



CSIS California School Information Services

Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District

Transportation Review

March 14, 2011

Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer





CSIS California School Information Services

March 14, 2011

Roger B. Campbell, Superintendent
Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District
657 Sunset Street
Coalinga, CA 93210

Dear Superintendent Campbell:

In December 2010, the Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a review of the district's transportation services. Specifically, the agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Conduct a study of pupil transportation revenue, costs and encroachment.
2. Evaluate operational efficiency, department staffing and organization and make recommendations for potential cost reduction.
3. Review transportation purchasing procedures and inventory practices and make recommendations for improved efficiency.
4. Evaluate routing methodology and relative routing efficiency and make recommendations for improvement.
5. Evaluate and determine compliance with all laws and regulations to include Vehicle Code, Education Code, CAC Title 5, 8 and 13.
6. Evaluate driver training and compliance with driver training laws and regulations and make recommendations for improvement if needed.
7. Evaluate vehicle maintenance program, vehicle safety, compliance with vehicle maintenance laws and regulations and vehicle replacement schedule, and make recommendations for improvement.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations in the above areas of review.

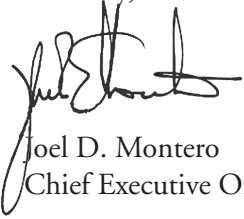
FCMAT

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

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We appreciate the opportunity to serve the Caolinga-Huron Joint Unified School District and extend our thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel D. Montero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer

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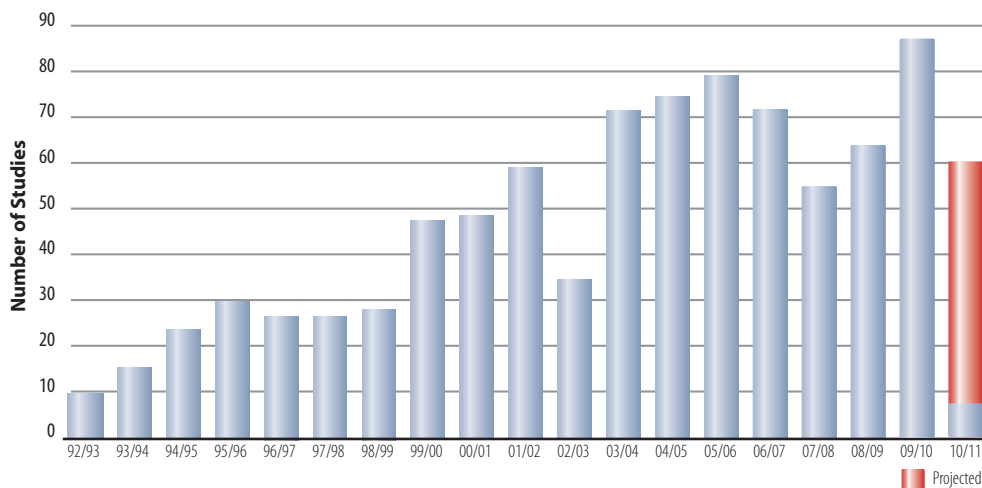
About FCMAT

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.

Study Agreements 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 Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District's student attendance boundaries encompass southwest Fresno County and portions of San Benito and Monterey counties. The district serves approximately 4,400 students in Coalinga, Huron and the surrounding rural areas at four elementary schools, two middle schools and a comprehensive high school and continuation high school that share a campus in Coalinga. Three of the elementary schools and one of the middle schools are in Coalinga; one elementary school and one middle school are in Huron. Interstate 5 bisects the district.

The district transports approximately 800 students on 14 bus routes, including two special education routes that transport approximately 22 students. In addition, the Fresno County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) transports approximately 10 of the district's special education students under its contract with First Student.

In December 2010, the district entered into a study agreement with the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT). The study specifies that FCMAT will perform the following:

1. Conduct a study of pupil transportation revenue, costs and encroachment.
2. Evaluate operational efficiency, department staffing and organization and make recommendations for potential cost reduction.
3. Review transportation purchasing procedures and inventory practices and make recommendations for improved efficiency.
4. Evaluate routing methodology and relative routing efficiency and make recommendations for improvement.
5. Evaluate and determine compliance with all laws and regulations to include Vehicle Code, Education Code, CAC Title 5, 8 and 13.
6. Evaluate driver training and compliance with driver training laws and regulations and make recommendations for improvement if needed.
7. Evaluate vehicle maintenance program, vehicle safety, compliance with vehicle maintenance laws and regulations and vehicle replacement schedule, and make recommendations for improvement.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Michelle Plumbtree
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Tim Purvis*
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Poway, CA

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Bakersfield, CA

Michael Rea*
Executive Director
West County Transportation Agency
Santa Rosa, CA

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

Study Guidelines

FCMAT visited the district on February 1-3, 2011, to conduct interviews with staff, collect data, review documents, and inspect facilities. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- I. Finances
- II. Routing
- III. Staffing
- IV. Vehicle Maintenance
- V. Driver Training and Safety
- VI. Vehicle Replacement

Executive Summary

Funding

School transportation in California has been inadequately funded for many years, and the state's current fiscal crisis has resulted in a further reduction of 20% for fiscal years 2009-10 and 2010-11. The district's school transportation funding is slightly higher than the statewide average.

The district's Annual Report of Pupil Transportation (Form TRAN), which is used to report transportation costs to the state, inaccurately reported in its Severely Disabled/Orthopedically Impaired (SD/OI) column the special education local plan area's (SELPA's) excess transportation costs rather than the district's costs for these students.

Several expenditure categories that are charged to the district's home-to-school transportation account should be charged to other appropriate accounts. These include labor and parts for school vans and for maintenance and grounds department vehicles, and all fuel costs.

During every high school class period, the district provides bus transportation to its farm, which is several blocks from the school. This is being charged as home-to-school transportation but should be charged as a field trip. The district also provides bus transportation for after-school enrichment and other activities. The district should ensure that transportation for enrichment is charged to the enrichment it is provided for and charged to the appropriate program.

The district charges \$1.28 per mile for the use of vans for small student groups, which is low compared to charges in similar districts. The district needs to determine its cost to operate these vehicles and set an accurate rate.

The district does not charge fees for home-to-school transportation even though such fees are allowed by law. However, FCMAT concurs with the district's opinion that because the majority of its students are from low income households it is not practical to charge such fees.

Routing

Most of the district's bus routes serve a particular geographic area and transport elementary, middle school and high school students to their respective schools, so adjusting bell schedules to lengthen the time between them would not provide additional efficiencies and cost savings. In Huron, one bus route serves the northern area and another route serves the southern area; each of these two routes has approximately 11 students. These two routes could be consolidated to one, but the ride time would be longer for some of the students.

