



Monterey County Office of Education

Management Review

June 15, 2009

Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer



June 15, 2009

Dr. Nancy Kotowski, Superintendent
Monterey County Office of Education
901 Blanco Circle
Salinas, CA 93912

Dear Superintendent Kotowski:

In September 2008, the Monterey County Office of Education entered into an agreement with the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) for a study that would perform the following:

Human Resources and Payroll Review

1. Review policies, procedures, forms, and level of customer service of the Human Resources Department to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency, both internally within the department and with other departments/divisions of the county office.
2. Review interactions and the flow of information between the Human Resources and Payroll Departments to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency of employee payment information.
3. Review the security of information within the Human Resources Department, including appropriate access to systems.
4. Review the orientation process for new employees, ensuring there are standards in place that allow for success of employees.
5. Review the systems used within Human Resources, including credentialing, ensuring they are being utilized to their full ability as well as being maintained and kept up to date.
6. Recommend specific trainings needed by positions within reviewed departments in order to implement recommendations.
7. As part of the review, compare findings with other similar county offices of education.

Informational Technology Review

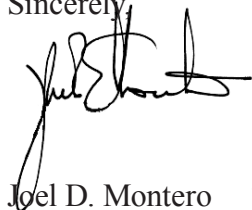
1. Assess system/network security as to adequacy and security of data, including backups and emergency planning.
 - a. Use NIST 800-53a standards
2. Review the utilization of the FMS system, including but not limited to processes, procedures, policies and forms. Survey districts in the county and county office staff to identify suggestions and concerns/issues with the system. Confirm whether the system is being utilized to its full advantage.
3. Review how programming changes are being done to the FMS system, assessing the process, procedures and how documentation is being handled. Also review how users of the FMS system are being notified of changes, as well as being given an opportunity for input.
4. Review the COE Information Technology Department's organizational structure, processes and procedures in comparison to similar county offices. As part of this comparison, conduct a review of the IT department(s) interface with Instructional Technology, sharing best practices.
5. Recommend specific trainings needed by positions within reviewed departments in order to implement recommendations

Payroll Audit

1. Review current payroll information against supporting documentation in Human Resources and position control for accuracy of employees and amount. Ensure employees are being paid accurately.

The attached final report contains the study team's findings with regard to the above areas of review. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you, and we extend our thanks to all the staff of the Monterey County Office of Education.

Sincerely,



Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer

Table of Contents

Forewordiii

Introduction I

Study Guidelines..... I

Study Team 2

Executive Summary 5

Findings and Recommendations I I

Human Resources and Payroll..... I I

Information Technology.....4I

Appendices63

Foreword

FCMAT Background

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) was created by legislation in accordance with Assembly Bill 1200 in 1992 as a service to assist local educational agencies in complying with fiscal accountability standards.

AB 1200 was established from a need to ensure that local educational agencies throughout California were adequately prepared to meet and sustain their financial obligations. AB 1200 is also a statewide plan for county offices of education and school districts to work together on a local level to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. The legislation expanded the role of the county office in monitoring school districts under certain fiscal constraints to ensure these districts could meet their financial commitments on a multiyear basis. AB 2756 provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans. These include comprehensive assessments in five major operational areas and periodic reports that identify the district’s progress on the improvement plans.

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform nearly 700 reviews for local educational agencies, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. Services range from fiscal crisis intervention to management review and assistance. FCMAT also provides professional development training. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The agency is guided under the leadership of 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.

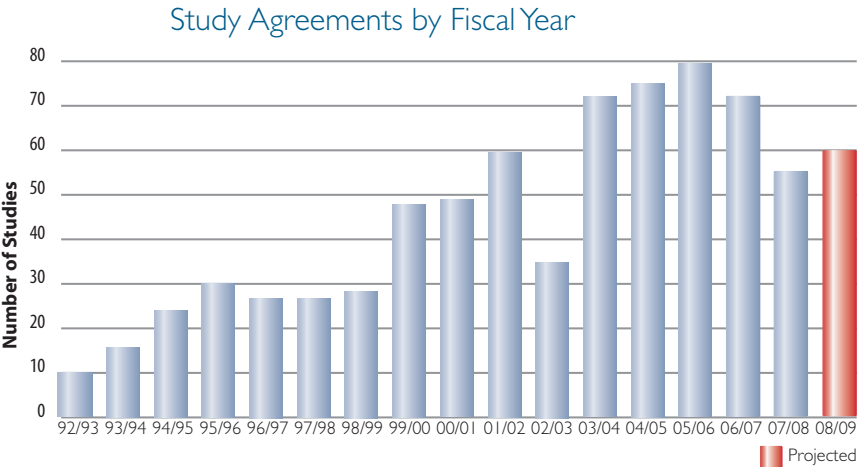
Total Number of Studies .711
Total Number of Districts in CA 982

● Management Assistance..... 675 (94.9%)

● Fiscal Crisis/Emergency.....36 (5.1%)

Note: Some districts had multiple studies.

● Districts (7) that have received emergency loans from the state. (Rev. 7/30/08)



Introduction

Located in Salinas, California, the Monterey County Office of Education (Monterey COE) provides financial oversight and support services to the 24 school districts and two of the charter schools located in Monterey County. In addition, the county office provides special education and alternative education services to approximately 800 kindergarten through 12th grade students.

The Monterey COE is governed by a seven-member Board of Education.

In September 2008 the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) received a request for management assistance from the county office. The study agreement specifies that FCMAT will complete the following:

Human Resources and Payroll Review

1. Review policies, procedures, forms, and level of customer service of the Human Resources Department to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency, both internally within the department and with other departments/divisions of the county office.
2. Review interactions and the flow of information between the Human Resources and Payroll Departments to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency of employee payment information.
3. Review the security of information within the Human Resources Department, including appropriate access to systems.
4. Review the orientation process for new employees, ensuring there are standards in place that allow for success of employees.
5. Review the systems used within Human Resources, including credentialing, ensuring they are being utilized to their full ability as well as being maintained and kept up to date.
6. Recommend specific trainings needed by positions within reviewed departments in order to implement recommendations.
7. As part of the review, compare findings with other similar county offices of education.

Information Technology Review

1. Assess system/network security as to adequacy and security of data, including backups and emergency planning.
2. Use NIST 800-53a standards

3. Review the utilization of the Financial Management System, including but not limited to processes, procedures, policies and forms. Survey districts in the county and county office staff to identify suggestions and concerns/issues with the system. Confirm whether the system is being utilized to its full advantage.
4. Review how programming changes are being done to the FMS, assessing the process, procedures and how documentation is being handled. Also review how users of the FMS are being notified of changes, as well as being given an opportunity for input.
5. Review the COE Information Technology Department's organizational structure, processes and procedures in comparison to similar county offices. As part of this comparison, conduct a review of the IT Department(s) interface with Instructional Technology, sharing best practices.
6. Recommend specific trainings needed by positions within reviewed departments in order to implement recommendations.

Payroll Audit

1. Review current payroll information against supporting documentation in Human Resources and Position Control for accuracy of employees and amount. Ensure employees are being paid accurately.

Study Guidelines

FCMAT visited the county office on October 7-9 and October 21-23, 2008 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documentation. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Human Resources and Payroll
- Information Technology
- Appendices

Study Team

The FCMAT study team was composed of the following members:

Michelle Plumbtree
Chief Management Analyst
Fiscal Crisis and Management
Assistance Team
Petaluma, California

Diane Branham
Fiscal Intervention Specialist
Fiscal Crisis and Management
Assistance Team
Bakersfield, California

Andrew Prestage
Management Analyst
Fiscal Crisis and Management
Assistance Team
Bakersfield, California

Terry Manges
FCMAT Consultant
Chula Vista, California

Elheart E. (Al) Foytek Jr.*
Systems Analyst
Visalia Unified School District
Visalia, California

Laura Haywood
Public Information Specialist
Fiscal Crisis and Management
Assistance Team
Bakersfield, California

Linda Grundhoffer
FCMAT Consultant
Danville, California

Margaret Rosales
FCMAT Consultant

Glenn Siegel*
Administrator, Classified Human Resources
San Mateo County Office of Education
Redwood City, California

Mike Keller*
Application Manager
Tulare County Office of Education
Visalia, 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

Human Resources and Payroll

Based on interviews with clients of the Human Resources (HR) Department, it appears to FCMAT that the county's HR service levels have improved in the last couple of years. HR and payroll staff members are receptive to continuing to make changes necessary to implement more efficient processes and procedures.

Human Resources' technical and administrative staff do not currently possess the full range of knowledge required to administer a comprehensive HR program, involving employee recruitment and selection, classification and compensation review, benefits administration and performance management. The county office expressed plans to hire a Director of HR once it is determined what the role of the position should be. This type of position is appropriate given the need for additional administrative support in the HR Department. The individual hired for this position should possess a strong background in technical HR processes and procedures including position classification, compensation, and public sector recruitment and selection and must be able to provide leadership, professional development training and technical direction in all of these areas.

Board policies and administrative regulations relating to personnel have been adopted but have not been updated for several years and therefore do not reflect current professional practices and statutory requirements. When updating policies and regulations, the county office should pay particular attention to updating legally mandated policies to reflect changes in state and federal statutes.

The county office has job descriptions for certificated, classified and management positions, but is inconsistent in their maintenance. Some job descriptions are out of date and frequently do not reflect the date the classification was established or the date of the most recent revision. In some instances a job description does not exist for a position.

No position in the HR Department has responsibility for overseeing the technical processes involved in recruiting and selecting employees. This is a potential area for litigation because the professional standards delineated by the state Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) and the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) must be followed. A lack of oversight from the HR Department exposes the county office to liability for unlawful hiring practices. The employee selection and hiring process should be a key role of the HR Director position. Training should be provided to HR staff, department and site managers regarding the county's hiring procedures. The county office should also review existing records retention practices and ensure that documents related to employee selection are retained a minimum of one year from the date of the personnel action to which the record pertains.

Employee performance evaluations are not being completed timely or in accordance with respective collective bargaining agreements. Expectations regarding timely completion should be communicated to all staff responsible for evaluating employees, and the HR Department should establish a standard procedure for notifying school site and department administrators of evaluation due dates. Mandatory training should be provided for all management team members regarding the evaluation process. The county office should also consider implementing a standard due process model and provide training for site and department managers in the chosen model.

Some of the HR Department's internal work flow processes are cumbersome and slow. Examples include the personnel forms for hiring and making staff changes. The county office should consider standardizing and consolidating these forms and putting them online to provide easy access for managers and help reduce the number of times a form is sent between departments. To streamline routine transactions, the county office should consider designating an employee other than the Superintendent for final authorization of routine employee changes and require the Superintendent's signature for approval of new positions and changes to existing positions only.

Necessary modifications should be made to the Financial Management System (FMS) so that salary information is calculated correctly on the Personnel Action Form (PAF). The FMS software also should be modified to allow employee demographic data to be entered one time and automatically uploaded to the position control and payroll software modules.

The HR Department should continue to develop specific performance objectives to administer HR systems and procedures in conformance with accepted professional practices and in compliance with all statutory requirements, and to maintain a high level of satisfaction among the HR Department's customers. The HR Department staff and the entire organization should be made aware of the priority and necessity of excellent customer service.

While some cross training has occurred, strategies should be developed to provide for additional cross training of staff members to further ensure continuity of service during periods of peak workload or when staff members are absent or positions are vacant. The HR Department should assess each of its staff members' professional development and training needs and develop a prioritized plan to address them. Individual desk manuals should be developed for each HR and Payroll department staff position, and the manuals should be updated as changes occur.

The county office should consider putting items such as job descriptions and HR and payroll forms online so employees can access the information as needed. This should also help save staff time in responding to requests for these documents.

