budgets. Expanding the LRPC's role to include these activities would allow the board to hold this committee accountable for all aspects of facilities planning. District staff provides information and support for the planning effort but are not independently responsible for the facilities planning.

The district is currently working to expand the scope of this committee. A draft policy will make the long-range planning committee responsible for:

- Reviewing of student population
- Reviewing countywide population trends and growth patterns
- Providing recommendations regarding new school facilities
- Recommending appropriate school site boundaries

The draft policy takes the site selection responsibility from the Long-Range Planning Committee and gives it to a new site selection committee created in the draft policy.

The board has established the committee's project goals but should also establish its broader goals and interim reporting targets. As indicated by board meeting minutes, the board has established project goals for the Long-Range Planning Committee. However, the board has not established broader goals, objectives, and procedures for the Long-Range Planning Committee's facilities planning function. This is contributing to the narrow focus of the LRPC. In addition, the Board has not established interim reporting targets for when the committee is to complete project-specific goals.

Once the board approves policies and procedures governing the Long-Range Planning Committee, the district will have an official mechanism or schedule for reconvening the committee to address the long-range plan. The LRPC should be charged with ensuring that

all school facilities have acceptable utilization rates and the district's average utilization rates meet established standards. This goal would require the committee to be more actively involved in activities that support this goal.

The primary means the Long-Range Planning Committee has for documenting its decisions is the committee's meeting minutes. However, these minutes do not clearly document the choices, criteria, or facts that led to committee decisions.

Recommendations

- *The district should add business and civic community members to the Long-Range Planning Committee.*

Action Plan 9-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Add business and civic members to the Long-Range Planning Committee.
Action Needed	Step 1: Adopt policy specifying the makeup of the LRPC. Step 2: Identify two business representatives, two civic organization representatives, and two parents to serve on the LRPC.
Who Is Responsible	General Counsel; School Board
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

4 The district has assigned one person with the authority to keep facilities construction projects within budget.

The District Has Assigned Responsibility for Keeping Projects Within Budget to the Supervisor of Construction and Has Established Credentials for This Position

The Supervisor for Construction is primarily responsible for the completion of all construction projects. In the job description of the Supervisor of Construction, the district has established the educational and professional qualifications for this position.

- Bachelor of science degree from an accredited educational institution.
- Five years experience in the building trades field with at least two years of supervisory work.
- Uniform Building Code Inspector designation.
- Knowledge of state, federal and local rules and regulations relating to construction and land use.

Each construction project also has an architect who reports to the Supervisor of Construction for that project.

The Current Supervisor of Construction Has the Required Credentials

The current Supervisor of Construction has a background in the construction industry and has worked at the district for 20 years. The Supervisor of Construction plans to retire at the end of 1999. With his retirement, the district will experience loss of critical information and experience that are used in the management of district construction projects. To ensure a smooth transition the district will need to upgrade the position requirements to require more years of experience. This will be especially important in Martin County as management information systems are under development. (See page 30).

The District Has a Mechanism for Holding the Supervisor of Construction Accountable for Keeping Facilities Construction Projects Within Budget

The SCOPE reports are the primary mechanism through which the Supervisor of Construction is held accountable for completing construction projects on time and within budget.

Recommendations

- *The district should upgrade credentials and qualifications for the position of Supervisor of Construction to ensure continued program success.*

Action Plan 9-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Update credentials and qualifications for position of Supervisor of Construction to ensure that replacement carries on successful program.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review existing requirements and credentials on job description. Step 2: Develop and/or upgrade requirements. Step 3: Modify job description.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

5 The district has assigned budget oversight of each project or group of projects to a single project manager.

The district has assigned the Supervisor of Construction with the responsibility to oversee the budget of each construction project. For more information on the required credentials and experience see page 9-13.

Facility Needs, Costs, and Financial Methods————

The district's capital budget is linked with the five-year facilities work program and the Educational Plant Survey. With more than adequate capital project funds, the district has not been required to pursue aggressive efforts to improve capacity.

1 The district uses a capital planning budget based on comprehensive data collected in the early stages of the Education Plant Survey.

The district prepares a Five-Year Facilities Work Program, which is updated annually, and serves as its capital planning budget. This program is required by Chapter 235.185 of the Education Code, but does not need state approval. The current work program shows all capital projects from 1998-99 through 2002-03. It groups these projects into several categories: student station needs; major repair and renovations (primarily includes major renovations); and other capital projects (primarily includes major repairs and other capital projects). The work program identifies a total of \$122 million in capital improvement projects over the next five years, \$90 million of which will be funded by local millage, and \$11 million by PECO funds. Another major source of funds is state bond proceeds (\$15 million).

The first year of the Five-Year Facilities Work Program is used as the capital budget for the following school year. As a part of the budget preparation process, the Finance Department conducts workshops for the board, including a workshop on capital outlay. As a part of this workshop, the board is presented with and reviews all funds related to debt service, and all items in the capital projects fund, including items contained in the district Facilities Work Program. The Director of Finance stated that funds cannot be budgeted or requisitioned without an active project number, and projects are not assigned a number until the board has approved them.

The Preparation of the Capital Planning Budget Needs to be Based on a Critical Assessment of All Factors

Separate sections in this chapter discuss the individual factors that are applied in the development of the capital budget. These factors are summarized below.

Demographics / enrollment. The district uses its own projection of enrollment to evaluate future capacity of schools and determine whether new student stations are needed. The enrollment projections are not based on a thorough demographic analysis. (See separate section on enrollment projections, page 9-23.)

Capacity. Through its FISH records, the district tracks capacity by school and identifies the need for additional student stations based on State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF). This analysis resulted in the need for three new schools over the next five years. If the district were able to redraw attendance boundaries to maximize school utilization, the construction of these schools would not be needed. The district has not aggressively sought to change attendance boundaries unless a new school is being

constructed. (See separate section capacity analysis regarding the district's assessment in this regard on page 9-24.)

Alternatives. Over the past five years, the district has renovated space and finished out existing space to defer construction of new facilities. The district uses an innovative practice of leaving empty shell space at a new school until it is needed. This reduces maintenance and operations cost. The district is also considering a joint use facility with Indian River Community College if legislative funding is granted. As indicated above, the changing of attendance boundaries has not been pursued to maximize utilization. (See separate section on capacity and alternatives analysis on page 9-30.)

Educational requirements. For each new school, an Educational Specifications Committee is established and a set of educational specifications is developed. However, in cases where plans are reused, a new set of educational specifications is not developed. Further, the architect is not involved in the development of educational specifications (See separate section on educational specifications on page 9-38.)

Yearly projection of needs. State law requires the five-year plan to be updated annually and adopted by the board. The district complies with this requirement.

Cost projection. According to the Supervisor of Construction, the district converts facility needs into preliminary cost estimates by using a rule of thumb cost-per-square-foot estimate. The district compares this amount to the inflation-adjusted cost-per-student-station guidelines for reasonableness.

Sources of funds. The sources of funds for all capital projects in the Facilities Work Program are estimated for a prospective five-year period.

The district has been able to fund construction programs on a pay-as-you-go basis. The district has not used bond referendums to finance construction projects in over 20 years, and is not planning on using this financing alternative in the future. As shown in Exhibit 9-6, approximately 73% of capital project funding is from local millage. The district has not used local sales-surtax to finance construction projects in recent years and is not planning on using this financing alternative in the future.

Exhibit 9-6

A Large Majority of Capital Project Funding Is From Local Millage 1998-99 through 2002-03

Purpose	Amount
Local Millage	\$ 89,916,612
PECO	10,992,140
Other recurring revenues	6,716,096
Non-recurring sources (state bonds)	14,812,545
Total	\$122,437,393

Source: Five-Year Facilities Work Program, 1998-99.

2 The district considers innovative methods for funding and financing construction projects.

The District Considers Innovative, Non-Traditional Methods for Funding Construction Projects

The district makes some effort to identify innovative financing and funding opportunities, but has not been compelled to do so because of an abundance of capital outlay funds.

For example, the district has achieved cost savings through a lease-purchase arrangement. The district executed a lease purchase agreement with the Wedham Foundation, which allows the school district to obtain a piece of property for future use at about one-half of fair market value. This resulted in savings of over \$300,000.

However, local millage and PECO funds provide a substantial amount of funding for the district. Thus the district has not been pressed to develop more innovative approaches to funding capital projects. The district's strategy has been to fund facilities on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, which is desirable from a financial management standpoint. Millions of dollars in interest expense are saved by using this approach. This has been a simple yet effective strategy in meeting long-term facility needs. As of June 30, 1998, the district had only \$7.5 million in bonds payable.

The District Has Assessed Each Proposed Project, Evaluated the Size of Spaces, and Building Proposals for Frugal Construction. However, the Most Recent Educational Specifications Did Not Contain Evidence That the District Eliminated Non-Essential Programs

The Facilities Department establishes parameters for gross square feet and cost per square foot, and lets the Educational Specifications committees establish priorities. However, the most recent Educational Specifications contained no evidence of any pruning of non-essential programs. The Educational Specifications for the last three schools constructed were all versions of the same boilerplate document used for a prior school. Modifications of district-wide programs and sizes of space were not factored into the educational specifications. (Also see separate section in this chapter on educational specifications, page 9-38.)

The district uses size parameters established by the SREF, and identifies the space needed by type of classroom, by grade level.

In the past, the district has not used the state's prototype designs, which are significantly less expensive than the designs used by the district. However, the Supervisor of Construction stated that the prototypes available from the state 10 years ago, when the district began its last construction phase, were not flexible enough to meet the needs of the district. For example, a prototype for a high school for 4,000 students was not easily adapted to one for 2,000 students.

The district also strives to construct cost-efficient facilities. In the architect contract, Article 15 obligates the architect to pursue costs savings through value engineering. (See separate section regarding architectural services on page 9-32.) The district expects to be eligible for awards for frugal construction during its next building program. The state's

frugal construction program was initiated since the last school was built. This program provides financial incentives for school districts for frugal construction on new schools.

3 The capital planning budget accurately lists facilities needs.

The Capital Budget Lists Reasonable Facility Needs

The Five-Year Facilities Work Program provides cost estimates for individual projects, and has separate sections for additional student stations, major renovation and repair, and other capital projects, which includes site improvements, technology, ADA compliance and major equipment purchases or replacements.

The Budget Itemizes the Cost of Needed Facilities

New school cost estimates are prepared based on prior experience (cost per square foot) and compared to the cost per student station based on state standards for reasonableness. The lower of the two amounts is applied. This ensures that cost estimates are consistent with state standards and support an accurate capital budget.

The School Board Needs to Establish “Not-to-Exceed” Project Amounts for Capital Projects

The board does not formally establish a “not to exceed” figure for capital projects. According to the Supervisor of Construction, the Facilities Department tells the board the anticipated spending levels, based on historical cost and cost per square foot information. However, the board does not formally adopt this figure.

The Budget Sets Project Priorities in Accordance With the Master Plan

The budget document reflects priorities for capital projects based on the Project Priority List. The district is also required a Request for Approval of Priorities of Expenditure of State Capital Outlay Funds to the Department of Education. This form identifies those projects with the highest (A rating) priority for educational programs.

The district has not developed procedures regarding the funding of projects in the Five-Year Facilities Work Program; however, the district has funded the projects on a “pay-as-you-go” basis. Thus the district relies primarily on recurring local tax revenue to fund facility needs.

Recommendations

- *The district should provide more itemization for new school construction on the Five-Year Facilities Work Program.*
- *The board should establish not-to-exceed spending levels that are consistent with state standards for construction.*

Action Plan 9-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide more itemization for new school construction on the Five-Year Facilities Work Program
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify estimated cost, by phase of construction, for new school construction. Step 2: Include breakdown of estimates in five-year facilities work program. Also include cost-per-student and cost-per-square-foot measures.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The board should establish not-to-exceed spending levels that are consistent with state standards for construction.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop proposed “not-to-exceed” limits based on state standards and district experience. Step 2: Draft policy establishing spending levels that are consistent with state standards. Step 3: Submit policy to board for approval.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Construction; School Board
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Selection and Acquisition of School Sites

1 The district uses a site selection committee to identify and recommend sites in a timely manner.

Although Not a District Procedure, the District Has Used a Site Selection Committee

The district does not have documented policies or procedures requiring the establishment of a site selection committee. However, in practice, the site selection committee is the Long-Range Planning Committee. Minutes of the LRPC meetings for the Bessey Creek Elementary school show that the committee evaluated sites in 1994, approximately 14 months before construction began on the school. The committee evaluated several sites and recommended the specific site for board approval on February 1, 1995. A draft policy has created a separate site selection committee.

The District Can Demonstrate That it Meets Legal Requirements for Site Selection

Until 1997, state law required that all site purchases be approved by the state. The state no longer has this requirement, but the district is still responsible for meeting legal requirements with respect to site purchases.

Since site purchases represent major financial and long-term planning commitments for a school district, it is important that their evaluation and selection meet all legal requirements. The legal requirements are defined in statute and in Section 1.4 of the State Requirements for Educational Facilities. Section 235.054, F.S., requires that all sites with an estimated value of \$100,000 to \$500,000 have one independent appraisal, and that sites with an estimated value exceeding \$500,000 have two independent appraisals. The district provided two appraisals of the Sea Wind Elementary School site that demonstrate its compliance with this statute.

Sections 235.19 and 235.193, F.S., define requirements for coordination with local governing bodies in site selection and require school districts to select sites that meet the education need parameters established by the state. These requirements are specifically defined in Section 1.4 of the SREF. The district provided copies of notification letters to the six local governing bodies and other entities to support compliance with this requirement with respect to the Bessey Creek Elementary site.

- Martin County Board of County Commissioners
- Martin County Sheriff's Department
- Martin County Fire Prevention
- Department of Public Safety
- South Florida Water Management
- Florida Power and Light

The final site inspection form for the Bessey Creek Elementary site verifies that written agreements were obtained from the above entities. These agreements verify that adequate services can be provided to the site, and/or that the intended use meets other prescribed conditions.

Section 1.4(4)(a) of the SREF establishes minimum acreage for elementary school sites. A minimum of four acres is required for the first 200 students, and one acre for each additional 100 students. Bessey Creek Elementary school's ultimate capacity based on the Education Plant Survey was 770 students. Based on the formula, this would require a minimum of 10 acres. The actual number of acres on the site is 17.1, which provides adequate land for facility growth.

The District Can Demonstrate That a Planner From Local Government Was Involved in Site Selection

The district provided correspondence between Martin County's County Engineer and the school district during the evaluation of the Bessey Creek Elementary site. In an April 27, 1995, letter to the district, the county expressed an intent to coordinate discussion of several issues relating to the site, including traffic, drainage, pedestrian movement, landscaping and coordination with neighboring park site.

Recommendations

- *The district should adopt board policy requiring establishment of a site selection committee at least 12 months prior to planned construction. This committee should be separate from the Long-Range Planning Committee.*

Action Plan 9-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adopt board policy requiring establishment of a site selection committee at least 12 months prior to planned construction.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Ensure that construction checklist includes establishment of a site selection committee at least 12 months prior to planned construction.</p> <p>Step 2: Draft policy requiring LRPC to appoint a site selection committee at least 12 months prior to planned construction.</p>
Who Is Responsible	General Counsel , School Board
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 The district needs to expand and document its site selection criteria.

The District Needs to Establish Formal School Site Selection Criteria

According to the supervisor of Construction, the district has no formal site selection criteria other than those defined by law and the SREF. However, the draft policy lists three main criteria for site selection: acreage, cost considerations, and governmental coordination. The policy also lists 31 miscellaneous criteria to be considered. The coordination with local governing bodies indicates the district considers many criteria related to this best practice indicator.

- General safety – coordination and written agreement with the Martin County Sheriff's Department, Martin County Fire Prevention and the Department of Public Safety.
- Location – Form 350 completed for the Bessey Creek Elementary site shows the district considered location criteria including proximity to flight patterns, neighboring noise or odor interference, and proximity to railroad and highway right of way.
- Utilities – Form 350 completed for the Bessey Creek Elementary site shows the district made sure utilities were readily available.
- Environmental impact requirements – the district maintains a parcel evaluation checklist that includes the assessment of environmental concerns, including wetlands evaluation, soil study, soil borings and existing elevations for fill dirt study. Evidence of these studies for the Bessey Creek Elementary site, conducted between June and September 1995, were provided as support.

- Size and shape – Form 350 completed for the Bessey Creek Elementary site reflects that the district assessed the size and shape of the site for educational purposes. The form also includes an assessment of whether the site can be expanded or not.

The Bessey Creek Elementary site met all of the site selection criteria prescribed on Form 350. However, the district's process does not address other site selection criteria such as, current and future zoning requirements, student transportation assessments, and cost of services provided to the site.

The District Can Demonstrate That Preliminary Reviews and Tests Were Conducted Prior to Final Selection

The district provided evidence of soil studies conducted four months prior to final site selection. Fraser Engineering and Testing conducted a preliminary subsurface investigation for the Bessey Creek site on June 5, 1995, three months prior to the site purchase on September 14, 1995. The conclusion of this study was that the site was suitable for construction of a new school. The district relied on a local governing body (South Florida Water Management District) to evaluate drainage. The district obtained a written agreement from South Florida Water Management District that flood control and drainage conditions were adequate for the site.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop formal site selection criteria and checklist for site evaluation that go beyond state requirements.*

Action Plan 9-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop formal site selection criteria and checklist for site evaluation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Using Form 350 and more current applicable state laws, define and document all criteria for site selection.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify other site selection criteria based on district needs.</p> <p>Step 3: Finalize site selection criteria and submit to board for approval.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

3 The board needs to improve its evaluation of other factors in site selection.

The district does not have any documented criteria that address condemnation, neighborhood concerns, future zoning, or future transportation plans. The Supervisor of Construction stated that these topics are discussed by the LRPC, and analysis of LRPC meeting minutes supported this statement. It is important, however, for the district to document these criteria so that they are considered in all site evaluations. The district's draft policy, if implemented, should address these issues.

4 The district has a system to assess sites to ensure prices paid reflect fair market value.

The District Conducts Independent Appraisals of Sites to Reflect Fair Market Value

The district provided two appraisal reports of vacant land located off SE Seabranh Blvd. (the present site of the Sea Wind Elementary School). The appraisal reports provide information on factors such as location, site size, land use, flood zone, and land value comparisons, they do not provide a comparison of "the most economical and practical locations for current and anticipated needs" with respect to a potential school site, as required by sections 235.054 and 235.19, F.S.

The district has paid below fair market value for two sites by using sites that were offered at substantially reduced prices. Williams Elementary school was built on land being purchased through a lease purchase agreement. The district paid an initial \$250,000 for the first year of using the land. Each year after the district's lease amount is abated as long as at least one of 11 lease criterion is met. After 10 years the district has the option to purchase the land for one dollar (\$1.00). An appraisal of the 26 acres site indicates the land is worth \$1,011,000. The district will recognize a savings of \$750,000 if the option is executed.

Sea Wind Elementary was built on land sold by a developer at a reduced rate. The district paid \$240,000 for a site appraised at \$480,000. By using sites that are offered at lower costs and still meet site selection criteria the district has been able to recognize a substantial savings on land acquisition costs.

5 For each project, the architect and facilities planner develop a plan to serve as a decision-making tool for future facilities needs.

Project Plans Include Provisions for Future Changes and Additions, and Serve as a Decision-Making Tool in Planning Future Facilities Needs and Implementation Strategies

The plans for new schools include the construction of shell space that can be used to meet future facility needs. The schools are designed for an ultimate enrollment, but some

classrooms are left unfinished until enrollment needs warrant the completion of the space at a lower cost than constructing new buildings. The district has applied this concept on all new schools including the recently constructed Bessey Creek Elementary school.

Enrollment Projections

1 The district prepares enrollment projections; however, available demographic data is not always incorporated into the enrollment projections used for facilities planning.

The District Has Not Conducted a District-Wide Demographic Study Over the Past Five Years, but Uses Available Demographic Data From the County Database

The Educational Plant Survey is the primary facilities planning document prepared by the school district. The state requires that a survey be conducted at least once every five years. Martin County's most recent Educational Plant Survey was developed in 1995 with the assistance of the Florida Department of Education. According to the Supervisor of Construction, the district is in the process of developing another survey this year.

The 1995 survey includes enrollment projections that were used as the basis for facility needs between 1995-96 and 1999-2000. The enrollment projection was developed by the Florida Department of Education, and applied a cohort survival method, which is the method used by the U.S. Census Bureau. This technique incorporates the number of live births, and uses historical trends to project enrollment by grade, or cohort, for Pre-K through Grade 12.

These state projections are not based on a thorough demographic study, or on city/county comprehensive plans. For instance, migration is not factored into the enrollment projections, nor are demographic characteristics such as ethnicity or economic status.

Martin County conducted a countywide population projection in February 1994. The study examined the following:

- Persons per household
- Permanent versus seasonal populations
- Municipal and regional growth
- Growth by planning area

The county study did consider build-out assumptions, but did not address local ordinances, a forecast of economic conditions, vocational opportunities, availability of community services or road systems. Based on these factors, the study projected population until 2005 by municipality, planning area, and permanent versus temporary population. This study was not incorporated or referenced by the 1995 enrollment projection in the district's Education Plant Survey.

The 1995 Education Plant Survey projected 14,923 students for 1998-99. Actual enrollment in 1998-99 is 16,331. Since this survey was completed, the state enrollment projections have been updated. The Department of Education prepared its most recent enrollment projection for Martin County School District in June 1998.

The district also develops its own enrollment projections, by grade, and compares its projections to state projections. These projections have been extremely accurate in recent years, and the state of Florida has allowed the district to base facility needs on its own projections. The district's methodology is not based on a formal demographic study, but demographic data is available from the county database. The Supervisor of Construction, in coordination with the Martin County planning office and the Long-Range Planning Committee, develops the district's enrollment projections.

The district's projection of enrollment submitted to the LRPC includes projected numbers of students by grade, by school. These projections should also include available demographic information, such as ethnicity and income status. This demographic information is useful in program planning. For example, if the Hispanic population is expected to increase, bilingual education programs may need to be expanded, and this may have facility consequences beyond those of regular program students. Further, and projected increases or decreases in family incomes will directly affect the district's eligibility for federal funding programs and the size of Title I programs in particular. Since Title I schools receive additional funds for educational enhancement, a need for more classrooms could result from the use of this information in facilities planning.

School Capacity Should be Based on Full Utilization for all Schools

The district's most recent enrollment projection is dated August 19, 1998, and projects enrollment in 2002-03 to be 18,722, reflecting 10.5% growth over the next four years. This estimate is considerably higher than the state's estimate made two months earlier showing projected enrollment of 16,935 by 2002-03. (See Exhibit 9-7) Historically, while the state's approach has been more sophisticated, the district's projections have been more accurate. The state's numbers exclude the district's Head Start student population, which is more than 350 students. The state's projections also apply end of year enrollment data. The district believes that they must have adequate facilities to house the number of students at the beginning of the school year.

Exhibit 9-7

District Enrollment Projections Reflect Higher Growth Rates than the State

Source	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
State	15,623	16,095	16,376	16,679	16,935
District	16,091	16,961	17,636	18,144	18,722

The district breaks down its enrollment projections by school. Its school enrollment projections incorporate anticipated boundary changes caused by the addition of new schools. The district has not changed attendance boundaries to increase district-wide facility utilization.

The 1995 Education Plant Survey contains capacity utilization factors for schools. The high school utilization rate varies with the number of student stations in the school. Both of Martin County's high schools have more than 1,500 student stations.

Elementary schools	100%
Middle/Junior High Schools	90%
Senior High Schools (over 1,500 students)	95%

Based on these targets, most schools are currently under capacity. See Exhibit 9-8 for information on the schools that have extra capacity. Some students that start out in a regular school at the beginning of the year are transferred to special school during the year. This can affect a school's ability to maintain full capacity throughout the year. The district is also considering limiting class sizes at J.D. Parker Elementary and Port Salerno Elementary to 20 students per teacher. If the district follows through with this, the capacities of these schools will be altered.

Exhibit 9-8

Most Martin County Schools Are Under Capacity, 1998-99

Campus	100% Capacity (Permanent Facilities)	Target Capacity %	Target Capacity	Enrollment	Percentage Capacity
<i>High School</i>					
Martin Senior High	2,177	95%	2,068	1,971	95.3%
South Fork Senior High	2,197	95%	2,087	1,623	77.8%
<i>Total - High Schools</i>	<i>4,374</i>		<i>4,155</i>	<i>3,594</i>	<i>86.5%</i>
<i>Middle Schools</i>					
Hidden Oaks Middle School	1,432	90%	1,289	1,278	99.2%
Stuart Middle School	1,515	90%	1,364	1,064	78.0%
Murray Middle School	1,297	90%	1,167	877	75.1%
Indiantown Middle School	663	90%	597	349	58.5%
<i>Total - Middle Schools</i>	<i>4,907</i>		<i>4,416</i>	<i>3,568</i>	<i>80.8%</i>
<i>Elementary Schools</i>					
Bessey Creek Elementary	560	100%	560	560	100.0%
Crystal Lake Elementary	820	100%	820	750	91.5%
Felix A. Williams Elementary	623	100%	623	709	113.8%
Hobe Sound Elementary	912	100%	912	654	71.7%
Jensen Beach Elementary	955	100%	955	653	68.4%
J.D. Parker Elementary	761	100%	761	686	90.1%
Palm City Elementary	899	100%	899	793	88.2%
Pinewood Elementary	826	100%	826	739	89.5%
Port Salerno Elementary	831	100%	831	621	74.7%
Sea Wind Elementary	700	100%	700	670	95.7%
Warfield Elementary	703	100%	703	792	112.7%
<i>Total - Elementary Schools</i>	<i>8,590</i>		<i>8,590</i>	<i>7,627</i>	<i>88.8%</i>
Total - Schools	18,740		17,871	14,789	86.2%

Sources: Martin County School District, Enrollment Demographic Progression Analysis, dated 6/16/99, revised 7/26/99; Florida Inventory of School Houses, 2/10/99.

The district has planned for the construction of three new schools by 2003-04 – one elementary school, one middle school and one high school – based on its most recent enrollment projections. While these projections have not manifested themselves in an Educational Plant Survey, they have been used to develop the district's Five-Year Work Program, a long-term budget for capital projects that is required by the state to be updated annually.

Recommendation

- *The district should include available demographic data in enrollment projections submitted to the LRPC.*

Action Plan 9-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should include available demographic data in enrollment projections submitted to the LRPC.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop supporting enrollment projection schedules that show ethnicity, income status and other available demographic data.</p> <p>Step 2: Incorporate schedules into enrollment projections provided to the LRPC.</p> <p>Step 3: Use results in future facilities planning efforts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Existing Facilities – Alternatives to New Construction

1 The district uses the Florida Inventory of School Houses inventory to analyze student capacity and classroom utilization.

The District Identifies all Buildings and/or Spaces as “Satisfactory Area” in the FISH Inventory; Because Information is not Available to Identify all Facility Needs

A facilities inventory is maintained on a state computer system called the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH). All buildings and spaces on this inventory are ranked satisfactory. The district has not conducted any facility audits that evaluate each component and classroom to provide information that would change existing satisfactory rankings. (See discussion of facilities page 9-29.) A facilities audit would also provide the

data to complete the ranking information on the FISH records, and allow these records to serve a more useful purpose.

The District can Demonstrate That it Uses the FISH Inventory to Analyze and Identify Instructional Areas or Student Stations

The FISH inventory is used to determine current capacity and needs for additional schools or student stations. Supporting schedules for the Five-Year Facilities Work Program includes FISH data relating to the number of student stations. Actual, planned and target capacities are compared to identify needs for additional student stations.

The district analyzes capacity on a school-by-school basis, not on a district or school type level. During the February 10, 1999, meeting of the Long-Range Planning Committee, the Director of Facilities and the Supervisor of Construction stated that “statistics show the need for another middle school to be open by Fall 2001. Hidden Oaks Middle School is over capacity.” This statement is true, but does not recognize that overall middle school capacity is 848 students under capacity. There was no mention in the minutes of overall capacity or the impact of projected enrollment on capacity.

The District Maintains the Data Needed to Identify Instructional Areas and Teaching Stations in Accordance With the Requirements of Current Laws of Florida. However, This Information is not Verified for Accuracy

Plant operators at each school confirm changes to the data in the FISH records annually. However, without a formal facilities audit/appraisal, data is confirmed only through confirmation of changes. The Facilities Department “informally” confirms compliance with state laws, according to the Supervisor of Construction.

The District Can Demonstrate That the Number of Students Assigned to Each Teaching Station is in Accordance With the Requirements of the Current Laws of Florida

The district provided FISH records for all schools, showing total net square feet per school. Five classrooms were randomly sampled from Bessey Creek Elementary FISH records to determine whether the individual class configuration fell within SREF parameters. (Exhibit 9-9)

Exhibit 9-9

District Student Stations Fall within State Prescribed Ranges

Building	Class #	Type	Net Square Feet/Student	SREF Range
02	201	Kindergarten	38.9	36-40
02	203	Intermediate (4-6)	32.2	30-34
03	302	ESE Resource	99.8	91-101
05	501	Primary (1-3)	38.0	36-40
03	304	Elem. Resource	33.6	30-34

Florida Inventory of School Houses, 1999

Recommendations

- The district should include FISH inventory verification in the district's internal audit program.

Action Plan 9-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Include FISH inventory verification in the district's internal audit program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop an audit program to verify the accuracy of FISH data for specific facilities on a rotating basis.</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct audit and report results to the board audit committee. This audit could be performed while the internal auditor is on site performing the audit of school activity funds. The internal auditor should perform the audit of FISH data with assistance from the Plant Operator or the Supervisor of Construction.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Internal Audit
Time Frame	<p>October 1999 – develop program</p> <p>December 2000 – conduct audit (after facilities audit is complete)</p>
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 The district needs to periodically conduct an evaluation of the physical condition and educational adequacy of existing facilities.

Current Facility Evaluations Include the Education Plant Survey, Conducted Every Five Years, and Annual Safety Inspections

The district conducts a 5-year plant survey and annual safety inspections. However, these processes do not collect the types of information that would be available through a formal evaluation of existing facilities (also referred to as facility audits or facility appraisals). A facilities audit applies a formal methodology in evaluating and grading all aspects of facilities, including the school site, structural and mechanical features, plant maintainability, school building safety and security, educational adequacy and a proper environment for education. An evaluation commonly used is the *Guide for School Facility Appraisal*, adopted by the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International. This evaluation instrument assigns a score of 1 to 100 to each facility based on detailed analyses of the five categories mentioned above.

These audits are useful in identifying facility needs that are not defined through current inspection and survey programs. A facilities evaluation would provide district staff with more specific information on facility needs for each school in the district, and would provide better information to use in planning future maintenance projects.

The District's FISH Data is Current, But its Accuracy Should be Verified

The district has an electronic link with the state of Florida to update its FISH data. The inventory is updated throughout the year by the Supervisor of Construction, even though the state requires updates annually. However, according to its internal audit procedures, the district does not conduct internal audits to independently verify the accuracy of the FISH data.

The FISH data lists every building and every component of every building, and provides a condition assessment for each. These assessments indicate that all building components are ranked as satisfactory. In addition, a random sample of 250 line items in the district's FISH records indicates that all spaces are ranked as satisfactory. These satisfactory rankings indicate that the district does not need to make capital expenditures for major repair or renovations.

The district conducts annual safety inspections to identify needed repairs and renovations. However, according to the Supervisor of Construction, the district has not performed a facilities audit in recent years but instead relied on the 1995 Education Plant Survey, which provides a general condition assessment of all buildings. More frequent facility audits or assessments based on formal evaluation criteria would provide the district with a more comprehensive list of its facility needs.

Recommendations

- The district should conduct a comprehensive facilities audit to identify all needs of existing facilities. This audit should be conducted by an independent contractor, and should be based on a generally accepted evaluation methodology commonly applied in the construction industry.*

Action Plan 9-10

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should conduct a comprehensive facilities audit to identify all needs of existing facilities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Designate \$100,000 of capital project funds for a facilities audit once every 10 years or as necessary based on increased student population.</p> <p>Step 2: Draft Request for Proposals to conduct a facilities audit. Require that a nationally recognized evaluation instrument be used.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluate bids and select vendor.</p> <p>Step 4: Update FISH data based on results.</p> <p>Step 5: Incorporate facilities needs into Education Plant Survey and Five-Year Facilities Work Program</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	Complete by December 1999
Fiscal Impact	\$100,000

3 The district should give serious consideration to more aggressive alternatives to improve facility utilization.

The District Needs to Analyze Alternatives to New Construction

The district does a good job of using portable buildings to accommodate short-term facility needs at certain schools. However, other alternatives, such as year-round education, extended day schools, alternate grade configurations and changing of attendance zones have not been evaluated in recent years. The FISH inventory tracks capacity assuming year-round education, as required by law, but the district has not used this information to propose or conduct a feasibility analysis of this alternative. In addition, the district has a school choice plan where parents can choose which school their child will attend with specific parameters. This may cause already crowded schools to become overcrowded if parents perceive the school as desirable. This complicates the district's analysis of alternatives to new construction and must be considered. As a result, the district builds new schools when one gets overcrowded, without evaluating alternatives that could delay spending tax dollars for new schools.

Recommendations

- *The district should conduct feasibility studies of alternative grade configurations and attendance zones to increase overall district capacity.*

Action Plan 9-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct feasibility studies of alternative grade configurations and attendance zones to increase overall district capacity.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Conduct community survey on sensitivity to attendance zone changes, alternative grade configurations, year-round education and price sensitivity of tax rates. Also review school choice policy and its impact on school capacity.</p> <p>Step 2: Evaluate current and future school capacity and identify plausible options to improve facility use.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct financial feasibility study of at least three alternative attendance zone configurations, three alternative grade configurations, and a year-round education program.</p> <p>Step 4: Evaluate the academic impact of alternatives to ensure that any proposed changes will not adversely affect student performance.</p> <p>Step 5: Communicate potential savings to taxpayers from alternatives to new construction.</p> <p>Step 6: Make recommendations to board on specific program to increase facility use.</p>
Who Is Responsible	LRPC, with assistance from Director of Facilities and Supervisor of Construction

Time Frame	July 2000
Fiscal Impact	The fiscal impact could be significant if the LRPC can successfully communicate to the public the financial benefits of improving facility use.

Architectural Services for Facility Planning and Construction

1 The district uses an architect selection committee to screen applicants and evaluate finalists.

The District Appoints a Selection Committee for Each Construction Project

Board policy 6Gx43-8.01 sets forth requirements for contracting with architects on construction projects. Part 1c of this policy requires that an architect selection committee be established for each construction project of \$120,000 or greater. This threshold is established by section 287.017, F.S. The district provided recent evidence that their policy is being followed by providing a November 2, 1998, architect evaluation form listing the names of the members of the selection committee.

The committee comprises a board member representative and four representatives from the Facilities Department, including the Director of Facilities and the Supervisor of Construction. It does not include educational program representatives. Including educators on the architect selection committee lends weight to the evaluation of architects in meeting educational, not just technical, specifications.

The District Can Demonstrate That Procedures for Selection Were in Legal Compliance

Section 287.055, F.S., provides guidance on the acquisition of architectural and engineering services. It defines the public announcement and qualifications procedures, and requires school districts to select no fewer than three qualified bidders for competitive negotiation. Part 11 of this statute also allows the selection process to be avoided if the district is reusing existing plans.

Board policy 6Gx43-8.01 references compliance with section 287.055, F.S., and the district uses a form for its own use in evaluating architects during interviews. This evaluation form includes five rating categories.

- Rating based on evaluation of standard form 254 (questionnaire) or form 255 (specific project) provided by each architect
- Past performance

- Willingness to meet requirements (time, budget, availability)
- Work load
- Volume of work previously awarded by district

The district demonstrated its use of these forms by providing Form 17A for an architect evaluation on November 2, 1998.

Forms 254 and 255 are standard forms prescribed by the state – bidding firms must submit one of these applicable forms to be considered. This application requires disclosure of the number of employees by discipline, resumes of key personnel, and a five-year history of work experience. The district provided examples of completed forms demonstrating that this evaluation procedure was performed.

The District's Evaluation Criteria Should Include Additional Elements

The district evaluation criteria exclude many of the characteristics required to effectively screen and evaluate architects. Specific elements of the architect evaluation form and forms 254/255 were compared to the essential elements of a best practice indicator.

Experience – Yes
Adequacy of technical personnel – Yes
Availability of individuals – Yes
Proximity to site – No
Creativity - No
Adequacy of Supervision - No
Recordkeeping – No
Financial Stability - No
Flexibility - Yes
References contacted - No
Protect district's interests - No

Evaluation of these elements is important to protect the district's interest. While the district does not want to exclude qualified vendors, particularly small businesses, it is important that all of the above criteria be formally incorporated into the evaluation process. The Supervisor of Construction, who has been with the district over 20 years, stated that he is familiar with most of the local architect's capabilities, and that this knowledge is instrumental in the evaluation process. With his retirement later this year, the district will not be able to rely on this knowledge base and will need to apply additional evaluation criteria.

The district can demonstrate that finalists were evaluated based on personal interviews, but should improve its evaluation process to include other activities.

The district uses a formal process to select architects. The district used the same architect for the last three new schools built because existing plans were used for all three schools. However, the district demonstrated its use of a formal selection process for architects for renovation projects.

However, the district's selection process relies primarily on interviews with architects. These interviews are documented by Form 17A, the form completed during the personal interview with each selected architect. The district could not provide any evidence of

interviewing an architect's previous clients, examining his or her other plans, or visiting his or her office. According to the Supervisor of Construction, these activities sometimes take place but are not required.

Personal interviews – Yes

Visits to examples of their work – No

Interviews with previous clients – No

Examination of plans/specs / change orders – No

Visits to architect's offices - No

The District Should Require its General Counsel to Review all Architect Contracts Before Signature

The district uses a standard architect contract. It is not the standard contract recommended by the American Institute of Architects (AIA), but incorporates language from the AIA standard contract. The contract includes the following elements:

Article 1 – Scope of work

Article 2 - Fees

Article 3 – Basic services, including phase deliverables

Article 4 – Additional services required outside the control of Architect

Article 5 – Owner responsibilities

Article 6 – Direct and reimbursable expense

Article 7 – Project construction cost

Article 8 – Statements (estimates) of project cost

Article 9 – Period of service

Article 10 – Payment plan

Article 11 – Accounting records

Article 12 – Termination of agreement

Article 13 – Successors and assigns

Article 14 – Special provisions

Article 15 – Value engineering

Article 2 of the contract establishes a percentage cap for the architect fees based on the size of the contract. This price schedule is attached to the contract and incorporated by reference.

The architect contract has several weaknesses.

- The contract should reference all items referenced in the construction contract, since the architect is responsible for construction supervision. The contract package for the architect and the contractor should be consistent in content and terminology since they are so closely related.
- The provision for consultant fees in Article 2 could be interpreted as an open-ended provision allowing the architect to bill additional fees. The contract language does not clearly state that the architect's fees are subject to the percent cap and could expose the district to additional fees, depending on the available technical resources in the architectural and engineering firm.

- The reimbursement rates for copies are outdated and reflect prices before commercial copy centers became common. The district should select a photocopy provider for drawings and plans and be billed directly for these services.

The general counsel is not currently required to review all architect contracts before signature. Responsibility for compliance rests primarily with the Director of Facilities. Some architect contracts are sent to the general counsel at the discretion of the Department of Facilities. While a standard form contract is used, it is not the standard AIA contract. Consequently, the lack of a formal legal review creates an unnecessary risk for the district.

Recommendations

- *The district should adopt the AIA standard contract for architects as a base contract and make only minor modifications. The architect contract should have consistent contents and terms as the construction contract. The terms of the AIA contract have been tested in the courts, and using these terms significantly reduces litigation risk due to disputes among the architect, the contractor and the school district.*
- *Pricing of additional professional services in the standard contract should be incorporated into the percentage cap, and the cap schedule should be amended as necessary. The current approach is an open-ended agreement that does not limit the district's financial exposure.*
- *The district should negotiate an arrangement with a local copy service to provide copies of construction drawings and specifications and should pay these costs directly.*
- *The board should require legal counsel to review all architect contracts before approval and periodically for long-term contracts.*

Action Plan 9-12

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should adopt the AIA standard contract for architects as a base contract and make only minor modifications.
Action Needed	Step 1: Obtain AIA standard contract for architects. Step 2: Review terms to ensure that district needs are met. Step 3: Ensure the AIA standard contract meets the requirements of Florida state law. Step 4: Finalize and approve standard agreement.
Who Is Responsible	General counsel, in coordination with Director of Facilities
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Price additional professional services in the standard contract such that they are incorporated into the percentage cap.

Action Needed	Amend architect contract to remove open-ended pricing of additional professional services and replace with pricing feature subject to cap.
Who Is Responsible	General counsel
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The district should negotiate an arrangement with a local copy service to provide copies of construction drawings and specifications and should pay these costs directly.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Contact three local copy vendors to obtain per page quotes on construction drawings and other copies.</p> <p>Step 2: Select lowest bidder.</p> <p>Step 3: Implement on trial basis with one contract to evaluate feasibility.</p> <p>Step 4: Remove language in architect contract regarding copy costs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, with assistance from General Counsel and Purchasing
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	It is estimated that by paying for copy costs directly on all architect contracts, the district will save approximately \$2,500 per year.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	The board should require legal counsel to review all architect contracts before approval.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Adopt policy requiring the general counsel to formally review and sign off on all architect contracts before approval.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish a policy for the periodic review of long-term contracts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	General Counsel, School Board
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 The district involves architects in all phases of the planning process.

The District Can Demonstrate That Architects Were Selected Early in the Planning Process

The Supervisor of Construction stated that the architect is involved early in the construction planning process, but this involvement is not documented. Based on discussions with one of the district's architect and engineering firms, BRPH, the architect is involved early in the project. This firm has been involved in several recent projects (Martin County High School Auditorium, South Fork High School Phase 5, and Martin County High

School Classroom Renovation), as well as being the architect of the three most recent schools built.

The construction checklist reviewed during initial field work showed the selection of the architect after the approval of educational specifications. However, the checklist has been updated to reflect the selection of the architect prior to approval of the education specifications. Based on discussions with BRPH, this chronology of events was confirmed for the recent renovation projects. The architect was not involved in the development of educational specifications for these projects, but did receive this document. The architect did not change or have input into the educational specifications or program goals, but did clarify requirements through meetings with educational specification committee members and other district staff. The architect stated that there were several meetings with Maintenance Department personnel clarifying their requirements and equipment specifications.

The architect stated that the educational specifications are useful, but sometimes are not clear. This is common to many school districts that do not involve an architect in the development of educational specifications. Some school districts hire an architect to lead this process. Involvement of the architect earlier on reduces the extent of clarification required after the educational specifications are completed. For a majority of projects, the district hires the architect early in the planning phase. The modification of the construction checklist and the establishment of timeframes will ensure that this is done on all construction projects.

The District Has Demonstrated That Frugal Costs and Life Cycle Cost Analyses are Incorporated Into the Architect's Contract

Chapter 235.2197, F.S., defines the elements of the Florida Frugal Schools Program, which provides incentive funds for school districts that achieve frugal construction standards based on state criteria. This program applies only to new schools, and has been enacted since the construction of Martin County's most recent school, Bessey Creek Elementary.

However, the district's standard architect contract includes a provision (Article 15) for value engineering. This provision requires the architect to pursue in good faith savings opportunities that do not affect the quality of the project. Although the contract does not currently provide a financial incentive for architects to pursue such savings, both the architect and the Supervisor of Construction confirmed that savings have been achieved.

3 The architect selection committee conducts formal post-evaluations of architect performance.

A Representative of the Architect Selection Committee Reviews and Evaluates Architects' Performance at the Completion of a Project

The Supervisor of Construction stated that he conducts post-evaluations of architect performance, although not in writing. The architect and engineering firm of BRPH confirmed this practice and was appreciative of the process. The findings of these reviews are not formally communicated to the architect, but have been considered by the selection committee in subsequent architect selections. An architect post-evaluation form should be developed to assist the district in documenting performance of architects. This form should include:

- Comparison of contract due dates to actual due dates for each deliverable.
- Assessed quality of each deliverable made by district based on a grade of 1 to 10.
- Listing of innovative ideas brought forth by the architect that improved the design or saved money.
- Listing of design issues encountered by architect that will benefit future projects.
- Assessed quality of teamwork exhibited by architect in working with district staff
- Instances of any performance problems noted by school district, and how architect resolved those problems to the district's satisfaction.
- Summary assessment indicating whether district recommends this architect for future work.

Recommendations

- *Develop architect post-evaluation form.*

Action Plan 9-13

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop architect post-evaluation form.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop forms to be used in conducting architect post-evaluations.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify and evaluate architect's ability to meet deadlines, work with school district, and other performance indicators listed above and complete form for each architect contract.</p> <p>Step 3: Use completed forms in subsequent evaluations of architects.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Educational Specifications Development—————

1 The district should improve its general project descriptions for major construction projects.

The District's Project Descriptions and Educational Specifications Need to be Improved to Meet Best Practice Standards

The educational specifications document prepared for each school meets the state requirements for education specifications. However, they do not sufficiently meet best practice standards of excellence. Below is an assessment of the educational specifications document prepared for Sea Wind Elementary School compared to best practice indicators.

1. The document did not specifically state the rationale for another school in the district.
2. The document provided a general description of the district's purpose, program goals, and program activities.
3. Although the district has developed and used enrollment projections, this particular document did not provide a discussion of the historical growth in the district.
4. The educational specifications document provides a detailed description of the net square feet of each program area; however, it does not provide a comparison of the proposed size of the school facility with state requirements.
5. The document classifies the center for grades K-5.
6. The document does not provide a map indicating community location and attendance zone boundaries. However, the meeting minutes of the Long-Range Planning Committee meeting indicates that extensive discussion take place about attendance zone boundaries for new schools.
7. The construction budget is not discussed in the educational specifications document.
8. The source of funding is not specified in the document.
9. A planning and construction timeline is not provided in the document.

In addition, the educational specifications do not discuss whether the new facility will serve all parts of the district on an open enrollment basis. According to the Supervisor of Construction, the educational specifications is a boilerplate document that has been used for the last three schools since the district decided to reuse the plans. The document was not modified for each school.

Even though plans are reused, it is important for each school to have its own identity and purpose. The educational specifications document provides the district with an opportunity to customize the specifications for the school's particular purpose, within constraints prescribed by the State Requirements for Educational Facilities.

Recommendation

- The district's educational specifications have been approved by the DOE. However the district could improve their educational specifications and develop a customized educational specifications document for each school, even if plans are reused. The educational specifications should be expanded to include:
 - the rationale for building another school,
 - projected timeline and budget,
 - listing of participants included in the design of the educational specifications.
 - description of the school-community relationships,
 - defined program objectives customized for each school,
 - description of traffic flow to and from the school for students, staff and visitors.
 - plans for future expansion or increased community use.

Action Plan 9-14

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop an educational specifications document customized for each school, even if plans are reused.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop a framework for educational specifications to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of document • Project description and justification • Discussion of educational trends and future programs • Discussion of educational facility trends • List and description of specific programs to be provided at the school • Projected timeline and budget, • Listing of participants in the process. • Description of the school-community relationships, • Defined program objectives customized for each school, • Description of traffic flow to and from the school for students, staff and visitors. • Plans for future expansion or increased community use <p>Step 2: Incorporate steps into development of educational specifications document. Prepare a cost comparison for alternative designs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 Educational planners, instructional staff and the architect develop a set of educational specifications.

The District can Demonstrate That Preliminary Educational Specifications Were Developed, When Applicable, Prior to Actual Design Implementation

The district provided copies of the educational specifications for Sea Wind Elementary and Bessey Creek Elementary. Both of these documents were prepared prior to the construction of the schools. For example, the educational specifications for Bessey Creek were developed in 1993, two years before the construction contract was signed by the district. The architect and engineering firm of BRPH confirmed that educational specifications on renovation projects were completed prior to the development of plans.

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek were almost identical to those used for Sea Wind. According to the Supervisor of Construction, both of these schools used a boilerplate document based on the reuse of plans of a prior school, which was originally obtained from another school district. The Educational Specifications Committee for the original school toured several schools in other districts and developed an original set of specifications. With the reuse of the plans, the educational specifications have remained virtually unchanged. The Supervisor of Construction stated that an informal group of school teachers and administrators toured Sea Wind before Bessey Creek plans were finalized. This process provided them the opportunity to recommend changes that did not materially affect the design of the school or the ability to meet SREF guidelines. The educational specifications document was not amended or updated as a result of this activity.

The educational specifications document includes the board philosophy, district goals, an overall facilities list, building considerations and specifications for specific subject areas and instructional arrangements. The specifications also include requirements for food service and custodial operations. Square footage parameters are provided, and fall within constraints prescribed by the SREF.

The District Should Involve the Architect in Developing the Educational Specifications on all Major Construction Projects

According to the Supervisor of Construction, the district selects an architect before it develops educational specifications and the architect is involved in developing the specifications. However, the district recently updated its construction checklist to indicate that the district's standard procedure is to select the architect before the board approves the education specifications. This apparent contradiction may be explained by the district's reuse of plans for the last three elementary schools constructed. Due to this reuse, the same architect was used for Bessey Creek, Sea Wind and Williams elementary schools. This was the same architect who was used by the other school district whose plans were used. Consequently, the architect had been involved in the development of the educational specifications before the district began using the plans.

For other projects, however, the architect is not always involved in the development of educational specifications. According to one of the district's architects, architects receive the document after it is complete, but are not involved in its development.

As stated in the previous section, the architect said that the educational specifications are useful, but sometimes are not clear. This is common to many school districts that do not involve an architect in the development of educational specifications. Some school districts hire an architect to lead this process. Involvement of the architect earlier on reduces the extent of clarification required after the educational specifications are completed.

The District can Demonstrate That Educational Specifications Were Developed With Input From Instructional Staff

Since the district is reusing plans of previous schools, it has not established separate committees for the recent elementary schools constructed. The Supervisor of Construction stated that teachers and administrators had input in the design of Bessey Creek, even though plans were reused. For one of the more recent renovation projects, the educational specifications committee consisted of the school principal and five other instructional staff. The district's architect confirmed that instructional staff were very involved in the development and refinement of plans, even though the educational specifications were not amended after the architect was hired.

Recommendation

- *The district should require the architect to verify that the educational specifications have been met, and should ensure that the architect is involved in their development.*

Action Plan 9-15

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should require the architect to verify that the educational specifications have been met, and should be involved in their development.
Action Needed	Include in architect's contract a requirement that the architect verify whether documented educational specifications have been met.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

3 The educational specifications include an educational program component, but need to be customized for each school.

The District's Educational Specifications Identify the School's Administrative Leader Unless the Specifications Are for a School That Will be Built With Reused Plans

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind do not identify the school's administrative leader, nor any other members of the committee involved in the development of specifications. In the educational specifications for renovation/remodeling of J.D. Parker Elementary, the school's principal is listed as a member of the committee, in addition to six other instructional staff.

The Educational Specifications Contain a Statement of the Goals and Educational Philosophy for Both the District and the Specific School Being Planned

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind contain identical statements of the district's program philosophy and goals, as well as the philosophy, goals, and activities for each program at the new school. The district's philosophy and long-range goals are presented on page one of the educational specifications.

Philosophy

The Martin County School System believes in the worth, dignity and individuality of every human being. We believe that our schools must serve society by providing opportunities for all individuals to succeed in our democracy and in our changing world. The School Board subscribes to and will seek to comply with the Florida Education Equity Act.

Long-Range Goals

1. To motivate students in seeking knowledge, accepting challenge and excelling to the best of their abilities.
2. To foster the development of positive self-concepts, self discipline, good citizenship, good health habits and realistic career goals.
3. To promote continued cooperation among all citizens in achieving the maximum development in our children.
4. To provide an educational setting that reflects a continuous effort to maintain and build facilities conducive to a pleasing learning environment.
5. To encourage cooperative endeavors which promote professional growth and respect for educational community.

The program philosophy and goals are also identical for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind.

Program Philosophy

The Martin County Elementary School Program provides the opportunity to help students live better, communicate with greater clarity, enhance their thirst for knowledge, stimulate dreams and hopes and develop qualities that will insure democratic living in a well-ordered society.

The first priority of the public schools of Florida shall be to assure that all

Floridians, to the extent their individual physical, mental and emotional capacities permit, shall achieve mastery of the basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and mastery of these skills shall be developed through basic programs in the following areas of learning: language arts, measurement, problem solving, art, music, physical education, science, and social studies. (Florida Statutes 230.2311)

Program Goals

1. A school should be inviting, attractive and stimulating – a place where children like to be, a place where each can find himself.
2. A school should be staffed with adults who care. The school needs people who are open, responsive, imaginative and sensitive to the young and to their parents.
3. A school should have a storehouse of raw materials to be used for creating and communicating ideas.
4. A school should recognize that it exists in today's world and should analyze, study, refine and understand today's people, resources and problems.
5. A school should be cognizant of its community, which should be a library and a storehouse of problems, cultural heritage and vast interrelationships and interdependencies.
6. A school's faculty should recognize that knowledge is unfolding daily, to be understood, to be interpreted, to be used. The newspaper, the news broadcast, the events of the day, the movies should all find their place in the modern school.
7. A school should provide its students with opportunities to share their talents and to provide social service to others: The aged, the young, the sick, etc. These experiences should begin at an early age.
8. A school should make it possible for students to discover latent competencies, to find out "what I can do." To paint a picture, to participate in a dance or to create a new set of relationships provides security and maturity. Each day should contribute to the student's stockpile of competencies and to his own feelings of adequacy.
9. A school should make it possible for students to be responsible for their activities. Assuming responsibility contributes to personality development, to citizenship practices and to value education.
10. A school shall implement a program of minimum basic skills for all students.
11. A school should provide opportunities for each child to realize his own power; to identify progress; to verbalize his limitations without fear; to accept his status as a benchmark of adequacy, a basis for continued learning, and an element of positive mental health.
12. A school should be led by an administrator who is sensitive to people, sensitive to learning, skilled in leadership and comfortable with change.

The educational specifications for the renovation project are more specific to the school, and do not represent a boilerplate document. The program philosophy and program goals presented in the educational specifications for J.D. Parker are presented below.

Program Philosophy

J.D. Parker Elementary School believes our educational program must prepare each child to cope with life successfully, and to function emotionally, physically, socially, and mentally within a changing world. Our school strives to accomplish this by providing living and learning experiences that will enable the child to behave as a responsible, contributing and considerate citizen in a democratic society.

Program Goals

The school endeavors to develop within each child an appreciation for aesthetic and moral values and to help develop creative potential.

The academic program provides each child an opportunity to master the basic skills, and recognizes individual differences by extending the curriculum to meet the needs of the academically talented.

The learning environment reflects educational technology and telecommunications used with current trends in best instructional practices.

Educational specifications for new schools should be tailored, like renovation projects, to meet the needs of that particular school, even if previous plans are reused. With the passage of time, the changing of laws, and the development of technology, the environment for new schools will require different educational specifications.

The Educational Specifications Do Not Address School-Community Relationships

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind list the following as one of its program goals:

A school should be cognizant of its community, (and should include) a library, (and reflect a) cultural heritage and vast interrelationships and interdependencies.

There is no other mention of school-community relationships or coordination with other public agencies. This is an important issue to address in educational specifications, particularly with the participation of parents in site-based decision making and other school events. Some schools allocate space for volunteers, community health clinics or other community based activity. The educational specifications document represents the ideal place for these opportunities or needs to be addressed.

The Educational Specifications Define Program Objectives and Activities and Teaching Strategies and Instructional Methods, But Are Not Customized for Each School

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind contain the same program objectives and activities. Sections in the educational specifications document for each area include pupil teacher ratios, total number of teachers and aides, grade levels taught and hours per day space will be used for that purpose. There are also sections for innovations and special considerations; however, these are the same for both schools. The only major difference between Bessey Creek and Sea Wind specifications are written notes indicating changes in the number of classrooms or use for specific areas.

The educational specifications for the renovation/remodeling project at J.D. Parker include program activities that are customized for that particular school.

Program Activities

- Large and small group instruction, cooperative learning, team-teaching
- Computer assisted instruction, publishing and production
- Lessons via instructional TV
- Art, music, and motor activities
- Testing, one-on-one tutoring
- Learning centers/stations
- Research and projects including multimedia presentations
- Lecture/discussion
- Hands-on, manipulative activities
- Display of student projects

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind address curriculum with respect to program goals and activities requirements for specific subject areas such as exceptional education, art, music, and skill development. The staffing and support services are addressed in sections on teaching personnel, food service, and custodial.

The only mention of advanced technology in the educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind is in the section entitled Innovations, Experimental Ideas, Other Planned Uses. For example, one of the innovations listed under the kindergarten program is as follows:

Separate area to house microcomputers for student use.

The description of the skills development lab program also provides a diagram of the computer lab.

The lack of complete technology requirements provide a good example supporting the need to refine educational specifications for each new school. Even though classroom wiring for technology was not included in the educational specifications, Bessey Creek Elementary was constructed with this feature.

The Architect and Project Leader Maintain Educational Specifications Requirements Within Budget Limitations

The Supervisor of Construction and the architect are responsible for ensuring that educational specifications are within the parameters of the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF). These responsibilities are defined in the job description of the Supervisor of Construction and Section 3.1.1 of the architect's contract. Compliance with the SREF ensures that schools are built on a cost per square foot and on a number of square feet basis that fall within state limits. All classroom student stations must fall within the minimum and maximum ranges defined by the SREF.

Recommendation

- See Recommendation on page 9-39 on customizing educational specifications.

4 The specifications include detailed descriptions that, when combined with the SREF, are sufficient for the architect to develop plans.

The same plans have been used for the last three elementary schools. These plans were originally used by another school district. The district selected these plans and the architect who developed these plans for each of the three elementary schools.

Exhibit 9-10 provides a comparison of best practice indicators for construction plans to the educational specifications of Bessey Creek Elementary. It shows that the district meets or partially meets most of these indicators.

Exhibit 9-10

Construction Plans Generally Contain Essential Elements

Required Elements for Construction Plans	Did the Ed Specs for Bessey Creek Meet the Required Elements?
The number and size of areas required for each purpose has been derived as the result of an analysis of current space requirements, master schedule, planned course offerings, staffing patterns, and planned student groupings.	Partial
The number of teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrative and classified personnel using specific areas have been identified.	Partial
The spatial relationship of one activity area to another has been described.	Yes
There is a description of space relationship requirements for the separation of large- and small-group areas and for convenient student and staff circulation.	No
Instructional support and co-curricular facilities, (i.e., areas for small- and large-group instruction, conferences, media centers, storage and teacher preparation) have been addressed.	Yes
Specific space for instructional support and pupil services programs, general support services, and special programs such as exceptional and vocational education have been identified and meet legal requirements.	Yes
Environmental variables such as acoustical needs, visual needs, thermal requirements, and special aesthetic concerns have been identified and described.	Yes
All utility needs, including water, sewer, drainage, electrical, gas,	Partial

compressed air, telephone, fire alarm, conduit cable for advanced technology, and satellite dish, have been identified.	
An energy management system has been provided.	Yes
Storage requirements for individual activity areas and teaching stations have been identified.	Yes
Extra storage space has been considered for year-round educational programs.	No
Display areas for chalkboards, tackboards, and display cases have been identified.	Yes
The number, kind, and size of furniture and equipment items have been identified for each activity area.	Yes
Emergency shelter accommodations have been included where required.	Partial
Planned expansion strategy has been included.	Yes

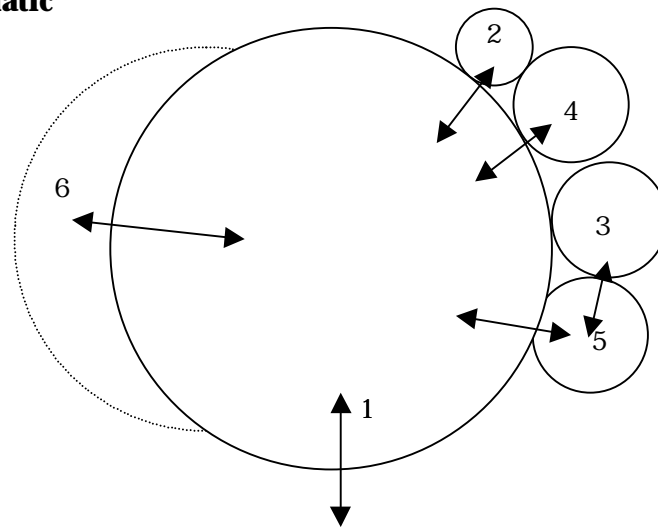
The SREF dictates space requirements for each type of class by grade level. The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind detail the capacity required for some but not all programs. Primary (grades 1-3) and intermediate (grades 4-6) programs contain pupil-teacher ratios and total pupil capacity per period. Other program units, such as resource rooms, art, and music, do not provide pupil-teacher ratios or total pupil capacity. This notwithstanding, the FISH records for Bessey Creek Elementary reflect space utilization that falls within the limits of the SREF. (See discussion earlier in this chapter on FISH records and compliance with SREF.)

The educational specifications also include a line item for grade level groupings by class. Course offerings were not customized for Bessey Creek or Sea Wind. It was assumed that the same course offerings, staffing patterns and student groupings would be the same as the earlier school constructed with the same plans.

The lack of customization in the educational specifications prevents these new schools from meeting new requirements, and considering alternative staffing approaches and student groupings.

For each classroom type, the educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind include a schematic drawing showing the spatial relationships between various activities. An example of a schematic for an art classroom is presented below.

Art Room - Schematic



LEGEND

1. Art Laboratory
2. Kiln
3. Material Storage
4. Project Storage
5. Teacher Planning
6. Patio

These diagrams help identify solutions for convenient student and staff circulation within types of classrooms; however, there is not an overall schematic that presents a conceptual framework for the entire school.

Instructional support and co-curricular facilities (i.e., areas for small-and large-group instruction, conferences, media centers, storage, and teacher preparation) are addressed in the educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind. Specifically, the specification document contains separate sections for a media center, textbook storage, and multi-purpose/stage space. Further, all classroom space requirements include consideration of storage requirements and teacher planning activities. However, the specifications do not specifically address storage for year-round education.

Environmental Variables Such as Acoustical Needs, Visual Needs, Thermal Requirements, and Special Aesthetic Concerns Have Been Identified and Described

Section II of the educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind contain 18 overall building considerations.

1. Heating/cooling/ventilation – energy management systems
2. Acoustical
3. Floor/carpet

4. Walls
5. Ceiling and ceiling lights
6. Lighting
7. Windows
8. Doors
9. Water and water supply
10. Communications
11. Electrical
12. Gas and air
13. Safety
14. Fencing
15. Service drives
16. Parking
17. Built-ins
18. Other (clocks, compliance with state and federal guidelines)

Additional special considerations may be included for specific educational programs or spaces. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is no mention of the need for classroom computer wiring. The only general classroom wiring included in the educational specifications is for cable television. Fire alarms, emergency shelter and safety considerations are not specifically discussed, but a reference is made to the applicable building codes.

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind specify the furniture and equipment needed for each room in the school. Item 17 under Overall Building Considerations discusses built-ins, including chalkboards, tackboards, wall-mounted projection screens and map rails.

Section VIII of each program space requirement section presents a listing of required furniture and equipment. The listing includes the space where the equipment or furniture will be located, the number of items and a description of each item.

Planned Expansion Strategy Has Been Included in the Educational Specifications

The district has applied an innovative expansion strategy in its construction of new schools. The Education Plant Survey identifies initial and ultimate figures for student capacity. The district constructs the entire facility, but does not complete all the classroom space since that space is rarely needed when the school opens. As enrollment grows the district completes the remaining classrooms. This improves school utilization in the short term and reduces the need for portables.

The educational specifications for Bessey Creek and Sea Wind do not specifically discuss this strategy, but it is implicit in the capacity statistics.

There is no mention of portables in the educational specifications. An analysis of portables is important so that the architect can be sure that as the student population increases, common areas (hall space, cafeterias) are sufficient size.

5 The district communicates general building considerations to the architect.

The District Can Demonstrate That the Architect Has Drawn a Schematic Layout of Buildings, Parking, Roads, and Physical Education Playground Areas

The district provided a copy of the architectural drawings for Bessey Creek Elementary. These drawings show the layout of the buildings, parking, roads, and playground areas. The drawings also include detailed specifications for key infrastructure components, such as lighting, utilities and fire alarm systems.

The minimum site size for a school is specified in the Education Plant Survey that is approved by the state. This page of the Education Plant Survey is included as part of the educational specifications. The educational specifications also present net square feet of covered playground areas and road access issues.

This information is of sufficient detail to compare plans to the educational specifications; however, there is no documented evidence that this procedure is performed. All specifications must be in compliance with SREF before approved by the state. The Supervisor of Construction stated that since these plans have been reused, there is no need to formally verify compliance with educational specifications. (See related discussion in this section regarding the customization of educational specifications.)

Because the District Has Reused the Same Building Plans for the Three Most Recent Schools, it Has Not Formally Compared Costs of Alternative Designs

Alternate designs have not been considered in recent years due to the district's reuse of plans. Based on discussions with teachers at the new schools, they meet or exceed expectations in virtually all respects. Since the costs of these schools fall within the parameters of the state requirements, no other cost analysis has been performed comparing current plans to alternative designs.

Article 15 of the architect's contract includes a provision for value engineering, which requires the architect to pursue in good faith cost savings without impairing the quality of the final product. Other district employees, such as the Supervisor of Maintenance, review plans to ensure that current, efficient equipment is used and that the layout supports efficient upkeep. This procedure is not documented, but was confirmed by the Supervisor of Maintenance.

The Total Building Area Conforms to the State's Standards Specified in Current Laws of Florida

The district provided FISH records for all schools, showing total net square feet per school. The total square footage for Bessey Creek Elementary, excluding covered walkways was 72,893. The total square footage listed in the educational specifications was 70,744, or approximately 3.5% less than actual square feet. The educational specifications for Bessey Creek had hand written modifications for storage space and handicap access. Five classrooms were randomly sampled from Bessey Creek Elementary FISH records to

determine whether the individual class configuration fell within SREF parameters. All five fell within these parameters. (See Exhibit 9-9 on page 9-28.)

To ensure that all educational specifications are met, the educational specifications document should be accurate and reflect the actual intentions of the district, even if plans are reused. This practice will help hold the architect accountable for meeting all educational specifications.

The Educational Specifications Should Include a Description of How Students, Staff, and Visitors Will Arrive and Depart From the School

The educational specifications do not specifically address the flow of students, staff and visitors to and from school. Section II of the educational specifications includes line items for service drives and parking. The description under service drives states “shall be paved to all delivery areas.” There is no mention of traffic flow or configuration. Parking requirements are defined as “Handicapped and regular parking shall be based on standard number reference needed adjacent to main entries.” The flow of students, staff and visitors to and from school is particularly important from a logistical standpoint so that congestion is minimized at the beginning and end of the school day. Visitor flow is also important from a safety perspective, and the layout should ensure that all visitors can easily locate and be directed toward the main office.

Flow or circulation patterns within classrooms are addressed in the educational specifications through the use of diagrams showing the relationship of activities. A sample diagram was presented earlier in this section. There is no schoolwide flow diagram in the educational specifications. This diagram would help evaluate flow between areas, such as classrooms and the cafeteria, to ensure convenience and safety.

The Architect’s Final Drawings Include Plans to Accommodate Future Expansion and Community Use, But These Plans are not Always Addressed in Educational Specifications

The architect’s final drawings for schools include plans for use of temporary buildings, the construction of shell space for future use, and the construction of athletic and food facilities so they are accessible to the public without requiring entry into the main part of the school. With the exception of the uncompleted classroom shell space, these elements are not part of the educational specifications document. These elements should be incorporated into the educational specifications. (See related section in this chapter on site selection and evaluation on page 9-19.)

The Plans Describe Mechanical and Electrical Systems, With the Exception of Telephone and Computer Networking Systems

The architectural drawings for Bessey Creek Elementary detail the mechanical and electrical systems for the building, including fire alarm, intercommunication, and television systems. Specifications for the telephone and computer networking systems were also included in the architectural drawings. Specific safe school design concepts and security considerations are required through SREF and are incorporated into building and communications systems by the architect.

Recommendation

- A cost comparison of alternative designs needs to be prepared for each project in conjunction with the education specifications planning. (See action plan 9-14)
- See Recommendation page 9-39 for customizing educational specifications and expanding their coverage.

6 The district needs to use the educational specifications to evaluate the architect's final product.

The District Should Devote More Time to the Development of Educational Specifications for Each New School, Even if Plans are Reused

Since the educational specifications used on recent schools represent a boilerplate document, they are not effective in holding the architect accountable for needs unique to the particular school.

