

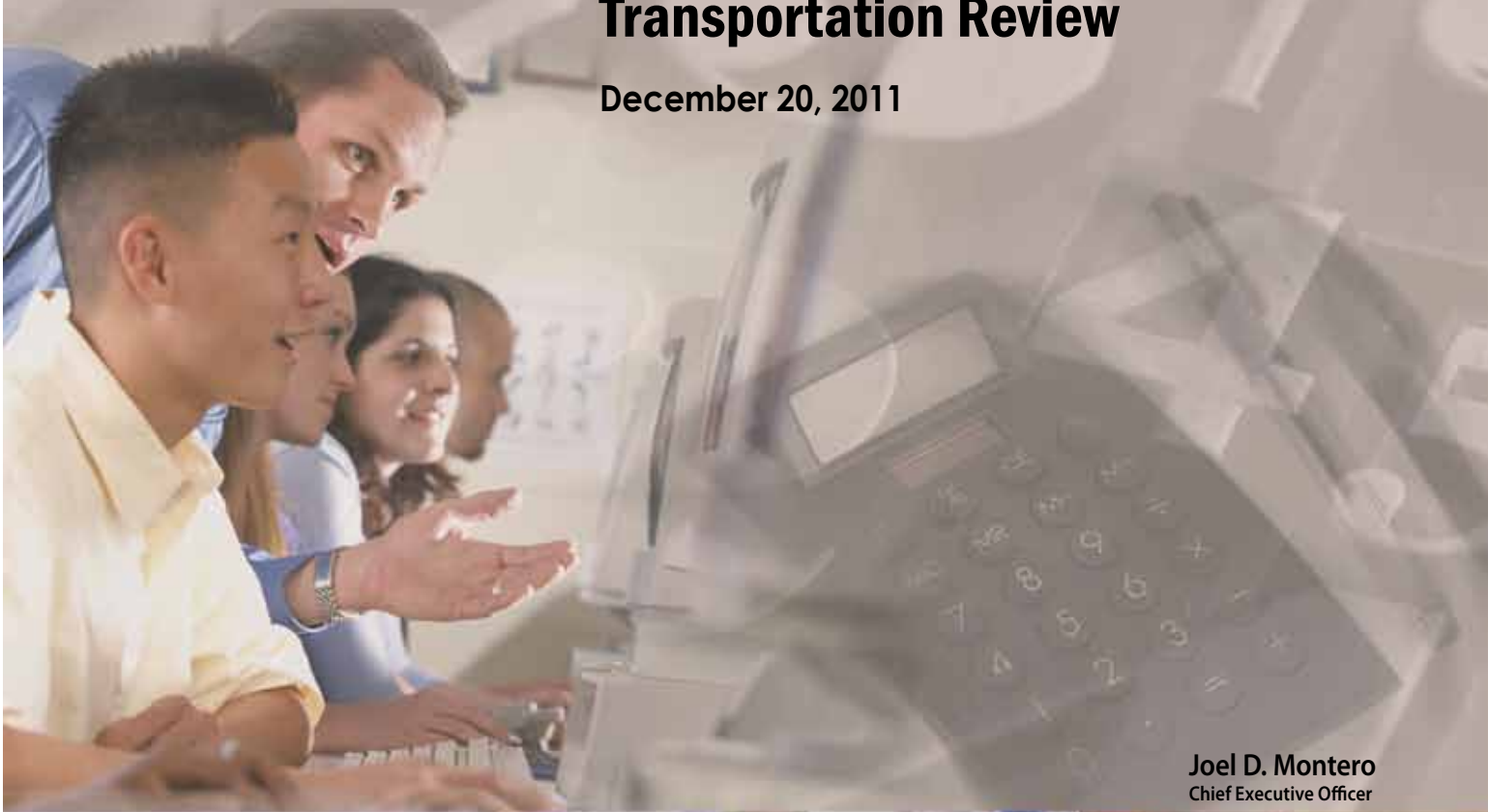


CSIS California School Information Services

Capistrano Unified School District

Transportation Review

December 20, 2011



Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer







CSIS California School Information Services

December 20, 2011

Joseph M. Farley, Ed.D., Superintendent
Capistrano Unified School District
33122 Valle Road
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Dear Superintendent Farley,

In August 2011, the Capistrano Unified School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a transportation review. Specifically, the agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Evaluate the transportation department's dispatch operation and methodology including driver route directions and its integration with routing/planning and provide recommendations regarding best practices to improve the operational efficiency.
2. Review the existing management organizational structure with a specific focus in the areas of safety and training while performing the daily operational duties and requirements of the department and provide recommendations.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations in the above areas of review. We appreciate the opportunity to serve the Capistrano Unified School District, and extend our thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,

Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer

FCMAT

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

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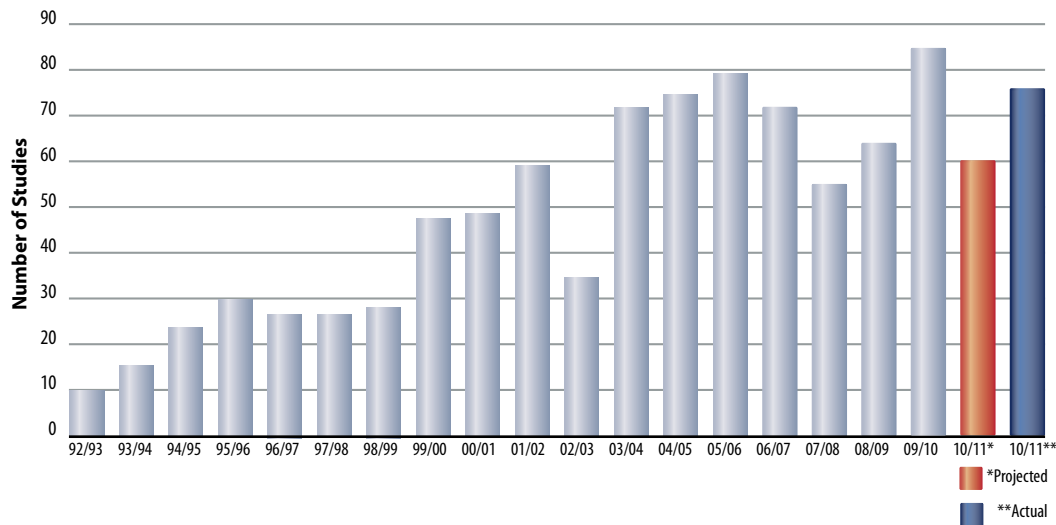
About FCMAT

FCMAT’s primary mission is to assist California’s local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related school business and data services. FCMAT’s fiscal and management assistance services are used not just to help avert fiscal crisis, but to promote sound financial practices and efficient operations. FCMAT’s data management services are used to help local educational agencies (LEAs) meet state reporting responsibilities, improve data quality, and share information.

FCMAT may be requested to provide fiscal crisis or management assistance by a school district, charter school, community college, county office of education, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Legislature.

When a request or assignment is received, FCMAT assembles a study team that works closely with the local education agency to define the scope of work, conduct on-site fieldwork and provide a written report with findings and recommendations to help resolve issues, overcome challenges and plan for the future.

Studies by Fiscal Year



FCMAT also develops and provides numerous publications, software tools, workshops and professional development opportunities to help local educational agencies operate more effectively and fulfill their fiscal oversight and data management responsibilities. The California School Information Services (CSIS) arm of FCMAT assists the California Department of Education with the implementation of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) and also maintains DataGate, the FCMAT/CSIS software LEAs use for CSIS services. FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill 1200 in 1992 to assist LEAs to meet and sustain their financial obligations. Assembly Bill 107 in 1997 charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its statewide data management work. Assembly Bill 1115 in 1999 codified CSIS’ mission.

AB 1200 is also a statewide plan for county office of education and school districts to work together locally to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. Assembly Bill 2756 (2004) provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans.

In January 2006, SB 430 (charter schools) and AB 1366 (community colleges) became law and expanded FCMAT's services to those types of LEAs.

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform nearly 850 reviews for LEAs, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The team is led by Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer, with funding derived through appropriations in the state budget and a modest fee schedule for charges to requesting agencies.

Introduction

Background

The Capistrano Unified School District is located in southwestern Orange County, bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the San Diego County line to the south. The district has an enrollment of approximately 53,000 students. It was founded in 1965 and today encompasses approximately 195 square miles, serving seven cities and a portion of unincorporated Orange County. The district has 56 campus sites and is the largest employer in southern Orange County, with more than 4,000 certificated and classified support staff.

The district's campuses consist of 34 elementary schools, two K-8 schools, 10 middle schools, six comprehensive high schools, one alternative education high school, one adult school, two exceptional needs schools and one independent study high school.

Study Guidelines

In August 2011, the district entered into a study agreement with the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) that requested FCMAT to perform the following:

1. Evaluate the transportation department's dispatch operation and methodology including driver route directions and its integration with routing/planning, and provide recommendations regarding best practices to improve the operational efficiency.
2. Review the existing management organizational structure with a specific focus in the areas of safety and training while performing the daily operational duties and requirements of the department, and provide recommendations.