The district should analyze current practices that have been in place for some time to ensure that the cost of providing such services is understood. Every dollar spent for these services is a dollar that could be spent in some other way for the district's students. For instance, providing bus transportation to its farm during every high school class period could be eliminated if these programs could be brought back to the high school campus, and transportation for after-school enrichment and activities is not required by law. The district should explore eliminating these services.

The district operates several costly bus routes, including two that serve few students in rural areas. The district should explore the feasibility of eliminating these routes. The district should also continue providing transportation for students with interdistrict transfer agreements only as long as space is available on current routes.

Double bus runs are required on Wednesday mornings because the high school starts later due to teacher collaboration time. Using a uniform calendar districtwide would eliminate this costly practice, though it may require modifications to the collective bargaining agreements..

Staffing

The transportation department is staffed with an MOT director, a supervisor, a senior secretary, three full time equivalent (FTE) mechanics, 14 permanent bus drivers and six substitute bus drivers. This staffing is adequate but has some inefficiencies. The district should consider reducing the senior secretary position to ten months per year and reassigning 0.5 FTE of one of the mechanic positions to permanently staff one additional bus driver position.

One substitute bus driver is a retiree but is permanently assigned to a regular route. This position should be staffed by a permanent school bus driver.

Almost all of the district's bus drivers also perform other duties to guarantee an eight-hour per day position. Split position such as these usually result in a loss of productivity in the non-bus-driving work. The district should consider separating bus driving duties from other duties.

Other inefficiencies include having eight bus drivers report early to work to ride the bus to their work location at Huron and one route driver who is paid approximately two hours of overtime per day. These practices should cease.

The district is installing new TransTraks transportation routing and management software and will need to provide significant training to ensure its successful implementation and optimal continued use and effectiveness.

The senior secretary and the transportation supervisor both have significant department and institutional knowledge. The district should begin succession planning to ensure organizational continuity in the event that these individuals leave the district.

Vehicle Maintenance

The district adheres to the required 45-day, 3000 mile preventive maintenance program for its school buses but has no preventive maintenance program for its trucks, vans and other vehicles. This will reduce the serviceable life of these vehicles. Inspections should be scheduled and tracked to reduce costs.

The district received the highest grade of "satisfactory" from the California Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Safety Unit. However, the district's shop employees are not as productive as they could be. There is no collection of work order data, and no vehicle maintenance cost data was available. Mechanics purchase parts, but the invoices are not always recorded on the work order.

The district has no inventory system for bus and vehicle parts, and the parts storage includes many parts for vehicles the district no longer operates.

Staff need and desire training and technology to enable mechanics to diagnose and repair newer computer-controlled engines.

During fieldwork, FCMAT observed and noted the significant safety risk created by a vehicle lift that was not holding hydraulic pressure. The district has since replaced this lift.

Driver Training and Safety

The district's school bus driver training records are organized and comply with applicable laws and regulations. Few school bus accidents have occurred and there is no noticeable damage to

buses. However, the district does not have a transportation safety plan and needs to develop one in compliance with the education code.

Teachers and coaches who drive small groups of students in district vans should receive defensive driver training. The district should consider enrolling these employees in a drug and alcohol testing program similar to that required of school bus drivers. The special education department could provide in-service training for the school bus drivers regarding students' disabilities and strategies to mitigate behavior-related safety issues on the bus.

Vehicle Replacement

The district has taken advantage of school bus replacement grant programs. Some older buses remain in its fleet but will be replaced when additional grant funds become available. All of the district's diesel buses comply with the California Air Resources Board's rules requiring particulate filters.

Findings and Recommendations

Finances

School transportation in California has been inadequately funded for many years. Until 1977 school districts reported their operational costs and the state reimbursed those costs in the subsequent year. Capital costs were never reimbursed. After the passage of Proposition 13, the state gradually reduced the percentage of reimbursement. During the 1982-83 school year only 80% of reported costs were reimbursed, and in that year the state capped the apportionment to each district at their reported amount. Only occasional cost of living adjustments have been made since then. Because costs have risen and revenue has remained mostly unchanged, the state's contribution to transportation funding continued to decline. For the 2008-09 school year, state funding paid for only approximately 45% of reported transportation costs. This was the highest level of funding in recent years and was identified as each participating school district's "approved apportionment." The state applied a 19.84% deficit factor to that approved apportionment in 2009-10 and a 19.81% deficit factor in 2010-11. As a result, state funding now pays for approximately 35% of the cost of pupil transportation; districts must pay approximately 65% of these costs.

School districts report their pupil transportation costs to the state on the Annual Report of Pupil Transportation (Form TRAN). The TRAN is part of the unaudited actual financial report that is usually generated every September and that includes final financial data for the fiscal year that ended June 30. The TRAN reports the number of students transported, the miles travelled, the cost to operate the program and other information. The TRAN is divided into two columns: one column reports regular education home-to-school transportation (HTS) and the other reports transportation of severely disabled, orthopedically impaired (SD/OI) students

Table 1 summarizes the district's TRAN data for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years.

Table 1: Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District TRAN data, 2008-09 and 2009-10

	2008-09	2008-09	2009-10	2009-10
	HTS	SD/OI	HTS	SD/OI
No. of Buses	23	1	23	2
No. of Students	946	8	972	10
No. of Students with IEPs	26	8	26	10
No. of Miles	325,539	39,683	257,010	35,625
Approved Cost	\$1,061,067.00	\$42,020.00	\$1,128,380.00	\$51,502.70
Cost per Mile	\$2.97	\$0.05	\$4.06	\$0.07
Cost per Student	\$1,024.10	\$252.50	\$1,075.70	\$244.78
Revenue	\$520,470.00	\$ ---	\$417,360.00	\$ ---
General Fund Contribution	\$540,597.00	\$42,020.00	\$711,020.00	\$51,502.70
Percent of Transportation Costs funded by General Fund Contribution	50.94%	100%	63.01%	100%

For the TRAN data in Table 1, district staff enter the number of buses, students and miles. The financial information is automatically transferred from the Standard Account Code Structure (SACS) software. HTS costs are reported as a part of Program 7230, and SD/OI costs are reported as a part of Program 7240.

For the 2010-11 school year, the district uses 14 buses and serves approximately 796 students. This is a significant reduction in the number of students transported. Although the TRAN reports 23 buses for 2008-09 and 2009-10, there were only 14 bus routes in those years.

The following items in the TRAN information are also improperly or inaccurately reported; these items increase the district's general fund contribution to transportation:

1. The district operates round trips between the high school and the school farm each class period. These trips are not home-to-school transportation; they should be billed as field trips.
2. Mechanic's labor hours, parts, vehicle fluids and fuel vehicles other than buses are charged to pupil transportation (HTS, Resource 7230). These costs should be charged to the appropriate department for each vehicle, such as the maintenance or grounds department.