The district has reused plans and educational specifications and has not formally compared the two documents. Since the educational specifications have not been customized to reflect current needs and plans include specifications not mentioned in the educational specifications document, matching specifications against plans would not currently yield a significant benefit. Assuming the district customizes its educational specifications for each school, this matching procedure would be helpful in holding the architect accountable.

Recommendation

- See Recommendation on page 9-39 for customizing educational specifications and expanding their coverage.

7 Program requirements are communicated to the architect through the educational specifications.

The District Can Demonstrate That all Program Requirements Were Communicated to the Architect Before the Commencement of Final Drawings

The educational specifications for renovation/remodeling at J. D. Parker Elementary provides program philosophy, goals, activities, key organizational characteristics, innovations, square footage changes, conceptual spatial designs, and furniture and fixture needs.

The District Should Provide the Educational Specifications Committee an Opportunity to Reassess Goals and Objectives

For the three most recent schools, a boilerplate document was used for educational specifications. The only changes apparent in the document were hand written notes changing the number of certain classrooms, the size of storage space, and the requirements for handicap access. Other than these changes, the district adopted the educational specifications for all three schools without revisiting goals and objectives.

Each school educational specifications committee should have the opportunity to amend or improve the educational specifications, even if a prior design is being used. There is evidence that some modified goals and objectives are being met, even though not documented in the specifications. Each classroom at Bessey Creek Elementary was wired for technology even though the educational specifications did not require it.

It is also important to note that Bessey Creek Elementary meets or exceeds the expectations of teachers in that school. Based on interviews with Bessey Creek teachers, they are very pleased with the overall design and layout, the configuration of planning areas, the special purpose rooms and the media center. The only complaint was that storage areas in classrooms were different sizes, and some were too small. Storage areas have restrictions in the SREF that are smaller than what is considered adequate by some teachers.

The District Should Evaluate Existing Facilities in Terms of Educational Adequacy in Support of Current and Planned Programs and Activities

When designing Williams Elementary, the educational planning committee toured schools in other Florida school districts. As a result of their evaluation, plans from another school were adopted for use in Martin County. Since 1993, the district has not conducted any post-occupancy surveys (see separate section in this chapter regarding these surveys).

While teachers appear to be satisfied that educational programs needs are being met at the new schools, the district should take steps to ensure that requirements of all current and planned programs are addressed in new or modified facilities.

Recommendation

- *The education specifications need to be customized for each school as indicated in recommendation page 9-39.*

8 The board minimizes changes to facilities plans after final drawings.

Changes to Facilities Plans After Final Working Drawings are Initiated Require Board Approval

Although not documented in board policy, board approval is required for all change orders. This is evidenced in board meeting minutes approving change orders for as low as \$409. Board approval of all change orders is necessary to adequately control construction project costs.

The District's Reuse of Plans Minimizes the Number and Size of Change Orders.

Based on a review of two of the three most recent schools built, only a few change orders were executed, and none added significant costs to the project. In fact, a majority of the change orders for two of the most recent schools built reduced the cost of the projects by significant amounts. Exhibit 9-11 presents a listing of change orders for Bessey Creek and SeaWind Elementary.

Exhibit 9-11

Few Change Orders, Lower Cost

School – Change Order #	Change Order Amount Increase (Decrease)
Bessey Creek	
1	(\$1,441,013)
2	(1,176)
3	(\$26,000)
4	(\$4,500)
Seawind	
1	(\$828,735)
2	431,150
3	(1,179,380)
4	(33,833)
5	(38,922)
6	(2,159)
7	9,687

Architectural Planning and Financial Management

1 The board needs to formally evaluate alternatives to construction management.

For Each New Facility Built in the Past Three Years, the Director of Facilities Selected the Type of Construction System to Use; However, the Board Has Not Formally Approved Each Selection

Chapter 235.211, F.S., presents construction management options available to Florida public school systems. Section 4.1 of the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) describes these options in further detail including the four major options listed below.

- Competitive Bids – under this method, the architect/engineering services and the construction contract are separately and competitively bid by the district.
- Design-Build – this is a turnkey arrangement whereby the architect works for the contractor, not the school district. The district evaluates and selects a design-build contractor who must be certified by the state to manage all aspects of design and construction.
- Construction Manager – a construction manager generally takes the place of the contractor; holds each contract; and manages, coordinates and monitors the progress of construction. A Construction Manager at Risk approach passes the risk of cost to the construction manager. The main advantage of this approach is a guaranteed maximum price provision which limits the district's financial exposure. Under a Construction Manager-Agency approach, the construction manager does not assume the financial risk, but performs all the duties of construction manager.
- Total Program Manager – a total construction program manager acts as an agent of the board and has broader responsibilities including land acquisition, selection of design and construction professionals, planning, coordination and monitoring of the total building program. A guaranteed maximum price provision may be incorporated into this option.

The district has employed the competitive bid option for the past 20 years, and has used its own staff to supervise construction projects. The Supervisor of Construction stated the district saves money by using in-house construction management versus an outside contractor. The district has not conducted any formal analysis, however, of the costs and benefits of considering alternative construction management techniques.

The district's use of other school districts' building plans and reuse of those plans has affected its ability to entertain alternative construction management options. Through a letter to school districts, the Department of Education communicated a ruling to public school districts that "boards may only purchase architectural services from an existing contract by another board." They may not purchase design-build services. The district

cited this as one example of why the current construction management approach is applied.

The board does not formally approve the construction management option to be applied for each school. According to the Supervisor of Construction, he assumes that the approach used on prior projects will continue unless changed by the board.

The board should approve the construction management approach for each school so that the decision is justified from a cost-benefit standpoint. Different management techniques work better for different school systems depending on the availability of contractors and the quality of in-house staff. The board's decision to formally approve specific options will require the district to prepare an analysis of alternatives and justify a recommended option. This exercise will ensure that the district is using the management approach that is the most effective and efficient alternative.

The District Has Not Formally Evaluated the Advantages and Disadvantages, of Alternative Construction Management Approaches

According to the Supervisor of Construction, the district has not performed a formal analysis of construction management alternatives that identify advantages and disadvantages of each option. He stated that performing construction management in-house saves the district 3% or more on each construction project, but there have been no formal analyses to substantiate this. Even if the district's current approach is the most effective and efficient, a periodic review of alternatives would provide a substantive basis for continuing with this option.

Recommendations

- *The district should establish a committee to evaluate alternative construction management techniques to improve management and control over construction projects while minimizing costs. The departure of the Supervisor of Construction later this year should prompt the district to evaluate all options, not just the replacement of this position.*

Action Plan 9-16

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should establish a committee to evaluate alternative construction management techniques to improve management and control over construction projects while minimizing costs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The board should establish a committee that includes key members such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A board member • Executive Director of Operations • Director of Facilities • General Counsel <p>Step 2: The committee should consider construction management options available under the law.</p> <p>Step 3: The committee should evaluate the advantages and</p>

	disadvantages of alternative approaches to contract management available.
	Step 4: The committee should recommend an approach to the board.
Who Is Responsible	School Board
Time Frame	Prior to the retirement of the current supervisor of construction need date.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 The architect prepares the building specifications document.

The District Can Demonstrate That the Architect Prepared a Construction Contract and General Conditions in Coordination With the District's Legal Counsel

The district uses a standard construction contract agreement that incorporates general provisions adopted by the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Before a construction contract is signed, it is reviewed by the district's general counsel. There are no procedures documenting this practice, but the general counsel stated that before signing he reviews all construction contracts. The general counsel is responsible for ensuring that all contract provisions are in compliance with applicable laws.

The General Conditions of Construction Contracts Specify All Needed Requirements

The district uses a standard construction contract that is not the AIA standard, but uses several AIA provisions. The contract also incorporates AIA general provisions. Section 4.2 of the SREF outlines construction contract guidelines for bonds and insurance, and other contract provisions. All the best practice indicators are generally included in the contract. Exhibit 9-12 presents a comparison of contract provisions associated with best practice to the school district's standard contract agreement.

Exhibit 9-12

Contract Provisions Contain Essential Elements

Contract Provision (Best Practice Indicator)	Location/Description in Martin County Architect Contract
Details of construction and materials	Project is described in Article 1 of the contract, and reference is made to building specifications and drawings
Starting time	Article 2 specifies that the start date will be three calendar days following the Official Notice to Proceed from the Superintendent of Schools.
Number of days allowed for construction	Article 2(B) establishes the maximum number of days for substantial completion. For Bessey Creek Elementary, substantial completion must not exceed 250 calendar days.

Contract Provision (Best Practice Indicator)	Location/Description in Martin County Architect Contract
Expected completion time	Expected final completion is expressed as the number of calendar days past substantial completion in Article 2(A) of the contract. For Bessey Creek Elementary, 70 days is the limit. Liquidating damages are provided for the district if the contractor exceeds the date of substantial completion or final completion.
Terms of payment bond	A payment bond is attached to the contract. Terms are described on the bond.
Terms of bid bond	Included as part of the contract.
Terms of performance bond	A performance bond is attached to the contract. Terms are described on the bond.
Workers' compensation	Terms of workers' compensation insurance are set forth in Article 10, and a certificate of insurance is attached to the contract.
Terms of liability insurance	Terms of general and automobile liability are set forth in Article 10, and a certificate of insurance is attached to the contract.
Prevailing wages to be paid	Unit prices are presented on a schedule and are incorporated into the contract agreement in Article 8.
Subcontractors to be used	Included as part of general provisions
Non-collusion affidavit	Included as part of general provisions
Change orders	Included as part of general provisions
Arbitration provision	Included in some contracts, but the district prefers to omit this provision whenever possible.

3 The architect coordinates plans, specifications and questions concerning the project.

The District Can Demonstrate That all Plans and Specifications Were Coordinated Through the School District's Planner and Project Leader

The job description of the Supervisor of Construction includes responsibilities for coordinating with the architect on plans and specifications. The Supervisor of Construction confirmed that all architect deliverables and issues go through him. All plans and specifications are developed by the architect and forwarded to the Supervisor of Construction for review and approval. This single point of communication for the district helps establish accountability for architect performance and ensures that all communications are centered on a single district employee.

Although There is no Documented Evidence, all Plans and Specifications are Reviewed by Those District Personnel Involved in Earlier Phases (Instructional, Administrative, Maintenance, and Safety Persons)

According to the Supervisor of Construction, once plans and specifications are received from the architect, they are reviewed with the Director of Maintenance, the school district

safety officer, and the Director of Facilities. This involvement of all necessary district staff in the process was confirmed by the district architect.

For the most recent school, Bessey Creek Elementary, plans from a previous school were reused. Since these plans had been approved by the state, no changes could be made that would affect meeting the State Requirements for Educational Facilities. The reuse of plans is an efficient method which minimizes architect costs, but reinforces the need for post-occupancy evaluations to determine if these plans are efficient and effective from an operations and educational standpoint. Post-occupancy reviews are discussed later in this chapter.

4 After bids are opened and tabulated, they are submitted to the board for awarding the contract.

The District Can Demonstrate That it Uses Standard Bid Awarding Practices

Section 4.2(2)(e) of the SREF requires that an employee of the board or other appointed individual publicly open bids and read and tabulate the bids at a designated time and place. This ensures that the competitive bid process is fair and open to public scrutiny, and that no individual bidder has any advantage other than what is contained in their respective bid.

Based on inspection of the advertisement and the bid tabulation form for six new classrooms at Bessey Creek Elementary, the district opened the bids as required. The bid tabulation form specifies the bid opening date and the name of the project and designates who opened the bids, who tabulated the bids, and who verified these actions. These three individuals sign the bid tabulation form attesting to its accuracy.

The bid tabulation form lists each bidder and the base bid. Incremental costs for accepted alternate work requested beyond the base bid, if applicable, are tabulated in separate columns on the bid tabulation form. For Bessey Creek Elementary, the district requested a base bid and four alternative pricing items.

The District Can Demonstrate That the Contract Was Awarded to the Lowest Responsible Bidder

Section 4.2 (2)(h) requires the school district to select the lowest bidder, considering base bid and accepted alternates, and award a contract for a fixed fee. Based on a review of two contract awards, the district recommended the lowest bidder on both projects, and the board voted to accept the recommendation. This was verified by comparing the board minutes to the bid tabulation forms for the six new classrooms at Bessey Creek Elementary (bids opened November 24, 1998) and the classroom renovations at Martin County High School (bids opened May 28, 1998).

Before a recommendation of low bidder is made to the board, the lowest bid is subject to review by the district's general counsel. This ensures that the lowest bidder fulfills all legal requirements of the bid. Once compliance has been verified, a recommendation to the board is made to accept the lowest bidder. These procedures are not documented, but are followed without exception according to the district's legal counsel.

5 The district requires each contractor to submit required forms and certifications to the contract.

The District Can Demonstrate That Each Contractor Awarded a Contract Has Required Documents, but the Liquidated Damage Requirements Should be Increased

Certain documentation from contractors is required by law. This is intended to protect the district from certain risks associated with construction contracts. Based on inspection of two recent construction contracts (six new classrooms at Bessey Creek Elementary and classroom renovations at Martin County High School), the following are included as part of the contract:

- A signed owner-contractor agreement. The agreement is signed by the contractor, a witness to the contractor's signature, the board chairman, and the board secretary, who is also the superintendent.
- Workers compensation insurance certificate – this form is attached to the contract.
- Payment bond – this form is attached to the contract.
- Performance bond – this form is attached to the contract.
- Guarantee of completion – this date is defined in Article 2 of the contract. Dates for substantial completion and final completion are established, and liquidating damages are provided on a daily basis for each day that (1) the actual date of substantial completion exceeds the scheduled date of substantial completion - \$425 per day - and (2) the actual date of final completion exceeds the scheduled date of final completion - \$75 per day.

These liquidating damage provisions are lower than industry standards and are not commensurate with the risk a school district faces if a school is not ready to open. The penalty levels are the same for renovations or new construction. An approach that is more commensurate with the risk is a minimum of \$1,000 per day for substantial completion for projects less than or equal to \$10 million, and \$2,000 per day for projects greater than \$10 million. Higher levels could be established if the district is willing to consider financial incentives for finishing the project early.

The contract also includes a certificate of insurance for: (1) builder's risk insurance in the amount of the contract value; (2) commercial general liability; (3) automobile liability; and (4) owner's protective liability (umbrella policy). These are required by Section 4.2.4(b) of the SREF.

6 The architect recommends payment based on the percent of work completed.

The District can Demonstrate That Payments Made to Contractors are Reviewed by the Architect

The architect uses a prescribed form (AIA document G702) for approving payments on construction projects. These forms set forth the percentage of work completed and must be signed and notarized by the contractor and certified by the architect. The contracts allow for progress payments up to 90% of the contract amount. To achieve this, 10% is withheld from each invoice.

The District Has a System of Internal Controls to Ensure That Timely Payments are Made Only After the Architect's Approval of the Work Completed, and With the Concurrence of the District's Project Manager in Charge of the Project

All construction invoices are sent from the Accounting Office to the Facilities Department to be reviewed by the Supervisor of Construction. Both the Supervisor of Construction and the Accounts Payable specialist confirmed this practice. The Supervisor of Construction is responsible for concurring with the architect that progress has reached a point to support payment. The Supervisor of Construction is a certified building inspector and visits the site throughout the project to ensure that progress is sufficient to support payment to the contractor. This procedure provides adequate internal controls over the architect's assessment of work completed and places ultimate responsibility for completion of work with the Supervisor of Construction.

7 The district requires continuous inspection of all school construction projects.

The District Can Demonstrate That it Provides and Requires Competent Continuous Inspection for all New School Construction and all Renovation, Remodeling, or Alteration Projects

The Supervisor of Construction is a certified building inspector and performs interim and final inspections of all school construction projects. The district uses Form OEF 209, Certificate of Final Inspection, to certify that the district, the architect, and the building inspector consider the building complete and in compliance with applicable building codes.

The Supervisor of Construction performs many of the interim inspections, according to the district architect. The results of some inspections, such as the pouring of concrete, are not required to be in writing. The architect also receives interim or threshold inspections from third parties in writing. According to the architect, this practice occurs on renovation projects, as well as new construction.

8 Buildings are not occupied prior to the notice of completion.

The district has procedures to ensure that buildings are not occupied prior to the notice of completion. For example, Sea Wind Elementary was completed in August 1995. During the August board meeting, the board approved occupancy based on approval of inspection by the Department of Education and the provision of a certificate of occupancy. These were achieved before the building was occupied in late August.

Facilities Use

1 The district conducts orientations of new facilities prior to their opening so users better understand the building design and function.

There is an Orientation Program for Staff That is Done Prior to the Facility Opening. Facility Orientation Programs for Parents and Students are Conducted Annually at all Schools

Although no formal, documented program exists, the district conducts orientation programs, or walk-throughs, with district staff. The architect and the Supervisor of Construction stated that the plant operator, the school principal, and other school staff participate in the orientation program, which is conducted prior to the school opening. Students and parents participate in an annual orientation of the school facilities prior to school starting. Generally, the district holds orientations for new students entering the school, but for new facilities, all students and parents are invited.

The district does not have facility user manuals; however, it provides operating manuals on the operation of equipment, such as the alarm systems and operation of utilities, to the plant operator. A shorter manual should be provided to facility users, including teachers, administrators and support staff. The manual should include a map of the facility, identifying exits, location of fire extinguishers telephones and other important features and equipment. The manual should also provide information regarding the energy management system, and the user's ability/restrictions in using it. This manual should be no more than 5 to 10 pages long, and should be written in non-technical terms.

Recommendations

- *The district should formalize and document a facility orientation program that is modified for each new school built.*

Action Plan 9-17

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Formalize and document a facility orientation program that is modified for each new school built.
Action Needed	Conduct a formal, documented orientation program and provide users a manual for new schools.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Construction
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 The district previously conducted comprehensive evaluations of new facilities at the end of the first year of operation, but has discontinued this practice.

The District Has Discontinued its Comprehensive Post-Occupancy Evaluation Program That Examined Building Operation and Performance

The district provided evidence of a post-occupation assessment dated March 1994, for Hidden Oaks Middle School. This report was prepared by the state Office of Educational Facilities, (OEF) and Martin County School District. Building occupancy occurred on August 10, 1992, and the post-occupancy report was dated 19 months later.

The Post-Occupancy Evaluation Team included five OEF representatives: the Director of Education Facilities Planning and Evaluation, two architects, an electrical and mechanical engineer, and an educational facilities specialist. The district's Supervisor of Construction and the school principal also participated in the evaluation.

The evaluation applied the state Post-occupancy Evaluation (POE) guidelines. The post-occupancy evaluation report for Hidden Oaks Middle School was comprehensive in scope and included three major areas of evaluation.

- Economy – is the facility economical to operate and maintain?
- Functionality – does the facility function as intended and does it help or hinder the educational program?
- Performance – Does the facility perform adequately and does it provide appropriate shelter?

The evaluation of economy did not analyze operating cost per square foot to determine if the school was operating efficiently. The evaluation of economy focused on ease of repair, quality of building materials and the efficient layout of rooms and buildings. None of the three evaluation areas referenced the educational specifications developed for the school.

The school was generally given good marks in each of these categories, but the report noted minor problems relating to for areas.

- The orientation of buildings creating some confusion among users
- The lack of fiber optics to be prepared for future technology and communications developments
- Inadequate storage in classrooms
- Awkward design of Administration Building

No other post-occupancy evaluations were conducted for Hidden Oaks, and the Supervisor of Construction stated that these reviews have been discontinued since the Office of Educational Facilities no longer initiates and manages this process. The three most recent schools constructed, Bessey Creek, Sea Wind and Williams, were not subject to a post-occupancy evaluation.

Post-occupancy evaluations are instrumental in identifying improvements to future schools. Until the facility is in use, the effectiveness and efficiency of the design, the equipment and other building features are not known. This knowledge provides opportunities to make future schools more efficient and effective.

Recommendations

- *The district should reinstate and expand post-occupancy evaluations to include analysis of maintenance and operating costs per square foot and an assessment of whether the educational specification were met.*

Action Plan 9-18

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should reinstate and expand post-occupancy evaluations to include analysis of maintenance and operating costs per square foot and an assessment of whether the educational specification were met.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop and adopt board policy requiring post-occupancy evaluations 12 months and 48 months after occupancy.</p> <p>Step 2: Adopt state post-occupancy evaluation (POE) model as a base model for such evaluations.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify additional evaluation elements to be incorporated into the evaluation, such as utilities cost, custodial cost, and student cost-per-square foot.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Construction
Time Frame	August 1999 – May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

3 The district should analyze post-occupancy evaluations to determine whether facilities are fully used, operating costs are minimized, and changes in the district's construction planning process are needed.

Previously, the post-occupancy evaluations were provided to architects on future school construction projects to incorporate recommendations into building specifications. However, since these post-occupancy evaluations were discontinued in 1994, no formal analysis is done. The Supervisor of Construction stated that problems and recommendations are informally communicated to him by the users, and this information is passed along to the architect.

4 The district should improve its analysis of facility maintenance and operating costs to identify improvements in construction.

The District Does Not Analyze Efficiency Measures for Maintenance and Operations Costs

The district does not analyze performance measures concerning maintenance and operating costs (also see Facilities Maintenance chapter). The district does not analyze cost per square foot or energy usage per square foot for any schools or buildings. Tracking and analyzing these measures are important from a maintenance and operations standpoint, but also important from a construction standpoint. If custodial costs per square foot are higher at one school, this may be attributable to a school design issue rather than a productivity issue. Analyzing these performance measures and determining the reason for unusual variances is needed to identify areas for improvement from a construction standpoint.

The district is beginning to analyze energy costs. These costs are usually attributable to design issues (excessive large, open areas) or construction materials (insulation) that can be remedied on future projects. This information should be used to evaluate the impact of alternative designs on energy costs.

While maintenance staff is consulted on school designs, there is no evidence that any changes identified have resulted in cost savings.

See Recommendation on page 10-5.

10

Facilities Maintenance

Although the district adequately maintains its facilities, the district could improve its facilities maintenance operations by developing standards, increasing its preventive maintenance efforts, and automating its work order tracking system.

Conclusions

Survey results and site visits indicate that Martin County's facilities are adequately maintained. The facilities maintenance operations, however, are very informal, lacking defined standards, staffing formulas, and goals. This has led to a "fix it when it breaks" approach that is more costly in the long run. The department spends a considerable amount of time on capital projects at the expense of a preventive maintenance program. Capital projects performed by maintenance include renovations, major repairs, and completion of school shell space.

The district's work order tracking system for maintenance operations is not automated, which limits management's effectiveness in planning and controlling its workload and analyzing its performance. Automation of the tracking system using the new TERMS software is in the planning stage.

The district needs to formalize its approach to facilities maintenance by documenting a mission statement, goals, policies, procedures, standards, and training requirements. It also needs to improve its analysis of costs and the evaluation of more cost-effective approaches to getting the work done.

The Maintenance Department cannot adequately assess staffing levels until its programs and procedures are better defined. When compared to peer school districts, Martin County has a relatively high staff level in its maintenance operation. This is somewhat surprising since staffing levels have remained virtually unchanged for over a decade. At a minimum, some staffing resources should be reallocated from capital projects to preventive maintenance.

The district is overstaffed in its custodial function, based on comparison to industry standards. Custodial productivity also varies widely among schools. Duplication of effort exists in supervisory functions between the plant operator and the lead custodian. Some of the plant operator positions could be eliminated and the functions reassigned to the Maintenance Department and the lead custodian. This will need to be explored further after programs are better defined.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most of the recommendations in the facilities maintenance will improve district performance but are neutral in terms of their fiscal impact. However, as shown in Exhibit 10-1, two recommendations will have a fiscal impact.

Exhibit 10-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Construction Management Will Have the Following Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Reduce custodial staff to achieve a productivity level of 20,000 square feet per custodian.	\$225,000 per year
Increase trade association memberships	(2,500) per year

Other recommendations in this chapter will require significant effort on the part of the Maintenance Department. The department should reallocate maintenance staff time from capital projects to provide the necessary effort to implement these recommendations. Once a majority of the recommendations are implemented, the Maintenance Department will be in a position to assess overall staffing levels.

Background

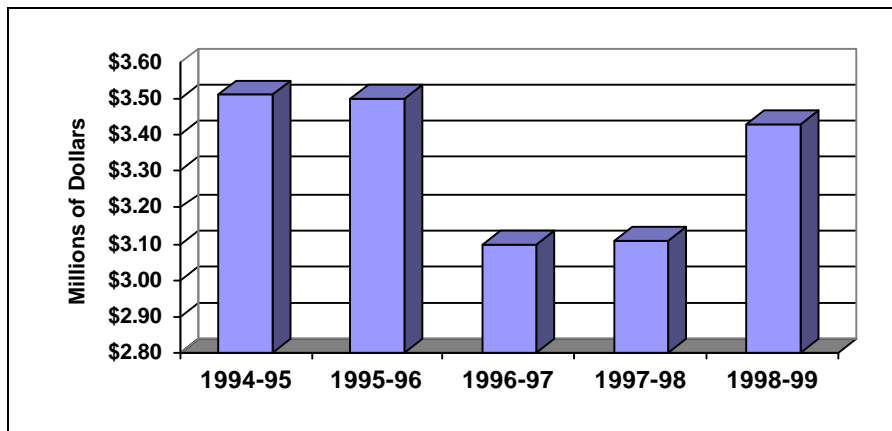
The Maintenance Department is responsible for the upkeep and repair of all school and administrative facilities. The department is also responsible for performing major repairs and other capital projects. The Maintenance Department is led by the maintenance supervisor, who reports to the Director of Facilities.

Custodians report to the school principals and are not part of the Maintenance Department. This is a common and desired practice in site-based decision making, and allows the principal to be held accountable for the cleanliness of the school. The expenditures of the custodian function are included in the Operation of Plant function, which is a separate budget category for costs relating to utilities, custodial services, and communications costs.

The Maintenance Department expenditures for 1998-99 were \$3.1 million and have been flat in recent years (Exhibit 10-2). Expenditures for Operation of Plant were \$6.5 million in 1998-99.

Exhibit 10-2

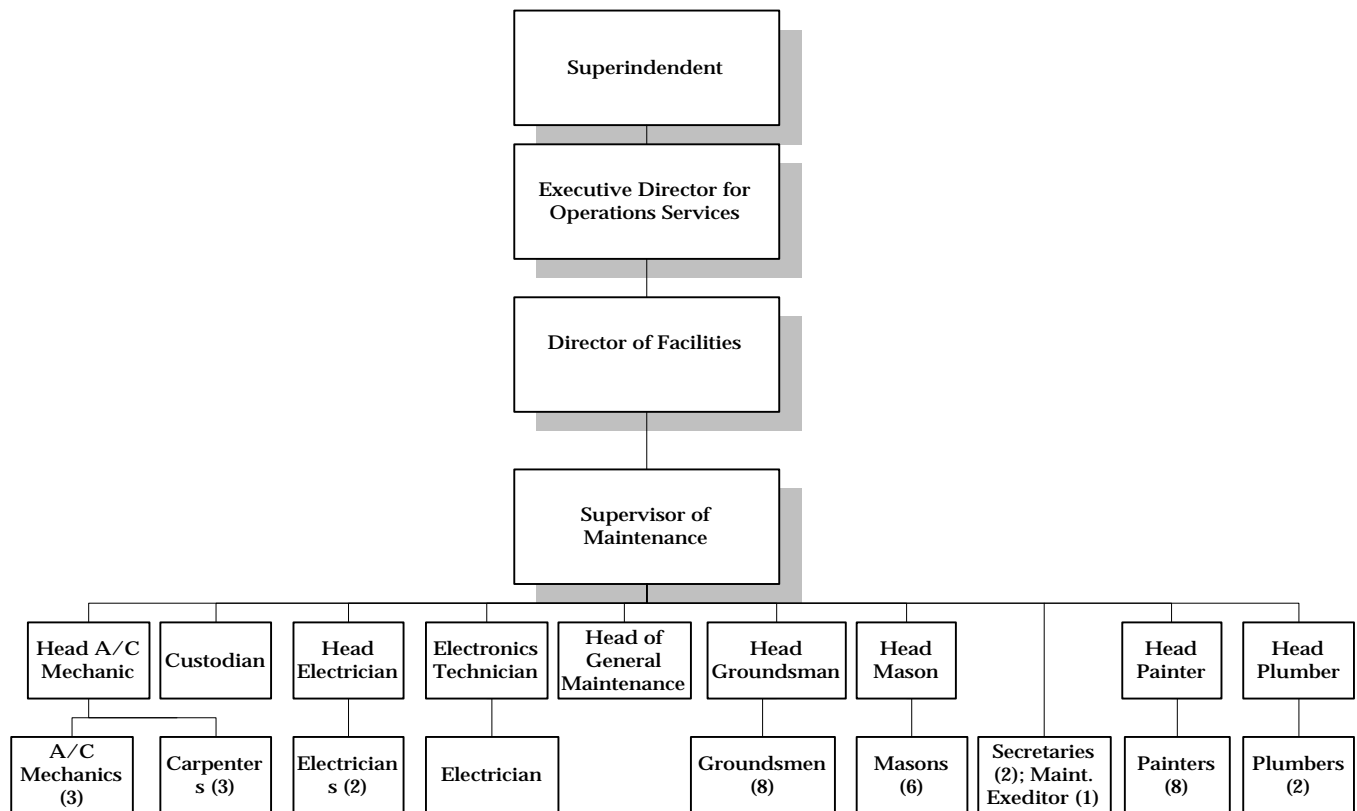
Maintenance Expenditures Have Remained Flat



Source: Superintendents Annual Financial Reports, 1994-95 through 1997-98; Final Budget, 1998-99.

Exhibit 10-3

Martin County School District Maintenance Department Organization Chart



Source: Martin County School District Maintenance Department.

The district has a Maintenance Facility in Stuart where the trade shops are located. All maintenance personnel are based in this facility.

The remainder of this chapter provides an assessment of the Maintenance function, as well as specific recommendations for improvement. It is organized into the following sub-sections:

- Cost effective methods
- Legal responsibilities
- Staffing
- Budgeting
- Standards
- Safety and energy efficiency
- Community use of facilities

Exhibit 10-4

Notable Accomplishments in Facilities Maintenance

-
- The district has allocated sufficient capital project funds to meet its identified needs for major maintenance and repair projects.
 - The district aggressively seeks to maximize the use of the facilities by the community and has developed a sound policy for this use.
 - The district's custodial handbook provides work standards for clean facilities.
-

Cost-Effective Methods

1 The district needs to evaluate the cost-effectiveness for the maintenance and operations functions.

The District Needs to Develop Cost-Effectiveness Measures

The district has not established cost-effectiveness measures for its maintenance operations. Examples of cost-effectiveness measures include cost per square foot statistics, number of full-time equivalent staff per square foot, and cost per student. The district has not calculated or analyzed any of these measures. The lack of performance measures and reports limits the district's ability to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Maintenance Department's operations.

As part of this review, maintenance and operations expenditures per square foot and per student were analyzed and compared to five peer districts (Exhibit 10-5). On a square foot basis, Martin County's maintenance cost per square foot and operations cost per square foot were lower than three of its five peers. However, Martin County's maintenance cost per

student was higher than four of its peers and its plant operating cost per student was higher than three of its peers.

Exhibit 10-5

Maintenance and Operations Cost Comparison

School District	Maintenance Cost per Student	Maintenance Cost per Square Foot	Operations Cost per Student	Operations Cost per Square Foot
Martin County	\$202	\$1.30	\$422	\$2.72
Charlotte	172	1.32	419	3.21
Citrus	136	0.91	367	2.46
Indian River	235	1.58	559	3.75
Santa Rosa	123	0.94	325	2.49
St. Johns	194	1.44	460	3.41
Average of Peers without Martin	190	1.24	426	3.06

Source: Profiles of Florida School Districts Financial Data - Statistical Report (for applicable years) and the Florida Inventory of School Houses.

The District Should Evaluate Contracted Services and Privatization for All Trades to Identify Cost Saving Opportunities

In 1996 the district evaluated the privatization of custodial services and determined that in-house services would be more cost effective. However, based on the current productivity levels of custodians, which is discussed on page 10-10, privatizing custodial services is often more cost effective than using in-house staff to perform these services.

The district has not considered privatizing trade functions, such as carpentry, heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing and electrical. In recent years, the district has used most of its trades staff to support capital projects rather than assigning these staff to maintenance and preventive maintenance projects. To ensure that the most cost-efficient alternative is applied, the district should periodically evaluate privatization of its maintenance trades functions.

The District Evaluates the Feasibility of Contracting with or Joining Associations of Other Government Agencies to Perform Functions of the District

The district has interlocal agreements with Martin County Parks Department to jointly maintain game fields. According to the Maintenance Supervisor, these agreements reduced district maintenance costs. However, the district has not analyzed these maintenance costs to determine actual cost savings.

Recommendations

- *Develop and track cost performance measures to support trend analyses and comparisons to peer districts and industry benchmarks.*
- *Develop specific goals and objectives for the Maintenance Department that clearly identify and segregate resources committed to capital projects, preventive maintenance, ongoing maintenance and emergency maintenance.*
- *The district should consider outsourcing certain maintenance trades based on a privatization study of selected trades.*

Action Plan 10-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and track cost performance measures to support trend analyses and comparisons to peer districts and industry benchmarks.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisor should work together to develop a set of performance measures and benchmarks for the Maintenance function. These measures should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities cost per square foot • Maintenance cost per square foot (excluding maintenance charges relating to capital projects) • Maintenance cost per student • Custodial cost per square foot • Square feet of building space per FTE custodian • Square feet of building space per FTE maintenance staff • MBTU usage per square foot • Average age of facilities <p>Step 2: Contact peer districts to identify information-sharing opportunities.</p> <p>Step 3: Obtain historical data from budget and FISH records</p> <p>Step 4: Calculate and verify measures</p> <p>Step 5: Analyze trends</p> <p>Step 6: Set performance goals</p> <p>Step 7: Incorporate results into the budget process</p> <p>Step 8: Track statistics annually</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	January – June 2000
Fiscal Impact	The amount of savings will depend on how well the district performs.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Develop specific goals and objectives for the Maintenance Department that clearly identify and segregate the resources committed to capital projects, preventive maintenance, ongoing maintenance and emergency maintenance.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop standards for the number of hours needed to accomplish preventive maintenance, ongoing maintenance and emergency maintenance activities.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop FTE targets for each maintenance category, plus a target for capital project time.</p> <p>Step 3: Track the level of effort through time sheets (in the interim). Use work order system to track effort by category after implementation.</p> <p>Step 4: Compare goals to actual hours spent in each area.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Consider outsourcing certain maintenance trades.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify maintenance trade functions that could be privatized.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify criteria for use in determining whether to outsource functions.</p> <p>Step 3: Contact vendors to determine costs to privatize these functions.</p> <p>Step 4: Analyze costs to perform these services with in-house staff.</p> <p>Step 5: Compare in-house costs to privatization costs.</p> <p>Step 6: Determine feasibility of privatizing maintenance trade functions based on the results of the comparison.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	March 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Legal Responsibilities

1 The board needs to provide procedural guidance to the Maintenance Department.

The Board Should Develop a Mission Statement

The Maintenance Department does not have a formal mission statement to define its purpose and help focus its activities. Over the past several years, the Maintenance Department has allocated its resources primarily to capital projects for both new construction and remodeling. As a result, fewer resources are available for preventive maintenance activities that are necessary to extend the useful lives of the district's school facilities. The Maintenance Department should define its goals for the upkeep and appearance of school facilities in a formal mission statement that provides guidance and direction for its activities.

A mission statement is important in that it drives goals, performance measures, and plans for a department. A statement of purpose helps focus department employees on what is most important and makes them feel as an important part of the school district. A sample mission statement for a Maintenance Department is presented below:

The Maintenance Department will provide competent, responsive and efficient services to users of facilities in order to operate and maintain a safe and functional environment for students, staff and the community.

Despite the absence of a mission statement, the Maintenance Department appears to meet or exceed user expectations of performance. Our survey of parents, teachers and school administrators indicates that while a majority of them believe that schools are clean and well maintained, less than half of the teachers and school administrators thought that the services of the Maintenance Department met expectations. (See Exhibit 10-6.)

Exhibit 10-6

Facility Users Are Satisfied with the Maintenance and Cleanliness of Schools

Survey Group	Question	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	No Opinion
Parents (N=42)	My child's school is kept clean	71.4%	14.3%	23.8%	4.8%
	My child's school facilities are well maintained	66.7%	19.0%	7.1%	7.1%
Teachers / School Administrators (N=94)	My school is kept clean	61.7%	10.6%	26.6%	1.1%
	My school's facilities are well maintained	56.4%	13.8%	28.7%	1.1%
	Maintenance Services meet or exceed expectations	32.0%	26.6%	32.9%	8.5%

Source: Review Team Survey.

Based on physical observations of six schools by the review team, most of the facilities are adequately maintained. The Alternative School (Spectrum) was the only facility that did not appear to be adequately maintained. This facility has maintenance needs with respect to floor tiles, bathrooms, and gutters, among others. Murray Middle School had a few maintenance deficiencies (bathrooms, lockers), but these are in process of being repaired/renovated.

The District Should Adopt Policies and Procedures for Maintenance.

The district does not have written policies and procedures for facilities maintenance. Section 6Gx43-8.0 of the policy manual is entitled Facilities and Operations but only discusses specific facility issues such as professional services, use of facilities by outsiders, short-term leasing of facilities and energy conservation. There are no other policies governing facilities maintenance. Section 5.5 of the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) presents requirements for maintaining existing facilities. The SREF specifically requires that boards adopt policies and procedures for maintenance, sanitation, and the housekeeping of existing facilities to ensure the health and safety of occupants. The lack of a policy framework limits the board's ability to hold district management accountable for legal compliance. The lack of documented policies also presents a litigation risk for the district by not providing a framework for decision-making.

The district also has no written procedures for replacement and selection of equipment; purchase of supplies and materials; level of maintenance expectations and maintenance standards; maintenance and operations budget criteria; management of facilities; personnel staffing policies; or use of facilities and equipment. (Staff development is discussed later in this chapter on page 10-19). The lack of documented procedures contributes to the lack of direction and control in the department. The effectiveness of activities and standards applied by Maintenance Department personnel are exclusively dependent on the individual performing them.

The Maintenance and Operations Department Is Administered in Accordance with an Organizational Chart that Has Been Approved by the School Board

The maintenance function organization structure has been approved by the board, and the same structure has been in place for the past 20 years. The Maintenance Supervisor leads this area. This position reports to the Director of Facilities, who reports to the Executive Director of Operations (Exhibit 10-3 on page 10-3).

Recommendations

- *The district should document a mission statement for the Maintenance Department.*
- *The district should conduct periodic surveys of facility users to measure how well maintenance is fulfilling its mission from a customer service standpoint and to evaluate where they need to be using resources.*
- *The district should document policies and procedures for the Maintenance Department.*

Action Plan 10-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a mission statement for the Maintenance Department.
Action Needed	As part of its strategic planning effort, district staff should establish a mission statement for maintenance for board approval. See example on page 10-8.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, school board
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Conduct periodic surveys of facility users to measure how well maintenance it is fulfilling its mission from a customer service standpoint.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop survey instrument. Use positive statements about maintenance performance and ask users to rank agreement or disagreement on a 1-5 scale.</p> <p>Step 2: Include quality, timeliness and cost of service in survey questions.</p> <p>Step 3: Submit surveys to principals and a random sample of teachers.</p> <p>Step 4: Have responses delivered to internal auditor for tabulation.</p> <p>Step 5: Summarize and evaluate responses.</p> <p>Step 6: Use to evaluate the use of maintenance resources and make adjustments accordingly.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	Bi-annually, beginning in February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Document policies and procedures for the Maintenance Department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Conduct research through national organizations to identify sources for procedures manual components.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop table of contents for maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 3: Prepare a written draft of the maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 4: Incorporate and update custodial handbook into maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 5: Put procedures manual on server, allowing access by maintenance staff and campus staff.</p> <p>Step 6: Revise applicable sections as needed during a one- to two-year period.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September 1999 – June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Staffing

1 The district needs to establish proper staffing levels for maintenance and operations.

The District Does Not Apply Formulas to Determine Staffing Needs

The district has developed a staffing formula for its custodians who report to school principals and are included in school budgets. However, it has not developed staffing formulas for Maintenance Department employees. Staffing formulas are important to determine proper staffing levels and to ensure adequate allocation of staff resources to meet needs.

The district provided a custodial staffing formula that calculates custodial levels using an average of five different factors. One factor establishes a requirement of one custodian for every 15,000 square feet of space. This is 5,000 square feet less than the industry standard for custodial coverage, and some school districts achieve 25,000 square feet per custodian.

The American School and University Magazine recommends a standard of 21,429 square feet per custodian. Taking into consideration additional responsibilities of Martin County School District custodians, the 21,429 square feet standard was adjusted down to 20,000 square feet. The district would only need a total of 122 positions to cover the 2,434,483 square feet in the 20 district school facilities evaluated. This may be accomplished by using part-time custodians or assigning custodians to more than one school when geographically feasible. Currently, there are 131 custodians at these schools.

Exhibit 10-7

Custodian Staffing Formula

Factor	Calculation
Teacher Factor	Number of Teachers divided by 8
Student Factor	Number of Students divided by 225
Room Factor	Number of Rooms divided by 11
Area Factor	Square Feet divided by 15,000
Site Factor	Number of Acres divided by 2
Total	Sum of each factor divided by 5

Source: Martin County School District.

The staffing formula is not being used; however, its use would exacerbate current overstaffing. Two schools were randomly selected to determine if the staffing formula was applied. South Fork High School would have 32 custodians if this formula were applied. It has 16 custodians and is overstaffed based on a standard of 20,000 square feet per custodian. Hidden Oaks Middle School would have 13 custodians if this formula were applied. It has 8 custodians and is not overstaffed. The Maintenance Supervisor was unaware of the source of this formula and stated that he did not think this formula was

applied. The analysis above also confirmed this. If the formula was applied, the district would add 25% to 50% more custodians to an operation that is currently overstaffed based on industry standards.

Actual custodial staffing levels vary widely among campuses. As shown in Exhibit 10-8, custodian productivity at individual schools, measured as square feet of coverage per custodian, ranges from 5,666 square feet to 28,930 square feet per custodian. The total square feet includes permanent facilities and portable buildings indicated in the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) report as of March 1999. As the district increases the total amount of square feet through the use of additional portables and the completion of shell buildings, the total number of custodians needed may increase using the 20,000 per square feet per custodian standard. In the long run, Martin County should strive to attain no less than the minimum productivity level of 20,000 square feet per custodian at each school.

Exhibit 10-8

Square Feet Covered Per Custodian

School / Site	Square Feet	Custodians	Square Feet Per Custodian
Indiantown Adult Learning Center	11,333	2	5,666
Challenger School	47,323	5	9,464
Spectrum Junior Senior High	31,058	2	15,529
Warfield Elementary	102,350	7	14,621
Jensen Beach Elementary	93,883	6	15,647
Martin Senior High	344,352	21	16,397
Palm City Elementary	100,906	6	16,817
Hobe Sound Elementary	86,252	5	17,250
Murray Middle School	132,239	7	18,891
Stuart Middle School	170,894	9	18,988
Port Salerno Alternative Education Center	102,969	5	20,593
South Fork Senior High	296,546	16	18,534
J.D. Parker School of Science, Math and Technology	100,250	5	20,050
Crystal Lake Elementary	103,684	5	20,736
Hidden Oaks Middle School	167,710	8	20,963
Pinewood Elementary	106,796	5	21,359
Indiantown Middle School	89,704	4	22,426
Sea Wind Elementary	115,033	5	23,006
Bessey Creek Elementary	115,480	4	28,870
Felix A. Williams Elementary	115,721	4	28,930
TOTAL	2,434,483	131	18,583

Source: Florida Inventory of School Houses, Martin County School District Schedule of Custodians by School, August 3, 1999.

The district does not apply any staffing formulas for maintenance trades. In recent years, maintenance staff has been spending the majority of their time on capital projects, not maintenance. Consequently, preventive and corrective maintenance has not been sufficiently staffed. The board recently directed a reduction in maintenance time devoted to capital projects, but the district does not track information to determine appropriate staffing levels for specific trades.

Martin County's maintenance trades staff levels were compared to peer districts that were able to provide information. (See Exhibit 10-9) Martin County and Santa Rosa have similar productivity levels (net square feet per trades staff), but these are significantly lower than Charlotte and St. Johns. Martin County devotes a significant amount of maintenance staff time to capital projects, which may explain the larger number of painters and masons. According to the Maintenance Supervisor, the department does very little preventive maintenance, which should contribute to lower staff levels.

Exhibit 10-9

Staffing Comparison by Trade Martin County School District and Peer Districts

	Martin	Santa Rosa	Charlotte	St. Johns
Air Conditioning	4	7	7	3
Carpenters	4	7	6	3
Electricians	3	4	7	2
Electronics Technicians	2	2	0	0
General Maintenance	1	10	0	8
Masons	7	0	0	1
Painters	9	4	0	2
Plumbers	3	4	3	2
Roofers	0	0	0	1
Totals	33	38	23	22
Gross square foot / trades staff	72,635	74,192	92,330	106,764

Sources: Interviews with peer district; district FISH data.

The district has assigned one plant operator to each school. The district has not developed staffing formulas for assigning plant operator positions to schools. Based on interviews of six plant operators, depending on the principal's direction, some are more involved in maintenance activities and others are more involved in administrative activities.

Staffing formulas are important to ensure adequate and equitable allocation of staff resources to meet needs. The tendency, particularly in maintenance related areas, is to keep prior year staffing levels or cut if needed, without knowledge of resource needs or current productivity levels. The wide range in custodial productivity indicates a need to apply formulas to achieve proper staffing levels overall and at the school level. Formulas should also be used to determine proper staffing levels in maintenance trades.

Job Vacancy Notices Adequately Describe Position Responsibilities

The district attaches job descriptions to vacancy notices. The notices include experience requirements and salary ranges. The job descriptions provide job responsibilities and

qualifications. Before a vacancy notice for a maintenance position is posted, the Maintenance Supervisor reviews the notice for accuracy.

Our review of two recent vacancy notices indicated that they generally provide sufficient information. However, as discussed separately in this chapter, the district does not update some job descriptions for required certifications. Also benefits, number of workdays, and selection criteria are not included in the notice of job descriptions. Job vacancy notices should include disclosure of benefits, selection criteria and the number of workdays to screen applicants who are not satisfied with these factors. This will reduce recruiting and hiring time.

The employee selection process meets state and federal guidelines related to equal employment opportunities, but methods to evaluate and confirm qualifications should be improved. The application states that the district does not discriminate, and there has been only one equal opportunity complaint filed by a maintenance employee in recent years. This complaint was later dropped.

Even though the district has not documented its screening criteria, the Maintenance Supervisor interviews all applicants and, if necessary, brings in a technical specialist to evaluate their technical abilities. However, the technical specialists' evaluation results are not documented in the applicant's file. Technical specialists should be automatically included in interviews of certain positions, and their evaluation should be documented and incorporated into the overall evaluation in the applicant's file. This will ensure that all candidates are properly and equitably screened.

According to the Maintenance Supervisor, the district checks references on all screened applicants; however, personnel files contain no documentation of these contacts. State law requires fingerprints of new employees, and school district policy requires all maintenance employees to be subject to a drug test. Documentation of the district's compliance with these two mandates is included in the personnel file. To provide protection against discrimination lawsuits, all reference checks should also be documented in the files.

The District Should Develop Procedures to Attract Qualified Applicants Given the District's Size, Location and Needs

The district needs to develop procedures to attract qualified applicants who can meet the district's needs. These needs are determined in part by the district's size and location. For example, the district is small, and maintenance employees of small to mid-size districts are more likely to need to be cross-trained in several trades. The district is also located in the south, and the maintenance needs of facilities in milder climates differ from the needs of facilities in more severe climates. Currently, the district does not have formal or informal procedures for attracting qualified applicants who can meet the needs of a small, southern school district. The district should consider and document applicants' ability to meet these needs when it evaluates them for employment.

Recommendations

- *Martin County School District should reallocate custodial staff to achieve minimum productivity on regular campuses to 20,000 square feet per custodian.*
- *The district should develop and apply staffing formulas for maintenance trades.*

Action Plan 10-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Reallocate custodial staff to achieve minimum productivity on regular campuses to 20,000 square feet per custodian.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign custodial staff based on square footage of building space, modified up or down based on age of facility and facility population. Total productivity for the district should be 20,000 square feet per custodian.</p> <p>Step 2: Reassign custodial staff among campuses.</p> <p>Step 3: Achieve reductions in staff through attrition where possible.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for Operations
Time Frame	September 1999 - July 2000
Fiscal Impact	Increasing districtwide productivity to 20,000 square feet per custodian would allow the district to eliminate 9 custodial positions. Assuming average salary and benefits of \$25,000 per custodian, the district could save approximately \$225,000 per year.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop and apply staffing formulas for maintenance trades.
Action Needed	<p>Once the district has determined outsourcing opportunities and established a preventative maintenance program as recommended in action plan 10-1, the district needs to develop staffing formulas for each trade based on square feet of facilities supported.</p> <p>Increase or decrease staffing levels by trade based on formulas.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	<p>April - June 2000</p> <p>This recommendation should be implemented after the district has evaluated outsourcing opportunities for maintenance trades.</p>
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

2 The Operations and Maintenance Departments have written job descriptions for each of their positions, but some job descriptions need to be updated.

The Operations and Maintenance Departments Have Written Job Descriptions for Each Position

The two Departments have job descriptions for all maintenance positions, including head trade positions and staff trade positions. These descriptions define specific job responsibilities for each position and indicate the position's level of supervisory responsibility. The Human Resources Department maintains all job descriptions. A copy of

each Maintenance Department job description is located in the Maintenance Department and is accessible to employees.

Staff Participate in the Updating of Job Description but These Changes Are Not Always Reflected on the Official Job Description Form

The Maintenance supervisor stated that he includes staff in the updating of job descriptions and staff keep him informed on new certification requirements. However, the job description changes he requests are not always included in the official job descriptions. For example, three job descriptions relating to maintenance have not been updated for changes requested by the Maintenance supervisor. The Maintenance supervisor requested that certifications necessary to perform jobs be added to the job descriptions, but the Personnel Department did not make the requested changes. For instance, pesticide certification is not a requirement specified on the plant operation job description, even though all plant operators have it. Other examples include Freon certification for HVAC maintenance staff and a required license for groundskeepers. Since job descriptions are used as the basis for posting vacancy notices, it is important that they are current and complete with respect to required certifications.

Recommendations

- *The district should update maintenance job descriptions to include all required certifications.*

Action Plan 10-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Update maintenance job descriptions to include all required certifications.
Action Needed	Update job descriptions with changes recommended by the Maintenance Department.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance, director of Human Resources
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

3 The district needs to clearly communicate performance standards to all maintenance and operations staff.

The District Needs to Establish and Document Job Performance Standards

The district has documented work standards only for custodial services. These standards specify duties to be performed by the custodians and the plant operator at each school and the frequency of tasks to be performed. However, the district has no evidence that these work standards are based on appropriate industry standards. Our visits to school

campuses indicate that some custodial tasks are not included in the custodial handbook, but most schools use the handbook as a reference tool.

The district has developed neither documented work standards for maintenance trades nor informal standards to use in estimating effort for work orders. The Maintenance supervisor conducts annual evaluations of Maintenance Department employees. The Maintenance Department evaluations are documented, but are not based on established performance standards. The Maintenance supervisor stated that the primary sources of input for work quality were feedback from departments and schools and his knowledge of work orders that had to be repeated due to poor work quality.

The lack of performance standards makes it difficult to hold maintenance staff accountable for their work. The lack of work standards may also pose problems if the district terminates the employment of an under-performing employee. Without documented work standards, the employee could file a lawsuit against the district for wrongful termination of employment. Finally, the lack of work standards may prevent a thorough orientation and training program for maintenance employees. While training is provided for job safety and specific technical matters, the training is not linked to the performance of work standards.

Employees Have the Opportunity to Review Their Performance Evaluations

The Maintenance supervisor conducts a formal evaluation annually, and meets with staff to review the evaluation form. The employee signs the evaluation form to indicate that he or she has read the form.

Training is discussed under Best Practice 5 on page 19

Recommendations

- *Develop a method for evaluating Maintenance trades based on work standards.*

Action Plan 10-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a method for evaluating Maintenance trades based on work standards.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop work standards for each trade that may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of maintenance task • Duration of maintenance task • Materials cost of maintenance task • Labor cost of maintenance task • References to applicable professional standards <p>Step 2: Inform maintenance personnel of the work standards.</p> <p>Step 3: Track the implementation of work standards and how employees meet those standards.</p> <p>Step 4: Evaluate employee performance based on the standards</p>

Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

4 The district provides adequate supervision of Maintenance Department staff.

Evaluations Are Performed for Each Employee on an Annual Basis

The Martin County School Board has not established a specific board policy requiring annual evaluations of maintenance and operations staff, but the Maintenance Supervisor conducts annual evaluations of all trades personnel. The results of these evaluations are documented and included in their personnel file. Board policy should require that annual evaluations be done annually to establish accountability and protect the district in employee related litigation.

Supervisory Ratios in the Maintenance Department Are Adequate and Levels of Authority and Responsibilities Are Defined

The district has not established formal staffing formulas or ratios to determine how many employees should report to lead positions. In practice, the district has established a lead position in each trade, and that lead position supervises at least one other employee. Based on the number of trades and the overall size of the department, this is an acceptable staffing practice.

In addition, the job descriptions for maintenance employees clearly define levels of authority and responsibilities for Maintenance Department staff. Lead positions in each trade have different job descriptions. For example the Head Carpenter is responsible for supervising carpenter personnel. A copy of these job descriptions is kept at the maintenance facility and is readily accessible by employees.

An Interim Work Order Tracking System Should Be Used to Increase Management Capability Until TERMS Work Order Software Is Installed

The district uses a manual system to track individual work orders. Work order statistics are not summarized or analyzed to increase management' capability. During the district's conversion to a new automated system (the TERMS system), the Maintenance Department will be installing an automated work order system that should significantly help in this area in the future. In the meantime, the district is unable to effectively plan and manage maintenance work orders and the related cost. This inhibits management's ability to effectively plan and control the completion of work orders, establish staffing levels and work priorities, and evaluate staff performance.

Recommendations

- The district should implement an interim work order tracking system until the TERMS work order management system is installed.

Action Plan 10-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement a computerized work order management system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Evaluate TERMS and other work order tracking systems for effectiveness</p> <p>Step 2: Determine the system to use and schedule implementation of work order management system.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop implementation plan.</p> <p>Step 4: Input data</p> <p>Step 5: Test software</p> <p>Step 6: Run parallel systems for three months.</p> <p>Step 7: Implement TERMS work order management system.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	June 2000 – May 2001
Fiscal Impact	This module is already a component of the TERMS software purchased. Consequently, there is no additional fiscal impact of this recommendation.

5 The district has staff development programs for Maintenance Department employees.

The District Needs to Develop a More Formalized Training Program

The district has an informal staff development and training program for maintenance employees. Based on discussions with the Maintenance supervisor and review of a sample of maintenance personnel files, the district has training programs to address identified technical and safety needs. Many technical training needs are identified by vendors that provide equipment for the district. Other training needs are identified by the Safety Officer. However, the district does not have a systematic way of identifying all training needs. A more formalized training program would ensure it identifies and fills all of these needs. Specific areas that are missing from the current training program are discussed below.

The District Needs to Document Training Goals

The district has not developed training goals and is not offering training in some key areas. For example, according to the Maintenance supervisor, when needed, employees work in other trade areas, but they are not cross-trained to work in all of these areas. Employees

are also not offered training on interpersonal team skills or district policy awareness. To ensure that employees meet quality and customer service expectations, the district should identify training needs and establish training goals for each position. In addition, the district should provide cross-training for specific positions to improve the efficiency of the maintenance staff.

The Maintenance Supervisor Should Work Closely with Human Resources to Develop a Structured, Sequential Training Program

The Maintenance supervisor receives input from staff and vendors on needs for skills development, but does not work with Human Resources Department to ensure a planned, sequential program for personal skills development. The Human Resources Department should be directly involved in the development and refinement of training programs for each maintenance position since this department is responsible for the coordination of all district training. This department also has the technical skills and resources to identify and fill training needs.

Training Programs Should Include Personal Interaction Strategies

According to the Maintenance supervisor, the district has not formally trained maintenance staff on personal interaction strategies. The district individualizes technical training to meet specific trade needs and skill sets, as evidenced by training certificates in employee personnel files. Since maintenance is a customer service function, personal interaction is a major component of the job. All maintenance department employees should receive training on personal interaction strategies.

Instructors Used for Staff Training Are from Appropriate Trade/Instructional Areas

The Maintenance supervisor stated that the district primarily uses the safety officer and outside vendors for conducting training. These are appropriate sources for these types of training, but other training course are needed and should be provided by appropriate trade/instructional areas. Qualified instructors are key to any successful training program.

Training Programs Provide an Opportunity for Staff Feedback and Evaluation

The district uses a form to obtain staff feedback on its training programs. Maintenance staff use this form to evaluate training provided by outside vendors, the school district safety officer and the Maintenance supervisor. Staff complete these forms at the end of each session. Evaluations of training provided by district staff are sent directly to the Human Resources Department, and evaluations of vendor-provided training are submitted directly to the Maintenance supervisor. The Maintenance supervisor said that he informally uses these evaluations to alter future training programs but does not document this use. A more formal approach will help ensure that training programs meet employee needs. The Human Resources Department should summarize the evaluations and discuss them with the Maintenance supervisor in an annual assessment of all training programs.

The District Should Implement an Apprenticeship Program

The district does not currently have an apprenticeship program for maintenance employees. These programs are effective in identifying and training future employees and provide a less expensive way to provide training to newly hired employees. Apprenticeship programs also improve a district's ability to recruit and maintain a qualified workforce over the long term.

Recommendations

- *The district should design and implement formalized training program for maintenance workers.*

Action Plan 10-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Design and implement formalized training program for maintenance workers.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify and prioritize training needs for maintenance staff, including technical training, interpersonal skills, and project management.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish minimum requirements for maintenance training.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop three-year training program for maintenance staff.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance, in coordination with the director of Human Resources.
Time Frame	October – December 1999, for implementation in 2000-01.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Budgeting

1 The district needs to develop budgetary guidelines to provide for funding in each category of facilities maintenance and operations.

The Annual Budget Should Address Short-Term Objectives and Long-Term Goals for Maintaining and Operating District Facilities

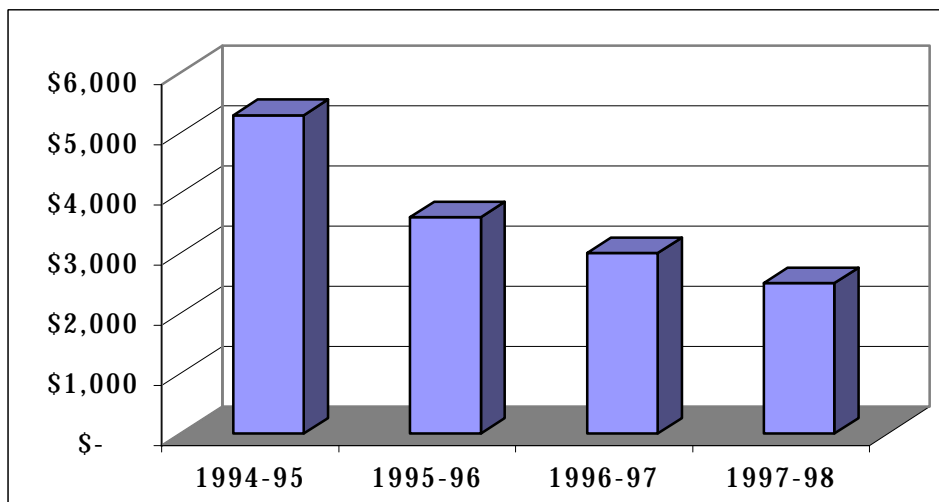
According to the Maintenance supervisor, the Maintenance Department operates in a “fix it when it breaks” mode. This implicit strategy is also evidenced by the lack of a preventive maintenance program and the dedication of significant Maintenance Department resources to capital projects. The district has no defined short-term or long-term goals for the maintenance area, and the maintenance budget and staff levels have declined slightly in

recent years. The only short-term objectives that are defined and met are capital projects, which the district defines in its Five-Year Facilities Work Program.

In past years, there have been significant transfers from the capital project fund to the Maintenance Department. This is a legal and proper use of capital project funds but reflects a poor strategy that neglects ongoing corrective and preventive maintenance. As shown in Exhibit 10-10, since fiscal year 1994-95 the district has reduced this transfer from \$5.3 million to \$2.1 million. The district should determine staffing levels for ongoing maintenance needs and fund those needs through the operating budget. The Maintenance Department should be reimbursed for capital projects, but this reimbursement should not exceed 25% of the Maintenance Department budget.

Exhibit 10-10

The District Has Transferred Significant Amounts to Maintenance from the Capital Projects Fund



Source: Martin County School District, Annual Financial Reports.

A properly funded maintenance program will minimize large capital investments required to repair or renovate facilities. In Martin County, the opposite is occurring. According to the Maintenance supervisor, funding and resources have been dedicated to capital projects and corrective maintenance, not preventive maintenance. The lack of a preventive maintenance program will cause higher repair and replacement costs for the district in the long run.

The District Funds Deferred Maintenance and Major Repair Projects within the Resources Available

The district has dedicated capital project funds for major maintenance and, with the exception of roof repairs, the district has reduced its unmet major maintenance needs to acceptable levels. The district's five-year facilities program beginning 1998-99 shows \$2.1 million to be spent on roof repair over the next five years.

The district has not conducted a facilities audit in recent years. These audits identify and quantify deferred maintenance needs. The district funds the needs it identifies with capital project funds; however, if it identified significant additional deferred maintenance needs, it

would need to reallocate resources. (See related discussion in Chapter 9-Facilities Construction.)

The Budget for Facilities Maintenance Is Not Based on Industry Standards

The district does not use cost per square foot measures to support budget amounts. As indicated in Exhibit 10-5 on page 10-5, Martin County ranks in the middle among its peers both in maintenance cost per square foot and operations cost per square foot. The district should establish target cost per square foot based on a proper balance of preventive, routine, and emergency maintenance.

The district spends 3% of its general fund operating budget on maintenance (before transfers from capital projects fund), down from 4% three years ago. Maintenance expenditures have remained flat or declined while the general fund budget continues to grow. Depending on the level of maintenance staff devoted to capital projects, the optimum target may range from 2.5% to 4%. Establishing financial targets will help the district manage the cost of the maintenance function while meeting all maintenance needs.

The Budget Process Provides for Periodic Evaluation of Actual Versus Planned Expenditures, but These Reports Are Not Currently Being Used to Monitor Expenditures

The Maintenance supervisor has the ability to print a budget variance report from the TERMS system. Individual expenditures must be encumbered (budget funds must be available) but the Maintenance supervisor is not reviewing monthly budget variance reports to monitor actual versus planned expenditures. This review is essential to properly control expenditures and understand variances.

Recommendations

- *Based on industry standards, establish short-term and long-term financial objectives for maintaining facilities and set budgets and staffing levels accordingly.*
- *Establish a target for Maintenance Department resources to be used for capital projects.*

Action Plan 10-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish short-term and long-term financial objectives for maintaining facilities, based on industry standards, and set budgets and staffing levels accordingly.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Define one-year and five-year objectives for facilities maintenance, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency (cost per square foot and other performance measures discussed earlier in this chapter) • Effectiveness (average response times, number of

	repeat work orders, customer satisfaction as expressed through survey instruments) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of key projects by certain dates (TERMS software, work standards, procedures) Step 2: Incorporate objectives into strategic planning process for approval by board.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	October 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Establish a target for Maintenance Department resources to be used for capital projects.
Action Needed	Step 1: Estimate amount of time spent on capital projects by maintenance staff in 1998-1999. Step 2: Develop target staffing levels for other maintenance needs. Identify available hours for capital projects based on current staffing levels. Step 3: Incorporate target percentage into long-range objectives and track progress.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September – December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2 The board has a provision for major maintenance reserve funds to provide flexibility in handling one-time expenditures necessary to support maintenance and operations.

The District Has Contingency and Special Reserve Funds

According to the director of Finance, the district maintains \$500,000 in contingency funds to handle unexpected major repairs or maintenance. This was confirmed by examination of the district's financial records. This contingency level represents 1.2 % of the district's 1998-99 capital budget and provides sufficient flexibility in the event of an unexpected need.

The district also has access to special reserve funding to meet unique situations created by new programs mandated by the state or federal government. There is \$280,000 available from Martin County for the school district to use for Americans' with Disabilities Act compliance.

Standards

1 The district needs to establish short- and long-term plans for providing adequately maintained facilities.

The District Needs to Develop Goals and Objectives for the Maintenance Department

The district has not developed a mission statement or written goals and objectives for the Maintenance Department. (Also see Best Practice 2 on page 10-7.) The performance of the Maintenance Department is currently dependent on the capabilities of a competent staff, but this staff is not held accountable for its performance. These elements, along with a mission statement, are important in providing direction for the facilities maintenance function and helping ensure that the department is operating efficiently and meeting or exceeding industry standards and user expectations.

Recommendations

- See the recommendation for developing goals and objectives on page 10-5.

2 The district needs to establish maintenance standards to identify maintenance needs.

The District Should Identify and Evaluate Maintenance Needs Based on Maintenance Standards.

Maintenance and facility repair needs are identified through three major efforts:

- Educational Plant Survey
- Annual Inspections
- Input from plant operators, principals and other district staff

The Educational Plant Survey is conducted with the assistance of the Office of Educational Facilities once every five years. Martin County 's most recent survey was conducted in February 1995. These surveys identify SREF compliance deficiencies and other major maintenance and repair needs and incorporate them into a five-year plan. Most of the items in the survey relate to new construction or remodeling, not major maintenance and repair.

Section 5.5 of the SREF defines standards for maintaining and repairing existing facilities. These requirements are broken down into six categories:

- Landscaping

- Signage
- Fencing
- Walkways, roads, driveways and parking areas
- Building structures and interior
- Major equipment (e.g., waste burners)

The district must annually inspect each facility to ensure that it is being maintained in accordance with SREF specifications. The district safety officer conducts these inspections and issues a report identifying any facility repairs or renovations needed to be SREF compliant. The safety officer confirmed that he performs SREF inspections annually at each facility. He submits the results of the inspections to the board and to the director of Facilities. In the following year's inspection, the Safety Officer confirms that the district has remedied the previous year exceptions.

District staff may identify other facility repair needs during the course of the year. The plant operators use email to communicate these needs to the Maintenance Department. This is not a formal reporting mechanism, however, since plant operators report to the principal. The principal must approve any repair needs identified at a school before the Maintenance Department can execute a work order. These needs are based on observations or referrals from other district staff and not based on prescribed standards.

The district has standards for mechanical and equipment specifications for new construction and renovation projects. These standards prescribe equipment specifications, but do not provide standards or guidelines for maintaining the equipment. The district receives maintenance guidelines from manufactures of purchased equipment, but does not incorporate these guidelines into any formal maintenance plans.

The district has not conducted a facilities audit in recent years to evaluate facility condition and identify needed major maintenance and repairs. A facilities audit is a comprehensive assessment of buildings and building components. They are effective in identifying major maintenance and repair needs through detailed inspections by qualified engineers and architects.

The district does not evaluate work order trends to identify major maintenance needs. The district's manual work order system is used for maintenance transaction purposes, not for reporting or planning purposes. Evaluating work order trends can help identify major maintenance needs and avoid costly repairs. For example, recurring work orders to repair a piece of equipment at several schools could be analyzed to determine what other schools have the same type of equipment. Preventive maintenance on the same equipment in other schools could help stop the repair trends. This same analysis could also support a decision to use different equipment on new or remodeled facilities.

The district also has not surveyed facility users to identify maintenance needs. These surveys could also be used to identify maintenance needs before they become expensive repair items.

Maintenance standards define procedures for maintaining facilities and equipment that maximize their useful lives. In the long run, a school district that applies maintenance standards will experience lower maintenance costs and also lower equipment replacement costs. Currently, with the exception of SREF, the district has not documented standards staff can apply to identify such needs.

The District Evaluates Facilities Designs and Maintenance Costs and Implements Labor Savings, Energy Reduction, and Reduced Long-Term Maintenance Strategies

The district has borrowed facilities designs from other Florida school districts, and has updated designs to include energy and operating efficiencies. Based on discussions with the school architect, the Maintenance Department is heavily involved in the school design and provides significant input on design and equipment. One example was the changing of analog to digital controls in the energy management system, which improved the ability to centrally operate the system. The supervisor of Maintenance stated that his group was involved in the design of schools from a maintenance standpoint but does not have documentation supporting this involvement.

