



Parlier Unified School District

Maintenance and Operations/Facilities Review

March 25, 2008



March 25, 2008

Henry Rick Rodriguez, Superintendent
Parlier Unified School District
900 Newmark Avenue
Parlier, California 93648

Dear Superintendent Rodriguez,

In November 2007, the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a maintenance and operations/facilities review with the Parlier Unified School District. The request specified that FCMAT would:

1. Conduct a review of the district's Maintenance and Operations Department and provide recommendations for improvements in the following maintenance, grounds, and custodial areas:
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Appropriate staffing levels
 - Efficiency
 - Supervision of employees

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 Parlier Unified School District.

Sincerely,

Joel Montero
Chief Executive Officer

FCMAT

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

1300 17th Street - CITY CENTRE, Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533 • Telephone 661-636-4611 • Fax 661-636-4647
422 Petaluma Blvd North, Suite. C, Petaluma, CA 94952 • Telephone: 707-775-2850 • Fax: 707-775-2854 • www.fcmat.org
Administrative Agent: Larry E. Reider - Office of Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Table of Contents

Forewordiii

Introduction I

Executive Summary 3

Findings and Recommendations 5

Custodial and Grounds Services..... 5

Maintenance 19

Appendices 25

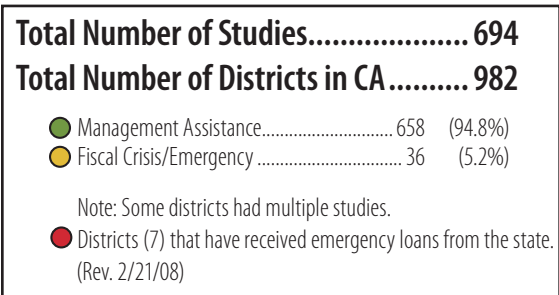
Foreword

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.



Introduction

The Parlier Unified School District is located in Fresno County, in the heart of California's San Joaquin Valley. The district delivers instructional services to students at seven sites including four elementary schools, one junior high school, one high school, and an alternative education center.

Past financial problems caused the district to reduce staffing levels in some areas, including positions in the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) department. In June 2005 the Fresno County Office of Education lent the district \$2 million so it could continue to meet its financial obligations. In October 2005 the county office disapproved the district's 2005-06 budget. Changes in administrative staff and the persistence of the administration and board in adhering to a recovery plan resulted in the county office approving the district's 2006-07 revised budget in September 2007. The district repaid the loan from the COE on October 1, 2007.

Facility, maintenance, and safety and health conditions at some of the school sites before the opening of school in the summer of 2007 were extreme. The architectural firm of Hastrup and Hyde, Inc. visited Parlier Junior High School and "observed many safety and health related violations and conditions" in the classrooms. The COE conducted an evaluation of the condition of the sites. The district contracted with outside service providers to refurbish school facilities in an expedient manner so schools could open on time.

On October 12, 2007, FCMAT received a request from the district for a study of the Maintenance and Operations department. The agreement for FCMAT services was approved by the Governing Board and returned to FCMAT on November 30, 2007. Specifically, the scope and objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Conduct a review of the District's Maintenance and Operations Department and provide recommendations for improvements in the following maintenance, grounds, and custodian areas:
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Appropriate staffing levels
 - Efficiency
 - Supervision of employees

Study Team

Barbara Dean
Deputy Administrative Officer
Fiscal Crisis and Management
Assistance Team
Bakersfield, California

Kirk Gilbert*
Director of Maintenance and Operations
Tehachapi Unified School District
Keene, California

Rod Sprecher
Maintenance and Operations Consultant
Bakersfield, California

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

*As a member of this study team, this consultant was not representing his employer, but was working solely as an independent contractor for FCMAT.

Study Guidelines

The study team visited the district on January 30-31, 2008 to interview employees, review information, collect documents, and conduct site visits. This report is the result of that effort and is divided into the following sections:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Custodial and Grounds Services
 - a. Custodian Oversight and School Cleaning
 - b. Custodian Staffing
 - c. Grounds and Landscaping
 - d. Training and Safety
 - e. Policies and Procedures Manual
 - f. Preventative Maintenance
 - g. Employee Morale
- III. Maintenance
 - a. Roles, Responsibilities, and Staffing
 - b. Assessment of M&O Equipment and Vehicles
 - c. Portable Classrooms
 - d. Assessment of District Facilities

Executive Summary

The district's custodians are directly supervised by the site administrators. Most of the administrators indicated to the study team that they are happy with having the custodians report to them and under their direction. However, most agreed that the cleaning practices at their sites could be improved. Under the current supervision structure the district lacks standardized cleaning methods, products, staff development and expectations for all sites.