In spite of inaccurate cost reporting, the district has a lower than average general fund contribution to home-to-school transportation.

The district's TRAN's SD/OI column reports the bill-back charge from the Fresno County SELPA for students that the SELPA transports through their contract with First Student, a for-profit school transportation contractor. However, the total cost of this transportation is reported by the Fresno County Office of Education on its TRAN, so the district's report of these costs duplicates the reporting. The California Department of Education (CDE) does not have any guidelines regarding to this type of reporting. The CDE's interest is that districts and county offices report the costs related to the funding they receive.

Although the district does not receive any SD/OI funding, there are other costs that should be reported in that column. Specifically, the district transports approximately 22 SD/OI students on two bus routes and has provided approximately this level of special education transportation for many years. These costs should be separated and reported in the SD/OI column.

The approved home-to-school transportation cost reported on the TRAN is overstated. Making the above changes will reduce the reported HTS cost and associated general fund contribution.

The district operates 11 passenger vans and station wagons to transport small student groups or teams. These groups are charged \$1.28 per mile for the use of these vans. Although FCMAT has seen other districts charge both lower and higher rates for similar use, the district has no operational or cost data to justify its rate. The current IRS rate for mileage is \$0.51 per mile. The American Automobile Association (AAA) reports that the ownership and operating costs of small, medium and large sedans ranges from \$0.366 per mile to \$0.926 per mile depending on the cost of the vehicle and the annual mileage. The district will need to calculate its own rate based on actual costs, including purchase or financing costs, maintenance and fuel costs.

Field trips have been charged to the users at the TRAN cost per mile rate. Because it does not account for labor costs, using this rate can result in charges that are too low for short trips that take a long time and charges that are too high for long trips that take a short time. In addition, the TRAN cost is arrived at by taking all of the home-to-school transportation costs and dividing

them by the home-to-school transportation miles. An accurate field trip rate should include two components: a mileage rate that reflects the cost to operate the bus for the trip, including fuel, engine fluids, fair share of bus maintenance; and an average hourly rate that reflects the cost of the driver, including salary, benefits and overtime. In addition, establishing a minimum charge of two hours would more accurately reflect the cost for very short trips when a driver would be paid for that amount of time.

The field trip approval process is cumbersome. The district's form requires various levels of administrative approval. Sometimes the trip has already been taken before all of the signatures are obtained. The transportation department has recognized this flaw and requires that the teacher, athletic director or school fax the form to the department before all approvals are received so that the department can schedule the trip. The problem, however, is that the department could schedule a trip for which adequate funding is not available exist or that an administrator does not feel is appropriate. The district recently purchased and is implementing TransTraks school transportation management software, which may provide site-based online field trip requests and approvals to speed up this process.

In 1992, the California Supreme Court ruled that it was legal for school districts to charge fees for most home-to-school transportation. Students who are indigent may not be charged; most define as indigent those students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. The Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District does not charge fees for transportation. Because nearly 80% of the district's students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, FCMAT concurs with the district's determination that it is not feasible to charge such fees; any fee program would cost more to administer than the revenue it would generate.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Charge the costs of labor, parts and fuel for vehicles to the appropriate departments.
2. Charge the school farm transportation as a field trip.
3. Separate report its own SD/OI costs in the appropriate column on the TRAN report.
4. Calculate an accurate per-mile rate to charge for the use of vans and station wagons.
5. Calculate an accurate rate for charging field trips, based on mileage and labor costs, and include a minimum charge to better recoup the cost of short trips.

Routing

The district operates 12 home-to-school routes and two routes that serve severely disabled special education students. The special education routes are customized and provide door-to-door service for students who attend programs in the district and whose IEPs require transportation as a related service. Each of the home-to-school routes transports all elementary, middle and high school students in a defined geographic area. These routes have remained largely unchanged over the years. Users generally consider the district's school transportation system to be safe, timely and responsive to their needs.

Because of reduced school transportation funding, school districts throughout California have reduced or eliminated home-to-school transportation for regular education students. Strategies for reducing transportation costs include extending nonservice zones to reduce the number of students who qualify for transportation, aligning bell times so that one bus can be used for more than one run, or eliminating service to certain geographical areas.

The district's Board Policy 3541 (a) states the following:

Transportation for Home to School will be provided to those students whose address is 2 miles or greater in radius from the center of Dawson School Administration Office or the Huron Elementary School Administration Office.

The district follows this policy, except in the case of the trailer park and subdivision just west on Highway 198 across the bridge. It is not uncommon for school districts to provide service within a nonservice zone for safety or local reasons.

"Nonservice zone" is the preferred descriptive term for areas not served by school transportation. The phrase "walking distances" is sometimes used but is not accurate because the nonservice area is measured as a radius from a central point, not a distance walked or traveled along surface streets. Districts need to communicate the expectation that parents are responsible for ensuring their children's safe travel to and from school if they walk or ride a bicycle. Similarly, parents should accompany their children to the bus stop and remain with them to ensure their safety. Because of the rural nature of the district, it is unlikely that extending the nonservice area to three or four miles would result in reduced bus routes or significant cost savings.

The district's Board Policy 3541(a) also states,

The district authorizes that students who are in kindergarten and need to be on take home runs for Los Gatos and Warthan Canyons and all Special Day Class Students shall be entitled to In-Lieu of Transportation Fees.

Staff indicated that district did pay parents' travel expenses for transporting students in lieu of providing bus service in the past, but reported that no students currently qualify for these payments.

The district has no formal process providing in-lieu transportation payments to parents. If parents are paid in lieu of transportation service in the future, the district will need to have a contract that delineates responsibilities, indemnifies the district and specifies a reimbursement rate. These payments are usually based on the distance to the closest bus stop from the point on a public road at or nearest to the home's entrance. The district should not pay for travel on private roads.

The district is not required to pay parents or guardians in lieu of providing school bus transportation; thus, eliminating current services would not necessitate paying parents to transport students to school or to the nearest bus stop.

All of the district's schools in Coalinga are located close together in a central part of town. The elementary school and middle school in Huron are also close to each other. Because of the schools' close proximity, changing or staggering bell-times is unlikely to increase transportation efficiency.

District ridership reports indicate that all bus routes except two have relatively full loads. The exceptions are routes J and K, which serve the Huron area and have approximately 11 students each. These two routes are both nearly one hour long and serve the northern and southern portions of Huron, respectively. Routes J and K could be consolidated, but it would mean a longer bus ride for some students. In its section titled "Riding Time," the district's parent handbook titled *Guide to Student Transportation* states, "Forty-five to sixty (45-60) minutes, each way, is the approximate riding time for students attending school." This statement would have to be revised if routes J and K are consolidated.