Recommendations

- *Martin County School District should document maintenance design standards for new construction.*

Action Plan 10-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Document maintenance design standards for new construction.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop maintenance design standards for new construction that include the following minimum specifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of energy efficient equipment • Location of equipment to facilitate accessibility for maintenance • Ease of cleaning • Location of supply closets • Configuration of large open areas (energy use) • Composition of floors (cleaning) <p>Step 2: Review the standards with the architect.</p> <p>Step 3: Update the standards annually.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September – December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3 The district needs a system for prioritizing ongoing maintenance needs.

The District Needs Guidelines to Determine Priorities of Maintenance Needs

The district identifies priorities for capital projects based on state-defined criteria and reports them to the state. However, it has not developed formal guidelines to determine priorities of ongoing maintenance needs. Ongoing maintenance priorities are not tied to educational program needs, changing enrollment projections, or long range facilities planning.

The Maintenance Supervisor assesses each work order and assigns a priority ranking. However, this priority is not indicated on the work order unless it is an emergency. District policies and procedures do not define what constitutes an emergency or provide guidance on prioritizing work orders. Defined criteria are important so that those requesting work orders will understand the priority their request will receive. The absence of documented criteria places the responsibility for evaluating priority on the judgment of Maintenance Department staff.

The Maintenance Supervisor stated that two factors would constitute an emergency work order -- safety concerns for students or employees or a need that directly impedes the delivery of instructional services. These and any other emergency criteria the district may develop should be documented to prevent abuse of the emergency designation of work orders. Documentation of emergency work order criteria can help protect the districts from a legal standpoint, and could help avoid costly lawsuits.

Recommendations

- *The district should establish and document criteria for prioritizing maintenance work orders.*

Action Plan 10-10

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish and document criteria for prioritizing maintenance work orders.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Define and document criteria for emergency work orders. Criteria should include student and employee safety and the prevention of instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and document criteria for prioritizing other work orders: • General school safety • Adverse impact on instruction • Adverse impact on operations or productivity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort
	Step 2: Refine criteria annually.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The district needs to better estimate the cost of major maintenance projects.

Cost Estimates Are Based on the District's Experience, but Do Not Incorporate Estimating Cost Standards or Market Conditions

Through the capital projects planning process, the district identifies, prioritizes, estimates, and completes major maintenance projects. Prior experience and the district's knowledge of costs are used to provide estimates of major maintenance needs. Since many major maintenance projects are performed by staff in the Maintenance Department, the district does not have the same cost controls in place as it does for contracted projects. The lack of an effective work order management system precludes the district's ability to compare projected to actual costs.

The district has been allocating capital project funds to meet identified major maintenance needs. The district's strategy has been to alternate major building programs and major maintenance programs. This strategy has worked in providing adequate and well-maintained space. The relatively slow growth of enrollment has allowed the district to implement this strategy. If the district were to experience more rapid enrollment growth, this strategy may no longer be effective.

The Cost Of Inflation For Maintenance Projects Is Projected For A Five-Year Period

The February 1999 Five-Year Facilities Work Program contains no evidence that the district factored inflation into its projections of the future cost of major maintenance projects. The consultant conducted an analysis and found that the district applied the same amounts in current year and out-year estimates, indicating that it did not make adjustments for inflation. In April 1999, the district provided an updated Facilities Work Program that showed inflation-adjusted numbers (3% per year) for major maintenance projects.

The District Is Beginning to Analyze and Evaluate Cost Estimates Against Actual Costs

According to the director of Facilities, the district is beginning to evaluate projected cost estimates of major maintenance projects for accuracy and use this information to improve future estimates. Currently the district has no evidence to show that it is evaluating its cost estimates for major maintenance projects. The budget does not provide any indication that the projected costs for individual projects were evaluated. The director of Facilities stated that evaluating these costs is a high priority, and he is currently implementing procedures to conduct cost evaluations.

Recommendations

- The district should develop a new system for estimating costs for major project.

Action Plan 10-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop a new system for estimating costs for major project.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Compare costs estimates against actual costs</p> <p>Step 2: Develop new system for estimating costs which includes the use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past experience • Professional cost estimating manuals such as R.S. Means and Whitestone • Market Conditions
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5 The district minimizes equipment costs through purchasing practices and maintenance.

Inflation Costs for Equipment Are Provided for a Five-Year Period

The Five-Year Facilities Work Program shows that the district applied an inflation factor to equipment purchases in the development of out-year cost estimates. Lines 85 and 86 of the work program show that the district applied a 3 % inflation factor to out-year projections. Before 1998-99, the district applied inflation factors to prospective equipment purchases but not to major maintenance and repair projects. Factoring inflation into all prospective cost estimates is key to establishing accurate funding levels for the long-range facilities plan.

To achieve the benefits of volume purchasing, the district has projected major purchase needs through 2001. The district also follows required bidding procedures. (See Purchasing section in Cost Control chapter, page 12-27.)

The District Has Not Implemented Preventive Maintenance Programs for Most of Its Equipment

According to the Maintenance supervisor, the district has no preventive maintenance programs in place other than replacements of AC coils and filters. The district operates on a “fix it when it breaks” approach, which is more expensive in the long run. A preventive maintenance program spreads the maintenance cost of equipment over the life of the equipment and extends the functional life of the equipment.

The Five-year facilities work program includes approximately \$3 million in equipment replacement projections. The district develops these projections based on its perceived needs or inspection results rather than on a formal equipment replacement program. A formal replacement program helps avoid unnecessary repairs for equipment that should be replaced. A replacement program also supports more accurate budgeting of future equipment needs.

The District Follows Policies and Procedures for Disposal of Surplus (Old, Outdated, Worn Out, and/or Otherwise Unusable) Furniture and Equipment

The district's policy for disposition of equipment is provided in board policy 6Gx43-7.08. District staff use a form to initiate a disposition. The board approves staff identification of all surplus equipment, and the district auctions this equipment each year in April. (See Asset Management section in Cost Control chapter, page 12-39.)

The District Considers Refurbishing or Repair in Lieu of New Purchases

The major maintenance projects in the Five-Year Facilities Work Program indicate that the district considers repair or refurbishment in lieu of new purchases. For example, the district allocated \$1.2 million over the next five years for the HVAC renovation program. The district could not provide any documentation showing that it performs cost-benefit analyses evaluate the feasibility of refurbishment or repair versus a new purchase. This analysis and a complete maintenance record on equipment are essential in making the right decision on new purchases.

The District Considers Equipment Operating and Maintenance Costs When Buying New Equipment, but Should Improve Its Analysis of Costs

The district considers operating costs when buying new equipment. For instance, the district uses pipe heat technology in the air conditioning units, which provides dehumidification without the need for re-heating cool air. The district also uses energy-efficient lighting. The district's commitment to energy conservation has been noted through several state-level awards.

The district's mechanical specifications include equipment specifications that were updated in October 1998. The district architect stated that the Maintenance Department does a good job in providing information on more efficient equipment to be considered in building and renovation plans.

However, the district should improve its analysis of costs to identify other opportunities for efficiency. Costs associated with new equipment at one school should be analyzed to determine whether it would be cost effective for the district to replace the same equipment in other schools. This analysis would lead to lower overall operation and maintenance costs for the district.

The District Should Periodically Conduct Cost Comparisons to Determine Whether Purchasing Practices Have Minimized Costs

Board policy 6Gx43.7.11(3b) requires that the district receive a minimum number of bids to ensure that it obtains the lowest possible cost on the goods and services it purchases. However, the Maintenance Department has not conducted any follow-up analyses to

determine if the lowest bid in the short-term provided the lowest long-term cost as well. (Also see Purchasing section in Cost Control chapter, page 12-27.)

Recommendations

- *The district should develop formal equipment replacement program for all equipment with a cost greater than \$10,000.*
- *The district should develop and implement preventive maintenance program for major equipment.*

Action Plan 10-12

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop formal equipment replacement program for all equipment with a cost greater than \$10,000.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop inventory of equipment (from complete fixed asset inventory) with a cost greater than \$10,000.</p> <p>Step 2: Review equipment documentation to identify estimated useful life. Contact vendors if necessary to obtain estimates of useful life. Determine when each piece of equipment will need to be replaced at current replacement value.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop long-range equipment replacement plan by documenting replacement cost estimates for each prospective year and applying an inflation factor.</p> <p>Step 4: Incorporate requirements into facilities work programs (5-year, 10-year and 20-year) and capital budget for the following year.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September 1999 – May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop and implement preventive maintenance program for major equipment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify equipment and other facility components that will be included in preventive maintenance program.</p> <p>Step 2: Review equipment documentation and other material to identify the type and frequency of preventive maintenance tasks. Contact vendors if necessary to obtain information on preventive maintenance.</p> <p>Step 3: Estimate the level of effort and materials cost for each preventive maintenance task. Estimate the overall staffing level (FTE's) required to perform preventive maintenance program activities.</p> <p>Step 4: Create preventive maintenance work orders that prompt</p>

	activity at required dates.
	Step 5: Implement the preventive maintenance program.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	October 1999 – August 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

6 The district provides Maintenance Department staff the tools required to accomplish their assigned tasks but may need to improve its training and supervision of these staff.

Maintenance Department Staff Is Provided with the Tools Necessary to Accomplish Assigned Duties

The Maintenance supervisor stated that Maintenance Department employees receive the tools they need to perform their jobs. Three maintenance employees confirmed that the tools the district provides are sufficient and available for use. Employees must sign out major tools. Minor tools are not tracked. In 1997-98, the Maintenance Department spent \$346,000 on consumable supplies. This represents 11 percent of the Maintenance budget, and includes minor tools and some major tools (major tools costing \$750 or more are capitalized). Based on industry standards, this level of expenditure is appropriate.

According to the Maintenance supervisor, tools and equipment that are not readily available are rented; however, this occurs infrequently. In 1997-98, the Maintenance Department incurred \$5,500 of rent expense.

The District Needs to Develop a Method to Determine If Training, Supervision, and Instruction Given to Staff Are Sufficient to Accomplish Their Assigned Tasks

The district has established supervisory positions for its maintenance staff. Each trade has a lead position that is responsible for allocating work to and supervising other employees. The district also provides training to its maintenance staff. However, it has not formally evaluated its training programs. Supervision and training are also discussed in earlier sections of this chapter (see page 10-19).

In our survey of Maintenance Department customers, teachers and principals expressed concerns about the responsiveness of maintenance staff. These concerns indicate that that these staff may be receiving inadequate training and supervision in certain areas. Without documented work standards and a formalized training program, it is difficult to isolate where the performance problems might be. The district needs to have these management tools in place to evaluate training, supervision, and instruction for maintenance workers.

The Maintenance Department Should Better Communicate with Customers on the Status of Outstanding Work

The Maintenance Department uses a manual work order system to communicate with maintenance staff and customers that it has assigned responsibility for performing requested maintenance work to one of its staff. The absence of an automated work order tracking system hinders the Department's ability to determine whether it is efficiently assigning, scheduling and completing its work. When customers call in to check on the status of a work order, Department staff provides them with an estimate of when the work will be completed. However, this estimate is not based on an analysis of the backlog of work or the priority of requests. The Maintenance Department needs to develop a work order tracking system that will enable it to provide customers with an accurate expected completion dates for requested work.

Recommendations

- See the recommendation for improving training on page 10-20.
- See the recommendation for implementing work order tracking system to better inform customers the status of outstanding work on page 10-18.
- The district should improve controls over the issuance of tools.

Action Plan 10-13

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Improve controls over the issuance of tools.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Implement a procedure that requires staff to sign out all tools and supplies from a controlled, secure area. Develop a system to track the issuance of tools and supplies to maintenance staff.</p> <p>Step 2: Conduct a physical inventory annually of tools and supplies that are valued at \$500 or less. (The purchase of such items can continue to be expensed, but a separate record of purchases and issuances should be maintained.)</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	January – June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

7 The district is planning to implement a computerized inventory tracking system.

The District Is Planning to Implement a Computerized Inventory Tracking System

The district has purchased a TERMS module for inventory tracking, but the module has not been scheduled for implementation at this time. This system is important in accounting for all inventory items and charging them to work orders. Currently, the district inventories only fixed assets costing \$500 or more. These items are accounted for in the district's fixed asset system.

Until it implements the TERMS inventory tracking module, the district has no mechanism for keeping a separate inventory for maintenance parts, supplies, and tools. It expenses these items annually. This practice presents a risk for the district by not adequately controlling and safeguarding inventory items.

Recommendations

- The district should establish a date for full implementation of its new software for inventory tracking.

Action Plan 10-14

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement a computerized inventory tracking system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Executive director for Operations Services shall meet with the technology director to establish an implementation date for the new software.</p> <p>Step 2: The Executive Director shall report the implementation date to the board.</p> <p>Step 3: The board shall verify that the implementation date is met.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for Operations; director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	June 2000 – May 2001
Fiscal Impact	This module is already a component of the TERMS software purchased. Consequently, there is no additional fiscal impact of this recommendation.

8 The district should ensure that standards reflect new technology and procedures.

The District Staff Participates in Trade Organizations

The Maintenance Supervisor is a member of the Florida State Plant Managers Association (FSPMA) The Facilities director is a member of Florida Educational Maintenance Association, the Florida Education Planners Association and International Facilities Management Association. The Maintenance Supervisor or Director of Facilities should consider becoming members of other trade organizations, including, the Florida Department of Education Trade Associations and the Council of Educational Facilities Planners International. Participation in more organizations will help keep district management current on new trade and technology developments.

The Maintenance Department Should Subscribe to Additional Trade Publications

The Maintenance Department currently subscribes to Education Facilities Maintenance Solutions. This publication is kept in the Maintenance Office and made available to employees. However, the department should consider receiving other publications to keep current on technology developments. These publications include School Engineer, Engineering News Record, and Building Operators Management.

The District Needs to Develop a Formal Method to Provide Information on New Technology to Workers

The district does not have a formalized method for providing information on new technology to workers. The Maintenance supervisor stated that new technology information often is communicated from the bottom up. Trades personnel, in maintaining their own certifications and professional development, often provide the Maintenance supervisor and the district architect with information on current technology. This information is distributed to rest of the Maintenance Department. If the Department maintained a centralized file of documents describing new technology developments, it could better communicate new technology developments to the appropriate maintenance personnel.

The District Updates Its Mechanical and General Specifications for New Technology, but Needs to Document Needed Maintenance Procedures

The district updated its mechanical and general specifications for new technology in October 1998, but it does not perform a similar update annually. The Maintenance Department provides specification updates directly to the district architect for incorporation into building plans. If it updating specifications annually, the district could better ensure that its building and renovation plans will all incorporate the latest technology.

Recommendations

- *The district should provide a budget item for membership in additional trade organizations and subscriptions to additional trade publications that provide current information and procedures.*
- *See recommendation for documenting policies and procedures on page 10-9.*

Action Plan 10-15

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should provide a budget item for membership in additional trade organizations and subscriptions to additional trade publications that provide current information and procedures.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Director of Facilities should study several trade organizations to determine which would best meet the needs of the district.</p> <p>Step 2: Director of Facilities should study several trade publications to determine which would best meet the needs of the district</p> <p>Step 3: Director of Facilities should prepare a budget item for professional organization membership and subscriptions</p> <p>Step 4: The board should consider the item during the annual budget process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September – December 1999
Fiscal Impact	Recurring cost of \$2,500.

Safety and Energy Efficiency

1 Martin County's facilities are safe based on periodic inspections and a well funded capital projects program.

The District Has Established Standards for Health And Safety

The district's risk management cooperative, the South Central Educational Risk Management Program (SCERMP), is responsible for establishing standards for health and safety. To be a member of SCERMP, the district must adopt the health and safety standards prescribed by SCERMP. SCERMP provided a safety handbook that outlines all safety standards. These standards are communicated to Maintenance Department employees through training courses conducted by the safety officer, who is located at the district but is an employee of SCERMP. Also see Risk Management section in the Cost Control chapter of this report, page 12-47.

District Procedures Address Compliance with Environmental Protection Agency Guidelines

The SREF contains requirements for compliance with all EPA provisions, including disposal of chemicals. These requirements are verified as part of the annual SREF inspection performed by the Safety Officer. During the May 1998 inspection of Jensen Beach Elementary, the safety officer found a school with several containers of unlisted and unlabeled chemicals and noted a violation. The chemicals were apparently brought from home and did not have required documentation. The chemicals were removed from the school immediately.

Periodic and Documented Evaluations Are Made of the Condition of Buildings and of Each School.

As discussed in the Facilities Construction chapter, the District conducts evaluations of the condition of buildings and documents the results of these evaluations. The district conducts the Education Plant Survey every five years with the assistance of the state Office of Educational Facilities. This survey does not represent a complete facilities audit, whereby each building component is evaluated based on a standard facilities evaluation form. It does, however, provide a general assessment of the condition of each building.

The Safety Office conducts An SREF inspection annually at each facility. This inspection documents exceptions to SREF guidelines for existing facilities.

The district would benefit from a comprehensive facilities audit that provides a more complete assessment of condition of each facility and its components.

The District Has A Manual of Operations for Custodial Services

The district has a custodial handbook that contains basic and general duties of custodians, required care of custodial equipment, custodial duties related to food services and employment matters. This manual is a complete and thorough description of custodian roles and responsibilities.

Pre-Service and In-Service Training Programs Are Made Available to Operations Personnel

According to the Safety Office, the district does not provide pre-service safety training programs to its operations personnel. Safety training is provided on an in-service basis only. To ensure that employees are fully knowledgeable of safety requirements the day they start work, the district should conduct certain safety training before newly hired operations staff begin to work. This would help protect the district from the occurrence of safety violations.

Custodians Accomplish Limited Maintenance Work as Part of Their Normal Responsibilities

The Custodial Handbook (page 1, Part A.5) specifies that custodians “do miscellaneous minor repairs and maintenance work as required.” The lead custodian job description also includes responsibilities for minor maintenance and repair. The involvement of custodians in maintenance activities varies from school to school, based on the discretion of principals.

The District Has a Written Standard for Cleanliness

The Custodian Handbook specify cleaning standards for the campus, classrooms, restrooms, the clinic, and food service operations. Cleaning frequency is not specifically stated for all standards, but most appear to be daily (specifications for mopping require custodians to mop a minimum of one classroom a day).

The standards could be improved to include more detail and more specificity on frequency.

The District Relies on Its Risk Management Cooperative to Evaluate the Cost-Efficiency of Its Safety Standards

(Also see risk management section in Cost Control chapter, page 12-47) Through the district’s agreement with SCERMP, SCERMP is responsible for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of health and safety standards. SCERMP board meeting minutes and an annual audit of the program are provided to the school district and provide a good level of accountability for monitoring performance.

2 The district should use external benchmarks to achieve energy efficiency.

The District Should Collaborate With Its Utility Providers, the U.S Environmental Protection Agency and Industry Expertise to Identify and Compare Industry Benchmarks to District Performance

The district has received recognition for its energy conservation program, and the EPA has designated the district as part of its Honor Society in 1998 for its efforts in energy efficiency and environmental protection.

Awards and recognition notwithstanding, the district provided no evidence indicating that it compares utilities costs to benchmarks on an ongoing basis. The Director of Facilities

confirmed the district does not evaluate or compare its utility costs per square foot to the benchmarks based on costs of other districts or private industry. (The EPA award is based on participation in a program focused on new construction not retrofitting.)

The Director of Facilities also stated that the district has not entered into any performance contracting agreements whereby the district pays for the cost of retrofit through guaranteed savings. The Director of Facilities stated that climate conditions in the area are so mild that contractors are unwilling to provide proposals.

The district has an energy conservation policy (6Gx43-8.03) but its requirements are very general. Specific conditions specify minimum and maximum temperatures for HVAC, maximum bus speeds, and minimization of field trips.

The district is beginning to identify and compare energy benchmarks to ensure that its energy costs are at appropriate levels.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop and track energy efficiency measures to identify possible savings opportunities.*

Action Plan 10-16

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and track energy efficiency measures to identify possible savings opportunities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop energy measures to be tracked by facility. Each line item of energy or utilities use (in the budget) should be measured on a square foot basis for each school. Additional measures, such as MBTU usage per square foot, by school, should also be calculated.</p> <p>Step 2: Analyze variances among schools and variances over time and identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency.</p> <p>Step 3: Incorporate efficiency measures into overall maintenance performance measures recommended under Best Practice 1.</p> <p>Step 4: Submit energy measures report quarterly to the executive director of Operations</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	October 1999 – May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation may result in future energy savings. However, until variances are evaluated, savings cannot be reasonably estimated.

3 Hazardous materials management complies with federal and state regulations.

Hazardous Materials Management Complies with Federal and State Regulations

The district has a documented Asbestos Management Plan that addresses compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. The district has budgeted \$150,000 for asbestos removal over the next three years, which will be the end of the asbestos abatement program. These expenditures will allow the district to be in compliance with the Act.

SREF contains requirements for hazardous materials in section 5.5. The Safety Officer conducts annual SREF inspections of all schools and facilities to ensure that hazardous materials requirements are met. (See additional information under best practice 1 in this section, see page 10-37)

The district needs to develop a hazardous materials business plan. The district relies on SCERMP to provide a hazardous materials business plan. However, SCERMP has not provided the district a plan. Although a chemical spill at a high school was handled correctly, there is no plan in place for the appropriate handling of such an incident.

Current Materials Safety Data Sheet Reports Are Readily Available to Staff

The director of Maintenance stated that materials safety data sheet reports are available at all sites. The safety officer confirmed that the Material Safety Data sheets are maintained at each school and are available to staff. The safety officer inspects these sheets at each school site annually in accordance with SREF. The safety officer, in a May 1998 inspection of Jensen Elementary, noted that Materials Safety Data Sheets were not available for some chemicals found at the school. The chemicals were removed immediately, and the principal was notified of the violation. However, this type of incident occurs infrequently. The safety officer stated that there have been very few violations noted during SREF inspections in recent years.

4 The district has comprehensive program for dealing with school safety and security.

This best practice and supporting indicators are discussed separately in the Safety and Security chapter of this report, see page --. The following points summarize the major indicators that a school district adheres to the best practices for safety and security.

Safety

- The district's School Resource Officer Program has clearly defined roles for its School Resource Officers (SROs) and evaluates the SROs based these roles.
- The district has defined goals and objectives for its SRO program and tracks incident rates by school.

- The school district community believes that the district's School Resource Officer Program is effective at preventing delinquent behavior.

Security

- People feel safe in district schools.
- There is adequate security at central office; however, visitor reception and monitoring could be improved.
- District schools and central administration buildings are adequately protected at night by security and fire alarms.

Community Use of Facilities

1 The district follows established procedures for making school facilities available to the community.

The District Has Developed Procedures Governing Community Use of District Facilities

Board policy 6Gx43-8.02 provides detailed provisions for the use of district facilities by the community. This policy contains separate sections for the Wanda H. Yarboro Performing Arts Center, the occasional use of school facilities, and short-term leasing of facilities. The district's policies include current fee schedules (Revised Annually), rules and regulations for users, security of property and equipment, and insurance coverage.

The policy governing contains specific elements governing community use of facilities for

- Fee schedules (Part 1a, Part 2d, Part 3e(4)).
- Rules and regulations for users (Part 1b, Part 2h, Part 3e – lease provisions)
- Security of property and equipment (Part 2e)
- Insurance coverage (Part 1b, part 2h, Part 3e-lease provisions)

The policy does not have provisions designating priority of use. However, it does provide that facilities cannot be used for a profit and that youth and community education groups do not have to obtain board approval for use. The board must approve all other groups.

2 Applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations are readily available

Americans with Disability Act regulations are available in the Facilities Department and the In-house attorney's office and are used to develop requirements for ADA compliance. These are reflected under a separate line item in the Five-year Facilities Work Program.

The District Complies with Accessibility Requirements

The district is in compliance with ADA requirements. (Also see Facilities Construction chapter) However, several of the older schools have accessibility issues (not violations) that are being addressed through the five-year facilities work program. Over the next five years, the district has allocated \$1.4 million to ADA projects. The best example is the administration building, which severely limits access to handicapped individuals. The district should be proactive in providing access and not wait for a complaint to arise.

Recommendations

- *The district should modify and expedite the ADA plan to meet community accessibility needs.*

Action Plan 10-17

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Modify and expedite the ADA plan to meet community accessibility needs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district should identify additional ADA accessibility needs (through the facilities audit recommended in Chapter 9).</p> <p>Step 2: Prioritize ADA all accessibility needs.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop plan to address accessibility needs and incorporate into Five-Year Facilities Work Program.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	November 1999 – December 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing and future capital project resources.

11

Personnel Systems and Benefits

The Martin County School District has a strong personnel system. However, it should strengthen its performance appraisal system, better protect records, and establish employee compensation level benchmarks.

Conclusion

The Martin County School District has in place several components of a strong personnel system, which ensures that it recruits, hires, and retains qualified personnel. For instance, the district has established a comprehensive staff development program, communicates performance expectations to employees, and uses appropriate cost-containment practices for its Worker Compensation Program. The district periodically evaluates its personnel practices and makes needed adjustments. The district could further strengthen its personnel system, however, by more closely aligning performance appraisals to the duties set forth in job descriptions, installing a fire sprinkler system to protect personnel files, archiving permanent records, and establishing and using clear and reliable benchmarks to evaluate employee compensation levels.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

While most of the recommendations made in this report can be accomplished within current or budgeted resources, several recommendations have fiscal impacts. Two recommendations, consultation with an individual who specializes in application of the American Disabilities Act and the installation of a fire protection sprinkler system to protect personnel records will require a one-time investment of \$1,800. In addition, we recommend two potential cost avoidance actions related to employee salaries and benefits, which could save the district an estimated \$3.2 million in salaries and benefits annually.

Exhibit 11-1

Implementing Report Recommendations in this Chapter Would Have a Positive Fiscal Impact of \$3,198,200 in the First Year After Implementation

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Fees for consultation with attorney specializing in ADA (one-time expense)	\$ (300)
Installation of sprinkler fire protection system for personnel records room (one-time expense)	(1,500)
Estimated annual savings through reduced salaries by improved labor negotiations	1,200,000
Estimated annual savings through reduced benefits for employees	2,000,000

Background

The personnel systems and benefits function is critical to the smooth operation of a school district. Departmental responsibilities include recruiting and hiring qualified, competent staff, administering salaries, staff development, and ensuring compliance with district policy and state and federal employment laws.

The Martin County School District (MCSD) is in an enviable situation in terms of recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees. The district is in proximity to both Orlando and Palm Beach. Unlike its larger neighbors, though, Martin County has the feel of a small community; this feeling carries over to its schools and attracts committed teachers and staff. Furthermore, the district has a very good reputation among educators and historically there are only a few positions for which the district has trouble finding qualified staff.

The district spent \$75,508,697 on salaries and benefits in Fiscal Year 1998-99 for approximately 2,000 employees. Of that amount, salaries accounted for \$53,310,113, and benefits for \$22,198,584. Salaries and benefits comprised 83% of the district's total expenditures.

Exhibit 11-2 displays a breakdown of the type and number of staff employed by the district.

Exhibit 11-2

Martin County School District Has 2,036 Employees

Staff Categories	Fall 1998, Number of Full-Time Staff
Administrative Staff	69
Officials, administrators, and managers	20
Supervisors of instruction	3
Principals	18
Assistant principals	23
Community education coordinators	4
Deans/curriculum coordinators	1
Teachers	941
Elementary teachers	349
Secondary teachers	386
Exceptional education teachers	158
Other teachers	48
Other Instructional Staff	60
Guidance counselors	33
Visiting teachers/social workers	1
School psychologists	6
Librarians/audio-visual workers	20
Professional Support Staff	91
Instructional	40
Non-instructional	51
Non-Professional Support Staff	875
Aides	232
Technicians	15
Clerical/secretarial	155
Service workers	411
Skilled crafts workers	39
Unskilled laborers	23
Total	2,036

Source: Department of Education.

Two unions operate in Martin County; 57% of Martin County teachers are members of Martin County Education Association (MCEA), and 15% of the district's blue and white collar workers are members of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

The school board and management team have made several notable accomplishments over the past several years related to the district's personnel systems and benefits. Exhibit 11-3 describes some of these accomplishments.

Notable Accomplishments

- The district has a strong recruiting program that includes contact with a number of local and regional colleges and universities as well as education recruiting consortiums.
 - The district's staff development program is comprehensive and extremely popular among staff members. Training is based on an assessment of needs of individuals and in each school's School Improvement Plan. The Human Resource Management Development Plan has been recognized by a state-selected panel of peer educators.
 - The district has entered into an agreement with Indian River Community College (IRCC) to waive the cost of two of every three credit hours completed at IRCC in any subject that can be shown to lead to the employee's professional development.
 - All district-provided training is evaluated by participants using an evaluation form; results are summarized and used to improve training sessions, identify new training topics, and discontinue those sessions that are not useful.
-

Personnel Systems and Benefits

1 Martin County School District recruits and hires qualified personnel.

The District Has Procedures to Ensure That It Recruits and Hires Qualified Personnel

In general, the district does not have a problem attracting and hiring qualified personnel. This may be due in part to the desirability of the location of the district and in part on the good academic reputation of the district. Throughout the district, managers and administrators report that only a few types of positions, including bus drivers and food service workers, are hard to fill. However, it is also possible that this condition may be due more to a current strong national economy than to any other factor.

According to a survey of parents conducted by the review team, 59.5% believe that the district recruits and retains qualified teachers, administrators, and other staff. Teachers and administrators had similar perceptions; 55.4% believe that the district does a good job of hiring the best possible teachers.

The Martin County School District has a strong recruitment program. It participates in six recruiting fairs in Florida and Georgia. In addition, promotional materials are sent to the Massachusetts Educational Recruitment Consortium in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach. MCSD has a job hotline that prospective applicants can call to hear about openings in the district. The recording is operated using a touch-tone phone and is organized by instructional, noninstructional, and administrative positions. Job openings are also posted on the MCSD web site and on the Troops to Teachers job postings web page, posted on a bulletin board located in the Human

Resources Department, and advertised in area newspapers, including the *Stuart News*, the *Palm Beach Post*, and the *Orlando Sentinel*. The Human Resources Department also publishes information about certain job openings using fliers distributed to every personnel director in a Florida school district; every incumbent in an applicable position in another Florida school district; state organizations and conferences; and selected universities.

The district also has a program to recruit and internally develop effective school administrators. Exhibit 11-4 displays the objectives of this program, called the Human Resources and Management Development Plan (HRMD).

Exhibit 11-4

The HRMD Plan Aims to Recruit and Develop Effective School Administrators

- To continue to improve a selection process that offers the most assurance that the more talented and capable individuals are selected as school center managers
 - To maintain a selection process that meets with the criteria approved by the Florida Council on Educational Management
 - To maintain a selection process that assures that highly capable principal candidates are selected for training
 - To improve the overall quality of education through improved selection procedures
 - To make the selection system an integral part of the Human Resource Development System
-

Source: Martin County School District Human Resources and Management Development Plan.

To especially ensure qualified teachers are hired references of all candidates are checked by the principal or department director before an offer of employment is made. Written references are required of teaching candidates; principals are advised to check the references of all candidates by telephone, and must sign a statement that they have checked references before an individual may be hired.

The certification and retirement specialist in the Human Resource Office monitors the certification of teachers and other employees for whom certification is required and ensures that requirements are met for temporary certificates or out-of-field teaching.

Some Position Descriptions Need to Be Reviewed and Updated

Up-to-date job descriptions are important to ensure staff are recruited, hired, or promoted to meet current needs rather than outdated or changing needs. The district's position descriptions include a list of the required qualifications, including education and experience, desirable factors, reporting relationships, a listing of general duties, length of contract (if applicable), and applicable salary schedule. Some descriptions include a numerical code that can be cross-referenced to the TERMS software system. However, of 20 descriptions sampled, 11 had no job codes.

While many of the district's job descriptions list the physical requirements of the position, some do not. For example, the description for a records specialist II specifies that the job requires "Light work: exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force as frequently as needed." The job descriptions for registrar and secretary—positions with presumably similar physical requirements—specify no physical requirements. Physical job requirements are discussed in the next section.

During interviews the review team was told of several instances in which the actual duties performed far eclipse the duties outlined in the description. While some position descriptions have been updated recently, the majority of position descriptions have not been reviewed within a reasonable period. Of the 223 position descriptions analyzed by our team, 126 (56%) have not been reviewed for revision since August 7, 1990. Of the 223, the department claims 15 are currently in the process of being revised.

The director of Human Resources stated that job descriptions are reviewed on an annual basis and as vacancies occur and responsibilities are restructured. However, this could not be verified by the review team since many job descriptions are not dated.

Job Postings and the Employment Applications Provide Detailed Information and Meet Legal Requirements

To ensure qualified applicants are aware of and apply for vacancies, job postings should be accurate and meet legal requirements. Job postings by the district include the name of the position, experience and educational requirements, salary levels, and a summary of duties. A job description is attached to the posting. As required, all postings state that the district is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Two types of employment applications are used. One type used is for instructional and administrative positions and the other for non-instructional positions. Application instruments include all relevant information the district needs and is required to have in order to select candidates for interviews. The review team found no requested information that could be used inappropriately in making a hiring decision. For example, applicants are not asked about age, marital status, disability status, or ethnicity.

The district is subject to the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act regardless of whether job descriptions include a list of physical requirements. However, the inconsistencies among MCSD job descriptions are of some concern to the review team because they may encourage district supervisors who conduct many of the pre-employment interviews to apply the physical requirement inconsistently. Because not all job descriptions in a class of positions list the physical requirements of the job, the district must be especially careful in the consideration of whether an applicant meets any specified physical requirements

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Technical Assistance Manual on the Employment Provisions (Title I) of the Americans with Disabilities Act (January 1992):

"An employer may ask candidates for a clerical job if they have a driver's license, because it would be desirable to have a person in the job who could occasionally run errands or take packages to the post office in an emergency. This requirement is "job related," but it relates to an **incidental**, not an **essential**, job function. If it disqualifies a person who could not obtain a driver's license because of a disability, it would not be justified as a "business necessity" for purposes of the ADA."

The manual goes on to say:

"Even if a physical ... qualification standard is job-related and necessary for a business, if it is applied to exclude an otherwise qualified individual with a disability, the employer must consider whether there is a reasonable accommodation that would enable this person to meet the standard. The employer does not have to consider such accommodations in establishing a standard, but

only when an otherwise qualified person with a disability requests an accommodation.

For example: An employer has a forklift operator job. The essential function of the job is mechanical operation of the forklift machinery. The job has a physical requirement of ability to lift a 70 pound weight, because the operator must be able to remove and replace the 70 pound battery which powers the forklift. This standard is job-related. However, it would be a reasonable accommodation to eliminate this standard for an otherwise qualified forklift operator who could not lift a 70 pound weight because of a disability, if other operators or employees are available to help this person remove and replace the battery.”

For these reasons, the review team urges the district to exercise caution in how it is applying the physical requirement standard from any job description to an employment/hiring decision. Adding clearly stated physical requirements to all job descriptions would be the best method of avoiding problems in this area.

The School Board Has an Equal Opportunity Policy

The School Board of Martin County has a non-discrimination notice that specifies “it is the policy of the School Board ... to employ or promote personnel on the basis of qualifications without regard to race religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status or handicap.” In addition, in the board policies it states, “Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status or disability is prohibited in the recruiting, hiring, assigning, promoting, demoting, or dismissing of any school board employee.”

We reviewed employment procedures and found no major discriminatory practices. During our first visit to the district we found one minor procedure that had the potential of being discriminatory, depending on how it is applied. By our second visit, the procedure had been changed and should no longer be a potential problem. Prior to our second visit, all applicants were required to pay a \$70 fee for pre-employment fingerprinting and drug testing at the time they submitted their application for employment. This out-of-pocket expense had the potential to turn away some applicants who could not afford \$70 when there was a chance they would not be hired. The district had an informal practice of deferring \$39 of the fee and subsequently recouping the cost out of the employee’s first three paychecks, but the option was not publicized and was not offered unless an applicant asked. This practice had the potential of being discriminatory. According to the director of Human Resource Services, applicants now are not required to submit to the fingerprinting and drug testing until after an offer of employment is made. In addition, all applicants are now informed about the payroll deduction option at the time the offer is made.

The District Hires Fully Qualified Staff

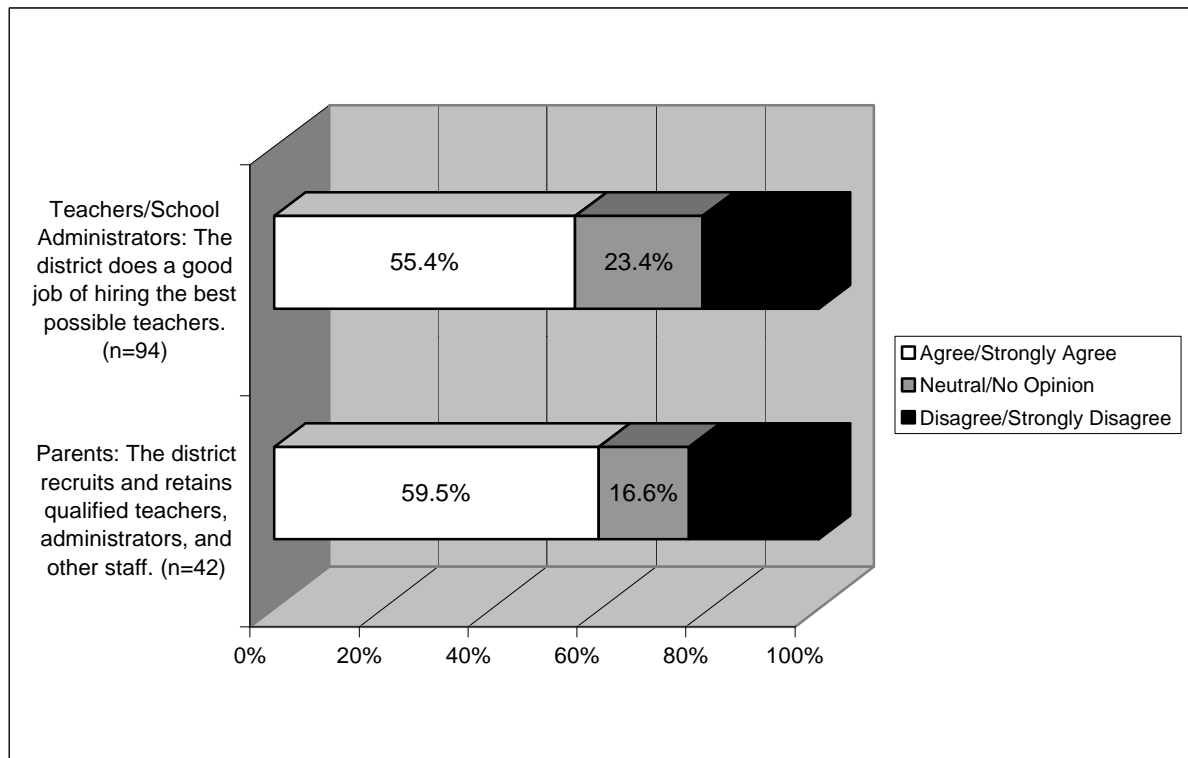
Having fully qualified staff is a key element in a district meeting its goals. By requiring reference checks and by monitoring certifications of staff members in positions that are required to be certified, MCSD’s Human Resources Department ensures that the district is staffed by fully-qualified individuals. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is the authority responsible for accrediting all Florida schools. The SACS states that Martin County is one of only five districts in Florida to have earned accreditation of all eligible elementary, middle, and secondary schools. One of the criteria considered during the accreditation process is qualified staffing.

According to surveys conducted by the review team, a significant percentage of school administrators, teachers, and parents agree that the district does a good job of recruiting

and retaining qualified staff. The results of the responses to survey statements regarding staff qualifications are shown in Exhibit 11-5.

Exhibit 11-5

A Majority of the District's Teachers, School Administrators, and Parents Believe the District Does a Good Job in Hiring Qualified Staff, Teachers/School Administrators



Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Surveys of Parents and Teachers and School Administrators in Martin County, February 1999.

The District Conducts Background Checks to Ensure the Safety of Students

Conducting background checks of applicants and employees is an important part of ensuring the safety of students. The district conducts background checks. All individuals who are offered employment must submit a current set of fingerprints to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Applicants whose criminal background checks come back showing an arrest record or criminal history are not hired. A review of twelve randomly-selected employee files revealed that, of the employees for whom a criminal background check was required, none had a criminal record. In addition, all applicants must submit to drug tests at the time they are offered employment and before they can report to work. Random drug tests are also performed on employees. Any district driver involved in an accident while on duty must also be tested. Drivers are also required to submit evidence of a good driving record.

Recommendations

- *Martin County School district should complete the task of revising job descriptions to accurately reflect the duties of the position, educational and experience requirements, required qualifications, supervisory responsibilities, and salary levels. Job descriptions should be dated when reviewed and/or revised.*
- *The district should institute measures to ensure compliance with the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, including standardizing job descriptions, providing training for all supervisors on ADA-compliant hiring practices, and consulting with an employment attorney.*

Action Plan 11-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Complete the task of revising all job descriptions to accurately reflect the duties of the position, educational and experience requirements, required qualifications, supervisory responsibilities, and salary levels. Job descriptions should be dated when reviewed and/or revised.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of human resource services or her designee works with department heads and appropriate staff in each department to update all job descriptions.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of human resource services presents updated job descriptions to the board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The board approves updates to job descriptions.</p> <p>Step 4: Old job descriptions are removed from the files.</p> <p>Step 5: Each employee's job description is reviewed at the time of his/her annual review and changes are made to the job description as necessary.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resource Services
Time Frame	April 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Institute measures to ensure compliance with the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, including standardizing job descriptions, providing training for all supervisors on ADA-compliant hiring practices, and consulting with an employment law attorney.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent and the director of Human Resources consult with an employment law attorney regarding the desirability of including physical requirements on district job descriptions, and on the question of whether, if some job descriptions list physical requirements, all should.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Human Resources or her designee makes changes to job descriptions as needed, based on the advice of the employment law attorney.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Human Resource Services or her designee</p>

	trains all supervisors on ADA-compliant hiring practices. Step 4: At the time they receive training, supervisors sign a statement that they have received training on hiring in compliance with ADA.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, director of Human Resource Services
Time Frame	August 1999 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	It is estimated that the consultation with an employment law attorney will cost the district (\$300). The remainder of this recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

2 The district bases employee compensation on the market value of services.

The District Bases Its Payment of Employee Salaries on Job Descriptions

Salary schedules exist, and are updated each year following collective bargaining with the unions and approval by the board of non-bargaining position increases. Job descriptions specify the position's salary schedule and, in some cases, the level on the schedule. The review team validated through a random sample of employees that the salaries specified in the schedules are applied consistently.

Prior to the 1998-99 school year, medical benefits were available to both full and part-time employees at no cost. Beginning with the 1998-99 school year this system changed for part-time employees. Since the change, new employees are provided the opportunity to participate in the medical insurance at half the district's cost. Part-time employees who were previously covered under this system were "grandfathered" into the full payment system.

The District Has Not Established Benchmarks to Analyze Salaries

Since salaries are such a significant portion of the district's budget, it is extremely important that the district pay wages at a fair, competitive, but not overly generous rate. If wages are too low they will not attract quality employees and the district may have difficulty reaching its goals and responsibilities to the community. On the other hand, the district has a public trust to judiciously expend public funds.

In 1995, Martin County commissioned a compensation study of approximately 40 benchmark positions in the administrative/technical areas. The study took into account internal equity considerations as well as market conditions by reviewing other school districts, other local governments, and private employers. The study's findings are shown in Exhibit 11-6.

The 1995 Martin County Compensation Study Provided Findings to Ensure Equitable Compensation

- The existing salary schedule is non-competitive within the geographic region and with comparable districts.
 - Several internal equity issues are driven by transition or organizational alignment and downsizing.
 - The index salary schedule is a single point structure, which does not provide employees with an adequate frame of reference for growth potential.
 - There is limited maintenance of a direct internal relationship between the instructional salary schedule and school based management positions.
 - The existing structure is a disincentive to entering the field of school administration and accordingly is contributing to a limited pool of trained candidates.
 - The salary structure does not provide for adequate flexibility in differentiating between various classifications with reference to the described compensable job dimensions.
 - The salary structure has not kept pace with the continuing growth of responsibility, training, and workload with emphasis on the principalship.
 - Social and economic changes dramatically impacting South Florida are having a growing impact on the Martin District.
 - Job descriptions are available for each position; however, they do not include essential function designations or other required Americans with Disabilities Act information.
 - Pay supplements for advanced degrees are not highly competitive.
 - There is no current system for performance incentives or temporary extra duty assignments.
 - The current structure of position hierarchy is not broadly understood, or based on any formal process of position ranking.
 - A strong sense of pride, loyalty, dedication, and expertise permeates the Martin management staff.
 - Job roles have evolved over time, creating job responsibilities which are inconsistent with job titles; (i.e., assistant principal-dean-athletic director).
-

Source: Florida Association of District School Superintendents, Martin County Public Schools Compensation Plan, August 1995.

The recommendations put forth in the study were never fully implemented. The district indicates that the recommendations were too costly to implement. The board has agreed to commission a follow-up compensation study by the same group that completed the 1995 study. At the time of completion of our fieldwork the results had not been received. The board should ensure that the district's generous benefit package and retirement supplements are included in any comparative analysis.

On an annual basis, MCSD also collects salary schedule data from peer districts. The district also surveys Martin Memorial Hospital, the Indian River Community College, and Martin County, all of whom have various comparable positions and therefore compete within the same labor pool. The district also conducts a survey of benefits offered by comparable employers.

The district personnel staff indicate that it uses all of the information collected during its salary negotiations. However, the staff was not able to provide any evidence to the team

how it analyzes this data and uses it in its negotiations. For example, the district has not established a benchmark level at which average district salaries should be paid.

Benchmarks can be as simple as basing salaries on those paid by another organization, or as complex as conducting a survey of the salaries paid by a number of competitors—peer districts, local government entities, and local private-sector firms—for a representative group of positions. The data collected from this survey can be examined for each position or class of positions to determine the highest, median, and lowest salary being paid. The act of collecting data is not beneficial and may even be wasteful without a plan for use by turning the data into meaningful information.

Adjustments to Salary Schedules Have Been Driven by Negotiations with the Unions

Periodic adjustments to salary schedules are part of most compensation programs. The basis or method of adjustment can have a significant impact on a district's budget. Generally, the team found that the district does examine the relationship of current employee pay scales versus market conditions and then takes into account available funding. Both the district and union may include in their negotiation discussions current cost of living indices. However, in Martin County ultimately salary adjustments are made as the result of union negotiation. While the negotiation process begins with an examination of the salaries paid to similar positions in other districts, the resulting agreement historically has resulted in an across-the-board percentage increase given to all employees in the salary schedule. By repetitively agreeing to across the board increases not based on an analysis of market information, the union and the board may be perpetuating individual or class inequities. After resolution of any inequities, the union and the board may want to consider the advantages of multiple-year contracts with built-in, intermediate cost-of-living adjustments based on agreed upon indices.

Non-union salaries have generally followed, but have not been restricted by, union negotiation results. Therefore, salary schedules for administrative staff have not historically been resolved until the union negotiations ended.

Recommendations

- *Martin County School District should adopt benchmarks for district salaries.*

Action Plan 11-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adopt benchmarks for district salaries.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The board and the superintendent determine what benchmark level, such as a percentile of the market rate of pay, is most appropriate for the district to pay.</p> <p>Step 2: The board presents the benchmarks to union representatives and tries to come to a mutually beneficial agreement that will streamline the salary negotiation process and help the district to budget for salaries.</p> <p>Step 3: The board sets benchmarks for administrative jobs (i.e.,</p>

	those jobs not covered under union salary negotiations).
Who Is Responsible	Board, superintendent, director of Human Resources
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

3 The district uses a comprehensive staff development program to increase productivity.

A Significant Portion of the District's Orientation Program Is Decentralized

The orientation process is important to ensure new employees are properly informed about district policy and procedures before they commence employment. The district's orientation program is divided into two phases. The first phase occurs during the centralized new teacher orientation program, new hires are welcomed by the chair of the school board; the superintendent; the assistant superintendent for leadership services and planning; the director for instructional services; and the Teacher of the Year. They then hear from the coordinator of instructional and technology support, the certification and retirement specialist, the payroll supervisor, the coordinator of exceptional student education and student services, the director of Human Resources and staff development, the risk manager/employee benefits coordinator, a union representative, and the director of personnel and employee relations. This half-day orientation session has historically been conducted in the board room.

The second phase is decentralized and occurs at each school. Principals lead two additional days of orientation at individual school sites. The review team found that the content of these sessions varies greatly from school to school and is not monitored by the Human Resources Department. Thus, no system is in-place to record what orientation subjects are covered.

To augment the orientation session the employee handbook is distributed to each new employee. The handbook has information on board policies and federal and state employment laws. Additionally, all new hires are required to review videos on a drug-free workplace, sexual harassment in the workplace, and Hepatitis B – blood borne pathogen safety precautions. Non-instructional employees receive an employee handbook and are required to watch the videos. Additional orientation of non-instructional employees is left to the discretion of the individual supervisor/principal. But again, no system is in place to ensure subjects are covered with new employees during the decentralized portion of orientation.

Training Programs Are Planned Based on Needs

For training to be meaningful and cost effective, plans need to be comprehensive and based on actual needs of employees. As part of each employee's annual performance evaluation, the employee and his or her supervisor prepares a personal development plan for any areas in which he or she did not meet expectations. Board policy states that "A rating of 'Unsatisfactory' shall require a written Professional Development Plan for improvement and assistance." The Human Resources uses these evaluations and Professional Development

Plan to plan developmental activities and training. If a number of individuals are identified as having the same training deficiency, the district will develop an in-service class on the topic.

In-service program planning is also based on training needs identified by each school as part of its School Improvement Plan. Based on this information, the Human Resources Department prepared a training needs assessment by school in December 1998. The department circulated this assessment list to each school. For each category of training, the school evaluator identified schools needing the topic. In addition, employees are generally authorized to take any training offered by any school in the district. The district could strengthen training programs with improvements to its performance evaluation instruments. Later in this report, the evaluation instrument is discussed in more detail.

The District Uses a Comprehensive Staff Development Program

Once training needs are identified, a comprehensive plan is necessary to ensure employees have the opportunity to satisfy their needs. The district makes an effort to provide training on a wide variety of topics during scheduled in-service days. The topics covered in the fall in-service training day spanned a wide range, including those shown in Exhibit 11-7.

Exhibit 11-7

The January 1999 In-Service Training Day Provided Training on a Wide Variety of Topics

- Maximizing Florida's Brain Power
 - Educational Research and Dissemination/Effective Classroom Management
 - Social Studies/Sunshine State Standards Goal 3
 - Writing Inservice for JBE and FAW Faculties
 - Character Education and Social Responsibility
 - Office 97 Overview
 - Lightspan Program
 - Holocaust Outreach Program
 - A Knowledge Based Approach: Content Area Comprehension
 - Florida Ag in the Classroom, Inc.
 - The Incas and Lost Civilizations
 - Computer Troubleshooting and Year 2000 Compliance
 - Microsoft Office for Laptop Recipients
 - Access 97 for Laptop Recipients
 - Internet Explorer or Netscape, which browser is best for you!
 - MTI Regional Network
 - Utilizing Student Records in TERMS
 - Exploring TERMS User Interface
 - Professional Inquiry Project
 - Multimedia Projects for BCE Teachers
 - Clasp – Children's Language Arts and Science Program
 - Using Printshop in the Classroom
-

-
- Dealing with Difficult People
 - Regional K-2 Literacy First Training
 - Phonological Awareness
 - Nonviolent Crisis Intervention
 - Follow-up Training: Co-teaching Support Facilitation
 - The “New” Brigrance Training
 - ESE Progress Report Training
 - African American History Cultural Sensitivity Training
-

Source: Martin County School District Presents ... Inservice Day January 19, 1999.

If an appropriate training program is not available within the district, the director of Human Resources will work with the employee and supervisor to find external training, or to find consultants to develop a new training module. To enhance the in-service training available through the district, Martin County also has cooperative training arrangements with neighboring districts. Through these arrangements, employees from one district can attend training in another district if the session has open slots. MCSD has also established an agreement with Indian River Community College (IRCC). In exchange for the use of district facilities, the IRCC has agreed that for any three-credit course that is determined to assist in an employee's professional growth, employees pay for the first credit hour and the IRCC waives the cost for the remaining two credit hours.

In order to ensure attendees receive credit for attendance at in-service training, sign-in logs are maintained for each session held in the district. For out-of-district sessions, employees can be required to submit a report when they return. Out-of-district sessions are included in the employee's permanent record; the sign-in logs are used to credit employees for in-district development. Master in-service training logs are maintained for each employee.

The District Has Established Clear Objectives for District-Provided Training

The district has defined the types of activities that will be conducted as part of the training and the methods of evaluating the training sessions. Summaries of all in-service training session evaluations are prepared, and sessions are developed, modified, and discontinued based on these evaluations. Objectives of training are specific and measurable, and relate to improved performance and productivity. The description of each in-service topic provides information on the session's objectives. For example, the objective of the Holocaust Outreach Program are to understand the implications of the Florida Statute and to become familiar with teaching strategies, to become acquainted with the curriculum, and to understand the impact of the Holocaust on the lives of survivors. A session on Access 97 will teach participants “to create Access tables, define fields, run queries, create reports based on tables or queries and design forms to input data.” All sessions have the goal of providing immediate solutions that can be applied in employee's day-to-day responsibilities.

Participants in a district-sponsored in-service sessions are asked to complete an in-service evaluation form. These evaluation forms are summarized by the Human Resources Department into a one- to two-page report, allowing the activities to be evaluated for their effectiveness. Programs that are not well rated are modified or discontinued as appropriate. Sessions are developed and continued on the basis of the In-service Master Plan.

Participants in district-provided training are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the sessions and the sessions' applicability to their job responsibilities. Of the evaluations

received following the January 19, 1999, in-service sessions, 95% of respondents felt that the session had clear relevant goals and 88% felt that their personal objectives were met. Furthermore, 90 % thought that the information provided was useful, and 97% thought that the consultant was organized and knowledgeable.

Training-Related Expenditures Are Justified in Writing

The written pre-approval of training-related expenditures is important to ensure a good development plan exists, expenditures are in support of the plan, and funds are used cost effectively. The district documents in writing its justification of the benefits and relationship to improving student learning.

In addition to the district's formal development plan, at the school level, principals are provided with a development budget that can be used at their discretion to send employees to professional workshops and training activities outside of the district. Employees who will be attending this training must submit a request for leave, when appropriate, that includes an estimated cost of the training.

To enhance the cost effectiveness of this type of training expenditures, the district can require that a report be submitted upon the employee's return to the district, but this practice is not the norm. Instead, employees are typically asked to make a presentation at a district in-service training session.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop an orientation program for use by all principals that includes information on applicable procedures, physical facilities, performance expectations, training and career opportunities, and any other identified topics, and require that principals cover these topics during the new employee orientation sessions held at the beginning of the school year.*

Action Plan 11-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop an orientation program for use by all principals that includes information on applicable procedures, physical facilities, performance expectations, training and career opportunities, and any other identified topics, and require that principals cover these topics during the new employee orientation sessions held at the beginning of the school year.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of human resource services requests that five principals volunteer to sit on a committee to design the elements of new employee orientation sessions held at district schools.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Human Resources and the committee of principal representatives determine the critical elements that must be covered during new employee orientation at each school. At a minimum, these elements should include applicable procedures, physical facilities, performance expectations, and training and career opportunities.</p> <p>Step 3: The committee of principals presents the orientation program to all district principals.</p> <p>Step 4: Principals include the required information in new employee orientation sessions held at each school.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resource Services, principals
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

4 Generally, district supervisors communicate personnel performance expectations to employees and solicit feedback for improvement.

The District Provides Written Personnel Expectations to All Staff

An effective personnel evaluation system includes clear, documented communication of expectations to employees before the end of a rating period. Within the district, expectations are communicated in writing to all staff. All employees are provided with copies of the evaluation handbook by which their position will be evaluated. The employee's annual performance appraisal includes a Professional Development Plan for any areas in which the employee's performance has not been satisfactory. These expectations are provided to the employee in writing and monitored throughout the year to ensure that the employee is performing satisfactorily. The employee handbook communicates professional standards and expectations regarding conduct and legal issues. Finally, union contracts set forth the expectations of all union members within a category.

The district follows the State of Florida Code of Ethics and requires all employees to abide by the Code. The code includes employee performance expectations and consequences of non-satisfactory performance. In addition to receiving a copy of the written code, each employee receives ethics training.

One weak link in the personnel system discussed earlier in this report can impact on this area. While job descriptions include a general listing of job duties for each position, the review team found instances in which a job description did not match the current duties of the position. More timely review and revision of job descriptions would further assist in the clear communications of performance expectations. Nonetheless, district supervisors indicated that they verbally communicated performance expectations to employees.

The District Provides Each Employee with a Comprehensive Employee Handbook

Through the employee handbook, the district ensures that each employee is provided detailed information on employee rights and responsibilities, benefits, leave requirements, holidays, grievance procedures, and compensation policies. In addition, each employee receives a copy of the performance evaluation handbook that is appropriate for their position. The subject of annual workdays is addressed within each employee's annual contract.

5 The district formally evaluates employees to improve performance and productivity but the process needs some improvements.

The District Has an Annual Performance Evaluation System

To ensure a fair and consistent evaluation system, well-documented and well-communicated procedures are needed. The district has created separate performance evaluation handbooks for instructional employees, principals, assistant principals, and administrators/managers. The handbook for evaluating non-instructional employees was in the process of being revised during the spring of 1999. Non-managerial professionals, such as computer programmers, are evaluated using the non-instructional performance evaluation instrument. All employees are evaluated on an annual basis as part of contractual requirements.

The superintendent is not subject to an annual performance evaluation. Since the position is an elected office, the district considers the incumbent subject to evaluation by voters every four years.

The District Provides Training to Supervisors on How to Conduct Effective Performance Appraisals

In order for a personnel evaluation system to operate properly, supervisors and employees need to be knowledgeable about the system. Training on the performance evaluation system is provided to supervisors on a periodic basis. This training covers progressive discipline, the evaluation process, and strategies of performance evaluation. For example, during the 1998-99 school year, performance evaluation training was provided to assistant principals, principals, directors, and coordinators in November 1998. Plant operators had an opportunity to attend the same training in March 1999. According to the participant attendance rosters for each of these sessions, 23 individuals attended the November training and 17 individuals attended the March training.

Individuals who will be conducting evaluations of instructional employees must receive training in conducting performance evaluations every three years. Other supervisors can request training as needed. Requested training is provided by the Human Resources Department on a one-on-one basis, or the employee can take advantage of the training consortium with other districts and attend a group training session.

In addition to training, performance evaluation handbooks are distributed to all employees by employment class and to their supervisors. These handbooks describe in detail the criteria being used in each area of the performance evaluation. To supplement information

supervisors receive about progressive discipline, managers and administrators are given copies of two documents, the Program of Corrective Discipline and Sample Written Reprimands, both by the American Association of School Personnel Administrators.

Performance Evaluation Instruments Should Relate More to the Specific Responsibilities in Job Descriptions

The district has two types of instruments for recording performance evaluations, one for instructional and supervisory staff and another for non-instructional staff. Instructional and supervisory staff include principals, assistant principals, administrators/managers, and other instructional personnel. The district uses the non-instructional evaluation instrument for all non-supervisory administrative professionals, clerical, and blue-collar staff.

The instructional and supervisory evaluation instruments are geared to specific capabilities necessary of incumbents. They also provide an opportunity for supervisor comments relating to duties specified in the job description, but providing such comments is not required.

The non-instructional instrument contains one set of relatively generic performance topics. Employees are rated on a scale of 1 (Exceeds Expectations) to 4 (Unsatisfactory) in the following areas.

- Job Knowledge and Performance (Level of proficiency, volume of work, adaptability, accuracy and clarity of communication, and dependability)
- Self-Management and Motivation (Enthusiasm, organization, use of time, independence, acceptance and use of constructive criticism, self-improvement)
- Safety (Proper use of equipment, use of safety equipment, care of equipment and tools)
- Interpersonal Effectiveness (Effective working relationships, use of tact and good judgment, effective presentation of ideas, appropriate dress and grooming)
- Attendance
- Punctuality

While all of these categories are generally important and measure an employee's basic on-the-job performance, the topic areas should contain details to better differentiate between evaluation for a food service worker and that of vehicle operator, computer operator/programmer, or clerical staff member. In addition, the form does not provide flexibility to weigh critical skills of classes of jobs. These improvements could enhance the district's training and staff development program.

Performance Measures and Standards for Instructional Personnel Should Include Student Outcomes

Since the ultimate goal of instructional staff should be student performance, it is appropriate to include student outcomes in personnel evaluations. However, there is no place on the instructional evaluation instrument to include student outcomes as a measure of employee performance, either by way of passing rates, grades, or test scores. But, employees who apply for the district's performance incentive program must show evidence of increased student performance. As an exception to this condition, the annual performance objectives for principals and assistant principals correlate with their School Improvement Plans, which in turn focus on student achievement.

Suggestions for Improvement Are Provided in Writing as Part of the Performance Evaluation Process

It is important to not only identify employee shortcomings in an evaluation system, but to also develop a plan for improvement that is documented and clearly understood by employee and supervisor. In the Martin County district an employee who receives a poor rating is provided with suggestions and action steps for how to improve his or her performance. For teachers, a form called the "Professional Development Plan" is completed any time an employee receives a "needs improvement" rating or worse. Principals, assistant principals, and administrators/managers use a form that lists goals for the year and for the next two to five years, and a high-level plan to achieve the goals. This latter group also develops annual objectives in cooperation with their immediate supervisors. For non-instructional personnel, an Evaluation Improvement Form is completed in the event of an unsatisfactory rating in any category.

Employee Disciplinary Procedures Are Documented

When disciplinary action is necessary, it is important to have a consistent, fair and well documented process that is understood by the employee and supervisor. For all employees, the supervisor documents disciplinary actions at the time they occur and enters them into the employee's permanent file.

In the case of blue and white-collar workers the union contract specifies agreed upon disciplinary procedures, and provides for due process. Exhibit 11-8 shows the disciplinary procedures for blue and white-collar workers.

Exhibit 11-8

The Disciplinary Procedures for Blue- and White-Collar Workers Provide for Due Process

- A. When necessary, and for just cause, employees covered by this agreement may be disciplined in the following ways, but not necessarily in this order.
 - 1. Oral warning
 - 2. Written reprimand
 - 3. Reduction in grade
 - 4. Suspension
 - 5. Dismissal
 - B. If the management representative has reason to give a written or oral reprimand to an employee, it shall be done in a manner that will not embarrass the employee before other employees or the public.
 - C. The grounds for immediate suspension or dismissal shall include but not be limited to the following.
 - 1. Immorality
 - 2. Gross insubordination
 - 3. Willful neglect of duty
 - 4. Incompetency
 - 5. Misconduct in office
 - 6. Substance abuse including alcohol
 - 7. Conviction of any crime involving moral turpitude
 - D. When an allegation of wrongdoing or a complaint against an employee is investigated by the board, the employee shall be notified of the nature of the complaint and shall have the opportunity to seek representation prior to any investigatory meeting. The employee shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations or complaint during the investigation. When a request for representation has been made, no such meeting shall take place until such representative shall have the opportunity to be present. In all board investigations resulting in discipline, the employee shall receive a copy of the investigator's report.
-

Source: Blue & White Collar Units 1995-1998 Contract Agreement Between the Martin County School Board and Local 597 AFSCME Florida Council 79, 1997-98 Additions.

All managers and administrators receive copies of the American Association of School Personnel Administrator's Program of Corrective Discipline as part of their annual training on ethics.

The District Terminates Poorly Performers to the Extent Allowable by Florida Law

When poorly performing employees are identified who fail to improve, the district needs to take further action, which can include termination of employment. In 1997-98, 17 employees' contracts were not renewed. Of these 17, records indicate that 13 were not renewed because of performance issues. In the year prior to termination, all of these employees had received scores of "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement."

It should be noted that the review team discovered one case in which a historically poor-performing teacher remained in continued employment. However, the director of Human

Resources explained that until very recently the district's disciplinary options were limited by state tenure laws.

Recommendations

- *The district should more closely align performance appraisals to the duties set forth in the job descriptions.*

Action Plan 11-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Align performance appraisals to the duties set forth in the job descriptions.
Action Needed	The director of Human Resource Services ensures that all district positions have a current, accurate job description. The director of Human Resource Services ensures that the performance appraisal instrument used for each position can be adapted to reflect the actual duties of the position. If the director for human resource services determines that the current format for the performance appraisal instrument is not adequate, she designs a new performance appraisal instrument. The director of Human Resource Services or her designee trains all supervisors in conducting performance appraisals using the job descriptions and, if appropriate, using updated forms.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resource Services
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

6 The district periodically evaluates its personnel practices and adjusts these practices as needed.

The District Evaluates the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Its Personnel Practices and Makes Improvements

The district has been proactive in its efforts to continually analyze and improve its personnel practices. In 1998 the district underwent a review of its Human Resources Management and Development Program, and received a positive review from a panel of peer educators selected by the Florida Department of Education. No improvements were suggested as a result of this review.

In addition, a process analysis report of the MCSD was conducted by a private consulting firm. In the report, the consultant recommended that the district require schools to select substitute teachers from the active substitute teacher list. Furthermore, the report recommended that the Human Resources Department establish an on-line list of substitute teachers that would be accessible from all schools via the mainframe terminals. In response to the report, all schools now select substitutes only from the active substitute

list. To facilitate this, a file exists on the mainframe server's public folders that contains a current list of substitutes, each individual's social security number and telephone number, and where they are available to work (both by location and grade level).

The district has also taken other steps to improve its personnel practices. For example, an internal study of the technology department resulted in changes to all departmental job descriptions and to the staffing formula in the department. Further evidence of the district's proactive evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of its personnel practices can be found in its request to undergo this Best Practices and Management review, which includes a component on Personnel Systems and Benefits.

The Ethnicity of the District's Professional Staff Could Better Reflect that of Its Students

The district's staff does not fully reflect the ethnicity of its students, but it is more closely in line with that of the community. According to 1998 information from the Department of Education, the district's ethnicity is as follows in Exhibit 11-9. Whites represent a higher percentage of district employees than of students. For example, 92.8% of administrative staff is white, compared to 76.5% of students. Hispanic employees are the most significant out of balance group. Based on the 1993 census projections, the most recent available, 93% of Martin County is white. In 1990, 4.7% of the population was Hispanic.¹ However, its variances are not uncommon and resemble both regional and national imbalances among professional employee groups.

Exhibit 11-9

Ethnicity of Students and Staff, 1998

	County	Students	Staff			
			Administrative	Instructional	Support	Total
White	85.9%	76.5%	92.8%	93.9%	72.8%	84.3%
Black	6.7%	11.5%	5.8%	4.3%	11.8%	11.8%
Hispanic	6.5%	11.0%	1.4%	1.6%	3.7%	3.7%
Asian	0.7%	0.9%	0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
American Indian	0.2%	0.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Florida Department of Education and U.S. Bureau of Census.

All categories of professional staff are underrepresented by minorities. As of November 1998, there were 63 minority professionals employed by the district, accounting for approximately 6% of professional staff. Exhibit 11-10 shows a breakdown of the Martin County School District's professional staff by specialty/job title.

¹ 1993 Census projections did not include data on the percent of the population that was Hispanic.

Exhibit 11-10

Martin County School District, Professional Staff by Specialty/Job Title

Specialty/Job Title	Number	Total in MCSD	Percent Minority
Principals	2	18	11%
African-American	2		
Assistant principals	1	23	4%
African-American	1		
Noninstructional administration	2	23	9%
Hispanic	1		
African-American	1		
Deans/curriculum coordinators	0	1	0%
Elementary teachers	23	349	7%
Hispanic	6		
African-American	16		
Asian/Pacific Islander	1		
Secondary teachers	20	386	5%
Hispanic	4		
African-American	16		
Exceptional child teachers	8	158	5%
African-American	8		
Other teachers	4	48	8%
Hispanic	3		
African-American	1		
Community school coordinators	0	4	0%
Social workers	1	1	100%
African-American	1		
Guidance counselors	2	33	6%
African-American	2		
Psychologists	0	6	0%
Librarians/audiovisual specialists	0	20	0%
Total	63	1,070	6%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

Martin County Is Taking Steps to Address Underrepresentation of Minorities Among Staff

Martin County is not alone with the issue of under representation of minorities among professional staff. Peer districts are facing similar situations in the recruitment and retention of minority professionals. Exhibit 11-11 shows a comparison of the professional staff for Martin County and each of its peer districts.