The district should consider returning the custodial supervision and oversight to the M&O department. This is consistent with best practices in other districts. The director should be responsible for and participate in the hiring, training, assignment and evaluation of all district custodial staff, including oversight of all night custodians and their work schedules. However, this recommended change should not be used to eliminate or disregard the needs of the site principals to utilize some custodial time during the day shift. The goal of keeping a school clean and safe goes beyond the school custodian. Budget cuts and staff reductions necessitate the assistance of all staff to keep schools clean and safe.

The FCMAT team used the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) formula to calculate custodian full-time equivalent (FTE) needs and found that the district's staffing aligns with the formula.

The grounds staff takes additional time to complete tasks because of the lack of equipment and appropriate vehicles. Tasks that require the use of mechanical equipment, such as sports field preparation, are performed with hand tools. This does not allow enough time for other duties. The district would have a much more efficient and effective grounds program if broken or worn-out equipment and vehicles were replaced with new or almost new equipment and vehicles designed to perform the type of work done by the department.

The district lacks a comprehensive training program for maintenance and operations staff and is out of compliance in several areas related to health and safety. Written policies or procedures regarding training, safety issues, or departmental protocols are not available or are out of date.

Rather than performing ongoing tasks identified in a preventative maintenance plan, the M&O department has become an emergency response team, with little time to complete regular preventative maintenance. The perception of the employees is that they are expected to complete ongoing or emergency tasks without the proper equipment, contributing to poor staff morale.

The director is not fulfilling many of his job responsibilities because he also spends time performing maintenance work. The director should be actively involved in developing department budgets and procuring district vehicles, tools and supplies. The director is

responsible for ensuring that the district fully complies with all local, state and federal regulations, including those that affect employees.

The M&O department has several pieces of equipment and vehicles that have outlived their useful life or have become safety issues. The vehicles purchased as replacements do not have to be new vehicles but should not exceed three years in age or have more than 50,000 miles on the odometer. New or used equipment, including a flatbed trailer with a tandem axle and a tractor with a bucket and scraper, should be purchased to improve staff efficiency and increase the time available to maintain district grounds.

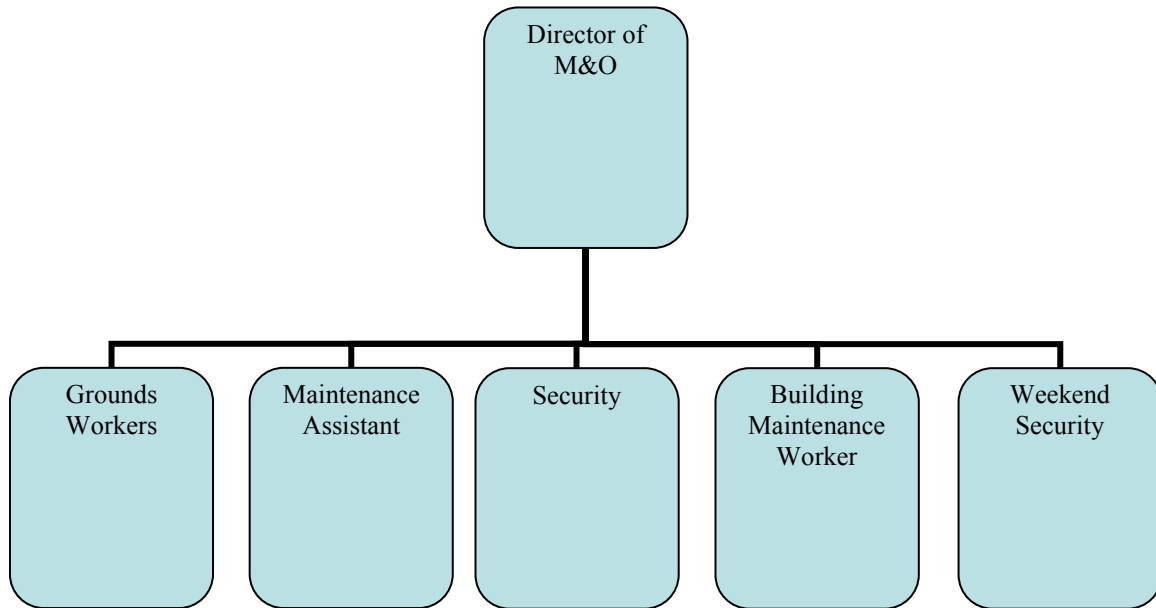
The district should consider removing vacant portable buildings from school sites if they are not safe, or cannot be used to support the educational programs at the school. Before taking any action to sell or dispose of portable classrooms the district should verify whether the removal and discounting of square feet of these buildings would adversely affect the district's eligibility in Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) programs.