Two routes serve the remote Los Gatos and Warthan canyons in the western portion of the district. Few students live in the canyons and ride the bus. The district could consider eliminating service to these two canyons. Students could still ride the bus by getting to the bus stop at the base of each canyon. If the district eliminates this service, it would need to revise its board policy to indicate that service will not be provided in these areas.

As noted earlier, transportation is provided from Coalinga High School to the school farm every class period of each school day, and this service has been charged home-to-school transportation rather than to the farm program. The district needs to determine whether these academic programs could be moved to the high school campus to eliminate this costly service.

Two bus routes transport students home from after-school activities, and one route transports students from an after-school program. Some school districts have eliminated transportation for after-school activities to reduce costs. Activity routes are generally considered home-to-school transportation and are not usually invoiced separately. However, the district needs to review how it is charging costs for its after-school program transportation because grant funds are often available to pay for this transportation.

Some students from neighboring districts who attend the Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District's schools on interdistrict transfers are driven to bus stops in the district and benefit from its transportation service. There is currently room on the buses for these students; however, students who are granted an interdistrict transfer are not usually guaranteed transportation.

The district allows students who reside in the Huron area to choose whether to attend school in Huron or in Coalinga. Some bus routes overlap geographic areas because one bus route may serve students who attend schools in Huron while another may serve students who attend schools in Coalinga. Without detailed demographic data, FCMAT cannot determine whether eliminating this practice would result in additional cost savings. There may be school capacity issues or other academic reasons that make this practice desirable.

Coalinga High School starts its school day later on Wednesdays to accommodate teacher planning and collaboration. No other schools in the district have a planning or collaboration time or day. This difference in start times creates additional transportation costs because each bus must travel to its route areas twice: once for the elementary and middle school students, and once for the high school students. This practice doubles bus operating costs on Wednesday morning. To

reduce costs, the district would need to consider aligning all start times by either establishing the high school's practice at all schools or eliminating the high school's later Wednesday start time.

The district's office staff produce a bus route information sheet that indicates each bus stop location and time in a standard format. However, detailed route sheets are given to the drivers so that they can type or handwrite specific directions. There is no standard format for these detailed route sheets, and many of them are poorly written and difficult to understand. The district would benefit from having the senior secretary type detailed route sheets in a standard format and include specific directions regarding bus stops at which buses are exempt from using red lights and bus stops at which students must cross the road. These detailed directions could also be completed in TransTraks.

When one of the district's special education student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) requires transportation as a related service, the special education department telephones or e-mails the details to the transportation department. It is a best practice for a district to use a form that indicates the student's start date, program location, home address and disability or medical condition, as well as any special equipment required. A sample form of this type is included in Appendix A.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider consolidating routes J and K, the two Huron elementary school routes with low ridership.
2. Consider moving the classes now conducted at the school farm to the high school campus to eliminate transportation provided each class period every school day.
3. Consider eliminating transportation home from after-school activities.
4. Consider eliminating service within the two remote western canyons.
5. Consider creating a uniform districtwide school start time on Wednesdays.
6. Create detailed route sheets using a standard format.

Staffing

The transportation department is staffed with the following positions:

- 1 full time equivalent (FTE) maintenance, operations, transportation director
- 1 FTE transportation supervisor
- 1 FTE senior secretary
- 3 FTE mechanics
- 14 part-time school bus drivers
- 6 substitute school bus drivers

A transportation operation of this size functioning on a traditional school calendar does not need a senior secretary for twelve months per year. The senior secretary types some route information, schedules field trips, answers telephones, dispatches drivers using the two-way radio, enters employee time into the district's payroll system, and otherwise supports the department's clerical needs. Because there is little activity in the department when school is not in session, this position could be reduced in time.

The district operates 22 school buses and 70 other vehicles. For a fleet of this size, 2.5 FTE mechanic positions are adequate. All three of the district's mechanics also hold a valid school bus driving certificate and drive bus routes when the regular drivers are absent or assigned to field trips. The mechanic whose duties are reduced to 0.5 FTE could be offered the next open four-hour per day bus driving position to restore the position to a total of 1.0 FTE.

One permanent bus route is staffed by a substitute school bus driver who is retired. It is not appropriate for a substitute driver to continue filling this position. Because the route is permanent, its bus driver duties need to be advertised and filled as a permanent position.

In addition, staffing this substitute bus driver position with a California Public Employee Retirement System (CalPERS) retiree exposes both the district and the employee to significant liability. CalPERS allows retirees to work in public service after their retirement but limits them to temporary or substitute assignments and prohibits them from working more than 960 hours per year. Continuing the current practice may result in the employee being required to pay back all retirement earnings and to pay retirement contributions related to the current work. The district may also be required to pay its portion of the employee's CalPERS retirement contribution retroactive to the beginning of the employee's employment as a substitute. Penalties may also be levied.

Table 2 details the district's bus drivers' assignments, showing the hours assigned to the transportation department, hours assigned to other departments, and actual bus driving time, which includes pre-trip bus inspections and bus cleaning.

Table 2: Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District Bus Driver Assignments

Route	Contract Hours of Driving	Contract Hours of Other Work	Actual Bus Driving Time
A	6	2 (gardening)	3
B	8		6.5
C	6.5	1.5 (custodian)	3.8
D	6	2 (gardening)	3
E	5	3 (gardening)	2.5
F	5	3 (gardening)	4

G	8		5.6
H	6		4.8
I	8		4.4
J	5.5	2.5 (custodian)	2.75
K	4	4 (gardening)	2.5
L	8		6
M	7		6
N	4		2.75
TOTAL	87	18	57.6

Note: Additional contract hours for bus drivers without a second assignment are intended to be filled by fueling or washing buses.

As indicated in Table 2, the district has 14 school bus drivers. Eleven of these drivers are guaranteed eight hours of work time per day, one is guaranteed seven, one is guaranteed six and one is guaranteed four. The bus drivers work only when school is in session.

Drivers spend a total of 57.6 hours per day performing actual bus driving but are paid for a total of 87 hours per day for bus driving and department duty time. This represents an annual total of \$74,405 in excess pay for salaries alone if calculated using Step 1 of the district's classified employee salary schedule. The actual excess cost is much higher because most drivers are higher than Step 1 and because this calculation does not include the employees' paid benefits.

Some of the drivers are expected to wash buses or fuel buses during their non-bus-driving hours; however, the total time allotted to these duties is 29.4 hours per day, or slightly more than 3.5 FTE, which is almost certainly far more than is needed to complete these duties.