Employment applications and some HR documents are currently processed in the public receptionist area. This could cause a breach in confidentiality if statements are overheard or personnel documentation is visible. Steps should be taken to provide an area less accessible to the public for staff to process confidential HR documents. The HR Department should also create separate “medical only” files for each employee to maintain the privacy of medical records or documentation as required by federal employee confidentiality laws.

Payroll Audit

A separate management letter was sent to the county office with the results of the scope item related to the payroll audit. FCMAT reviewed three sets of county office payroll and human resources documents to determine if the data was consistent. These data sets were selected for review and comparison because they should show consistent salary information, without variances, in reporting the base salary calculation. FCMAT’s analysis showed that for the approximately 1,700 employees of the Monterey COE, the data was not equal in 215 cases. That is, differing amounts are stated in one or more of the three sets of documents and databases reviewed. The separate management letter contains the specific differences and is not part of this larger reporter due to the confidential employee information contained in that document.

Information Technology

The two primary spaces where Information Technology Department employees work need to be revamped. The lead Financial Management Systems developer should be moved out of the equipment room because of noise and safety issues. Planning/meeting areas and equipment staging/testing benches are needed.

Implementation of MS Exchange and Active Directory services will improve e-mail and department file-sharing security.

The halon gas fire suppression system would not be contained to the computer room in the event of discharge. If the halon gas concentration levels exceed industry-defined safety levels, this could pose a health risk to employees. A qualified vendor should be contacted immediately to recommend improvements to the computer room enclosure and halon system. Employees need to be trained in the related first aid procedures, spill and leak response, safe handling and storage, and the signs and symptoms of exposure.

The county office has no documented plan to recover financial or other software systems should they be damaged in a disaster. Adequate uninterruptible power supply (UPS) systems are needed to keep essential systems running. UPS systems are in place, but staff members are unsure how much hardware would continue to function during a power failure.

Data retention policies need to be reviewed and revised to comply with the state Education Code and other regulations.

The Financial Management System (FMS) software developed by the county office and used by the county's school districts has a number of issues. In interviews with FCMAT, districts expressed dissatisfaction with its reliability, available applications and reporting capabilities. Frequent crashes and freezes that require data re-entry were reported.

Users stated that they do not get adequate support for the existing software and their input regarding system functions is not considered. User group meetings lapsed years ago but recently have been restarted.

FMS developers need to establish software development practices that maintain an application revision history, prevent updates from being overwritten, and retain baseline information. Custom software and system components should be thoroughly tested on production systems before being deployed. The recently implemented .NET programming environment will help with version control and software security. Work on new software projects should cease until FMS deficiencies and errors are corrected.

Because of changes in the organizational structure, computer support staff in other divisions will report to the Information Technology Director by the end of 2008-09. An IT information systems coordinator is needed to communicate with and train county office and district FMS users. An instructional resources portal project and other technology projects that have been based in other departments will become the IT Director's responsibility and may necessitate additional staffing. Outside assistance likely will be needed to develop Internet collaboration and resource-sharing services that will benefit the county office and its districts.

Classified employee evaluations need to be performed at regular intervals or as required by collective bargaining. Some technology employees have never been evaluated. Weekly staff meetings should be conducted by the IT Director to improve communication and discuss projects and issues.

At least three employees should be trained to perform all warrant runs; there is inadequate cross training in this area. A detailed warrant procedure check-off sheet is needed so any cross trained employee can complete the run.

Safe standard operating procedures should be developed for microwave tower work. Hardhats, safety climbing harnesses, and safety rope should be issued for this work. Technicians should be trained in safe climbing practices and the use of protective equipment.

All technology purchases by the county office should be approved by the Information Technology Department. A standard hardware platform and operating system should be selected, along with a standard vendor and one backup for purchases. A lack of standards increases the costs of specification, procurement and support throughout the life of the technology purchases.

The county office should consider using a consultant for E-Rate application work to obtain the maximum benefit and funding from the program.

All employees should be required to sign the Acceptable Use of Technology policies annually.

Findings and Recommendations

Human Resources and Payroll

Department Organization and Staffing

FCMAT has developed an extensive list of standards for use in reviewing the personnel management functions in public school agencies. These standards cover the general functions of the department, such as policies and procedures, participation in the Superintendent's cabinet, internal and external communication, employee recruitment, selection and orientation, legal compliance with state and federal laws, use of technology, staff training, evaluation and due process procedures, employee services, employer and employee relations, job descriptions and staffing formulas. The county office should review all of the standards to ensure they are being met and to help develop best practices for its HR operations. The standards may be accessed and downloaded at the following web address: <http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/fcmat/FCMATStandards.pdf>.

The Monterey COE Human Resources Department's leadership is provided by the Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources. The department includes nine full-time equivalent (FTE) support staff divided among the functional areas for which the department is responsible:

- Administration - Administrative Assistant
- Employment - Secretary II and Information Specialist I
- Operations - HR/Benefits Specialist and three HR Technicians
- Credentials - Senior Credentials Technician and Credentials Technician

The Assistant Superintendent directly supervises each of the support staff positions, supplemented by informal levels of supervision, technical leadership and direction that are provided by the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary II and Information Specialist I, by the HR/Benefits Specialist to the HR Technicians, and by the Senior Credentials Technician to the Credentials Technician. The number of employees reporting directly to the Assistant Superintendent requires an extensive span of control and may detract from the Assistant Superintendent's effectiveness as the department's leader.

The total support staffing level of the HR Department is appropriate for the size of this class three county office. A class three county office represents a combined county-wide average daily attendance in its districts of 60,000 to 139,999. However, based on interviews with staff members, the staffing allocated to operations functions is generous. The county office should consider devoting some of the operations staffing resources to other functions, such as hiring, via internal restructuring without detracting from the effective completion of duties currently assigned to the HR operations staff.

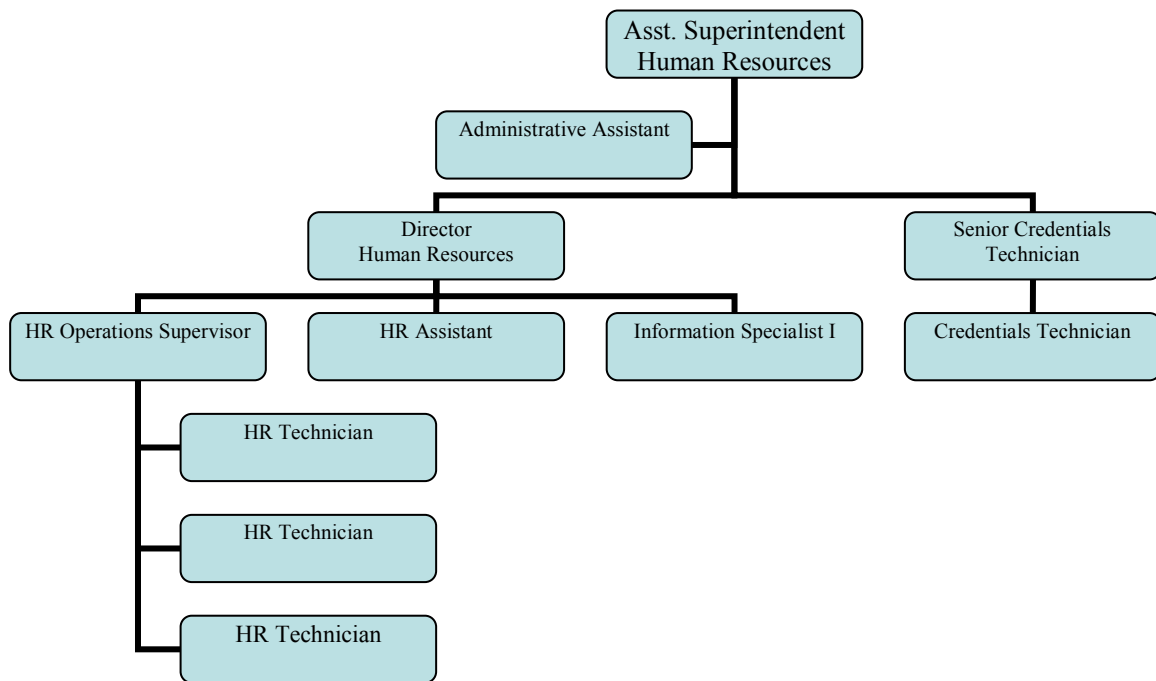
The HR/Benefits Specialist and Secretary II perform work that is not fully reflected in the job descriptions for these positions. The HR/Benefits Specialist is classified as a management position and coordinates and supervises HR operations staff, which is beyond the scope of work typically assigned to a benefits specialist. The county office should consider reclassifying this position to HR Operations Supervisor and assign duties to the position that include coordinating HR administrative functions; supervising the HR Technicians; and serving as liaison and the primary contact for communication between the HR and Payroll departments. In addition, more of the current clerical duties of the HR/Benefits Specialist need to be transferred to the HR Technicians.

The Secretary II does not provide administrative support to a department manager, work that is typically assigned to a secretary, but spends most of her work time on tasks associated with recruitment and selection. The county office should consider reclassifying this position to HR Assistant to more closely reflect the duties performed.

Human Resources technical and administrative staff do not possess the full range of knowledge required to administer a comprehensive HR program involving employee recruitment and selection, classification and compensation review, benefits administration and performance management.

The Monterey COE plans to hire an HR Director. This is an appropriate objective based on the need for additional administrative support in the HR Department. Under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent of HR, this position should be responsible for duties that include overseeing employee recruitment and selection, managing the position classification and compensation process, overseeing HR operations and benefits functions, ensuring that employee evaluations are completed and progressive discipline procedures are in place, providing HR training for management and ensuring that required employee trainings are provided. The individual hired for this position should have a strong background in technical HR processes and procedures including position classification, compensation, and public sector recruitment and selection.

The following organizational chart offers one option for how the HR Department could be restructured:



Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Move forward with plans to hire a Director of Human Resources.
2. Consider reclassifying the HR/Benefits Specialist position to a new classification of HR Operations Supervisor.
3. Consider reclassifying the Secretary II position to a new classification of HR Assistant.
4. Draft annual written goals and objectives for the development of the county's HR operations and evaluate staff on whether the goals have been met. Consider using FCMAT Personnel Management standards as a resource to guide development of best practices in the HR Department.

Board Policies and Administrative Regulations

Board policies and administrative regulations relating to personnel have been adopted but have not been updated to reflect current professional practices and statutory requirements. County office staff should review sample policies and regulations from a well-recognized source such as the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and compare them to current county office policies and regulations. The county should then update the policies and regulations that are out of date as quickly as possible. Updating the entire personnel series may take as long as a year or two. As an alternative, the county office could accelerate bringing the policies up to date by assigning an employee or hiring an independent consultant to review and update the policies all at once. The CSBA's GAMUT online policy subscription service is a resource for maintaining policies once they have been updated.

The county office should pay particular attention to updating legally mandated policies to reflect changes in state and federal statutes. Legally mandated policies that require updating include:

- EEO Policy
- Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure
- Family Medical Leave Act Policy
- Employee Disability Accommodations Policy under the California Disability Rights Act
- Pregnancy Disability Leave
- Military Leave
- Military Spousal Leave

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Update the board policies and administrative regulations relating to personnel and develop a plan to keep them current.

Job Descriptions and Position Classification

The county office has job descriptions for certificated, classified and management positions, but maintenance of the job descriptions is inconsistent. Some job descriptions are out of date and frequently do not reflect the date the class was established or the date of the most recent revision. In some instances a job description does not exist for a position, such as for the Associate Superintendent. A general review of the job descriptions for the HR and Payroll departments reflect that the format adequately represents the work typically performed by employees in these classifications, contains appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and other qualifications (KSAOs) and is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Job classifications are grouped appropriately into job families representing similar kinds of work. The salary differentials between classifications within the occupational groupings appear reasonable. However, the classification titles for some jobs, such as Information Specialist I, Technical Analyst/Liaison, and Dropout and Preschool Services, are not descriptive of the kind of work performed, and are not readily understood in the labor market.