The goals and objectives of the M&O department and the services it provides to school sites should be reviewed and updated continuously. They should also be considered during budget development and monitoring and used to adjust staffing allocations and improve processes and procedures. This will help to ensure that the district's facilities are appropriately maintained to preserve and extend their useful life.

It will take adequate funding and time to achieve the goals recommended in this report. Staffing in the maintenance program is low compared to other districts. If the district is unable to add more staff, the next best option is to invest in up-to-date equipment and tools so that the staff can improve operating standards and more efficiently use their time.

Custodial and Grounds Services

Maintenance and Operations departments are often divided into the three areas of custodial services, grounds, and maintenance, with management and planning assigned to a department director. Depending on the size of the district, secondary supervisory level employees may be assigned to oversee daily operations in each area. The organizational structure of the Parlier M&O department is shown below, and does not include custodial oversight responsibilities:



Custodian Oversight and School Cleaning

The district's custodial employees are directly supervised by the site administrators. During interviews with administrators at each site, most indicated they are happy with having the custodians report to them. However, most agreed that the cleaning practices at their sites could be improved. Under this supervision structure the district lacks standardized cleaning methods, products, staff development and expectations for all sites.

FCMAT visited all campuses and interviewed the head custodians at each site. Custodial duties and schedules varied by site, with no consistency district wide. The condition and cleanliness of the district's campuses varied because of the lack of work plans and cleaning standards.

Employees reported that the district does not provide new employees with an orientation or training session, and substitute or new employees are expected to learn schedules and methods from the head custodian or administrator at their assigned site. The night custodians at each site work mostly unsupervised because their shift starts toward the end of the school day.

Without a centralized custodian services program, each site independently purchases cleaning products and equipment, contributing to inconsistent standards and expectations throughout the district. This also hinders the district's ability to take advantage of volume pricing from vendors.

School sites do not appear to be consistently maintained at acceptable levels. There are no formal written goals and objectives, cleaning schedules, purchasing standards, evaluation standards, or standards provided through training for custodial employees to follow. School classrooms are beginning to show excessive wear and tear.

Establishing district-wide cleaning standards is a first step in implementing an effective clean school policy. In addition, the district should develop a how-to plan for other school site employees and students to support the effort to keep their school(s) clean. This goes further than an announcement in the daily bulletin or efforts made at the discretion of the school custodian.

Budget cuts and staff reductions necessitate the assistance of all staff to keep schools clean and safe. A sample plan is shown below:

School Team Cleaning Plan
What the Schools Can Do to Help

What Needs Attention	How to Help
Entrances	Use walk off mats to help keep soil outside the building.
Work Areas	Keep your work area free of litter and clutter. Students should police their work areas the last two minutes of each day and place all paper and debris in trash can.
Spills	Wipe or blot up small spills on the floor to avoid slipping hazards. Immediately notify custodian services of serious spills or clean-up tasks that cannot wait for regularly scheduled maintenance.
Staples	Even the most powerful vacuum cleaner will not pick up staples. When you drop them, please pick them up and dispose of them.
Restrooms & Sink Basins	Water left on a lavatory sink can result in an embarrassing situation for the next person who leans against it. Please wipe the sink dry after use.
Classroom Trash & Paper	Classroom trash and paper should be emptied into trash barrels located at the end of each wing every day.
Chairs	All student chairs should be placed on top of tables at end of the school day or stacked at the front of the room so that the custodians can clean floors. This takes one or two minutes for the students to do vs. 10 minutes for the custodian.
Walls and doors	Do not tape papers to painted surfaces. This practice makes it impossible to remove gum residue.