Exhibit 11-11

Percent Minority Professional Staff Martin County and Peer Districts, 1998-99

District	Minority Professional Staff	Total Professional Staff	Percent Minority
Indian River County	80	876	9%
St. Johns County	113	1,366	8%
Martin County	63	1,070	6%
Charlotte County	30	1,017	3%
Citrus County	32	1,040	3%
Santa Rosa County	47	1,370	3%

Source: Florida Department of Education.

In our survey, district staff identified minority recruitment as an issue that needs attention by the district. Exhibit 11-12 includes sample responses received from district staff.

Exhibit 11-12

Some Teachers and Administrators Surveyed Stated that Minority Recruitment Is an Issue in Martin County

- Recruit more minority educators and administrators.
- [Explore] hiring of minority staff and administration.
- [The greatest weakness of the district is] lack of minority teachers and administrators.

Source: Gibson Consulting Group, Survey of Teachers and School Administrators in Martin County, February 1999.

The district needs to continue to explore initiatives in the area of minority recruitment if it is to improve ethnicity balance of its staff. The district has historically had trouble recruiting minorities. To help encourage professionals of non-white ethnicity to apply for work with Martin County, the district developed a minority recruitment plan. This plan calls for the district to network, provide alternative certification methods, ensure that district salaries are comparable to surrounding counties, help find housing and low interest rate loans, mentor for administrative development, identify minority students interested in education, and develop incentive plans. The plan was revised in 1999. Activating the minority recruitment plan, or a similar effort, is likely the only way this condition will improve.

The District Should Compare Its Employee Absenteeism and Turnover Rates to Those of Other Organizations

Employee absenteeism and turnover can be a drain on district resources and productivity. Some absenteeism and turnover is to be expected. It is when these rates are excessive that management should be concerned. To identify whether absenteeism and turnover rates are excessive, the district should compare itself to other organizations such as peer school

districts, government agencies, and private industry. By having this information, the district can analyze and seek out cause and effect relationships impacting these outcomes. In turn, it can build on strengths or attack weaknesses with proactive plans and actions. The Martin County Human Resources Department has not performed this comparison as the first step in minimizing the negative impact of employee absenteeism and turnover.

Recommendations

- *The district needs to continue its efforts to balance the ethnicity of its staff to its community and students. In addition, the district needs to develop a system to evaluate and review recruiting efforts.*

Action Plan 11-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Continue efforts to balance ethnicity of its staff to the Martin County community and student population and develop a system of evaluating and reviewing recruiting efforts.
Action Needed	The director of Human Resources establishes a committee of principals and key administrators that meets regularly to evaluate status of ethnicity balance and develop strategies to improve balance.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resources and committee
Time Frame	March 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

7 The district should improve its maintenance of personnel records.

Personnel Records Are Maintained in Accordance with Federal and State Statutes and Regulations

The retention and protection of personnel records is important to maintain a work history of each employee and to secure personal employee information. A review of twelve randomly-selected personnel files confirmed that hardcopy personnel files are maintained in accordance with federal and state statutes and regulations. At the time of our review, the district was in the process of converting its electronic personnel system and records to TERMS. Therefore, since the district was in a transitional period, the review team did not evaluate the district on its maintenance of automated records.

It should be noted that the file room used for storage of current hardcopy personnel records is in an office that is not fitted with fire sprinklers. While many of the filing cabinets are fire-resistant, members of the review team noted that cabinet drawers often were not fully closed, rendering the fire-resistant nature of the metal container ineffective in the event of a fire. In addition, some historical records are stored in boxes outside of the cabinets. The

district should consider installing a fire sprinkler system in all buildings, and should ensure that all records are protected in fire-resistant cabinets and they are fully closed when not in use in order to properly protect the records.

Long-Term Record Retention Needs to Be Addressed by the District

The district must properly protect and retain some records for a relatively long period of time, which can be costly both in terms of labor and storage space. The district is currently contending with limited file storage space and a growing number of records.

All personnel files that became inactive prior to 1992 are on microfilm. The district decided not to continue microfilming because the staff was advised that microfilm might, over time, become unreadable. To address this problem, in 1998, the district issued a Request For Proposals (RFP), but received no satisfactory responses. The RFP was re-issued in 1999, but a vendor has not yet been selected.

The District Should Improve Its Updating of Personnel Records

In order to be usable as a component of the personnel system, records need to reasonably reflect current conditions. The team found that all files reviewed contained copies of current certifications for those employees whose positions require certification. In accordance with the Sunshine Laws, the team also noted that the most recent performance evaluations are maintained separately and are not accessible to the general public. However, 7 of the files sampled did not contain the most current information, including employment contracts and in-service training records. However, according to the Director of Human Resources, in-service records are stored electronically and transmitted to the state Department of Education.

Recommendations

- *The district should consider installing a fire sprinkler system in the file room of the Human Resources department.*
- *The district should proceed with an archiving system for permanent records.*

Action Plan 11-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Consider installing a fire sprinkler system in the file room of the Human Resources department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Facilities develops a project budget for installing a sprinkler system in the file room.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Facilities, in conjunction with the director of purchasing, develops a Requests for Bid to have a sprinkler system installed in the file room.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Facilities and the director of purchasing evaluate incoming proposals and select the vendor who best meets the specifications at the lowest cost.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Facilities oversees the installation and testing of the fire sprinkler system in the file room.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, director of Purchasing
Time Frame	September 2000
Fiscal Impact	\$1,500 one-time cost (estimated at \$3 per square foot for a 500 square foot room).
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Proceed with a decision on an archiving system for permanent records.
Action Needed	The director of Human Resources formulates a recommendation and plan for archiving permanent records based on available methods and presents it to superintendent and board for decision.
Who is Responsible	Director of Human Resources, superintendent, and board
Time Frame	April 2000
Fiscal Impact	This is an ongoing process that began before our report and needs to be concluded. Cost to the district will vary depending on the option selected.

8 The district uses cost-containment practices for Its Worker Compensation Program.

Background

For approximately 10 years, the Martin County School District has been a member of SCERMP (South Central Educational Risk Management Program), a consortium of 10 similarly-sized Florida school districts, to handle several of its insurance needs, including workers' compensation. SCERMP provides a combination self-insuring and large deductible mechanism for addressing workers' compensation liability coverage and other insurance needs of the member districts. SCERMP's contract administrator (McCreary Corp.) provides access to the districts automated records to analyze such factors as incident frequency, location and occupation to identify causes of injuries.

Workers' compensation claims can result in significant costs to districts extending over several years, especially when more serious injuries are involved. Therefore, it is common to not only pay current claim expense but to also set aside a reserve for future related expenses. Typically it take several years to identify all costs associated with a claim and setting aside a reserve does not limit future expenses. The districts expense history and reserve set-aside for workers' compensation claims is displayed in Exhibit 11-13 below.

Exhibit 11-13

Martin County Workers' Compensation Expenses and Reserves, 1994-98

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Payments	\$1,327,053	\$408,025	\$172,910	\$304,586	\$175,145
Remaining Reserve	176,283	110,357	67,698	173,812	235,779
Total Incurred	\$1,503,336	\$518,383	\$240,608	\$478,398	\$410,924
Number of Claims	366	312	249	127	171

Source: Martin County School District.

The district analyzes worker's compensation claim information to identify risks to employees and cost to the district. The district uses workers' compensation incident and claim information to reduce injuries to employees and reduce costs to the district. To analyze and prevent injuries the district employs a risk manager and a safety officer. At the time of our fieldwork the risk manager position was vacant, and the district was actively recruiting to fill the position. SCERMP provides the district with a full-time safety officer.

The District is Using Its Analysis of Workers' Compensation Information to Reduce Injuries and Cost

The district safety officer provided examples illustrating how the district uses its analysis to prevent future injuries and workers' compensation claims. For example:

- In 1998 the risk manager linked several injuries, one severe, to falls in the transportation motor pool area. Further investigation revealed that a water drainage problem during periods of heavy rain was being solved by creating a makeshift, hazardous walkway out of pallets. The drainage problem was permanently fixed, thereby alleviating the water and hazard. Injuries from falls in the area immediately stopped.
- During a short period in 1998, several district painters reported back sprains. After investigation, it was found that painters were lifting heavy individual paint containers into district trucks for delivery to work sites. By training staff in the use of a forklift, the injuries stopped and containers could be loaded more quickly by pallet.
- In 1999, an employee sustained a severe injury from a fall from a ladder. Further research of records revealed several incident reports for which claims were not filed, but which could have been more severe. The district found that many of its ladders were not designed for industrial use. Light use ladders were discarded and replaced with heavy duty fiberglass ladders. Incidents have ceased.

The District Needs to Evaluate Its Workers' Compensation Program Compared to Other Organizations

Any school district can expect to have some workers' compensation claims. Whether or not the rate of claims is reasonable should be an on-going concern of management. One

accepted and common method of analyzing an organization's claim rate is to regularly compare its frequency and cost of workers' compensation claims against other organizations of similar size and exposure. The Martin County School District staff was unable to provide documentation that such an evaluation is being conducted. Therefore the district is unaware how it is performing and if more or less resources should be directly toward this potentially very costly area.

9 The district should establish clear and reliable benchmarks to evaluate employee salaries and benefits.

The District Should Establish Additional Benchmarks to Evaluate Salary and Benefit Levels

The district collects salary information from other districts and from private employers, but has not established benchmarks to evaluate whether salary and benefit levels are appropriate. For a more detailed discussion of employee compensation, refer to page 11-10.

The District Uses a Point Factor System to Evaluate Positions

When establishing compensation levels for individual positions, several factor should be taken into consideration, including experience and training requirements of the position. The district has two methods of compensation. The first takes into consideration criteria such as educational requirements, job complexity, district cost of living, skills and knowledge requirements, decision-making responsibility, and supervisory authority. These factors establish a position's base salary. In addition to these factors, years of service are taken into account in establishing an individual employee's salary. In general, this method is used for non-administrative employees, including teachers, education paraprofessionals, blue and white collar workers, bus drivers, and food service employees.

The second method is used to ensure internal equity among administrative staff. All administrative positions are factored in relation to each other using an index with a base of 1.0 assigned to the highest administrative salary (\$77,236 in 1997-98). All other administrative salaries are assigned an index value between 0.34 and 0.95 of the top salary and computed against the base top salary. According to the director of Human Resources, positions were originally indexed based on interviews with the person who held the job at the time the index was created, the input of supervisors, and comparisons of the salary levels of similar positions. At the request of an employee's supervisor, the director of Human Resources can recommend to the superintendent that the index of a job be adjusted based on the results of a job analysis study. Adjustments must be approved by the board. The problem with the index method is that it disregards the years of experience of the individual currently holding the position. Therefore, an individual with 20 years of experience who leaves the position, such as the director of Personnel, might be replaced by someone with five years of experience who would automatically receive the identical pay. Under Martin County's index system, the new director of personnel would be paid the same as his predecessor, or \$67,968 against the 1997-98 base. This method ignores professional growth of the individual in the position and change in value to the district. In 1999, the school board commissioned a compensation study that is examining salary ranges for administrative positions. The results of this study, if implemented by the board, could address some of the issues discussed above but may not address salary inequities between similar positions.

Overall, Martin County Pays Higher Salaries Than Peer Districts

Public organizations have the responsibility to be good stewards of public funds. When comparing salaries with peer districts, many factors must be considered, including comparability of positions, cost of living, and the competitive market for employees. Considering these factors, we chose the following counties for the purposes of salary and benefit comparisons.

- Indian River
- Okeechobee
- Collier
- Charlotte
- Santa Rosa
- St. Lucie
- Citrus
- Hernando

Exhibit 11-14 displays the most recent compensation comparison study available to the team. Among positions studied are peers for a 25 instructional and non-instructional, professional positions. Of the 25 positions surveyed, the actual salary paid by Martin County is in the top third of average salaries paid for 20 positions. When considering minimum salaries on pay schedules, Martin County positions ranked in the top third of the minimum salary paid for 24 positions.² When considering maximum salary paid in a pay schedule, Martin County again ranked in the top third in eight cases. At the time of fieldwork completion the district was awaiting more recent study results which could alter the district's relative position.

² This is important because, according to the system used by MCSD for professional/administrative employee salaries, a replacement would receive the same salary as the incumbent. For more information, refer to Exhibit 11-6, page 11-11.

Exhibit 11-14

Martin County Salaries for 25 Positions Are Generally Higher Than Peers

Rank of Martin County Employees Versus Other Districts	Various Methods of Comparison		
	Midpoint Salary*	Minimum Salary	Maximum Salary
Highest Paid	4	19	
2 nd Highest Paid	13	2	4
3 rd Highest Paid	3	3	4
4 th Highest Paid	1		3
Median Paid	1		
4 th Lowest Paid	1		3
3 rd Lowest Paid			3
2 nd Lowest Paid	1		6
Lowest Paid	1	1	2
Total	25	25	25

*Actual salaries were used in cases where only one person is in the position, or where all persons in the position are paid the same amount.

Source: Based on salary schedule information provided by Martin County School District Salary Comparisons, 1998.

The information displayed above and similar data should be used in future salary determinations and negotiations. The chart shows that district starting and midpoint salaries are high compared to those of its peers. However, the chart also indicates that the district's range may be too narrow when also considering the maximum salary information.

Compared to Peer Districts, the District's Benefits Package Is Generous

Benefits provided to employees should be reasonable and follow industry practices. Too limited a benefit package will not attract or retain quality staff. Too generous a package is too costly. As presented in Exhibit 11-15, MCSD pays the second highest of all its peer districts behind only Indian River for coverage of the employee only (i.e., no dependent coverage). In addition, Martin County is among three peer counties that does not require an employee contribution towards the cost of benefits. Further, Martin County provides a very broad range of benefits to employees.

Exhibit 11-15

Martin County Provides a Large Range of Benefits at No Cost to Employees

District	District Paid				Employee Contribution
	Health Plan	Prescription Card	Dental	Vision	
Martin	\$2,409 to \$3,421 plus \$350	Yes	Available	Available	\$0
Indian River	\$3,336	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$0
Charlotte	\$3,276	Available	Available	Available	\$0

District	District Paid				Employee Contribution
	Health Plan	Prescription Card	Dental	Vision	
St. Lucie	\$1,800 plus \$400	-	-	-	\$548
Okeechobee	\$1,753 plus \$300	Yes	Available	Available	\$438
Hernando	\$1,685	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$0 to \$469
Citrus	\$1,440	Yes	No	No	\$312
St. Johns	\$1,047	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$265

Source: Martin County School District Basic Benefit Comparison – District Paid vs. Employee Paid.

In addition to paying among the highest amounts for benefits, Martin County also provides the more choices to its employees than most of the peer districts. Martin County employees can choose between three types of health plans; the total cost of employee coverage is paid by the district. Only Charlotte County provides the same extent of choice. Martin County employees can also opt for dental and/or vision coverage which can cost the district an additional \$350.

In addition to health insurance, the district provides life insurance and retirement benefits to employees. The term life insurance amount is the second-highest and the most costly of the districts (\$122/year for \$35,000 coverage, as opposed to \$96/year for \$50,000 coverage). The district also has an early retirement program. While most peer districts have some provision for health plan participation by retirees, the time period of coverage after retirement is typically limited and/or the cost of insurance is paid by the employee. In contrast, an employee who retires from the Martin County School district is covered for life for a portion of the cost of hospitalization insurance, and also receives a 15% retirement supplement. This supplement is beyond what state workers receive as their retirement benefit. In addition, the district pays the penalty for early retirement assessed by the state's retirement system for some employees. The penalty is paid for life for those employees whose age, plus years of service, equal the sum of 80 or more, and opt for the program. However, entry into the program is limited to the first two years of eligibility.

Recommendations

- The district should base adjustments to salaries on market studies and on district cost of living indices. The district also should pursue changes in the structure of administrative salaries as currently under consideration.
- The district should consider reducing benefits to some classes of employees, and consider reducing the retirement package to reduce the cost to the district. One possible alternative is to eliminate the early retirement incentive program.

Action Plan 11-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use market studies and district cost of living indices for adjusting salary scales and cost of living adjustments. The system for determining administrative salaries also should be altered to include, as a minimum, a range of salary per position.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Human Resources surveys peer and area districts annually and report to the board how district salaries should be adjusted to fall in line with the benchmark.</p> <p>Step 2: In accordance with the negotiated agreements with the unions, salaries of employees covered by the unions are adjusted.</p> <p>Step 3: Salaries of administrative employees are adjusted to meet benchmark criteria.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resources, board
Time Frame	May 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	By limiting the rate at which salaries increase annually, the district should be able to avoid future costs of approximately \$1.2 million per year (1½%).
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Reduce benefits to some classes of employees and reduce the retirement package to reduce the cost to the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Human Resources develops a proposal for alternatives to reduce benefits and/or the retirement package.</p> <p>Step 2: The board reviews the proposal and makes a determination on the best options.</p> <p>Step 3: The board and the unions come to an agreement on benefits reductions.</p> <p>Step 4: The board makes a determination of how to reduce benefits to employees who are not covered by one of the unions.</p> <p>Step 5: The director for Human Resources implements the agreement between the board and the unions.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Board and director of Human Resources
Time Frame	February 2000 – August 2000
Fiscal Impact	Reducing overall benefits by 3% of salaries would save the district an estimated \$2 million dollars per year.

12

Cost Control Systems

The district's cost control systems include internal auditing, financial auditing, financial management, information systems, purchasing, asset management, and risk management. Improvements are needed in internal auditing, financial management, information systems, asset management, and risk management.

Conclusion

During this review of the district's cost control systems, we identified areas in which improvements could be made in cost control systems including:

- the internal auditing function;
- accountability for capitalized assets;
- verification of the validity of insurance claims and the ultimate cost of premiums for health insurance coverage;
- communication of management's commitment to and support of strong internal controls;
- timely submission of financial reports;
- payroll processing; and
- access and general controls over information technology resources.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

The corrective action plans provided for cost controls systems can generally be implemented with existing resources. However, as shown in Exhibit 12-1, one recommendation will have a fiscal impact.

Exhibit 12-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Cost Control Systems Will Have the Following Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Hire a full-time property control specialist	\$25,785 annually in salaries and benefits

Background

The District's major cost control systems are separated into seven subsections.

- Internal Auditing
- Financial Auditing
- Financial Management
- Information Systems
- Purchasing
- Asset Management
- Risk Management

The Board, as provided in Section 230.03(2), Florida Statutes, is required to operate, control, and supervise all free public schools in the District. Laws, rules, regulations, and grantor restrictions applicable to the District's activities define, among other matters, the purposes for which resources may be used and the manner in which authorized uses shall be accomplished and documented. Section 230.23(3), Florida Statutes, provides that the responsibility for the administration of 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 cost control systems. The objectives of efficient and effective cost control systems are to:

- provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition;
- ensure that transactions are executed in accordance with the Board's authorization;
- ensure that transactions are recorded properly to promote reliable financial data;
- ensure that restricted assets are managed in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and contracts, and
- within the constraints established by applicable laws and regulations, ensure that operating policies and procedures promote cost-effective and efficient methods of operation.

The school board and management team have made several notable accomplishments over the past several years related to the district's cost control systems. Exhibit 12-2 describes some of these accomplishments.

*Exhibit 12-2***Notable Accomplishments in Cost Control Systems**

-
- There is a good, documented audit program for internal school activity accounts. The internal auditor is also seeking out audit programs already developed by other Florida school districts that she can use – avoiding the need to develop them from scratch.
 - The Finance Department has done a good job in processing accounting and budget transactions during the TERMS system conversion.
 - The organization of the Educational Technology Department separate from Finance or Instruction helps ensure that technology decisions benefit the entire district, and clearly place accountability for the use of technology in the district.
 - The new TERMS system has more screen edit capabilities to improve the accuracy of data at the point of entry.
 - The district has a sound disaster recovery plan with multiple options in the case of an emergency.
-

Source: Martin County School District.

A. Auditing and Financial Management***Internal Audit***

1 The Martin County School District has an internal audit function; however, the district should restructure the audit planning and review committee, perform a risk assessment, and develop long-and short-range audit plans for internal audit.

Section 11.45(3)(a)1., Florida Statutes (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. Such an internal audit function can provide a school district assurance that internal control processes in the organization are adequately designed and functioning effectively and can evaluate the manner in which organizational units comply with board and administrative policies and procedures, as well as with state and federal guidelines. Additionally, an internal audit function can provide a school district with an effective internal performance and evaluation system. Used this way, an internal audit function can be an effective element of management and internal control.

In addition to funds received at the district level, the individual schools also receive funds for club and class activities. These funds are deposited in the school's accounts, which are commonly referred to 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 employed pursuant to s. 11.45(3)(a)1., F.S., may also be assigned the responsibility for auditing the school internal funds.

The District Has Established an Internal Audit Function with a Defined Mission that Reports Directly to the School Board

The School Board of Martin County created and filled an internal audit position and has adopted a formal charter for the unit. The purpose of the internal audit function is “to assist the board and the district in reaching their goals and objectives by determining that controls exist and are functioning to ensure, as far as practical, operational economy and efficiency as it relates to financial performance.” The charter also describes the unit’s authority, scope of responsibility, reporting requirements and rules of professional conduct.

The internal audit function reports to the board. There is also an Audit Planning and Review Committee (APRC) that serves in an advisory capacity to the internal auditor. The APRC was established in 1997, and consists of one board member, the superintendent, the internal auditor, and an outside member who is a certified public accountant in private practice. The district provided minutes of APRC meetings from July 10, 1997.

The Audit Planning and Review Committee Should Be Restructured

The membership composition of the committee needs to be changed to promote greater independence for the internal auditor. As currently established, most of the committee members are either elected officials or employees. If the internal auditor discloses weaknesses or deficiencies through an audit finding, and the audit committee is comprised mostly of members from within the organization, they may be affected by their direct involvement in the problem areas. An audit committee made up of members outside the organization’s management structure would be more apt to be impartial and objective in such matters. Often, members from outside the organization are able to bring a more varied range of management experience to the decision-making process.

A suggested committee composition would be to include the superintendent and a board member (which could be the board chairman) from within the organization and to have at least three (a majority) additional members from outside the district organization. Alternatively, each board member could appoint an individual from outside the school district to be a committee member. In addition to changing the composition of the committee to include a majority of members from outside the organization, the committee charter should include information relating to the qualifications of the committee members. For example, criteria could include such qualifications as being a certified public accountant, an established business leader, a representative from the school advisory councils and/or parent teacher associations/organizations, etc. Other information, such as committee member terms of office, frequency of meetings, and the process for appointing committee members should also be detailed in the committee charter.

The District’s Internal Auditor Should Obtain Additional Technical Training in School District Operations and Financial Systems

The internal auditor job description contains several requirements: bachelor’s degree in business or accounting from an accredited educational institution; at least five years experience in accounting or auditing in business and/or governmental agency—of which at least two years is governmental; at least one year of experience in budget management;

and, at least one year of supervisory experience. The current internal auditor meets these requirements, and is also a certified public accountant.

Since hired by the school district, the internal auditor has had 32 hours of training on auditing automated applications and 32 hours of training on general operational auditing. There should be more emphasis in the training program on school district operations and current issues in Florida public education. This additional technical training may include attending school business officers' association meetings, orientation meetings for new board members, continuing education courses, research materials, or other methods. These topics will help ensure a well-rounded curriculum and maximize the internal auditor's effectiveness in the organization.

The District Should Perform an Organizational Risk Assessment Annually to Determine Areas of Risk to Be Reviewed by the Internal Auditor

During our review, we noted that a risk assessment process had not been developed and implemented. Additionally, annual audit plans had not been developed. A good risk assessment program is critical to evaluating the levels of risk in all school district operations so that internal audit activities can be focused on the appropriate areas. By identifying and focusing on the highest risk areas, the district can maximize its internal auditing resources. Currently, internal audit activities are guided by the APRC, the internal auditor, and individual board members. The audit charter states that unless otherwise directed by the board, the internal auditor will decide the nature and scope of such audits, based on risk analysis and input from all levels of management.

The district's internal auditor should develop a formal, documented risk assessment process to determine high risk areas in need of internal audit review. To be effective, this process should include input from all financial management staff and other management, including school principals. This process could be accomplished through the distribution of questionnaires or surveys to appropriate employees so that they can provide written responses as to what district operations they consider to be high risk. The risk assessment documents distributed to district employees can include suggested categories to help employees identify areas that they are concerned about. Examples of such areas include budgeting; asset custody; potential areas of loss and risk; perceived internal control weaknesses; areas of political sensitivity; external audit concerns; major changes in operations, programs, systems, and controls; perceived failures to meet regulatory requirements; full-time equivalent (FTE) student reporting; and any other management requests for audit reviews.

Once these responses are received, the APRC can review them and assist the internal auditor in ranking the assessments received in order of highest perceived risk. From this ranking, a long-range audit plan can be developed. The long-range audit plan should include a risk analysis for each area proposed for audit and an allocation of hours to be used for each proposed audit. This established process should also include a process that requires the APRC to review any special investigations and other unplanned audits to determine their priority within the established audit plan.

Upon establishment of the long-range audit plan, short-term (annual) audit plans can be developed. These plans can be used to determine the extent of internal audit resources required to complete the work within time-frames desired by the board. The annual plan may include, based on the determination of risk or other regulatory requirements, audits that will be repeated each year, such as FTE audits and audits of the internal funds.

Because the FTE counts drive the district's state appropriations, the short-term plan should include the monitoring of FTE counts, and appropriate resources should be allocated to perform the audit of FTE counts.

We recommend that the internal auditor develop an annual risk assessment process that is used to develop long- and short-range audit plans. The internal auditor should be expected to follow these audit plans, and perform other activities as requested by the APRC. Individual board members requesting internal audit activities should submit these requests to the APRC for consideration. This will allow the internal auditor's time to be spent on areas of highest importance to the district.

Recommendations

- *The district should ensure that the internal auditor receives additional technical training in school district operations and current issues in Florida public education.*
- *The district should restructure the APRC to ensure that the majority of the committee includes members from outside the district.*
- *The district should perform an organizational risk assessment on an annual basis to determine areas of risk to be reviewed by the internal auditor.*

Action Plan 12-1

Internal Auditing

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should ensure that the internal auditor has received additional technical training in school district operations and current issues in Florida public education.
Action Needed	Provide specific continuing professional education programs to the internal auditor in school district operations and current issues in Florida public school education.
Who Is Responsible	Martin County District School Board
Time Frame	By June 30, 2000
Fiscal Impact	Not determinable at this time.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Restructure the APRC to include a majority of members from outside the school district's operations.
Action Needed	Modification of the internal audit committee charter to establish criteria for selection of committee members and other pertinent requirements, such as term of office, etc.
Who Is Responsible	Martin County District School Board
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	The district's internal auditor should develop a documented risk assessment process that would provide information to the APRC to assist the internal auditor in developing long- and short-range audit plans.
Action Needed	Develop an annual internal audit plan (short-range) and a 3- or 5-year (long-range) internal audit plan.
Who Is Responsible	Martin County District School Board
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Financial Auditing

1 The school district receives an annual external audit in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

Pursuant to s. 11.45(3)(a)1., F.S., the district annually receives a financial audit by the Auditor General. A financial audit is defined in s. 11.45(1)(b), F.S., and states, in part, that financial audits must be conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and government auditing standards. While performing the financial audit, the Auditor General performs an examination to determine whether district operations are properly conducted in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Because of the district's significant federal funding sources, the Auditor General's audits include a review of the district's federal programs as required by the United States Office of Management and Budget's *Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*.

Audit Reports Have Been Filed with Appropriate Oversight Bodies in Accordance with Applicable State and Federal Filing Requirements and Were Completed in Accordance with Government Auditing Standards

The Auditor General's audit reports of the Martin County School District for 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98 have been filed with the Florida Department of Education. Each of these audit reports state that the audit was conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

2 The district provides timely follow-up to findings identified in the external audit.

Pursuant to s. 11.45(7)(d), F.S., the Auditor General is required to provide the district with a list of adverse findings which may be included in the audit report. This section of law also provides that the district shall submit to the Auditor General, within 30 days of receipt

of the adverse findings, a written statement of explanation or rebuttal concerning all of the findings, including therein corrective actions to be taken to prevent a recurrence of all adverse findings. The school district generally provides for the timely follow-up to findings addressed in external audit reports.

Financial Management

1 District management should enhance its communication of its commitment and support of strong internal controls by completing procedures manuals.

Procedures Manuals Detailing Daily Activities Should Be Completed

The district has established a finance and accounting function that is responsible for essentially all activities related to financial management. For purposes of this report, functional responsibilities within the finance and accounting function are further segregated into accounting, purchasing, technology, risk management, and food services.

Although district management has achieved a comprehensive system of internal controls, they 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 and maintenance of comprehensive procedures manuals of its daily financial activities. Although some written procedures documents were available for certain parts of the district's financial operations, they were generally outdated and/or incomplete. 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. The district should develop and maintain detailed procedures manuals relating to all its financial activities. Some suggested procedures that should be included in the manuals include such matters as those noted below.

- Identification and description of the principal accounting records, recurring standard entries, and requirements for supporting documentation. For example, this may include information about the general ledger, source journals, subsidiary ledgers, and detail records for each significant class of transactions.
- Expression of the assignment of responsibilities and delegation of authority including identification of the individuals or positions that have authority to approve various types of recurring and non-recurring entries.
- Explanations of documentation and approval requirements for various types of recurring and non-recurring transactions and journal entries. Documentation requirements, for example, would include the basis and supporting computations required for adjustments and write-offs.
- Instructions for determining an adequate cutoff and closing of accounts for each reporting period.

The Finance Department is in the process of documenting procedures that address the above requirements, as well as others. This manual, once complete, will be distributed to all Finance Department personnel. Currently, the TERMS system documentation is available to Finance Department employees. The documentation of procedures will assist the department from a training and operations perspective, and will also help the internal auditor verify compliance with prescribed procedures. As such manuals are developed, the board's internal auditor should review them to ensure that the procedures are designed to promote effective internal controls.

Management Conducts Business on a High Ethical Plane and Has Established Written Employee Ethics Policies

State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.001, Florida Administrative Code, specifies a code of ethics of the education profession in Florida. Martin County has adopted this as its own code of ethics.

The Finance Department is responsible for evaluating and improving internal controls. With a few minor exceptions, management demonstrates a commitment of strong internal controls. This is evidenced by the absence of material weaknesses in the audit reports over the past four years.

The minor exceptions noted during this review are common to school districts the size of Martin County. The entire accounting department has 12 employees, and complete segregation of duties, while admirable from a control standpoint, is not practical from a fiscal point of view. The trade-off of efficiency and control is a delicate balance that is appreciated and taken seriously by current district management.

There are two examples of minor control weaknesses that relate primarily to segregation of duties. First, all accounting clerks have password access to make journal entries on the computer. There is a manual procedure requiring that journal entries be approved by the accounting supervisor, and the accounting supervisor reviews the general ledger at the end of each month for reasonableness. However, it is possible for unauthorized entries to be made by accounting department staff. As a compensating control, the accounting supervisor reviews all journal entries that have been made at month-end.

Another example is access to unsigned checks, signed checks, and accounting records by the same accounting department personnel. This practice is often found in small to moderate size school districts, but should be avoided if at all possible to minimize the possibility of embezzlement.

Management Periodically Reviews Internal Controls to Ensure that They Are Being Enforced

The Finance Department is responsible for evaluating and improving internal controls. The director of Finance stated that internal controls are reviewed at least annually to ensure that controls are adequate based on the size of the accounting department and the inherent risks involved.

State Whistleblower Laws Allow School District Employees to Report Suspected Improprieties

Another indicator that a district has a strong commitment to internal controls is its ability to promote the feedback of information from employees, particularly information relating to suspected improprieties. It is through this process that an organization becomes aware of internal control weaknesses that may otherwise be overlooked. As a result, it is important that the organization have a policy that promotes the reporting of suspected improprieties.

Section 112.3187, F.S., provides a process for employees to report improper activities such as illegal acts or suspected acts of gross mismanagement, malfeasance, misfeasance, gross waste of public funds, or gross neglect of duty committed by an employee, agent or independent contractor.

Recommendations

- The district should develop and maintain detailed procedures manuals of all financial operations including daily activities. The board's internal auditor should review procedures manuals and subsequent revisions to ensure that the procedures are designed to promote effective internal controls.*

Action Plan 12-2

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Procedures manuals for all financial management activities should be completed.
Action Needed	Step 1: Complete the detailed procedures manual. Step 2: Submit the procedures manual to the internal auditor for review. Step 3: Submit the procedures manual for board approval. Step 4: Distribute the approved manuals to all users.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations and school board
Time Frame	June 2001
How to Evaluate	Issuance of procedures manuals to appropriate personnel
Financial Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2 The district records and reports financial transactions in accordance with prescribed standards.

The District's New Computerized Accounting System Facilitates Collecting, Processing, and Maintaining and Reporting Financial Transactions

The district is in the middle of a financial software conversion to the Total Educational Resource Management System (TERMS), but has been able to collect, process and maintain financial records. The district's chart of accounts, which applies the Florida Department of Education's manual *Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools* of account codes, was successfully converted to the TERMS financial module without reconstruction or modification of the code structure. The chart of accounts also facilitates accountability for restricted sources of funds through grant/project accounting. Martin County uses the "project code" component of its chart of accounts to track restricted sources of funds through grant/project accounting.

For the 1998-99 school year, the budget has been entered into the TERMS system and the encumbrance function is working to control district financial commitments within budget limits. The district provided a detailed, line item budget generated from the TERMS system, and budget variance reports can be viewed from each department head's terminal. Training has been provided to all department heads by the director of Finance.

Subsidiary accounting systems, such as property accounting, have not yet been interfaced with the general ledger. Other subsystems, such as accounts payable and payroll, are interfaced. Upon completion of the TERMS conversion, all subsidiary ledgers and systems will ultimately be interfaced with the general ledger, according to the Director of Finance.

Controls Are In Place to Ensure that Recorded Transactions Are Supported by Hard Copy or Electronically Maintained Documentation

All accounting transactions are supported by hard copy documentation and filed in the accounting department. Actual transactions were reviewed to ensure such documentation was evident and complete. This information is also stored electronically on the TERMS system.

3 The district does not always prepare and distribute its financial reports on a timely basis.

Through the end of the 1997-98 school year, the district provided monthly financial statements to the board on a timely basis. However, due to the conversion to TERMS, the district was unable to provide monthly financial statements to the board timely. The district is in the process of catching up on its monthly financial statements for the 1998-99 fiscal year, and expects to be current by the end of the fiscal year. As of July 28, 1999, financial reports for the months of July 1998 through February 1999 had been presented to the school board.

The district has been able to meet external grant reporting requirements throughout the conversion. The director of Finance stated that some amended reports may need to be resubmitted based on the preparation of monthly financial statements for the 1998-99 fiscal year, but does not anticipate material changes.

An Annual Financial Report Is Prepared, Approved by the Board, and Filed in a Timely Manner

The Annual Financial Report was prepared, approved by the board, and filed in a timely manner by the superintendent for the 1997-98 school year.

Recommendations

- *The district should ensure that monthly financial reports are presented to the board in a timely manner.*

Action Plan 12-3

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To provide monthly financial reports to the board in a timely manner.
Action Needed	Follow the district's procedures of providing monthly financial reports to the board.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The district has a financial plan serving as an estimate of and control over operations and expenditures.

Board policy 6Gx43-7.01 states that the annual budget shall be developed by the superintendent and presented to the school board for adoption by the date prescribed by law. The director of Finance is responsible for assisting in the development and implementation of the budget. Board policy 6Gx43-7.01 requires that the board adopt a staff allocation plan using current year student population data adjusted for anticipated growth. This plan drives the district's payroll budget line items. According to board policy, tentative school budgets (for non-payroll items) are provided to the principals and school advisory council chair for review by June 1 of each year. Principals work with the councils to finalize the school budget. This budget is submitted to the superintendent by June 30. Budget hearings are advertised as required to solicit public input and participation. Advertisements include the required notification to the public of proposed capital outlay millage levies. Special millage levies (e.g., capital outlay millage) are supported by detailed budgets identifying the specific intended uses and the estimated needed revenues.

Based on inspection of the 1998-99 fiscal year adopted budget and the detailed budget, district budgets are prepared commensurate with functional responsibilities, at the department and program level, to facilitate effective budget monitoring. The budget adopted by the board is a summary budget, but the budget entered into the accounting system contains much more detail. This level of detail clearly establishes levels of operational and financial accountability. Budgets are also prepared in sufficient detail to provide effective monitoring of restricted funds. Each fund has its own budget, and the annual financial audit report contains budget to actual variances for each fund.

A budget calendar is applied by the district, and certain budget reporting dates are specified in board policy. Function codes and project codes are used to support budget control at the program and activity level, as well as to support the monitoring of restricted funds. The location code is used to present budgets by school, supporting accountability at the school level. The function and project codes are used to identify departments and programs, and assign budget responsibility for those areas.

Procedures Are in Place to Provide for Effective Monitoring of the Budget to Preclude Expenditures in Excess of Available Budget and to Provide for Timely Amendments for Board Approval

The TERMS finance module can currently generate budget status reports for each department or budget unit. All expenditures are encumbered. The encumbrance precludes expenditures in excess of available budget. Additionally, all purchase orders are reviewed by the Finance Department for proper coding to ensure the integrity of budgeted and actual expenditures.

The district does not utilize an automated system for monitoring the number of Board-authorized, filled, and vacant positions, either districtwide or by school and department. The TERMS Human Resources System, which has the capability of position control, has not been implemented. As part of the budgetary process, the district allocates positions to each school and department using a staffing formula based on student enrollment, square footage, and need. The district relies on the schools and departments to manually track the number of authorized, filled, and vacant positions.

Recommendations

- *The District should enhance its budgetary and position control abilities by implementing an automated system for monitoring the number of Board-authorized, filled and vacant positions.*

Action Plan 12-4

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement automated position control system.
Action Needed	Have Technology Department develop and implement automated position control system with TERMS Human Resources module.

Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Human Resources, and director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	August 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources

5 The district has adequate controls to provide accountability for cash resources.

Procedures Are in Place that Provide for Appropriate Checks and Balances in the Receipting and Recording of Collections

The district has implemented procedures that provide for appropriate checks and balances in the receipting and recording of collections noted below.

- Primary responsibilities for collections and deposit preparation functions are segregated from those for recording cash receipts and general ledger entries.
- Responsibilities for cash receipts functions are segregated from those for cash disbursements. Different accounting staffs have responsibilities for these functions.
- District receipts are deposited on a timely basis, usually daily. Any undeposited funds are maintained in a safe overnight and deposited the following day. Checks received at the central office may be held overnight, but are deposited daily.
- Daily reported receipts are compared on a test basis to bank statements to verify timeliness of deposits. This procedure is performed during the reconciliation of bank statements.
- A restrictive endorsement is placed on each incoming check upon receipt. This activity is performed by a Finance Department secretary, who is responsible for opening the mail.
- Procedures exist for follow-up of "non-sufficient funds" (NSF) checks. Copies of NSF notices are forwarded to the applicable department for follow-up. Most NSF notices related to food service operations or extended day services for students. These items represent small amounts, both individually and in the aggregate.

Receipts are accounted for and balanced to collections on a timely basis. This is part of the daily collection procedure whereby a tape total of receipts is compared to the edit listing of cash receipts entered into the system.

Bank Accounts Are Established in Approved Public Depositories

The district has two deposit agreements with a local banking institution. This bank is listed as an approved public depository by the state of Florida.

Responsibilities for Disbursement Preparation Functions Are Sufficiently Segregated from Those for Recording or Entering Cash Disbursement Information on the General Ledger

Disbursements are prepared by two accounts payable specialists, and entered into the accounting system by different accounting personnel. The matching of the paperwork (purchase order, receiving report and invoice) is done by a volunteer, but the actual matching of amounts is performed by accounting personnel.

All direct pays are approved by the Accounting Supervisor based on established approval levels; however, there is no supervisory approval of disbursements that go through the purchase order process. The accounting supervisor and/or the director of Finance approve the original purchase order, but not the invoice (voucher package). The approval of purchase orders is viewed by the district as a compensating control. A better practice would be to require the accounting supervisor (and director of Finance, depending on the level of disbursement) to approve invoices for payment so that the matching process can be confirmed.

There Is Adequate Fidelity Insurance for Employees Responsible for Cash Collections

The accounting department employees are covered under a blanket provided through SCERMP. There is a \$1,000 deductible for each incident.

Separate Bank Accounts Are Maintained for Each Fund, or If Not, There Is Adequate Fund Control Over Pooled Cash

The district maintains a pooled-account spreadsheet. This spreadsheet indicates that separate funds are accounted for even though the bank accounts are consolidated. This is the desired accounting practice that achieves fund accountability without the cost of maintaining numerous bank accounts.

Procedures Exist for Authorizing and Recording Interbank and Interfund Transfers and for Providing for Proper Accounting for Those Transactions

The district's bank depository agreements and a journal entry reflecting an interbank transfer provide support for wire transfers. The accounting supervisor is responsible for transfers relating to the SBA investment account and food services. The director of Finance is responsible for transfers relating to the early retirement investment accounts.

The District Has Established Procedures to Provide for Bank Reconciliations

Responsibilities for preparing and approving bank account reconciliations are segregated from those for other cash receipt or disbursement functions. Bank statements are delivered by the Finance Department secretary in unopened envelopes directly to the accounting specialist responsible for preparing the reconciliation.

Bank statements are normally reconciled in a timely manner; however, during the TERMS conversion, bank statement reconciliations could not be completed because of accounting

system issues beyond the control of the Finance Department. As of July 29, 1999, the latest reconciliations were for March 1999. District personnel are working to bring these reconciliations up to date. This notwithstanding, the accounting specialist compares checks with disbursement records and uses a cash book to confirm ending balances. Unusual reconciling items are reviewed and approved by the accounting supervisor.

The accounting specialist examines checks signed manually and endorsements on a test basis. Deposits are also compared to cash receipts entries on a test basis. All checks are pre-numbered and all checks are accounted for.

6 The district has a sound investment program.

The district identifies cash balances that it considers excess to immediate cash needs. The district invests the majority of its available cash balances with the State Board of Administration's Local Government Surplus Funds Trust Fund investment pool created by s. 218.405, F.S. This investment pool operates under the investment guidelines established in s. 215.47, F.S. This fund offers highly liquid investments with competitive rates. The district invests its early retirement program cash balances, as authorized by ss. 236.24 and 237.211, F.S., in bonds and equities and overnight repurchase agreements.

7 The district has established effective procedures for recording receivables.

Based on the limited volume and nature of receivables that are normal for a school board, the District records receivables for financial reporting purposes only at fiscal year end.

8 The district should improve controls to provide for the accountability of employee compensation and provide for the segregation of duties between the payroll disbursement and authorization to change personnel records.

Controls providing accountability for employee compensation and benefits pursuant to an approved compensation plan are also discussed in the Personnel Management chapter of this report, Chapter 11. Section 236.02(4), F.S., and State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.052, F.A.C., require school districts to annually adopt salary schedules for employees that shall be the sole instrument used in determining employee compensation. The district annually adopts and includes in the board minutes the approved salary schedules for school personnel. Additionally, the district has established procedures to ensure that amounts paid to employees are consistent with the amounts provided in the salary schedules. The district's payroll accounting program provides for the calculation of retirement plan contributions and procedures are in place to ensure that those contributions are timely remitted.

The District Should Provide For the Proper Segregation of Duties Between the Payroll Disbursement and the Human Resources/Personnel Records Functions

The Payroll supervisor is responsible for preparing payroll disbursements. During the conversion to the new TERMS application software, the district granted the Payroll supervisor update capabilities to certain TERMS Human Resources applications. The access granted allowed the Payroll supervisor to update or change salary information for all employees. Granting update capabilities to the Payroll supervisor gives this employee the ability to change employee salary rates and subsequently prepare the payroll checks. These incompatible duties could allow errors or irregularities (fraud) to occur and not be detected in a timely basis, if at all. The district should implement controls to provide for the segregation of duties between the payroll disbursement function and the authority to update salary rate information in the Human Resources applications.

The District Should Establish Procedures to Provide For the Supervisory Review or Verification of Changes Made to the Personnel Records

The Human Resources Department is responsible for maintaining and updating personnel records. The district maintains personnel records in a hard copy form and through the computerized Human Resources applications. During the 1998-99 fiscal year, the Human Resources Department did not have procedures in place to monitor changes made to personnel records maintained in the computerized records. Supervisory review, or independent verification by the Human Resources Department, of changes made to the computerized personnel records provides additional assurances that changes made to the personnel records were correct and properly authorized. The district should establish procedures to prepare exception reports on a periodic basis (daily, weekly, etc.) to document the changes made to the computerized personnel records. These exception reports should be reviewed by supervisory personnel to ensure that changes made to the computerized personnel records were correctly entered and supported by documentation authorizing the change(s).

Recommendations

- *Segregate the duties for preparing payroll disbursements and the authority to update salary rate information in the human resource records.*
- *Provide for supervisory review or independent verification of changes made to the computerized personnel records.*

Action Plan 12-5

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Limit access to update personnel records to only those employees in the Human Resources Department and limit access to the inquiry level to those employee that require the information to perform their duties.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Research access granted to employees to the personnel information in the Human Resources applications.</p> <p>Step 2: Restrict access to update personnel records to the Human Resources Department only to those employees in this Department requiring such access to perform their duties.</p> <p>Step 3: For other employees that require access to personnel information to perform their duties, the access should be limited to inquiry only.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Human Resources, director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	To provide for supervisory review and/or independent verification of changes made to the computerized personnel records.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Meet with the director of Educational Technology and discuss preparing exception reports that document all changes made to the computerized personnel records.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish procedures to obtain periodic exception reports documenting all changes made to the computerized personnel records.</p> <p>Step 3: Establish procedures to provide for the independent verification of changes in the computerized personnel records to the documents supporting the authorization for the changes.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Human Resources, director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

9 The district has procedures for analyzing, evaluating, monitoring, and reporting debt-financing alternatives.

The district does not enter into long-term debt financing on a frequent basis. When the district determines that it needs to raise funds to meet district needs, it uses its retained financial advisor who is experienced in the issuance and sale of debt instruments to assist in determining the best financing alternatives given the district's specific needs. Based on the advice of the financial advisor, the district determines the best financing alternatives given the district's specific needs.

10 The district adequately monitors and reports grant activities.

The district receives significant resources from federal grantors. Most of these resources are derived from recurring grants that have been received by the district for many years. Accordingly, procedures to ensure compliance with these grants are well established. District personnel monitor changes in these grant requirements and, as appropriate, procedural changes are made to meet changing grant requirements. Because of the district's familiarity with federal grants, district personnel know to closely review any new federal grants so that procedures to comply with grant requirements can be established. The district assigns an individual to coordinate grants and monitor compliance with grant terms and budgets.

Information Systems

Computer processing is used in significant accounting and administrative applications within the district. The district has an electronic data processing function that reports to the superintendent. This department is subdivided into three functional areas, which report to the director of Educational Technology (ET). These three areas are administrative technology, instructional technology, and communications/infrastructure technology. These functions support not only the district office, but also the county school sites.

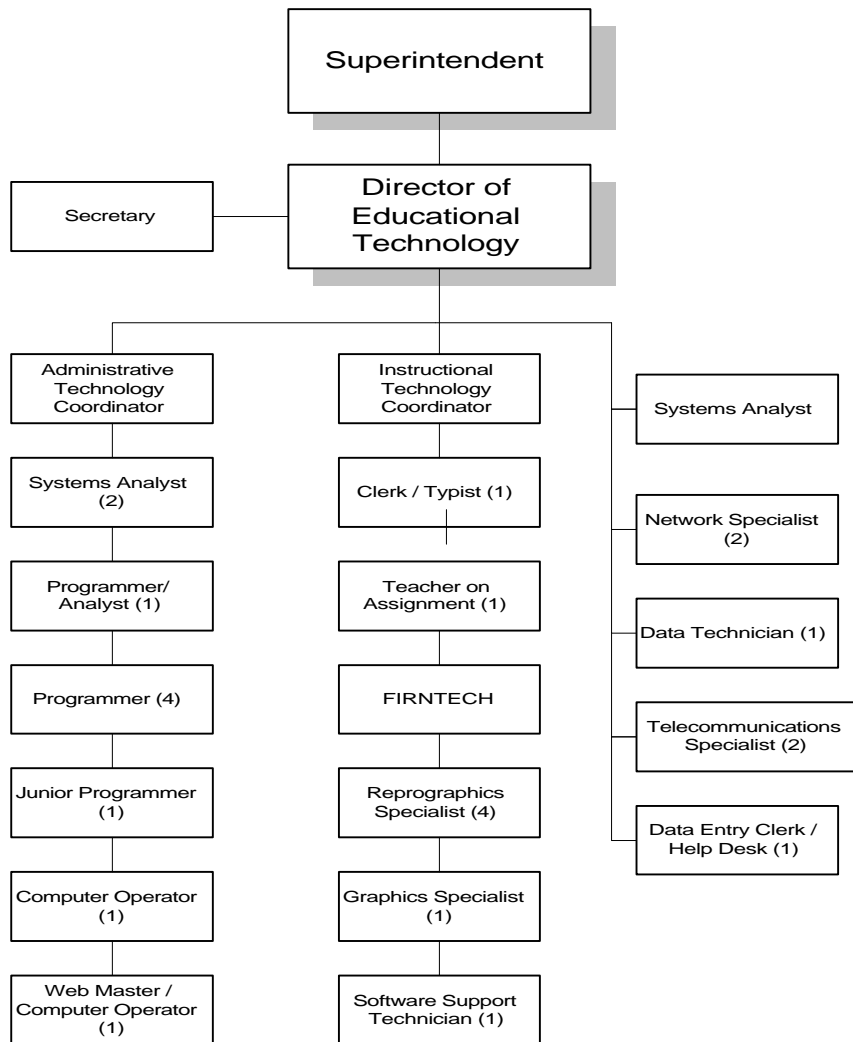
1 The district sufficiently segregates duties to prevent unauthorized transactions.

The ET Department Is Independent from the Accounting and Operating Departments for Which It Processes Data

As indicated in Exhibit 12-3, the district segregates duties to prevent unauthorized transactions.

Exhibit 12-3

Organization Educational Technology Department



The ET Department is independent from the accounting and operating departments. The instructional technology area serves more to coordinate school level technology initiatives. The district has established an Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC), which includes one representative from each school. The Executive Committee approves all major technology decisions.

The Personnel Practices of the ET Function Should Be Improved

Although not documented, there are informal procedures applied in the recruitment and employment of Educational Technology Department employees. All district employees, including Educational Technology Department employees, are subject to reference checks. Further, all district employees must be fingerprinted prior to hiring. However, security statements are not required.

The district should develop security awareness statements to be signed by all employees, including ET employees, who are given access to the district's EDP systems. Included on the district's data systems is critical information, including non-public information for which the dissemination of the information needs to be controlled. By signing the security awareness statements, employees acknowledge that they have access to such information and are to exercise due care in the handling of the information. Such security awareness statements will provide additional protection for the district's critical data.

Rotation of duties is not formally planned, but occurs as different needs and priorities arise. The small Technology Department staff limits the ability to achieve effective rotation of duties. For instance, there are only two computer operators.

Not all terminated employees are removed in a timely manner from the password access list. A list of former employees (those employees who left the district's employment between August 16, 1998, and February 16, 1999) was obtained from Human Resources and traced to see if they had been removed from the password list. Seventeen employees who are no longer employed by the District were still on the password list.

Recommendations

- *Improve personnel controls in the Educational Technology Department to require security statements for all employees who have access to the District's computerized data files.*
- *The district should develop and implement procedures outlining actions required for terminated employees that should include the timely removal from the password listing.*

Action Plan 12-6

Information Systems

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Improve personnel controls to require security statements for all employees who have access to the district's computerized data files.
Action Needed	Establish procedures to ensure that all employees who have access to the district's computerized data files sign security statements.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Educational Technology, and director of Personnel
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Ensure that access rights of terminated employees are timely removed from the password listing.
Action Needed	Develop procedures to ensure that the educational technology department security administrator is made aware of terminated employees in a timely manner.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resources and director of Educational Technology

Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2 The District's user controls ensure authorization prior to processing transactions and ensure that all output represents authorized and valid transactions.

The responsibility for inputting transactions rests with user departments. Each user department is responsible for the entry, edit and approval of all data transactions. For example, in the finance area, all receipt and disbursement transactions are entered by Finance Department employees and subject to controls in that department. (See separate discussion in financial management section of this chapter).

Users are responsible for the entry and edit of their own data. There are system level controls available under the new system (data entry screens will not accept invalid data elements, accounts payable feature identifies duplicate payments) and edit controls (via edit report listings) used by individual departments. Further, each transaction is indexed to avoid duplication of entry.

There are various levels of password security in the TERMS systems to restrict access to data entry to authorized employees. With the exception of controls over terminated employees discussed above, password controls are adequate to restrict access to terminals and data entry.

3 The district has established appropriate data controls between the user and the Educational Technology Department.

Controls Exist Over Data Entry, Including Adequate Supervision and Key Verification of Important Fields; However, Documented Instructions Need to Be Improved

There are adequate screen level data controls for TERMS, as discussed earlier in this section. There is also adequate supervision over data entry in the respective departments. All transactions are reviewed by a supervisor prior to entry, and the supervisor reviews output reports for reasonableness.

There are also TERMS user guides; however, these guides do not provide sufficient instruction. The guides are generally limited to description of individual keys. The accounting area was particularly unhappy with the lack of instructional guidance for operating the Finance system. This TERMS Finance system manual does not provide sufficient process descriptions or decision rules (what to do under certain situations). Up-to-date instructions are key for proper and maximum use of the new system.

Recommendations

- *Develop improved user instructions for all TERMS applications.*

Action Plan 12-7

Information Systems

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop or acquire from the software vendor, system documentation to assist TERMS users in the operation of the software.
Action Needed	Development or acquisition of improved software user manuals.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4 The district should make improvements to its general controls to provide physical security over terminals, limit access to programs and data files, and to control risk in systems development and maintenance.

The District Has a EDP Steering Committee Responsible for Approving All Major Data Processing Projects and Establishing Data Processing Priorities

The superintendent's cabinet is responsible for approval of all major data processing projects and establishing data processing priorities. This committee reviews and approves all software purchases, hardware purchases, and major software enhancements. This committee also establishes priorities for the Educational Technology Department, and approves the long-range plan for computer technology.

The district also has an Educational Technology Advisory Council (ETAC), which has no approval authority, but all recommendations of ETAC generally have been approved.

The District Has Written Short- and Long-Range EDP Plans

The district has documented short-term and long-term technology plans. These plans include administrative technology, instructional technology, technology infrastructure and communications, as well as Educational Technology Department operations. The most recent long-range technology plan is dated February 1, 1998. The plan contains strategies, and each strategy has action steps to implement. The plans include a detailed implementation schedule that shows the specific action, the administrator responsible, and a five-year financial projection and implementation timeline. The technology plan also contains separate schedules that set forth the costs and benefits of each technology strategy.

The district also provides a separate technology plan update annually to the Office of Educational Technology—Florida Department of Education. The most recent update submitted to the Department was October 26, 1998.

While the district has made significant progress in instructional and administrative technology in recent years, several consultants noted that many schools are behind in the use of technology. Many schools are just now being wired for internet use. District short-term goals are noted below.

- Upgrade Windows 3.1 to current standards.
- 30% of teachers will be connected to e-mail and have Internet access.
- 50% of all teachers will be proficient in Microsoft Word and Excel.
- 30% proficiency in Microsoft Office Professional 97 will be achieved.
- Train 30% of staff and 25% of students to be proficient on Internet.
- 30% of schools will be retrofitted (wired) and have Pentium computers by the end of 1998-99.
- 25% of teachers will have laptop computers.

Long-term (two to five years) goals include having a satellite dish at all schools, each classroom having at least one Pentium computer.

Controls Should Be Improved Over Changes to System Software

Changes to system software can be made only by “task lists” approved by the superintendent’s cabinet. Minor changes (such as new reports not requiring significant effort) can be made without cabinet approval.

Actual software changes are tracked only “after the fact.” All programmer/analysts have access to the software code, and there are no controls to prevent unauthorized changes to system software. This presents a serious control weakness that should be addressed immediately. The district should limit access to software code to only those ET employees who must have access to perform their duties.

Education Technology Department Employees Should Be Supervised for All Shifts

The evening shift from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. is unsupervised. However, on many days the Administrative Technology coordinator stays past 5:00 p.m. and is able to supervise. The director of Educational Technology decided that the additional cost of three hours of supervision a day was not worth the benefit of additional security.

The district should require supervision during the evenings. Because of the risk exposure inherent in a data processing operation, all computer operators should be supervised at all times.

Operating Procedures Manuals Are Outdated but Are Currently Being Updated

There is an operator’s handbook, and it is currently being updated for the new system. Until system conversion is complete, operator procedures will continue to change.

However, this does not eliminate the short-term need for documented procedures, particularly since there are only two computer operators.

The Data Processing System Should Be Documented Such that the Organization Could Continue to Operate If Important Data Processing Employees Leave

There is TERMS software documentation, but the director of Educational Technology stated that he would like to see more done in this area. The Educational Technology Department has been consumed with the TERMS conversion, and has been unable to devote the necessary time to the development of current and complete operating procedures.

Based on discussions with the director of Educational Technology and a review of the TERMS manuals, current procedures are not documented to the extent they constitute a best practice.

The District Should Have a Written Policy Standards Manual that Includes Documentation Standards, Systems Development and Maintenance Standards, Operations Policies and Access Security Policies

Based on discussions with the director of Educational Technology, a written policy standards manual has not been accomplished, but is planned after system conversion. There is no mention of this in the district's short-range or long-range technology plans, however.

The District Has a Written Disaster Recovery Plan that Includes Alternative Sites with Compatible Systems for Critical Applications

The district has agreements with three other school districts to provide short-term disaster recovery: Indian River, Brevard, and Osceola school districts. These are reciprocal, local disaster recovery plans for all IBM AS/400 equipment. These agreements were executed in mid-1998, and provide for recovery services within 12-24 hours. There is also very detailed documentation of disaster recovery procedures. Since Martin County backups include data files and application software, they are not dependent on compatible software from these other school districts.

The District Should Develop User-Approved Written Specifications for New Systems and Modifications to Existing Application Systems

Requirement specifications for a new system were not documented by Martin County School District, nor were any requirements informally approved. The software selection process was limited to one software package (TERMS), which is the dominant software package used by school districts in the state of Florida. Consequently, it is assumed that this system will meet the district's functional, reporting and performance needs.

With respect to ongoing enhancements, there is a formal procedure to define specifications and request changes. All major changes must be approved by the superintendent's cabinet.

The district should adopt a formal requirements definition methodology for all future software purchases to ensure that purchased software meets its needs. This methodology could include borrowing and amending established requirements from other Florida school districts. By using this methodology, the district could better evaluate all available options and determine the total cost of the purchased system (software plus needed enhancements).

There Should Be Written Procedures to Test and Implement New Systems and Modifications to Existing Application Systems

There are documented implementation and testing procedures applied in the TERMS conversion; however, these procedures did not include parallel testing. Since the prior computer equipment lease for the Unisys computer was expiring, the district did not have any short-term options to keep this equipment. To avoid two long-term leases, the district decided to let the lease expire, remove the equipment, and start the new system.

The absence of parallel systems has complicated the conversion due to numerous data conversion errors that could have been more easily detected otherwise. The director of Educational Technology stated that his experience with parallel systems is that the users are more reluctant to switch over to the new system—it requires duplicate entry of data into two systems and district staff does not have the time.

Running parallel systems for a defined but limited period of time supports a smoother conversion. It is too late to reverse this testing procedure, but all new systems should be required to run parallel systems.

The district hired a consultant to assess their implementation as of November 1998. This study was a high level study that made several commendations and recommendations. The conclusion of this study was that TERMS was meeting fundamental business and information requirements, and that the relationship with the consortium (through which TERMS was purchased and is supported) should be continued. There are no documented procedures to test and implement modifications to existing application systems; however, these are planned to be developed once the conversion is complete.

The District Has Assessed the Impact of the Year 2000 on Its Information Technology and Has Established a Plan for Becoming Year 2000 Compliant

The district has a documented Y2K plan that was prompted by an Auditor General audit comment from the 1996-97 audit. A Y2K Oversight Committee was established on January 7, 1999, and most of the action items in the Y2K plan are just now underway. The TERMS applications are Y2K compliant. Due to the significance of the effects of Y2K on the district, it should continue to closely monitor its efforts to achieve Y2K compliance.

Recommendations

- *Direct access to software codes should be limited to only those ET employees who need access to perform their duties.*
- *The district should adopt a structured systems development methodology that includes formal definition of requirements and parallel testing.*

- *The Educational Technology Department should document all system operating procedures and controls, as well as system testing and implementation procedures.*
- *The district should continue to monitor its efforts to ensure a smooth Y2K transition.*
- *The district should ensure that all work shifts are supervised. One possible way to ensure this is to stagger the work hours of the supervisors so that their work hours overlap all work shifts.*

Action Plan 12-8**Information Systems**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Direct access to software codes should be limited to only those ET employees for whom access is required to perform their duties.
Action Needed	Develop procedures to limit the access to software codes to only those employees that require such access to perform their duties. Alternatively, establish procedures to monitor all accesses to software code to determine the appropriateness of the changes made.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	As soon as possible.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should adopt a structured systems development methodology that includes formal definition of requirements and parallel testing.
Action Needed	Development of a structured systems methodology that includes a formal definition of requirements and parallel testing.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, executive director of Operations, and director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The Educational Technology Department should document all system operating procedures and controls, as well as system testing and implementation procedures.
Action Needed	Development of operating system procedures manual.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations and director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Ensure that computer operators are properly supervised for all shifts.

Action Needed	Revise supervisory employees work schedule or change computer operators production schedules.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	As soon as possible.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

B. Purchasing

Background

The Department of Purchasing and Warehousing is staffed with a director of Purchasing and Warehousing, a purchasing secretary, four expeditors, and one warehouse clerk. The purchasing staff consists of the director of Purchasing and Warehousing and the purchasing secretary. They are responsible for all district procurement activities. One warehouse clerk and four expeditors operate the warehouse and courier service. One of the expeditors performs the district's courier service on a full-time basis, and another makes deliveries of supplies and commodities to schools and other district facilities. The warehouse clerk enters warehouse orders into the inventory control system upon receipt from the district schools and facilities on a daily basis. The warehouse clerk maintains all warehouse records and issues inventory reports, account activity reports, and requests for purchases.

The Finance Department is staffed with a director of Finance, supervisor of Accounting, supervisor of Payroll, three accounting specialists and two payroll specialists. The goal of the director of Finance is to "ensure that the district's financial records are maintained in accordance with law and generally accepted accounting practices to support the mission of the district and that payroll and other obligations are paid accurately and on time." The goal of the supervisor of Accounting is to "ensure that required financial reports and vendor payments are completed accurately and in a timely manner and that bank statements are reconciled promptly." The three accounting specialists are responsible for routine accounting functions, including accounts payable, and the preparation of reports and special studies.

Requisitioning, Authorizing, and Receiving—————

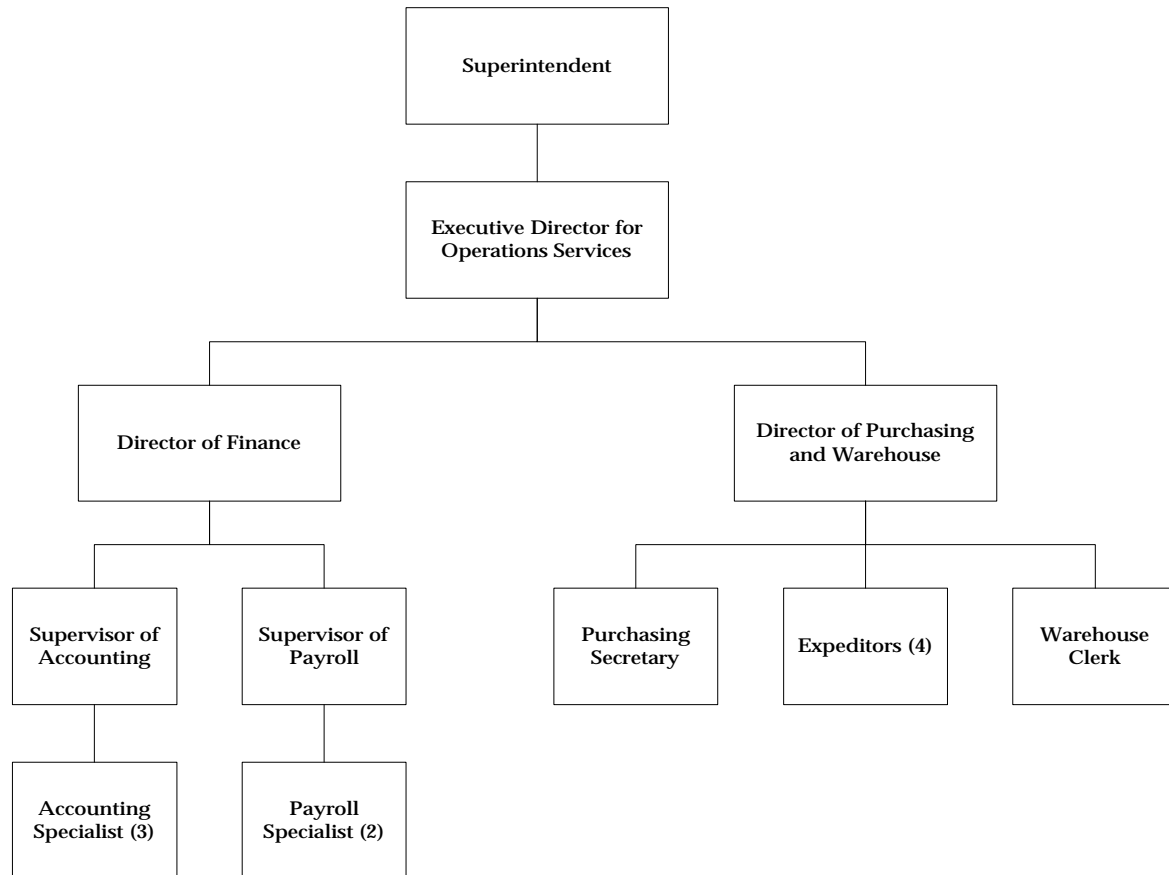
1 The district segregates purchasing responsibilities from the requisitioning, authorizing and receiving functions.

In general, responsibilities for the requisitioning, purchasing, and receiving functions are segregated from the invoice processing, accounts payable, and general ledger functions. Requisitions and purchase orders are prepared by the originating departments and are approved by the principals or department heads. The director of Purchasing and Warehousing is responsible for reviewing approved purchase orders and signs the purchase orders evidencing this review. Goods and services are received at the warehouse or schools. Goods received at the central warehouse are processed by the warehouse clerk.

The director of Purchasing and Warehousing is responsible for the overall monitoring of the purchasing process and he supervises warehouse employees; however, he is not involved directly with requisitioning or receiving the goods or services. (Exhibit 12-4.)

Exhibit 12-4

Organization: Purchasing and Accounting Functions



Source: Department of Finance and Department of Purchasing and Warehousing.

According to district's policy manual, any authorized purchase of a group of items costing more than \$10,000 must also follow the district's documented bid procedures. The superintendent is authorized to issue invitations to bid without prior school board approval in cases where he/she determined that, due to unforeseen circumstances, time is of the essence. In such cases, as with all bids required by this rule, bids received will be submitted to the school board for their approval. For construction contracts between \$3,000 and \$10,000, the district requires three quotes prior to initiation of a purchase order.

Both the Departments of Finance and Purchasing and Warehousing have separate departmental budgets. With its organizational structure, procedures, and budgetary controls, the district has segregated these responsibilities appropriately.

The responsibilities for invoice processing and accounts payable functions are sufficiently segregated from the general ledger functions. Because of the relatively small size of the accounting staff, there is some cross-sharing of duties during peak transaction periods. However, standard operating procedures segregate invoice processing and general ledger

functions among accounting staff. The job descriptions provided by the district do not reflect this, but they are being updated to reflect actual operations.

2 The Martin County School District has established controls for authorizing purchase requisitions.

Purchases of goods and services are initiated by properly authorized requisitions bearing the approval of officials designated to authorize requisitions. According to the director of Purchasing and Warehousing, principals, assistant principals (in the absence of principals), directors, coordinators, and anyone responsible for a particular budget has the authorization to approve purchase requisitions.

Requisitions are pre-numbered and those numbers are controlled, and the appropriation to be charged is indicated on the purchase requisition by the person requesting the purchase. The district's new administrative software, TERMS, automatically numbers purchase requisitions.

Before commitment, unobligated funds remaining under the appropriation are verified by the accounting or budget department through TERMS as sufficient to meet the proposed expenditure. TERMS does not allow a purchase order to be issued unless there are adequate budget funds to cover the commitment.