The collective bargaining agreement with the California School Employees Association (CSEA), Appendix G, requires an in-house reclassification committee of five members comprised of two CSEA members appointed by CSEA, two members appointed by the Superintendent and a committee facilitator jointly approved by CSEA and Monterey COE to perform classification and compensation work. Classification studies are to be completed on one-third of the job families each year so that all classifications are studied by the end of the three-year cycle. Staff reported to FCMAT that a committee facilitator has not been appointed by the parties and the classification activities specified by contract are behind schedule.

The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Associate Superintendent of Administration and Business have been appointed as members of the reclassification committee. As of January 2007, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources was assigned the responsibility of overseeing the classification study process. It does not appear that reclassification committee members are provided adequate formal training in the process of evaluating job analysis data and classifying positions.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Review and update all job descriptions to ensure that the documents are current and reflect the dates the classification was established and/or the date of the most recent revision.

2. Maintain job descriptions by reviewing the relevant job description whenever there is a vacancy in that classification.
3. Ensure that the new Director of Human Resources has an adequate background of training and experience in classification and compensation practices so they can provide leadership, training and technical direction in this area.
4. Assign an HR staff member fully trained in public sector job classification and pay practices to serve as a permanent member of the classification and compensation committee. This individual should ensure that classification and pay decisions are made objectively and in conformance with professionally accepted standards.
5. Take action to bring job classification activities up to date, as specified in the CSEA collective bargaining agreement. This may be accomplished through the leadership and direct involvement of the Director of Human Resources or by retaining the services of an independent consultant.

Recruitment, Selection and Retention of Employees

Applicant assessment and hiring processes are decentralized and handled by department heads and school site administrators. The HR Department provides minimal oversight of selection procedures. The managers who are hiring determine applicant screening criteria and the composition of paper screening and interview panels.

The HR Department mainly provides clerical support for the employee selection process. The department's Secretary II compiles applications and forwards them to hiring departments for qualifications review. The names of those selected for interview are forwarded to the Secretary II, who sets up interview schedules. The secretary also administers employment tests for some classifications. The HR Department performs some screening but does not verify the applicants' credentials for each position or whether each applicant is still interested in a position.

Vacancies are posted to the Ed-Join system, which provides an effective way to advertise positions and acquire job candidates, particularly teaching applicants. However, additional effort should be made to identify diversity recruitment resources among local community action agencies. Monterey COE should identify local agencies in its recruitment area that serve minority populations. These organizations are typically found in local non-profit directories or through an Internet search of local job placement organizations. Additional recruitment resources also may be identified by utilizing internal county office contacts such as the Director of Migrant Education.

Inadequate HR Department preparation in employee selection and the department's lack of sufficient involvement in the hiring process has led to inconsistencies in following established hiring procedures. For example, in some cases candidates who failed written exams were invited to participate in the interview panel process. In other instances the Business Department has developed, administered, and scored its own written exam for accounting and clerical positions independent of any HR Department input.

No position in the HR Department is responsible for technical selection processes for certificated and classified positions. This is a potential area for litigation because the professional standards delineated by the state Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) and the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) must be followed. A lack of oversight from the HR Department exposes the county office to liability for unlawful hiring practices. The employee selection and hiring process should be a key role of the HR Director position.

The EEOC standards (which are also followed for claims filed under state DFEH) are the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (UGESP). These guidelines were originally published jointly by the United States EEOC, Civil Service Commission, Department of Labor and Department of Justice in 1978. The guidelines require employers to demonstrate that each examination they administer, including paper screening,

written, oral, and performance tests, does not show adverse impact. An adverse impact is a substantially different rate of selection in hiring, promotion or other employment decision that works to the disadvantage of members of a race, sex, ethnic, or other protected group under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The UGESP provides that “[A] selection process which has an adverse impact on the employment opportunities of members of a race, color, religion, sex, or national origin group ... and thus disproportionately screens them out is unlawfully discriminatory unless the process or its component procedures have been validated in accord with the Guidelines, or the user otherwise justifies them in accord with Federal law.” Employers demonstrate test validity by operationally defining important knowledge, skills, abilities, and other qualifications (KSAOs) and how they are actually used on the job, and developing or purchasing examinations that specifically measure those KSAOs.

The Monterey COE does not prepare an adverse impact analysis for each employee selection process (recruitment) it conducts. Therefore, as a minimum precaution, the study team recommends that decisions to exclude applicants from further consideration or recommendations for applicants to be hired are documented so that if a disparate impact is later shown, as part of an employment discrimination action, the county office can meet its burden to demonstrate that its criteria are job-related and consistent with business necessity for the job in question (U.S. Code, Title 42, Section 2000e-2(k)).

The process of documenting the validity of employee selection procedures is required by law and consistent with accepted professional HR practice. It is important for oral rating instruments, screening forms, and other selection materials to reflect essential KSAOs that link directly to important tasks performed on the job. The book, *Adverse Impact and Test Validation: A Practitioner’s Guide to Valid and Defensible Employment Testing, 2nd Edition* by Dan Biddle provides specific instructions on how to meet selection requirements.

The county office maintains a membership in the Cooperative Organization for the Development of Employee Selection Procedures (CODESP), although many of the benefits of membership are not fully utilized, such as testing instruments and training opportunities. By utilizing CODESP services, members are often able to improve their selection procedures and develop valid employee test instruments to meet federal and state employment regulations. Members can maximize staff resources by using the CODESP Automated Test System. The online bank includes multiple choice questions, which were developed to test applicants on their job knowledge in a variety of subject areas. Other test materials available online to members include: interview questions, performance examinations, writing exercises and supplemental application forms. If appropriate test materials cannot be found online, CODESP staff will develop custom materials for the member agency. Test materials and an online Job Description Builder are available to member agencies directly through CODESP’s password protected secure Web site.

CODESP offers training and other professional development activities so that members can develop and maintain current professional knowledge and skills in the area of employee selection. Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS), a self-supporting public agency based in Sacramento, also provides human resource services to public, government and non-profit clients in the western United States. The county office should send HR staff to training conducted by CODESP and/or CPS on subjects including: developing recruitment and selection plans in compliance with EEO law, adverse impact and test validation, position classification and compensation practices in the public sector, and leaves and benefits administration. This training would expand knowledge of the full range of duties typically performed in educational HR departments and allow staff to provide added expertise in advising and assisting management with these functions.

Department heads and others involved in the selection process have not been adequately trained in employee selection procedures. Documentation of hiring exams, including ratings of training and experience, written tests and interview panel assessments, is insufficient. Statutory employment standards for test development and administration do not appear to be applied appropriately. If challenged, the county office might be unable to demonstrate that state and federal guidelines for employment testing have been met.

Employers must keep the following pre-employment records for no less than one year to comply with federal legislation such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act:

- Advertisements related to job openings
- Job applications
- Job orders submitted to any agency
- Reference checks
- Results of physical examinations used in conjunction with personnel actions
- Resumes (solicited or unsolicited)
- Selection process for recall
- Test papers that disclose results
- Employment tests and selection procedures
- Records such as credit reports, employment tests and selection procedures
- Validity documentation of tests used in selection

Documents generated during the course of employee selection actions such as promotions, demotions, transfers, training selections, layoffs, recalls or discharges must be maintained a minimum of one year from the date of the personnel action to which the record pertains.

The county office has adopted Hiring Procedures for Management, Certificated, Classified Personnel, a document that outlines how managers are to conduct recruitment and candidate assessment activities. However, many of the requirements of the written procedure are not followed. For example, according to the Hiring Procedures:

- Position announcements that are advertised to the public are to be sent to “affirmative action resources.” However, the county office’s job announcement distribution list does not include job placement and community action agencies in Monterey County that serve minority group members. Additional effort should be made to identify diversity recruitment resources among local community action agencies.
- Job announcements must cite the application deadline and indicate what materials must be submitted by the deadline. However, the job announcements provided to FCMAT do not indicate what application materials must be submitted.
- Personnel representatives in each department are responsible for applying EEO practices at every level of the recruitment, testing, and selection process. However, department managers and principals have not been trained in fair employment practices promulgated by the EEOC or the DFEH.
- Applicants with the highest ratings based on their applications must be invited to an interview. However, the county’s paper screening instrument does not define a passing score.

EEO statutes prohibit any non-job-related inquiries of applicants or employees, either verbally or through the use of an application form, that may identify the applicant as a member of a protected class. Examples of protected classes include race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability and marital status. FCMAT observed the following concerns for the Monterey COE personnel procedures relative to pre-employment inquiries:

- The employment applications for both certificated and classified positions ask candidates if they are able to speak, read, write or understand a language other than English. This question on a general application form can reveal national origin. A pre-employment inquiry about language ability could be asked in a supplemental form pertaining to a specific position or classification where particular language skills are a valid selection criteria.
- The employment applications ask candidates to indicate the dates of school attendance, which can indicate the applicant’s age.

The employment applications should also be revised to include the following questions/statements:

1. *Are you at least 18 years old? (If under 18, hire is subject to verification that you are of minimum legal age.)*

2. *If hired, can you present evidence of your U.S. citizenship or proof of legal right to work in this country?*
3. *Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job for which you are applying, either with or without accommodations? If no, describe the functions that cannot be performed.*
4. *The Monterey County Office of Education complies with the ADA and considers reasonable accommodation measures that may be necessary for eligible applicants/employees to perform essential functions.*

The Monterey COE paper screening form is a general use document. It is not customized for use in screening for a particular job classification or vacancy within a classification. FCMAT observed the following areas of concern in connection with the paper screening form:

- The form does not outline specific qualification requirements and KSAOs essential for successful performance in a given position or classification. Screeners are directed to review the job description to determine qualifications. Job descriptions typically include only a representative sample of duties and KSAOs and may not suffice for the level of job analysis needed to establish selection criteria and defend employment decisions for a specific position, and should not be relied upon exclusively.
- The form does not provide a decision-point box indicating whether or not the rater believes a candidate should receive an interview.
- The form asks screeners to rate an applicant's education, training, experience, and skills on a five-point scale but does not state how the score translates to a screening decision (for example, is a score of 3 passing?). Without this definition, the screening decision becomes too subjective, and therefore, less defensible in the event of a challenge by an unsuccessful job applicant.

The county office's oral rating sheet is a generic pre-formatted form that is not customized for each classification vacancy. The form utilizes a forced ranking system and does not delineate specific job criteria on which interview panelists should rate candidates. The form does not provide for a decision point indicating whether the interviewer has passed or failed a candidate.

The employment reference check form asks only generic, closed-ended questions requiring yes or no responses. Reference check questions should be tailored specifically to the KSAOs required for a specific position to be valid in making employment decisions.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Ensure that the job description includes, and the candidate selected for the Director of Human Resources has an adequate background of training and experience in employee selection processes and procedures to allow the individual to provide leadership, training and technical direction in this area.
2. Initiate an HR committee to begin reviewing and revising employee recruitment and selection procedures. Consider retaining the services of a consultant from an organization such as CODESP or CPS to facilitate initial meetings to ensure a clear understanding of legal compliance standards.
3. Revise the hiring procedures document, and assign the new Director of HR the responsibility for overseeing compliance.
4. Provide training to HR staff, department and site managers regarding the Monterey COE hiring procedures.
5. Fully utilize the benefits derived from membership in CODESP.
6. Consider sending HR staff to trainings conducted by CODESP or CPS.
7. Provide training to department and site managers in basic legal hiring processes and procedures. Training may be provided by the Director of Human Resources or by retaining the services of a public sector selection specialist.
8. Review existing records retention practices and ensure that documents related to employee selection are retained a minimum of one year from the date of the personnel action to which the record pertains. Consider retaining such documents for two years.
9. Establish a recruitment file for each job opening, and maintain all application and testing materials related to that recruitment for at least one year. Consider retaining such documents for two years.
10. Expand recruitment efforts by adding Internet resources such as www.k12.jobs.com that target school employees and by distributing job announcements to local libraries and local community job placement and community action agencies.
11. Revise the standard format of job announcements and recruitment bulletins to include procedures for applying and submitting required application materials.
12. Revise employment applications and eliminate any questions that may indicate age or national origin.