Sample cleaning plans from other districts can be used to create a cleaning plan for Parlier Unified. Here is an example of standards and frequencies for routine cleaning:

Classrooms & Multipurpose Rooms: (Daily)

- Empty all trash cans.
- Wipe or replace plastic liners as necessary.
- Vacuum and spot clean carpeted floors.
- Dust mop and damp mop hard surface floors.
- Spot dust all furniture. Clean doorknobs, lever handles, push plates, push bars, and pull handles. Clean chalkboards, marker boards if necessary.

Classrooms & Multipurpose Rooms: (Weekly)

- Spot clean and spray buff/burnish all hard surface floors. Spot clean walls and wall switches. Dust all high horizontal building surfaces that can be safely reached. Damp wipe and vacuum all furniture.

Classrooms & Multipurpose Rooms: (Yearly)

- Scrub and polish hard surface floors.
- Clean and shampoo carpet.
- Wipe down and disinfect all desks and other surrounding hard surfaces.

Student & Staff Restrooms: (Daily)

- Empty trash cans, damp wipe, and replace liners in trash cans.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect surface of all floors, lavatory fixtures, toilets, and urinals, including outside and underneath fixture.
- Spot clean all walls and tile partitions.
- Refill soap, paper towel and toilet tissue dispensers.
- Clean all metal fixtures and surfaces.

Student & Staff Restrooms: (Weekly)

- Wash walls and toilet partitions from top to bottom.
- Perform high and low dusting.

Student & Staff Restrooms: (Twice Monthly)

- Service the sanitary napkin machines in women's restrooms.

Student and Staff Restrooms: (Monthly)

- Clean air conditioning supply and return registers.
- Scrub and sanitize floors.

Staff Offices and Conference Rooms: (Daily)

- Empty trash cans.
- Damp wipe and change liner if necessary.
- Remove materials labeled as “trash.”
- Remove materials labeled as “recycling.”
- Vacuum and spot clean carpeted floors.
- Dust mop and spot mop hard surface floors.
- Spot clean entry doors and glass storefronts.
- Dust all furniture that is not covered by paperwork.

Staff Offices and Conference Rooms: (Weekly)

- Spot clean walls and glass partitions.
- Spot clean wall switches.
- Damp wipe telephones.
- Low and high dusting.
- Replace trash can liners.
- Spot clean and spray buff/burnish all hard surfaces.

Staff Offices and Conference Rooms: (Monthly)

- Brush down and clean all wall and ceiling air conditioning registers.
- Dust window coverings.
- Vacuum or brush cloth upholstered chairs and damp wipe leather or vinyl furniture.

Kitchens, Pantries, Teacher Lounges: (Daily)

- Empty trash, damp wipe, and replace liners in trash cans.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces of all floors and sinks, and counters if cleared.
- Refill soap and paper towel dispensers.
- Vacuum and spot clean carpet.
- Wet mop tile floors.

Kitchens, Pantries & Teacher Lounges: (Weekly)

- Perform high and low dusting.
- Spot clean all walls and other hard surfaces.

Kitchens, Pantries & Teacher Lounges: (Monthly)

- Brush down air conditioning supply and return registers.
- Scrub and polish floors.
- Spot clean carpets.

A custodial handbook should be developed and distributed to all custodians and site administrators to ensure that sites are cleaned to a district standard.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider reorganizing the M&O department to place all custodial staff under the direct supervision of the Director of Maintenance and Operations. This would allow the director to develop and formalize a district-wide plan for custodians and provide required in-service training and regular staff meeting training.
2. Facilitate communications between the director and the site administrators regarding the changes in custodian supervision. Monitor implementation during the transition period.
3. Prioritize development, by the director or a third party, of a custodial handbook including cleaning standards and expectations to be implemented and consistently followed at each site.
4. Schedule visits to each school site to document facility needs and prepare a catch-up cleaning schedule to ensure that areas of concern will be addressed in a timely manner.
5. Prioritize development, by the director or a third party, of a department policy and procedures manual to document responsibilities for grounds and maintenance staff.
6. Develop written standards for purchasing chemicals, cleaning supplies and custodian equipment, and provide training for their use.
7. Request the director and the CBO to develop a plan to centralize the purchasing of all custodial supplies and equipment to standardize and to obtain the best prices.
8. Conduct an inventory of all current custodial supplies and develop a budget to acquire equipment and tools to effectively clean district rooms.
9. Encourage other site employees and pupils to follow guidelines for keeping classrooms and other site buildings and grounds clean and safe.