3 Martin County School District needs to improve its policies and procedures governing purchasing authorization.

With the director of Purchasing and Warehousing spending much of his time on small-dollar purchases, the district is not structuring authorizations to give appropriate recognition to the nature and size of purchases and the experience of purchasing personnel.

Board policy requires district personnel to obtain three quotes for construction-related purchase orders exceeding \$3,000 and less than \$10,000. Board policy also requires competitive bidding and board approval of purchases exceeding \$10,000.

Purchase orders are required for purchases more than \$25, and the director of Purchasing and Warehousing must sign each purchase requisition and purchase order. By approving all purchases more than \$25, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing spends much of his time on relatively low-dollar-value procurement decisions. With this approval process, the district is not structuring purchasing authorizations to allow the director of Purchasing and Warehousing to focus his limited time and energy on large dollar purchase decisions.

Although Informal Procedures Are in Place, the District's Written Purchasing Procedures Have Several Deficiencies

The director of Purchasing and Warehousing has a purchasing guide for district employees called "You want it ..., When?" This guide describes the various methods of purchase, cancellation of purchase orders, return of material, receiving procedures, and reporting

damages. The district also has procedures for public advertisement of non-shelf item procurements in accordance with legal requirements in its policy manual. The district, however, has not established or documented procedures regarding:

- *Coordination and consolidation of planned purchases.* Although the district does not have written procedures for coordination and consolidation of planned purchase, the Purchasing and Warehousing Department maintains a bid calendar, which assists in planning purchases for the district. This calendar projects the date for bids until June 2001.
- *Consideration of bids issued by other agencies.* Although informal procedures are in place to consider competitive bids by other agencies (i.e., state contracts, purchasing consortiums, and other districts) in making purchasing decisions, the district does not have written procedures to consider competitive bids by other agencies. The director of Purchasing and Warehousing has historically “piggy-backed” on the competitive bids issued by other government entities; however, the department does not have written procedures that ensure bids from other districts comply with board policies.
- *Identification of costs and expenditures not allowable under grant or loan agreements.* Although it has informal procedures, the district has not modified its written procedures to handle the disbursement of funds under grant or loan agreements and related regulations that differ from the district's normal policies. The district routes purchase requisitions funded through federal, state, or local grants through the educational coordinator responsible for the program. Approval from the educational coordinator for that program is required prior to initiation of the purchase requisition. The draft purchasing procedures manual states “it is the responsibility of the requestor to: ... ensure that all Federal, State, and Local Grant requirements are met, if different than district procurement requirements, prior to submission of a requisition to Purchasing.”
- *Conflicts of interest and business practice policies.* The district's policy manual does not include a purchasing ethics policy. The director of Purchasing and Warehousing has drafted a code of conduct for the new purchasing procedures manual.
- *Adequate number of price quotations.* The district's policies and procedures are not sufficient to ensure that an adequate number of price quotations are obtained before placing orders not subject to formalized competitive bidding. The district has a policy requiring three quotes for construction contracts, but it does not have a policy pertaining to non-construction related purchases. The district is developing a draft of this policy for its purchase procedures manual.
- *Splitting purchase orders.* The district prohibits the practice of splitting orders, but does not have a written policy prohibiting the practice.

As noted above, the director of Purchasing and Warehouse is developing a purchase procedures manual; however, this document has not been completed by the director, reviewed and approved by the superintendent and board, or distributed to district staff.

The District Has an Adequate Record of Open Purchase Orders and Agreements and a List of Items / Services Exempt from Competition

The district maintains an adequate record of open purchase orders and agreements. The TERMS application software tracks open purchase orders. The Purchasing Department keeps a list of agreements called “MCSD Bids/RFPs in Chronological Order by Projected

Award or Expiration Date.” The district also tracks purchase orders issued in accordance with board approved bids by month.

The district has a list of items/services exempt from competitive selection listed in School Board

Rule 6Gx43-7.10(8) as follows:

The requirement for requesting bids from three (3) or more sources is hereby waived as provided by law for the purchase of professional or educational services, educational tests, textbooks and printed instructional materials, computer software, films, filmstrips, video tapes, disc or tape recordings, or similar audio-visual materials, and for library and reference books, and printed library cards where such materials are purchased directly from the producer or publisher, the owner of the copyright, an exclusive agent within the state, a governmental agency or a recognized educational institution. Any additional exemptions must comply with F.S. 237.02 and State Board Rule 6A-1.012(8).

The draft of the purchasing procedures manual also indicates a list of purchases exempt from competitive selection requirements. The district tracks sole source suppliers through a filing system recording all sole source suppliers with purchases of more than \$5,000.

4 Martin County School District has a system to ensure accountability in the actual receipt and quality of purchased goods.

The district has taken appropriate steps to ensure accountability in the receipt of purchased goods. Receiving reports are prepared for all purchased goods, and steps are taken to ensure that goods received are accurately counted and examined to see that they meet quality standards. Receiving reports are numerically accounted for or otherwise controlled to ensure that all receipts are reported to the accounting department by the purchase order number. Goods are counted and examined upon receipt by the requesting school or department.

The district has written procedures to ensure the receipt and quality of purchased goods. For capital purchases for such items as computers (large quantities), lawn mowers, floor scrubbers, playground equipment, and kitchen equipment, each school and department is responsible for receiving and inspection of new purchases. The director of Purchasing and Warehousing is incorporating procedures to address claims for shortages or damaged goods in the draft purchasing procedures manual.

District employees with specialized knowledge act as technical representatives and are assigned to monitor and evaluate contractor performance and approve receipt of services with respect to procurement of special purpose materials, services, or facilities. For example, the Facilities Department approves payment for facilities improvements and construction and the Educational Technology Department is responsible for evaluating supplier performance for technology purchases.

5 The district has established controls for processing invoices to ensure that quantities, prices and terms coincide with purchase orders, and receiving reports.

The Martin County School District has appropriate procedures for invoice processing. Copies of open, approved purchase orders are maintained in an alphabetical file in the accounting department. These files also contain the receiving report, which is a separate copy of the purchase order. The receiving school or department checks off amounts on the purchase order receiver if amounts agree, or enters the amounts received if different. The person recording the receipt also signs the form and submits it to the accounting department.

All district mail is received and opened by a secretary in the Accounting Department. Some school mail, including invoices, is sent directly to the school. With the exception of internal account invoices, all invoices are forwarded to the accounts payable specialist. In rare situations when an invoice is received elsewhere, it is forwarded to the Accounting Department. Once an invoice is received from the supplier, a volunteer performs the matching of the paperwork, including the invoice document, the purchase order, and the receiving report. The accounts payable specialist compares actual quantities, prices and terms, and verifies the invoice accuracy.

The accounting specialist responsible for accounts payable (accounts payable specialist) resolves any variances among purchase orders, receiving reports, and invoices by contacting the supplier and/or the requestor.

The district has procedures to ensure that the accounts payable system is properly accounting for unmatched receiving reports and invoices and for adjusting the reserve for encumbrances (obligations) when invoices are processed for payment. This function is accomplished via the TERMS un-encumbrance feature.

Unmatched items are identified by the volunteer and presented to the accounting specialist. In some cases, unmatched items are identified by a supplier who has not received payment. The new TERMS system will track these outstanding items automatically and generate a "tickler" report of unmatched items.

All invoices for long-term contracts are sent to the Facilities Department for approval. There is a special form that must be submitted by contractors and approved by the construction supervisor before payment can be made. Once this is returned to the Accounting Department, the package is processed like any other invoice.

Access to the EDP Master Vendor File Should Be Limited to Employees Authorized to Make Changes, and the District Should Verify that Suppliers Actually Exist

All accounting department employees and the purchasing secretary have password access to change the master vendor file. In addition, employees in the Department of Education Technology have password authorization to change the master vendor file as well as any other master files. The district also does not verify the actual existence of a supplier. With access to the master vendor file, district personnel could theoretically change the name of a supplier, run the checks, and then change the supplier name back to the original name.

Since accounting personnel approves only purchase orders and not expenditures and the existence of suppliers are not verified, the access to the master vendor file by numerous individuals creates the possibility of payment to an unauthorized supplier. Alternatively, the district could develop an edit report that documents all changes to the EDP master vendor file for each transaction period. The changes documented on this report should be reviewed for propriety by the director of Purchasing and Warehousing, and any unusual changes should be promptly investigated.

6 The district should improve controls over disbursement approval.

Procedures Need to Be Developed and Implemented for Disbursement Approval

The invoice approval functions are performed by the accounts payable specialist, who checks pricing and mathematical accuracy, and the volunteer, who performs matching of the invoice to the receiving report and the purchase order. Since checks are signed with two signatures automatically, a check signer does not review the voucher package, consisting of the invoice and all supporting documentation, for propriety. The district should develop procedures to ensure that all voucher packages are reviewed by someone other than the person processing the payments prior to issuing the checks to the vendors.

7 The district has established controls to ensure payables/ encumbrances are properly authorized, documented and recorded.

Encumbrance (obligation) entries are recorded on the basis of approved purchase orders. The assignment of a purchase order number is done only after the approval of the requesting department and the Accounting Department. Once the purchase order is assigned, the TERMS system records the transaction as an outstanding obligation, or encumbrance. The Accounting Department verifies that the account code on the requisition is appropriate.

Once payments are made, the posting of the disbursement into the accounting system converts the encumbrance to an actual expenditure. This serves as notification to the department heads that payments on encumbrances are made.

Recommendations

- *MCSD should complete the purchasing procedures manual and distribute the manual to all appropriate staff members.*

- *MCSD should require that prior to issuing the checks to the vendors, all voucher packages be reviewed by someone other than the employee processing the payments.*
- *MCSD should limit access to the master vendor file, implement procedures to monitor changes to the master vendor file, implement procedures to verify that suppliers actually exist, and allow payment only on original supplier invoices.*

Action Plan 12-9

Requisitioning, Authorizing, and Receiving

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Complete the draft purchasing procedures manual and distribute the manual to all appropriate staff members.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing should develops additional purchasing procedures and should completes the draft purchasing procedures manual.</p> <p>Step 2: Upon completion, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should submits the draft purchasing manual to the superintendent and senior district management personnel for review.</p> <p>Step 3: After review, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should finalizes the purchasing procedures manual and should submits it to the Martin County School Board for approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The Martin County School Board should approves the purchasing procedures manual after any necessary revisions.</p> <p>Step 5: After board approval, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should distributes copies of the purchasing procedures manual to district employees as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Purchasing and Warehousing, superintendent, Martin County School Board
Time Frame	March 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Require the review and approval of invoices by someone other than the employee processing the payments prior to issuing the checks to the vendors.
Action Needed	Implementation of procedures for the review of voucher packages by employees that have not processed the payments.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Accounting; director of Finance
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Limit access to the master vendor file, review changes to master vendor file, implement procedures to verify that supplier actually exist, and allow payment only on original supplier invoices.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Finance, director of Purchasing and Warehousing, and director of Educational Technology should develop a plan to limit access to update the master vendor listing to appropriate purchasing department personnel. This plan could include the development of an edit run to show all changes to the master vendor listing so that the changes can be monitored.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing should develop procedures to verify periodically the actual existence of suppliers.</p> <p>Step 3: The supervisor of Accounting and the director of Finance should develop procedures to allow payment only on an original invoice.</p> <p>Step 4: The executive director of Operation Services should review and approve the new procedures after any necessary changes.</p> <p>Step 5: After approval, the district should implement these plans and procedures.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Accounting; director of Finance; director of Purchasing and Warehousing; director of Educational Technology; executive director of Operation Services
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Purchasing Process

1 The district needs to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its purchasing process.

Although the District Is Implementing an Automated Purchase Requisition System Through TERMS, the Current Purchase Requisition Process Is Manually Intensive and Overly Reliant on Paper Forms

The Martin County School District requests and authorizes the procurement of goods and services by requiring staff at schools and departments to identify their needs via a purchase requisition. The requisition is entered into the district's mainframe computer system, printed out, and forwarded through inter-office mail to the Department of Finance, the original requestor, and the Department of Purchasing and Warehousing. The requisition is reviewed and signed at each location. The purchase requisition is converted into a purchase order after all reviews and signatures. The Director of Purchasing and Warehousing must

sign each purchase requisition and purchase order. The district is implementing a new administrative software system, TERMS, which should reduce the transfer of paper requisitions among schools and departments through inter-office mail.

The District Has Not Analyzed the Cost and Benefits of Streamlining the Purchase Approval Process for Small Dollar Purchases

Purchase orders are required for purchases over \$25. This requirement also applies to travel expenses, reimbursements, subscriptions, advertisements, proprietary educational media, fees, dues, and other miscellaneous requirements that are not subject to potential alternate source selection. Of the 7,796 purchase orders in 1998-99, the Director of Purchasing and Warehousing reviewed and approved 3,506 purchase orders (45%) with a value between \$25 and \$500 (Exhibit 12-5).

Exhibit 12-5

Purchase Orders by Dollar Value Martin County School District, 1998-99

Range of Dollar Value	Number of Purchase Orders	Percent
\$25 and less	39	0.5
\$25 - \$50	319	4.1
\$50 - \$100	661	8.4
\$100 - \$500	2,526	32.4
\$500 - \$1,000	1,183	15.2
\$1,000 - \$3,000	1,744	22.4
\$3,000 - \$5,000	651	8.4
\$5,000 - \$10,000	245	3.1
\$10,000 and greater	428	5.5
Total	7,796	100.0

Source: Department of Purchasing and Warehousing, MCSD.

A limited number of blanket purchase orders are issued to selected suppliers to promote a more efficient method of authorizing the purchase of small dollar value items. Even with the implementation of TERMS, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing will be required to review and approve all purchase orders. Albeit, these approvals will be electronic instead of paper based approvals.

Recommendations

- *MCSD should complete its implementation of the purchasing system provided in TERMS.*
- *MCSD should analyze the costs and benefits of the purchasing approval process for small dollar purchases, and streamline the approval process for purchases under \$500.*

Action Plan 12-10**Purchasing Process**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Complete the implementation of the TERMS purchasing system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing should discuss the implementation of the TERMS purchasing system with the director of Educational Technology.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Educational Technology should appoint a project manager for implementing the TERMS purchasing system.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing, the director of Educational Technology, and the project manager should develop a timeline and budget for full implementation of the purchasing system.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing, the director of Educational Technology, and the project manager should develop and present the timeline and budget to the superintendent and the board.</p> <p>Step 5: The superintendent and Martin County School Board should approve the timeline and budget after any necessary revisions.</p> <p>Step 6: Upon approval, the project manager should begin the implementation of the TERMS purchasing system.</p> <p>Step 7: The TERMS purchasing system goes on-line.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Purchasing and Warehousing, director of Educational Technology, appointed project manager, superintendent, Martin County School Board
Time Frame	July 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished as part of the overall system replacement.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Analyze the costs and benefits of the purchasing approval process for small dollar purchases and streamline the approval process for purchases under \$500.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing and director of Finance should analyze the costs and benefits of the existing approval process for small dollar purchases.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing and director of Finance should identify and analyze solutions for streamlining this approval process, including increased use of blanket purchase orders and procurement cards.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing and director of Finance should present the analysis and recommendations to the Superintendent and the Martin County School Board.</p> <p>Step 4: The superintendent and Martin County School Board should approve the proposed recommendations after any necessary discussion and revisions.</p> <p>Step 5: After approval, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing and director of Finance should begin the implementation of the revised approval process for small dollar purchases.</p> <p>Step 6: The revised approval process for small dollar purchases is implemented.</p> <p>Step 7: After implementation, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing and director of Finance should revise staff requirements based on the approval process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Purchasing and Warehousing, director of Finance, superintendent, Martin County School Board
Time Frame	July 2000
Fiscal Impact	With the use of more blanket purchase orders or procurement cards, the district could eliminate 45 percent of district purchase orders and reduce the workload of the director of Purchasing and Warehousing and accounting specialists responsible for accounts payable. The additional time available from the new approval process should be used for managing programs associated with the new approval process and for more valued added management activities. This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. Asset and Risk Management

Background

Responsibilities for the asset and risk management functions at Martin County School District are divided among the director of Finance, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing, and the risk manager.

The director of Finance is responsible for maintaining the district's financial records in accordance with law and generally accepted accounting practices. Reporting to the director of Finance, the property control specialist maintains a complete record of all fixed assets owned by the district. The district produces a general inventory report listing all district-owned assets. Detailed property records are periodically compared with existing assets.

The director of Purchasing and Warehousing is responsible for managing the district's warehouse staff who receives and inspects most new assets purchased by the district. For capital purchases for such items as computers (large quantities), lawn mowers, floor scrubbers, playground equipment, and kitchen equipment, schools are responsible for receiving and inspecting these purchases upon receipt.

The risk manager is responsible for managing the district's insurance, loss control, fringe benefits, and safety and risk related programs. The district has three main providers of insurance coverage. Through its participation in the risk management consortium of the South Central Educational Risk Management Program (SCERMP), the Martin County School District has property and casualty, general liability, and workers' compensation insurance coverage. The district has an on-site safety officer provided through its association with SCERMP. The district's health and life insurance coverage is provided through commercial insurance companies.

Asset Management

1 The Martin County School District has segregated responsibilities for custody of assets from record keeping responsibilities for those assets.

Responsibilities for initiating, evaluating, and approving capital expenditures, leases, and maintenance or repair projects are segregated from those for project accounting, property records, and general ledger functions.

Responsibilities for initiating capital asset transactions are segregated from those for final approvals that commit government resources. The directors of Finance and Purchasing and Warehousing have authority for capital asset transactions. The director of Facilities is responsible for most capital expenditures and maintenance, property leases, and repair projects. The property control specialist is not responsible for approving property transactions and does not have experience in general ledger functions.

The Finance Department is primarily responsible for project accounting, property records, and general ledger functions. Responsibilities for the project accounting and property records functions are segregated from the general ledger functions. The property control specialist maintains property records, but cannot authorize general ledger entries. Additionally, responsibilities for the project accounting and property records functions are segregated from the custodial function.

2 The district has established procedures that provide for effective review of asset acquisitions.

Those individuals authorized to initiate capital asset transactions are identified and there is clear definition of the limits of their authority. The superintendent and his/her designee are authorized to approve all contracts or purchase orders for items up to \$5,000. The superintendent's designation for this authority must be in writing. The superintendent has

designated the director of Purchasing and Warehousing in writing for this purpose. According to the district's policy manual, purchases over \$5,000 will be submitted to the school board for approval.

The Purchasing Department tracks purchase orders issued in accordance with board approved bids. The information tracked by the Department of Purchasing and Warehousing includes supplier name, description of product, cost of the product, supporting authority for the purchase, requisition number, purchase order number, and school / department. As of November 1998, the district had an automated purchase requisition system called TERMS. However, at that time, on-line approval was not operational. Until on-line approval is available, all requisitions need the appropriate signatures (on the printed purchase requisition) before they are forwarded to purchasing to be converted into purchase orders.

According to the district's policy manual, any authorized purchase of a group of items costing more than \$10,000 must also follow the district's documented bid procedures. The superintendent is authorized to issue invitations to bid without prior school board approval in cases where he/she determined that, due to unforeseen circumstances, time is of the essence. In such cases, as with all bids required by this rule, bids received will be submitted to the school board for its approval. For construction contracts, bids will be requested when cost is greater than \$10,000 and less than \$25,000. For construction projects amounting to \$25,000 or more, other requirements apply including legal newspaper notice, press release for bid openings, and a performance bond. In addition, the superintendent or his designee will prepare all contracts for projects exceeding \$25,000, and submit them to the school board attorney for approval, insuring that the necessary sections of the State Board Rules (Chapter 6A-2) are correctly followed.

The district has documented procedures to authorize, approve, and document sales or other dispositions of capital assets in its recently revised accounting procedures. The general procedures for the disposition of property and equipment are detailed in Section 14: Fixed Asset Handbook of these procedures.

Since It Has Not Historically Used Other Financing Alternatives, the District Has Not Developed Procedures for Approving Decisions Regarding Financing Alternatives and Accounting Principles, Practices, and Methods

Except for copy machines, the Martin County School District has not historically used other financing alternatives, such as leasing, and has not had a need for approval procedures regarding financing alternatives. However, the district is starting to evaluate leasing as a financing alternative and will need procedures for approving leasing and other financing-related decisions.

Although Not Written, the District Has Procedures for Grant-Funded Capital Asset Acquisitions

Grant-funded acquisitions are subjected to the same controls as internally- funded acquisitions; however, the district does not have written procedures for obtaining grantor approval, if required, for the use of grant funds for capital asset acquisitions. The district's purchase requisition process routes purchase requisitions funded through federal, state, or local grants through the educational coordinator responsible for the program. Approval from the educational coordinator for that program is required prior to initiation of the purchase requisition.

3 The district has established records that accumulate project costs and other relevant data to facilitate reporting construction and maintenance activities to the board, public, and grantors.

The district has key tools in place to effectively manage project accounting, including project account codes to track project costs, qualified employees to inspect and monitor complex projects, and a review process for charges to fixed asset and expenditure projects. Martin County School District has a system of project account codes to track expenditures of grant-funded and capital projects. Project expenses are also tracked by fund. In addition, purchase requisitions for grant-funded and capital projects have to be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department. For example, the director of Facilities has to approve purchases for facilities improvement and construction; the media specialist from the department of Educational Technology is responsible for the approval of technology purchases; and the educational coordinators are responsible for the approval of grant-funded purchases for their programs. The accounting specialist responsible for accounts payable also reviews the accounting distribution of purchases to ensure proper allocation of charges to fixed asset and expenditure projects.

4 Although it has, in general, established accountability for capitalized assets, the district should improve asset accountability and promptly investigate discrepancies in fixed asset records.

The Martin County School District Has Established Procedures and Policies to Distinguish Between Capital Projects' Fund Expenditures and Operating Budget Expenditures, and Identify Operating Budget Expenditures to Be Capitalized in the Fixed Asset Account Group.

The district distinguishes between capital projects' fund expenditures and operating budget expenditures via fund number. The district identifies operating budget expenditures to be capitalized in the fixed asset account group by object number.

Although It Has Procedures for Obsolete Equipment and Controls for Capital Expenditure and Repair Projects, the District Needs to Establish Written Procedures for Other Aspects of Asset Accountability

The district has documented procedures to identify, collect, and dispose of surplus or obsolete equipment in Section 14: Fixed Asset Handbook of its accounting procedures. As indicated in this handbook, the district uses its Equipment Disposal Request Form to document the seven-step process for disposal of obsolete equipment. According to the property control specialist, all surplus or obsolete equipment for disposal is sent to the Maintenance Department with a completed Equipment Disposal Form and stored in the warehouse. The board approves the assets for disposal, and the district holds an annual auction in April.

Procedures exist to ensure that purchased materials and services for capital expenditure and repair projects are subjected to the same levels of controls as exist for all other procurements (i.e., receiving, approval, checking). This is accomplished via the purchase requisition approval process. For example, the director of Facilities approves purchase requisitions for construction projects, and the media specialist from the department of Educational Technology is responsible for the approval of technology purchases.

Gaps in written procedures include the two below.

- **Inventory of Property Rights.** Although the Supervisor of Construction manages the documentation of property rights (for example, deeds, leases and the like), the district lacks procedures for the periodic inventory of documents evidencing property rights.
- **Disposition of Property Acquired with Grant Funds.** The district does not have procedures for monitoring the appropriate disposition of property acquired with grant funds. The district has documented procedures to identify, collect, and dispose of surplus or obsolete equipment in Section 14: Fixed Asset Handbook in its accounting procedures. However, the manual does not have specific written procedures for the disposition of property acquired with grant funds. According to the property control specialist, the items that are grant funded are flagged in the computer system and require the approval of the program coordinator.

The District Maintains and Periodically Updates Detail Property Records For All Significant Assets; However, Detailed Property Records Are Not Periodically Reconciled With the General Ledger Control Accounts and Differences Between Asset Records and Physical Counts Are Not Always Promptly Investigated

As required by the state of Florida, the Facilities Department maintains an inventory of all significant self-constructed assets on a state computer system called the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH). The FISH lists every building and every component of every building, and provides a condition assessment for each facility.

One-half of an accounting specialist position in the department of Finance is responsible for maintaining fixed asset records of donated, purchased or leased assets; conducting an annual inventory of fixed assets in April; and investigating discrepancies in fixed asset inventories. However, with limited staffing and increasing number of assets, the accounting specialist is not able to always complete these functions. The accounting specialist has relied on warehouse personnel to assist in recording, tagging, and inventory of assets. Other functions that are not being performed by the accounting specialist include training of property custodians in schools and departments, valuation of donated property, audits of site inventories, and preparation for bids and auctions.

The Accounting Department also has not periodically reconciled detailed property records with the general ledger control accounts. Although it has procedures for investigating missing items, the district has not always promptly investigated discrepancies in fixed asset inventories. For example, during the 1996-97 fiscal year, an inventory of fixed assets at one school indicated the loss of two computers. Due to staffing shortages, the loss was eventually written off, without an investigation of the loss.

Recommendations

- *The district should provide for the safeguarding of district assets and ensure that property records are accurately maintained.*
- *The district should provide for the prompt investigation of property items not located during the annual physical counts of fixed assets and hold property custodians accountable for safeguarding of property.*

Action Plan 12-11

Asset Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide for the safeguarding of district assets and ensure that property records are accurately maintained.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Finance should develop procedures for reconciling property records to the general ledger control accounts on a periodic basis.</p> <p>Step 2: The supervisor of Accounting and director of Finance should reconcile property records to the general ledger control accounts on a periodic basis.</p> <p>Step 3: The superintendent should propose to the board that the property control specialist be a full-time position reporting to the director of Purchasing and Warehousing.</p> <p>Step 4: The Board should approve the property control specialist position as a full-time position.</p> <p>Step 5: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing, director of Finance, and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations should develop a job description for the property control specialist.</p> <p>Step 6: After board approval and development of a job description, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should hire a full-time property control specialist.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Finance, director of Purchasing and Warehousing, director of Personnel and Employee Relations, superintendent, board.
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	\$25,785 in salaries and benefits.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Provide for the prompt investigation of property items not located during the annual physical counts of fixed assets and hold property custodians accountable for safeguarding of property.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Property Control specialist should identify all property items not located during the annual physical inventory counts.</p> <p>Step 2: The Property Control specialist should investigate all items not located and should report all missing property items to the Director of Purchasing and Warehousing, Director of Finance, and the appropriate law enforcement agency.</p> <p>Step 3: The Property Control Specialist should prepare a detailed list of all property items not located by school or department and should present the listing to each property custodian and the Director of Purchasing and Warehousing for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The Executive Director of Operations should submit the listings of property items not located to Board for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 5: After approval by the Board, the property items should be removed from the active property records.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Finance, director of Purchasing and Warehousing, Property custodians, and the Property Control specialist
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Inventory Management

1 Martin County School District maintains and distributes relatively high warehouse inventory compared to peer districts.

The district relies on its warehouse to store and distribute the supplies and materials needed by schools to start the new school year.

Martin County School District has an inventory of 126,648 units valued at \$234,343.49. As indicated in Exhibit 12-6, warehouse inventory has increased from 93,402 units or 6.67 units per student in 1995-96 to 181,708 units or 12.04 units per student in 1997-98.

Exhibit 12-6

Warehouse Inventory Per Student, 1996-99

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99 (partial)
Number of Units	93,402	107,287	181,708	126,648
Value	\$203,545.55	\$217,189.02	\$267,510.93	\$234,343.49
Enrollment	14,020	14,555	15,087	16,331
Inventory Per Student				
Number of Units / Student	6.67	7.37	12.04	7.75
Value / Student	\$14.52	\$14.92	\$17.73	\$14.35

Source: Department of Purchasing and Warehousing, MCSD.

One of the main features of the district's inventory management system is the annual order placed by district schools. Each year, schools place an order for supplies needed to start the next school year. The director of Purchasing and Warehousing analyzes the order quantities, contract order requirements, and the last two years usage to determine the optimum order quantity to satisfy the large annual order and provide an appropriate safety stock. The orders are filled and delivered to the school during the summer. The district's philosophy is not to maximize turns but to minimize out-of-stock items.

The warehouse also receives the bulk of purchased replenishment items just prior to the annual inventory. This practice began in 1997-98 and is done to allow for delivery of all the annual orders prior to the beginning of school. In the past, the warehouse received replenishment stock after the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. The combination of a heavy receiving load and a high level of out-of-stock items prevented the warehouse from efficiently filling annual orders and completing delivery of the annual orders prior to the beginning of school. The 1997-98 school year was the first year deliveries were completed prior to the beginning of school.

Peer Districts Maintain Much Less Warehouse Inventory than the Martin County School District

Instead of managing an extensive storage and distribution network, some school districts are using large national office supply companies to maintain and distribute supplies to individual schools. For example, St. Johns County School District negotiates the purchase and delivery of supplies directly to individual schools and carries only 576 units of inventory valued at \$60,000 (Exhibit 12-7).

Exhibit 12-7

Warehouse Inventory Per Student Peer Districts, 1998-99

	St. Johns	Indian River	Martin	Charlotte
Number of Units	576	300	126,648	700
Value	\$60,000.00	\$65,000	\$234,343.49	\$250,000
Enrollment	18,289	14,003	16,331	16,491
Number of Units / Student	0.03	0.02	7.75	0.04
Value / Student	\$3.28	\$4.64	\$14.35	\$15.16

Source: Department of Purchasing and Warehousing, MCS D and peer school districts.

Even though St. Johns is larger in terms of enrollment than Martin County, St. Johns has less than 1% of the warehouse inventory items of Martin County. St. Johns freed up \$174,000 more in funds than Martin County by lowering its warehouse inventory.

2 The Martin County School District's warehouse order and inventory replenishment processes are manually intensive.

The Process of Ordering Supplies and Materials Is Duplicative Requiring the Entry of Warehouse Orders Twice

The department of Purchasing and Warehousing manages the warehouse of materials and supplies used in the daily operation of the school district. Schools and departments request supplies from the warehouse. Orders are hand written by site staff and sent via inter-office mail to the warehouse clerk. The warehouse clerk inputs the orders into the system and generates picking tickets for the warehouse expeditors. The expeditors pull the orders and report any out of stock items to the warehouse clerk who adjusts the delivery ticket accordingly.

The Warehouse Staff Reviews Inventory Levels and Initiates Replenishment Orders for Inventory Items

The department of Purchasing and Warehousing has recently installed new inventory management software. The system tracks replenishment orders and on hand quantities. The system consolidates these two reports to provide available quantities. The warehouse clerk reviews available quantities on hand using the report generated by the new inventory management software. When quantities fall below a certain quantity, the warehouse clerk initiates a replenishment purchase order for approval.

Recommendations

- The Martin County School District should analyze the costs and benefits of contracting the storage and distribution of the initial supplies for schools to private companies.
- The Martin County School District should evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of its warehouse order and inventory replenishment processes.

Action Plan 12-12

Inventory Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Analyze the costs and benefits of contracting the storage and distribution of the initial supplies for schools to private companies.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing should analyze the costs and benefits of contracting the storage and distribution of the initial supplies for schools.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing should present the analysis and recommendations to the Superintendent.</p> <p>Step 3: If more beneficial, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should pursue contracting the storage and distribution of the initial supplies to schools to private companies.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Purchasing and Warehousing, superintendent
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	<i>Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of warehouse order and inventory replenishment processes.</i>
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Based on the analysis on contracting the storage and distribution of initial supplies for schools to a private company, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should assess the need for an electronic warehouse ordering system and automatic inventory reorder point system.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing should present the analysis and recommendations to the Superintendent.</p> <p>Step 3: If a need is established for these systems, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of warehouse order and inventory replenishment processes and should pursue the procurement of an electronic warehouse ordering system and automatic inventory reorder point system.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Purchasing and Warehousing, superintendent
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Risk Management

1 The Martin County School District has provided processes, procedures, and programs to manage the district's risk through its inter-local agreement with the South Central Educational Risk Management Program and other insurance programs.

Procedures are in place to identify the various risks of loss to which the district is exposed. The district's risk manager is responsible for analyzing "the district's claim, loss, and

accident history and identifies methods to eliminate, minimize or indemnify risks to possible losses.” The district covers most risks through its inter-local agreement and policies, procedures, and coverage with the South Central Educational Risk Management Program (SCERMP). According to the inter-local agreement, “it is the intent of the members (of SCERMP) to create a risk management consortium. Funds contributed by the members will be utilized to defend and protect the members against stated liabilities and losses.” SCERMP outlines its policies and procedures in documented form. These procedures identify the various risks of loss the district faces.

The district has adopted a risk management policy relative to risk financing and related insurance coverage to provide reasonable coverage for risks of loss. Board policy 6Gx43-2.09 discusses insurance matters and states that all self-insurance coverages are provided through SCERMP. All other coverages not covered by SCERMP will be awarded by bid if the annual cost is greater than \$4,500. The specific types of insurance coverage mentioned in the policy are health insurance, accidental death and dismemberment, and student accident insurance. The district recently issued an RFP for its health insurance.

2 The district has policies and procedures for purchasing and reviewing its insurance coverage; however, the district has not developed these policies and procedures for verifying the validity of insurance claims or premiums for its health insurance coverage.

Through its participation in the risk management consortium of SCERMP, Martin County School District has property and casualty, general liability, and workers’ compensation insurance coverage.

Methods for analyzing and acquiring other commercial coverages are documented in the District's records. The methods for analyzing and acquiring other commercial coverage are detailed in the minutes of SCERMP board meetings and the Health Insurance RFP Analysis of 1997. A complete set of minutes is on file in the Risk Management Office.

Although It Has Procedures to Verify the Ultimate Cost Of Premiums For Insurance Coverage Provided Through SCERMP, the District Needs to Develop Procedures to Verify Premiums For Health Insurance Coverage

The district's health insurance is acquired through commercial coverage. The district has not provided any procedures to verify premiums for health insurance coverage (either from Risk Management or from Human Resources). However, under the agreement with the carrier, payments are administered whereby the district retains on deposit a portion of the premium in a minimum premium account. The insurance carrier draws on this account to pay claims submitted by employees and dependents, but the district does not verify the claims on a test basis. The district also does not perform a comparison of the actual employees to the list of names for which the insurance provider has submitted claims.

Recommendations

- *Martin County School District should develop procedures to verify the ultimate costs of premiums for health insurance coverage and to provide for the testing of claims payments from the revolving account to ensure that claims are valid and are for current employees.*

Action Plan 12-13

Risk Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop procedures to verify premiums for health insurance coverage and to provide for testing the validity of claim payments through the district's revolving account.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Risk Management and the director of Finance should draft procedures to verify premiums for health insurance coverage.</p> <p>Step 2: The superintendent should approve the new procedures after any necessary revisions.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Finance and his staff should verify premiums for health insurance coverage on an annual basis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Risk Management, director of Finance, superintendent
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3 The district regularly monitors and evaluates its self-insurance program to insure the feasibility of its self-insured coverages.

See the narrative above under Risk Management Best Practice No. 1.

13

Student Transportation

Martin County recently privatized its Transportation Services. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is needed to ensure that the district knows how well the transportation program is performing and can evaluate the costs and benefits of privatization.

Conclusion

The Martin County School District routes its school buses to achieve a very high average bus occupancy but could improve its evaluation of performance. The school board awarded a contract to a private vendor, Laidlaw, Inc., to provide all student transportation and vehicle maintenance services for a three-year period beginning with the 1999-2000 school year. Board members indicated that they voted for privatization to reduce costs, ensure safety, and improve employee incentives and administration of the transportation department.

Key information on performance and cost has not been monitored consistently over time. It will be increasingly important to monitor performance as transportation services are privatized to ensure that the district gets the quality of service it is expecting. Cost comparison or other performance benchmarks for student transportation would improve managerial control and public accountability. In most areas, information about student transportation has not been comprehensive or reported systematically. The district has not used the information it does have to develop performance benchmarks.

Performance indicators are critical to enable the district to know how well student transportation is performing relative to how well it is expected to perform. In the contract with Laidlaw, the district has established average bus occupancy as a performance indicator. This indicator is particularly important as it affects funding. In addition, the contract lays out performance information that Laidlaw must maintain and report to the district. This information can be used to track additional performance indicators. The district has not established expectations that Laidlaw must meet for other areas such as, number of accidents per 100,000 miles, vehicle breakdowns per 100,000 miles, or on-time performance to deliver students to school. The need for performance indicators and established benchmarks will be even more important with the privatization of student transportation in the 1999-2000 school year and should be a part of the district's oversight of the contractor.

The annual budget has been the district's principal tool to analyze and control costs, but its usefulness is limited. The lack of a comprehensive management information system that included student transportation information restricted the district's ability to analyze and control costs. By privatizing, the district passed this responsibility to a private vendor.

District staff have proposed a comprehensive five-year plan for replacement and management of school buses based on cost-effective criteria. The plan has been approved by the school board through the adoption of the five-year capital projects budget, which includes major equipment purchases. Under the private contract, the district will maintain ownership of the vehicle fleet, but the contractor is responsible for annual recommendations on replacement. Buses are purchased through the state purchasing pool, which allows Martin County to take advantage of favorable prices and minimize the costs of procurement.

Martin County 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 state safety standards. However, the district has not used data on fleet maintenance that is recorded daily and could help enhance effective decision-making. The private contractor is now responsible for inspection and maintenance of the school bus fleet, including implementation of a vehicle maintenance information system.

The district reviewed the safety and efficiency of student transportation operations periodically. The Martin County School District has earned a good efficiency rating from the Department of Education (DOE) measured by the high average bus occupancy rate. This achievement is earned at a cost - some students ride the bus longer than transportation goals prescribe, and the number of students on some bus trips exceeds district guidelines. The contractor is required to use a computerized routing and scheduling system which could help develop a more effective assignment of students.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

On March 16, 1999, the Martin County School Board awarded a contract to Laidlaw, Inc. According to a bid analysis prepared for the school board by KPMG LLP, the Laidlaw cost proposal was 13.5% less than the district's projected costs over three years, for an average annual savings of \$630,000. Given the private sector contract, there are limited additional opportunities for the district to directly affect costs.

Evaluate the use of courtesy bus service and discontinue courtesy bus service unless the courtesy riders can be accommodated on routes necessary to transport other students, for savings of up to \$211,000 annually.

Exhibit 13-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Transportation Services Have the Following Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Evaluate and discontinue courtesy bus service unless riders can be accommodated on routes needed to transport other students.	Up to \$211,000 savings

Background

During the 1997-98 school year, the Martin County School District provided school bus service to 7,462 of the district's 15,350 students at 21 school centers throughout the county. The student riders include 166 students with disabilities who require special arrangements to be transported to various school sites throughout the district. Martin County deployed 77 buses in daily service on an equal number of routes. The total school bus fleet was comprised of 104 buses including 23 spares. Most bus routes include three runs each morning and afternoon to accommodate staggered school start times.

In 1997-98, all student transportation services were provided under the director of transportation, who was the only administrative representative in the Transportation Department. The director of Transportation reported to the executive director of Operations Services. The executive director position was vacant until April 1999, and the director of Transportation reported to the director of Facilities. All personnel in the Transportation Department other than the director are members of Council 79, Local 597 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME Florida). There are four lead drivers and one lead mechanic, none of whom have supervisory responsibility and may not discipline or evaluate the performance of another union member. The Transportation team also includes 97 drivers and substitute drivers, 13 bus attendants, 8 mechanics, 3 budgeted fleet maintenance helpers (2 positions vacant), and 3 clerical assistants.

State law requires each school district in Florida to provide student transportation. The state helps districts provide student transportation by allocating funding for the following groups of students.

- Students who live two or more miles from the school they attend
- Elementary school students (sixth grade and under) who live within two miles of school but who would be required to walk in hazardous areas to attend school
- Pre-kindergarten students
- Students with disabilities
- Participants in teenage parent programs
- Special education, vocational, and dual enrollment students transported from one school to another school

Transportation for other students (courtesy riders) and extracurricular activities and expenses that exceed the state allotment are paid with local district funds.

The state allocates student transportation funding based on a set formula. The formula makes adjustments for specific district traits, such as cost of living and population density. The formula also uses a bus occupancy index, which rewards districts that use buses more efficiently. In school year 1997-98, Martin County received state funds for 80% of total transportation operating expense.

The Transportation Department is responsible for planning and operating all home to school transportation. The department also provides transportation for field trips and extracurricular activities. The Transportation Department provides vehicle maintenance for all district vehicles, including school buses, trucks, vans, and automobiles. All vehicles other than school buses are referred to as the "white fleet."

Student transportation costs in 1997-98 were \$3,752,186. An additional \$351,794 was spent for the purchase of school buses. The budget for 1998-99 was \$4,127,462, plus \$697,249 for school buses.

The Martin County School Board solicited competitive price proposals from private sector providers in 1998 and 1999 to provide school transportation services. In January 1999, two private vendors, Laidlaw, Inc., and Ryder/ATE, submitted proposals, as did the Martin County School District Transportation Department employees. On March 16, 1999, the Martin County School Board voted to award a contract to Laidlaw. Board members said they voted for privatization to reduce costs, ensure safety, and improve employee incentives and administration of the transportation department. Laidlaw took over operation of the Transportation Department on June 10, 1999. Martin County is only the fourth district in Florida to privatize, and only the second to contract with a single private company to operate the entire department (Duval and Dade counties contract with multiple vendors).

The school district has made several notable accomplishments over the past several years in the Student Transportation Program. Exhibit 13-2 describes some of these accomplishments.

Exhibit 13-2

Notable Accomplishments

- Martin County School District has a high average bus occupancy to enhance efficiency and earn as much of the state allocation as possible.
 - Martin County School Board has privatized student transportation to save a projected 13.5% of operating costs beginning with the 1999-2000 school year.
 - The private contractor provided a complete transition plan and the branch manager was on-site to plan for a transfer of responsibility three months in advance.
 - The district staff has determined appropriate standards for making decisions on repairing versus replacing school buses. The plan to replace 10% of daily route buses each year and transfer older school buses to a spare bus fleet is a cost-effective recommendation and an example of good fleet management.
 - The district is integrating special needs students on regular transportation bus routes as much as possible.
 - The district has a staff development program for drivers and bus attendants assigned to special education routes to meet with the Challenger School staff to learn about special needs children and to discuss ways to improve transportation procedures.
-

Appropriate and Cost Effective Transportation

1 The district has not developed cost-comparison benchmarks based on appropriate standards from similar districts.

Peer Districts Not Identified

The Martin County School District has not identified peer district cost-comparisons or other performance benchmarks for student transportation. Key information on performance and costs are not monitored consistently over time. Objective information on the performance and cost-effectiveness of the student transportation program is not reported regularly to decision-makers, such as the School Board.

Despite easy access to the data, the Martin County School District does not monitor peer performance statistics. The Florida Department of Education (DOE) publishes a report annually profiling the transportation program of each school district in the state. The report, "Quality Link Florida School District Transportation Profiles," provides specific performance and cost data for the student transportation program in each district.

The information in the Quality Links report is sufficient to select peer districts based on criteria that most affect student transportation costs, such as district size (square miles), population density, student enrollment, students transported, number of school centers, and number of buses in daily service. Based upon these criteria, the five districts most comparable to Martin County are illustrated in Exhibit 13-3.

Exhibit 13-3

Peer Selection Criteria Martin County School District

School District	Size in Square Miles	Population Density	Student Enrollment	Number of School Centers	Buses in Daily Service	Transportation Operating Expenditures
Charlotte	690	161	16,294	19	116	\$3,721,686
Citrus	629	149	14,598	20	185	4,661,018
Hernando	477	212	16,105	17	165	4,697,130
Indian River	497	182	14,317	21	71	2,667,341
Martin	555	182	15,350	21	77	3,752,186
St. Johns	617	136	17,623	24	128	3,570,836
Peer Average	578	170	15,715	20	124	3,845,033

Source: 1997-98 Draft DOE Quality Links Report.

Useful Cost-Comparison Benchmarks Not Yet Developed

The profiles in the Quality Links reports include the school districts identified as peers for Martin County and include cost data that can be used as benchmarks; however, the data have not been analyzed to develop useful cost-comparison benchmarks.

The director of Transportation for Martin County was reluctant to rely on the Quality Link profiles for cost-comparison benchmarks. He believed the quality and accuracy of the data varies too much by school district. He was especially concerned that districts do not report costs comparably by category. His opinion is supported by a report titled *Review of the Potential for Privatizing Student Transportation*, Report 97-44, February 1998, by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). In the report, OPPAGA observed that numerous factors account for variances in reported costs to DOE. These factors may include differences in the cost of living, district demographics, transportation service levels, and operational efficiency. Further, OPPAGA noted that inconsistent district cost accounting procedures are another factor causing variances in costs. These factors make it difficult to accurately compare costs between districts. DOE has published a manual governing school district financial and program cost accounting and reporting. However, according to OPPAGA, the manual does not specifically identify all costs that should be included under the pupil transportation cost functions. This contributes to the difficulty in accurately comparing costs between districts.

Despite the limitations of the DOE data, the Quality Links reports provide the best single source of information about school transportation programs in peer districts. Key cost efficiency and cost effectiveness indicators for Martin County and peer districts are illustrated in Exhibit 13-4.

Exhibit 13-4

Martin County's Costs per Rider and Per Mile Are Higher than the Peers

School District	Operating Expenditures	Total Annual Miles	Student Riders	Cost per Mile	Cost per Rider
Charlotte	\$3,721,686	1,959,500	8,440	\$1.90	\$2.45
Citrus	4,661,018	2,382,016	10,306	1.96	2.51
Hernando	4,697,130	3,331,436	10,692	1.41	2.44
Indian River	2,667,341	1,521,962	6,066	1.75	2.44
Martin	3,752,186	1,776,624	7,462	2.11	2.79
St. Johns	3,570,836	2,731,957	10,179	1.31	1.95
Peer Average	3,845,033	2,283,916	8,858	1.74	2.43

Source: 1997-98 Draft DOE Quality Links Report. Operating expenditures exclude cost of new vehicles.

The Martin County operating cost per mile is 21% higher than the peer average, and the operating cost per rider is 15% higher than the peer average. However, Martin County has not segregated the cost of maintaining their non-bus vehicle fleet (white fleet) from the cost of student transportation. This may contribute to some of the variance in comparison to peer districts.

The District Has Identified Private Sector Organizations To Obtain Data For Making Cost-Comparisons

The district solicited competitive price proposals from private sector providers in 1998 and in 1999 to make cost comparisons. In 1998 and 1999, private providers Laidlaw, Inc., and ATE/Ryder both submitted proposals. In 1998 the Transportation Department also submitted a cost proposal. In 1999 the Martin County School District Transportation Department employees, with the cooperation of Council 79, Local 597 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME Florida) submitted a proposal. A summary of the results of the price proposals submitted in 1999 is included on page 13-7.

Recommendation

- See Recommendations and Action Plan on Page 13 -18

2 The district used competitive price proposals to compare costs to determine if privatization would increase efficiency.

District Uses Competitive Proposals to Evaluate Privatization

The district solicited competitive price proposals twice from public and private sector providers to determine if the Student Transportation Program could be performed at a lower cost through outsourcing. The scope of work for each request for proposals included management of student transportation services, operations, and vehicle maintenance (school buses and district service vehicles).

The district decided to investigate privatization to save costs, improve the quality of service, and reduce the administrative time devoted to managing student transportation. Officials were aware of privatization in other states and were familiar with the plan of Santa Rosa School District to contract with a private company to operate student transportation. Prospective vendors visited the district and presented qualifications.

In February 1998 the Martin County School Board issued a request for proposals for a private contractor for school transportation. Two private vendors, Laidlaw, Inc., and Ryder/ATE, submitted proposals. The Transportation Department also submitted a cost proposal. The lowest private provider price proposal by ATE/Ryder was less than 2% less than the staff cost proposal. An award was never made. The director of Transportation indicated that the school board voted to reject all proposals in 1998.

The Martin County School Board issued a second request for proposals in November 1998; priced proposals were accepted in January 1999. Two private vendors, Laidlaw, Inc., and Ryder/ATE, again submitted proposals. The Martin County School District Transportation Department employees, with the cooperation of Council 79, Local 597 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME Florida) submitted a third proposal.

The 1999 cost proposals were analyzed by KPMG LLP (KPMG). According to the bid analysis presented by KPMG to the School Board on February 23, 1999, and corrections provided by AFSCME to their proposal, the Laidlaw cost proposal was 13.5% less than the district's projected costs over three years, for an average annual savings of \$630,000. The ATE/Ryder cost proposal was 9% less than the district over three years, or about \$418,000 average each year. The AFSCME Florida cost proposal was 7.3% less than the district over three years, or about \$340,000 each year.

On March 16, 1999, the Martin County School Board voted to award a contract to Laidlaw. Board members said they voted for privatization to reduce costs, ensure safety, and improve employee incentives, and administration of the Transportation Department. All current district employees with four or more year's experience were offered the choice of remaining a district employee or becoming a Laidlaw employee. All others were offered employment with Laidlaw.

The option for district employees with four or more years experience to remain with the district was the subject of additional cost negotiations after contract award (and prior to contract execution). According to the district's collective bargaining agreement with AFSCME, drivers who joined the district on or before February 1, 1996, are guaranteed eight hours pay each day, including one hour for administrative time. Drivers hired after February 1, 1996, do not have guaranteed hours and are paid only for actual hours worked plus one-half hour for administrative time.

Twenty-eight drivers are eligible for the eight-hour guarantee each day. These 28 drivers are compensated for 224 hours of work per day. Average daily route time (actual hours worked) for the 28 drivers in the 1998-99 school year was 184.5 hours. The difference between the total number of hours compensated and the combined average daily route time is 39.5 hours. Under current practice, the 28 drivers are required to drive activity runs (field trips) for no additional compensation as "makeup hours" for time paid but not worked. For the period November 8, 1998, through January 16, 1999, the 28 drivers had a combined average of 11.08 make-up hours per day. This reduced the hours compensated but not paid to 28.42 per day. The district estimated the annual total cost for guaranteed hours paid but not worked in 1998-99 was \$71,056. Over the three-year period of the private contract, the district estimated the value of the guaranteed hours to be \$230,680.

After contract award, the district and Laidlaw agreed to share the costs for the first year of the contract to protect the benefits of eight-hour drivers who chose to remain with the district. Until August 10, 2000, the cost of compensation paid to employees because of the collective bargaining agreement above actual hours worked plus one-half hour per day administrative time will be shared equally by the district and Laidlaw, except Laidlaw's responsibility is not to exceed \$38,333. After August 10, 2000, the district will be responsible for all compensation over actual hours worked plus one-half hour per day for administrative time. The district is also liable for accumulated but unused sick, compensatory, and vacation time of all employees with four or more years experience and who chose to continue employment with the district. The district did not provide an estimate of the possible cost of this liability.

The effect of this agreement is to decrease the savings to the district for the three-year contract with Laidlaw. The savings over three years are reduced by as much as \$192,000, or an average of \$64,000 annually. This is a 10% reduction in the average annual savings estimated by KPMG. In addition, the district has continuing costs that cannot be avoided for the administration of employee compensation and benefits for personnel who chose to stay with the district. These recurring district costs were not included in the KPMG analysis.

The school board has entered into collective bargaining with AFSCME to negotiate a change in the benefits for drivers. The school board proposes to pay only for time actually worked and for only one-half hour administrative time per day. If the negotiation is successful, the district will recover the savings.

The Laidlaw proposal included a complete transition plan. The new branch manager reported to Martin County in April to coordinate the transfer over the next three months.

3 The district budget was not structured to account for direct and indirect costs for student transportation, and accounting systems do not allocate costs by function.

Budget reports did not identify separate costs for administration, operations, or vehicle maintenance. This limited the ways in which costs could be analyzed and makes the development of performance indicators difficult. In addition, the student transportation budget did not exclude costs that are attributable to other district vehicles or programs. This made it very difficult to analyze only costs for student transportation. Indirect costs incurred by other departments in support of transportation could not be identified. Current budget records will not allow the district to track continuing costs for transportation in addition to the private contractor.

Budget Reflects Costs but Allows Limited Cost Analysis

Budget reports have not been provided in a format that makes it possible to identify separately costs for administration, operations, or vehicle maintenance. Because expenses are not allocated to the functional areas within the Transportation Department, analyzing costs to improve efficiency and develop performance indicators is difficult.

The district has maintained a line item budget for the Transportation Department. The Transportation budget includes student transportation costs for several cost categories: employee salaries and benefits, insurance, professional services, travel, repairs and maintenance, purchased services, fuel and lubricants, supplies, tires, audio-visual materials, capital outlay, dues and fees, and other personnel services. The budget is structured with several line items per cost category. The line items are reported with exactly the same cost category label but with different codes for location and project. The codes vary from year to year. Neither the transportation department nor the finance department was able to provide a translation of the codes to allow cost comparisons or trends analysis.

The 1998-99 school year was a particular challenge for cost analysis as some data were not available during the year due to transition problems with the new TERMS computer software. These problems affected monthly reports of actual expense for non-discretionary budget line items such as personnel costs. Personnel costs represent almost 80% of operations expenditures. The absence of timely data on personnel expenditures makes it impossible for a department director to monitor costs and budget adherence.

Budget Does Not Identify and Exclude Costs for Other District Vehicles or Programs

The budget for home to school transportation should be reported separately from all other expenditures of the Transportation Department to allow cost analyses and efforts to improve cost efficiency. Currently, costs such as field trips and extracurricular transportation services, costs attributable to other district vehicles or programs, and gasoline for some school generators are all included in the student transportation costs.

In school year 1997-98, the district reported 120,921 miles in field trips and extracurricular activities. Assuming a fully allocated cost per mile of \$2.11, a total of \$255,000, or 7% of the operating expenditures reported to DOE were spent on transportation other than home to school. These expenditures are not accounted for separately.

The contract with Laidlaw provides for up to 231,622 miles of “supplemental transportation” at a total cost of \$466,345 in 1999-2000, or the equivalent of just over \$2.01 per mile. Supplemental transportation includes field trips, excursions, extracurricular activities and any other transportation requested by the school board.

The Transportation Department provides vehicle maintenance for all district vehicles, including school buses, trucks, vans, and automobiles. All vehicles other than school buses are referred to as the “white fleet.” The costs for vehicle maintenance of the white fleet may also be reported as student transportation expense to DOE annually. Costs for fuel and maintenance for the white fleet are not separated from the costs for school bus vehicle maintenance. The director of transportation stated all district gasoline purchases are assigned to pupil transportation, although some of the fuel is purchased for school generators.

In the proposal for privatization, Laidlaw said they would maintain the white fleet for an estimated cost of \$154,488 per year. The contract includes one maintenance fee to provide vehicle maintenance services and fuel for all district vehicles. The maintenance fee for 1999-2000 is \$847,908. The contractor will invoice the school district monthly for one-twelfth of the maintenance fee. In addition, the contract requires Laidlaw to maintain an automated record system for each vehicle and vehicle category to provide detailed maintenance and operating information for the district. The district should ensure that it will receive reports on maintenance costs by vehicle category and reports of costs for labor, parts, tires and fuel.

Budget Does Not Identify Indirect Costs for Transportation

The district will continue to incur indirect expenses for activities related to student transportation. These costs are considered unavoidable and will continue even though the district has privatized transportation. Examples of these unavoidable costs are personnel and payroll administration, continuing insurance premiums, accounting services, expenses for collective bargaining, purchasing expenses for vehicle acquisition, and environmental costs associated with the Transportation Department facility. The district will also have expenses for administration of the private contract. All of these expenses should be included along with the cost of the private contract to compare costs before and after privatization.

The budget does not provide a mechanism to identify and regularly report indirect expenses for transportation. These expenses are part of larger budget line items.

Recommendations

- The district should request Laidlaw to report maintenance expenses by important performance categories. For example, reporting school buses separately from the expenses for the white fleet.
- The district should modify accounting systems to ensure that it will identify and report continued district expenses for student transportation in addition to the private contract to compare the actual cost of transportation before and after privatization.

Action Plan 13-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Request Laidlaw to allocate and report costs by important performance categories, for example separating the cost of maintaining the white fleet from the maintenance costs for school buses. This will enable the district to evaluate present costs as well as build baselines for future comparisons.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify the following required indicators for cost comparisons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School bus vehicle maintenance costs. • White fleet vehicle maintenance costs • Miles operated by vehicle • Labor hours for inspection and maintenance by vehicle • Gallons of fuel used by vehicle <p>Step 2: Discuss with Laidlaw the format and frequency for the cost reports.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operation Services and Finance director
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Ensure that internal accounting systems record and report the district's continuing costs for transportation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify departments that continue to incur expenses</p> <p>Step 2: Modify accounting systems as necessary to allocate transportation related expenses</p> <p>Step 3: Implement necessary reporting systems to gather data (hours worked, for example) required to record and report the applicable expenses.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Finance director
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources

4 The district does not regularly review and report on Student Transportation performance in comparison to established indicators and benchmarks.

Costs and Performance Indicators Not Regularly Monitored

The director of Finance issues monthly financial reports to compare actual expenditures to the budget by line item. However, the director of Transportation did not provide a regular performance report to the superintendent and other appropriate administrative personnel. In the absence of performance statistics, it is difficult for district staff and school administrators or school board members to know how well Student Transportation is performing. In the past the district did not report regularly on actual performance compared with established standards of performance, and there was no systematic review of the costs and performance of Student Transportation. The private contractor is required to maintain performance information as required by law and report it to the required entities as well as maintain additional management information. The district should review this information periodically in order to understand how well the Transportation program is performing and any changes that may be necessary.

Peer Data Published Annually Should Be Used to Review and Evaluate

The Quality Links report, published by DOE, includes performance data for each of Florida's school districts. These data for peer districts can be used to establish service-effectiveness and performance comparisons and develop benchmarks. Exhibit 13-5 illustrates the data available.

Exhibit 13-5

Performance Indicators for Service Effectiveness Martin County School District and Peer Districts

School District	Student Enrollment	Student Riders	Percent Enrollment Transported	Buses in Daily Service	Average Bus Occupancy
Charlotte	16,294	8,440	52%	116	73
Citrus	14,598	10,306	71%	185	56
Hernando	16,105	10,692	66%	165	65
Indian River	14,317	6,066	42%	71	85
Martin	15,350	7,462	49%	77	97
St. Johns	17,623	10,179	58%	128	80
Peer Average	15,715	8,858	56%	124	76

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

Martin County transports 49% of enrolled students. This is lower than the peer average of 56%, but within the peer range. For the number of student riders, Martin County has fewer buses in daily service. Martin County has high average bus occupancy, 28% higher

than the peer average. The average bus occupancy was fourth highest of school districts in Florida for school year 1997-98.

It is important to note that compared to peer districts, Martin County had a 28% higher average bus occupancy but 15% higher cost per rider [see page 13-6]. The two performance indicators appear contradictory. Martin County performance as compared to peer benchmarks is positive for service effectiveness but negative for cost effectiveness. Further analysis is required to analyze the cause for the seemingly contradictory performance comparisons.

The costs of providing transportation may be higher if there are a significant number of student riders with special needs. A peer comparison of disabled, hazardous walking and courtesy riders is provided as Exhibit 13-6.

Exhibit 13-6

Martin Has Low Percentages of Disabled and Courtesy Riders Compared to Peers

School District	Student Riders	Disabled as % of Riders	Hazardous Walking as % of Riders	Courtesy as % of Riders
Charlotte	8,440	1%	5%	6%
Citrus	10,306	17%	0%	2%
Hernando	10,692	7%	0%	21%
Indian River	6,066	3%	2%	5%
Martin	7,462	1%	1%	3%
St. Johns	10,179	1%	0%	7%
Peer Average	8,858	5%	1%	7%

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

Martin County has a lower percentage of student riders with special needs than peer districts. In Martin County, the percentage of student riders is only 1%, significantly lower than the peer average of 5%. The number of students who are provided transportation to avoid hazardous walking conditions in Martin County is only 1% of the student riders, equal to the peer average. The number of courtesy riders in Martin County is 3% of student riders, less than the peer average of 7%.

The annual miles of transportation reported by Martin County and peer districts are documented as Exhibit 13-7. For school year 1997-98, Martin County operated 22% fewer total miles and 22% fewer route miles than the peer average. The number of field trip miles was 7% of total miles in Martin County, equal to the peer average. Because Martin County places fewer buses in daily route service than all but one peer, the average number of route miles per bus is high. At 21,503 annual route miles per bus in daily service, Martin County averaged 22% more route miles per bus than the peer average.

Exhibit 13-7**Martin County Has the Highest Number of Route Miles Per Bus when Compared to Peer Districts**

School District	Total Annual Miles	Route Miles		Field Trip Miles		Buses in Daily Service	Route Miles per Bus
		Number	%	Number	%		
Charlotte	1,959,500	1,845,500	94%	114,000	6%	116	15,909
Citrus	2,382,016	2,227,969	93%	154,047	7%	185	12,043
Hernando	3,331,436	3,062,331	91%	269,105	9%	165	18,560
Indian River	1,521,962	1,408,165	92%	113,797	8%	71	19,833
Martin	1,776,624	1,655,703	93%	120,921	7%	77	21,503
St. Johns	2,731,957	2,584,680	94%	147,277	6%	128	20,193
Peer Average	2,283,916	2,130,725	93%	153,191	7%	124	18,007

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

The performance data suggests Martin County is effectively assigning buses to maximize service per vehicle. However, the high number of miles per bus may lead to the need for a disproportionate number of spare buses. Spare buses are discussed on page 13-30.

Exhibit 13-8 provides peer data to compare staffing levels for drivers, substitute drivers, and bus attendants.

Exhibit 13-8**Martin County's Staffing Is Within the Range of Peer Districts**

School District	Drivers	Substitute Drivers		Bus Attendants		Total Drivers, Substitutes, and Attendants
		#	% of Drivers	#	% of Drivers	
Charlotte	116	25	22%	19	16%	160
Citrus	175	50	29%	1	1%	226
Hernando	174	25	14%	20	11%	219
Indian River	67	17	25%	19	28%	103
Martin	77	20	26%	13	17%	110
St. Johns	131	4	3%	9	7%	144
Peer Average	123	24	20%	14	13%	160

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

Substitute drivers are an important element of good school transportation. Substitute drivers must be available when regular route drivers are out due to illness or personal

leave. Martin County substitute drivers are 26% of regular route drivers. This is higher than the peer average of 20% but within the peer range.

Bus attendants assist bus drivers with the special needs of student riders with disabilities. Martin County also assigns bus attendants to selected routes when the number of students assigned is near capacity. For this reason, Martin County bus attendants are 17% of drivers, higher than the peer average of 13%.

Exhibit 13-9 provides peer data to compare staffing levels for mechanics and other fleet maintenance positions.

Exhibit 13-9

Martin County Has Fewer Buses Per Maintenance Staff than Its Peer Districts

School District	Total Buses	Mechanic Positions	Other Fleet Maintenance Positions	Buses per Maintenance Employee
Charlotte	150	6	5	14
Citrus	244	11	0	22
Hernando	199	14	0	14
Indian River	104	1	8	12
Martin	104	8	3	9
St. Johns	137	7	1	17
Peer Average	156	8	3	15

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

Martin County averaged only 9 school buses per vehicle maintenance worker. This was significantly lower than the peer average of 15 school buses per maintenance worker. The source of peer data, the DOE draft Quality Links report for school year 1997-98, does not provide information on other vehicles that may also be the responsibility of the maintenance workers. In Martin County, as in many other counties, the same mechanics and fleet maintenance positions are also responsible for the white fleet of district vans and trucks. However, even if two mechanics were assumed to be dedicated to the white fleet, each of the remaining maintenance workers would be responsible for less than 12 school buses each, 20% fewer than the peer average.

Martin County salaries and payroll benefits were higher than peers, as illustrated in Exhibit 13-10. The average transportation salary in Martin County is \$16,200 versus the peer average of \$13,000. The average percent payroll benefits in Martin County was 38% as compared to the peer average of 31%.

Exhibit 13-10**Average Salaries and Benefits Are Higher for Martin County than for Peer Districts**

School District	Average Transportation Salary	Average % Payroll Benefits	Average Salary and Benefits	Salaries and Benefits (% of Operating Costs)
Charlotte	\$11,832	34%	\$15,843	79%
Citrus	11,358	25%	14,141	77%
Hernando	12,071	26%	15,197	78%
Indian River	12,493	33%	16,653	76%
Martin	16,201	38%	22,309	77%
St. Johns	13,976	31%	18,280	83%
Peer Average	12,989	31%	17,071	78%

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

The average value of salary plus benefits for Martin County employees in the Transportation Department was 31% higher than the peer average (\$22,309 as compared to \$17,071). Salaries and benefits represent 77% of Martin County operating expenditures.

Even if all other performance indicators are the same, Martin County transportation operating expenses would be higher than the peer average due to average salaries and benefits. These findings explain why the Martin County operating cost per mile was 21% higher than the peer average. Martin County achieved some efficiency due to high average bus occupancy, and therefore the operating cost per rider is 15% higher than the peer average.

Other useful performance indicators such as on-time performance, preventable accidents per 100,000 miles, and vehicle breakdowns per 100,000 miles are not included in the Quality Links reports. Martin County has not tracked these data and has not developed peer comparison benchmarks. However, miles driven are included in the Quality Links reports and the number of accidents is reported separately to the DOE each year.

School districts are asked to report the number of all accidents, whether ruled preventable or non-preventable, to the DOE. As illustrated in Exhibit 13-11, Martin County reported a higher number of accidents per 100,000 miles than any peer and higher than the Florida state average.

Exhibit 13-11**Martin County School Bus Accidents Are Higher than Peer Districts**

School District	Number of Accidents Reported	Total Miles Driven	Reported Accidents Per 100,000 Miles
Charlotte	9	1,761,064	0.51

School District	Number of Accidents Reported	Total Miles Driven	Reported Accidents Per 100,000 Miles
Citrus	8	2,382,778	0.34
Hernando	15	3,180,822	0.47
Indian River	4	1,593,474	0.25
Martin	11	1,577,942	0.70
St. Johns	3	2,213,451	0.14
Peer Average	8	2,118,255	0.39
State Totals	1,235	260,186,526	0.47

Source: (1) DOE, 1996-97 School Bus Accident Facts, 09-30-98; (2) 1996-97 DOE Quality Links Report; and (3) OPPAGA calculations

Evaluation Results Used to Adjust Program Structure and Improve Efficiency

The Martin County School Board used private contractor price proposals as the benchmarks to evaluate the cost of student transportation. On March 16, 1999, the Martin County School Board voted to privatize student transportation and award a contract to Laidlaw, Inc. Board members said they voted for privatization to reduce costs, ensure safety, and improve employee incentives and administration of the Transportation Department. Based upon competitive cost proposals, Martin County expects to save 13.5% of operating costs.

The director of Transportation prepared an analysis of the costs of the Transportation program in November 19, 1997. At the request of the director of Transportation, a private consultant, Charles E. Long (d/b/a Common Sense Management, Inc.), prepared an analysis of the cost effectiveness of school bus transportation services in Martin County in November 1997. The findings of these two reports were used to develop initiatives to make changes in operational structure and staffing levels to improve efficiency. The following are three examples of initiatives.

- Restructured the routes to reduce the number of daily driver assignments from 77 in 1997-98 to 74 in the fall of 1998 and to 72 in the spring 1999. Each daily driver assignment is valued at approximately \$22,000 in annual salary and benefits.
- Assigned three buses to be stored overnight at a school in south Martin County. Drivers report morning and evening by radio. Reduced 13 non-productive miles per bus per day and saved about \$15,000 annually. Buses were brought in every 20 days for inspection and as needed for repairs.
- Recommended assigning classroom teachers' assistants in lieu of bus aides with special education bus routes to save 14 budgeted positions. This recommendation was not supported by principals and the superintendent.

Recommendation

- *The district should review the information maintained by Laidlaw and adopt performance indicators, such as those included in Exhibit 13-13, to be monitored periodically by the district. This should provide the district with the information necessary to monitor the contractor's performance and determine whether performance levels meet the district's expectations.*

Action Plan 13-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Review the information maintained by Laidlaw and adopt performance indicators and benchmarks, such as those included in Exhibit 13-13, that the district will use to monitor the contractor's performance. Adopt cost comparison and other performance benchmarks for student transportation operations, for vehicle maintenance for school buses and for the white fleet, and establish baselines for comparison of historical costs and costs under privatization.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine which indicators will be reported.</p> <p>Step 2: Define benchmarks or performance expectations using past district performance and performance of peer districts</p> <p>Step 3: Identify source data and ensure that is collected consistently</p> <p>Step 4: Establish baseline or starting point from which future performance will be measured</p> <p>Step 5: Discuss with Laidlaw the format and frequency for the performance reports.</p> <p>Step 6: Include performance information such as on-time performance, accidents per 100,000 miles, in-service breakdowns per 100,000 miles, cost per mile, cost per student rider, number of courtesy trips, etc.</p> <p>Step 7: Agree upon the methodology for collecting and reporting performance data.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations Services or see Action Plan 13-3
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources

5 Although the district did not routinely analyze and control costs in the past, the contract with Laidlaw establishes controls over operating costs per route but includes a lump sum fee for vehicle maintenance.