13. Revise employment paper screening and oral interview forms to include specific job qualifications and standards on which applicants are screened. Require documentation of decisions to exclude applicants from further consideration or recommendations for applicants to be hired that includes the job-related reasons consistent with business necessity for the particular job.
14. Revise the reference check form to include open-ended questions specific to the nature of the work to be performed. Develop separate reference check forms for classified, certificated and management positions that are tailored specifically to the KSAOs required for a specific position.

Employee Orientation and Evaluation

The HR Technicians conduct comprehensive employee orientations twice a week for the employees in their alpha group. The process includes administration of TB and Hepatitis B vaccinations by a nurse who provides these services at the county office. New employees receive information about employee health, dental, vision, and life insurance plan offerings, retirement savings programs, and the Employee Assistance Program. Information is provided regarding sexual harassment policies and procedures, blood-borne pathogens and universal precautions, drug-free workplace regulations, workers' compensation, child abuse reporting, and general safety rules. The orientation materials should be reviewed to ensure they are up to date and should include a workers' compensation informational brochure and a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) notice.

The evaluation of employees has not been monitored for many years. Employees are not evaluated regularly, no management notification system is in place, and the HR Department does not follow up to ensure evaluations are completed within contract time lines. A poorly managed employee performance evaluation system can detract from the effective overall management of the county office. Opportunities for managers and administrators to provide positive feedback and performance coaching to further the major goals and objectives of the county office are lost, and there is also a lack of sufficient documented evidence of below-standard performance to undertake corrective or disciplinary action when necessary. The CSEA collective bargaining agreement indicates that if an employee is not evaluated within the prescribed timeline, the employee should assume they are doing a satisfactory job.

The county office lacks a standard model for managing due process issues. The county should consider implementing a standard model and ensure that site and department managers are provided appropriate training in the model selected. The FRISK (facts, rule, impact, suggestions, knowledge) model is an example of a due process system that could be considered for implementation.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Review all orientation materials to ensure they are up to date and include all necessary information.
2. Consider refining the orientation program for all new employees to permit utilization of Internet resources such as Webcasting. Such a program could incorporate existing aspects of new employee orientations and be available to existing employees at any time for refresher information.

3. Communicate to the cabinet officers the Superintendent's expectation that the provisions of county office procedures and negotiated agreements with regard to employee performance evaluations will be followed without exception.
4. Establish a standard procedure for notifying school site and department administrators of evaluation due dates.
5. Implement a standard follow-up process for past due performance evaluations, including steps to notify the appropriate administrative and supervisory staff and ultimately the Superintendent of past due performance evaluations.
6. Hold administrative and supervisory staff accountable for observing county office policy and contract provisions through the evaluation process.
7. Provide mandatory training for all management team members regarding the evaluation process.
8. Review existing training and orientation for managers and supervisors in collective bargaining contract administration. Ensure consistency of preparation for all members of the management team in this area.
9. Make evaluation forms available to all management team members on the county's Web site so they can be downloaded when needed.
10. Consider implementing a standard due process model and provide training for site and department managers in the chosen model.

Human Resources/Payroll Operations

Initiating, Authorizing and Completing Personnel Transactions

The Monterey COE utilizes three separate forms to initiate, approve and complete personnel transactions.

Green Form (Position Requisition): Required to authorize a new position; also utilized to add or reduce hours/days/months to an existing position or eliminate a position.

Yellow Form (Request to Hire): Required to initiate a personnel action, such as to fill a vacancy, complete a transfer or change an employee's assignment.

Blue Form (Employment): Required to complete selection/hiring process.

The personnel transaction forms, referred to by county office staff as the blue, green, and yellow forms, contain duplicate data elements. No instructions are printed on the backs of the forms indicating who is responsible for providing various information requirements or giving guidance for their routing.

The process for gaining approval to fill a vacant position is cumbersome. The green, yellow and blue forms must pass through several staff members for review and signature before action can be initiated and approved. Each form can take several days or more from initiation to approval, and HR staff members spend a significant amount of time tracking down missing information. The study team learned through interviews that backlogs in form completion and approval create unnecessary delays in the hiring processes.

Position control numbers and budget authorization for hiring are administered by the Business Services Department. However, it appears that both HR staff and department level personnel have responsibility for assigning position numbers when creating and processing a green Position Requisition. This lack of clarity contributes to inaccuracies and delays in processing the forms.

Department and site level managers are required to provide data elements on yellow Request to Hire forms that may not be readily available to or understood by them such as salary information, position control numbers and payroll account numbers. Delays also occur in processing blue Employment forms because certain data elements such as position control numbers and payroll account codes are not readily available at the department and school site level.

Work flow is hampered by the number of hiring forms the county office uses and the number of signatures required on these forms. The forms appear to be outdated and could be consolidated into one form and automated. A hierarchy of signatures should be developed that would preclude the county Superintendent from having to sign forms for routine employee changes. The Superintendent could continue to sign forms for new positions and changes to existing positions. The Superintendent's approval for these items

should be obtained before the changes occur. A sample Position Requisition Form is included in Appendix A to this report.

Federal law requires all employers to report newly hired or rehired workers to EDD on Form DE-43, Report of New Employee(s), within 20 days of their start-of-work date. State and county agencies use this information to assist them in locating parents who are delinquent in their child support obligations. The county office should ensure that this document is submitted within the required time lines. Based on interviews of staff, some HR employees may not be familiar with this requirement.

Payroll Administration

Personnel Action Forms (PAF) that require a payroll action sometimes get caught up in the system because they must be completed, audited, and initialed by several employees. HR Technicians prepare a PAF, which may require making several pay calculations by hand. Once a PAF is completed, it is audited by another HR Technician and then by the HR/Benefits Specialist before being submitted to the Payroll Department. Some PAFs are sent back to HR to be corrected. There is considerable duplication of effort in this process. Further, no written procedures exist to document the requirements for processing a PAF and describing each major HR/Payroll function.

An HR/Payroll problem-solving committee meets once a month. This committee is chaired on a rotating basis by those who attend. The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources attends the meetings but does not regularly facilitate them. In addition, regular meetings between the Payroll Supervisor and the HR/Benefits Specialist have helped to improve interdepartmental relationships and resolve payroll processing problems.

The study team identified several factors that may be contributing to continuing processing delays and errors related to PAFs:

- No formal system is in place to audit HR documents, including verification of the accuracy of teacher contract salary amounts. Not all errors are caught by Payroll. Some errors are found during payment of retroactive salary adjustments or creation of new teacher contracts.
- There is no single point of contact with the Payroll Supervisor to ensure that all pay forms are distributed to the Payroll Department before payroll deadline dates.
- No single document contains all the employee data necessary to enter into the Financial Management System (FMS) to generate a PAF. The necessary information comes from various sources including the employment application. Consideration should be given to developing a Notice of Employment form to serve as a source for new hire data that will be input into the HR/Payroll database. The form should include all basic employment information: salary placement, pay codes, budget codes, full-time equivalent, work location, and all personal data required for entry into the FMS. The form should be completed and signed by

the employee during orientation. A sample form is included in Appendix B to this report.

- It is difficult to track and reconcile all absences. Absences are tracked at the department level and sent to Payroll for entry into FMS.
- Payroll and HR Technicians do not have read-only access to each other's position control screens, thereby providing no opportunity to audit accuracy of employee data such as step and column/range.
- Based on interviews with county office staff members, interaction between HR and Payroll staff members is often strained and ineffective.

The monthly meetings between HR and Payroll appear to have resulted in positive changes for both departments. However, because of the number of differences in information resulting from the PAFs, the county office should consider initiating weekly meetings between the HR and Payroll technicians to discuss and analyze specific problems. These discussions should lead to the reduction/elimination of errors through training of staff, correction of FMS errors or improvement of FMS functions.

Financial Data System

The Monterey COE uses the FMS to maintain financial, budget and HR/Payroll information. Human Resources and Payroll technicians use the system effectively for basic employee intake and payroll processing but lack knowledge of its full capabilities, particularly in report generation. It has been two years since formal training on the system took place. In addition, not all HR employees have been provided access to the FMS.

The HR Technicians make payroll calculations that should be handled by the FMS. The system does not calculate all salaries correctly. There are variances of a few cents in hand calculations of salaries and what the FMS calculates. This has caused problems in reconciling salary data.

Information input by the HR Department into the FMS should result in demographic data being uploaded to the payroll and position control modules. A PAF should be generated from the FMS reflecting all of the data about an employee that was input by HR. It was reported to FCMAT that the PAF is now generated from FMS but does not reflect the exact data from the HR module. The data on the PAF is then separately input into the position control and payroll modules. This leaves the county office vulnerable to input errors in one or both of these modules. If the data on the PAF is incorrect and Payroll has the correct information, the technicians may input the correct information into the payroll module without always ensuring that the PAF is sent back to HR with corrected information.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Review and revise all HR/Payroll forms to ensure they conform to current laws and board policies and meet the needs of users.
2. Consolidate the position requisition and hiring approval forms (blue, green and yellow forms) into one document. Ensure that there are clear directions on the back of the form outlining who should complete various data elements. Place the revised form online so that managers and administrators may access it easily.
3. Further analyze the HR/Payroll paper flow to find ways to streamline procedures. Make sure that form processing originates in the appropriate department, is reviewed by required departments only once, and reaches the HR Department ready for final action.
4. Review the signature requirements on all HR/Payroll forms and streamline the process where possible. Consider requiring the Superintendent's signature for approval of new positions and changes to existing positions only.
5. Ensure that all EDD DE-43 forms are completed and submitted as required.
6. Consider eliminating the triple check of salary calculations in the HR Department.
7. Ensure that the payroll technicians verify all salary calculations made by HR technicians, and that HR technicians make all necessary corrections to the PAF.
8. Maintain the existing HR/Payroll problem-solving committee and assign the Assistant Superintendent of HR and Associate Superintendent of Administration and Business Services to co-chair the committee. This arrangement will foster dual accountability and ensure that issues brought up by committee members are acted on appropriately.
9. Consider placing accountability for all HR/Payroll transaction processing with the HR/Benefits Specialist and Supervisor of Payroll to ensure that ongoing problems are resolved and do not continue. Devote additional effort to ensuring quality control and eliminating duplicative effort.
10. Consider utilizing the HR/Benefits Specialist and the Supervisor of Payroll positions as the primary conduit for communication between the two departments and give these employees the responsibility to review, refine and improve the level of effective communication and cooperation between the HR and Payroll staff members.
11. Allow HR and Payroll staff members to have read-only access to each other's position control screens.
12. Provide read-only access to the FMS position control screens to all HR staff members who need it to complete job tasks.

13. Provide and require HR user training on the FMS so that staff can become proficient in using all system features, including report generation.
14. Consider developing a Notice of Employment form to serve as a source for new hire data that will be used for input into the HR/Payroll database.
15. Consider conducting weekly or biweekly meetings with the HR and Payroll technicians to ensure that payroll information is the same between the departments.
16. Make necessary modifications to the FMS so that salary information is calculated correctly on the PAF.
17. Make necessary modifications to the FMS to allow employee demographic data to be uploaded to the position control and payroll modules.