FCMAT visited the district on September 28-30, 2011 to conduct interviews with district staff, collect data, review documents and inspect facilities. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- Organizational Structure and Staffing
- Routing
- Driver Training
- Communications

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

John F. Von Flue

FCMAT Fiscal Intervention Specialist

Bakersfield, California

Tim Purvis*

Director of Transportation

Poway Unified School District

Poway, California

Michael Rea*

Executive Director

West County Transportation Agency

Santa Rosa, California

Laura Haywood

FCMAT Technical Writer

Bakersfield, California

*As members of this study team, these consultants were not representing their respective employers but were working solely as independent contractors for FCMAT.

Executive Summary

The district operates 21 regular education home-to-school bus routes, with three of the routes dedicated to transporting students who attend schools in Program Improvement (PI) status under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). According to the 2010-11 unaudited actuals Annual Report of Pupil Transportation Home-to-School and Severely Disabled/Orthopedically Impaired (Form TRAN), 2,680 students are transported. The district also operates 58 special education routes for approximately 731 students identified as requiring transportation support on their individual education program (IEP), per the 2010-11 state TRAN report. The district added a special education route for the 2011-12 school year. Based on the TRAN report data, the district operates a student per bus ratio of approximately 12.6 on its special education buses and approximately 63.8 on its home-to-school buses.

The district has implemented two industry-accepted pupil transportation routing systems in the last 10 years. Routing was not fully implemented with the first software, most likely a result of internal leadership transition and lack of transportation staff knowledge and buy-in. Vendor staff introduced the software and did not support interaction with transportation planning, dispatch and leadership staff. The software was replaced shortly after the current transportation director joined the district. The current software is suitable for the district and its routing needs but is not being utilized to its fullest potential. Multiple personnel in the transportation department handle the steps required to design routes or place students. The routing package is only used to generate a face sheet and does not generate driver directions. In addition, the bus run/route creation process (assigning students to individual schools) is not optimized.

The transportation department is more than adequately staffed, in part because of service level reductions in the home-to-school program. In the last three years well over half of the district's school bus routes have been eliminated, specifically affecting the non-mandated home-to-school transportation support. Prior years of higher student enrollment and related district transportation services growth resulted in a large supervisory structure to oversee and provide support to a very large driving staff. Reduced transportation service levels in its home-to-school routing have resulted in an unsuccessful attempt to merge the responsibilities of the safety and training functions and leadership with the daily operations needs and support of drivers.

The process of assigning a special education student to a bus route and communicating the assignment to both dispatch and the driver can take as long as 10 to 15 days. The district fully separates its route planning from the route design, which is also separated from implementation of the new stop, run or route managed by the district's dispatch team. As a result, the employees who design and add students to school bus runs and routes may not be vested in the viability of the changes.

Safety and training functions are commingled with daily operations supervision. As a result, required safety and training functions are adversely affected. Safety and training is integral to any successful pupil transportation program and should be identified as a separate component of any transportation operations structure. It is very difficult for supervisors to balance competing roles as daily operations leaders and as safety and training technicians.

The dispatch staff is not involved with the planning and routing methodology used by both the planning staff and operations leadership. Documentation reviewed suggested that routing sheets sometimes do not meet real-time demands or maximize efficiency. In a school transportation department, the dispatch team is generally most familiar with practical and efficient design and routing. They are typically the most familiar with specific driver routes and challenges faced by

drivers involving traffic patterns, volume and equipment needs. The district should consider merging its planning and dispatch functions to ensure continuity from the point a transportation request is communicated to the department to the point that service is implemented.

The district's transportation department has experienced dramatic growth, followed by significant downsizing. The resulting organizational structure has led to less than effective communications among operations managers, supervisors, and staff. Interviews suggested that decision-making is channeled through only one or two sources, and the operations environment does not allow for shared decision-making. As a result, decision-making and authorization delay creates a difficult environment for dispatch and planning.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

The Capistrano Unified School District has a large transportation department operating approximately 80 daily home-to-school and special education school bus routes. The district transports approximately 3,411 students according to district source data and the 2010-11 unaudited actuals Annual Report of Pupil Transportation for Home-to-School and Severely Disabled/Orthopedically Impaired (Form TRAN). The staff schedules or contracts transportation for over 3,500 extracurricular and field trips annually. In addition, the transportation program has a large district fleet of school buses and other support vehicles to maintain.

With the recent reduction in home-to-school transportation routes, the district's transportation department is housed and dispatched at a large, modern transportation terminal in Aliso Viejo. However, some of the district's vehicles that are not used on a daily basis are housed at the old transportation facility.