Financial reports generated by the district did not include cost analyses or performance reports. Cost information is reported to the district superintendent and administrative personnel in monthly expense reports and annual financial reports. However, the district

did not report financial and management information to monitor cost-effectiveness. The district did not monitor or evaluate the trends in costs per route, cost per mile, or cost per student rider. As reported on page 13-8, budget reports did not identify separately costs for administration, operations, and vehicle maintenance.

The District Did Not Analyze Student Transportation Costs on a Routine Basis

Financial reports are issued monthly to report expenses incurred and budget balances. The format of the budget and financial reports are not adequate to provide the cost data needed monitor and analyze important cost indicators on a routine basis.

Under the terms of the contract with Laidlaw, the management fee and operations costs are charged to the district as a cost per bus (route) per day. The costs are differentiated by type of bus, so that the cost for a regular route can be compared to the cost for a special education route. The allocated budget for supplemental transportation can be translated to a cost per mile. However, as discussed on page 13-9, the maintenance fee is a single budget line item including maintenance and fuel. However, the contract requires Laidlaw to maintain an automated record system for each vehicle and vehicle category to provide detailed maintenance and operating information for the district. The district should ensure that it will receive reports needed to analyze vehicle maintenance costs by vehicle type, by mile, or by function (labor, parts, fuel). This information will help the district assess what it is receiving for the maintenance fee and will provide baseline information for reviewing future proposals to provide transportation services.

The District Does Not Maintain a Management Information System that Links Budget Information to Other Student Transportation Performance Indicators

The new TERMS accounting computer software is a financial reporting system and does not link transportation management information systems to financial data. Historically, the district has not maintained a management information system that links budget information to student transportation data. Data is reported as required to DOE, but the district has not collected and reported management information data.

If the district allocated costs by administration, operations, and maintenance and also reported key indicators such as miles, hours, and student riders by route and by field trip, important performance indicators could be analyzed. The types of performance indicators that could be reported and analyzed include the following: operations cost per hour, maintenance cost per mile, total costs per route, cost per student rider, riders per hour and riders per mile. These data could be used to compare regular transportation routes to special education transportation and to extracurricular transportation. In addition, costs would be known for each route and trends could be analyzed to monitor changes in cost-effectiveness from year to year. With this type of cost and performance data, the district can make informed decisions on changes in service and business practices that affect cost.

The district's contract with Laidlaw includes average bus occupancy as an indicator of performance and requires the contractor to maintain management information systems that contain additional performance information. Periodic reports of this information and the established district expectations would help the district evaluate the contractor's performance.

The Director of Transportation Considered Significant Factors that Influence Costs

The director of Transportation analyzed several factors that influence student transportation costs. He monitored the number of bus routes, the number of students per bus route, the number of bus stops within two miles of school (courtesy transportation), the number of field trips, the transportation services not reimbursed by the state, the number of guarantee hours per driver (authorized and scheduled), the overtime hours authorized for drivers, and the number of non-productive miles per bus route. He also monitored the average age per school bus in the revenue fleet to recommend a capital budget for vehicle replacement.

The District Recovers 80% of Transportation Operating Costs from State Allocations

Martin County School District recovers 80% of operations costs from the state of Florida allocation; however, the peer average is 89%. The state allocation for Indian River covers 100% of operating costs, and the allocation for St. Johns is actually larger than the reported expenses.

The state of Florida provides an annual allocation of funds to each district for transportation to public school programs. Funds are allocated by DOE. Average bus occupancy is the one variable in the funding formula that a local school district can affect. Each school district reports average bus occupancy to DOE four times per year (fall semester, spring semester, first summer session, and second summer session). The Martin County Transportation Department staff design routes to achieve high average bus occupancy to maximize state funding allocations for Martin County. For the 1997-98 school year, Martin County's average bus occupancy was 96.90, the third highest of all districts in Florida. The statewide average was 69.42.

Exhibit 13-12 compares key data used in the state's allocation of transportation funds for Martin County and peer school districts.

Exhibit 13-12

Martin Recovers 80% of Costs from the State, Less than Its Peers

School District	Average Bus Occupancy	FPLI Index	Rurality Index	Allocation Per Student	Allocation Per Disabled Student	State Allocation (%Operating Costs)
Charlotte	73	96.59	0.939	\$340	\$ 979	84%
Citrus	56	91.71	1.038	351	1,014	82%
Hernando	65	93.56	0.977	342	985	83%
Indian River	85	98.55	0.933	353	1,017	100%
Martin	97	100.00	0.933	366	1,054	80%
St. Johns	80	97.00	0.985	365	1,049	106%
Peer Average	76	96.00	0.968	353	1,016	89%

Source: 1997-98 Draft DOE Quality Links Report and Student Transportation Allocation, 1998-99, Second Calculation. Data Operating costs exclude cost of new vehicles.

In an effort to increase bus occupancy, a major factor in the state funding formula, all school districts in the peer group have staggered bell times. This allows each bus assigned to a route to make two or three trips each morning and evening. In Martin County, individual trips average 52 riders for elementary school trips, 49 riders for middle school trips, and 42 riders for high school trips. With the exception of five buses for special education routes, the Martin County buses have 65 to 78 passenger seating capacity (3 passengers per seat).

Martin County performs well compared to its peers – it has the highest bus occupancy, highest FPLI index, and a low rural index than its peers. The state allocation funding formula is favorable to high bus occupancy, high FPLI index, and low rural index. Martin County has the highest allocation per student and disabled student of all of its peers.

Cost And Performance Data From Different Sources Differs

Cost and performance data reported by the district to DOE often differs from the district's published financial reports and information provided by the director of Transportation. The 1997-98 expenditures for the Transportation Department were found in several different sources: the Quality Links reports published by DOE; the 1999 RFP to privatize Martin County student transportation; and the Martin County School Board Statement of Expense Month Ending June 30, 1998. Theoretically, all of these sources should show the same expenditure amounts for specific line items. However, numerous discrepancies exist.

- Fuel cost. The Quality Links report for Martin County lists expenditures for Motor Fuel as \$238,339. The RFP listed expenditures for diesel fuel for 1997-98 at \$182,102. The school board statement of expense lists diesel fuel costs at \$160,254. The RFP and school board statement of expense list gasoline expenditures as \$4,875 and \$8,768, respectively.
- Purchase of Buses. The Quality Links report lists \$351,794 for new buses in 1997-98. The RFP and the school board statement of expense list bus/countywide vehicle purchases at \$309,316.
- Total Student Transportation Expenditures. The Quality Links report lists Martin County's expenditures for student transportation as \$4,103,980. The RFP lists student transportation expenditures as \$4,285,118. The school board statement of expense lists all expenditures, including non-student transportation expenditures, as only \$3,682,357. Similar discrepancies exist for previous years also.

Martin County's methodology for documenting costs for the Transportation Department does not provide a consistent source of data, making accurate analysis of departmental costs very difficult.

The District Completed an Analysis of Student Transportation Costs and a Projection of Identifiable Costs for the Next Three Years

KPMG prepared a report entitled "Transportation and Fleet Services Department Cost Model and Bid Analysis" for 1999. The report was presented to the school board in workshop on February 23, 1999. The report provides to the district identifiable costs and the district conditions that affect costs when analyzing student transportation costs. One of the purposes of the report is to evaluate direct and indirect costs to the district associated with current operation of transportation and fleet services.

KPMG recommended a 4% annual increase each year to project the district's cost model for three years. Prior to the KPMG analysis, there is no documentation of systematic efforts to identify costs and district conditions that affect costs.

The District Did Not Periodically Evaluate Projected Costs for Accuracy and Use the Information to Improve Future Estimates

The budget process and the monthly financial reports did not provide the director information needed to periodically evaluate the accuracy of cost estimates for payroll and payroll benefits.

The director of Transportation said he was involved in budgeting only "discretionary" budget items; the district's financial office prepares "non-discretionary" budget items including payroll and payroll benefits. According to the fiscal 1998 statement of expenses, 80% of all transportation expenses are non-discretionary. As a result, the Transportation director was not accountable for the accuracy of 80 percent of the expenses allotted to his department.

The discretionary budget line items included items such as fuel, repair parts, rentals, communication, personal services, and travel. The director of Transportation reviewed each monthly financial report and identified any significant discrepancy. During the annual budget process he attempted to evaluate the previous budget against actual expenses to improve the accuracy of the next budget.

Major Components of the Transportation Program Need to Be Analyzed to Identify Rising Costs and the Factors Related to Rising Costs

The monthly financial reports and the budget process should provide opportunities for periodic evaluation of the major cost components in the budget to identify rising costs and factors related to rising costs. As discussed on page 13-9, the data presented in the monthly financial reports do not provide the information necessary for trend analysis of major costs. Budget reports are not provided in a format that makes it possible to identify separately costs for administration, operations, or vehicle maintenance. Without the allocation of expenses by function, cost analysis to improve budget accuracy and future estimates is difficult.

The Director of Transportation Identified Ways to Control Costs

The district did not have a formal process to routinely analyze student transportation costs and identify rising costs. However, the director of Transportation identified and implemented ways to control costs.

The director of Transportation described the following initiatives undertaken by the district to identify and implement ways to control costs.

- The number of bus routes was reduced in September 1998 from 77 to 74 and in December 1998 from 74 to 71.
- The average number of students per route was increased from 93.7 in school year 1996-97 to 96.9 in school year 1997-98.
- Drivers that are guaranteed more hours per day than actually worked plus one hour administrative time are asked to drive activity assignments (field trips)

without additional pay and are assigned administrative duties to help the department.

- Drivers are assigned to extracurricular and field trips in an order to minimize overtime. The Transportation Department recorded \$6,327 in overtime pay for drivers during 1998-99, less than one percent of total driver labor costs.
- Non-productive miles are reduced on three bus routes by establishing a remote compound in south Martin County to store buses overnight. The south compound saves about 7,000 miles and \$15,000 annually.
- Procurement costs are reduced by using the state pool purchasing program to buy school buses.
- Larger buses are specified to make it possible to increase average bus occupancy.

Recommendations

- See Recommendation on and Action Plan 13-1 on page 13-10.

6 The district has improved purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase the efficiency of the procurement of vehicles, tires, and fuel. The district has not pursued improvements in the purchase of parts and supplies.

The District Uses the State Pool Purchasing Process to Maximize Cost-Savings and Increase Procurement Efficiency

The district takes advantage of the state's pool purchasing program to buy school buses and other vehicles at low prices. New tires are also purchased through the state's contract process.

The District Is a Member of a Fuel-Purchasing Cooperative to Buy Fuel

The district is a member of a fuel-purchasing cooperative including the counties of St. Lucie and Indian River. The purchase of fuel is conducted through a bulk purchasing arrangement that was competitively bid to get the best possible price on fuel. Members of the cooperative purchase fuel based on the current market, allowing participants to benefit from day to day changes in price. During 1998-99, Martin County paid an average of \$0.4363 per gallon for diesel and \$0.4808 per gallon for unleaded gasoline.

The Director of Transportation Investigated Specification Updates to Address New Technology and Changes in the Market Place

The director of Transportation followed industry changes in school bus specifications to identify promising new technology and safety improvements. Specifically, the director of

Transportation and lead mechanic were investigating new engines that are reported to increase fuel efficiency. Other examples include:

- The Transportation Department has selected bus specifications that are reported to reduce the risk of driver injury.
- A new automated fuel storage and supply system was installed.
- The Transportation Department upgraded departmental personal computers to increase office efficiency.
- Vehicle maintenance information software was installed in the parts room. The software is ExtraFleet by Current Software of Edgewood, Kentucky. The software allows the district to develop a database of the inspections, repairs, labor hours and parts for each vehicle in the fleet.

The District Did Not Periodically Conduct Competitive Bids for High-Usage Parts and Supplies

The district requires three price quotes for all items over \$100. State purchasing guidelines require advertised bids for all items over \$5,000. The district solicits competitive bids or uses the state pool purchasing program for most purchases over \$5,000.

The district has not solicited competitive bids for high-usage parts. Competitive bids can help lower the price of these high usage parts. In Martin County high-usage parts and supplies are purchased using purchase orders under \$5,000. In July 1998 approximately 50 "open" purchase orders were issued to different vendors. The value of each purchase order ranged from \$500 to \$4,900. The Purchasing Department establishes an open purchase order with a vendor. Then the Transportation Department can order parts or supplies as required. Many purchase orders were issued to the supplier of Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) parts for the original vehicle manufacturer. Multiple purchase orders (two or more) may be issued during the school year to one vendor to meet the demand for a specific product if sources are scarce.

The directors of Transportation and Purchasing were investigating the merits of privatizing the vehicle maintenance parts room to save costs. The award of a contract to Laidlaw, Inc. to privatize student transportation and vehicle maintenance has privatized the parts room.

The District Periodically Evaluates Purchased Items for Compliance with Specifications and Vendor Performance

The lead mechanic and mechanics relied upon their experience and records to evaluate purchased items for compliance with specifications and to monitor vendor performance. The mechanics inspect parts and equipment when issued from the parts room. Any item that does not meet specification or fails in service is returned to the parts manager. The parts manager returns the part to the vendor for a replacement part.

The work order system and ExtraFleet can track warranty repairs by vehicle, part and vendor. A warranty repair is recorded on the work order and entered into the ExtraFleet database. The vehicle is returned to the vendor or authorized warranty dealer to have the repair made. There is no systematic tracking of warranty claims. If warranty claims are tracked, the district could identify trends in the number and nature of warranty claims by part and by vendor and could monitor the timely response of each vendor to each warranty claim.

If a routine problem occurs, the lead mechanic pursues resolution with the vendor. The ExtraFleet database provides a record of dates and failures. The director of Transportation relied upon the lead mechanic for decisions about vendor performance are

The District Evaluated Replacement Vs. Repair of Buses to Minimize Costs

The only example of the district evaluating purchasing practices to identify ways to improve efficiency and to determine if purchasing practices have minimized costs pertains to the evaluation of a 10-year versus a 13-year vehicle life for a school bus. The Transportation Department recommended a maximum of 10 years for a school bus assigned to a daily route and then two additional years as a spare. A cost analysis was prepared by the director of transportation to show it is more cost-effective to invest in a new bus than to incur the additional costs of refurbishment and increased maintenance. For more information on this cost analysis and the bus replacement plan see page 13-26.

The Executive Director of Operations Services Is to Supervise the Private Contractor, Laidlaw

The school board assigned the executive director of Operations Services with the responsibility to supervise the private contractor, Laidlaw. Monitoring the contractor to ensure efficient quality transportation services will be critical. The district should closely monitor services by the contractor and measure results against the agreed upon standards and contract terms. In the report titled *Review of the Potential for Privatizing Student Transportation*, Report 97-44, February 1998, OPPAGA recommended that districts employ experienced in-house contract administrators.

The Martin County School Board specifically discussed the need for a contract administrator. The board decided to avoid the cost and agreed to eliminate the only current supervisory position in the student transportation department—the director. Instead, the school board directed the superintendent to assign duties for supervision of the private contractor to the executive director of Operations Services. The executive director will be responsible for supervision of Purchasing and Warehouse, Risk Management, Facilities (including Construction, Maintenance, And Facilities), food services, finance, as well as student transportation.

The contract with Laidlaw includes average bus occupancy as a specific benchmarks or standard to measure the performance of the private contractor. In addition, the contract provides for Laidlaw to maintain additional performance information that could be used to monitor performance in other areas. The district should ensure contract compliance and monitor the performance of the contractor. The types of indicators that the district should consider using are illustrated in Exhibit 13-13.

Exhibit 13-13

Suggested Performance Measures for Private Transportation Contractor

Category	Performance Measures
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student riders per mile • Student riders per route

Category	Performance Measures
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per route • Cost per mile
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents per 100,000 miles of service • Student incidents per 1,000 students transported • Training curriculum for new drivers • Hours of in-service training for each driver
Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-time performance • Maximum length of student time on school bus • Average bus occupancy per trip • Number of regular routes cancelled • Number of field trip requests denied
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of route driver positions vacant • Number of bus attendant positions vacant • Absentee rate for route drivers and monitors • Number of available substitute drivers • Annual turnover rate
Customer Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual user survey of parents, school administrators • Student referrals per route • Response time per referral
Vehicle Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of safety maintenance inspections completed on-time • Miles between in-service breakdowns

Source: Gibson Consulting.

Recommendations

- *The district should assign an individual the responsibility to monitor the performance information reported by Laidlaw on a periodic basis.*

Action Plan 13-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Assign an individual the responsibility to monitor performance information reported by Laidlaw and contract compliance on a periodic basis.

Action Needed	<p>Identify a position that can assume the responsibility to monitor performance information received periodically from the contractor.</p> <p>Develop a performance reporting system as described in Action plan 13-2 on page 13-18.</p> <p>Monitor performance information and identify any performance deficiencies or areas to be improved.</p> <p>Work with contractor to resolve any concerns identified.</p>
Who Is Responsible	executive director of Operations Services, or designee
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources

Transportation Adequacy

1 The Transportation Department has a five-year capital plan to replace buses and provide an adequate number of spare buses.

The District Has Adopted an Effective 5-Year Plan for Replacing Buses

The Transportation Department has determined appropriate standards for making decisions on repairing versus replacing vehicles and has a written plan that meets replacement needs, anticipates district growth, and specifies performance standards. The Transportation Department has a written bus replacement plan for the next five years. The five-year bus replacement plan is based on the assumption that a bus should be kept 10 years in daily route service and then 2 additional years as a spare. The plan is designed to achieve an average fleet age of 10 years per daily service buses and provide modest growth in the number of buses.

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) recommends that school buses be replaced on a 10-year cycle. In the Quality Links reports, data is provided on actual expenditures for purchase of buses. DOE analyzes a 10% bus replacement factor for each district. Peer comparisons are provided in Exhibit 13-14.

Exhibit 13-14**Martin County 's Expenditures for Bus Replacement Are Consistent with a 10-Year Replacement Cycle Unlike Several Peers**

School District	Total Actual Costs, Including Buses	Total Operations Costs	Actual Bus Expenditures	10% Bus Replacement Factor	Difference
Charlotte	\$3,779,850	\$3,721,686	\$ 58,164	\$487,258	\$(429,094)
Citrus	5,351,562	4,661,018	690,544	777,093	(86,549)
Hernando	4,697,130	4,697,130	0	693,083	(693,083)
Indian River	2,952,619	2,667,341	285,278	298,236	(12,958)
Martin	4,103,980	3,752,186	351,794	323,439	28,355
St. Johns	3,570,836	3,570,836	0	537,664	(537,664)
Peer Average	4,075,996	3,845,033	230,963	519,462	(288,499)

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

Of the peer districts, Martin, Indian River and Citrus made significant expenditure of funds to purchase buses. Martin County spent an amount very close to the 10% bus replacement factor recommended by DOE.

DOE supports a 10-year cycle for bus replacement for the following reasons.

- DOE says newer buses have increased safety. This is in part a function of wear and tear on older buses that can result in compromises to the structural integrity of the bus. Newer buses also have more safety features.
- The state school board bus purchasing specifications include a 10-year useful life for school buses. DOE believes the 10-year useful life helps the department to maintain some of the lowest new bus prices in the country.
- Most school districts can maximize the surplus value of the bus when it is sold after retirement. Resale prices typically drop sharply after the eleventh year of service.
- The useful life of a school bus can also be defined as 200,000 miles, which is often near 10 years of service. If a bus is kept in service beyond 200,000 miles additional expense may be incurred to rebuild an engine.

Using the DOE guidelines, Martin County conducted an analysis of the cost of a 10-year bus replacement cycle versus a 13-year cycle and determined that it is cost effective to replace buses every 10 years. The cost of a new bus is approximately \$50,000. Over a 10-year life, the amortized annual cost of a new bus is \$5,000. The average Martin County school bus in daily service operates over 21,000 miles per year, which means that the useful life of the bus will be met in 10 years. The department estimated that a bus in daily service beyond 10 years would require \$11,000 in rehabilitation (engine, transmission, painting, flooring) and \$4,000 lost resale value—a total investment of \$15,000. If the rehabilitated bus adds 3 years additional service life, the investment will be \$5,000 per additional year—the same as the amortized annual cost of a new bus. Rehabilitating a bus would be more cost-effective than a new bus only if the service life was extended to more

than 13 years. By replacing a 10-year bus, Martin County will gain the advantage of new bus specifications and safety features.

The recommended Martin County policy is to replace 10% of the buses in daily route service, and then rotate older buses into the spare bus fleet. A spare bus is not used daily and will not require rehabilitation. The number of spare buses should then be reduced annually (by sale of surplus buses) to maintain a spare ratio of not more than 20% of the number of buses in daily service (or just over 15% of the total fleet). Using a bus no more than 10 years in daily route service will help avoid the incremental cost of rehabilitation to add three years additional service life.

By replacing 10% of daily route buses annually and moving the same percent of older buses into a spare bus fleet, the recommended Martin County policy has the equivalent effect of placing the total school bus fleet on a 12-year replacement cycle.

The district has adopted a 10 year replacement cycle for buses through its current 5 year capital budget. Until 1994 the district had a policy to replace daily route buses after 10 years, or about 7 buses every year. Limits on the capital budget forced a change in the policy and the district got away from the 10-year replacement goal. Fourteen new buses were purchased this year, representing a 7- bus purchase each for 1997-98 and 1998-99. The oldest regular route buses should be 1989, but in February 1999, buses manufactured in 1987 and 1988 were still on daily assignment. When the 14 new buses are placed in service, the oldest 14 will be retired. The new buses include three 77-passenger and eleven 65-passenger buses. Fourteen of the oldest buses in the spare bus fleet (buses manufactured in 1985 and 1986) will be sold as surplus and the 48-passenger bus without a wheelchair lift was reassigned to vocational education. The fleet will then include 91 buses, seven 77 to 78-passenger, eighty 65-passenger, two 29-passenger and two 48-passenger buses. In its proposal to provide transportation services, Laidlaw stated "With 14 new vehicles being purchased by the District, we feel the district's fleet is acceptable for the 1999-2000 school year."

Exhibit 13-15 shows the age distribution and average age of the fleet.

Exhibit 13-15

All Daily Service Buses Are 10 Years Old or Less

Age in Years	Number of Buses February 1999	Number of Buses After New Buses Arrive
14	8	
13	6	
12	9	9
11	7	7
10	9	9
9	7	7
8	7	7
7	7	7
6	7	7
5	1	1
4	9	9
3	5	5

Age in Years	Number of Buses February 1999	Number of Buses After New Buses Arrive
2	5	5
1	4	4
0		14
Total Buses	91	91
Average Age	8.2	7.1

Source: Fleet list provided by the Transportation Department February 1999.

The bus replacement plan was presented to the superintendent and is reflected in the district's five-year capital budget. Bus replacement expenditures continue for Martin County even though transportation services have been privatized. In the agreement with Laidlaw, Martin County will retain ownership of all of its existing and replacement buses. The contract does not recognize the district's bus replacement plan. Each year, Laidlaw is to evaluate the school bus fleet and then recommend replacements.

The District Did Not Conduct a Cost Analysis on a Regular Basis for the Operation of Each Bus in Service

The ExtraFleet software used by the Transportation Department provided the tool to collect data for cost analysis. Each day, the parts manager entered the parts, tires, and labor for each work order issued into the ExtraFleet database. The Transportation Department did not actually use the database to perform cost analysis by vehicle.

The Transportation Department also recorded cost data in hard copy. Each month, the bookkeeper for the Transportation Department sorted all paper work orders by vehicle number. She then tallied the costs using a calculator with printed tape for each vehicle for each of three categories: tires, parts, and labor. From the tape for each vehicle, she entered the costs into a spreadsheet for each category by vehicle by month. Each month subtotals were calculated for buses and for other vehicles by each category (tires, parts and labor). These six subtotals were reported to the Finance Department. Cost data were not reported by vehicle for analysis.

Finally, the bookkeeper stapled the calculator tape to the work orders for the month for each vehicle. The work orders were then filed in a folder labeled for each vehicle number in a file cabinet near the vehicle maintenance work area. The hard files were available to the lead mechanic. The Transportation Department provided copies of a sample of each step in the process. Her work is not verified against the ExtraFleet database.

Fuel reports were also available for each vehicle each month. The number of gallons and the odometer reading were recorded each time a vehicle is fueled. The fuel reports were not linked to the vehicle maintenance reports. However, when the new fuel management system is in full operation, information can be retrieved to enter into the ExtraFleet database.

Spare Buses Are Available that Can Easily Be Assigned to a Route in Case of Need

Maintaining an adequate but not too high number of spare buses is important in order to ensure that spare buses are available when regular buses break down or are scheduled for routine maintenance. The number of spare buses for Martin County was 22% of the total

fleet in 1997-98. This is above the 17% peer average. The typical ratio of spare buses for a fleet of 100 or more buses is 20% of the number of buses in daily service, or about 15% of the total bus fleet. The ratio of spare buses to the total school bus fleet is provided as Exhibit 13-16.

Exhibit 13-16

Martin County Maintains a Relatively High Proportion of Spare Buses

School District	Total Buses	Buses in Daily Service	Spare Buses	Spare as % of Total Buses
Charlotte	150	116	29	19%
Citrus	244	185	22	9%
Hernando	199	165	22	11%
Indian River	104	71	22	21%
Martin	104	77	23	22%
St. Johns	137	128	24	17%
Peer Average	156	124	24	17%

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

A higher spare bus ratio may be justified in one or more of the following situations: the school district is growing rapidly, the average age of the fleet is high, there are significant subfleets each requiring spare buses, there are remote compounds requiring dedicated spare buses, or the average number of miles per bus is high. For the most part, these factors are not applicable to Martin County. The district is not experiencing a high growth rate and the average age of the fleet is not high. There are two remote compounds although only the Indian River location requires a modest number of spare buses.

The one factor that could affect the number of spare buses required is the average number of route miles per bus. At 21,503 annual route miles per bus in daily service, Martin County averaged 22% more route miles per bus than the peer average. However, the recommendation to replace 10% of daily route buses annually and make older buses into spares is an appropriate way manage the fleet.

Spare buses are generally assigned to substitute for like buses but this is not always possible. For example, a substitute bus for a 78-passenger bus should usually be a 78-passenger bus. However, sometimes this is not possible as no similar bus is available (48-passenger without a wheelchair lift for one route; 78-passenger for four routes). However, a different size bus can be assigned to the routes. There are more than sufficient spares for 65-passenger buses, and these can be assigned in lieu of 48-passenger or 78-passenger buses. The other two bus types of buses that Martin County maintains have adequate spares (29-passenger and wheelchair equipped buses). The director of transportation said he would like to purchase a standardized fleet of primarily 78-passenger buses with an adequate subfleet of wheelchair-lift equipped buses. He believes the larger buses give him the greatest flexibility in making route assignments and accommodating extracurricular field trips. The 29-passenger buses are the least adaptable to different assignments.

Assuming 74 bus routes (as specified in the request for proposals for privatization, although the number of routes was reduced to 71 in December 1998), the spare bus ratio will be 23% of daily route buses (19% of total buses). Assuming a spare ratio of 20% of the buses in daily service, Martin County has two to four more spare buses than required

based on industry standards. However, given the change in management and the high level of annual miles driven per bus, the slightly larger than required spare fleet does not seem unreasonable.

2 The Transportation Department has inspection and maintenance practices in place to ensure the safety of school buses. Manual systems are in place to track vehicle maintenance.

Buses Are Inspected Every 20 Working Days and Bus Safety Inspection Records Are Reviewed Regularly to Determine Their Completeness and Accuracy

School buses in service are inspected every 20 working days in accordance with the Florida School Bus Safety Manual and in compliance with Rule 6A-3.017, F.A.C. During a site visit the team reviewed the work orders for vehicles selected at random. Each safety inspection is recorded with a work order. Of the six vehicles selected from the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years, each vehicle had a safety inspection monthly and inspections were conducted at least every 20 workdays. Now that the district's transportation program is privatized, Laidlaw is contractually obligated to inspect buses every 20 working days in accordance with state and district policy.

The district regularly reviews its bus safety inspection records to determine their completeness and accuracy. The lead mechanic is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the bus safety inspection records as recorded by the work order and attached safety inspection form. The lead mechanic also relies upon one of his inspectors to keep a cross-file on index cards. An index card is prepared for each vehicle. The date of each safety inspection and each change of filter or fluid is recorded on the index card. During the site visit, the study team reviewed the hard copy files of safety inspection records and the index card file. The records were filed by vehicle number by school year, and the work orders in each file were in chronological order. The lead mechanic indicated that he reviews records of safety inspections and repairs daily. When a mechanic completes work on a bus, the lead mechanic reviews the work order and does spot checks of the work performed.

In addition, the director of transportation and the superintendent signed an assurance statement for "Monthly Bus Inspection Records" verifying that the records transmitted to DOE are accurate. The assurance statement was submitted to the School Transportation Management Section of DOE in Tallahassee. The private contractor, Laidlaw, is now responsible for providing safety inspections, preventive maintenance, and repair for all district vehicles. Laidlaw is responsible for ensuring buses are inspected and maintained in accordance with DOE requirements. Bus drivers inspect all buses in operation daily and promptly follow-up on identified deficiencies.

The district has implemented procedures for bus drivers to inspect all buses daily and promptly follow-up on deficiencies identified. School buses are repaired to meet Rule 6A-3, F.A.C., safety standards before being returned to service to transport students. A bus inspection check sheet is maintained in each bus and drivers are required to conduct pre-trip inspections in the morning and in the afternoon. During a site visit the review team checked to see if the bus inspection check sheet was on each of approximately five buses

boarded and filled out as required. Checks were recorded for each inspection task for each day, both a.m. and p.m.

If the driver finds a problem during the pre-trip inspections, he or she is responsible for opening a work order to describe the problem and delivering the work order to vehicle maintenance. Once the transportation program district has been privatized, Laidlaw will be responsible to the district for driver inspections in accordance with DOE safety standards.

If a driver identifies a problem a box is available in vehicle maintenance to drop-off work order requests. A work order stays with the mechanic until all repairs are completed. Inspection forms are supplemented by work orders for repairs. Most repairs are completed the same day. Mechanics make their repairs in accordance with basic safety standards, which are established by DOE, to ensure that repairs of all safety related items are made and documented before a bus is returned to service.

Drivers who participated in a focus group discussion reported a high level of confidence in the quality of vehicle maintenance. In addition, the drivers said repairs are made promptly.

In addition, the director of Transportation and the superintendent sign an assurance statement for "Physical Examination of School Buses" verifying that required inspections are performed and necessary repairs made. The assurance statement is submitted to the School Transportation Management Section of the Florida DOE in Tallahassee.

Manual Systems Are in Place to Track Vehicle Maintenance

Manual systems are in place to track vehicle maintenance. However, this could be greatly enhanced by using the ExtraFleet software as a management tool. The lead mechanic and the principal inspector have developed a manual tracking system using a card file index to track safety inspections and service intervals for buses and other district-owned vehicles. All vehicle maintenance work is recorded on a manual work order system. The data from work orders, including parts, labor, and tires, are entered into the ExtraFleet database. All work orders have been entered for at least the past year so a year's worth of data is available for analysis.

During an on-site visit the review team, inspected the work order files. In addition, the parts manager demonstrated how all data is entered from work orders. She confirmed all work orders are entered into the ExtraFleet software daily. However, the parts manager does not manipulate the database and the lead mechanic has not been trained to use the ExtraFleet software as a management tool. The director of Transportation reported that he has not had the time to learn the software himself.

There is a sufficient maintenance database to establish an effective preventive maintenance program. In addition, the new fuel management system makes it possible to merge data for fuel and mileage. The ExtraFleet software program should be capable of tracking time and mileage intervals for safety inspections, preventive maintenance inspections, scheduled and unscheduled repairs.

The contract for privatization of transportation requires Laidlaw to maintain an automated record system for each vehicle and vehicle category.

3 The district has procedures and practices in place to ensure that vehicles are maintained, serviced and stored safely.

The District Had More Mechanics than Required for the Fleet of School Buses and the White Fleet

The vehicle maintenance personnel included one lead mechanic, eight mechanics (one paint and body mechanic), three transportation helpers (two positions vacant), one parts clerk and a bookkeeper. Exhibit 13-17 provides peer data to compare staffing levels for mechanics and other fleet maintenance positions.

Exhibit 13-17

Martin County Has Fewer Buses Per Maintenance Staff than Its Peer Districts

School District	Total Buses	Mechanic Positions	Other Fleet Maintenance Positions	Buses per Maintenance Employee
Charlotte	150	6	5	14
Citrus	244	11	0	22
Hernando	199	14	0	14
Indian River	104	1	8	12
Martin	104	8	3	9
St. Johns	137	7	1	17
Peer Average	156	8	3	15

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

Martin County averages only 9 school buses per vehicle maintenance worker. This is significantly lower than the peer average of 15 school buses per maintenance worker. The source of peer data, the DOE draft Quality Links report for school year 1997-98, does not provide information on other vehicles that may also be the responsibility of the maintenance workers. In Martin County as in many other districts the same mechanics and fleet maintenance positions are also responsible for the white fleet of district vans and trucks. Martin County budgeted positions for three non-mechanic workers in fleet maintenance. Only one position is filled.

At the request of the director of Transportation, a private consultant, Charles E. Long (d/b/a Common Sense Management, Inc.), prepared an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of school bus transportation services in Martin County in November 1997. Mr. Long's analysis concludes the proper number of qualified technicians for the current fleet is 5.4 to 6.8 mechanics. Two additional mechanics are required for maintenance of the white fleet. According to this analysis, Martin County requires 7.4 to 8.8 mechanics. The current staff is 9 mechanics including the lead mechanic.

LKC Consulting Services, Inc., analyzed vehicle maintenance staffing using a methodology typical in the public transit industry. The factors addressed in the analysis included the number and types of buses and other vehicles in the fleet, the average annual maintenance person-hours expected for each vehicle type, and the total number of productive work hours per mechanic now available. The study estimated that the total maintenance person hours needed annually for Martin County is 9,116 for both school buses and the white fleet.

To determine the number of mechanics required to provide the maintenance hours he study estimated how much nonproductive time must be taken into account. Once non-productive time is factored out the number of mechanics needed for Martin County according to this analysis is 4.7 mechanics for the school bus fleet and 1.59 mechanics for the white fleet, for a total of 6.29 mechanics. Rounded up to the next highest whole number the number of mechanics required for the Martin County vehicle fleet would be 7 plus the lead mechanic (or an equivalent supervisor). The current vehicle maintenance staffing plan includes 8 mechanics plus the lead mechanic.

Laidlaw is now responsible for evaluating staffing levels in vehicle maintenance.

The District Has a Staff Development Program for Technicians and Garage Supervisors to Keep Them Apprised of Updated Safety, Technology, and Garage Management Practices

The district relied upon the Florida Department of Education (DOE) meetings and workshops as the staff development program. The Transportation Department provided a list of typical conferences, meetings, and training. DOE offers a mid-year meeting and a summer workshop for technicians. The Transportation Department usually sent two mechanics to each meeting or workshop at the district's expense. Participation is rotated among the mechanics. The lead mechanic reported that it was departmental practice to require the mechanics that attended the DOE session to conduct training for other mechanics to pass on information on the first non-school day after a meeting. Clinics to upgrade skills are also provided on-site. For example, Navistar recently conducted an 8-hour class on the new buses.

Mechanics maintain certification as inspectors and technicians. The lead mechanic provided a list of certifications by mechanic. Eight of nine mechanics (including the lead mechanic) have state certification as bus inspectors and certification as technicians from the Florida Association for Pupil Transportation. The Martin County mechanics are not certified by the Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). The lead mechanic stated that the district does not provide an incentive for obtaining ASE certification.

The District Has Evaluated Outsourcing Specific Maintenance or Repair Activities as a Cost-Savings Measure and Implemented Outsourcing Where Appropriate

The district concluded that certain repair and maintenance jobs are more efficiently or cost-effectively conducted through a local vendor. The Transportation Department contracts with outside vendors for major body repair, glass repair, engine (except wet sleeve engines) and transmission rebuilds, and towing. The Transportation Department's outsourcing practices are typical for the industry. These functions are usually not cost-effective to be performed in-house by a small fleet maintenance shop. For example, the district rarely requires a bus to be towed. It would not be cost-effective to buy a tow truck for only

occasional use. Rebuilding engines and transmissions requires expensive equipment and highly trained technicians. Martin County does not rebuild enough engines and transmissions in a year to justify an in-house engine and transmission shop. Glass repair is a unique skill and requires inventory. An outside vendor can respond promptly and perform the repair with precision.

The Transportation Department has undertaken a campaign to remove and replace the wood floors in a portion of the school bus fleet. Although the district may have excess maintenance capacity (a staff of one more mechanic than required), the Transportation Department used temporary laborers to perform the work. The labor rate of \$8.25 per hour to the temporary agency was judged by the director of Transportation to be more cost-effective than reassigning a skilled mechanic.

The district did not conduct competitive bids for outside vendors. Most work is authorized by open purchase order under \$5,000. Many parts are secured directly from the local dealers representing the manufacturers of school buses. Therefore it is not clear whether the district was getting the best price possible for the work activities that it outsourced.

Laidlaw is now responsible for parts control and inventory management. The private contractor is presumed to implement the most cost-effective purchasing practices.

The District Has an Adequate Number of Bus Compounds, Fueling Sites, and Garages Located or Centralized to Maximize Efficient Use of Resources

The Transportation service facility is centrally located approximately three miles from the district's main offices. The service facility includes the maintenance garage with seven bays with four lifts (one outside) and bus parking. Because Martin County has a relatively small fleet, all vehicle maintenance should be centralized.

There were two additional bus "compounds." The largest is in Indiantown in western Martin County. Approximately 18 school buses and drivers are assigned to the Indiantown compound, which has a lead driver to ensure that all drivers report to the compound on time each day. Fueling is available at the compound, however, buses must be returned to the central maintenance facility for 20-day inspections and repairs.

A third compound was at a school in southern Martin County. Actually, the compound is a school parking lot where three buses are parked overnight to reduce non-productive miles. The buses were stored inside a fenced yard, and each bus assigned to southern Martin County had an ignition interlock to provide additional security. Drivers assigned to southern Martin County reported to the central office by radio. Buses were returned to Dixie Highway for fueling, 20-day inspections, and repairs.

The number of facilities, compounds, and fueling sites in Martin County are comparable to peer districts as illustrated in Exhibit 13-18.

Exhibit 13-18**Transportation Facilities in Martin County
Are Comparable to Peer Districts**

School District	Total Buses	Area in Square Miles	Bus Maintenance Facilities	Bus Compounds	Fuel Sites
Charlotte	150	690	2	2	2
Citrus	244	629	3	9	7
Hernando	199	477	2	2	2
Indian River	104	497	1	2	2
Martin	104	555	1	3	2
St. Johns	137	617	2	2	2
Peer Average	156	578	2	3	3

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

The contract for privatization of transportation leases the main facility and the Indiantown compound to Laidlaw for the term of the agreement. The compound in south Martin County is not mentioned in the contract.

The District Has Implemented Systems to Ensure Security of Parts; However, the District Stocked More Inventory than Necessary

The ExtraFleet software is in place and is used as a parts inventory management system. The parts manager enters all parts purchased into the database. The tire inventory is reported as a stock item, and all tires are numbered to track inventory. The parts manager issues parts to mechanics during the day. When the parts manager is not available, any mechanic can enter the parts room and find the necessary part. An informal system requires the mechanic to leave a note for the parts manager any time the last part is taken. All parts used are recorded on a work order. Each day, the parts manager enters the parts, tires, and labor for each work order completed into the ExtraFleet database.

However, although the information on maintenance costs was entered into the ExtraFleet database the Transportation Department did not actually use it to analyze performance or maintenance costs by vehicle. This type of information could be useful when deciding which vehicles to retire and when searching for trends on what types of repairs are costing the district the most money.

The Transportation Department also maintained records on hard copy. Each month, the bookkeeper for the Transportation Department sorted all paper work orders by vehicle number. The work orders for the month for each vehicle were stapled together with a calculator tape to tally costs. The work orders were then filed in a folder labeled for each vehicle number in a file cabinet near the vehicle maintenance work area. The hard files were available to the lead mechanic. Records for the current school year and for the year immediately past were readily available. Older records are filed in storage boxes.

The Purchasing Department conducted an annual inventory of the parts room. The director of Purchasing reported the variance between financial records and the inventory was small. An annual inventory is sufficient as long as the variance remains one percent or

less. The additional cost of a semi-annual or quarterly inventory is warranted only if the variances are significant.

According to a consultant's report the district's parts inventory was about three times larger than needed. At the request of the director of Transportation, a private consultant, Charles E. Long (d/b/a Common Sense Management, Inc.), prepared an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of school bus transportation services in Martin County in November 1997. The parts inventory should be turned over about four times per year. The inventory in stock should be only one-fourth the annual parts budget. For 1998-99, the repair parts budget for Transportation was \$100,000. One-fourth of the budget is \$25,000. The active inventory value was about \$96,000. The value of actual inventory over the estimated need is \$71,000.

The ExtraFleet database has the information needed to evaluate which parts in inventory are not moving and how many of each part are on hand. The inventory could be reduced to delete those parts that have not moved within the last year. If a part does not turn over often, the number of parts in stock may be reduced. Finally, high dollar parts should be evaluated. Multiple high dollar parts may be not be required if a local vendor can be identified to provide delivery within 24-hours.

The district also had forms and procedures in place to report the monthly fuel inventory and a schedule of fuel purchases. The amount of fuel dispensed was recorded by vehicle daily. The monthly records were transferred to create per vehicle fuel records. Fuel purchased was reconciled to fuel dispensed monthly. The lead driver in Indiantown was responsible for tracking and reporting fuel inventory at the compound.

A new automatic fuel management system has just been installed at the transportation service facility on Dixie Highway. The automated system can provide monthly reports to track the fuel inventory more accurately. Automated data reporting had not yet begun as of the week of April 21, 1999.

Laidlaw will be responsible for all fuel for operation of the system. The cost of fuel is included in the maintenance fee. The contractor may chose to use the district's fuel storage and dispensing system. In the event that the Laidlaw does use the fuel supply system, the contractor will assume full responsibility for maintenance, repair, and renovation of the system.

The District Had Not Implemented an Efficient System for Tracking Maintenance Costs, Including Labor, Parts, Supplies and Fuel

The Transportation Department recorded and reported cost data in hard copy and also entered the parts, tires, and labor for each work order issued into the ExtraFleet database. However the Transportation Department did not actually use the database. Costs are not tracked by vehicle or by vehicle category. The vehicle maintenance information system is discussed further on page 13-32.

The District Did Not Monitor Environmental, Health, and Safety Standards Applicable to Transportation Shop Operations

The district's safety officer reported there should be a fire inspection annually for every district facility, but the last fire inspection at the transportation services facility was in 1997. He was not able to locate a copy of the inspection report.

DOE requires that each school board provide for inspections to ensure that all facilities meet the standards set forth in the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF). In Martin County, this responsibility for SREF inspections is assigned to the safety officer. An SREF inspection was conducted before June 30, 1999. The safety officer said SREF inspections have not been conducted for several years in the absence of adequate staff.

The Transportation Department operating procedure included procedures for ensuring environmental compliance and clean-up procedures for oil spills. Oil, antifreeze and other fluids are captured in appropriate containers. A private vendor retrieves and disposes of the contaminated fluids. Batteries are returned to the vendor for recycling. Employees are briefed on right to know and provided documentation each September during an in-service day at the beginning of the new school year.

Laidlaw is now responsible for disposing of all hazardous and special wastes generated during the course of the contract. All waste disposal is to be in accordance with all district, county, state, and federal regulations.

4 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 District Implemented Policies to Ensure Students With Special Needs Receive Appropriate Transportation

The district implemented policies regarding transportation services for pupils with special educational needs to ensure compliance with Rule 6A-3.0121, F.A.C., and annually assessed whether children who ride on special transportation could instead ride on a regular bus. Special transportation is provided for students who need it because of their disability or location of their program. Students who are able are encouraged to use the regular school bus or walk to school. The district makes an annual assessment of whether children who ride special education buses could instead take a regular bus. In school year 1997-98, the Transportation Department reported 166 student riders with disabilities.

The Transportation Department uses Form 4-A, a transportation request form, to record the information necessary to assess a student's need to ride on special transportation. The intent of the form is to ensure special transportation is available to the children who qualify. The Form 4-A is completed by a parent and evaluated by the IEP committee. The Transportation Department may be consulted in the discussion of transportation needs, but the decision to provide special education transportation is made by the IEP committee.

The director of Transportation initiated a program for staff development for drivers and bus attendants assigned to special education routes for the Challenger School. Each month the drivers and bus assistants meet for one hour with trainers from the Challenger School. The Transportation Department personnel are trained on the special needs of the students attending the Challenger School. In return, the Challenger School staff has the opportunity to learn about transportation procedures and can offer help in resolving problems.

Routing Efficiency and Safety

- 1 Martin County bus routes are designed to achieve one of the highest bus occupancy rates in the state. Procedures are adequate to provide safety for students, although student comfort may be compromised to achieve the high occupancy rate.**

The District Has Adopted Guidelines and Procedures to Ensure Safety at Stops and Loading Zones

The Martin district adopted a systematic procedure for identifying hazards. Drivers and others were asked to report any hazard or any dangerous situation on or near public sidewalks, streets, or highways that might be a threat to the safety of a student who walks or is transported between home and school. A form was available to report a hazard. A lead driver or the director of Transportation investigated the reported situation and recommended appropriate action. The district revised bus routes or stops to resolve the dangerous situation if possible. If the hazard could not be resolved, the director of Transportation could recommend another intervention such as requesting the Martin County Public Services Department to make a road repair. For example, route 151 served students who lived within two miles of a school, but were prevented from walking because the sidewalk to school ended at a canal. The director of Transportation approached the county to install a walking bridge and extend the sidewalk to the school.

Department procedures encouraged each bus driver to continuously evaluate assigned routes. Recommendations to improve routes were requested. One specific area of concern is any situation where a driver is required to back a bus up. Each semester each driver was asked to survey his/her route and document any circumstance where backing a bus may be required, for example at the end of a cul-de-sac where the turning radius is insufficient for a school bus. A lead driver or the director of Transportation investigated the reported situation and recommended appropriate action. Bus routes or bus stops were revised by the district to resolve the dangerous situation.

District Limits Pupil's Riding Time on School Buses

The Transportation Department has established rules for routes and route times to provide dependable, effective and timely student transportation. Each driver is provided a detailed route plan with stop by stop instructions and times. Department procedures require drivers to report a variance of plus or minus five minutes from the printed stop times on the route schedule. Drivers are cautioned not to leave a designated stop earlier than the scheduled time.

The Transportation Department has a goal to limit an elementary student's riding time on the school bus to no more than 50 minutes and a secondary student's riding time to no more than one hour. For any trip, the longest riding time will be for the students picked up at the first stop in the morning or dropped off at the last stop in the afternoon. The detailed route plans and schedule for the spring semester 1998-99 were reviewed to evaluate trip times. The afternoon trip times were selected for evaluation. In the afternoon,

the total trip time for elementary schools ranged from 9 minutes to 100 minutes. Thirty percent of the trips from elementary schools were more than the 50 minute standard. The trip times for high schools ranged from 23 minutes to 92 minutes. Nineteen or 32% of the trips from high schools were more than the one hour standard. The trip times for middle schools ranged from 17 minutes to 90 minutes. Only one of the trips from a middle school was more than one hour. It is important to note that only the last students delivered home were subject to total trip time on the bus.

The director of Transportation indicated that the exceptions are all distance based, i.e. students who ride from Indiantown or the beach. The middle and high school trips that have long operating schedules also travel long distances across the county, often using highways to traverse many miles. For the long elementary routes, about one-half are due to long trips from Indiantown and Hobe Sound, and the remainder appear to simply be very long routes with lots of stops and routes on busy roads (A1A for example) where speeds are slow. The length of trips may also be a factor of the high average occupancy rate. In some instances, many stops are made to maximize the student loads on a bus trip.

Under the new privatization agreement, Laidlaw will implement a computerized routing program, which may help route buses more effectively. Automated routing and scheduling programs will have specific parameters that are defined by the district to control route and schedule design. For example, the automated program can be set up to limit trips to a maximum number of minutes. Exceptions, for trips from Indiantown and Hobe Sound can then be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Routes Are Designed to Achieve a High Average Bus Occupancy Rate

Martin County designed routes to achieve high average bus occupancy. In 1997-98, the average bus occupancy was 96.90 students per bus. The statewide average was 69.42, and the peer average was 71.47. Martin County and all peers have staggered bell times (which allow each bus to make three trips each morning and evening) to improve the efficient assignment of school buses.

In order to increase bus flexibility and maximize buses average occupancy the director of Transportation preferred to increase the number of 77-passenger buses in the fleet. The current bus fleet includes buses with varying capacities. When the 14 new buses arrive, the maximum capacity of 80 buses in the fleet will be 65 passengers. Seven buses will seat 77 to 78 passengers. Fifteen buses in the fleet are wheelchair lift equipped. The buses equipped with wheelchair lifts include two 29-passenger buses and two 48-passenger buses.

The maximum capacity of a school bus is defined in the 1995 National Standards for School Buses and Florida School Bus Specifications. Capacity is based on 13 inches of width per seating position. Typically, this can be translated as three passenger positions per seat. The Martin County practice is to assign three students per seat for elementary and middle school students and two students per seat for high school students.

Four times a year Martin County drivers are required to count the number of students on each trip for each route. The counts are made once each semester in the fall and spring and twice each summer. The results are reported to DOE to calculate average bus occupancy for the state allocation. The average bus occupancy rate is used to measure student transportation efficiency and is an important factor for determining the amount of state allocation.

The study team reviewed detailed trip by trip counts of student riders in February 1999 to evaluate the number of students registered for each trip. Individual trips average 52 registered riders for elementary school trips, 49 registered riders for middle school trips, and 42 registered riders for high school trips. Registered riders are all students who are on record to ride a specific route. The director of Transportation said on average 10% of registered riders do not ride on any given school days, either due to absence or choice to use other transportation.

For elementary school trips, five trips expect more than 65 student riders. Expected riders are equal to 90% of registered riders. Of the five trips, the highest number of students expected is 72 students.

For middle school trips, drivers reported no trips with more than 65 expected student riders. Sixty-five represents three students per seat. Some drivers suggest this standard is too many for middle school students. If one assumed instead two passengers per seat (similar to high school students), the typical bus seating would be 44 passengers. For middle school trips, 24 trips had more than 44 expected student riders. In a focus group interview, drivers said they were concerned about the number of middle students per bus trip. The drivers find that is hard to effectively manage that many students of middle school age, especially when they are sitting three to a school bus seat.

High school students are assigned two passengers per seat, or typical bus seating of 44 passengers. For high school trips, Martin County drivers reported 13 trips with more than 44 expected student riders. If a 78-passenger bus was in service, high school seating capacity would be about 52 passengers. Six trips expected more than 52 student riders. None of the trips expected more than 65 student riders.

Drivers are required to report crowded situations for rerouting or other intervention and may not drive with a standing student. If there are more students than seats, children are asked to crowd four to a seat.

Under the new privatization agreement, Laidlaw will implement a computerized routing program. Automated routing and scheduling programs can be set to limit the number of middle school students to 44 for a 65 passenger bus.

However, if the Martin County School Board adopted a formal policy to limit the number of students assigned to a bus trip, the number of bus assignments would increase. For example, the lead driver responsible for routing estimated nine additional bus routes would be required if the number of middle school students per seat was limited to two rather than three. If the number of student riders is limited, the average bus occupancy rate will also fall. A lower average bus occupancy rate will reduce the state allocation of funds for student transportation.

Cluster Bus Stops Help Increase Efficiency

One of the reasons the Transportation Department can efficiently schedule routes is because the district uses cluster stops. Cluster stops are located in a safe area where surrounding students can walk to the bus stop. With cluster stops, buses can be routed more directly because the students walk from their home to bus stops that are on a more direct route rather than having the bus pick up a few people at many scattered bus stops.

Better Information Is Needed on the Resolution of Student Referrals for a Discipline Problem on a School Bus

In a focus group interview drivers expressed a concern about overcrowded buses. The opinion of some drivers was that overcrowding made it difficult to monitor student behavior on the bus.

Neither the Martin County Transportation Department nor school principals tracked the number of student discipline incidents that occurred on buses. Collecting and tracking this data would allow the Transportation Department to evaluate whether overcrowded buses result in increased discipline problems. Better information on discipline problems could help the district target additional counseling or training for drivers that have students with discipline problems.

A school bus driver may not discipline a student by means other than giving a reasonable verbal reprimand. If a problem occurs with a particular student on a school bus, the driver must write a report on the incident and deliver the report to the school principal. The school principal is responsible for investigation of the incident and discipline if any. The Transportation Department is not involved. There is no formal mechanism to report back to the driver, a lead driver, or the director of Transportation on the action taken. This situation leaves the driver feeling not in control of the student riders, the school principal feeling responsible for the problems of the driver, and the student at the advantage.

Activity Trips Are Operated in Accordance with District Policy and Charges Cover Most Expenses

A bus request for activity trips is designed to collect the appropriate information. The bus request must be submitted to the Transportation Department seven days prior to the trip as required by board Policy 6Gx43-4.20. A sampling of request forms revealed that teachers and administrators submit requests at least 7 days in advance. When exceptions to the seven-day rule occur, they are usually unavoidable. For example, the schedules for sports tournaments do not schedule game times in advance. Martin County established charges for field trips that recover 94% cost of the cost of activity trips. The district charges \$1.00 per mile plus the actual field trip time in hours times the driver's pay rate (including benefits). The district recovered approximately \$120,921 in mileage expense and \$118,434 in driver time (assuming the average driver pay per hour for all drivers of \$10.18), for a total of \$239,500 in revenue. This compares to the fully allocated cost of \$2.11 per mile, or about \$255,000 in expenses.

The district does provide transportation for a limited number of outside groups if approved by the School Board. Other groups are charged a premium of \$1.50 per mile plus the actual costs of the driver.

Under the contract with Laidlaw, the school district has the choice of contracting with a private charter for any field trip or extracurricular trip or using Laidlaw. The contract cost for supplemental transportation by Laidlaw is equivalent to about \$2.01 per mile (total).

District Policies on Transportation Provide Direction for Transportation of Students Within Two Miles of School

The district has collected data regarding each student's distance from the assigned school and put policies in place necessary to ensure consistent and equitable decisions on transportation of students who live less than two miles walking distance from school. The

state of Florida provides funds for home to school transportation for students who live more than two miles walking distance from school. Exceptions are allowed for hazardous conditions and some special education students. Any other transportation must be provided with local funds at the courtesy of the district.

The Transportation Department designs routes to provide transportation for students who live more than two miles from school. The department has a procedure for identifying hazardous conditions and documenting exceptions for students who live within two miles of school. The procedure requires school board approval for exceptions due to hazardous conditions and for courtesy transportation for students living within two miles of their zoned school.

The 1997-98 school year data for hazardous walking and courtesy riders for Martin County and peer districts is provided as Exhibit 13-19. Martin County provides courtesy transportation to fewer students than other districts except Citrus.

Exhibit 13-19

Martin County Provides Transportation to Relatively Few Courtesy Riders

School District	Student Riders	Number of Riders Hazardous Conditions	Percent of Hazardous Conditions	Number of Riders Courtesy of District	Percent of Courtesy
Charlotte	8,440	866	5%	1,011	6%
Citrus	10,306	35	0%	294	2%
Hernando	10,692	0	0%	3,452	21%
Indian River	6,066	345	2%	717	5%
Martin	7,462	148	1%	420	3%
St. Johns	10,179	0	0%	1,168	7%
Peer Average	8,858	232	1%	1,177	7%

Source: 1997-98 Draft Quality Links Report.

No state allocation is received for courtesy transportation. Assuming the average per student rider cost of \$2.79 per day and 180 days of school, the cost to the Martin County School District of courtesy transportation in 1997-98 was \$211,000.

The District Maintains Records for Route and Non-Route Trips

The Transportation Department has forms and procedures to collect data for route and non-route trips. During the 1997-98 school year, 1,655,703 home to school route miles were reported. For the same year, 120,921 field trip miles were reported. During 1997-98 transportation was provided for a total of 1,939 field trips, or about 10 per day on average. Each field trip averaged 63 miles and about six hours. Exhibit 13-20 provides information on route and non-route miles for Martin and its peers.

Exhibit 13-20**Martin's Annual Mileage for Bus Routes and Field Trips Are Consistent with Its Peers**

School District	Total Annual Miles	Route Miles		Field Trip Miles		Buses in Daily Service	Miles per Bus
		Number	%	Number	%		
Charlotte	1,959,500	1,845,500	94%	114,000	6%	116	15,909
Citrus	2,382,016	2,227,969	93%	154,047	7%	185	12,043
Hernando	3,331,436	3,062,331	91%	269,105	9%	165	18,560
Indian River	1,521,962	1,408,165	92%	113,797	8%	71	19,833
Martin	1,776,624	1,655,703	93%	120,921	7%	77	21,503
St. Johns	2,731,957	2,584,680	94%	147,277	6%	128	20,193
Peer Average	2,283,916	2,130,725	93%	153,191	7%	124	18,007

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

Recommendations

- *The district should work with Laidlaw to ensure that student referrals for disciplinary action on school buses are reported.*
- *The district should evaluate the use of courtesy bus service and discontinue courtesy bus service unless the courtesy riders can be accommodated on routes necessary to transport other students. Discontinuing courtesy transportation could save as much as \$211,000 if transportation services were stopped for all courtesy riders.*
- *Guidelines should be developed for schools to use in deciding whether to select either Laidlaw or a private charter company to provide transportation for field trips.*

Action Plan 13-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Work with Laidlaw to ensure that student referrals for disciplinary action on school bus and the resolution of the problem are reported.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish suggested procedure Step 2: Coordinate with Laidlaw branch manager Step 3: Present to all principals Step 4: Modify by feedback Step 5: Implement program
Who Is Responsible	executive director of Operations or designee

Time Frame	To be developed first semester 1999-2000
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Evaluate the use of courtesy transportation and discontinue service to courtesy riders unless they can be accommodated on routes necessary to transport other students.
Action Needed	Step 1: Evaluate transportation routes. Step 2: Identify students affected. Step 3: Present to School Board.
Who Is Responsible	Laidlaw for analysis, executive director of Operations Services, superintendent
Time Frame	Implemented 2000-2001 school year. Should be done at the same time as routing and scheduling revisions with new automated computer program.
Fiscal Impact	Could save as much as \$211,000 annually
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Develop guidelines for schools to use in deciding whether to select either Laidlaw or a private charter company to provide transportation for field trips or extracurricular activities.
Action Needed	Step 1: Investigate local charter rates. Step 2: Compare Laidlaw rate to private charter for different length (miles and hours) of field trip. Step 3: Prepare guidelines on when it is cost-effective to choose which provider. Step 4: Write procedure for issuing a purchase order for charter transportation. Step 5: Develop accounting systems to record and report expense by Laidlaw and private charters.
Who Is Responsible	executive director of Operations, Purchasing director, Finance director
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources. Without guidelines, the district will not be ensured of best price for extracurricular transportation.

2 Staff, drivers, and pupils are instructed and rehearsed in the procedures to be used in an accident or disaster.

Emergency Bus Evacuation Drills Are Conducted at Least Once Each Semester

Principals or designated school staff conduct emergency bus evacuation drills at least once each semester. The district documents the results of the bus evacuation drill at each school. These reports are signed by the principal, confirming drills are conducted.

The District's Accident Review Policy Meets and Exceeds State Reporting Requirements

Whenever an accident occurs, a department lead driver goes to the scene. The lead driver evaluates each accident and determines if the accident was preventable or non-preventable. The DOE school bus accident report form is used to review and report accidents. The recommendations developed from the review are forwarded to the director of transportation for concurrence. The report identifies any retraining required for a driver involved in an accident. The lead driver received her training for accident investigation at the local police academy.

The driver handbook includes written procedures in the case of an accident. Student drivers are instructed in proper procedures in case of accidents during training. Each driver is required to attend 16 hours of in-service training each year. Additional training is provided in monthly driver safety meetings. During a site visit the team observed, a driver safety meeting and a guest speaker from the county sheriff's office. Data on the number of accidents reported by Martin County and peer districts are reported on page 13-16.

3 The district has implemented hiring and training policies to employ qualified bus drivers.

The District Had High Levels of Turnover but Had Not Collected Comparable Information from Similar Districts

The district's turnover rate for the 1998-99 school year to date was about 25%. Eighteen of the 73 drivers were hired since February 1998. More than 50% of the district's drivers had been employed with the district two years or less. This poses challenges to the district and requires higher levels of training and increased hiring and recruiting costs. Seniority is illustrated in Exhibit 13-21.

Exhibit 13-21

More than Half of Martin's Drivers Were Employed Two Years or Less

Years Employed	Number of Drivers
14 or more	15
13	0
12	1
11	1
10	0
9	3
8	1
7	3
6	1
5	1
4	2
3	5

Years Employed	Number of Drivers
2	12
1	10
<1	18
Total Drivers	73
Average Years	6.7

Source: Employee list provided by Transportation Department.

Martin County School District Salaries and Benefits Were Higher than Peer Districts

Average salaries and benefits for transportation employees are reported annually to DOE. The results are summarized in the Quality Links reports. Exhibit 13-22 provides data for school year 1997-98 for Martin County and peer districts.

Exhibit 13-22

Martin's Average Salaries and Benefits Were Higher than Those of Its Peers

School District	Average District Salary	Average % Benefits	Average Salary and Benefits	Salaries and Benefits (as a Percentage of Operating Costs)
Charlotte	\$11,832	34%	\$15,843	79%
Citrus	11,358	25%	14,141	77%
Hernando	12,071	26%	15,197	78%
Indian River	12,493	33%	16,653	76%
Martin	16,201	38%	22,309	77%
St. Johns	13,976	31%	18,280	83%
Peer Average	12,989	31%	17,071	78%

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report.

The Martin County average salary and benefits was 31% higher than the peer average. Salaries and benefits represent an average of 78% peer district operating costs. Therefore, Martin County total operating costs can be expected to be 24% higher than peer districts due to higher salaries and benefits, alone. This explains why Martin County's cost per mile was 21% higher than the peer average.

Martin County wage rates were increased in February 1999. A copy of the 1998-99 salary schedule was collected from the Personnel Department. Exhibit 13-23 provides a comparison of Martin County average salary for drivers and for mechanics.

Exhibit 13-23**Average Salaries for Drivers and Mechanics Were Higher than Most Peers**

School District	Director Salary	Average Annual Driver Salary	Average Annual Mechanic Salary	Benefits as a Percent of Salary
Charlotte	\$68,640	\$ 8,014	\$20,814	34%
Citrus	N/A	8,488	24,998	25%
Hernando	N/A	N/A	N/A	26%
Indian River	58,601	11,355	28,807	33%
Martin	58,074	12,772	28,385	38%
St. Johns	31,328	9,977	24,021	31%
Peer Average	54,161	10,121	25,405	31%

Source: Martin County and Peer Districts.

The District Reviews All Drivers' Records on a Regular Basis

The district has established qualifications for any driver of a district vehicle. The lead driver keeps driver training and safety records of in the Transportation Department. The records in each file include original training documentation, certification as a commercial driver, copies of annual physical reports (each driver is required to have an annual physical and to maintain a valid commercial driver's license), motor vehicle reports, reports on incidents, and reports on driver problems and resolutions. The lead driver reviews all drivers' records to determine whether qualifications are up-to-date. She requests motor vehicle reports from the state for each driver two times per year. The director of Transportation and the superintendent provide an assurance statement of "School Bus Driver Licensure and Qualifications" annually. The assurance statement is submitted to the School Transportation Management Section of DOE in Tallahassee.

If a driver is involved in any motor incident on or off the job, he or she is required to immediately report the incident to the Transportation Department. These incidents can also be identified by the department as it subscribes to a weekly service that reports any motor vehicle report involving a driver qualified by the district. The lead driver keeps a separate notebook with records of each accident involving a school bus. Records are filed in chronological order. The accident records are not cross-referenced in the driver file and therefore do not contain the same information.

The director of Transportation also had a file on each Transportation Department employee. Records on file include attendance records, commendations, complaints, disciplinary action and similar personnel records.

The District Has A Staff Development Program, Including an Annual Driver Performance System, to Address Drivers' Training Needs

The Transportation Department provides 16 hours of in-service training and sponsors a monthly safety meeting with drivers. After an accident or incident, a driver may be subject to up to two hours of retraining. Cameras are also rotated on buses. The lead driver reviews the tapes for driver training and safety. If the lead driver observes a problem with driver or bus assistant skills, the individual is counseled.

Drivers are also scheduled for an annual ride check with a lead driver to evaluate driver performance and student management techniques. A lead driver rides one run with each driver each year and completes an evaluation form. The evaluation form is the same as the form used by an instructor during driver training and covers such areas as driving skills, student management, driver preparedness, bus interior and exterior appearance, and route schedule compliance. The lead drivers report they do not have time to ride with every driver. Lack of sufficient supervisory personnel has resulted in each lead driver taking on more responsibilities. Each lead driver, therefore, works the equivalent of two jobs, leaving little time for ride checks with each driver. Additional experienced drivers are recruited to assist.

Martin County School District Has Not Provided a Sufficient Number of Supervisors for the Number of Employees in the Transportation Department

The lack of sufficient supervisory staff is the result of AFSCME Florida union rules, which prevents union workers from supervising other union workers. Since the Transportation director was the only non-unionized employee in the department (the director) he was responsible for supervising the department's other 129 employees. This situation forced the director of Transportation to focus his attention on managing 129 individual employees rather than managing the functions of the department. One supervisor cannot effectively manage 129 employees. As shown in Exhibit 13-24, the Martin County averaged two to four as many employees per supervisor than its peers.

Exhibit 13-24

Martin County's Ratio of Employees Per Supervisor Was Twice that of Peer Districts

School District	Primary Supervisors	Clerical	Non-Supervisory Operations	Operations	Vehicle Maintenance	Total Staff	Total Employees per Supervisor
Charlotte	7	4	3	160	11	185	25
Citrus	7	9	0	226	11	253	35
Hernando	4	4	2	219	14	243	60
Indian River	2	4	4	103	9	122	60
Martin	1	3	5	110	11	130	129
St. Johns	5	2	3	144	8	162	31
Peer Average	4	4	3	160	11	183	57

Source: 1997-98 DOE Draft Quality Links Report. Operations personnel include bus drivers, substitute drivers, and bus attendants.

Laidlaw proposes a management staff to include seven full-time supervisors. The branch manager is equivalent to the director of Transportation. There will also be one driver development and safety supervisor, one dispatcher, one router/dispatcher, two field supervisors for drivers, and one maintenance supervisor. The five operations supervisors are comparable to the current four lead drivers. The maintenance supervisor is equivalent to the current lead mechanic. It is not clear whether Laidlaw intends to convert lead

positions to supervisors or intends to employ a new management team. There is at least one additional position.

4 The district has a policy on drugs and alcohol for the Transportation Department and enforces the policy.

The District Has Adopted and Clearly Communicated a Drug and Alcohol. The Policy Is Enforced and Includes an Employee Assistance Program

The district has adopted a drug and alcohol policy that is consistent with federal regulations. The director of Facilities is responsible for administering the drug and alcohol policy. Testing notification forms and signed attendance rosters demonstrated that the policy is followed. Driver candidates were observed reporting for drug tests the week of February 15, 1999. The district uses a laboratory selected by DOE to conduct the drug tests.

All new employees must submit to a drug test before employment. Any employee who is qualified to operate a district vehicle is subject to random drug testing and testing for reasonable suspicion. Random testing is conducted at a minimum annual rate of 50% of the average number of driver positions for controlled substances and 25% of the average number of driver positions for alcohol. The director of Transportation could recall only one instance in 18 months where an employee in the Transportation Department was asked to submit to a drug test and resigned rather than comply. The director of Facilities could remember only one other similar instance.

The district has a zero tolerance policy. If an employee fails a drug test, the employee is immediately terminated. However, the district's drug and alcohol policy includes an employee assistance program (EAP) up until the time an employee is asked to submit to a random drug test or a test for reasonable suspicion. At that point the zero tolerance policy goes into effect.

The EAP program is provided by a counseling firm selected by DOE referred to as "Bradman." If an employee seeks assistance, he or she is counseled to call Bradman using a 1-800 telephone number.