Credentialing

The staffing level of two technicians in the HR Department credentials section is appropriate. The section appears to meet its statutory requirements for processing credentials, monitoring assignments (including the Williams Settlement teacher assignments), sending appropriate notifications to teachers and district superintendents, and reporting to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC).

The credentials staff processes credentials using the online system provided by the CCTC. Credentials for all teachers in the county are entered into the FMS. Teacher misassignment reviews are done every four years on a rotational basis for each district in the county. The Credentials Technician splits responsibility for school site monitoring with the Senior Credentials Technician, and two consultants hired by the county office help with the monitoring. The credentials staff members notify district superintendents of misassignments and provide a 30-day time frame for response. Misassignment reports are sent to the California Department of Education (CDE) each June as required by law.

Notifications are provided to teachers regarding expiring credentials. District administrators also are notified when a teacher's paycheck must be withheld due to an expired credential.

The Credentials Technician handles approximately 30 appointments per week and has recently started using an appointment system rather than taking all clients on a walk-in basis. Appointments take approximately 20 minutes, and walk-in clients are taken as time allows. Phone inquiries also are taken between appointments. In addition, the technician processes fingerprints for county office substitutes. To further aid certificated staff to complete credential applications online, the county office should consider providing a computer terminal for their use at the county office.

The credentials staff members conduct two trainings per year for school district staff to update them on CDE requirements and new credentialing laws.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Consider providing a computer terminal at the county office where certificated staff may come in to complete and renew credentials applications online.

Internal Communication and Customer Service

Although the HR staff reported that they work together to assist one another, there are some indications of a lack of effective communication throughout the office including a lack of timely communication between the HR and Payroll Technicians. There is an apparent lack of integration in the HR Department between staff in the operations, employment, administrative and credentials areas.

County office HR clients reported satisfaction with a high level of support from the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources in managing and resolving issues pertaining to personnel problems. However, some clients perceive that employee organizations are allowed an inappropriate level of involvement in areas outside the scope of collective bargaining, such as in internal processes and procedures.

Clients reported a lesser degree of satisfaction with the service from HR support staff. Examples of comments from HR clients are:

- HR staff is not fully prepared and some may not possess an appropriate level of skill for the position(s) they fill.
- Written communications from HR are not well thought out.
- HR staff sometimes lack information to respond to inquiries, or they provide incorrect information.
- There is a need for more clearly defined roles and expectations.
- Slow service – hiring process in particular.

The county office appears to lack specific performance objectives for the HR Department regarding customer service and client satisfaction. Developing and communicating objectives would raise the priority of these functions and increase awareness of the department's efforts in this area. The HR Department should also develop a standard calendar of HR responsibilities, with time lines for specific duties and the staff member responsible for each duty.

Staff cross training that enables them to perform HR functions when other employees are absent is not apparent in all areas, nor is there a clear organizational structure indicating who should assist in performing HR tasks in a staff member's absence. Cross training has occurred with the HR Technician positions, as each of the three technicians is now responsible for completing tasks for a portion of the certificated and classified county employees. Examples of additional cross training opportunities that should be considered include: training the HR Technicians in some of the areas of recruitment and selection; training the Secretary II in routine procedures regarding credential requirements; and training the STRS account clerk in PERS reporting. In line with best practices, more than one employee in the organization should be trained to perform each job task.

HR managers and staff members should be encouraged to attend human resources training and professional growth opportunities. Training and assistance are offered by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Personnel Institute and Personnel Academy, Cooperative Organization for the Development of Personnel Selection Procedures (CODESP), Educational Jobs Opportunities and Information Network (Ed-Join) and International Personnel Management Association (IPMA). In addition, staff should develop further networking connections with other HR professionals and consider obtaining training conducted by law firms regarding HR issues. Training for HR staff should cover areas such as recruitment, selection, credentialing, testing, benefits, employee-employer relations, leadership, workers' compensation, unemployment and other personnel administration topics. Managers, HR and Payroll staff should be provided training in sections of the collective bargaining agreements that are relevant to their respective job duties.

The development and use of desk procedure manuals is an invaluable tool for proper internal controls, employee training and ensuring that staff members know where to find information related to their own duties and the duties of other positions when they fill in for another employee. The HR and Payroll departments should provide time each week for staff to develop and organize the manuals with step-by-step procedures outlining all of the duties of each position. The manuals should be updated as changes occur.

The county office should consider placing job descriptions and HR and payroll forms online so that employees have access to the information as needed. This should also help save staff time in responding to requests for these documents.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Develop specific performance objectives to administer HR systems and procedures in conformance with accepted professional practices and in compliance with all statutory requirements. Hold the Assistant Superintendent of HR and the new Director of HR accountable through the evaluation process for achieving these objectives.
2. Develop specific performance objectives to maintain a high level of satisfaction among the HR Department's customers and provide clear and timely communication to school sites and departments regarding these objectives. Make the HR Department staff and the entire organization aware of the high priority placed on achieving a high level of client satisfaction through excellent customer service.
3. Develop written annual/monthly calendars and accompanying lists for recurring personnel and employee relations activities that designate both the activity and the position with primary responsibility for the activity.

4. Develop and distribute to county office staff a list of HR services that includes the activities performed, the individuals responsible, and their contact information.
5. Direct the Assistant Superintendent of HR and new Director to develop a plan for team-building for the entire department. The goal should be to strengthen unity and commitment to common purposes in the department.
6. Review work flow in the HR Department and its interaction with other county office departments and school sites to identify opportunities to improve efficiency, effectiveness, communication and cooperation among staff and other units.
7. Ensure that both the Assistant Superintendent and the new Director of HR actively seek to identify emerging personnel issues and challenges and assertively provide leadership, counsel and training to county office staff in dealing effectively with these emerging issues.
8. Communicate in writing and orally to department and school site staff any changes in current practices and requirements for compliance, such as policy changes, organizational changes and personnel actions.
9. Prioritize timely and accurate responses from HR to sites and departments on phone calls and requests for information.
10. Develop specific strategies for cross training staff members in the HR Department to ensure continuity of service during periods of peak workload or when staff members are absent.
11. Assess each HR Department staff member's professional development and training needs and develop a prioritized plan to address them.
12. Allow and encourage HR Department managers and staff members to attend human resources professional growth activities.
13. Provide training for management, HR and payroll staff members in the area of collective bargaining contract administration as it pertains to the job tasks.
14. Develop individual desk manuals for each HR Department staff position and update the manuals as changes occur.
15. Provide online access of HR and payroll forms to county employees.
16. Consider publishing salary schedules in a format that displays job classifications, pay grades, salary steps and longevity increments as well as monthly salaries and hourly rates. Provide employees online access to this information.
17. Hold regular staff meetings of the entire HR Department to discuss current issues, the flow of work and to plan for maintaining the effective delivery of HR services even in periods of peak workload.

Security of Information within HR Department

Human Resources records and files appear appropriately stored in lockable file cabinets. A locked wall-mounted container is provided in front of the HR Department office for applicants to deposit employment applications.

The Secretary II processes employment applications and HR documents in the public reception area. At times patrons reach over the counter and take things such as rubber bands and paperclips off the desk. This could cause a breach in confidentiality if documents were left unattended or were visible to other employees and members of the public.

Personnel files should not contain an employee's medical records. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers to keep employees' medical records confidential and separate from personnel files. This information may be revealed only to safety and first aid workers if necessary to treat the employee or provide for evacuation procedures; to the employee's supervisor if the employee's disability requires restricted duties or a reasonable accommodation; to government officials as required by law; and to insurance companies that require a medical exam. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) also imposes privacy obligations on many employers who provide group health plans. Under HIPAA, employers are required to protect the privacy of employees' personal health-related information.

The HR and Payroll departments do not have read-only access to each other's position control screens. Read-only access would allow staff to review but not change information. This access would be an invaluable step to more efficient use of the system and of employee time. It would eliminate an inordinate amount of time spent by staff in physically taking paperwork back and forth between departments.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Provide an area less accessible to the public for processing employment applications and related HR documents.
2. Create separate "medical only" files for each employee to maintain the privacy of medical records or documentation as required by federal employee confidentiality laws.
3. Provide read-only access to position control screens between the HR and Payroll departments.

Information Technology

Facilities

The Information Technology Department has two primary facility spaces devoted to its use. One is where the FMS system, network support equipment, and the FMS staff are located. The other is where the network technicians are located. One technician is located with the Instructional Technology personnel in a third facility.

The space allocated for technology support has only one office and short, low partitions separating work spaces. The lead FMS developer works in a small room that contains a lot of equipment. This was done to insulate him from constant interruptions by users wanting his time and attention. Since the help desk has been established, users are being routed there instead of to the lead developer's desk.

The area where the lead developer sits is noisy because of the fans that are used to cool equipment. This area needs to be evaluated for safety.

There are no planning/meeting areas, no equipment staging/testing benches, and no separation from user interruptions for most of the IT staff.

The reception/help desk should be located at the front of the department space. Non-department personnel should not be able to proceed past this area without invitation. IT needs adequate space for equipment assembly, testing, office/desk space, file space, media archiving, and other needs. Software development requires considerable deliberation, analysis, evaluation, and collaboration between team members. The FMS team working space is poorly suited to its purpose.

Technology needs can be expected to continue to grow, and additional work space will likely be needed. No plan exists at this time to provide the space needed for this department and its employees.

Electronic keypad locks are on all the doors leading to the computer rooms and other areas where networking and server hardware is housed. Doors appeared to be locked at all times. Only select individuals such as the networking staff and managers have security clearance to access these rooms.

The networking staff is responsible for the intranet and provides WAN support to the school districts. Sometimes the staff provides support to districts past their router when asked, assisting them with network and security issues. The staff's expertise helps make the PC systems more secure, and provides a more secure network.

At one time multiple push-to-talk radios were provided for network and technician staff to communicate with each other and with the department. Currently only two radios are available for all staff. Network staff and technicians need to communicate during their workday. Equipment should be provided to enable communication between team members.

In the network room, a Barracuda-brand firewall monitors and protects the e-mail server from spam, viruses, spoofing, phishing and spyware attacks. Network intrusion hardware/software is in place to inspect all data passing through the network, helping to prevent malicious or suspicious communications from reaching their intended targets and protecting the network resources. Districts that use the county office as their ISP are behind the firewall and benefit from the security the county office provides.

The IT staff is implementing MS Exchange and Active Directory services. This will greatly improve e-mail and department file-sharing security.

Halon Fire Suppression System

The primary computer and network room at the Monterey COE is protected by a halon gas fire suppression system. The thresholds for doors were removed some time ago, as was a door between the computer room and a network cable termination area. The drop-down ceiling is shared with an adjacent network equipment area that also serves as an office for one employee. Thus, the halon gas would escape the computer room immediately upon release and move into the two adjacent rooms and the outlying office space and hall area. The operator has never been given training on how to respond to the halon system activation, and improper response procedures are posted on the wall.

Containment of the gas when released is vital to the health and safety of those in the area. Unnecessary exposure of employees to either the natural agent or decomposition products should be avoided. Decomposition results from exposure of the agent to fire or other hot surfaces. Halon is about five times heavier than air and will settle to the bottom of enclosed or confined spaces.

While halon is one of the most effective fire extinguishing agents ever produced, it has many associated hazards that caused it to be banned for new installations in California many years ago. Even though it is considered to have low toxicity, safety and health problems could occur for those who become exposed to the gas if its concentration exceeds industry-defined safety levels.

The county office's standard operating procedure for a halon system activation has been to reset it and wait to see if it activates a second time, and then call the security company followed by the fire department. Employees have not been trained in emergency procedures in case of a fire in the area and have no knowledge of the risks related to the halon system.