Nine bus drivers report to Coalinga by 5:45 a.m., board one bus and drive to the Huron bus yard where eight buses are parked and where their routes then begin. Most of those routes return to the Coalinga bus yard at some point during the day, and at the end of the day all buses are parked at Huron and the drivers ride back to the Coalinga yard. Neither the eight drivers nor the employee who drives them to and from Huron are paid for this travel time at the beginning and end of each day. This is an unusual arrangement but has been a longstanding practice. The benefit for the drivers is that they do not have to drive their personal vehicles to and from Huron. The benefit for the district is that it does not have to pay for this time. The district may wish to explore whether there is any potential liability related to this practice.

Seven of the district's 14 drivers also serve the district as gardeners or custodians. The time served in a non-bus-driving classification is paid at the appropriate rate for that classification and is charged to the appropriate budget.

Some school districts in California supplement bus driver positions with other positions to ensure full-time employment for these individuals. Because some communities find it very difficult to attract and retain individuals for this low-paying, high responsibility and high stress job, they offer an eight-hour position to make it more desirable. Although this is a relatively common practice, these employees are not always as productive in these combination positions. The gardening, custodial or maintenance duties often suffer, and the district is cautious to discipline the employee for this aspect of the job for fear of losing the bus driver. Also, most districts perceive bus driving needs as having greater importance, so when a last-minute trip comes up, the driver is pulled away from their other duties. The ideal arrangement is to not guarantee these

positions but to separate the reporting and duties so that the employee reports to and provides service to the transportation program and separately to another department for the duties of the other clearly designated classification.

Because it is not reasonable to pay bus driving wages for a job that requires less skilled labor, fueling and bus washing duties at the transportation facility would be best accomplished by establishing a separate job (perhaps with a new classification) for which employees apply, are hired, and are paid at an appropriate rate.

The driver of Route B receives approximately two hours of overtime pay per day. This is not necessary. This driver washes buses or performs other duties in the department during the middle of the day, then earns overtime by driving one of the evening bus routes. This driver could have a schedule with less than eight hours per day if the midday duties were eliminated or assigned to another driver.

The district recently purchased TransTraks, a school transportation software suite. Employees in the department are fearful of this technology and do not clearly understand the need for it or its purpose. The district has hired and assigned an individual to enter some daily data into the system, and this individual is also entering or downloading the entire district student database into the program. This is not necessary; only student bus riders should be entered into the system. The bus drivers collect complete data on all student bus riders. This software can become a productive tool, but for this to occur, employees who will use it must understand its practical application and must receive significant training in its use. The software includes modules for vehicle maintenance, student tracking, routing, driver training, and field trips. Each module can record data and generate valuable reports regarding field trip booking and invoicing, driver training and vehicle maintenance. The software can also generate bus routes.

District staff indicated that the possibility that bus drivers could enter their daily mileage and student data into the TransTraks program. FCMAT does not believe this would be a best practice. The department would be best served if drivers continue to complete daily written reports and a trained staff member enters them into the program. Similarly, it is not considered best practice for mechanics to enter their work orders in the system; a trained clerical employee can better accomplish this. This arrangement will provide more control over data input and decrease the chances of error.

The transportation department's senior secretary and its supervisor have worked for the district for a number of years and have a great deal of institutional knowledge. Eventually these individuals will retire. It is important for the district to complete some succession planning, including establishing a process to record and pass on these employees' knowledge and information.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Reduce the senior secretary position to 10 months per year.
2. Reduce the total mechanic positions by 0.5 FTE and offer the affected individual part-time bus driving duties to replace the lost 0.5 FTE.
3. Advertise for and hire a permanent bus driver rather than using a retired substitute driver for a regular route.

4. Consider reducing contracted bus driving hours to match the actual hours spent bus driving, performing pre-trip inspections and cleaning buses. Consider separating job duties and creating separate positions for bus washing and fueling to reduce costs.
5. Study the current practice of unpaid time for bus drivers travelling to and from the Huron bus yard for any potential liabilities.
6. Eliminate the daily overtime pay for the driver of Route B by restructuring responsibilities.
7. Provide employees with training and support in the use of the TransTraks software and identify one primary clerical support individual to manage the program.

Vehicle Maintenance

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) Motor Carrier Inspector Unit conducts an annual inspection of buses, vehicle maintenance records, driver training records, and federal drug and alcohol training records. The CHP's report of its findings is entitled the "Terminal Grade." For the past four years, the district has received the CHP's highest grade of "satisfactory" on these reports. This is an objective measure of a school transportation operation's safety and indicates compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 1232 (13 CCR 1232) requires that school buses be inspected every 45 days or 3,000 miles, whichever occurs first. The district lists inspection due dates on a whiteboard posted in the shop and performs the inspections on a 30-day rotation. Mileage intervals are not recorded, so buses that are assigned to high-mileage routes are inspected every fifteen days. Although this practice ensures compliance with the regulations, it may increase costs by conducting inspections more frequently than necessary.

School bus inspections are recorded and repairs are listed on a work order form; however, labor hours and a list of parts associated with the work order are not always attached or included. In addition, repairs performed by outside contractors are not always included in the file, and in some cases the mechanics do not see the invoices and so do not compare them with the work performed.

Repair orders are filed, and the past year's maintenance documentation is filed and eventually stored elsewhere. The department does not use maintenance data to create any useful management information. The TransTraks system will allow the department to generate useful reports from this data including information such as fuel mileage, vehicle maintenance history and cost per mile by bus.

The district has no discernible preventive maintenance program for its vehicles other than buses. These include maintenance and grounds trucks and vans, and passenger vehicles used to transport small groups of students. Mechanics reported that these vehicles are repaired when a problem is discovered or reported. This practice can be very costly; the lack of regular inspections means that minor maintenance issues can develop into costly repairs or dangerous safety issues. The passenger vans that are transporting students need to be on a preventive maintenance program similar to that used for school buses.

Newer school buses and other district vehicles feature computer-controlled engines; however, the district does not have any up-to-date diagnostic equipment, and mechanics have not received training regarding these newer engines, transmissions and components. Consequently, mechanics reported that vehicles are sometimes towed out of town to another shop only to discover that the problem could have been repaired inexpensively if diagnostic capabilities were in place.

The district's shop includes a parts room upstairs. One part of this room is stocked with filters, belts, hoses and some glass. Mechanics reported that these are usually purchased in bulk for a discount and supply the district's needs for a year or more. A large part of the remainder of this room is stocked with obsolete and unusable parts. Mechanics indicated that these parts may have been for vehicles the district no longer owns. The parts room is dirty and generally in disarray. The obsolete parts could be returned to the suppliers for credit, sold to other operators that may need certain parts, or declared surplus and removed.