Custodian Staffing

Administrators and custodians throughout the district are aware of the district's fiscal limitations. However, all agreed that there are not enough custodians to meet the daily needs of school sites since the prior budget cuts and reduction in custodian hours.

The California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) has developed a formula to identify appropriate custodian staffing levels according to the established industry time-driven standards and cleaning standards found in the CASBO custodian handbook.

This formula, combined with other local factors, is widely accepted in the industry. The formula recognizes factors in four areas: the number of teachers, number of students, number of classrooms, and the square footage in classrooms, offices and general purpose areas.

Steps for completing the CASBO formula include:

Step 1- Determine the number of custodians for each category based on the factor.

- One custodian for every 13 teachers.
- One custodian for every 325 students.
- One custodian for every 13 classrooms.
- One custodian for every 18,000 square feet.

Step 2 - Combine the results for each of the four areas and divide by four to determine the number of custodians needed to clean and maintain a building.

Example:

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	45	<i>(divided by) 13</i>	= 3.46
Students/325	1,500	<i>(divided by) 325</i>	= 4.61
Classrooms/13	45	<i>(divided by) 13</i>	= 3.46
Sq. Ft./18,000	40,500	<i>(divided by) 18,000</i>	= 2.25
Total			16.78
Total (divided by) 4			= 4.2

The following tables identify the recommended custodial staffing levels for each of the school sites in Parlier Unified, based on the information provided by the district. The district's staffing aligns with these recommendations.

Parlier High School

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	50	$\div 13$	3.85
Students/325	923	$\div 325$	2.84
Classrooms/13	51	$\div 13$	3.92
Sq. Ft./18,000	74,838	$\div 18,000$	4.16
Total			14.77
Total $\div 4$			3.69
Number of Custodians Currently Assigned			4.00

Parlier Junior High School

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	27	$\div 13$	2.08
Students/325	548	$\div 325$	1.69
Classrooms/13	30	$\div 13$	2.31
Sq. Ft./18,000	47,765	$\div 18,000$	2.65
Total			8.72
Total $\div 4$			2.18
Number of Custodians Currently Assigned			3.00

Chavez Elementary School

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	23	$\div 13$	1.77
Students/325	522	$\div 325$	1.61
Classrooms/13	34	$\div 13$	2.62
Sq. Ft./18,000	55,076	$\div 18,000$	3.06
Total			9.05
Total $\div 4$			2.26
Number of Custodians Currently Assigned			2.00

Martinez Elementary School

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	22	÷ 13	1.69
Students/325	472	÷ 325	1.45
Classrooms/13	31	÷ 13	2.38
Sq. Ft./18,000	41,150	÷ 18,000	2.29
Total			7.82
Total ÷ 4			1.95
Number of Custodians Currently Assigned			2.00

Brletic Elementary School

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	20	÷ 13	1.54
Students/325	390	÷ 325	1.20
Classrooms/13	35	÷ 13	2.69
Sq. Ft./18,000	53,780	÷ 18,000	2.99
Total			8.42
Total ÷ 4			2.10
Number of Custodians Currently Assigned			2.50

San Joaquin Valley High School

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	2	÷ 13	0.15
Students/325	62	÷ 325	0.19
Classrooms/13	4	÷ 13	0.31
Sq. Ft./18,000	3,840	÷ 18,000	0.21
Total			0.87
Total ÷ 4			0.22
Number of Custodians Currently Assigned			0.25

Benavidez Elementary School

	Total Number	Formula	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers/13	24	$\div 13$	1.85
Students/325	510	$\div 325$	1.57
Classrooms/13	23	$\div 13$	1.77
Sq. Ft./18,000	43,680	$\div 18,000$	2.43
Total			7.62
Total $\div 4$			1.90
Number of Custodians Currently Assigned			2.00

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Recalculate the CASBO custodian formula annually and adjust staffing as needed for changes affecting any of the four factors included in the formula.