There are extensive regulations for control of halon systems. All regulations are obviously not being met by the present system since the gas is not contained and escapes into adjacent spaces easily.

Systems Disaster Recovery/Power Supply

There is no plan to recover financial or other systems should they be destroyed in a disaster such as fire or earthquake. A 30-day rotating backup of FMS system and database is kept in an unlocked safe in the vault room. The vault room is kept locked, but the room is not fire safe. The safe where FMS tapes are kept is not marked with its fire rating or protection for tape media. It appears to be an old safe formerly used for money or certificates, so it may be sufficient for paper but not for tape media. Special containers are needed for tape media that will be destroyed at temperatures lower than paper and many other media forms.

An online backup to another server is performed every evening to function as a ready replacement if needed, but this server is in the same room as the FMS servers. A full weekly tape backup of the FMS is stored off site for use in the event the local archive is destroyed. These tapes have not been tested. The off-site archiving is a good practice. However, the file storage rotation schedule and length of time the tapes are archived should meet California Association of School Business Officials standards, statutory requirements, and best practices for the industry.

Business continuity procedures have not been defined, so even if the FMS was restored from a week-old backup, there is no real expectation that the necessary transactions to bring it current so work could continue could be done.

Adequate uninterruptible power supply (UPS) systems are needed to keep critical systems running so they can be shut down in an orderly fashion to prevent them from being damaged. The study team noted the presence of UPS systems during a computer room walk-through. The staff was not sure how much hardware would stay functioning in the event of a power failure.

A realistic disaster recovery plan is needed that will allow district and Monterey COE users to continue to perform necessary tasks required to meet payroll and vendor payments and other needs. An online, high speed database replication with online backup to a remote site could be done, or a memorandum of understanding could be established that would allow the county office to use another LEA's site to build and use FMS remotely. Some vendors provide disaster recovery services, including online backup.

A risk associated with the 30-day retention practice is that it provides no ready way to expeditiously prepare for a civil case or answer a federal subpoena for communications records of county office employees or the County Board. New laws require LEAs to respond within a defined timeline, or face fines and even contempt charges.

In addition, network stored files, FMS data and software used in business cycles of more

than 30 days could be inadvertently lost due to operator, user, or programmer errors, or natural disasters. Many business cycles for LEAs are quarterly or annual. In fact, several users stated that they lost files that could not be recovered by the network technicians.

The county office data retention policies do not meet regulatory requirements, and do not provide for data recovery in the event of a disaster.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Discontinue using equipment areas as employee work spaces. Move the lead programmer out of the equipment area.
2. Provide adequate partitioning of the present space to make more functional work areas for employees.
3. Develop a plan to locate all technology employees in one area while providing for present needs and growth for the future.
4. Purchase additional push-to-talk radios that will allow staff members to communicate with each other while addressing issues outside the department.
5. Continue to involve the network staff in PC support.
6. Provide IT staff with additional network testing tools to allow them to monitor and identify network bottlenecks and other issues more efficiently.
7. Immediately contact a qualified vendor to inspect the computer and network room enclosure and make the recommended improvements to the facility and halon fire suppression system. At a minimum, the county office will need to:
 - Reinstall door thresholds, seal doors.
 - Ensure that the room is separated from adjacent office space that is in use.
 - Develop a written policy for employees who may be exposed to halon gas.
 - Provide training to consist of first aid procedures, spill and leak response, safe handling and storage, and recognizing signs and symptoms of exposure.
8. Consider replacing the halon system with an FM-200 gas fire suppression system to avoid unnecessary risks to employees.
9. Document financial system procedures for payroll and accounts payable processing. Test the ability to rebuild and load data onto critical servers such as the FMS servers, which would be the first priority in the event of a disaster.
10. Determine whether the computer room UPS system can handle the current load by having a UPS technician test its capacity and system health. Label systems and

- racks for easy identification (front and back). Create an operations guide for each system.
11. Develop data and original software retention policies to include the end-of-month tapes for all critical information for up to 18 months and the end-of-quarter tapes for up to two years. Test archive tapes semi-annually to ensure they are valid.
 12. Provide tape media fire-safe storage for FMS and other enterprise server tapes.
 13. Compare the county office's data retention policies for other information with the Education Code and other regulatory requirements. Review the CASBO Business Records retention guide for an explanation of how long data must be retained.
 14. Determine the length of time for retention of all e-mail other than spam between, to and from all its employees and board members. Obtain board approval of this time span, and communicate it to all staff.

Financial Management System

The Monterey COE has developed the Financial Management System (FMS), which is maintained by four dedicated staff members and is supported by others on a part-time basis. This system allows the county office to provide business services for its operations and for the county's school districts. It provides financial control and accountability for services such as payroll, accounts payable and general ledger.

School districts are dissatisfied with the system's reliability, available applications and reporting capabilities. FMS user group meetings lapsed years ago but were restarted a few months ago. However, district users have not been included in the new user group meetings. District users stated they are not getting adequate support for existing software and do not have all features and reporting they need. Key reports such as a school board budget revision report with working, proposed, revised, and approved budgets are not available.

School district users and some Monterey COE users stated that they no longer try to discuss system issues with the county office Technology Services staff because their concerns are not addressed. District users felt they had no input regarding system functions. Monterey COE users had a long list of needed reports and features that have not been addressed. District and Monterey COE users cannot directly request help from the FMS software developers and must instead route all such requests through an IT department manager.

Several districts use separate, stand-alone position control software to manage job positions and related budget information because they perceive the FMS position control module is not adequate for their needs, nor is it well supported.

QuickBooks software is used for invoicing. This product needs to be upgraded to a newer version. IT has apparently begun work on an invoicing system to replace QuickBooks. The new application should allow school districts and county office employees to request and print their own payroll and accounts payable reports.

Users reported anomalies in software behavior, with frequent crashes and freezes that require data to be re-entered. There was little consistency in these occurrences, as users were using different applications at different times. Problems occurred both at the county office and in districts, and may not all be FMS related. Network issues on the intranet and/or communication errors on high-speed data lines could cause some of these issues.

Other issues reported by users are:

- The lead software developer conducts training, but very infrequently.
- Documentation is out of date and incomplete. No announcement, training, or documentation is provided for system changes.

- System access security is very low. Users are not required to change passwords, which are as short as four characters and lack complexity.
- County office users must log out and back in to get each district's reports, which is very laborious.
- A 941 payroll tax report is not included in FMS. Reporting requires Monterey COE employees to download multiple reports, hand-enter some data, and use several linked spreadsheets to obtain the figures needed.
- A budget transaction record is only available via a report. Developers stated that there is very little online lookup; most data is only available by launching a report. This is laborious and does not demonstrate modern information system design.
- A net zero paycheck still processes voluntary deductions.
- Monterey COE Human Resources employees still use some report tools from an old system because they are not available on the FMS.
- No master files access for users to make configuration changes to HR-related information and databases, such as job codes or job categories.
- No terminated employee information is available.
- There are no position calendars or history in the system.
- The position data does not roll to payroll.
- There is no ability to encumber using position control and disencumber using payroll, which are complementary processes.
- The system contains no tracking function for personnel evaluations or TB testing.
- Many reports have inadequate sorting capabilities.
- Vendors are duplicated in the master file. A merge feature is needed to prevent recurrence and clean up the current information.
- The ability to delete a vendor should be removed, since vendor history information is occasionally accessed in subsequent years. This is standard in most systems, since removing a vendor used for transactions in past years corrupts the data for those years.
- Users desire changes to the vendor, AP payment, PO/requisition, and vendor list windows.
- 1099 reporting needs enhancement, including new fields and sort capabilities.
- There is no pre-encumbrance system for requisitions.

Development and Deployment

FMS developers are not following established procedures for software development environments that maintain application revision history, prevent updates from being overwritten, and maintain fallback information such as the production and maintenance of software baselines. These baselines record a prior system configuration and components so it can be used if needed.

Goals are not set for integrating new subsystems or upgrading to new system components. This is a risky practice, given the complexity of the projects as well as the years of labor and hundreds of components involved. There is a very real danger of losing functional aspects of the system and critical information that keep the system viable for the accountants, payroll technicians, and budget managers who rely on it.

The lead developer uses laptops with small, inefficient screens for work. A source code library is not established formally or informally. There was discussion among FMS developers about deploying the latest version of Microsoft's SQL server immediately, but no discussion of first testing it for compatibility with all existing software.

Standard practice in software development is to develop on one platform (a standard computer architecture, operating system, and programming language). Best practices and standards are set up to be used in development of the application. The application is deployed as beta such that it can easily be replaced temporarily, if necessary, by the original software. The baselines are archived for safety of investment and tracking. There is a high risk otherwise of overwriting the wrong software, introducing immature software, and potentially causing substantial disruption in the business processes of the organization.

This approach applies to custom developed software and system components such as the SQL database. Each component needs to first be tested in the development stages before deployment. While it is commendable to stay current with middleware (the software that connects applications) and subsystem component upgrades, such as for the MS SQL Server, it is dangerous to deploy major new releases of embedded software without testing them on all production systems first.

The Monterey COE's current FMS practices can result in disruption, loss of work when good software components are lost or overwritten, and general disorder to the software process.

Software artifacts are the components of the system. They define it and provide the information needed to maintain, operate, and modify the system, and speedily correct problems pertaining to it. These artifacts include program code, purchased software components (database, utility programs, compilers, etc.), requirement documentation, and information on the system design, users, operators, and management. Collectively, these define the system and are its "source." Without a software artifact source library, it likely would be impossible for the Monterey COE to re-establish its system should a portion of

it be lost for any reason. No definition of the specific components of the FMS as it currently exists has been established by the FMS developers.

Programming

The programming staff is undergoing many procedure changes for managing projects and programs. Until very recently the staff wrote applications using only VB6 technology in developing the FMS system. The recently hired IT Director has implemented the more current .NET environment. Application source control is now part of this environment and will help with version control and software security. Microsoft Team Builder is used to allow application source code to be controlled and shared with a development team. An upgrade from MS SQL Server 2000 to Server 2008 is under way. ReportViewer will be used for reporting. This is a freely redistributable control that enables embedding reports in applications developed using the .NET framework. Two programmers have received .NET training using these new programming tools.

The IT Director appears very committed to improving the hardware and software on which the FMS system is based. The changes implemented thus far are all positive steps for this office. A substantial investment has been made in the current software, and keeping the staff trained to maintain the system remains important. It will take years to rewrite the FMS system using newer programming tools such as .NET, so the existing system artifacts will need to be maintained until a full change-out is accomplished.

County office administrators expressed a desire for significant enhancements to the office's Web presence and emphasized establishing an instructional Web portal. Creation of this type of portal requires significant technical skill and experience with .NET, Visual Basic, SQL, Java scripting, and information design technologies. No one in the IT Department has all of the skills necessary to create and maintain an effective instructional Web portal. This will need to be addressed by an additional staff member because the requirements are not transient. In fact, Web-based information, collaboration, and system implementations can be expected to increase in demand.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Halt work on new software projects until existing system deficiencies and errors are corrected. Devote programming staff time instead to improving FMS functionality with existing programming tools if necessary.
2. Establish a district and Monterey COE user group that meets at least once a month. Designate a group coordinator and define the errors reported and enhancements desired. Based on the information received at these meetings, prioritize FMS modifications according to importance and user needs. Place high

- priority on tasks that are especially laborious, or have federal, state, or resource mandates.
3. Create a list-serve for all users to facilitate communication with each other and with the FMS developers.
 4. Expand the new Help Desk ticket process so that all FMS users, including districts, can input requests for system changes and service. Direct these queries to the help desk initially, with developer follow-up as necessary.
 5. Implement a new password system that requires users to change their password approximately ever three months. Increase the complexity of passwords to make security breaches less likely. Use a mix of letters, symbols and numbers.
 6. Stop software development on all production servers and establish an entirely separate development environment including servers, software, licenses, rack space, etc. Back up the system nightly. Include in the software development environment workstations of each type and configuration that will be accessing it.
 7. Enforce established procedures where programmers who work on the software check it out and back in. Log the modifications by user, purpose, etc. Periodically establish new baselines for the entire system or portions of it for deployment into production. Plan and coordinate these activities with users so they know what is coming and how to use it, including documentation.
 8. Test all new releases of embedded software (e.g., Microsoft's SQL server) with all subsystems in the development environment before installing them for users. This will reduce the substantial risk of introducing these third-party components when they are not compatible with existing software.
 9. Provide a new development workstation for the lead software developer and others who need one, with a large monitor of at least 22 inches.
 10. Ensure that continued education is provided for the IT staff to keep current with emerging technologies.
 11. Ensure that development and testing of new applications is a priority, with test environments that match the production environment. Consider the possible advantages of using Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Reporting Services (report builder) in these activities.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

Technology Management

The IT Director has held this position for less than two months. In addition to the director, there are 12 staff members in the department. Three employees report directly to the director: the Help Desk Technician, the Systems Analyst, and the Network Administrator.