Mechanics order parts individually from local or specialty suppliers as needed, and they are careful to find the lowest cost suppliers. However, valuable repair time is lost, because mechanics often drive to the local parts store to order or purchase parts.

Gasoline and diesel storage is located at both the Huron and Coalinga bus yards. Only diesel is available in the maintenance department yard. The storage tanks are above ground and comply with current laws and regulations. The pumps are controlled by a computerized commercial software system that requires cards and data input to dispense fuel. Reasonable controls are in place to prevent theft. The software system can print out regular reports, but the transportation department is not currently using these reports. This system can also be integrated with the upcoming TransTraks system to automatically provide fuel usage data.

School districts are exempt from federal excise tax on diesel and gasoline, and from state excise tax on diesel. Some recent fuel invoices indicate that the district is charged the state excise tax on diesel. This district will need to rectify this with its fuel supplier.

The district's vehicle maintenance shop was reportedly built in the 1950's and is still an excellent shop that would be the envy of any school district. It includes offices, an employee break room, a small kitchen, restrooms, several in-ground vehicle lifts and an interior bus washing room. The shop does need some maintenance and housekeeping.

Several other areas of the shop building are no longer used, including a paint booth, an engine rebuilding room and a vehicle alignment pit. Discontinuing use of these facilities is consistent with what has occurred in many school district shops. The environmental rules and equipment needed for vehicle painting are prohibitively complex and expensive; most school districts do not have the volume or expertise to support engine rebuilding; and vehicle alignment equipment is expensive and is a specialty that is usually sublet to other providers.

During fieldwork, FCMAT noted that a lift in the steam-cleaning room was leaking hydraulic fluid from a post seal and was unable to hold up a bus up without slowly slipping down. This was a safety hazard and the district has since repaired this lift. It is easier to steam clean buses while they are raised, and this cleaning is needed to perform professional vehicle inspections.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Track and schedule preventive maintenance for buses when it is needed rather than on a set calendar rotation.
2. Develop a regular preventive maintenance program for all non-bus vehicles, and ensure that vans that transport students are maintained using the same standards and procedures as those used for school buses.
3. Implement a work order system that assigns labor hours, parts costs and miscellaneous costs to every repair. Develop useful vehicle maintenance reports using this and other data.
4. Clean the shop and the parts storage area. Remove surplus parts and equipment that no longer have value for the district.
5. Ensure that it is not being charged state excise tax for diesel fuel.

6. Invest in technology and training for mechanics to enable them to diagnose computer-controlled engines and vehicle components.

Driver Training and Safety

School bus driver training in California is highly regulated. Prospective school bus drivers must receive a minimum of 20 hours of classroom training and 20 hours of behind-the-wheel training (E.C. 40082). In addition, every year school bus drivers must receive a minimum of 10 hours of in-service training. This training can only be conducted by a State Certified School Bus Driver Instructor (E.C. 40084.5). Behind-the-wheel training may be given by a Delegated Behind-the-Wheel Instructor. A record of this training must be made and kept. In addition, school bus drivers must submit to a background check and fingerprinting for licensing and for employment, and drug and alcohol testing in compliance with Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) rules (49 CFR 382).

The district's transportation supervisor is also a State Certified School Bus Driver Instructor and is knowledgeable regarding laws and regulations. Driver training records are kept in compliance with all laws and regulations and are in good order.

The department reported a low incidence of bus accidents, and this is reflected in the fact that its bus fleet has few dents or scratches. However, the district does not have a transportation safety plan in place in compliance with E.C. 39831.3. A plan must be in place and available at each school for inspection by a CHP officer. A sample plan is included in appendix B.

Education Code section 39831.5 requires school districts to perform school bus emergency evacuation drills annually and keep specific records kept for students in grades K-6. Also, specific safety information must be announced prior to every field trip. The transportation department is aware of these regulations and is in compliance with them.

Teachers and coaches drive small groups of students to school events in district-owned passenger vans. This is common throughout the state. The transportation department ensures that each of these teachers or coaches is enrolled in the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) pull notice program, which sends the district reports of each driver's record annually. The pull notice program also sends a report any time there has been activity on the driver's record such as an accident, moving violation or other more serious violations, such as a drunk driving conviction or a license suspension or revocation. The transportation department regularly reviews these teachers' and coaches' driving records. The district may wish to consider enrolling all of these drivers in a drug and alcohol testing program similar to the program used for school bus drivers. In addition, the transportation department needs to provide defensive driver training for these teachers and coaches.

Bus drivers who transport special education students do not receive regular in-service training regarding common medical conditions and behaviors related to certain disabilities, or how to mitigate certain behaviors on the bus. Because of the expertise of the district's special education department and their knowledge of the students who are transported, the special education department could provide bus drivers with this type of regular in-service training.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide defensive driver training for all district staff who drive students in district vehicles.

2. Consider enrolling staff who transport students in district vans in a drug and alcohol testing program similar to that used for school bus drivers.
3. Ensure that the special education department provides regular training for the bus drivers regarding common medical conditions and disabilities and related issues and behaviors.

Vehicle Replacement

The district has a fleet of 23 school buses ranging from five to 25 years old. The average age of the fleet is 12.5 years. This is a relatively new fleet compared to many California school districts. The oldest two buses are 1986 Crown Coaches. The district has been an active participant in bus replacement grant programs operated by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). The two Crown Coach buses are slated for replacement when new funding is allocated to the programs. In addition, CARB has adopted truck and bus rules intended to reduce diesel particulate exhaust. Although full compliance with these rules is not required until 2018, the district has taken advantage of grant programs from the SJVAPCD to retrofit its buses with diesel particulate filters and is thus in full compliance with the rules.