Grounds and Landscaping

The grounds department has five full-time employees responsible for maintaining approximately 108 acres. Compared to the CASBO baseline recommendations for grounds (one FTE for every 40 acres) the district is adequately staffed. All grounds are well-maintained considering the shortage of adequate equipment and vehicles. Staff expressed concerns that they do not have the proper equipment to adequately maintain the district's grounds, which include all sports fields, irrigation systems, and fencing. The grounds crew is responsible for tree trimming and the scheduled mowing of green areas. The grounds department has no equipment replacement program, and much of the equipment is in need of repair or replacement. Two vans are utilized for all operations. These vehicles are old and worn out, and not designed for this type of use. On many occasions several employees travel to school sites in a vehicle that has only two seats.

The grounds staff uses additional time to complete task because of the lack of equipment and appropriate vehicles. Tasks that require the use of mechanical equipment (e.g., sports field preparation) are performed with hand tools, which does not allow enough time for other duties. The district would have a much more efficient and effective grounds program if broken or worn out equipment and vehicles were replaced with new or almost new equipment and vehicles designed to perform the type of work done by the department.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop, fund, and implement an equipment and vehicle replacement/repair program.

Training and Safety

The district lacks a comprehensive training program for maintenance and operations staff and is out of compliance in a number of areas related to health and safety. FCMAT found no current written policies or procedures regarding training, safety issues, or departmental protocols.

The MOT Director is not up to date on maintenance and operations safety standards, mandated staff training for his department, or documentation of trainings that have been provided. The department employees are not kept current on trainings and safety compliance issues, which affects their ability to perform tasks correctly and maintain district facilities adequately.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Immediately develop a thorough, standardized training program to bring all district procedures, departments, and sites into compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. Conduct standardized training sessions for all maintenance and operations staff as soon as possible, with follow-up sessions throughout the year, or as new needs are identified.
2. Hold monthly staff and safety meetings for all maintenance and grounds staff to improve communication, provide staff development, and resolve issues as they arise.
3. Ensure that all mandated regulatory training sessions are conducted and that compliance is monitored. Training should include the following topics.
 - Hazard Communication Plan
 - Asbestos
 - Lead
 - Antimicrobials
 - Blood borne pathogens
 - Materials Safety Data Sheets
 - Injury and Illness Prevention Programs
 - Fire extinguisher

- Integrated pest management
- Forklift training/scissor lift training (if applicable)
- Respiratory protection
- Hand and power tool safety
- Ladder safety
- Back safety
- Electrical safety
- Driver safety

Designate one employee to maintain employee records related to mandated safety and health training, using software programs for ease of tracking.

Policy and Procedures Manual

The Maintenance and Operations Department does not have a policies and procedures manual. Without this in place, employees do not have consistent and clear policies to follow. Legal and procedural mandates should be outlined for the department to stay in compliance and function optimally and each employee should be held accountable for following district guidelines.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop a manual that includes, but is not limited to the following topics:
 - Use of District Vehicles
 - Use of District Tools and Equipment
 - Safety Training
 - Key Control
 - New Employee Orientation
 - Employee Conduct
 - Employee Discipline
 - Employee Evaluation
 - Dress Code/Uniforms
2. Hold all departments, including M&O, accountable to follow established policies and procedures.
3. Provide a draft of the manual to the CSEA Chapter 396 representative for suggestions and approval before the policies and procedures are implemented.

Preventative Maintenance

The district has no formalized or written plan for scheduled preventative maintenance. A preventative maintenance plan should reside in a database and include information on district buildings and equipment that will/may require ongoing preventative maintenance and repair. It would typically include purchase prices, anticipated life expectancies, replacement schedules and budgetary information needed to implement the program.

Without an established schedule for preventative maintenance the M&O department has found itself in the position of being an emergency response team, with little time to complete regular preventative maintenance.

The director of M&O should implement a comprehensive preventative maintenance program to maintain district facilities and equipment in acceptable operating condition. A preventative maintenance plan includes regular inspection and maintenance tasks that are performed *before* facilities deteriorate or equipment breaks down, as opposed to a remedial maintenance program in which efforts to restore facilities and equipment occur *after* a breakdown.