These individuals report to the Systems Analyst: two Programmer IIs, a Programmer/Operator, and the Web Designer. These individuals report to the Network Administrator: three Network Technicians, a Desktop Technician and a Special Education Desktop Technician. All computer support staff in other divisions will be reporting to the IT director before the end of fiscal year 2008-09.

There is no IT department liaison, or information systems coordinator, to communicate with and train county office and district FMS users. The lack of this type of position is especially apparent given the relationship that the Monterey COE has with the school districts and other county staff. The school district personnel interviewed by the team feel very disconnected and insufficiently supported by the county office IT staff.

Staff and projects outside of the direction and supervision of the IT Director have led to fragmentation in the way technology functions at the Monterey COE. Other divisions such as Migrant Education and Alternative Education have additional PC support staff, including private contractors.

The study team understands that the SELPA section has been allowed to contract for desktop support in violation of state law that prohibits a contractual arrangement for services existing classified staff are qualified to perform (EC 45101.3). Desktop support has been a long-time function of the IT staff. Unless considerable analysis has been conducted and there is documented proof that the use of an outside contractor would be advantageous, state code requires additional staff to be hired.

In the past the Instructional Division's instructional resources portal project, TV broadcasting services and many microwave broadcasting tower duties have not been supervised by the IT Director. The study team was told by the County Superintendent that the IT Director will be responsible for these in the future. These projects will all utilize IT staff resources and telecommunication services, and may necessitate additional staffing.

Personnel Management

The IT Director should work closely with the HR Director to obtain a thorough understanding of the provisions of classified collective bargaining agreements and the processes involved in working with represented employees.

Employee evaluations are not performed at regular intervals and some employees have never been evaluated. Evaluations can help managers in a variety of ways including providing necessary feedback to workers on their performance, helping to document superior and inferior performance, give managers feedback on what the employee sees as lacking in their work environment, and provide a definitive time for discussing the relationship between supervisor and employee. Inaccurate work, poor performance, and misbehavior should not be left for a once a year time for discussion. These need to be noted to employees immediately along with the appropriate remedy for them.

Because some IT staff members in the county office do not report to the IT director, it limits the director's ability to focus the resources of the department to best serve all divisions. All county office technology staff should report to the IT Director.

Web Applications

The Monterey COE employs one person for Web applications development. This employee is classified as a Web Designer. There are no Web site software or system developers on staff, although contractors have participated in several projects, and a contract is now in place for some work on the Web portals.

A stated goal of the Monterey COE Superintendent is for the county office to lead efforts to bring districts together via the Internet to collaborate and share resources. However, the county office does not have a Web application developer on staff. Thus, outside assistance would be needed in this area.

Web projects in process include:

- Redesign, development, and deployment of a new Monterey COE web site
- Portal projects begun by the Instruction Department
- Help Desk ticketing system implementation
- Possible Wiki site for Monterey COE technology services users and a list-serve for obtaining user group support help quickly and effectively for the Financial Management System
- Collaboration work

The Web Designer's skills would be best utilized for portal administration, site design oversight, and other ancillary efforts. Portal work is currently performed by a former employee under contract.

Warrant Production

An experienced operator starts the payroll or APY warrant process in the evening, and the next morning requests the attendant reports. If this job aborts during the evening, the operator is not aware of it until the next morning. There is no checklist for quality assurance, for tracking of the process, or for assurance that all tasks are complete.

The bank files associated with the warrant production process are handled by an automation script, which is a set of scheduled processes running on the FMS. Necessary transaction files of debits/credits are thus sent to the bank automatically. The operator does not check to be sure automatic processes for file transfer run correctly. This should be part of the operator's responsibilities and should be included on a checklist of tasks to perform.

When the operator is absent the lead programmer must run warrant production cycles. No one else is trained to do this, and the programmer apparently does it from memory. Therefore, only two employees know how to produce warrants, and one is a highly paid programmer.

Payroll runs are not ordered from payroll. Although the payroll department issues warrant stock to the IT department, payroll does not closely monitor the use of warrant stock. No warrant count is performed by either employee involved in warrant checkout. When the IT employee asks for warrants, a payroll clerk opens the cabinet where the warrants are locked up and lets the operator remove whatever amount is deemed necessary. The payroll clerk then locks the thin metal cabinet where the warrants are kept and leaves the area. This allows ample opportunity for warrant stock to be acquired by unauthorized individuals.

At the time of FCMAT's fieldwork, the operator was working on a description of the production room equipment and how to use it, but not on the procedures to perform the duties of the position.

Warrant production is a complex process that is essential to the business of the Monterey COE. It should be well documented and protected by sound internal control measures. Several employees should be capable of running warrants and performing associated tasks to provide backup for vacations and/or illness.

The lead programmer appears to be the only employee who understands the entire warrant production process from start to finish, including file transfers. His absence would present a major obstacle to completion of warrant production.

Microwave Transmitter/Receiver Towers

Monterey COE network technicians climb microwave towers, some of which are 80 feet in height (according to technicians), to make repairs and adjustments. Technicians are not properly trained, do not know the hazards involved, have no protective equipment, and are not compliant with California Occupational and Safety Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) standards for this kind of work.

The county office is exposed to significant business and safety risks by having its technicians perform microwave tower work. A qualified contractor should be hired to perform the work until appropriate training and protective equipment is provided for employees. The optimal solution may be to use a contractor for this work indefinitely.

If county office technicians continue to perform microwave tower work, their job descriptions should be expanded to include these duties. Under the current job description, technicians should be allowed to decline to perform this work since it is not a part of what they were hired to do and requires balance, the ability to climb, and other skills and abilities outside of and not required by the job description.

Personal Computer Specifications

The Monterey COE technicians specify the systems for each computer order individually and use the manufacturer desired by the department manager ordering the equipment. There is no standard vendor, hardware platform, or standard computer configuration. The technicians individually load and configure each application needed.

Selecting a few standard configurations from one or two vendors would help contain costs for specifying, procuring and supporting desktop computer systems. A lack of such standards will increase the costs of specification, procurement, and support throughout the life cycle of these systems.

The county office does not utilize vendor programs such as Dell's that provide a corporate Web site for ordering standard configurations and preloading the destination disk image onto the hard disk. Such preloaded configurations may include a wide range of setup information and standard software such as Microsoft Office.

Administrative computer workstations can be standardized on one architecture and one operating system, except in a few rare, exceptional situations. Standard selection will depend on the county office's investment in other systems, software, and user training. The most prominent setup today is Intel-based with the Windows operating system. An Apple system with OS X also is common. Intel with a Linux operating system is an increasingly common standard.

An additional advantage of focused purchasing is that many vendors and distributors will provide deeper discounts or rebates based on volume purchasing.

Instructional use workstations often are standardized, but this may sacrifice diversity in student instruction. Alternately, not standardizing increases the cost of instruction. If an instructional program is willing to bear the cost that a diverse computing environment brings, then it should be allowed.

E-Rate Project Administration

Under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission, the E-Rate program provides discounts to assist most U.S. schools and libraries to obtain affordable telecommunications and Internet access.

Management of the E-Rate project for the Monterey COE has been assigned to the Technology Director's assistant/help desk coordinator, whose background is in clerical support and accounting.

This task is multifaceted, substantial and very technical in the vision, planning and details needed. Substantial clerical tasks include tracking funding, assembling information, and maintaining the required records. Purchasing functions also are involved. Network engineering, extensive regulatory requirements and other aspects make it highly specialized. Many school districts use an outside consultant to perform E-Rate work since it peaks as more than a one person task and trails off to very little work in the off months. This helps districts to maximize their discounts and minimize the delays associated with inquiries from representatives of the organization overseeing this federal discount program. Typically, E-Rate consultants charge either a flat rate per year or a very small percentage of the discount the district receives, with a not-to-exceed cap amount established in advance.

E-Rate consultants can be identified through an Internet search or by contacting other school districts or county offices. The relatively small cost for this service can be justified by maximizing the discounts that can be obtained by an experienced consultant.

The amount of subsidies obtained depends largely on the ability of the filing entity to translate its technological needs into E-rate application terms.

In certain circumstances, E-rate will provide funding for microwave towers and support. E-rate has not been used for any of the microwave tower support at the Monterey COE.

Training Needs

The Monterey COE Acceptable Use Policy was not reviewed. Some users think they signed a policy at some point in the past, some said maybe five or more years ago, and some newer hires signed one more recently. Most employees remember signing an e-mail use policy when they were hired. LEAs around the state routinely have employees sign a Technology AUP each year.

IT staff members expressed a desire to be reimbursed for technical books or training materials in their area of responsibility when they take the initiative to improve their technical skills.

The expectation that IT staff can maintain the new hardware and software that is implemented in the IT department requires them to receive ongoing training in the areas for which they are responsible.

IT staff that are involved in computer system operations need to have documentation resources and training regarding backups, payroll processing, APY processing and any other critical procedures. Network and programming staff received some training recently on Exchange, Active directory and .NET. More training is needed to better prepare the staff for the new technologies to be implemented and supported this coming year.

The IT Director should consider obtaining training regarding the fundamental issues that drive school technology. This will assist the Director in managing the department and understanding the special challenges that school districts and county offices face.

County office and school district personnel should be encouraged to use the Help Desk ticket process. Many still bypass this process, which sometimes overwhelms staff that already have ticket projects assigned to them. Employees who experience application, PC, and reporting errors should enter their own help tickets. These calls should be dealt with at a higher priority. Critical errors or system issues need to be resolved quickly to allow employees to do their jobs. Employees need to know that the IT department will respond to them in a timely manner. Help Desk Ticket requests related to system modifications or enhancements should be routed to the employee's supervisor.

Recommendations

The county office should:

1. Reclassify the Programmer I as Operations Technician or Operator I because the job duties of that position do not involve programming.
2. Cross train the Web designer to take over Web portal work for Instructional services (now done under time sheet with a former full-time employee) and develop content as needed for sites.