According to interviews and transportation department source documents reviewed by FCMAT, the district added one additional special education route for the 2011-12 school year. Based on the state TRAN report data, the district operates above the statewide ratio of 11.78 students per special education bus, with an approximate 12.6 ridership ratio and under the statewide average of 72.8 students per home-to-school bus with a 63.8 ridership ratio. The statewide averages are based on districts across the state transporting in very rural, suburban, and urban localities; therefore, variances should be taken into account when comparing this data. Overall, the district's student load ratios are good in comparison to the statewide average and relative to similar districts reviewed.

The transportation department is more than adequately staffed as compared to similar-size programs. The department has one manager of transportation operations, one supervisor I (state certified instructor), one supervisor III (state certified instructor and safety and training supervisor), one supervisor IV (safety and training), and one supervisor V (vehicle maintenance/dispatch supervisor) with shared supervisory responsibilities for the vehicle maintenance program and the dispatch staff.

The manager of transportation operations supervises the supervisors I, III, and IV, and the dispatch portion of the supervisor V. Most supervision time is dedicated to daily route discussion and development of data provided by the planning staff as well as typical supervision issues arising from a staff of over 80 drivers, substitute drivers, and technical and clerical support staff. Interviews of staff in various positions indicate that most decisions regarding daily activities are made by the transportation manager. The dispatch supervisor does not address questions arising from the dispatch area that should be routine for the position; nor are the individual dispatchers permitted to make specific decisions such as authorizing overtime in response to exceptional routing needs.

The supervisor IV oversees all safety and training program responsibilities, handles all staff requests for coverage of vacations and illness, and shares the duty of reconciling the drivers' daily time reports. The supervisor IV works with the transportation manager to develop bus routes and manages the required Department of Transportation pre-employment and random substance and alcohol testing program. Both the supervisor IV and supervisor III split the driver staff by alphabet for supervision of over 80 drivers and substitute drivers. With the multitude of responsibilities, the supervisor IV cannot adequately plan and supervise the necessary original and renewal safety and training courses required annually for a staff of that size.

The supervisor III has primary responsibility for evaluating and training the driving staff but finds it overwhelming to conduct daily supervision of half of the drivers. Solving routing issues for the drivers takes several hours daily. The supervisor III does not have sufficient time to perform regular, necessary driver ride-alongs to ensure routes are performed as designed, safely, and by state and district standards.

The supervisor I position was designed to assist with the original and renewal class training, ride-alongs, and mandated Title 13 documentation of drivers' training and proficiency training time records. Other duties include maintaining records for the annual terminal inspection by the California Highway Patrol Motor Carrier and maintaining and reviewing the Department of Motor Vehicles' pull notices (a record of the district's driving history). However, much of the supervisor I's time is spent addressing the distribution of bus keys, handing out department change of assignment forms, and securing the signature of drivers accepting a change of assignment. In addition, the supervisor I devotes approximately 45 minutes to 1.5 hours each day to daily operations meetings and helping to formulate bus routes.

The vehicle maintenance supervisor (supervisor V) also is assigned to supervise the district's dispatchers. This supervisor dedicates the majority of the workday to supervising the dispatchers and dispatch area. The vehicle maintenance supervisor is working to become acquainted with the specific responsibilities of dispatch, but is not yet highly competent in this area. Therefore, the transportation manager dedicates substantial time to daily routine dispatch decisions and work flow. The dispatch team's ability to make immediate, routine decisions regarding daily routing challenges is greatly hampered by the need to obtain approval from the transportation manager. This is frustrating for both the dispatch team and the drivers.

The supervisor V spends less than half the workday managing the district's fleet maintenance operations. Interviews and field work observations showed that over 20% of the primary fleet was out of service due to the need for maintenance attention. Most of the out-of-service fleet needed major repairs, while approximately seven vehicles were out for routine inspections. Having such a significant number of the fleet out of service challenges the department to dispatch in alternative ways, requires drivers to use backup equipment, and brings into question whether the vehicle maintenance operation receives sufficient attention.

Review of the district's bus route development shows a lack of continuity between the planning and the daily dispatch functions. The planners work in isolation from the dispatchers, with no coordinated effort between the two sections of the department. As a result, the dispatchers do not have confidence that routing schedules developed by the planners will work. Specifically, a great deal of effort is put into modified (minimum day) schedules that do not work, and the dispatchers end up rearranging or covering routes on the spot. In most successful transportation operations, the dispatching and route creation or planning functions are combined. Dispatch or scheduling staff are vested in the design of the route because they are involved in its implementation.