There is not a lot of evidence on the EAP program. No literature was found in the Transportation Department. The Personnel Department had no literature and referred inquiries to the risk manager. In the office of the risk manager, an inquiry was referred to the 1-800 number. However, during a focus group with drivers the week of February 15, 1999, all drivers confirmed knowledge of the EAP program.

14

Food Service Operations

Food Service operations have recently improved but lack a fully functioning accounting system and a complete system of performance reporting and management information.

Conclusion

The Martin County School District Food Services Program appears to be moving toward improved leadership and management. Since being hired by the district in October 1998, the director of Food and Nutrition Services has instituted benchmarks, improved program reporting and monitoring, and documented all departmental procedures. The Food Service department has sound methods for receiving and storing goods, providing nutritious meals, accurately providing a count of those meals to the Florida Department of Education, and follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations. The district is also improving its financial reporting and monitoring of food service operations.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

While most of the recommendations made in this report can be accomplished within current or budgeted resources, several recommendations made in this report can generate additional revenue for the district if implemented. This additional revenue is expected to offset anticipated inflation of food and labor costs. At the current level of operations, approximately \$100,000 of additional funds are needed each year to offset a 2.5% inflation rate. As illustrated in Exhibit 14-1, the district could realize an additional \$136,079 annually by increasing select meal prices and increasing meal participation rates.

Exhibit 14-1

Implementing the Recommendations for the Martin County Food and Nutrition Services Program Should Enable the District to Have a Positive Fiscal Impact of \$136,079 Per Year

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Revise meal prices and increase participation in schools not meeting the benchmark indicator for overall and free or reduced-price breakfasts and lunches.	\$136,079

Background

The mission of the Martin County Food and Nutritional Services program is to provide an appealing and nutritionally-sound breakfast and lunch to students while operating at a break-even basis. The department, with estimated 1998-99 revenues of \$5.1 million, served approximately 1.5 million meal equivalents in 1997-98 in 17 kitchens. Meals are prepared on-site in each of the 17 kitchens; in 1998-99, three schools prepared meals for satellite campuses: Stuart Middle and Pine Wood Elementary for the district's two alternative schools, and Port Salerno Elementary for a charter school. On average, the department serves 11,500 meal equivalents daily.

The department has seen a high rate of turnover in the department head position over the last few years. In October 1998, a new director of Food and Nutrition Services was hired. Prior to hiring the new director, the position was upgraded from a supervisor position.

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's Food and Nutrition Management Section and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Bureau of Food Distribution. 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 1998-99 school year, approximately 37% 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 14-2 shows the reimbursement rates for the 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 14-3 shows what Martin County charged for meals during the 1998-99 school year.

Exhibit 14-2

USDA Meal Reimbursement Rates

Meal		1998-99
Free Lunch	Population < 60% Economically Needy	\$1.94
	Population > 60% Economically Needy	1.96
Reduced-Price Lunch	Population < 60% Economically Needy	1.54
	Population > 60% Economically Needy	1.56
Breakfast	Free	1.07
	Reduced	0.77
	Maximum Free	1.28
	Maximum Reduced	0.98

Source: Department of Education

Exhibit 14-3

Martin County Meal Prices, 1998-99

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Breakfast	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.75
Reduced-Price Breakfast	0.30	0.30	0.30
Lunch	1.25	1.50	1.75
Reduced-Price Lunch	0.40	0.40	0.40

Source: Martin County School District Food and Nutrition Services.

In addition to federal meal income reimbursements, the district also receives USDA food commodities. Commodities 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 through a USDA-approved storage facility from which they are transferred to the school district's warehouse. The commodities are delivered from the school district's warehouse to the schools as managers order them.

The school district as a whole experienced problems during the 1998-99 school year in transitioning from an old automated financial management system to a new system called "TERMS." This transition, and problems implementing TERMS, seriously impeded the Food Service Department's ability to track financial data and performance measures.

The food service program has made several notable accomplishments over the past several years. Exhibit 14-4 describes some of these accomplishments.

Exhibit 14-4

Notable Accomplishments

- The district has established strong purchasing relationships with vendors and with neighboring counties to ensure the prompt delivery of quality items at a competitive price.
 - Menus are designed to maximize the use of federally provided commodities while meeting national dietary guidelines.
 - Contracts with vendors who do not meet nutritional requirements have been cancelled.
-

Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness

1 The control over resources and services in Martin County School District's Food Services Program could be improved.

The District Has Qualified Staff Members

The current director of Food Services is qualified to oversee the Food Service program. She has a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership. She is formerly the director of nutritional and dietary services for a hospital in Indiana; prior to that, she was an area specialist for the Food Service Department of Palm Beach County schools.

The director of Food Services has responsibility for the management of the school nutrition program and has control over its resources and services. Exhibit 14-5 displays the duties designated by the district as essential to the satisfactory accomplishment of the position.

Exhibit 14-5

Essential Job Duties of the Director of Food Services

1. Direct and coordinate the implementation of a school food service plan in accordance with program requirements, regulations, and policies of the federal government, (USDA), Florida Department of Education, and the School Board of Martin County.
 2. Standardize policies, levels of cleanliness, health and safety.
 3. Supervise cafeteria accounting procedures and food service accounting procedures at the district level.
 4. Make all applications for federal and state subsidies.
 5. Plan the menus at all schools and promote quality food preparation and service.
 6. Inspect school lunch facilities and operations to ensure that standards of cleanliness, health, and safety are being maintained.
 7. Recommend standardized prices charged for various types of meals.
 8. Facilitate training programs for school food service personnel.
-

9. Prepare school and district level food service budgets.
10. Oversee fiscal management and provide for periodic financial analysis of program operations.
11. Administer state/federal reimbursement and supervise the preparation of all records and reports as required by these agencies.
12. Conduct administrative reviews and surveys as required by the Florida Department of Education.
13. Visit schools on a regular basis.
14. Interface with principals concerning the operation of the food service program.
15. Supervise assigned personnel, conduct annual performance appraisals, and make recommendations for continued and/or initial employment.

Source: School Board of Martin County Job Description, Director of Food Services, approved July 21, 1998.

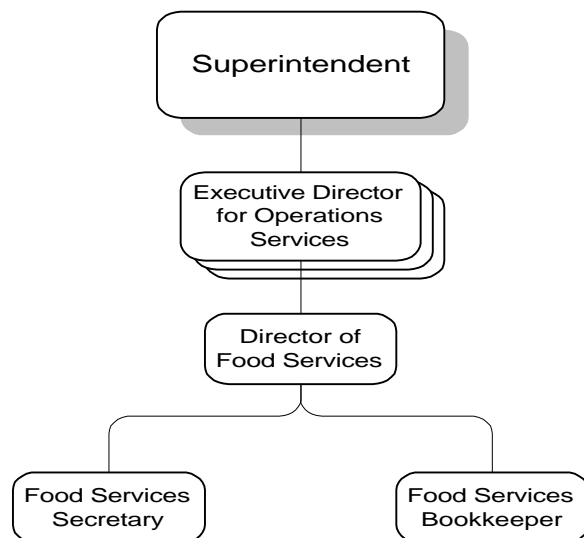
At the time of the review, the executive director of Operations position, which is responsible for overseeing the director of Food Services, was vacant. This has put the burden of ensuring that the Food Services Department is operating satisfactorily in relation to the other operational and support service departments directly on the director of Food Services; she has been required to oversee the day-to-day operations of the department while maintaining a broader view of the function.

The District's Organization Chart Is Incomplete

Organizational charts can be a helpful tool in explaining supervisory or coordination relationships between members of an organization. The district's organization chart shows high-level positions and displays the placement of the school nutrition program director within the district's structure, but details no reporting relationships under the director of Food Services. Exhibit 14-6 displays the organization of the Food Service Department.

Exhibit 14-6

Food Service Department Organization



Source: School Board of Martin County Organization Chart, October 1998; augmented per interview with director of Food Services.

Food service managers at the cafeteria level are not shown on the organization chart. Seven cafeteria managers interviewed were not clear as to whether their direct supervisor is the director of Food Services or the principal of their school. Five of the managers said that the Director of Food Services was their supervisor, while two considered the school principal to be their supervisor. Likewise, principals were not in agreement on this point. During a focus group meeting with principals from every school, it was generally agreed that there was confusion about this issue. However, according to the job descriptions of the director of Food Service and the School Cafeteria Managers, the director of Food Services is responsible for supervising School Cafeteria Managers.

The Food Service Program Has Developed a Mission Statement, Objectives, and Benchmarks

The district has established a mission statement, vision, and objectives for the food service program. These are displayed in Exhibit 14-7.

Exhibit 14-7

Food Service Department Mission, Vision, and Objectives

Mission	The mission of the Food and Nutritional Services Department of the Martin County School District, in partnership with family and community, is to provide an appealing and nutritionally-sound breakfast and lunch to students while operating at a break-even basis.
Vision	The Food and Nutritional Services Department of the Martin County School District will continually upgrade and replace the equipment in the school center kitchens, computerize processes, provide in-service education to employees, and strive for an efficient, effective department.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To financially break-even annually.• To provide nutritionally sound meals to students that meet state and federal guidelines.• To insure sanitation and safety standards are met in all school center kitchens.

Source: Martin County Food Services Department.

With the aid of five cafeteria managers, the Food Service Department has developed a set of objectives, goals and performance measurements. These goals and measurements are not termed by the department as a strategic plan but do give the staff direction and purpose. Goals, measures, and status for the 1998-99 school year are displayed in Exhibit 14-8.

Exhibit 14-8

Food and Nutritional Services Goals 1998-99

Goal	Measurement	Status
Financial		
To have at least a break-even status June 1999.	Compare revenue and expenditure reports in TERMS.	Distributing summary report to managers May 1999.

Goal	Measurement	Status
To have school centers keep labor costs within guidelines.	Labor costs from Expenditure Reports in TERMS; MPLH standards from Financial Report Benchmarks; actual MPLH by school center.	MPLH is calculated using Excel and distributed to managers.
To attain the cost per plate for labor and food.	Labor and food costs from the Expenditure Reports in TERMS and number of meals served by school center, compared to the Financial Report Benchmarks.	Food costs continue to be inaccurate because the payment of food invoices is behind.
Personnel		
To develop and present to Cafeteria Managers an in-service on customer service.	Managers meeting that provides an in-service on customer service.	In-service being developed summer 1999 and presented fall 1999.
To develop a dress code for all school center food service employees.	Establish a committee of food service employees to help develop a dress code and find a source for uniforms.	Committee established. Reached an agreement to piggy-back on Palm Beach County's uniform bid.
Operations		
Develop a Policies and Procedures Manual for the Food and Nutritional Services Department.	Establish a committee to help develop and distribute the manual to school centers.	Under development. Upon board approval, will be saved in public folder on the server.
Develop an Excel program to calculate school center food service operations MPLH.	Distribute monthly MPLH to Cafeteria Managers and principals.	Complete.
Develop an Access program to track substitute employees.	Distribute monthly substitute employee list to Cafeteria Managers.	Food Service Secretary is in the process of developing.
Purchase and install computer hardware and software to allow the school center food service operations to communicate via the network.	New computer hardware and software installed in the school food service operations by the end of 1998-99 and Cafeteria Managers trained by the beginning of 1999-00.	Computers purchased; waiting on software.
Do a five-year plan for the replacement of school center food service equipment.	Five-year equipment plan completed by the end of April in order to budget for equipment replacement for the 1999-2000 school year.	Complete.

Source: Martin County School District Food Services Department.

The District Has Recently Developed a Set of Comprehensive, Written Procedures

A procedures manual for the Food Services Department is substantially complete. The procedures manual will be made available to all Food Services personnel. The director of Food Services plans to make the manual available on-line through a common computer server. This method is intended to save paper and printing costs and to facilitate updates.

The Table of Contents of the procedures manual is displayed in Exhibit 14-9.

Exhibit 14-9

The Food and Nutritional Services Planned Procedures Manual is Comprehensive

- Equipment and Facility Management Procedures
- General Policies and Procedures
- Meal and Cash Accountability Procedures
- Food Production, Menu Analysis, and Satelliting
- Inventory and Purchasing Procedures
- Personnel Policies and Procedures
- Training, Communication and Program Evaluation Procedures

Source: Martin County School District Food and Nutritional Services Procedures Manual,
Revised for the 1998-99 School Year.

Recommendations

- The district should clarify in the district's organizational chart and in applicable job descriptions the supervisory relationship between the Director of Food Services and the Food Service Managers. Within Florida school districts there are generally three methods of dealing with the relationship between Director of Food Services, principals, and cafeteria managers. The director or principal may supervise cafeteria managers, or a dual reporting relationship can be established with either the director or principal taking primary leadership.

Action Plan 14-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Clarify in the district's organizational chart and in applicable job descriptions the supervisory relationship between the Director of Food Services and the Food Service Managers.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Superintendent establishes the line of authority for cafeteria managers. Step 2: As needed, the Superintendent instructs the Executive Director of Human Resources to change the job descriptions of food service manager, Director of Food Services, and principals to reflect the supervisory relationship between the positions. Step 3: The Director of Food Services revises the Food Service organization chart to clearly reflect the supervisory relationship between the director and food service managers.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; director of Food Services; principals; executive director of Human Resources
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

2 The district has identified some barriers to student participation and implemented some strategies, but more needs to be done.

The District Distributes Materials to Students and Parents

The district distributes to students and parents materials that explain and promote the school food service and nutrition program. In cooperation with the school district, in 1997-98 the *Stuart News* printed an announcement that applications for free and reduced-price meals were being sent home with all students. This announcement was based on a press release sent by the district to the Stewart News, and included information on income eligibility criteria, procedures for applying if the family receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Food Stamps, and the information required on the application. In 1998-99, applications for the free and reduced-price meals program were also distributed to all students.

The level of information provided to students and parents can vary by school or type of school.

- Letters are sent from some, but not all, cafeteria managers to parents regarding their child(ren)'s eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.
- Menus are printed and sent home with students from most elementary and middle schools. However, the managers of both Martin County High School and South Fork High School do not send menus home with students. Furthermore, the manager at Martin County High School does not follow the standard menu.
- One school (Sea Wind Elementary) conducted a survey about its planned salad bar to determine preferences on the food items to be included. When the salad bar opened, the school distributed flyers and coupons.

More Needs to Be Done to Identify and Overcome Barriers to Participation

As shown later in Exhibit 14-14 on page 19, participation rates in the school district are typically below benchmark levels set by the program. However, student participation in the school meals program has historically not been recognized by the district as a significant problem. Consequently, very little has been done to formally or systematically identify potential barriers to participation.

Two schools, Martin County High School and Hidden Oaks Middle School, do not serve breakfast. Parents at Hidden Oaks Middle School were surveyed on November 16, 1998, to determine whether students would participate in a school breakfast program if one was established at the school; one response was received, so no action was taken. At Martin County High School, a similar survey was distributed. Like Hidden Oaks, only two responses to the Martin County High School survey were received, so the decision was made not to begin serving breakfast.

Lack of meal payment options can be a barrier to participation for some students. Point-of-Sale (POS) terminals are not available on all serving lines within the district, but the problem is being addressed by management. Currently, there are some serving lines at some schools (such as Martin County High School) where only cash is accepted. The Food Services Department has contacted CAFS, the vendor for the food service point-of-sale

system, for additional terminals. Laptop computers are now budgeted and should be available to solve this problem by the spring of 2000. Having terminals at every point of sale at every school will allow all students, including those who receive free or reduced-price meals, to get reimbursable meals from any line and should improve participation. In addition, students whose parents pre-pay will be able to purchase a la carte items from any line, even if they do not have cash readily available.

No other barriers to participation have been identified. Surveys of parents have not been conducted, nor has a parent advisory group been established to seek input from parents and students. Either of these approaches would increase communications with students and parents with the food service staff, and perhaps identify other barriers to increased participation.

The District Controls A La Carte and Vending Machines Sales

Controlling the sale of a la carte food and beverages minimizes competition with reimbursable meals. At all levels, a la carte items and items in vending machines are priced higher than the prices for reimbursable meals.

Access to a la carte food items are restricted by food service staff. At the elementary level, students must purchase a lunch before they can purchase an a la carte item. A la carte items are not available at every school; the decision to stock a la carte items is left to the food service manager and the principal of the school.

Food sold through vending machines is controlled in two ways. At elementary schools, no vending machines are accessible to students. Vending machines at the middle and high school levels are on automatic timers, and only become operational one hour after the last lunch serving time. The timers on vending machines at the high schools can be removed or inactivated if the state ever lifts the restriction on competitive food at secondary schools.

The District Considers Indirect Student Input, But No Formal Process Exists

No formal procedures are in place to solicit student input. However, the seven cafeteria managers interviewed reported that they pay attention to what the children choose to eat and observe waste, thereby developing an understanding of what the children at their school like and don't like, and plan and adjust menus accordingly. Managers also report that they make an effort to engage children in conversations to discover their food preferences. Also, at several schools there is a Student Planning Day, where managers go to the classrooms to talk with students about nutrition and their preferences. This provides an opportunity for managers to learn about specific likes and dislikes, and to consider these in menu changes.

Recommendations

- *The district should install point-of-sale registers at all sale locations to allow students to buy reimbursable meals and snacks using their pre-paid accounts.*
- *The district should develop a formal process for obtaining input from students and parents about the food service program at each school.*

Action Plan 14-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Install point-of-sale registers at all sale locations to allow students to buy reimbursable meals and snacks using their pre-paid accounts.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services works with the vendor to resolve software problems that have held up the installation of point-of-sale registers at all locations.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services proceeds with procurement of computers for remaining point-of-sale locations.</p> <p>Step 3: The vendor installs the software at all point-of-sale locations, including on the new terminals.</p> <p>Step 4: The managers receive training on the new software.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within planned budget.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a formal process for obtaining input from students and parents about the food service program at each school.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services works with the Food Service managers and principals of several schools to brainstorm ideas about how to formally include input from students and parents in Food Service department decisions. Consideration should be given to establishing food advisory committees composed of students at the schools, distributing formal surveys to students and parents, conducting additional nutritional information classes, and developing a requirement for conducting student taste tests in the menu development process.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services includes agreed-upon approaches in an update to the procedures manual.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers, principals
Time Frame	November 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

3 The district has established some cost-efficiency benchmarks but could develop more and communicate better with its stakeholders.

The District Has Established Some Food Service Benchmarks, but Should Develop More

The district has benchmarks for meals per labor hour (MPLH) and calculates MPLH using industry-accepted standards. The district also has set benchmarks for 1998-99 for participation rates and for food and labor costs per plate. Benchmarks were developed by surveying neighboring districts, including Palm Beach, Indian River, St. Lucie, Charlotte, and Okeechobee counties. The benchmarks used by the district are displayed in Exhibit 14-10.

Exhibit 14-10

Food Service Department Financial Report Benchmarks

Criteria		Benchmark
Staffing		(MPLH = Meals per labor hour)
Elementary Schools	0-599 Meals/Day	17.0 MPLH
	600-699 Meals/Day	18.0 MPLH
	700+ Meals/Day	19.0 MPLH
Participation		
Elementary Schools	Overall Lunch Participation	75-80% of total attendance
	Extreme Need* Lunch	85% of eligible students in attendance
	Overall Breakfast Participation	30-35% of total attendance
Middle Schools	Overall Lunch Participation (including a la carte sales)	75-80% of total attendance
	Extreme Need Lunch Participation	85% of eligible students in attendance
	Overall Breakfast Participation	20% of total attendance
High Schools	Overall Lunch Participation	70-75% of total attendance
	Extreme Need Lunch Participation	75% of eligible students in attendance
	Overall Breakfast Participation	15% of total attendance
Cost Per Plate		
Elementary Schools	Labor Cost per plate – year to date (YTD)	\$0.60 - \$0.65 per plate
	Purchased Food – YTD	\$0.75 - \$0.80 per plate
	Commodities – YTD	\$0.12 - \$0.15 per plate
Secondary Schools	Labor Cost per plate – YTD	\$0.62 - \$0.65 per plate
	Purchased Food – YTD	\$0.85 - \$0.90 per plate
	Commodities – YTD	\$0.12 - \$0.15 per plate

*Extreme Need is defined as those students eligible for free or reduced-price meals through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Source: Martin County School District Food Services Department Financial Report Benchmarks, 1998-99 School Year.

There are additional areas that warrant the establishment of benchmarks. Wage and salary scales of other districts are available for analysis, as are employee benefits. However, the district has not set benchmarks for evaluating district salaries and benefits against those of other districts. Like all other district positions, food service worker salaries of peers is not used adequately in labor negotiations, as discussed in the Personnel section of this report.

The Benchmarks Were Set Using Neighboring Districts, Not Necessarily Peers

Food Service benchmarks were set by survey, but not necessarily using peer districts. The director of Food Services reported that she surveyed surrounding districts to arrive at benchmarks. This means that the benchmarks were not necessarily based on Florida school districts with similar numbers of students and demographics. The director of Food Services used Palm Beach County, Okeechobee County, St. Lucie County, and Indian River County to set benchmarks. In contrast, the OPPAGA review is using Indian River County, Citrus County, Charlotte County, St. Johns County, and Santa Rosa County. Exhibit 14-11 displays the difference in enrollment between the peers used by OPPAGA and those used by the Martin County Food Service Department.

Exhibit 14-11

Food Services Benchmarks Were Patterned After Several School Districts Different from Martin County Rather than Peer Districts

OPPAGA Peers	Enrollment 1996-97	Martin County Peer Districts	Enrollment 1996-97
Martin County	14,824	Martin County	14,824
Charlotte County	16,088	Palm Beach County	137,663
Citrus County	14,194	Okeechobee County	6,596
Indian River County	13,984	St. Lucie County	27,675
St. Johns County	16,437	Indian River County	13,984
Santa Rosa County	20,663		
Peer Average	16,273	Average	46,480

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

Despite the existence of widely accepted industry standards for meals per labor hour and food and labor costs, none were used in developing the benchmarks for the department.

Benchmarks Appear Appropriate, Reasonable, Well Defined, and Based on High Standards

Despite the fact that the director of Food Services did not use industry standards when developing the benchmarks, they are reasonable and based on high standards. The director of Food Services reported that, while she believes in setting high standards for benchmarks, she is careful to set attainable goals. She expressed a belief that employees are not motivated to try to attain goals that they feel are out of their grasp; therefore, she has set goals that are ambitious but reasonable.

The District Has Not Communicated Its Food Service Benchmarks to Stakeholders

Although the district has developed benchmarks, its stakeholders are not aware of their existence. The cafeteria managers interviewed did not know how to calculate their kitchen's meals per labor hour or other benchmark indicators, nor did they in every case understand the importance of the benchmarks. Of the seven managers interviewed, six were calculating the daily cost of food using actual costs of mainline foods and commodities and an average daily cost of produce and snack foods. All managers interviewed were not calculating the actual cost of labor, but instead were using the hours scheduled to be worked to calculate labor costs.

Without adequate communication of benchmarks and performance, stakeholders cannot know whether the program is performing up to expectations. School administrators are not informed of their school's performance in relation to the indicators, nor is there a proactive effort by the district to inform community members about the status of each school's kitchen in comparison to benchmarks.

Recommendations

- *The district should find creative ways to publicize the successes of the food services department in school newsletters. Information on participation rates, nutritional information, and explanations of why charges are not allowed could encourage greater participation and provide more information to parents, administrators, teachers and staff, and other interested community members.*

Action Plan 14-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Publicize the successes of the food services department, including information about participation rates, nutritional information, and profiles of selected "diners" in school newsletters to encourage greater participation and provide more information to parents, administrators, teachers and staff, and other interested community members.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services works with the Food Service managers to determine the publication schedule of school newsletters at each school.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services names a subcommittee of managers to help develop topics of articles to be submitted to school newsletters and to assign writing to an individual staff member. Suggested topics include nutritional information, why participation in the school lunch is important to the district, and an explanation of why charges aren't permitted.</p> <p>Step 3: Monthly articles are published in every school's newsletter.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Communications Sub-Committee
Time Frame	November 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

4 The district regularly evaluates the school nutrition program based on established benchmarks; however, to date little has been done to increase revenue and reduce costs.

The District Measures Some Productivity Monthly, but the Data Is of Limited Value.

The district is currently undergoing a transition to a new automated information system, which severely limits data to analyze operations. The only significant productivity measure currently used is meals per labor hour (MPLH). However, the labor hours used are the hours scheduled rather than the actual hours worked making the measure of limited value to management. Using actual hours worked as recorded for payroll instead of scheduled hours would result in a more accurate evaluation of productivity. For management to make informed decisions, it must have accurate information. The director of Food Services prepares a chart for each school that shows MPLH by month.

The labor hours used to calculate MPLH are the hours scheduled at each school rather than the hours actually worked. Therefore, the district is not capturing an accurate picture of how many hours are actually required to prepare and serve the meals served at each school. The problem is twofold. First, the hours scheduled but not worked are included in the calculation, creating an MPLH statistic lower than the actual. Second, any hours worked beyond those scheduled are not counted, thereby creating an MPLH higher than actual.

The district uses the industry standard of dividing the number of breakfasts served by two to achieve a number of lunch equivalents, and the total dollar value of a la carte items sold by two to obtain lunch equivalents.

The District Evaluates Individual Schools, but Not Its Food Service Program

The director of Food Services reviews all district schools at least once each school year. However, since the conversion to TERMS is not complete, the cafeterias are not being evaluated in all areas. Much of this will be rectified with the full implementation of TERMS.

The site review form used by the Food Services director includes a variety of checks.

- Average participation rates and meals per labor hour
- Proper temperatures maintained
- Cash management practices
- Inventory control practices
- Pest control/health and safety codes followed
- Meetings with staff; nutritional education projects with students
- Equipment maintenance and replacement needs
- Use of standard menus and recipes

As a whole, the program's only planned evaluation is from a profit/loss standpoint, both monthly and annually. However, for the 1998-99 school year, the cumulative profit/loss calculations have been delayed by the implementation of TERMS.

During this entire school year management has been operating without ongoing financial data. Our analysis indicates that increasing participation rates could generate an additional \$22,327 per year. Additionally, increasing the price of elementary and middle school full-price lunches by \$0.25 could generate \$113,752 per year at current participation rates.

The District Has No Formal Method to Collect or Document Student Opinion

Informal methods are used to solicit student opinion by district staff. Although lacking specifics, managers are evaluated on whether they work with student committees to improve the food service program at their campus. All of the managers interviewed reported that the students find a way to make their preferences known, and managers do not serve items that they know the students will not eat. Managers also report that they monitoring the amount of waste on trays to learn student preferences.

Without a formal methodology, it is not possible to link student feedback and opinion to any changes in food service operations in the district.

Although the District Regularly Conducts Wage Surveys No Adjustments Are Made as a Result

The district collects information annually from surrounding districts on food service position salaries. However, there is no indication that this information is used to evaluate salary scales, or that salaries are adjusted based on the comparison with other districts. By not evaluating the competitiveness of the salary scale, the district is not taking advantage of a negotiation point with the unions.

Information collected by the district regarding the wages and salaries paid to foodservice employees in other districts is incomplete and unusable. From some peer districts, the district has received the actual salary schedule, but has not received a list of positions and their placements, while from other peers they have a list of positions and their placements without a salary schedule. For example, Martin County staff know that Charlotte County has classified a Food Service General Worker in pay grade 2, but the district does not know what the salary or wage rate is for Charlotte County's Pay Grade 2. Conversely, the district has a salary schedule for Palm Beach County but no information about salary rates for Food Service workers. Thus, no comparison with peer salary data can be made using the data provided by the district.

A comparison could be made using a survey report prepared by the Florida Department of Education of 1997-98 average salaries by district. However, the methodology used to collect the information is unknown. The survey used does not clarify whether only general food service workers are included in the districts' average monthly wage calculations. If wages paid to cooks, assistant managers, and managers were included in the information provided by some districts, the data for those districts would be skewed.

However, available information is clear as to the salary of the director of Food Services. The salary paid by Martin County to the director of Food Services is among the lowest of all peer districts. In a 1997-98 comparison of Director of Food Services salaries conducted by the Florida Department of Education, the lowest average salary among Martin County's peer

districts was \$54,546 and the highest was \$75,445. The average salary of food service directors in the peer districts was \$62,100, and the median was \$61,049. At a 1998-99 salary of \$56,382, Martin County's director of Food Services is paid significantly less than the 1997-98 median and average, and is the second-lowest salary of the peers, assuming none of the peer districts have significantly adjusted the salaries paid to their food service directors in the interim.

The District's Use of Performance Measures Need to Improve

According to the district's calculations, MPLH in 10 kitchens are below benchmarks; 7 are at or above the target. However, the district's method of calculating MPLH using scheduled hours instead of actual hours worked makes the MPLH calculations of limited value. Since this is the only information available, however, the data was used to evaluate each school's performance. This information should be used cautiously since it is not calculated using actual hours worked.

Exhibit 14-12

More than Half of Martin County Schools Did Not Meet Their Meals Per Labor Hour Benchmark in 1997-98.

School	Benchmark MPLH*	Average MPLH
<i>Elementary Schools</i>		
Bessey Creek Elementary	17	12.0
Crystal Lake Elementary	17	15.5
J.D. Parker Elementary	19	18.5
Felix A. Williams Elementary	17	15.7
Hobe Sound Elementary	17	16.4
Jensen Beach Elementary	17	15.1
Palm City Elementary	17	14.5
Pinewood Elementary	19	15.3
Port Salerno Elementary	18	15.8
Seawind Elementary	17	18.5
Warfield Elementary	19	23.4
<i>Middle Schools</i>		
Hidden Oaks Middle School	16	18.7
Indiantown Middle School	16	18.0
Murray Middle School	16	17.1
Stuart Middle School	16	16.8
<i>High Schools</i>		
Martin County High School	16	19.5
South Fork High School	16	14.5

* As set by Martin County Food Services Department, based on average daily meals served.

Source: Martin County School District Food Services Department.

No attempt is made by the district to compare its MPLH statistics with statewide averages or private-sector information. The Florida Department of Education collects information on the total number of meals served by each Florida school district.

The District Is Not Able to Accurately Track Some Costs for the 1998-99 School Year

Although the district has set a benchmark for labor, purchased food, and commodities cost per plate, the district is not currently tracking these costs. The conversion to the TERMS system has temporarily limited information necessary to perform the evaluation.

Managers record some manual information on food costs but this information is not routinely collected. On their daily production sheet, managers may complete a manual calculation of the daily food cost. However, this figure is not accurate because it is calculated using average costs rather than actual costs of snacks, produce, and milk. Of the seven managers interviewed, six were informally using the food cost calculation portion of the worksheet to estimate food costs. In one case the manager was not including an average snack cost on Mondays because the weekly snack delivery does not arrive until Tuesday. Each week at that school, the cost of snacks are allocated Tuesday through Friday. None of the information was being passed by the Director of Food Services.

In addition, each kitchen uses a standard labor cost each day, which is the cost of scheduled labor for that site for one day. Again, this means that the cost of labor per meal, factoring in overtime and absences, is not calculated accurately.

The District's Overall Meal Participation Rates Are Generally Below Benchmarks

The middle and high schools were generally below their benchmarks for participation, while elementary schools were generally at or above the expected level. District participation benchmarks were developed by the director of Food Services using information provided by neighboring districts and are displayed in Exhibit 14-13.

Exhibit 14-13

Thirteen of 17 Schools Do Not Meet the Overall Benchmarks for Participation

			Comments on January 1999 Performance
		Benchmark	
Elementary	Lunch- overall	75-80%	Most schools meet the free and reduced lunch benchmark but only J.D. Parker, Port Selerno, and Warfield meet the overall breakfast benchmark
	Free/reduced	85%	
	Breakfast	30-35%	
Middle	Lunch - overall	75-80%	Only Indiantown meets benchmark
	Free/reduced	85%	
	Breakfast	20%	
High	Lunch- overall	70-75%	Generally not meeting benchmark except for free breakfast
	Free/reduced	85%	
	Breakfast	15%	

Source: Martin County School District and Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

Many of the schools are not meeting the benchmark participation targets. Indiantown Middle School is the only secondary school that meets the benchmarks; for lunch, both overall participation and participation among reduced-price students is higher than the

targets. Overall breakfast participation at Indiantown Middle is also above the benchmark rate. Elementary schools meeting or exceeding the overall participation benchmark include JD Parker, Port Salerno, and Warfield. Another school, Pinewood, is only slightly below the benchmark.

These same schools have the highest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Exhibit 14-14 displays the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals and the participation rates by school for January 1999.

Exhibit 14-14

Four Schools Met Benchmark Participation Rates in January 1999

	Student Eligibility Percent Free/ Reduced	Student Participation					
		Lunch			Breakfast		
		All Students	Reduced	Free	All Students	Reduced	Free
High Schools		Benchmark 70-75 85%			Benchmark 15%		
Martin County High School	10.9%	10.5%	51.0%	53.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Fork High School	25.8%	23.9%	48.6%	66.5%	7.8%	10.4%	30.4%
All High School	17.4%	16.4%	49.5%	61.9%	7.8%	10.4%	30.4%
Middle Schools		Benchmark 75-80% 85%			Benchmark 20%		
Hidden Oaks Middle School	13.1%	23.3%	46.4%	67.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Indiantown Middle School	97.6%	85.0%	99.0%	77.8%	32.3%	28.7%	33.1%
Murray Middle School	35.1%	33.5%	43.4%	62.5%	7.3%	3.9%	19.8%
Stuart Middle School	42.5%	37.7%	59.6%	62.0%	13.1%	19.6%	28.7%
All Middle School	38.7%	38.5%	58.0%	68.4%	15.0%	15.9%	28.7%
Elementary Schools		Benchmark 75-80% 85%			Benchmark 30-35%		
Bessey Creek Elementary	6.8%	56.9%	90.0%	91.0%	4.0%	4.4%	16.4%
Crystal Lake Elementary	22.9%	67.0%	86.3%	93.2%	11.9%	20.6%	36.6%
Felix A. Williams Elementary	26.4%	65.5%	87.2%	89.1%	9.3%	18.6%	28.6%
Hobe Sound Elementary	29.3%	67.1%	88.4%	94.7%	14.9%	21.0%	48.6%
JD Parker Elementary	66.4%	79.4%	93.3%	97.2%	47.9%	38.0%	70.5%
Jensen Beach Elementary	23.2%	64.1%	88.9%	87.4%	14.2%	17.9%	41.5%
Palm City Elementary	13.2%	50.6%	73.1%	94.5%	5.2%	8.0%	45.5%
Pinewood Elementary	52.8%	74.3%	76.9%	79.8%	26.6%	18.1%	47.1%
Port Salerno Elementary	78.0%	87.5%	82.7%	99.0%	52.8%	47.0%	64.2%
Sea Wind Elementary	29.6%	61.7%	83.1%	92.8%	17.6%	26.7%	52.2%
Warfield Elementary	99.5%	92.0%	77.8%	91.9%	60.0%	2.2%	63.5%
All Elementary	46.4%	69.8%	83.4%	92.3%	24.5%	21.9%	56.3%

Source: Martin County School District January Accruals (1999); Florida Department of Education Percent of Public School Membership Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch by School Survey 2 9899 (12/11/98).

The District Has Not Developed Benchmarks for Employee Benefits

The district's benefits package for full-time employees (over 37.5 hours/week) is generous, as described in the Personnel chapter. Employees hired after 1998 who work less than 37.5 hours/week must pay half of the cost of coverage; those who were hired in 1997-98 or before are covered under a "grandfather" provision and continue to receive full benefits at no cost to themselves. A more detailed comparison of the benefits package offered by the district is provided in the Personnel chapter of this report.

Because the employee's benefit package is generous, development of a benchmark using peer and statewide information could be important in its labor negotiations. Without a well-based benchmark, the district's bargaining position is very limited.

Recommendations

- *The district should make a concerted effort to increase participation in those schools not meeting the benchmark indicator for overall and free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch participation.*
- *The district should use actual food and labor costs to determine meal cost data, and adjust meal prices as necessary to ensure the district is operating on a break-even basis.*

Action Plan 14-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Increase participation in those schools not meeting the benchmark indicator for overall and free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch participation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services implements strategies outlined in other recommendations of this chapter to improve the image of school food services and to encourage increased participation in the school lunch program.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services analyzes the results of surveys, taste tests, and advisory committees to improve service and quality and increase participation.</p> <p>Step 3: The Food Service managers work with the students, teachers, and principals at their schools to develop a culture in which "it's cool to eat in school."</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers
Time Frame	December 2000
Fiscal Impact	Increasing participation can increase the number of meals served per labor hour and could save the district an estimated \$22,327 per year if achieved in conjunction with a \$0.25 increase in meal prices at the elementary and middle school levels. If the district does not raise meal prices, increasing participation could result in an annual cost of approximately \$95,000 since the cost of food and labor would be greater than the amount being recouped.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Use actual food and labor costs to determine meal cost data, and revise meal prices as necessary to ensure the district is operating on a break-even basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services installs the recipe and inventory components of CAFS.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services or her designee enters all recipes used into CAFS and ensures that food costs are entered for each item.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Food Services calculates the average food cost of a meal.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services calculates the average labor cost of a meal.</p> <p>Step 5: The director of Food Services works with the school board to adjust breakfast and lunch prices, if appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, school board
Time Frame	October 1999 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	\$113,752 annually. This estimate is based on current estimated food and labor costs less the federal reimbursement, assumes that participation rates among paying students remains constant, and assumes that the meal price for high school students remains \$1.75; the meal price for middle school students is raised to \$1.75, and the meal price for elementary students is raised to \$1.50.

5 The district does not regularly assess the benefits of service delivery alternatives, such as contracting and privatization.

The District Has Not Assessed Privatization 1992

The district issued an RFP for privatization of food services in 1992. Based on the bids received, the district decided not to contract out or privatize the food services function. No additional study into privatization has been done since 1992.

New Services Have Been Added Without a Cost-Benefit Analysis

While no formal annual review of the program is being undertaken, the district occasionally uses surveys to evaluate whether additional services are needed or desired. For example, in November 1998, Hidden Oaks Middle School conducted a survey of parents to determine whether a breakfast program should be implemented. No results were reported to the review team, and it's not clear whether the data has been used to help make a decision regarding implementing a breakfast program at the school. A similar study was conducted at Martin County High School (MCHS); because only two responses were received, the decision was made that breakfast will not be served at MCHS at this time.

Some services have been provided due to the absence of another provider. For example, when a charter school, the Dizzy Gillespie School for the Performing Arts, was established

in 1998-99, Martin County began providing breakfast and lunch through a satellite location feeding arrangement with Port Salerno Elementary. This process has not been evaluated by the district to ensure that using one food service employee at the charter school is cost-effective.

The district has memoranda of agreement with the City of Stuart Parks and Recreation Department and the Gertrude Walden Child Care Center to provide meals and snacks. Another alternative service provided by the district is a summer food program. The district has done no analysis to determine whether these agreements have affected other food services or are cost effective.

Recommendations

- *The district should conduct an assessment of the costs and benefits of contracting out the Food Service Department in 2000 and at least every three subsequent years.*
- *The district should conduct an evaluation of the service provided to the Dizzy Gillespie School for the Performing Arts and other optional services to ensure that they are fiscally and operationally responsible.*

Action Plan 14-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct an assessment of the costs and benefits of contracting out the Food Service Department in 2000 and at least every three subsequent years.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Purchasing develops a request for proposals to outsource food services.</p> <p>Step 2: Private companies and the Martin County Food Service Department are invited to submit bids.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Purchasing establishes a proposal review committee to evaluate all proposals received.</p> <p>Step 4: A three-year contract is awarded to the successful bidder.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Purchasing
Time Frame	April 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Conduct an evaluation of the service provided to the Dizzy Gillespie School for Performing Arts and any other optional services to ensure that it is fiscally and operationally responsible to have this satellite program in place.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services collects information on the food and labor costs of providing meals to the Dizzy Gillespie School for Performing Arts and any other optional services.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services conducts a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether the district is losing money by</p>

	operating optional food service.
	Step 3: If optional food services are found to be not cost effective the director of Food Services works with the executive director of Business Operations to arrange a contract that will cover Martin County's costs. Alternatively, the executive director of Business Operations and the Superintendent should cancel the agreement with the Dizzy Gillespie School for Performing Arts.
	Step 4: The director of Food Services maintains data on unit costs In order to calculate of costs and benefits for any satellite operation to allow preliminary and follow-up cost/benefit analysis of any other satellite programs.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, executive director of Business Operations, Superintendent
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Financial Accountability and Viability of School Nutrition Program

1 The program budget should be developed using improved methods.

The District Need to Use Enrollment and Participation Forecasts

Staff report that historically they have not used projected enrollment and participation rates to forecast revenues and expenditures when developing future budgets. However, for 1999-2000, the director of Food Services reports that she is developing the budget using the current year, then incorporating funds for equipment, cash registers, and computers that need to be purchased during the year. Basing the budget only on the previous year data does not take into account variations in attendance or food costs.

The developed budget is maintained in the automated TERMS system. The food service director also maintains a printed copy of the budget.

This Year the District Has Not Had All Needed Financial Information

At the time of our review, the district did not have the software capability to evaluate income and expenditure projections against actual revenues and expenditures monthly (pending full implementation of TERMS and the integration of TERMS and CAFS, the district's point of sale system). While raw data is available through CAFS, the director of Food Services is not analyzing the data. This is not a good management practice, since it eliminates the ability to monitor expenditures and program performance versus budget estimates.

Under current practices, the district runs the risk of experiencing an unanticipated loss at the end of the year, and has no way of knowing whether actual expenditures are significantly higher than budgeted and/or whether actual revenues are significantly lower than budgeted. If projections were evaluated against actual costs, the district would have the opportunity to cut costs if necessary.

Recommendations

- *The district should tie budget projections to departmental goals, revenue, and expenditure projections based on current participation rates and on updated expenditure and revenue data.*

Action Plan 14-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Tie budget projections to departmental goals, revenue, and expenditure projections based on current participation rates and on updated expenditure and revenue data.
Action Needed	The director of Food Services develops future year budgets based on current participation rates and on updated expenditure and revenue data.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services
Time Frame	2000 budget cycle and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

2 The district's financial control process should be strengthened.

Until Recently, the District Could Not Conduct a Review of Financial Controls

With the exception of cash counting and depositing procedures, all formal forms of financial control were suspended pending the full implementation of TERMS. As of July 1999 the director began receiving important financial management information from the new system. The previous lack of timely information put the district at risk, since the director of Food Services is not able to analyze expenditures or revenues and manage accordingly.

The District Has Written Procedures for Financial Controls

The director of Food Services recently developed written procedures that include cash management and counting and reporting reimbursable meals and other sales. These written procedures are needed to ensure consistency when conducting repetitive tasks, provide continuity when there is turnover in key personnel, and assist in training new staff. Managers and cashiers at the schools visited by the review team are practicing good cash control with regards to making nightly deposits and balancing cashier drawers at the end of the day. For example, cashiers count the cash drawers at the end of the serving period and the managers verify their count. In addition, deposit slips are prepared by the manager and verified by the head cashier.

The District Is Not Currently Using a Fully Operational Automated Data Processing System

The implementation of TERMS is limiting most of the district's financial reporting for the current period. This is of concern to the review team. The lack of a fully operational TERMS system has resulted in the inability to monitor financial information for most of the current year. The district formerly used automation to generate reports, and some limited reports continue to be generated by CAFS. Only when TERMS is fully implemented and integrated with CAFS will the district's financial reporting be automated and fully operational.

The District Has Not Adjusted Meal Prices In Five Years

The district needs to keep pace with inflation of food costs and rising wages and make periodic adjustments as needed. Menu prices have not been adjusted in five years. Delaying too long between price changes causes the need for a larger adjustment that may be less acceptable to patrons.

Recommendations

- *The district should compare actual and budgeted expenses and revenues on a monthly basis and evaluate the projections made, revising future budgeting procedures as appropriate.*

Action Plan 14-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Compare actual and budgeted expenses and revenues on a monthly basis and evaluate the projections made, revising them as appropriate.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services works with the director of Finance and the Accounting Department to define the data elements required to calculate monthly actual expenditures and revenues, and to agree upon a timeframe and a format in which this information can be delivered to the director of Food Services.</p> <p>Step 2: The bookkeeper in the Food Service Department receives training, if necessary, in manipulating TERMS to obtain the necessary information.</p> <p>Step 3: The Food Services bookkeeper prepares a monthly statement for the director of Food Service that compares actual to budgeted revenues and expenditures for the month and year-to-date.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services reviews the statement prepared by the Food Services bookkeeper. Revise budgeting procedures in the future as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Services bookkeeper, director of Finance, Accounting Department
Time Frame	January 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

3 The district properly accounts for and reports meals served, by category.

The District Has an Approved System for Reporting Meals Served

A proper reporting system of meals served by category is important in order to accurately request federal and state funds for reimbursable meals. The food service point-of-sale system, CAFS tracks meals served by category using cards scanned in by the students or a keypad. At the end of each day, a summary report is run that shows the total number of meals served by category; at the end of the month, a similar report is run.

Meals served at the charter school and the two alternative schools are counted manually. Terminals have been purchased and will be installed at both Spectrum and Challenger alternative schools. No reimbursable meals are served on the two food lines that do not have point of sale terminals at Martin County High School. However, the district's proposed budget for the 1999-2000 school year includes computer equipment to run the point of sale system for these two food lines.

The District Determines Number of Meals Served Using Approved Procedures

The federal government has issued approved procedures for counting meals. All cashiers are trained in the criteria of a reimbursable meal. The CAFS system meets federal meal counting procedure standards. Using the CAFS system, each student is assigned a unique ID code. This ID code identifies in the system whether the child is eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Other accepted federal counting systems are in use at schools without the CAFS system. At these schools a paper roster with the status of each student is printed and used by the cashier to determine the amount the student owes for his or her meal. Once all schools have terminals installed, CAFS will eliminate the need for cashiers to know any student's status as free or reduced-price eligible.

The District Submits Accurate Meal Counts to the Florida Department of Education

Reimbursable meal counts are submitted to the Florida Department of Education. The CAFS system ensures that only those students present are counted in the meals served (including free and reduced-price eligible students). A student must use his or her personal ID code or card in order to be counted, and the cashier can determine if a student is coming through the line a second time so that the full price for the meal can be charged for the second meal.

4 The district regularly evaluates purchasing practices to decrease costs and increase efficiency.

The District Regularly Evaluates Purchasing Practices

The district has undertaken a number of cooperative initiatives to decrease costs and increase efficiency. A co-op has been established with neighboring small districts for the purchase of main-line foods and paper products. Each member district is responsible for analyzing bids according to their specifications; currently, Indian River County is

responsible for awarding a contract. For expendable and capital equipment, the district “piggybacks” on Palm Beach County’s bid. In so doing, the district believes it is getting a better deal through higher-volume purchases. Beginning in January 2000, the district expects the co-op to also issue a combined RFP for frozen and canned products. To further ensure the quality of products delivered, the co-op is working to limit the bids to two or three acceptable brands per product.

For their commonly stocked foods, the district’s contract with the vendor (US Foods) calls for a price per case of cost plus \$1.19 delivery fee. To verify the vendor’s cost per case, the district has a contract with a consultant who surveys other Florida school districts to determine at what cost their goods are being provided; if anyone is paying less than Martin County for an item, the county brings this to the vendor’s attention.

Of the peer districts surveyed, those in Martin County’s cooperative are the only districts that also have a cost-plus arrangement; the other peers are using fixed-price bids or have vendors bid separately for each order. Fixed-price arrangements allow for more accurate budgeting, since vendors typically bid for six months to a year at a time. Further, of the six peer districts surveyed, three are using fixed-price bids and one has vendors bid separately for each order.

The District Has Developed Specifications for Purchasing Major Items

Food specifications are important to ensure good communications with vendors and quality food. The director of Purchasing works with the Food Service director to develop specifications for all purchases related to Food Services. Martin County has developed an agreement with Palm Beach County to piggyback on Palm Beach County’s RFPs for major purchases. Specifications are developed in cooperation with Palm Beach County.

The District Reviews and Updates Food Specifications Annually

Food specifications should be periodically reviewed to ensure accuracy, eliminate items no longer ordered, and add new products. The director of Purchasing reports that he works with the director of Food Services to review and update food specifications every six months. While the specifications have stayed the same in recent years, the district plans to further limit the vendors to providing two or three acceptable brands per product.

The District Gives Vendors Equal Opportunity to Provide Service

It is important to ensure equitable vendor opportunity to optimize the district’s purchasing power, ensure lower prices, and prevent improper procurement practices. Requests for proposals/requests for bids are sent to all vendors in the area known to have the capability to fill the orders. Additionally, notices are published in the local paper.

For produce, a number of vendors are contacted at the beginning of the year and invited to submit bids each week. Each week, a list of specifications are faxed to all approved produce vendors. The vendor with the lowest price who is able to fill the order is selected for that week.

The District Considers Specifications, Service, and Price in Its Bid Analysis Process

The district uses a variety of methods to ensure proper analysis of vendor bids. The director of Purchasing receives the bids and analyzes them. Then the director of Food Services verifies the bids and the analysis done by the director of Purchasing. For

commonly stocked food items, a cooperative agreement has been established with neighboring school districts. Martin County's analysis is sent to Indian River for inclusion in the co-op's contract.

For produce bid items, both the director of Purchasing and the director of Food Services evaluate the weekly produce bids. Each vendor's weekly produce bid is evaluated on the basis of price and history of meeting the specifications as reported by cafeteria managers.

When cafeteria managers have problems with a vendor, they complete a product evaluation sheet. These reported problems are taken into consideration when evaluating future bids from vendors.

5 The district is in the process of improving its inventory control system.

The District Completes Physical Inventories Each Month

Each cafeteria manager completes a physical inventory each month. Additionally, a physical inventory is conducted of USDA commodities and other items stored in the central warehouse.

All seven Food Service managers interviewed reported that they conduct the physical inventory as required. In addition, a review of inventory records revealed that inventories are generally submitted to the Food Services Department within the allotted five-day period.

The District Does Not Currently Maintain a Perpetual Inventory

The district is not currently maintaining a perpetual inventory; however, the director of Food Services reports that this feature is available through CAFS and that implementation is planned in 1999. Upon implementation, a perpetual inventory will be maintained and compared to the monthly physical inventory. Maintenance of a perpetual inventory greatly assists in the timely and knowledgeable management of food products and supplies.

The District's Inventory Control System Minimizes Energy Costs, Waste, Theft, and Storage Costs

Overall, the district's inventory control system should ensure that food products maintain their quality between the time they are purchased and used through proper rotation and storage, and that enough of each product is on hand to meet the requirements of the program until the next delivery.

The inventory control system in Martin County monitors commodities that are currently being stored at the distribution center. This ensures that all commodities are ordered within the 90-day window during which storage of commodities is free. The system also allows the director of Food Services to review orders before they are submitted to the vendor to ensure that the kitchens are not ordering items that are available and on-hand through the commodities program. Inventory is monitored to ensure that adequate amounts are on hand to meet demand. In addition, the inventory is monitored to ensure that first in/first out procedures are being followed to minimize waste.

Although access to the central warehouse is restricted to authorized personnel, at the kitchen level, there are no real controls to ensure that employees are not stealing items. Basic theft-deterrent procedures include requiring that all boxes be broken down before being deposited in a dumpster, keeping would-be thieves from throwing food into the dumpster from which they or a friend can later retrieve it. A more aggressive form of theft deterrence is a daily bag inspection at the end of each employee's shift; however, because of the message this sends to employees that they are not trusted, this is not always ideal or necessary. Once the perpetual inventory component of CAFS is in place, the district will be able to determine whether theft is a problem in the kitchens.

The District Has Guidelines for Inventory Control, Receipt, and Handling Of Products

Written procedures are needed to ensure consistency when conducting repetitive tasks, provide continuity when there is turnover of key staff, and assist in training new staff. The director of Food Services recently created a procedures manual for inventory control and the efficient receipt and handling of products.

Recommendations

- *The district should institute a perpetual inventory system, and require all food service managers to compare the perpetual and physical inventories monthly, as an automated system is available.*
- *The district should institute theft-prevention measures at all schools, including breaking down all boxes before disposing of them; using clear garbage bags so that trash leaving the kitchen is visible; and locking the back door to the kitchen.*

Action Plan 14-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Institute a perpetual inventory system, and require all food service managers to compare the perpetual and physical inventories monthly, as an automated system is available.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services installs the perpetual inventory component of CAFS.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services ensures that all managers receive training in the use of the perpetual inventory component of CAFS.</p> <p>Step 3: Food Service managers begin using the perpetual inventory component of CAFS, and compare the perpetual and actual inventory counts monthly.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services monitors the comparison made by each kitchen and helps the managers to deal with any discrepancies that become apparent.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers
Time Frame	August 2000 and ongoing.

Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing and/or budgeted resources, and will help to identify opportunities for saving money in food costs.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Institute theft-prevention measures at all schools, including breaking down all boxes before disposing of them; using clear garbage bags so that trash leaving the kitchen is visible; and locking the back door to the kitchen.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services documents theft-prevention measures in the procedures manual.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services trains Food Service managers in theft-prevention measures.</p> <p>Step 3: Food Service managers implement theft-prevention measures in the kitchens.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers
Time Frame	September 1999 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources, and is expected to save the district money in food costs. However, specific savings cannot be estimated.

6 The district has a system for receiving and storing food, supplies, and equipment.

The District Follows Common Practices for Receiving and Storing Food, Supplies, and Equipment

District staff appear to be following common industry practices for receiving and storing food, supplies and equipment. Commodities are received at the central warehouse and contract foods are received at the individual schools. Each manager is responsible for receiving their food deliveries and checking amounts, quality, and price against invoices. However, of the seven managers interviewed, four reported that they do not always check invoices against the orders to make sure that the deliveries include only those items ordered. Some managers also check the deliveries against the items ordered.

The manager or a designee stores food and supplies when they are delivered. Commodities are marked with the pack date at most schools; one of the seven managers interviewed was labeling commodities with the delivery date instead of the pack date. The central warehouse is responsible for receiving and checking in supplies and equipment and delivering them to the schools as necessary.

Written procedures for receiving and storing food, supplies, and equipment were recently developed. Written procedures are needed to ensure consistency when conducting repetitive tasks, provide continuity when there is turnover of key staff, and assist in the training of new staff.

The District Refuses Unacceptable Products and Obtains Appropriate Credit

If an item shown on the invoice is not delivered or is unsatisfactory, a notation is made on the invoice. The manager also completes a product evaluation sheet to record the problems with the delivery. Between August and December 1998, 19 product/service evaluation sheets were completed by managers. Of these, 12 were due to late delivery or unacceptable product. Four were due to late or no delivery. In two cases, the amount invoiced was greater than the bid amount for the product.

Credit memos are issued by the vendor and credited to the individual school's account by the bookkeeper at the central office. Managers report that the performance of one vendor has been much better since complaints were filed. A letter was sent to the vendor warning that their bids would no longer be accepted if the complaint rate regarding products and service was not significantly reduced. Since the letter was sent, managers report they have had few or no problems with the vendor's products.

The director of Food Services recently incorporated the current practice to refuse unacceptable products into a formal procedures manual. Written procedures are needed to ensure consistency when conducting repetitive tasks, provide continuity when there is turnover of key staff, and assist in the training of new staff.

The District Limits the Issuance of Products to Authorized Personnel

The district requires that a requisition form signed by an authorized employee of the district be presented in order to remove items from the warehouse. The individual authorizing the requisition can designate another employee to physically pick up the products, but this authorization must be in writing. Warehouse personnel have been trained to issue items only to authorized personnel. Cafeteria managers are the only employees of the kitchens who are authorized to obtain items from the warehouse.

It is the practice at cafeterias for employees to note on the daily production record all products removed from storage areas.

Recently, written procedures were developed by the director of Purchasing and the director of Food Services. Written procedures are needed to ensure consistency when conducting repetitive tasks, provide continuity when there is turnover of key staff, and assist in the training of new staff. These newly documented procedures should record the issuance of items from the central warehouse and the removal of items from storage areas in the kitchens as well as indicate by whom.

Personnel Are Instructed on Practices for Receiving and Storing Purchased Items and Services

The district has conducted training on receiving and storing purchased items. The training has taken several forms. According to a managers meeting agenda for February 19, 1998, managers were reminded to sign all forms, invoices, bank deposit slips, etc. On April 7, 1998, managers were reminded to "watch carefully the produce quote for the week. Only order from the awarded vendor." In addition, at a meeting on April 10, 1996, managers were told to "sign [form 91] when you receive the items from the warehouse, not before." At the same meeting, it was specified that "if someone in the kitchen is filling out the order form, it is the responsibility of the manager to look it over before it is sent out." Managers have also been reminded to carefully track commodity usage.

Advice on practices has also been obtained from outside the Food Service Department. An auditor for the USDA Bureau of Food Distribution, spoke at a managers meeting on November 21, 1996. In addition, there was an in-service training session on receiving commodities in 1996.

It is the practice of the department that it is the responsibility of managers to instruct their staff on receiving procedures. All five managers the team interviewed stated that staff who are not trained in receiving procedures are not allowed to process vendor deliveries.

7 The district has a long-range plan for the replacement of equipment and facilities but little preventive maintenance is performed.

The District Has Procedures for a Mid-Range Plan for Facilities and Equipment

The district has developed a five-year plan for equipment acquisition and replacement. The plan lists projected purchases to be made during 1997-98 through 2001-02, and includes facility remodeling. The plan includes a list of the locations at which new/replacement equipment will be placed.

The District Needs to Develop a Preventive Maintenance Program for Equipment

Procedures are being documented by the director of Food Services for conducting routine preventive measures (e.g., proper use of garbage disposal, stacking boxes in freezer, avoiding pouring grease down drains). Cleaning instructions for much of the kitchen equipment is already documented for inclusion in the procedures manual.

The maintenance department performs no preventive maintenance of equipment. Studies have shown that equipment that undergoes routine preventive maintenance (for example, changing fluids and belts and recalibrating gauges) lasts longer and therefore costs less over time than equipment that is only serviced when a component breaks. Therefore, the lack of a preventive maintenance program is costly to the district.

Recommendations

- *The district should develop a preventive maintenance program for food service equipment.*

Action Plan 14-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a preventive maintenance program for Food Service equipment.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services, cafeteria managers, and a district maintenance staff representative develop a list of all equipment, maintenance needs, and frequency, by location.</p> <p>Step 2: The district's maintenance department determines in-house capabilities and cost for each item on the food service preventive maintenance list.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Food Services and the district procurement staff develop a Request for Proposal for preventive maintenance of food service equipment.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services meets with the procurement staff, maintenance staff to determine the most feasible and cost-effective method of creating a long-term preventive maintenance program.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Service, Food Service managers, director of Procurement, and district supervisor of Maintenance.
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation should pay for itself in the long-term through reduced equipment repairs and replacement.

Meal Preparation and Service

1 The district provides meals that ensure the nutritional needs of participating students are met.

Food Service Staff Have Been Trained in Nationally Recognized Dietary Guidelines

In 1997, managers received training from the Department of Education's Food and Nutrition Management Department on Food-Based Menu Planning. Inservice training was also provided on culinary techniques for a variety of topics.

- Introduction to Preparing Healthy School Meals
- Preparing Fruits
- Preparing Cooked Vegetables
- Preparing Salads
- Preparing Yeast Breads
- Preparing Quick Breads
- Preparing Pasta, Rice & Grains
- Preparing Cakes
- Preparing Meat & Poultry
- Preparing Processed Meat Products

- Preparing Meat Alternate Main Dishes
- Preparing Sauces
- Seasonings for Healthy School Meals.

In 1996 a training course was provided on basic childhood nutrition. No in-service training was provided in 1998-99; however, the director of Food Services plans to reinstitute regular training sessions in the 1999-2000 school year. Attendance rosters were provided for each school showing the sessions attended by employee.

Menus Are Planned to Meet the Nutritional Needs of Students and National Guidelines

All districtwide menus are developed in compliance with USDA guidelines. Managers and food service staff are trained in the components of reimbursable meals, which meet the guidelines for nutritional content. Most schools follow the developed menu.

However, at Martin County High School and Stuart Middle School the managers do not always follow the districtwide menu. These managers report that the students would not routinely eat the food offered. Exhibit 14-15 displays a comparison of the menu published by the district and the menus of MCHS and SMS for February 1999. All menus published include a choice of at least two vegetables, fruits, or juices. The menus prepared by each school appear to comply with USDA guidelines. Along with a choice of main dishes, students are offered a variety of fruits and vegetables and milk.

Exhibit 14-15

Main Dish Menus Varied in February 1999

Date	District	MCHS	SMS
2-1	Pork riblet w/bun Tuna salad and roll	Outside pizza Potato bar w/ roll	Pork riblet w/ bun Tuna salad and roll
2-3	Hamburger w/ bun Fish nuggets and roll	Salad bar w/ roll Pizza w/ roll Fish nuggets w/ roll	Cheeseburger w/ bun Chicken patty w/ bun
2-10	Corn dog Peanut butter and jelly sandwich	BBQ rib sandwich Pizza w/ roll	Cheeseburger w/ bun Ham and cheese sub
2-11	Sloppy Joe w/ bun Ham and cheese sub	Meatball sub Grilled chicken sandwich	Potato bar Chili
2-26	Pizza and rolls Assorted sandwiches	Lasagna Outside pizza	Chicken patty w/ bun Pizza

Source: Martin County School District Food Service Department; Martin County High School Food Service Manager; Stuart Middle School Food Service Manager.

The District Evaluates Pre-Packaged Foods for Nutritive Value, but Needs to Do More

Convenience foods typically reduce a food service department's labor costs but increase food costs, and should be evaluated for their cost effectiveness as well as their acceptability to students and their nutritional content. Martin County evaluates convenience and pre-packaged foods for their acceptability to students prior to use through taste tests. In recent taste tests of prepared pizza and burritos, students were asked to evaluate the products

using response forms, and contracts were established with the vendors with the most competitive bid who met the nutritional specifications and whose product tasted best.

Pre-packaged products that do not meet the nutritive content specifications or are not acceptable to students have been eliminated from use by the district. For example, a contract with one pizza vendor was cancelled because their pizzas were not meeting USDA nutritional requirements even after notice was provided to the vendor.

While the district is evaluating convenience and pre-prepared foods for taste and nutritive value, the cost-effectiveness of these items is not regularly evaluated.

Recommendations

- *The district should ensure that all kitchens follow standardized recipes that provide information on nutrition, serving containers and utensils, and yield and portion size. Any exceptions granted to specific schools should fall within an established range of acceptable per-meal costs.*

Action Plan 14-10

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Ensure that all kitchens follow standardized recipes that provide nutrition information, and information on serving containers and utensils, and yield and portion size.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services establishes criteria for granting exceptions to specific schools that want to use special recipes.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services establishes an acceptable range for per-meal costs that is applied to all recipes.</p> <p>Step 3: Managers submit a request to the director of Food Services to use a special recipe and include a per-serving cost.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services includes an inspection of the recipes used as part of her annual inspection of each kitchen.</p> <p>Step 5: Managers are informed that they will be evaluated on the use of standard recipes unless they have been granted an exception.</p> <p>Step 6: Managers and staff who are not using standard recipes are subject to disciplinary action.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers
Time Frame	November 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

2 The district's food production and transportation system ensures the service of high quality food with minimal waste.

The District Maximizes the Use of USDA Commodities

District menus are structured in such a way that USDA commodities are used as part of each planned meal.

Generally, all eligible USDA commodities are ordered and used, except those few items for which students have demonstrated a genuine dislike. A review of records indicate that USDA commodities stocked in the warehouse are rotated on a proper first-in, first-out basis. A review of the central warehouse also revealed no undue surplus of commodities.

To ensure that commodities are being used, the director of Food Service monitors managers' weekly orders from food suppliers to ensure that cafeteria managers are not ordering items available through the commodities program. Any items that are available as a commodity are removed from the order, and the kitchen is issued an equivalent amount of the USDA commodity product.

Most Cafeteria Managers Use Standardized Recipes and Portion Control Utensils

Most cafeteria managers and cooks are using the standardized recipes adopted by the district. The adopted recipes include a chronological list of ingredients, cooking procedures, serving containers and utensils, yield, and portion size. The recipes were published by the Department of Education for the state of Mississippi. The front cover of the recipe binder states, "No endorsement from the USDA should be inferred."

However, while the director of Food Services has instructed all Food Service managers to use the standard recipes, some managers have not required their cooks to use them. For example, one of the cooks interviewed reported that she uses some of her own recipes. Some recipes included in the district's recipe list were handwritten and may be locally-developed. These handwritten recipes did not include nutrition information.

The team found that portion controls are used in all cafeterias. The production records form has a column for portion size and was used in all instances. In addition, portioning utensils are prescribed in recipes and are used.

Staff Observe Returned Trays for the Amount of Waste but Could Do More

Most managers report that they and/or the dishwasher observe trays for waste. Additionally, the director of Food Services reported that she observes for waste when she visits schools. However, no written record is made of these observations. Recording these observations would better remind managers of student preferences and dislikes when ordering food and planning menus.

Production Records Are Maintained but Not Reviewed for Corrective Action

Recording, reviewing, and reacting to over and under production of food items can prevent waste and better satisfy student needs in the future. Several managers and cooks reported that they know “in their heads” how much of various items to prepare, but no analysis of production records is used to help them predict food quantities needed. Left-over quantities are recorded on the production records, but this information is not used when the item is served again.

Some items are intentionally over prepared in order to reduce future work. Some cooks make double-recipes of items such as spaghetti sauce in order to reduce preparation work for the next time the item is on the menu. This is standard industry procedure for those items that can withstand storage without losing quality. The district should avoid using this technique for items that spoil quickly.

Per-Meal Costs Are Not Accurate and Some Cost Information Is Not Available

Accurate per meal cost estimates are important as a basis of budgeting, pricing of meals, and meeting the districts goal of breakeven. However, the per-meal costs being used are based on scheduled labor hours and average produce costs for the week, rather than on actual labor costs. This method does not provide sufficiently accurate information for management to make knowledgeable decisions. In addition, the delay in implementation of TERMS has severely limited current and year-to-date information needed by management to make adjustments or take corrective action within the school year.

The District Has a System for Transporting and Holding the Meals for Satellite Campuses

The district transports food off-site to only three satellite campuses, none of significant volume. Transport equipment and methods ensure that high-quality food reaches the students at these campuses. Three sites receive food from district kitchens: the Dizzy Gillespie school and the two alternative schools. Each satellite location is equipped with refrigeration units and steam tables to ensure that the food maintains proper temperatures.

Recommendations

- *The district should record waste by students on the daily production sheets, and use the daily production sheets as a tool in calculating the amount of food to prepare and for future menu planning.*
- *The district should include a current per-meal cost calculation in the menu planning process and then monitor actual costs for corrective action.*

Action Plan 14-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Record waste on the daily production sheets, and use the daily production sheets as a tool in calculating the amount of food to prepare and for future menu planning.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services revises the daily production sheets to provide space for managers to record waste.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services trains managers in how to record waste.</p> <p>Step 3: Managers or their designees record waste as trays are being bussed.</p> <p>Step 4: The daily production sheets are collected and referred to each time a recipe is being prepared to determine the amount to prepare.</p> <p>Step 5: Annually, the daily production sheets are reviewed as part of the menu planning process to discover trends and preferences.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources. It is expected that tracking food waste will save money in food costs; however, the amount that can be saved cannot be estimated at this time.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Include a current per-meal food cost calculation in the menu planning process and then monitor actual costs for corrective action.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services includes a calculation of the per-meal food cost calculation in the menu planning process.</p> <p>Step 2: Menus or recipes are adjusted for exceedingly high- or low cost.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Health and Safety

1 The district follows safety and environmental health practices and regulations.

The District Generally Follows Safety and Environmental Health Practices and Regulations

Food service inspections were conducted by Martin County from July through November 1998 of all district kitchens. Of 28 reports, schools were rated unsatisfactory in five instances. Three of these five incidents were at one school. All three incidents revolved around the need to install a sink.

The District Trains Personnel in Food Safety

In 1997, managers received training from the Department of Education's Food and Nutrition Management Department on Food-Based Menu Planning. Inservice training was also provided on culinary techniques for a variety of topics including

- Introduction to Preparing Healthy School Meals
- Preparing Fruits
- Preparing Cooked Vegetables
- Preparing Salads
- Preparing Yeast Breads
- Preparing Quick Breads
- Preparing Pasta, Rice and Grains
- Preparing Cakes
- Preparing Meat and Poultry
- Preparing Processed Meat Products
- Preparing Meat Alternate Main Dishes
- Preparing Sauces
- Seasonings for Healthy School Meals.

In 1996 a training course was provided on basic childhood nutrition. Managers also receive training during the monthly manager meetings on a variety of topics, including safety, sanitation, communication and customer service, etc. Logs are maintained for each school showing the sessions attended by each employee.

State and local health regulations are on file at each school site and available to managers and staff. Training has been conducted for all staff in this area and is a matter of continuous interest to management.