3. Consider hiring an IT department liaison to communicate with and train county office and district FMS users.
4. Organize all technology support personnel resources and contracts under the Information Technology Department's authority. Make managers aware of laws prohibiting the use of contract labor to do work already done in-house.
5. Enhance the IT Director's knowledge of the CSEA and CTA bargaining agreements, particularly with regard to the accurate and timely evaluation of employees' job performance.
6. Ensure that employees are evaluated at least once a year and that the expectations of management with regard to their job performance are made clear.
7. Initiate biweekly staff meetings conducted by the IT Director to improve communication and to discuss projects and issues. Conduct separate meetings of the IT Director and managers to evaluate priorities and set goals for the IT department.
8. Cross train at least three employees who can perform all warrant runs, including proper file transfer.
9. Develop a detailed warrant production procedure check-off sheet delineating the steps of the process that any cross trained employee can use to complete a run in an emergency situation.
10. Implement a warrant production order process where the payroll department defines the run to be performed, with gross amounts, net amounts, and number of warrants. Limit the number of warrants released to IT to the number of warrants necessary to complete the run, and require the return of any warrants that were not used or were damaged in production. Require Payroll to verify that all warrants are either used or returned.
11. Review its Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (required by Cal-OSHA) to be sure that the microwave related work and tower work is properly addressed in it.
12. Provide a hardhat, safety climbing harness, and safety rope for each type of microwave tower work to be performed.
13. Develop safe standard operating procedures for each task, e.g., climbing, radio transmitter/receiver replacement work, and antennae adjustments.
14. Train technicians adequately in safe climbing practices and the use of protective equipment so they understand the risks involved and how to minimize them.
15. Establish a policy for all technology purchases to be approved by the Information Technology Department.
16. Survey desktop systems and select a standard hardware platform and operating system for use as the administrative use workstation.

17. Select a standard vendor and one backup for purchases via request for proposal, request for quote, or an existing contract arrangement. Work with purchasing professionals and the vendor to obtain the best possible discounts, rebates, and bonus equipment possible for the expected procurement volume. Obtain a corporate Web site from the vendor for users to be able to select and print standard configurations.
18. Research imaging tools such as Ghost to build disk images for PC workstations. Plan to have the vendor preload imaging or load it in-house as part of the setup for all delivered systems.
19. Consider using an outside consultant for E-Rate application work.
20. Encourage the IT Director to participate in professional organizations such as the California Educational Technology Professionals Association and enroll in technology management training that is pertinent to school districts and county offices.
21. Provide IT staff with ongoing training and training materials. Ensure that IT managers assess the training needs of employees as new technologies get introduced.
22. Require all new employees to sign the Acceptable Use of Technology policies. Require existing employees to sign the policies annually.

Appendices

- A. Position Requisition Form and Instructions*
- B. Notice of Employment Form*
- C. Study Agreement*

APPENDIX A

XXXXXX SCHOOL DISTRICT
POSITION REQUISITION

General Information			
Site/Department Name	Site/Dept #	Telephone #	Request Date
Requestor's Name	Title	E-Mail Address	Alternate Phone

Action Requested: **ALL REQUESTS MUST BE APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

☐ Create New Position Current Allocation: New Allocation: Funding Change
(attach documentation) **(attach documentation)**

☐ Post Vacant*/New Position (please circle) *To replace:

☐ Increase FTE % from to ☐ Decrease FTE % from to

☐ Eliminate Position: justification

Long-term Substitute*/Extra Help Request
Instructions: Show budget sources below
and attach documentation justifying request
 Job Classification: _____
 Employee on Leave* _____
 _____ Certificated Start Date _____ End Date: _____
 _____ Classified Work Hrs _____ am/pm to _____ am/pm
 Recommended Sub: _____

[illegible]

Position Information		
Position Number _____	Position Title _____	Current FTE % _____

Requestor (Principal, Program Mgr,etc)	Date	Executive Director	Date
Associate/Assistant Superintendent	Date	Verified by (Human Resources)	Date
Chief Financial Officer	Date	Human Resources to return copy to originator	

TO: SITE AND DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATORS

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT: REVISED POSITION REQUISITION FORM

Attached please find a revised Position Requisition (PR) form. This form will take the place of the Position Action (PAF) and Request to Fill (RTF) forms and is in effect immediately. We will be putting this form on the website in the near future.

The PR form is to be used in the following instances:

- Creating a new position – this requires documentation showing where the funding is coming from and why the position is needed
- Funding changes – this requires documentation for the new funding source
- Posting a vacancy – requires the name of the employee being replaced
- Increasing/decreasing FTE – this requires documentation either way. Decreases mean layoffs.
- Eliminating a position – complete the justification area. This section means a layoff.
- Request for long-term help/substitutes –
 1. If you have a classroom teacher who will be out for a long-term leave (more than one semester) you may request approval for a long term substitute/temporary teacher. Documentation required.
 2. If you are requesting substitutes for in-service or other site activities that are not related to a teachers absence, you must complete this form providing both the OBARS and IFAS site budget to charge these expenses. Note: starting January 1st, only the IFAS account number will be needed.

Once the form has been signed by all required parties, a copy will be returned to the originator by the Human Resources department.

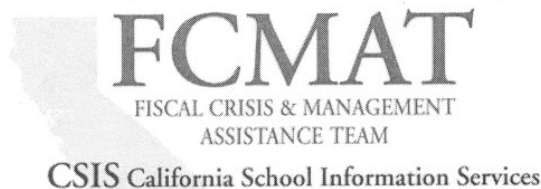
Questions regarding this form may be addressed to your Budget or HR Analyst.

CC:

APPENDIX B

NOTICE OF EMPLOYMENT – CLASSIFIED

DIST NO.	SOCIAL SECURITY	SCHOOL CODE	EMPLOYEE NAME (Last, First, Middle)			
060						
EMPLOYEE ADDRESS (Number and Street)			CITY	STATE	ZIP	
PHONE	SEX	BIRTHDATE	MARITAL STATUS	TAX EXEMPT.	DATE EMPLOYED	FORMER EMPL. NO.
NAME OF LAST PUBLIC AGENCY EMPLOYMENT		TERMINATION DATE	Has employee worked for any San Mateo County school district or county office after 1/1/57? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> IF YES, NAME OF LAST DISTRICT: _____ LAST DATE WORKED: _____ OR CURRENTLY: _____			
Has employee been a member of a retirement system? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> IF YES: STRS <input type="checkbox"/> PERS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> (SPECIFY IF OTHER) _____		Have retirement contributions been withdrawn? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> APPROXIMATE DATE: _____				
FULL-TIME MONTHLY GROSS	ACTUAL MONTHLY GROSS	% OF FULL-TIME	DAILY RATE	HOURLY RATE	MISC. RATE	
CREDENTIAL CODES & EXPIRATION DATES		BASE HRS. REQ.	FULL-TIME	POSITION		
CODE _____ MO _____ YR _____		HRLY. 400	MO. 173			
ACCOUNT AND PAYROLL CODES						
STARTING DATE	ACCOUNT NUMBER	PAY PLAN	RET. CODE	COMP CODE	PAY RATE	MONTHLY NORMAL GROSS
MONTHLY						
MONTHLY						
MONTHLY						
DATE:			SIGNED: _____ (RESPONSIBLE SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICIAL)			
COUNTY OFFICE USE:						
Posted to Permanent Record:			Duplicate to E.D.P.:			
Date Retire. Effective _____			Age at Effective Date _____		Notice to PERS (Date) _____	
FOR DISTRICT USE ONLY						
U.S. CITIZEN? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		IF NATURALIZED, DATE: _____		CERT NO.:	UNIT:	
Is Employee NEW <input type="checkbox"/> or RE-EMPLOYED <input type="checkbox"/> in this District?						
If RE-EMPLOYED, indicate LAST date of previous service: _____					ETHNIC CODE:	
SALARY RANGE:		STEP:		Where will employee be working? DIVISION:		
LOCATION:		REMARKS:				
Employee Signature					Date	
Prepared by		APPROVED (Personnel Director signature)		APPROVED (Division Head signature)		



FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
STUDY AGREEMENT
September 2, 2008

The FISCAL CRISIS AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the Team, and the Monterey County Office of Education, hereinafter referred to as the COE, 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 COE has requested that the Team provide for the assignment of professionals to study specific aspects of the County 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.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

The scope of work for is identified separately for each of the three areas:

Human Resources and Payroll Review

1. Review policies, procedures, forms, and level of customer service of the Human Resources Department to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency, both internally within the department and with other departments/divisions of the county office.
2. Review interactions and the flow of information between the Human Resources and Payroll Departments to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency of employee payment information.
3. Review the security of information within the Human Resources Department, including appropriate access to systems.
4. Review the orientation process for new employees, ensuring there are standards in place that allow for success of employees.
5. Review the systems used within Human Resources, including credentialing, ensuring they are being utilized to their full ability as well as being maintained and kept up to date.
6. Recommend specific trainings needed by positions within reviewed departments in order to implement recommendations.
7. As part of the review, compare findings with other similar county offices

processes, procedures, policies and forms. Survey districts in the county and county office staff to identify suggestions and concerns/issues with the system. Confirm whether the system is being utilized to its full advantage.

3. Review how programming changes are being done to the FMS system, assessing the process, procedures and how documentation is being handled. Also review how users of the FMS system are being notified of changes, as well as being given an opportunity for input.
4. Review the COE Information Technology Department's organizational structure, processes and procedures in comparison to similar county offices. As part of this comparison, conduct a review of the IT department(s) interface with Instructional Technology, sharing best practices.
5. Recommend specific trainings needed by positions within reviewed departments in order to implement recommendations

Payroll Audit

1. Review current payroll information against supporting documentation in Human Resources and position control for accuracy of employees and amount. Ensure employees are being paid accurately.

Services and Products to be Provided

- 1) Orientation Meeting - The Team will conduct an orientation session at the COE to brief COE management and supervisory personnel on the overall 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 COE office and at school sites if necessary. On-site visits for each of the three areas will be scheduled according to the availability of Team members.
- 3) Progress Reports - The Team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the on-site reviews to inform the COE of significant findings and recommendations to that point.
- 4) Exit Letter - The Team will issue an exit letter approximately 10 days after the final 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 COE administration for review and comment.
- 6) Final Report - Sufficient copies of the final study report will be delivered to the COE following completion of the review.
- 7) Follow-Up Support – Six months after the completion of the study, FCMAT will return to the COE, if requested, to confirm the COE's progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report, at no cost. Status of the recommendations will be documented to the COE in a FCMAT Management Letter.

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The study team will be supervised by Anthony L. Bridges, 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. Diane Branham, FCMAT Fiscal Intervention Specialist
- C. Andrew Prestage, FCMAT Management Analyst
- D. Linda Grundhoffer, FCMAT Fiscal Consultant
- E. Margaret Rosales, FCMAT Fiscal Consultant
- F. Terry Manges, FCMAT Human Resources Consultant
- G. Glenn Siegel, FCMAT Human Resources Consultant
- H. Al Foytek, FCMAT Technology Consultant
- I. FCMAT Technology 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. Based on the scope of work identified in section 2 A, estimated total cost is **\$40,000**. The COE 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 COE.
- 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 COE

- A. The COE will provide office and conference room space while on-site reviews are in progress.
- B. The COE 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 organizational charts
 - 4) Current and four (4) prior years' audit reports
 - 5) Any documents requested on a supplemental listing
- C. The COE 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 COE pupils. The COE shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following schedule outlines preliminary completion dates for key study milestones.

Orientation:	October, 2008
Staff Interviews:	Payroll Audit: October 7 to 9, 2008 Human Resources/Payroll Review: October 21 to 23, 2008 Informational Technology Review: October 6 to 8, 2008 or October 21 to 23, 2008
Exit Interviews:	October, 2008
Preliminary Report Submitted:	December, 2008
Final Report Submitted:	to be determined
Board Presentation:	to be determined
Follow-Up Support:	If requested

7. CONTACT PERSON

Please print name of contact person: Dr. Nancy Kotowski, Superintendent

Telephone (831) 755-0301 FAX

Internet Address Nancy Kotowski <nk@monterey.k12.ca.us>

for *J. Kotowski, Assoc Supt* *9-24-08*
Dr. Nancy Kotowski, Superintendent Date
Monterey County Office of Education

Barbara Dean September 15, 2008
Barbara Dean, Deputy Administrative Officer Date
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team