With the exception of very large transportation programs, it is unusual to see student assignment and route development completely separated from daily dispatch or oversight of the daily route. Numerous examples were found of routing sheets depicting incorrect, challenging, or unachievable student pick-up times. Some scheduled times for driver check-in and delivering students to school do not allow sufficient time for bus pre-trip inspection and travel to the first stop. As a result, both dispatchers and drivers are highly frustrated because they frequently run late or find that routing time frames cannot be met. FCMAT believes that much of this confusion is the result of separating the planning and dispatch duties, combined with having the supervisory staff place the bus runs onto routes.

Department staffing is generous and is not designed to ensure efficient daily operations. Both the current and suggested staffing configurations are identified below:

Current and Suggested Operations Staffing

Current	Suggested
I Executive Director, MOT	I Executive Director, Transportation
I Manager, Trans. Operations	I Manager, Trans. Operations
I Supervisor V-Vehicle Maint. and Dispatch	*I Supervisor -Vehicle Maintenance
I Supervisor IV-Safety and Training	*I Supervisor -Trans. Operations
I Supervisor III-Safety and Training	*I Supervisor -Trans. Safety and Training
I Supervisor I	*2 Trans. Safety and Training Instructors (Supervisor Position)
	*4 Schedulers I-w/concentration in HTS routing I-w/concentration in sp. ed. routing I-w/concentration in field trips I-general
4 Dispatchers	
2 Planners	
I Parent Fee Clerk	I Parent Fee Clerk
I Senior Staff Secretary	I Senior Staff Secretary
Total Current Staff = 14	Total Suggested Staffing = 13

*Recommended newly classified position

Transportation operations are lacking clearly documented and articulated operating procedures. Staff members, especially in a large operation, need to be able to refer to specific job and position responsibilities and to clearly understand lines of communication and protocol.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Reorganize its transportation operations supervisory staff to reflect specific operations or safety and training oversight responsibilities, with a minimum of two operations supervisors to oversee dispatcher/scheduling personnel and safety and training.
2. Consider merging the planning and dispatch functions and creating transportation schedulers that both develop routing and dispatch daily routes, with specific position duties such as home-to-school, special education and field trip assignments.
3. Reassign the supervisor V to the full oversight of district vehicle maintenance.
4. Create position-specific operational procedures for all areas in the operations section of transportation.

Routing

Data on the state TRAN reports provided to FCMAT for fiscal years 2009-10 and 2010-11 matches the district's source data. Both reports show 21 home-to-school routes; however, there is a decline in home-to-school ridership of over 700 students between the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years. The 2009-10 TRAN report shows that the district operated 59 special education routes. The 2010-11 report shows the reduction of one route and a reduction of approximately 10 students transported on special education routes. Current district source data shows that one special education route was added this school year. It is not unusual for special education routes to fluctuate frequently to meet specific student needs and program locations.

District data shows that approximately 3,411 students are transported daily. Approximately 2,680 are home-to-school regular education students and 731 are special education students approved for transportation as a required service on their individualized education program (IEP). The district's student load ratios are above the state average on special education bus routes and at efficient levels on home-to-school routes. According to staff interviews, some special education students have long ride times as a result. Additionally, the higher load ratios and longer ride times create a challenge for drivers on some routes, with students requiring extra supervision, needing additional care in loading and unloading and needing assistance with wheelchairs, safety vests or car seats. For these reasons, special education bus routes commonly operate at a lower capacity than other routes and are based on acceptable ride times. For Capistrano USD, a suburban school district with dense population centers, acceptable ride times would generally be between 45 minutes and one hour for students attending district program locations, and may be slightly longer for students attending programs outside the district boundaries.

The district has implemented two industry accepted pupil transportation routing systems in the last ten years. Routing was not fully implemented with the first software, mostly likely a result of internal leadership transition and lack of district transportation staff knowledge and buy-in. The software was introduced by vendor staff that did not interact with transportation planning, dispatch and leadership staff. Its implementation was terminated shortly after the current director joined the district.

The current software (TransTraks) meets the district's routing needs but is not utilized to its fullest potential. Multiple employees handle the steps required to route students or place designed bus runs onto routes, and the process is cumbersome. The planners must enter student-specific data twice: first manually typing all the information into TransTraks and then again to utilize the MapPoint software program to identify student addresses and logical routing. The data attained through MapPoint must then be input into TransTraks. Because the routing software is not utilized to actually route the student, the route directions function cannot be used. As a result, the planning staff only uses the TransTraks routing software to input the student information and create a route face sheet. Driver directions commonly referred to as "lefts and rights" are not generated by the routing package, and bus runs (students assigned to individual schools) are not optimized and assigned to established bus routes. Students who have been assigned to bus runs must then be placed onto a bus route by the transportation manager and supervisors. Once this process is completed, the route configuration is handed over to the dispatchers for implementation.