Scheduled preventative maintenance should be viewed as an investment and not an unnecessary cost. Probable and desired outcomes of a preventative maintenance program include:

- Increased life of school buildings and district equipment.
- Improved operating efficiency of equipment.
- Reduced breakdowns.
- Lower operating costs.
- Fewer burdens on the district's general fund.
- Improved safety.
- Improved customer satisfaction; less school disruption and downtime resulting from remedial maintenance activities.

Methods of implementing the plan could include:

- Creating department policy regarding preventative maintenance, including funding sources.
- Creating a database of all facilities and equipment that require cyclical preventative care and maintenance.
- Developing an organizational chart reflecting the scheduled preventative maintenance responsibilities, activities, and time lines.
- Establishing a computer database of priorities for preventative maintenance items.

- Establishing a computer database with information for each site that reflects the identity of all equipment and buildings, including name, location, description, age, part number or date of purchase, I.D. number, etc.
- Creating a computer database that indicates in chronological order when the servicing or replacement of equipment should occur.
- Establishing a financial plan, funding sources, and budget codes necessary to track expenditures on preventative maintenance projects.
- Developing a calendar for projects that may need to be contracted out. (This may be tied to the Five-Year Deferred Maintenance Plan.)
- Creating or developing a program that will update the district facilities and equipment inventory each year and that will reflect the changes that have occurred during the current year as a result of any maintenance that was performed, addition of new equipment or facilities, demolition of facilities, sale of equipment, or any other changes to the status of facilities or equipment.
- Using the data from above, establish a long range (five-year) financial plan reflecting the possible impact of the scheduled preventative maintenance program.
- Developing a separate budget for the scheduled maintenance program apart from the routine maintenance program.

Employee Morale

During interviews with the maintenance and operations staff the study team confirmed that employee morale was low. Employees feel overworked and unappreciated, largely due to the effects of several years of fiscal difficulties that have resulted in the inability to provide the employees with the proper tools, equipment and vehicles to do their jobs effectively. Most employees felt that they consistently held the role of emergency responders, with a lack of consistent schedules or direction.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure that the director of M&O maintains an open line of communication between himself and his staff and with the business office and administration to identify equipment and vehicle needs to appropriately maintain district facilities and grounds.
2. Conduct monthly meetings to improve communication and to resolve department issues as they arise.
3. Consider establishing staff appreciation activities (potlucks, barbecues) to further enhance morale in the department.

Maintenance

Roles, Responsibilities, and Staffing

The Maintenance and Operations department has the following positions and full-time equivalent (FTE) staff:

- 1 FTE Maintenance Director
- 1 FTE Maintenance Assistant
- 1 FTE Building Maintenance Worker
- 5 FTE Grounds Workers
- 1 FTE Custodian (for the district office and alternative education center)
- 1 FTE Security Worker
- 0.5 FTE Weekend Security Worker

All employees report to and take direction from the director. The director evaluates all members of the department. The maintenance assistant is a member of the bargaining unit and does not evaluate other members of the unit.

The five members of the grounds & landscaping department are primarily responsible for the care and maintenance of all district grounds, landscaping, irrigation, pest control and preparation of all sports fields. They may also be asked to support the maintenance team when required.

The grounds crew does not have a clearly defined schedule for mowing at the school sites. The grounds employees do not receive regular safety training or training in the use of equipment and tools.

The quality of the grounds crew work can be seen clearly at the school sites. The crews have done a good job of keeping the sites very presentable, and the curb appeal of the sites is above average. Crew members go to each site early in the morning and use leaf blowers and other tools to get the fronts of schools clean and presentable to the public.

The director, according to his written job description and confirmed by the study team, is not fulfilling many of his job responsibilities. This is perhaps because he also spends time performing maintenance work.

In most school districts, the job description and regular duties of a director of M&O would include:

- Preparing specifications and cost estimates.
- Preparing regular reports on department activities.
- Preparing project budgets, equipment and material, and personnel requirements.