Recommendation

The district should:

1. Continue to stay informed and participate in school bus replacement grant programs.

Appendices

Appendix A

Sample Transportation Request Form

Appendix B

Sample Transportation Safety Plan

Appendix C

Study Agreement

Appendix A:

Sample Transportation Request Form

- ☐ Special Education
☐ 504
☐ No Child Left Behind

Poway Unified School District
 Special Education
 13626 Twin Peaks Road, Poway CA 92064

- ☐ Start _____
☐ Change _____
☐ Continue _____

TRANSPORTATION REQUEST

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Student Name		Parents Name		Home Phone	Work Phone	Cell Phone
Address		Apartment Name and number		TRANSPORTATION REQUIRED		
City		Zip	SCHOOL HOURS		YES	
Name of Special Program		Birthdate	Grade	From	To	
School		Address		School Phone Number		
YES	NO	FACTORS AFFECTING TRANSPORTATION		EXPLANATIONS		
		CAN WALK TO/FROM A DESIGNATED BUS STOP <input type="checkbox"/> Gated Community/Apartment Complex may not be accessible.				
		Wheelchair dependent		Name of Sitter		
		Walker dependent		Address		
		Requires assistance loading/unloading		City		
		Safety Vest		Name of Responsible Party for Release		
		Special Aide/Nurse required				
		Must be met at Residence or School				
		Possible Problem with other children				
		Diabetic				
		Subject to Seizures				
		Requires Medication				
		Special Equipment				
		Oxygen				
		Trach/Gast Tube				
		Restraints				
		Suction machine				
		Other				
		Other				

REASON OR TRANSPORTATION

- ☐ Placement away from Home School ☐ Student Disability

Signature (Special Education/Health Services)

Date

PARENTAL RELEASE SIGNATURE

I AGREE TO HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNIFY THE POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, ITS EMPLOYEES, AND ITS AGENTS FROM ANY CLAIM OR DEMAND WHICH MAY BE MADE BY REASON OF MY AUTHORIZATION TO ALLOW MY CHILD TO WAIT FOR AND/OR LEAVE THE SCHOOL BUS AT A PREARRANGED LOCATION.

Parent Signature

Date

EMERGENCY POINTS OF CONTACT AND RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, OR IF WE ARE UNABLE TO DELIVER YOUR CHILD TO YOU WE WILL ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE YOU DESIGNATE AS EMERGENCY POINTS OF CONTACT. IF WE ARE STILL UNABLE TO DELIVER YOUR CHILD, WE WILL DELIVER YOUR CHILD TO EITHER THE: POWAY SHERIFFS DEPARTMENT OR SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR SAFE KEEPING.

Name	Relationship	Telephone	Name	Relationship	Telephone
TRANSPORTATION USE ONLY					
EDU LOG NO.		AM STOP NO.		PM STOP NO.	

Appendix B

Sample Transportation Safety Plan

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

This Transportation Safety Plan contains procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of pupils and is in compliance with Education Code Section 39831.3.

HOME-TO-SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER

West County Transportation Agency is a public, Joint Powers Agreement or Agency formed by your school district or contracted by your district to provide safe, child-centered, economical and coordinated school transportation service for you. The information in the following paragraphs is intended to assist school personnel in their task of providing safe transportation.

Students shall receive a packet of school transportation safety and ridership information at least once when they are enrolled in school (Education Code Section 39831.5). Most schools continue to include this same information in the back-to-school packet annually for students. Most of this same information is presented below so school personnel may include this information in their daily contact with students, may utilize this in answering questions for students or the public or teachers may utilize this in developing instructional lessons for school transportation safety.

BUS ROUTES

Regular home-to-school bus route schedules are delivered to school offices several weeks prior to the beginning of the school in September. Although bus routes and stops change infrequently, occasionally notices are sent to schools or given directly to students. Any questions regarding any revised bus schedules should be directed to the Dispatchers at West County Transportation Agency. Routes are identified by a number. That number is located in the passenger window closest to the entrance door on each bus. Students need to have a designated school bus stop, and any student who wishes to ride another bus or travel to a different bus stop must have a signed permission note from a parent. Students without such a note will be allowed to leave the bus at their regular stop only, or will be returned to school. If there is not a bus stop located in close proximity to a student's home, one may be established by calling West County Transportation Agency at 823-7036.

Students are urged to get to the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the posted stop time. Bus stop times may change or vary depending on ridership changes made in the first couple of weeks of school. Drivers make a point to notify students and parents of any changes.

Students must remain orderly at the bus stop, must remain at least six feet back of the main traveled portion of the roadway and should be visible to the driver. Students must be respectful of property-owners where the bus stop is located, must keep their voices down and keep off of the property.

School staff should assist student bus riders particularly the first couple of weeks of school by reviewing the bus they are to board at the end of the day, identifying that on a temporary name tag, and walking out with students to the buses.

DETERMINING IF A PUPIL REQUIRES ESCORT

The driver in conjunction with the Transportation Agency, the School and the student's input shall determine if escort is required at a particular bus stop in compliance with Section 22112 of the California Vehicle Code. Particularly with new students registering in a school, whom the Transportation Agency may not have exact address information or home location, the driver may have to rely on the student input. If the input of the

student is unclear, the driver may need to radio to Dispatch to have them call the school to verify an address. Every stop requiring an escort will be clearly marked on the route sheet.

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL BUS STOPS

Students should be very careful when walking to and from school bus stops. Parents should accompany young children to the bus stop and assist in keeping order while waiting for the bus. Children should be instructed to keep on sidewalks or on the shoulder, and far away from the main traveled portion of the roadway. Children should pay close attention to traffic, weather conditions, and visibility conditions. Visible clothing, or clothing and backpacks with reflective material should be worn at all times. Children should remain orderly at all times and refrain from boisterous conduct or horseplay while walking to and from the school bus stop. Children should not engage in conversation with strangers or accept rides from passing motorists. When walking to or from a bus stop, children should face traffic.

GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT AT SCHOOL BUS LOADING ZONES

Students should wait in an orderly fashion while at the bus stop in the morning. They should be at the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the posted stop time. Students should be at least six feet back from the main traveled portion of the roadway and visible to the driver. Pushing, shoving or horseplay are not allowed at the bus stop. Students should be mindful of the bus stop location. Many are in driveways and on private property. Students are not allowed to throw rocks or other objects, play around, cause excessive noise, touch or tamper with the other private property or vehicles nearby. Once the bus arrives students shall wait for the driver to come to a complete stop and the door of the bus to open before they begin to move forward to the bus. Students should board the bus one-at-a-time, using the available hand-rails, and move quickly to an open seat. If a student drops papers or other objects while boarding the bus he/she should get the attention of the driver. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. The driver may not be able to see you!

In the afternoon, students should wait at school according to the established pre-bus-loading procedure at the school. Teachers or aides on duty at the bus loading area shall maintain order over students, keep the students well away from the location where the buses pull up and orderly release or escort the students to their buses. Teachers or aides on duty must remain at the bus loading zone until all buses have departed. Drivers may need their help for disciplinary matters or to take students back to the office. Ensure that no students get close to buses, touch them, and in no case may a student go under the bus.

When students depart from school on the bus and they are arriving at their bus stop, they must remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop, the brakes are set and the door is open before they stand up to exit the bus. Students should have all of their clothes and supplies together in preparation for their bus stop. Students should use handrails when leaving the bus and shall walk away from the bus to the shoulder or sidewalk and walk directly home. If a student drops papers or other objects while he/she is leaving the bus, please get the attention of the driver. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. The driver may not be able to see you.

SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONES

The areas closest to the perimeter of the bus are called the danger zones. Students are directed to be no closer than ten feet to the bus, except when loading and unloading. The vast majority of school bus accidents and injury to students occur outside of the bus in this danger zone. If a student drops papers, lunch boxes or other objects while loading or unloading from the bus the student must get the attention of the driver. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. The driver may not be able to see you!

SAFE RIDING PRACTICES

In compliance with Education Code Section 39831.5, students annually receive instruction on proper loading and unloading procedures including escorting by the driver, proper passenger conduct, bus evacuation and location of emergency exits and emergency equipment. Instruction may also include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

Prior to departure on any school activity trip, all pupils riding on a school bus or a school pupil activity bus (SPAB) shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to, location of emergency exits, and location and use of emergency equipment.

In addition to the expectations spelled out to students in the above, drivers orient students to rules and expectations their first days of each school year. Rules are posted in the buses. Consequences for poor behavior and rewards for good behavior are discussed. Classroom behavior is expected on all school buses. Students must remain seated at all times, must keep all body parts inside the windows of the bus, must not eat, drink or smoke on the bus, must keep noise down, are not allowed to “roughhouse” on the bus and must follow all directions of the driver.

RED LIGHT CROSSINGS

When a student needs to cross the road and the stop is designated as an escorted crossing, the driver sets the parking brake, secures the bus, checks traffic, turns on the red lights, takes the key, opens the door and exits the bus with a hand held stop sign to escort the student across the road. The student should follow all of the directions of the driver, and not cross the road until the driver verbally tells the student to proceed. This crossing maneuver is considered most dangerous and students must be aware, alert and follow directions of the driver.

CLOTHING HAZARDS

In the past few years, there have been several serious student injuries or fatalities in other states due to clothing or backpacks that have drawstrings. The drawstrings have gotten caught in handrails on the bus, without the driver's knowledge. Please inspect the children's clothing or backpacks to ensure there are not drawstrings or other hanging objects that could get caught in the handrail or the door.

FIELD TRIPS

When planning a field trip, the school has several options. They may use a school bus, a school pupil activity bus (SPAB) operated by a charter bus company, use school owned automobiles or vans, use public transit or use parent-owned vehicles.

School Buses

School buses are the most highly regulated student transportation vehicles and school bus drivers are the most highly trained drivers in California. On any school field trip, whether on a bus or not, teachers shall have a roster of all students on the trip, an itinerary of the trip and should carry a supplemental first aid kit appropriate for the trip destination and activity intended. Teachers or coaches should plan all stops in conjunction with the transportation provider and should not allow students to eat while the vehicles are moving.

SPAB Buses

School Pupil Activity Buses are operated by a Charter Party Carrier (for-hire charter bus operator). SPAB buses need to be certified by the CHP Motor Carrier Inspector within the past 13 months and must have a certificate

on board that is signed and dated by the inspector. The driver must also have received some special training and must have at least a Class B license and a Special Driver Certificate valid for driving a SPAB bus. When you book a SPAB bus you must specify such and a school official shall inspect the bus certification and driver certification upon arrival at the school to pick up the group.

Public Transit

If the group intends to use public transit for their trip, the school should call the transit agency prior to the trip to ensure they are prepared for the group and to inquire regarding any special requirements for student groups.

School vehicles

If school vehicles are to be used, they must be consistent with the law (may not seat more than nine students and the driver—and constructed so as not to hold more than that) and have a properly licensed driver who is an employee of the District. All passengers must be seat-belted while in the vehicle. It is ideal if such drivers received training in defensive driving and first aid practices and if the vehicle were part of a regular and systematic preventive maintenance program.

Parent vehicles

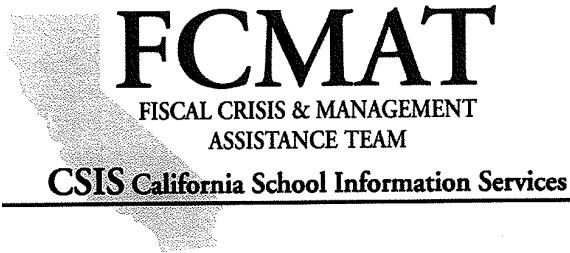
The use of parent vehicles for field trips shall strictly adhere to District Policy. All parents shall show proof of appropriate insurance. In no case shall a vehicle be used that is designed for more than nine passengers and the driver. In no case shall more than nine passengers plus the driver be seated in a parent vehicle.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES

If you encounter a student transportation safety situation that is not covered in this plan or seems unique, please contact West County Transportation Agency for direction or the School Pupil Safety Officer of the California Highway Patrol for direction.

Appendix C

Study Agreement



FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM STUDY AGREEMENT December 21, 2010

The FISCAL CRISIS AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the Team, and the Coalinga-Huron Joint 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 Coalinga-Huron Joint 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:

1. Conduct a study of pupil transportation revenue, costs and encroachment.
2. Evaluate operational efficiency, department staffing and organization and make recommendations for potential cost reduction.
3. Review transportation purchasing procedures and inventory practices and make recommendations for improved efficiency.
4. Evaluate routing methodology and relative routing efficiency and make recommendations for improvement.
5. Evaluate and determine compliance with all laws and regulations to include Vehicle Code, Education Code, CAC Title 5, 8 & 13.

6. Evaluate driver training and compliance with driver training laws and regulations and make recommendations for improvement if needed.
7. Evaluate vehicle maintenance program, vehicle safety, compliance with vehicle maintenance laws and regulations and vehicle replacement schedule and make recommendations for improvement.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

- 1) 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.
- 2) On-site Review - The Team will conduct an on-site review at the District office and at school sites if necessary.
- 3) 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.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Draft Reports - Sufficient copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the District administration for review and comment.
- 6) Final Report - Sufficient copies of the final study report will be delivered to the District administration following completion of the review.
- 7) 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. Michelle Plumbtree	FCMAT Chief Management Analyst
B. Tim Purvis	FCMAT Consultant
C. Michael Rea	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 \$9,500.

- 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:

Orientation:	February 1-3, 2011
Staff Interviews:	to be determined
Exit Interviews:	to be determined
Preliminary Report Submitted:	to be determined
Final Report Submitted:	to be determined
Board Presentation:	to be determined
Follow-Up Support:	If requested

7. **CONTACT PERSON**

Name of contact person: Stan Dobbs, Assistant Superintendent

Telephone: (559) 938-7505 FAX: _____

E-Mail: sdobbs@chusd.k12.ca.us



12/29/10

Stan Dobbs, Assistant Superintendent
Coalinga-Huron Joint Unified School District

Date



December 21, 2010

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

Date