FCMAT found numerous occurrences of inefficient and ineffective routing and dispatching. Several bus routes provided insufficient drive times between stops and schools, and also between driver check-in, pre-trip bus inspection and arrival time to the first stop. Further complicating

the process is the practice of creating driver-specific modified day schedules, which occur whenever the schools' start and end bell times are altered and necessitate changes to bus drop-off and pickup times. Although it would be expected that not all staff can alter their schedules within a modified day schedule without conflict, many can. In an attempt to control costs, great effort is made by the transportation management to ensure that no overtime is incurred as a result of a modified day schedule. Although operational cost efficiency is desirable and the absence of overtime is intended to reduce operational expense, the net effect may be a loss of total service efficiency and confusion among the drivers.

Too much time is taken to route new students needing transportation as a related service through their IEP, with delays of 10-15 days reported to FCMAT. The procedures used by the planning staff consume a substantial amount of time before the supervisory staff can assign new students to a route.

District drivers and dispatchers lack the confidence that the routing sheets will ensure a timely delivery system. A tremendous lack of communication and confidence exists between everyone involved in trying to produce the most efficient routing. Dispatching staff typically are the most astute route managers in an effective transportation program. This knowledge is gained by the daily practice of interacting with the drivers who actually drive the route, including processing driver feedback regarding specific route timing and nuances. Traffic patterns and volumes differ greatly throughout the day, and the familiarity of drivers and dispatchers with these fluctuations can yield extremely valuable feedback and data for creating school bus routes. Therefore, staff who work both in route development and deployment produce the greatest routing efficiency.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Merge the planning and dispatch functions into a single position of scheduler, ensuring a sufficient number of schedulers to support the district's 80 school bus routes and more than 3,500 field trips annually.
2. Provide sufficient training for all operations personnel who work with the TransTraks routing software.
3. Utilize the full routing capability of TransTraks, to ensure greatest efficiency of use and reduce student ride times.
4. Complete student routing within 10 days of receiving the transportation request.
5. Review student load and ride times to ensure an acceptable ride and delivery schedule.

Driver Training

The Transportation Department supports the training needs of over 80 district school bus drivers and substitute drivers without staff that are solely assigned to training functions. Although the district employs three state-certified school bus instructors, all three are assigned supervisory roles in daily operations along with safety and training program responsibilities. The operations supervisors I, III and IV all share in operations duties, with two of the three highly involved in the direct supervision of the driving staff. All three supervisors are heavily involved in developing school bus routes along with the manager of transportation operations. While all three of these supervisors have “safety and training” or “certified instructor” in their title, none of the three is solely assigned to the district’s safety and training program. The supervisors and staff expressed frustration with the lack of commitment to the necessary time and effort needed for an effective safety and training program.

Staff at all levels indicated that the district’s safety and training program is insufficient and lacks dedicated leadership. Typically, programs with more than 75 drivers provide a dedicated supervisor to oversee safety and training. A program of this size requires at least two full-time safety and training instructors to support driver training needs, driver record maintenance, renewals and classroom instruction along with regularly scheduled safety in-service programs. Duties such as the maintenance and monitoring of the DMV Pull Notice process and the district’s pre-employment and random substance and alcohol testing program, which are currently performed by the operations supervisors, would transfer to a supervisor of safety and training.

The district eliminated its monthly in-service programs that provided drivers with their required 10 hours of annual training. Instead, an annual program prior to the start of school was designed to provide all mandatory training time. Most recently, every other month in-service programs have been instituted. However, instructors do not feel they are given sufficient time to properly prepare programs specific to drivers’ needs. Driving staff may not effectively absorb the necessary industry safety and update information offered in annual or sporadic in-service programs, nor does this approach make safety and training a district priority. Ongoing training throughout the course of the school year would be optimal.

Supervisors cannot adequately perform driver ride-alongs to ensure legal requirements are met, district procedures are followed, drivers adhere to proper driving habits, and school bus stops are adequate. The California Department of Education recommends and partially funds the certification of up to one state-certified instructor per 25 school bus drivers on staff in a school district. Although this ratio is not strictly adhered to in all school district transportation operations, the industry norm would suggest two to three active instructors for the Capistrano USD transportation department for the number of drivers currently on staff. Some transportation programs will assign multiple school bus instructors to other related transportation work functions, but they remain active instructors who aid drivers with certifications, training, records maintenance, renewal training, and behind-the-wheel instruction. Maintaining the necessary records is a large and time-consuming responsibility. Department supervisors who are assigned routine transportation operations workloads and staff oversight cannot also fulfill the necessary required training needs for a staff of over 80 regular and substitute school bus drivers.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Reassign a transportation supervisor to oversee the safety and training program.
2. Consider dedicating two full-time safety and training instructors, under the supervision of a safety and training supervisor, to manage the district's driver training needs and in-service programs and maintain related records.
3. Reassign all safety and training functions from the operations supervisor to a safety and training supervisor, such as the district's pre-employment and random substance and alcohol program for staff, required annual school bus evacuation drills and management of district personnel driving records under the DMV Pull Notice system.