The District Should Include Additional Procedures, Such as Grease Fires

Generally, the Martin County School District Emergency Manual includes procedures for chemical spills, evacuation procedures, medical emergencies and first aid for choking. However, there are no procedures regarding dealing with fires unique to kitchens, such as grease fires.

The Risk Management Department requires that all accidents be reported immediately using an incident report. All managers interviewed stated that they file incident reports with the Risk Management Department in a timely manner.

Recommendations ---

- *The district should include in the Emergency Manual procedures for how to deal with grease fires and other kitchen emergencies.*

Action Plan 14-12

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Include in the district's Emergency Manual procedures for how to deal with grease fires and other kitchen emergencies.
Action Needed	Step 1: The director of Food Service meets with the district risk manager and discusses the procedures for dealing with fires in kitchens, especially electrical and grease fires. Step 2: The risk manager ensures the existence of proper fire extinguishers and arranges for training on their proper use. Step 3: The director of Food Services schedules periodic training of all employees in the proper handling of fires in cafeterias.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services and risk manager
Time Frame	September 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

15

Safety and Security

While the district generally has a well-run safety and security program in place, it needs to make efforts to address truant students and better coordinate its security efforts.

Conclusion

In general, the Martin County School District is effective in providing for the safety and security of people and property. For instance, the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program is well managed and effective at deterring delinquent behavior. In addition, to save costs, the district has found alternative ways of providing safety and security services. While the district has adequate staffing and alarms in place, it could improve the overall coordination of its security efforts. Further, the district could more effectively address truant students.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Most of the recommendations in the safety and security chapter will improve district performance, but are neutral in terms of their fiscal impact. However, as shown in Exhibit 15-1, one recommendation will have a fiscal impact.

Exhibit 15-1

Implementing the Recommendations for Safety and Security Will Have the Following Fiscal Impact

Recommendation	Fiscal Impact
Create a position for an additional truancy officer.	The average salary on the salary schedule for a truancy officer is approximately \$23,657 each year for salary and benefits. However, it is expected that the district will receive benefits far greater than its cost through increased state funding, especially because recent legislation changed the basis for funding to average daily attendance.

Background

The functions of safety and security in school districts should strive to ensure high attendance rates and to maintain safe and secure learning and working environments. Recent reports from the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, and Engineering and Safety Service list steps for creating and maintaining a safe school environment. These steps are listed below.

1. Establish school-community partnerships.
2. Identify and measure problems.
3. Develop a plan by setting measurable goals and objectives.
4. Identify strategies to achieve goals.
5. Implement plan.
6. Evaluate plan.
7. Upon evaluation, revise the plan to increase its effectiveness.

The district's Coordinator for Student Services manages the district's truancy program. He oversees the district's two truancy officers in an effort to address truancy problems in the district and to increase attendance rates.

In Martin County School District, the School Resource Officer (SRO) program provides law enforcement services at the district's schools as well as teaches classes on both drug and gang prevention. School Resource Officers have a law enforcement role in the district, not security responsibilities. To satisfy security needs, some schools hire security guards to patrol the grounds protecting students, staff and facilities. These guards are not coordinated in any way at a district-wide level.

The final element in the district's safety and security function is the district's alarm system. Burglar and fire alarms are installed at each of the district's facilities and maintained by the district's facilities department.

The school board and management team have made several notable accomplishments over the past several years related to the district's safety and security program. Exhibit 15-2 describes some of these accomplishments.

Exhibit 15-2

Notable Accomplishments in Safety and Security

- People feel safe in Martin County schools.
 - The district's School Resource Officer program is effective and well managed. The program has goals and objectives, and it tracks indicators of arrests and cases. The officer's roles are well defined, and they are evaluated by their supervisor as well as by school staff.
-

Source: Martin County School District.

This chapter relies on the results of a survey conducted by the review team. Because of the small sample size and low response rate, the results of the survey should be used with care and in conjunction with other information available in the district.

Truancy Program

1 The district's truancy program is more effective at addressing the seriously truant students and less effective at the moderately truant students.

The district's truancy program consists of two truancy officers who are supervised by the Coordinator of Student Services. Each officer is responsible for half of the district's schools. The district's Habitual Truant Procedures Handbook defines the procedures for monitoring truancy in the district and focusing on the high priority situations. High priority situations are typically ones in which another agency – including the state's Department of Children and Families or the courts – is involved. Since nine absences are allowable, it is the tenth absence that raises a red flag for the schools and the officers. When a student is absent without an excuse for a fifth or tenth day, the school sends a referral form to the truancy officer who follows up with home visits.

Like other districts in Florida, Martin County currently tracks absences 11 to 20 days and over 21 days. For the purposes of this report, the students who are absent for over 21 days are considered to be seriously truant. While the district does not currently track daily attendance rates, it has recently received the software module for TERMS that will enable it to do so. Once the district begins collecting daily attendance rates next year, it will be possible to compare its attendance rate to national averages.

District Absenteeism Rates for Seriously Truant Students Compare Favorably to State Averages

For the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, the percent of students absent from school for over 21 days is lower in Martin County than the state average for all grade levels. (Exhibit 15-3)

Exhibit 15-3

The Percent of Students Absent More Than 21 Days in Martin County Compares Favorably to that of the State as a Whole

	1996-97		1997-98	
	District	State	District	State
Elementary	5.0 %	9.3 %	4.8 %	8.7 %
Middle	8.3 %	16.3 %	15.2 %	15.6 %
High School	17.9 %	19.1 %	15.4 %	19.1 %

Source: Florida School Indicators Report.

While Martin County compares favorably to the state average for all grade levels in terms of seriously truant students, its performance is mixed when it is compared to peer districts. As Exhibit 15-4 shows, Martin County School District has the lowest absentee rate among

its peers at the elementary level; however, it has the third highest rate among peers at the high school level and the second highest rate among peers at the middle school level.

Exhibit 15-4

The Percent of Seriously Truant Students in Martin County Is Comparable to Peer Districts

District	Elementary	Middle	High School
Martin County	4.8%	15.2%	15.4%
Indian River	6%	3.1%	2.5%
St. Johns	6.4%	9.0%	11.7%
Santa Rosa	7.2%	10.1%	10.8%
Charlotte	7.5%	13.5%	21.1%
Citrus	11.2%	16.4%	24.6%
State Average	8.7%	15.6%	19.1%

Source: Department of Education, Florida School Indicators Report (1997-98).

In addition, truancy rates vary among Martin County schools. For example, as shown in Exhibit 15-5, the lowest absenteeism rates are found among the district's 11 elementary schools which, in 1997-98, ranged from 1.9% to 8.0%. Absenteeism rates among middle schools ranged from 12.5% to 18.9%. During the 1997-98 school year, two high schools had absenteeism rates of 23.7% and 5.0%, respectively. Furthermore, in some instances, absenteeism rates for the same school varies significantly from year to year. For instance, at one district high school the absenteeism rate decreased from 20.9% to 5.0% from 1996-97 to 1997-98 while at one district middle school's absenteeism rate almost doubled during that same time period.

Exhibit 15-5

Seriously Truant Rates in Martin County Vary from School to School

School	1996-97	1997-98
Elementary Schools		
Bessey Creek	2.3 %	1.9 %
Crystal Lake	5.1 %	4.9 %
Felix Williams	4.0 %	6.0 %
Hobe Sound	3.5 %	3.5 %
JD Parker School of Science, Math, and Technology	6.1 %	7.6 %
Jensen Beach	4.9 %	2.9 %
Palm City	3.1 %	2.5 %
Pinewood	5.6 %	6.0 %
Port Salerno	7.7 %	5.3 %
Sea Wind	3.1 %	3.1 %

School	1996-97	1997-98
Warfield	7.7 %	8.0 %
District Average for elementary schools	5 %	4.8 %
State Average for elementary schools	9.3 %	8.7 %
Middle Schools		
Hidden Oaks	8.0 %	12.5 %
Indiantown	7.8 %	12.7 %
Murray	7.1 %	15.8 %
Stuart	9.9 %	18.9 %
District Average for middle schools	8.3 %	15.2 %
State Average for middle schools	16.3 %	15.6 %
High Schools		
Martin County	15.5 %	23.7 %
South Fork	20.9 %	5.0 %
District Average for high schools	17.9 %	15.4 %
State Average for high schools	19.1 %	19.1 %

Source: Florida School Indicators Report.

The district's absentee problem is particularly severe among seriously truant students in its middle schools. Not only does it compare poorly to its peers at this level, but all four middle schools have more than 12% of their students absent for at least 21 days.

In 1999, the state of Florida passed legislation that will change the way school districts are funded by adjusting state funds for school districts based on the average daily attendance. This legislation was designed to encourage school districts to implement changes to increase student attendance. Districts with higher average daily attendance would receive a higher level of funding. Previously, average daily attendance was not a factor in district funding. Consequently, increasing attendance rates through a more effective truancy program would yield direct financial benefits for the district and should far outweigh the cost of hiring an additional truancy officer.

In addition, uniforms could be provided to all truancy officers to increase their effectiveness. Uniformed truancy officer programs demonstrate a more serious effort by school districts to address truancy problems.

Recommendation

- *The district should consider creating a position for an additional truancy officer. This should increase average daily attendance so that students are in the classroom more to increase learning, but should also increase funding under the new funding model.*

Action Plan 15-1

Truancy

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Consider hiring an additional truancy officer and provide uniforms for all truancy officers.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Board approves position for an additional truancy officer.</p> <p>Step 2: Human Resource Services posts the position.</p> <p>Step 3: The district selects and hires the new truancy officer.</p> <p>Step 4: Purchase uniforms for truancy officers.</p> <p>Step 5: Monitor attendance rates to determine if there is an increase.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent, the board, the coordinator of Student Services
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	The salary and benefits for a truancy officer are \$23,657; however, the financial benefits of hiring an additional truancy officer should far outweigh the costs. The district should monitor attendance rates to verify that these benefits are actually realized.

School Resource Officer Program

1 The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program is well managed and effective at deterring delinquent behavior.

The School Resource Officers' Duties Include Teaching Students and Providing Law Enforcement Support to the District

Martin County's School Resource Officer Program began in 1989 with 2 officers. The Lieutenant in Charge of the School Resource Officer Program manages the program. The program has expanded over the years to the 10 officers it has today. There is an officer at each of the two high schools, at each of the four middle schools, and at Spectrum, the alternative school. There are also two officers that cover the district's 10 elementary schools and one officer that manages the program.

The School Resource Officers teach programs to students as well as provide law enforcement at sporting events, field trips, and other community events. At the elementary level, the officers are primarily responsible for teaching the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program and the Seat Belt Safety program. The officers also teach the GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program in the middle schools, and in the two high schools, the officers participate in the law enforcement classes taught. In addition, the School Resource Officers Program participates in the district's Crime Stoppers Program.

The Sheriff's department and the school district split the cost of salaries and benefits; the Sheriff's office provides the cars and uniforms, and the district provides the office space.

The officers work primarily when school is in session, so when they attend after-hour events, like sporting events or field trips, they earn compensatory time that can be later used as time off in lieu of taking annual leave.

The District's School Resource Officer Program Has Clearly Defined Roles for Its SROs

In cooperation with the Martin County Sheriff's Office, Martin County School District produced a procedure manual for the School Resource Officer Program. The manual is thorough and useful, and includes the appropriate laws governing the program, adequately defines SRO functions, and provides program guidelines and procedures for various activities.

The manual elaborates on the definition of the role provided by state law. Florida Statute 230.2318 states, "The intent of the Florida Legislature in establishing the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program is to provide assistance to local school boards in the form of matching grants for the establishment, continuation, or expansion of cooperative programs with law enforcement and community agencies. These efforts are intended to educate and counsel school communities in law enforcement, delinquent behaviors, substance abuse, citizens' rights and responsibilities; provide assistance and support for crime victims; and promote positive relations between the community and law enforcement.

In addition to restating the statutory language, the manual identifies additional SRO functions including:

- serving first and foremost as a law enforcement officer (and not as a school disciplinarian) and taking law enforcement action as required and promptly principals of such action;
- assisting other police officers and deputy sheriffs in matters regarding his/her school assignment, whenever necessary, including interviewing students;
- provide briefings on criminal or current activities, training, administrative, or supervisory concerns and other practices to the Sheriff's SRO supervisor;
- supply copies of all police reports that may be generated by the SRO in relation to his/her assigned school to the school district's Director of Student Services; and
- being available for conferences with students, parents, and faculty members to assist them with problems concerning law enforcement or crime prevention.

The manual also defines program guidelines and procedures for various SRO activities, such as reporting child abuse and making arrests.

The District Evaluates SRO Appropriately

The district has two mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the program against these goals. First, even though School Resource Officers report to the Lieutenant in Charge they are still evaluated by the principal at the school where they work. The principal evaluates the SRO on his or her understanding of SRO job duties, personal orientation and disposition, ability to follow instructions and solve problems, and ability to work responsibly with minimum supervision.

In addition to being evaluated as School Resource Officers by the principals, teachers evaluate them as DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) instructors. The DARE evaluation asks teachers to rate the instructor on several items. Some of these items

include class organization, communication and management, professionalism, and ability to motivate students.

The defined roles and the evaluation are two indications that the department is well managed. This is supported by input received from principals, teachers, and parents during the site visit. Several people commented on the appropriateness of the matching of officers to schools. The turnover within this program is very low. In the 10 years the current Lieutenant in Charge has overseen the program, he has replaced only 2 officers.

SRO Program Goals and Objectives Could Be Improved

The School Resource Officer Program has identified several goals and objectives (see Exhibit 15-6) to guide its operations. These objectives and goals are presented in

Exhibit 15-6

The District Has Established Goals and Objectives for Its School Resource Officer Program

Goal	Objective	Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve our surveillance of school functions and promote a more secure environment for students and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to respond quickly and discretely to a school campus situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain and equip each School Resource Officer with uniform headsets for quiet and accurate communication. • To develop plans for securing weapons brought on campus with school staff and SRO • To improve communication with media of situations occurring on school campuses. • To implement security measures on “open” campuses and appropriate identification of all school employees. • To obtain a full-time depute as a “float car” for situations that arise on campus and/or as substitute deputy for regular SRO not able to be on campus (court, sick, transporting, special event)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work harder within the agency to define the necessity to communicate the felony arrests of juveniles outside of school boundaries (after school hours, weekends, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To stay within the state of Florida Statutes for compliance of keeping certain arrested juveniles off of school campuses, pending outcome of hearing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To copy arrest reports and/or meet with watch commander for weekend update on any juvenile arrests. • To arrange with Jail/Booking to notify SRO Supervisor of arrest of juvenile for felony offenses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expand our drug and gang involvement programs on our school campuses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expand the awareness of drugs through Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) and gang violence with Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) on our school campuses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expand our program with the additional training for middle school SRO’s. • To bring in motivational speakers to our Middle and High Schools at least twice a year. • To provide classes for the parents about current drugs being used and/or gang involvement. • Working with schools’ Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and their School Advisory Council (SACs)

Source: School Resource Officer Program of Martin County School District.

While these goals, objectives and methods provide a good direction for the program, they could be even more effective if they were adequately defined and linked with specific, quantifiable measures and benchmarks or targets against which these measures could be evaluated. For example, terms used in the objectives, like “quickly” and “discretely” are not quantified. How quick should “quickly” be? Unless these objectives are clearly quantified and communicated, there will be no way of measuring them or realizing it once the goals have been met. In addition, although the program has some identified measures it tracks, these are not linked to goals and objectives, nor are targets or benchmarks established against which they could be measured.

The Significance of Changes in Performance Data Is Unclear

The SRO program tracks the volume of activities, including cases, parent conferences, and arrests. These indicators are presented in Exhibit 15-7. Numbers like these are often hard to interpret, because it is difficult to tell whether changes reflect a change in the activities or a change in the officer's detection of the activities. In other words, decreases could be a good or bad indication. However, several observations can be made from these numbers. First, SROs are managing more cases with the same number of officers. This is an indication that each officer is even busier than last year. The increase in case numbers can also be attributed to the Superintendent's request that all incidents be logged by SRO's, and a new law making illegal the possession of tobacco by juveniles. Second, SROs are facilitating more classroom presentations, which could indicate they are playing a more active role in educational and prevention activities. Finally, there has been a large increase in the value of stolen property recovered. Much of this increase, however, can be attributed to the recovery of one stolen car.

Exhibit 15-7

School Resource Officer Program Indicators Have Changed Between 1996-97 and 1997-98

	1996-97	1997-98
Case numbers	297	342
Truancy Pick-up	131	165
Walk in complaints	1983	1961
Parent conferences	847	765
Classroom Presentations	639	672
School Related Meetings	372	223
Total Charges Filed	220	213
Recovered Stolen Property	\$2,372.00	\$26,342.00
Total Arrests	181	187

Source: School Resource Officer Indicators.

In addition, the SRO Program also tracks the types of arrests. Exhibit 15-8 illustrates the number of each type of arrest made over the last three years.

Exhibit 15-8**Types of Arrests Vary Over Time**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Assault	8		
Battery/Aggravated Battery*	40	28	25
Assault/ Battery on School Board Employees	16	35	28
Assault on Law Enforcement		1	
Battery on Law Enforcement		1	3
Burglary	13	14	4
Disorderly Conduct	12	7	4
Theft/Grand Theft	21	14	22
Narcotics	56		
Possession of weapons	4	4	5
Possession of firearm			4
Possession of alcohol		2	2
Possession of tobacco (notice to appear)			92
Possession of marijuana		33	32
Possession of paraphernalia		6	10
Possession of controlled substance (acid/ cocaine)			2
Possession LSD		1	
Conspiracy to possess marijuana		6	
Robbery	1	2	
Trespassing	28	15	7
Vandalism	13		
Take and Hold Orders	10		
Criminal Mischief		11	15
Affray		3	
Resist w/o violence		1	8
Smoking 100FT of School		22	
Lewd Lascivious		3	
Disrupting School		3	15
Arson		2	
Unlawful Burning		2	
Cruelty to Animals		1	
Throwing Deadly Missile		1	
Escape		1	
Dealing in Stolen Property		1	
Child Abuse	1		
Bomb Threat			1
Other			22

* Assault and Aggravated Assault were combined for 1996-97, 1997-98

Source: School Resource Officer Program of the Martin County School District.

Other indicators are tracked by the Florida Department of Education at the state level. According to this data, the total number of incidents within Martin County has decreased in the last three years (Exhibit 15-9). In addition, the number of incidents in most categories has also decreased. The only three types of incidents showing an increase are: drugs, excluding alcohol; sexual battery; and sexual harassment. Again, it is difficult to

interpret whether the decrease is due to improved deterrence or to decreased detection, so it is difficult to know if the situation is improving or getting worse.

Exhibit 15-9

Total Incidents of Crime Have Changed Over Time

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	Percent Change
Alcohol	17	16	11	-35%
Arson		4		
Battery	77	49	57	-26%
Breaking and Entering	2			-100%
Disorderly Conduct	289	317	52	-82%
Drugs, Excluding Alcohol	44	57	58	32%
Fighting	282	324	195	-31%
Homicide				
Kidnapping				
Larceny/Theft	82	66	34	-59%
Motor Vehicle Theft		2		
Robbery	3	2	1	-67%
Sex Offenses	9	5	3	-67%
Sexual Battery	1	1	3	200%
Sexual Harassment	9	6	14	56%
Threat/Intimidation	40	51	38	-5%
Tobacco	328	253	303	-8%
Trespassing	5	6	2	-60%
Vandalism	25	45	17	-32%
Weapons Possession	43	20	11	-74%
Unclassified	192	107	27	-86%
Total	1,448	1,331	826	-43%

Source: School Advisory Council Reports, 1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98.

The Public Believes that the District Is Effective at Preventing Delinquent Behavior

As Exhibit 15-10 illustrates, members of the Martin County community believe the district is doing a good job with its anti-drug and anti-violence programs.

Exhibit 15-10

District Staff and Parents Believe That the District's Drug and Violence Programs Are Effective

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators (n=94)	The district's anti-drug and anti-violence programs are effective.	47.9 %	21.3 %	25.5 %	5.3 %
Parents (n=42)	The district's anti-drug and anti-violence programs are effective.	61.9 %	21.4 %	11.9 %	4.8 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

The Public Feels Safe in Martin County Schools

Survey results indicate that teachers, administrators and parents believe that the schools are safe and secure (Exhibit 15-11). Several programs including the district's Crime Watch Program and its Zero Tolerance Policy may contribute to the safe environment. Both programs demonstrate the district's commitment to identifying potential safety problems and protecting the schools from these problems.

Exhibit 15-11

District Staff and Parents Believe Schools Are Safe

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	No Opinion
Teacher and Administrator (n=94)	My school is safe and secure	62.8 %	8.5 %	26.6 %	2.1 %
Parents (n=42)	My child(ren) is safe in the district's schools.	80.0 %	19.0 %	9.5 %	0.0 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

While the majority of survey respondents feel the schools are safe, fewer respondents believe that the district's security services respond quickly enough and that the district has adequate security staff (Exhibit 15-12). For example, less than half of the teachers and administrators surveyed believed that the district's security services effectively responds to calls for assistance. In addition, parents are divided in their opinions on the whether the district has adequate of security personnel to maintain a safe school environment. It is impossible to know whether the respondents are referring to the School Resource Officer program or the Security program (security guards and alarm services).

Exhibit 15-12

District Staff and Parents Hold Differing Opinions on the Adequacy of Security Personnel Staffing Levels

Survey Group	Question	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	No Opinion
Teachers and Administrators (n= 94)	The district has adequate security personnel to maintain a safe school environment.	57.4 %	21.3 %	8.5 %	12.8 %
Parents (n=42)	The district has adequate security personnel to maintain a safe school environment.	35.7 %	23.8 %	33.3 %	7.1 %

Source: Gibson Consulting Group Survey.

Recommendation

- *The SRO program should link performance measures with its goals and objectives and should develop a way of interpreting the significance of changes in performance data over time.*

*Action Plan 6-2***School Resource Officer Program**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The SRO program should link performance measures with its goals and objectives and should assess this performance in light of resource allocation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The SRO Lieutenant in charge and the SRO's establish goals for the SRO program.</p> <p>Step 2: SRO Lieutenant and SRO's develop performance measures to track the attainment of set goals. For example, if conducting classroom presentations is one goal, tracking the number of classes or grades an SRO presents to would indicate how many presentations are being conducted and to whom.</p> <p>Step 3: Clearly communicate goals and performance measures to all SRO's and set expectations of attaining these goals.</p> <p>Step 4: Train the SRO's how to achieve the set goals.</p> <p>Step 5: Develop a method for interpreting the performance data. This includes identifying benchmarks for desired results, as well as identifying ranges that are acceptable and ranges that are unacceptable. This also includes developing a process for explaining why data may be in the unacceptable range and what is going to be done to address this.</p> <p>Step 6: Begin collecting and assessing performance.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Lieutenant in charge of School Resource Officer program.
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented and managed within existing resources.

Security

1 **The district has the general staffing and alarms in place, but it lacks the necessary coordination needed to ensure security of its students, staff, and property.**

The district has several methods of providing security for people and for its property including security guards, safety committees, security alarms, and procedures in case of emergency.

Security guards are hired and supervised by each school principal. The security guards are not part of a centralized school district program. The guards patrol the halls and the school property and may be called in to provide discipline support. While there are guards in the district, there are no security trailers. However, according to principals and teachers

interviewed, there is no need for security trailers. Refer to page 15-17 for more information on security trailers.

Beginning in 1998, the district strongly recommended that campuses establish their own safety committees and that they meet at least once each quarter, preferably once each month. While the district's Safety Officer attends many of these meetings, the committees are site-based, so their activities are not tracked at the district level. While the responsibilities of these committees are broader than campus security, they do consider issues of security. For instance, the committee responsibilities include:

- Evaluating all accidents and their investigations that have occurred during the previous months and recommend responsible measures to prevent a recurrence.
- Assisting in conducting required practice emergency drills and actual emergency evacuations.
- Maintaining a formal administrative safety file at the site for review by visiting staff members and safety inspectors.
- Assisting site management in promoting safety awareness and co-worker participation through continuous improvements to the organization's safety program.
- Assisting in monitoring safety education and training programs for all employees to ensure that safety training is taking place, and that it is effective.
- Assisting in evaluating record keeping procedures to ensure that accident and injury records are controlled and properly maintained, are reviewed for trends and patterns, and that corrective action has been implemented successfully.

In addition to the physical safety of people and property, these committees also review sufficiency of alarm systems and safety procedures.

The district has a safety program that includes Emergency Procedures, Classroom Safety, and Playground Safety. The Emergency Procedures include instructions for fire evacuation, tornado preparedness, hurricane preparedness, and first aid. The Fire Evacuation plan includes direction for evacuation maps, emergency exits, and staging areas. The Tornado Preparedness plan includes instructions for developing an evacuation or positioning map, for the recommended placement and position for people in case of an emergency, and for conducting drills. The section of First Aid/Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) /Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) includes recommendations for renewing training for First Aid/CPR/BBP, for following necessary safety precautions for BBP, and for providing necessary emergency supplies. Classroom Safety raises an awareness of the need to use only appropriate chemicals in cleaning and reminds individuals to store chemicals appropriately. It includes a reminder about state restrictions on combustible storage, and it reminds individuals that excessive clutter can interfere with safe facilities. The Playground Safety plan covers the age appropriateness of playground equipment, the need for regular audits of playground equipment, and the need to report all accidents.

The district's Safety Officer in the Risk Management department participates in the schools' safety committees and produces the procedure manuals, but there is nobody at central office that has any involvement with the security officers. The Facilities Department manages the alarm systems and other physical plant security issues. Individual schools manage their own security officers, and nobody at central office has any involvement with these officers; and, as previously mentioned, the School Resource Officer program performs its law enforcement, prevention and educational role in the district. While the assignment of these responsibilities is appropriate, there should be an individual or a committee in the district responsible for overseeing these various aspects of district security.

The District Demonstrates No Need for Security Trailers

There are no security trailers in the district. Indicators tracked by the Florida Department of Education report the total number of incidents within the Martin County School District has decreased over the last three years. The district Facilities supervisor feels the school alarm systems, the current full-time sheriff's deputy located at each school, and the school security guards provide sufficient school security. Additionally, interviews with district staff and administrators support a current lack of need for security trailers. In sum, the present security measures are sufficient at this time and, therefore, there is no justification for expenditures for adding district office security trailers.

There Is Adequate Security at Central Office; However, Visitor Reception Could Be Improved

The district's central office is protected by a building alarm system and recently upgraded parking lot lighting. In addition, the lieutenant in charge of the SRO program (a full-time sheriff) offices inside the building near the front entrance, and the county sheriff's office is located only two blocks from the district office. Further, there are procedures in place to protect property. For instance, there is a procedure that requires that all delivered boxes be signed for and stored in a locked area of the basement until designated personnel can deliver the boxes to the appropriate office. Finally, interviews with district staff and administrators indicate that they feel safe at central office.

As evidenced from a lack of incidents, these elements appear to combine to provide sufficient security for the district office. According to the district's Facilities supervisor, the district office has had no security incidents in the past two years, and according to district property loss reports, there has only been one theft at central office in the same time period (in 1997, \$160 was stolen from a purse).

Visitor reception could be improved. The district's central office complex is made up of a main building and several portables. While there are receptionists or other employees near the main entrances of most of the portables, there is no individual to greet or assist people entering the main building nor signs or directions to instruct visitors when they arrive on campus. As a result, people do not know where to report in and the district does not know who is on site at any given time.

Schools and Central Administration Buildings Are Adequately Protected at Night by Security and Fire Alarms

All schools and facilities are protected by security and fire alarm systems. These systems are inspected annually by the Safety Officer. These alarm systems protect all buildings, other than portables, with motion detectors and contacts on windows and doors.

Recommendation

- *Identify a district-level position responsible for coordinating all Safety & Security functions. This position would integrate, organize, and manage consistent roles and responsibilities, training, and procedures for both SRO's and security officers.*

- *Develop a central visitor check-in process and assign responsibilities for overseeing this process to an existing employee. The district should require that all visitors sign-in and sign-out at a centralized location. The district may or may not decide to require visitors to wear badges. There should be signs directing visitors to the sign-in sheet and to the individual who can provide assistance or directions.*

Action Plan 15-3

Security

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Identify a district-level position responsible for coordinating all Safety & Security functions. This position would integrate, organize, and manage consistent roles and responsibilities, training, and procedures for both SRO's and security officers.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish who will coordinate district safety and security functions, including SRO's, Security Guards, relevant facilities risk managers, and alarm support personnel.</p> <p>Step 2: Create an organizational flowchart of all SRO's, Security Guards, relevant facilities risk managers, and alarm support personnel.</p> <p>Step 3: Ensure the roles and responsibilities of each position are clearly defined in their respective job descriptions.</p> <p>Step 4: Explain this organization to all pertinent staff along with roles and responsibilities for each position.</p> <p>Step 5: Begin implementing this new organizational flow, monitoring its effectiveness, and making changes when and where necessary.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Lieutenant in charge of School Resource Officer program, security officers, principals, facilities directors, and risk managers.
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented and managed within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a central visitor check-in process and assign responsibilities for overseeing this process to an existing employee. The district should require that all visitors sign-in and sign-out at a centralized location
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop requirements for visitor sign-in, sign-out and assistance.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop processes to support these requirements.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify an individual to oversee these processes.</p> <p>Step 4: Communicate process and individual to school district employees and to members of the community.</p> <p>Step 5: Develop and place necessary signs (directing visitors to the sign-in list and describing requirements to sign in, sign out, or wear a badge).</p>
Who Is Responsible	The executive director for Operations
Time Frame	November 1999
Fiscal Impact	The district should be able to implement this recommendation within existing resources.

Shared Services

1 The district has found alternative ways of providing services in the areas of safety and security.

The District Participates Alternative Ways of Providing Services, But Should Evaluate These Arrangements

Sharing services is one way for school district's to maximize benefits while reducing their costs. Martin County School District's School Resource Officer program is a shared service. It is a collaborative project with the Martin County Sheriff's Office. As previously mentioned the Sheriff's Office shares the expense of operating this program. In addition, to save costs, Martin County contracts with SVI, Inc., a private company, to maintain its alarm systems. The review team found that this arrangement provides appropriate fire and security alarms for all permanent buildings of all facilities. Finally, the district operates a boot camp at the county jail that serves students from five counties. The district receives FTE funding for all students at the boot camp as well as funding from the state Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). While all three arrangements appear to be effective and efficient for the district, it is not clear that the district conducts specific evaluations to ensure they are maximizing benefits while reducing costs.



Action Plans

If the Martin County School Board agrees by a majority plus one vote to implement the action plans in this Appendix, the district could meet the best practices within two years and receive the seal of Best Financial Management from the State Board of Education.

Management Structures

Action Plan 3-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Martin County School District should develop a process for reviewing job descriptions on an annual basis as part of its performance evaluation process. As part of this process each year, each employee and his or her supervisor should review the employee's job description to ensure that it is accurate and that it clearly defines the expectations of the position. The job description should also define all lines of authority above and below the position.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Executive Director of Human Resources develops and documents a procedure for reviewing job descriptions as part of the annual evaluation process. Step 2: The Executive Director of Human Resources should train all directors, principals, and other managers in how to incorporate the job description review into the annual evaluation process.
Who Is Responsible	The Executive Director of Human Resources, all directors, principals, and other managers
Time Frame	Ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should develop and/or update procedure manuals for all areas. These manuals will require that the district to define their procedures and this process can assist in streamlining activities and ensuring people understand their roles and responsibilities in these activities. To the extent possible, these procedures should also be made available on-line. As long as individuals can access procedures through the computer, updates can be made without having to distribute hard copies throughout the district.
Action Needed	Step 1: Each department director should meet with members of the department's staff to identify all activities conducted by the department to develop a complete list of what procedures are needed.

	<p>Step 2: The director and the department staff should then gather all documentation of procedures that exist (including those in memo format, old procedures manuals, handbooks, draft format, etc). In some cases, procedures may be sufficient in their current format. In other cases, they can serve as a basis for refinement.</p> <p>Step 3: Procedure development should be distributed among various department members. Procedures should be developed by those most familiar with the activity. Procedures that require actions of several members of the department should be developed with input from each of these members.</p> <p>Step 4: Once all procedures are developed, they should be stored on a shared drive in a single folder as read-only files. They should also be printed and kept in a single binder.</p> <p>Step 5: The procedure manual should be updated as procedures change and reviewed annually to ensure the information in it is current and complete.</p>
Who Is Responsible	All department directors.
Time Frame	January 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 3-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Martin County School District should revise its strategic plan so that it contains the necessary level of detail.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: With the assistance of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Assistant Superintendent, the Superintendent should reconvene a strategic planning committee.</p> <p>Step 2: The district should hire a facilitator to train the committee on the elements of a successful strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 3: The committee should meet as a whole to review and revise current high-level goals and objectives and should then meet as sub-committees to focus on each individual area.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented at the cost of hiring a facilitator to provide the training to the committee, \$2,000.

Action Plan 3-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district's strategic plan should be used to drive district financial planning and budgeting.
Action Needed	Step 1: The superintendent and her cabinet should develop a procedure

	for incorporating the strategic plan into the budget process.
	Step 2: The assistant superintendent should document this process and communicate it to the board and to district administrators.
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 3-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The Technology Department should provide training to district administrators on performance reporting.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The Director of Educational Technology delivers training to administrators on performance reporting, how to identify and prioritize data needs, and on the reports already available from TERMS.</p> <p>Step 2: The superintendent and the cabinet should work together to establish a mechanism for soliciting ongoing input from district employees on changing data and reporting needs; prioritizing these needs; communicating them to the Department of Educational Technology; and creating performance reports.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should hire a grant writer to support its efforts at raising additional funding.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendent, the Director of Curriculum and Development and the Executive Director for Human Resources develop a job description for the position.</p> <p>Step 2: Human Resources advertises for the position.</p> <p>Step 3: The superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the Director of Curriculum and Development interview for the position.</p> <p>Step 4: The district fills the position.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The superintendent
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Creating a grant writer position will cost the district approximately \$50,000 each year in salary and benefits. This assumes a salary level equivalent to the district's programmer/analyst position.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The district should implement a cost savings identification program.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendent should develop procedures for soliciting ideas about cost savings.</p> <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendent should publicize the program, including its incentives, to district employees.</p> <p>Step 3: The district should begin to collect, analyze, implement, and track these ideas.</p> <p>Step 4: The district should reward the employees whose ideas saved money.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The assistant superintendent
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented at no cost to the district, but should generate savings each year.

Performance Accountability System

Action Plan 4-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Require that each program and department—instructional and operational—have effective goals with objectives. The goals should be achievable and reflect the intent of the program. The objectives should be measurable and specific.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent and the assistant superintendent hire a facilitator to train department directors in goal and objective setting.</p> <p>Step 2: The department directors work with their departments to identify goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 3: The assistant superintendent reviews the goals and objectives to ensure they satisfy the criteria for effectiveness. If necessary, departments revise their goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 4: The department directors incorporate these into a plan for their department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Personnel
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	\$2,000 for the facilitator

Action Plan 4-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Each program and department should establish performance and cost-efficiency measures that can be used to assess performance, cost efficiency, and progress towards achieving goals and objectives. These measures must be specific, measurable, easy to track (in terms of time and money) and easy to understand. These measures should link the relationship between the program's inputs, outputs, and outcomes so that program performance can be evaluated in terms of the program's cost. For example, measures could include: construction cost per square foot, maintenance cost per square foot, human resources cost per employee, technology expenditure per employee, and response time for work requests.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The superintendent and the assistant superintendent hire a facilitator to train department directors in identifying performance measures. This will be part of the training described in Recommendation 1 under Best Practice 1 in this chapter.</p> <p>Step 2: The department directors work with their departments to identify performance measures that support their goals and objectives; with the Director of Educational Technology and the Director of Finance to ensure that the performance measures can be calculated; and with the assistant superintendent to ensure they satisfy the criteria for effectiveness.</p> <p>Step 3: The department directors incorporate these performance measures into a plan for their department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Department directors, department staff, Director of Educational Technology, Director of Finance, assistant superintendent
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished within existing resources. The cost for the facilitator is reflected in Recommendation 1.

Action Plan 4-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should establish performance and cost-efficiency benchmarks to which it can compare its program's performance and cost-efficiency measures. These benchmarks should reflect standards from comparable school districts, governmental agencies, and private industry. The district should evaluate its performance against these benchmarks, and, when necessary, program changes should be made to improve performance or reduce costs.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Department directors, with help from their staff, should contact peer districts, national organizations, private industry, research organizations, and other groups to identify benchmarks for their performance measures.</p> <p>Step 2: The department directors should work with their supervisors in identifying these benchmarks.</p> <p>Step 3: Department directors should incorporate these benchmarks into their plans.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Department directors
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 4-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should conduct routine program assessments.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The department directors and their supervisors should develop a general format for these assessments, including what types of data and input will be incorporated.</p> <p>Step 2: The format for assessments should be presented to the superintendent and board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The format should be documented and distributed</p> <p>Step 4: Department directors will work with the Director of Educational Technology to identify what data is necessary for these assessments, who will collect it, when they will collect it, how they will submit it, and how it will be calculated.</p> <p>Step 5: Each department director will calculate baseline data for each measure and will establish their own procedures and schedule for ongoing evaluation of the measures.</p> <p>Step 6: The department directors will use this information to evaluate progress made towards department goals and objectives, document the progress, and update the plan based on this analysis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Department directors and their supervisors, the Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	March 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should develop a process for conducting program performance evaluations of programs and departments on a scheduled basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The department directors and their supervisors should develop a general framework for these evaluations including types of input and analysis to be included. Since departments and programs will only be reviewed every few years, the framework should also define how the evaluations of departments and programs should be scheduled. This could include a consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence that the program is not performing according to

	<p>expectations,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program funding level; • number of students served by the program; • cost to the district to conduct the evaluation, • availability of resources to conduct the evaluation, • potential for program improvement or cost savings, • potential risk or consequences that may result from ineffective program performance, • length of time since the program's last evaluation, and • public input or concern. <p>Step 2: The assistant superintendent should present this framework to the Superintendent and Board for approval.</p> <p>Step 3: The framework should be documented and distributed.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Department directors and their supervisors
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 4-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Produce and distribute easy-to-understand management reports that reflects the district's performance according to these indicators. These reports should be used by district management in decision-making and planning to improve performance and decrease costs. These reports should also be used by the community to hold the district accountable. The report card should include indicators such as: pupil: teacher ratios (by grade, by school); student: employee ratios (by school; total); total expenditures per student (by school); total expenditures per student by functional area; the percent of total expenditures spent on central administration; and the percent of expenditures spent on school administration.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The assistant superintendent, department directors, the Director of Educational Technology develop a format for an annual management report. The report should include the goals, objectives, and measures for each instructional and operational area.</p> <p>Step 2: The complete report should be produced once a year, presented to the board, and made available to members of the community.</p> <p>Step 3: The progress reports should be produced at the mid-point of each year. These reports should be brief updates on the performance measures for each department.</p>
Who Is Responsible	The assistant superintendent, department directors, the Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	June 2000 (for the formats and the first management report)
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Use of Lottery Proceeds

Action Plan 5-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a definition of “enhancement” that is clearly articulated, placed in writing, and included in the School Board Policy document
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The district staff and the school board develop a definition of “enhancement” as a part of the district’s overall strategic planning process.</p> <p>Step 2: The school board holds public hearings to provide an opportunity for community members to offer input.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent; director of School Improvement and Curriculum; School Board
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This plan can be implemented within existing resources. District will have greater fiscal accountability with a definition of “enhancement.”

Action Plan 5-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use written guidelines to ensure the appropriate management of lottery funds.
Action Needed	<p>Implement a coordinated, broad-based effort to develop a set of standard procedures to account for the receipt and expenditure of all state discretionary lottery funds. These guidelines should, at a minimum, include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the requirement to allocate lottery funds from the budget equal to the appropriation from the state; a procedure to ensure the district uses unique project or account numbers for the expenditure of state lottery funds to include designation of the specific programs, activities, or accounts to which state lottery funds will be allocated; and procedures that explicitly describe the process of how to account for lottery fund expenditures when a program or activity may be funded by more than one source, e.g., when a portion of teachers' salaries are funded by lottery funds in support of the district's school improvement activities.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Finance
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 5-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Require that, prior to allocating lottery funds for a program, that any new program have an evaluation component, and that ongoing programs be required to demonstrate that they continue to be effective in improving student achievement.
Action Needed	<p>The director of School Improvement and Curriculum develops quantifiable accountability criteria for evaluating enhancement programs.</p> <p>The director of School Improvement and Curriculum provides training relating to program review and evaluation to those district and campus personnel who are responsible for developing and implementing enhancement programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of School Improvement and Curriculum
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Developing program evaluation criteria and training will likely require the addition of a staff person dedicated to research and evaluation in the Office of School Improvement and Curriculum. The costs associated with creating and filling this position are included in Chapter 6, Educational Service Delivery.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop written policies for the expenditures of funds by the School Advisory Committees that are clearly articulated, placed in writing, and included in the School Board Policy document. The district should implement procedures for more extensive evaluation of programs provided with SAC funds.
Action Needed	<p>The director of School Improvement and Curriculum provides district level support to SACs in the form of assistance in developing school improvement plans that include measurable goals and evaluation components.</p> <p>Principals create and use forms that allow for more accurate tracking of SAC discretionary funds.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of School Improvement and Curriculum; principals
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This plan can be implemented within existing resources.

Use of State and District Construction Funds

Action Plan 8-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should establish a target for capital project fund transfers to the general fund, not exceeding 25% of the Maintenance Department budget
Action Needed	Adopt policy for capital project fund transfers. Monitor percentage of time incurred by Maintenance Department on capital projects.
Who Is Responsible	School board
Time Frame	September 1999

Facilities Construction

Action Plan 9-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Add business and civic members to the Long-Range Planning Committee.
Action Needed	Step 1: Adopt policy specifying the makeup of the LRPC. Step 2: Identify two business representatives, two civic organization representatives, and two parents to serve on the LRPC.
Who Is Responsible	General Counsel; School Board
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 9-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop formal site selection criteria and checklist for site evaluation.
Action Needed	Step 1: Using Form 350 and more current applicable state laws, define and document all criteria for site selection. Step 2: Identify other site selection criteria based on district needs. Step 3: Finalize site selection criteria and submit to board for approval.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 9-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should include available demographic data in enrollment projections submitted to the LRPC.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop supporting enrollment projection schedules that show ethnicity, income status and other available demographic data.</p> <p>Step 2: Incorporate schedules into enrollment projections provided to the LRPC.</p> <p>Step 3: Use results in future facilities planning efforts.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 9-10

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should conduct a comprehensive facilities audit to identify all needs of existing facilities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Designate \$100,000 of capital project funds for a facilities audit once every 10 years or as necessary based on increased student population.</p> <p>Step 2: Draft Request for Proposals to conduct a facilities audit. Require that a nationally recognized evaluation instrument be used.</p> <p>Step 3: Evaluate bids and select vendor.</p> <p>Step 4: Update FISH data based on results.</p> <p>Step 5: Incorporate facilities needs into Education Plant Survey and Five-Year Facilities Work Program</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	Complete by December 1999
Fiscal Impact	\$100,000

Action Plan 9-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct feasibility studies of alternative grade configurations and attendance zones to increase overall district capacity.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Conduct community survey on sensitivity to attendance zone changes, alternative grade configurations, year-round education and price sensitivity of tax rates. Also review school choice policy and its impact on school capacity.</p> <p>Step 2: Evaluate current and future school capacity and identify plausible options to improve facility use.</p> <p>Step 3: Conduct financial feasibility study of at least three alternative attendance zone configurations, three alternative grade configurations, and a year-round education program.</p> <p>Step 4: Evaluate the academic impact of alternatives to ensure that any proposed changes will not adversely affect student performance.</p> <p>Step 5: Communicate potential savings to taxpayers from alternatives to new construction.</p> <p>Step 6: Make recommendations to board on specific program to increase facility use.</p>
Who Is Responsible	LRPC, with assistance from Director of Facilities and Supervisor of Construction
Time Frame	July 2000
Fiscal Impact	The fiscal impact could be significant if the LRPC can successfully communicate to the public the financial benefits of improving facility use.

Action Plan 9-14

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop an educational specifications document customized for each school, even if plans are reused.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop a framework for educational specifications to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of document • Project description and justification • Discussion of educational trends and future programs • Discussion of educational facility trends • List and description of specific programs to be provided at the school • Projected timeline and budget, • Listing of participants in the process. • Description of the school-community relationships, • Defined program objectives customized for each school, • Description of traffic flow to and from the school for students, staff and visitors. • Plans for future expansion or increased community use <p>Step 2: Incorporate steps into development of educational specifications document. Prepare a cost comparison for alternative designs.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 9-16

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should establish a committee to evaluate alternative construction management techniques to improve management and control over construction projects while minimizing costs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The board should establish a committee that includes key members such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A board member • Executive Director of Operations • Director of Facilities • General Counsel <p>Step 2: The committee should consider construction management options available under the law.</p> <p>Step 3: The committee should evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of alternative approaches to contract management available.</p> <p>Step 4: The committee should recommend an approach to the board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	School Board
Time Frame	Prior to the retirement of the current supervisor of construction need date.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 9-18

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should reinstate and expand post-occupancy evaluations to include analysis of maintenance and operating costs per square foot and an assessment of whether the educational specification were met.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop and adopt board policy requiring post-occupancy evaluations 12 months and 48 months after occupancy.</p> <p>Step 2: Adopt state post-occupancy evaluation (POE) model as a base model for such evaluations.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify additional evaluation elements to be incorporated into the evaluation, such as utilities cost, custodial cost, and student cost-per-square foot.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Construction
Time Frame	August 1999 – May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Facilities Maintenance

Action Plan 10-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and track cost performance measures to support trend analyses and comparisons to peer districts and industry benchmarks.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Director of Facilities and Maintenance Supervisor should work together to develop a set of performance measures and benchmarks for the Maintenance function. These measures should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities cost per square foot • Maintenance cost per square foot (excluding maintenance charges relating to capital projects) • Maintenance cost per student • Custodial cost per square foot • Square feet of building space per FTE custodian • Square feet of building space per FTE maintenance staff • MBTU usage per square foot • Average age of facilities <p>Step 2: Contact peer districts to identify information-sharing opportunities.</p> <p>Step 3: Obtain historical data from budget and FISH records</p> <p>Step 4: Calculate and verify measures</p> <p>Step 5: Analyze trends</p> <p>Step 6: Set performance goals</p> <p>Step 7: Incorporate results into the budget process</p> <p>Step 8: Track statistics annually</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	January – June 2000
Fiscal Impact	The amount of savings will depend on how well the district performs.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop specific goals and objectives for the Maintenance Department that clearly identify and segregate the resources committed to capital projects, preventive maintenance, ongoing maintenance and emergency maintenance.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop standards for the number of hours needed to accomplish preventive maintenance, ongoing maintenance and emergency maintenance activities.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop FTE targets for each maintenance category, plus a target for capital project time.</p>

	Step 3: Track the level of effort through time sheets (in the interim). Use work order system to track effort by category after implementation.
	Step 4: Compare goals to actual hours spent in each area.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 3

Strategy	Consider outsourcing certain maintenance trades.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify maintenance trade functions that could be privatized. Step 2: Identify criteria for use in determining whether to outsource functions. Step 3: Contact vendors to determine costs to privatize these functions. Step 4: Analyze costs to perform these services with in-house staff. Step 5: Compare in-house costs to privatization costs. Step 6: Determine feasibility of privatizing maintenance trade functions based on the results of the comparison.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	March 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-2

Recommendation 1

Strategy	Develop a mission statement for the Maintenance Department.
Action Needed	As part of its strategic planning effort, district staff should establish a mission statement for maintenance for board approval. See example on page 10-8.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, school board
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Conduct periodic surveys of facility users to measure how well maintenance it is fulfilling its mission from a customer service standpoint.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop survey instrument. Use positive statements about maintenance performance and ask users to rank agreement or disagreement on a 1-5 scale. Step 2: Include quality, timeliness and cost of service in survey questions. Step 3: Submit surveys to principals and a random sample of teachers. Step 4: Have responses delivered to internal auditor for tabulation.

	Step 5: Summarize and evaluate responses.
	Step 6: Use to evaluate the use of maintenance resources and make adjustments accordingly.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	Bi-annually, beginning in February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	Document policies and procedures for the Maintenance Department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Conduct research through national organizations to identify sources for procedures manual components.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop table of contents for maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 3: Prepare a written draft of the maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 4: Incorporate and update custodial handbook into maintenance procedures manual</p> <p>Step 5: Put procedures manual on server, allowing access by maintenance staff and campus staff.</p> <p>Step 6: Revise applicable sections as needed during a one- to two-year period.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September 1999 – June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-3

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Reallocate custodial staff to achieve minimum productivity on regular campuses to 20,000 square feet per custodian.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign custodial staff based on square footage of building space, modified up or down based on age of facility and facility population. Total productivity for the district should be 20,000 square feet per custodian.</p> <p>Step 2: Reassign custodial staff among campuses.</p> <p>Step 3: Achieve reductions in staff through attrition where possible.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for Operations
Time Frame	September 1999 - July 2000
Fiscal Impact	Increasing districtwide productivity to 20,000 square feet per custodian would allow the district to eliminate 9 custodial positions. Assuming average salary and benefits of \$25,000 per custodian, the district could save approximately \$225,000 per year.

Action Plan 10-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Update maintenance job descriptions to include all required certifications.
Action Needed	Update job descriptions with changes recommended by the Maintenance Department.
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance, director of Human Resources
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-8

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish short-term and long-term financial objectives for maintaining facilities, based on industry standards, and set budgets and staffing levels accordingly.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Define one-year and five-year objectives for facilities maintenance, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency (cost per square foot and other performance measures discussed earlier in this chapter) • Effectiveness (average response times, number of repeat work orders, customer satisfaction as expressed through survey instruments) • Implementation of key projects by certain dates (TERMS software, work standards, procedures) <p>Step 2: Incorporate objectives into strategic planning process for approval by board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	October 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Establish a target for Maintenance Department resources to be used for capital projects.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Estimate amount of time spent on capital projects by maintenance staff in 1998-1999.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop target staffing levels for other maintenance needs. Identify available hours for capital projects based on current staffing levels.</p> <p>Step 3: Incorporate target percentage into long-range objectives and track progress.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September – December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Document maintenance design standards for new construction.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop maintenance design standards for new construction that include the following minimum specifications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of energy efficient equipment • Location of equipment to facilitate accessibility for maintenance • Ease of cleaning • Location of supply closets • Configuration of large open areas (energy use) • Composition of floors (cleaning) <p>Step 2: Review the standards with the architect.</p> <p>Step 3: Update the standards annually.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September – December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-10

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Establish and document criteria for prioritizing maintenance work orders.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Define and document criteria for emergency work orders. Criteria should include student and employee safety and the prevention of instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and document criteria for prioritizing other work orders: • General school safety • Adverse impact on instruction • Adverse impact on operations or productivity • Comfort <p>Step 2: Refine criteria annually.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-11

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should develop a new system for estimating costs for major project.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Compare costs estimates against actual costs</p> <p>Step 2: Develop new system for estimating costs which includes the use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past experience • Professional cost estimating manuals such as R.S. Means and Whitestone • Market Conditions
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 10-14

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Implement a computerized inventory tracking system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Executive director for Operations Services shall meet with the technology director to establish an implementation date for the new software.</p> <p>Step 2: The Executive Director shall report the implementation date to the board.</p> <p>Step 3: The board shall verify that the implementation date is met.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director for Operations; director of Facilities; supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	June 2000 – May 2001
Fiscal Impact	This module is already a component of the TERMS software purchased. Consequently, there is no additional fiscal impact of this recommendation.

Action Plan 10-15

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should provide a budget item for membership in additional trade organizations and subscriptions to additional trade publications that provide current information and procedures.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Director of Facilities should study several trade organizations to determine which would best meet the needs of the district.</p> <p>Step 2: Director of Facilities should study several trade publications to determine which would best meet the needs of the district</p> <p>Step 3: Director of Facilities should prepare a budget item for professional organization membership and subscriptions</p> <p>Step 4: The board should consider the item during the annual budget process.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Supervisor of Maintenance
Time Frame	September – December 1999
Fiscal Impact	Recurring cost of \$2,500.

Action Plan 10-16

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop and track energy efficiency measures to identify possible savings opportunities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop energy measures to be tracked by facility. Each line item of energy or utilities use (in the budget) should be measured on a square foot basis for each school. Additional measures, such as MBTU usage per square foot, by school, should also be calculated.</p> <p>Step 2: Analyze variances among schools and variances over time and identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency.</p> <p>Step 3: Incorporate efficiency measures into overall maintenance performance measures recommended under Best Practice 1.</p> <p>Step 4: Submit energy measures report quarterly to the executive director of Operations</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities
Time Frame	October 1999 – May 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation may result in future energy savings. However, until variances are evaluated, savings cannot be reasonably estimated.

Personnel Systems and Benefits**Action Plan 11-2**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Adopt benchmarks for district salaries.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The board and the superintendent determine what benchmark level, such as a percentile of the market rate of pay, is most appropriate for the district to pay.</p> <p>Step 2: The board presents the benchmarks to union representatives and tries to come to a mutually beneficial agreement that will streamline the salary negotiation process and help the district to budget for salaries.</p> <p>Step 3: The board sets benchmarks for administrative jobs (i.e., those jobs not covered under union salary negotiations).</p>
Who Is Responsible	Board, superintendent, director of Human Resources
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Action Plan 11-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Align performance appraisals to the duties set forth in the job descriptions.
Action Needed	The director of Human Resource Services ensures that all district positions have a current, accurate job description. The director of Human Resource Services ensures that the performance appraisal instrument used for each position can be adapted to reflect the actual duties of the position. If the director for human resource services determines that the current format for the performance appraisal instrument is not adequate, she designs a new performance appraisal instrument. The director of Human Resource Services or her designee trains all supervisors in conducting performance appraisals using the job descriptions and, if appropriate, using updated forms.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resource Services
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 11-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Consider installing a fire sprinkler system in the file room of the Human Resources department.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Facilities develops a project budget for installing a sprinkler system in the file room.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Facilities, in conjunction with the director of purchasing, develops a Requests for Bid to have a sprinkler system installed in the file room.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Facilities and the director of purchasing evaluate incoming proposals and select the vendor who best meets the specifications at the lowest cost.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Facilities oversees the installation and testing of the fire sprinkler system in the file room.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Facilities, director of Purchasing
Time Frame	September 2000
Fiscal Impact	\$1,500 one-time cost (estimated at \$3 per square foot for a 500 square foot room).

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Proceed with a decision on an archiving system for permanent records.
Action Needed	The director of Human Resources formulates a recommendation and plan for archiving permanent records based on available methods and presents it to superintendent and board for decision.
Who is Responsible	Director of Human Resources, superintendent, and board
Time Frame	April 2000

Fiscal Impact	This is an ongoing process that began before our report and needs to be concluded. Cost to the district will vary depending on the option selected.
---------------	---

Action Plan 11-7

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Use market studies and district cost of living indices for adjusting salary scales and cost of living adjustments. The system for determining administrative salaries also should be altered to include, as a minimum, a range of salary per position.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Human Resources surveys peer and area districts annually and report to the board how district salaries should be adjusted to fall in line with the benchmark.</p> <p>Step 2: In accordance with the negotiated agreements with the unions, salaries of employees covered by the unions are adjusted.</p> <p>Step 3: Salaries of administrative employees are adjusted to meet benchmark criteria.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Human Resources, board
Time Frame	May 2000 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	By limiting the rate at which salaries increase annually, the district should be able to avoid future costs of approximately \$1.2 million per year (1½%).
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Reduce benefits to some classes of employees and reduce the retirement package to reduce the cost to the district.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Human Resources develops a proposal for alternatives to reduce benefits and/or the retirement package.</p> <p>Step 2: The board reviews the proposal and makes a determination on the best options.</p> <p>Step 3: The board and the unions come to an agreement on benefits reductions.</p> <p>Step 4: The board makes a determination of how to reduce benefits to employees who are not covered by one of the unions.</p> <p>Step 5: The director for Human Resources implements the agreement between the board and the unions.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Board and director of Human Resources
Time Frame	February 2000 – August 2000
Fiscal Impact	Reducing overall benefits by 3% of salaries would save the district an estimated \$2 million dollars per year.

Cost Control Systems

Action Plan 12-1

Internal Auditing

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	The district should ensure that the internal auditor has received additional technical training in school district operations and current issues in Florida public education.
Action Needed	Provide specific continuing professional education programs to the internal auditor in school district operations and current issues in Florida public school education.
Who Is Responsible	Martin County District School Board
Time Frame	By June 30, 2000
Fiscal Impact	Not determinable at this time.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Restructure the APRC to include a majority of members from outside the school district's operations.
Action Needed	Modification of the internal audit committee charter to establish criteria for selection of committee members and other pertinent requirements, such as term of office, etc.
Who Is Responsible	Martin County District School Board
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The district's internal auditor should develop a documented risk assessment process that would provide information to the APRC to assist the internal auditor in developing long- and short-range audit plans.
Action Needed	Develop an annual internal audit plan (short-range) and a 3- or 5-year (long-range) internal audit plan.
Who Is Responsible	Martin County District School Board
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-2

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Procedures manuals for all financial management activities should be completed.
Action Needed	Step 1: Complete the detailed procedures manual.

	Step 2: Submit the procedures manual to the internal auditor for review.
	Step 3: Submit the procedures manual for board approval.
	Step 4: Distribute the approved manuals to all users.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations and school board
Time Frame	June 2001
How to Evaluate	Issuance of procedures manuals to appropriate personnel
Financial Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-3**Financial Management**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	To provide monthly financial reports to the board in a timely manner.
Action Needed	Follow the district's procedures of providing monthly financial reports to the board.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-5**Financial Management**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Limit access to update personnel records to only those employees in the Human Resources Department and limit access to the inquiry level to those employee that require the information to perform their duties.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Research access granted to employees to the personnel information in the Human Resources applications.</p> <p>Step 2: Restrict access to update personnel records to the Human Resources Department only to those employees in this Department requiring such access to perform their duties.</p> <p>Step 3: For other employees that require access to personnel information to perform their duties, the access should be limited to inquiry only.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Human Resources, director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	To provide for supervisory review and/or independent verification of changes made to the computerized personnel records.
Action Needed	Step 1: Meet with the director of Educational Technology and discuss

	preparing exception reports that document all changes made to the computerized personnel records.
	Step 2: Establish procedures to obtain periodic exception reports documenting all changes made to the computerized personnel records.
	Step 3: Establish procedures to provide for the independent verification of changes in the computerized personnel records to the documents supporting the authorization for the changes.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Human Resources, director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-8

Financial Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Direct access to software codes should be limited to only those ET employees for whom access is required to perform their duties.
Action Needed	Develop procedures to limit the access to software codes to only those employees that require such access to perform their duties. Alternatively, establish procedures to monitor all accesses to software code to determine the appropriateness of the changes made.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	As soon as possible.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	The district should adopt a structured systems development methodology that includes formal definition of requirements and parallel testing.
Action Needed	Development of a structured systems methodology that includes a formal definition of requirements and parallel testing.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent, executive director of Operations, and director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	December 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 3	
Strategy	The Educational Technology Department should document all system operating procedures and controls, as well as system testing and implementation procedures.
Action Needed	Development of operating system procedures manual.
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations and director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	December 1999

Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.
Recommendation 4	
Strategy	Ensure that computer operators are properly supervised for all shifts.
Action Needed	Revise supervisory employees work schedule or change computer operators production schedules.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Educational Technology
Time Frame	As soon as possible.
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-11**Asset Management**

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Provide for the safeguarding of district assets and ensure that property records are accurately maintained.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Finance should develop procedures for reconciling property records to the general ledger control accounts on a periodic basis.</p> <p>Step 2: The supervisor of Accounting and director of Finance should reconcile property records to the general ledger control accounts on a periodic basis.</p> <p>Step 3: The superintendent should propose to the board that the property control specialist be a full-time position reporting to the director of Purchasing and Warehousing.</p> <p>Step 4: The Board should approve the property control specialist position as a full-time position.</p> <p>Step 5: The director of Purchasing and Warehousing, director of Finance, and the director of Personnel and Employee Relations should develop a job description for the property control specialist</p> <p>Step 6: After board approval and development of a job description, the director of Purchasing and Warehousing should hire a full-time property control specialist.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Finance, director of Purchasing and Warehousing, director of Personnel and Employee Relations, superintendent, board.
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	\$25,785 in salaries and benefits.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Provide for the prompt investigation of property items not located during the annual physical counts of fixed assets and hold property custodians accountable for safeguarding of property.
Action Needed	Step 1: The Property Control specialist should identify all property items not located during the annual physical inventory counts.

	<p>Step 2: The Property Control specialist should investigate all items not located and should report all missing property items to the Director of Purchasing and Warehousing, Director of Finance, and the appropriate law enforcement agency.</p> <p>Step 3: The Property Control Specialist should prepare a detailed list of all property items not located by school or department and should present the listing to each property custodian and the Director of Purchasing and Warehousing for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 4: The Executive Director of Operations should submit the listings of property items not located to Board for review and approval.</p> <p>Step 5: After approval by the Board, the property items should be removed from the active property records.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations, director of Finance, director of Purchasing and Warehousing, Property custodians, and the Property Control specialist
Time Frame	September 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Action Plan 12-13

Risk Management

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop procedures to verify premiums for health insurance coverage and to provide for testing the validity of claim payments through the district's revolving account.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Risk Management and the director of Finance should draft procedures to verify premiums for health insurance coverage.</p> <p>Step 2: The superintendent should approve the new procedures after any necessary revisions.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Finance and his staff should verify premiums for health insurance coverage on an annual basis.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Risk Management, director of Finance, superintendent
Time Frame	October 1999
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Student Transportation

Action Plan 13-1

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Request Laidlaw to allocate and report costs by important performance categories, for example separating the cost of maintaining the white fleet from the maintenance costs for school buses. This will enable the district to evaluate present costs as well as build baselines for future comparisons.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify the following required indicators for cost comparisons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School bus vehicle maintenance costs. • White fleet vehicle maintenance costs • Miles operated by vehicle • Labor hours for inspection and maintenance by vehicle • Gallons of fuel used by vehicle <p>Step 2: Discuss with Laidlaw the format and frequency for the cost reports.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operation Services and Finance director
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Ensure that internal accounting systems record and report the district's continuing costs for transportation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify departments that continue to incur expenses</p> <p>Step 2: Modify accounting systems as necessary to allocate transportation related expenses</p> <p>Step 3: Implement necessary reporting systems to gather data (hours worked, for example) required to record and report the applicable expenses.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Finance director
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources

Action Plan 13-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Review the information maintained by Laidlaw and adopt performance indicators and benchmarks, such as those included in Exhibit 13-13, that the district will use to monitor the contractor's performance. Adopt cost comparison and other performance benchmarks for student transportation operations, for vehicle maintenance for school buses and for the white fleet, and establish baselines for comparison of historical costs and costs under privatization.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Determine which indicators will be reported.</p> <p>Step 2: Define benchmarks or performance expectations using past district performance and performance of peer districts</p> <p>Step 3: Identify source data and ensure that is collected consistently</p> <p>Step 4: Establish baseline or starting point from which future performance will be measured</p> <p>Step 5: Discuss with Laidlaw the format and frequency for the performance reports.</p> <p>Step 6: Include performance information such as on-time performance, accidents per 100,000 miles, in-service breakdowns per 100,000 miles, cost per mile, cost per student rider, number of courtesy trips, etc.</p> <p>Step 7: Agree upon the methodology for collecting and reporting performance data.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Executive director of Operations Services or see Action Plan 13-3
Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	Within existing resources

Food Service Operations

Action Plan 14-2

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Install point-of-sale registers at all sale locations to allow students to buy reimbursable meals and snacks using their pre-paid accounts.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services works with the vendor to resolve software problems that have held up the installation of point-of-sale registers at all locations.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services proceeds with procurement of computers for remaining point-of-sale locations.</p> <p>Step 3: The vendor installs the software at all point-of-sale locations, including on the new terminals.</p> <p>Step 4: The managers receive training on the new software.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services
Time Frame	February 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within planned budget.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Develop a formal process for obtaining input from students and parents about the food service program at each school.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services works with the Food Service managers and principals of several schools to brainstorm ideas about how to formally include input from students and parents in Food Service department decisions. Consideration should be given to establishing food advisory committees composed of students at the schools, distributing formal surveys to students</p>

	and parents, conducting additional nutritional information classes, and developing a requirement for conducting student taste tests in the menu development process.
	Step 2: The director of Food Services includes agreed-upon approaches in an update to the procedures manual.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers, principals
Time Frame	November 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 14-4

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Increase participation in those schools not meeting the benchmark indicator for overall and free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch participation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services implements strategies outlined in other recommendations of this chapter to improve the image of school food services and to encourage increased participation in the school lunch program.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services analyzes the results of surveys, taste tests, and advisory committees to improve service and quality and increase participation.</p> <p>Step 3: The Food Service managers work with the students, teachers, and principals at their schools to develop a culture in which “it’s cool to eat in school.”</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, Food Service managers
Time Frame	December 2000
Fiscal Impact	Increasing participation can increase the number of meals served per labor hour and could save the district an estimated \$22,327 per year if achieved in conjunction with a \$0.25 increase in meal prices at the elementary and middle school levels. If the district does not raise meal prices, increasing participation could result in an annual cost of approximately \$95,000 since the cost of food and labor would be greater than the amount being recouped.

Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Use actual food and labor costs to determine meal cost data, and revise meal prices as necessary to ensure the district is operating on a break-even basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services installs the recipe and inventory components of CAFS.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services or her designee enters all recipes used into CAFS and ensures that food costs are entered for each item.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Food Services calculates the average food cost of a meal.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services calculates the average labor cost of a meal.</p> <p>Step 5: The director of Food Services works with the school board to adjust breakfast and lunch prices, if appropriate.</p>

Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, school board
Time Frame	October 1999 and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	\$113,752 annually. This estimate is based on current estimated food and labor costs less the federal reimbursement, assumes that participation rates among paying students remains constant, and assumes that the meal price for high school students remains \$1.75; the meal price for middle school students is raised to \$1.75, and the meal price for elementary students is raised to \$1.50.

Action Plan 14-5

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Conduct an assessment of the costs and benefits of contracting out the Food Service Department in 2000 and at least every three subsequent years.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Purchasing develops a request for proposals to outsource food services.</p> <p>Step 2: Private companies and the Martin County Food Service Department are invited to submit bids.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Purchasing establishes a proposal review committee to evaluate all proposals received.</p> <p>Step 4: A three-year contract is awarded to the successful bidder.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Purchasing
Time Frame	April 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.
Recommendation 2	
Strategy	Conduct an evaluation of the service provided to the Dizzy Gillespie School for Performing Arts and any other optional services to ensure that it is fiscally and operationally responsible to have this satellite program in place.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services collects information on the food and labor costs of providing meals to the Dizzy Gillespie School for Performing Arts and any other optional services.</p> <p>Step 2: The director of Food Services conducts a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether the district is losing money by operating optional food service.</p> <p>Step 3: If optional food services are found to be not cost effective the director of Food Services works with the executive director of Business Operations to arrange a contract that will cover Martin County's costs. Alternatively, the executive director of Business Operations and the Superintendent should cancel the agreement with the Dizzy Gillespie School for Performing Arts.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services maintains data on unit costs in order to calculate of costs and benefits for any satellite operation to allow preliminary and follow-up cost/benefit analysis of any other satellite programs.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services, executive director of Business Operations, Superintendent

Time Frame	January 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 14-6

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Tie budget projections to departmental goals, revenue, and expenditure projections based on current participation rates and on updated expenditure and revenue data.
Action Needed	The director of Food Services develops future year budgets based on current participation rates and on updated expenditure and revenue data.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Services
Time Frame	2000 budget cycle and ongoing
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Action Plan 14-9

Recommendation 1	
Strategy	Develop a preventive maintenance program for Food Service equipment.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: The director of Food Services, cafeteria managers, and a district maintenance staff representative develop a list of all equipment, maintenance needs, and frequency, by location.</p> <p>Step 2: The district's maintenance department determines in-house capabilities and cost for each item on the food service preventive maintenance list.</p> <p>Step 3: The director of Food Services and the district procurement staff develop a Request for Proposal for preventive maintenance of food service equipment.</p> <p>Step 4: The director of Food Services meets with the procurement staff, maintenance staff to determine the most feasible and cost-effective method of creating a long-term preventive maintenance program.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Food Service, Food Service managers, director of Procurement, and district supervisor of Maintenance.
Time Frame	June 2000
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation should pay for itself in the long-term through reduced equipment repairs and replacement.