Communications

Lines of communication between administrative/supervisory staff and driving staff are strained. Staff interviewed by FCMAT spoke in terms of “them” and “us,” which indicates a strong sense of alienation by drivers and all levels of the operations support team. Staff in various department positions identified and corroborated the communications concerns. The administrative team needs to improve their visibility and connection to staff. Being accessible to listen to concerns, provide direction, and interact with staff is an important function of any successful administration.

The district had grown substantially over several years, resulting in the growth of the transportation department and the addition of drivers and support personnel. However, due to fiscal pressures, the district is now tasked with the need to downsize its home-to-school transportation routes and re-evaluate its operations staffing configuration to best support the needs of its drivers, students, parents and school site staffs. With a greater emphasis on special education routing and parent support, the challenge is for the department to adjust to an operations support team that can best meet the needs of a smaller, reoriented operation.

It is clear that drivers desire to perform well and want to be supported. The operations support staff wants to better support drivers and provide an improved and timelier delivery system for students. However, a cohesive plan for building a strong operations team is missing, and FCMAT did not find any type of team building efforts being undertaken in the department. Individual operations team members commented on the lack of communication among themselves. Essential communication between critical staff involved in routing is not evident. Dispatch team members lack confidence in their ability to make immediate and necessary decisions to support the events that affect drivers on the road, and in some cases these decisions are prohibited. Operations supervisors are frustrated by their inability to address and carry out the responsibilities of their positions because they are overwhelmed with both traditional operations duties and supervision along with the duties usually performed by safety and training supervisors and instructors. The transportation manager cannot effectively step away from the routine daily operations responsibilities long enough to interact with the driving staff, ride routes, and work with the executive director on department planning and communications.

The transportation department should provide the training necessary to allow and trust employees to take responsibility for their defined job tasks and create an environment that fosters employee involvement. Supervisors and technical staff should be given appropriate authority for decisions based on their technical capabilities. Operational processes should only be implemented if they measurably improve the student delivery system. Decision-making may greatly benefit by being less rigid, allowing for staff participation in decisions and constructive criticisms of current processes that may not be working effectively or can be improved. A concerted effort by all supervision and operations technical support staff to be more open to suggestion and interaction may help considerably to reduce the current high level of frustration and feeling of not being supported. The executive director, manager of transportation operations, and supervisors should lead efforts to build a cohesive transportation department. The drivers and mechanics should be encouraged to participate in the efforts of ongoing department improvement. Team building exercises, problem solving sessions, and accessibility of management should facilitate staff involvement.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Streamline its transportation operations to allow for an improved delivery system for special education student routing and better defined supervisory roles, with specific emphasis given to operations, safety and training and the merged responsibilities of route planning and dispatch.
2. Promote better transportation department morale through team-building exercises involving all department employees.
3. Involve the staff in decision-making to create a more effective and timely student delivery system.
4. Foster a less rigid chain of authority, allowing some operational decisions to be made by those closest to the issue in route planning and daily dispatching assignments.

Appendices

Appendix A - Study Agreement



CSIS California School Information Services

**FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
STUDY AGREEMENT
August 15, 2011**

The FISCAL CRISIS AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the Team, and the Capistrano Unified School District, hereinafter referred to as the District, mutually agree as follows:

1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

The Team provides a variety of services to school districts and county offices of education upon request. The District has requested that the Team provide for the assignment of professionals to study specific aspects of the Capistrano Unified School District operations. These professionals may include staff of the Team, County Offices of Education, the California State Department of Education, school districts, or private contractors. All work shall be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

In keeping with the provisions of AB1200, the County Superintendent will be notified of this agreement between the District and FCMAT and will receive a copy of the final report. The final report will be published on the FCMAT website.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

The scope and objectives of this study are to:

The District is requesting the FCMAT Team to conduct a review of the Home to School and Special Education Transportation program and provide recommendations for best practices for the following components:

1. Evaluate the transportation department's dispatch operation and methodology including driver route directions and its integration with routing/planning and provide recommendations regarding best practices to improve the operational efficiency.

2. Review the existing management organizational structure with a specific focus in the areas of safety and training while performing the daily operational duties and requirements of the department and provide recommendations.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

Orientation Meeting - The Team will conduct an orientation session at the School District to brief District management and supervisory personnel on the procedures of the Team and on the purpose and schedule of the study.

On-site Review - The Team will conduct an on-site review at the District office and at school sites if necessary.

1. Exit Report - The Team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the on-site review to inform the District of significant findings and recommendations to that point.
2. Exit Letter - The Team will issue an exit letter approximately 10 days after the exit meeting detailing significant findings and recommendations to date and memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
3. Draft Reports - Sufficient copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the District administration for review and comment.
4. Final Report - Sufficient copies of the final study report will be delivered to the District administration following completion of the review.
5. Follow-Up Support – Six months after the completion of the study, FCMAT will return to the District, if requested, to confirm the District’s progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report, at no cost. Status of the recommendations will be documented to the District in a FCMAT Management Letter.

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The study team will be supervised by Anthony L. Bridges, CFE, Deputy Executive Officer, Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. The study team may also include:

- A. *John F. Von Flue*
- B. *Timothy Purvis*
- C. *Michael Rea*

- FCMAT Fiscal Intervention Specialist*
- FCMAT Consultant*
- FCMAT Consultant*

Other equally qualified consultants will be substituted in the event one of the above noted individuals is unable to participate in the study.

4. **PROJECT COSTS**

The cost for studies requested pursuant to E.C. 42127.8(d)(1) shall be:

- A. \$500.00 per day for each Team Member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, preparing and presenting reports, or participating in meetings.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals, lodging, etc. The District will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon acceptance of the final report by the District.

Based on the elements noted in section 2 A, the total cost of the study is estimated at \$11,500.

- C. Any change to the scope will affect the estimate of total cost.

Payments for FCMAT services are payable to Kern County Superintendent of Schools - Administrative Agent.

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT**

- A. The District will provide office and conference room space while on-site reviews are in progress.
- B. The District will provide the following (if requested):
 - 1. A map of the local area
 - 2. Existing policies, regulations and prior reports addressing the study request
 - 3. Current or proposed organizational charts
 - 4. Current and two (2) prior years' audit reports
 - 5. Any documents requested on a supplemental listing
 - 6. Any documents requested on the supplemental listing should be provided to FCMAT in electronic format when possible.
 - 7. Documents that are only available in hard copy should be scanned by the district and sent to FCMAT in an electronic format.
 - 8. All documents should be provided in advance of field work and any delay in the receipt of the requested documentation may affect the start date of the project.

- C. The District Administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the Team prior to completion of the final report.

Pursuant to EC 45125.1(c), representatives of FCMAT will have limited contact with pupils. The District shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following schedule outlines the planned completion dates for key study milestones:

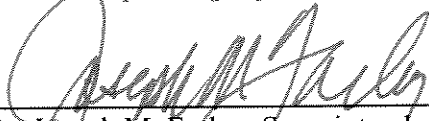
<i>Orientation:</i>	<i>September 19, 2011</i>
<i>Staff Interviews:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Exit Interviews:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Preliminary Report Submitted:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Final Report Submitted:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Board Presentation:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Follow-Up Support:</i>	<i>If requested</i>

7. CONTACT PERSON

Name of contact person: Mike Patton, Director of Transportation

Telephone: (949) 489-7365 FAX: (949) 831-4213

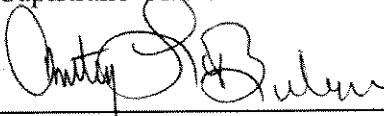
E-Mail: mrpatton@capousd.org



 Dr. Joseph M. Farley, Superintendent
 Capistrano Unified School District

8/29/11

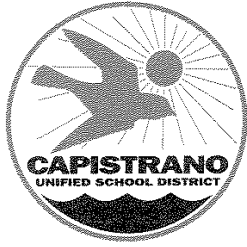
 Date



 Anthony L. Bridges, CFE
 Deputy Executive Officer
 Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

August 15, 2011

 Date



CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

33122 VALLE ROAD, SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO CA 92675
TELEPHONE: (949) 234-9441/FAX: 493-4083 www.capousd.org

August 30, 2011

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Anthony L. Bridges, CFE
Deputy Executive Officer
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team
770 L Street, Suite 1120
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team Study Agreement

Dear Mr. Bridges:

Enclosed is a fully executed Study Agreement between Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) and Capistrano Unified School District for your records.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Terry Fluent
Director, Purchasing

c: Mike Patton, Director of Transportation