- Recommending personnel, procedural, and policy changes in the areas overseen.
- Maintaining department budgets; analyzing and reviewing budgetary and financial data; monitoring and authorizing expenditures in accordance with established guidelines.
- Planning, coordinating, and delivering instruction on topics pertinent to the department.
- Coordinating and supervising the Hazard Communication Program.
- Coordinating and supervising the asbestos hazards (AHERA) program.
- Coordinating and supervising the hazardous waste program.
- Coordinating and supervising the Employee Right to Know program.
- Monitoring the district safety plan, including the district disaster plan.

The director should be actively involved in the development of department budgets and the procurement of district vehicles, tools and supplies. The director is responsible to ensure that the district fully complies with all local, state and federal regulations, including those that affect employees.

The district should consider returning the custodial supervision and oversight to the M&O department. This is consistent with best practices in other districts. The director should be responsible for and participate in the hiring, training, assignment and evaluation of all district custodial staff, including oversight of all night custodians and their work schedules. However, this recommended change should not be used to eliminate or disregard the needs of the site principals to utilize some custodial time during the day shift.

The Maintenance Assistant reports to the director. According to the job description, this position is responsible for developing a systematic preventative maintenance program and keeping a written log of all inspections that are performed on district heating and cooling equipment. It was not clear to the team whether this work is being done or the information has been logged in.

The district's full time security employee begins work at 6 p.m. and checks out at 2 a.m. This employee is responsible for traveling throughout the district each night to see that all schools are secure and locked down after the night custodians have checked out. All schools are also covered by automatic alarm systems.

The district may want to consider whether it is getting sufficient value from the security position or whether the FTE could be better utilized in a maintenance position as the director assumes higher level duties. The district should review whether acts of vandalism or graffiti have been reduced by having night security.

The 1 FTE custodian that reports to the M&O director has cleaning responsibilities at the district office as well as at the alternative education center and two buildings designated to special programs. This seems to be working very well.

The Maintenance and Operations department, while functioning well on a minimal level, does not measure up to departmental standards of other comparably sized school districts in California. The department seems to function on a day-to-day basis but does not adequately address the longer term needs of the schools, students and community. Much of the departmental oversight and planning appropriately comes under the purview of the director. However, the director also does maintenance work along with the line staff, and lacks the time to address future needs.

Most employees of the department are devoted to their work, as evidenced by the number of years many of them have been with the district. However, they have not been provided with adequate training or support to work at their maximum potential.

As in most school districts, the Superintendent and Governing Board set the annual goals and objectives. Each department and school site should also set goals and objectives that are consistent with the district's goals. For the M&O department to establish goals, the Chief Business Officer (CBO) and director will need to work together to develop a plan for maintaining district facilities in a fiscally responsible manner. They should meet weekly to discuss current and future needs and projects. Both should attend training and workshops on school maintenance and facilities issues.

The M&O department does not have enough clerical support to assist the director with filing and keeping accurate records of department business and projects. Additional support should be considered.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Implement significant changes in policies, procedures, training, and access to appropriate vehicles and equipment to achieve the industry standards of a sound program of maintenance and operations for a California school district.
2. Establish clear lines of reporting and authority between the director and the CBO to prepare the department to achieve the district's goals and objectives.
3. Ensure that the director, or an independent third party, develops written department policies and procedures.
4. Ensure that the director develops a comfortable working relationship with each school principal to achieve the most efficient use of the day custodian's time. The director and the principal should jointly prepare the evaluation of the day custodian and develop a work schedule for the custodian that best meets the cleaning needs of the school site and the functional needs of the principal.
5. Assign additional cleaning tasks to the day custodians besides cleaning the cafeteria area during/after breakfast and lunch service.

6. Re-evaluate the night security position in the M&O department and consider real-locating the FTE to the maintenance program as the director's time and attention is redirected to higher level responsibilities.
7. Consider adding 0.5 FTE to the M&O department for clerical support to maintain records, track projects, and file paperwork.

Assessment of M&O Equipment and Vehicles

The M&O department has several pieces of equipment and vehicles that have outlived their useful life or have become safety issues. The vehicles purchased as replacements do not have to be new vehicles but should not exceed three years in age or have more than 50,000 miles on the odometer. The following vehicles should be considered for surplus.

Bar Code	Description	Manufacturer	Model
3574	Pick-up truck	Ford	1983 Ranger
3582	Pick-up truck	Ford	1981 Custom
3583	Van	Chevrolet	1985 Sports
3584	Van	Chevrolet	1985 Sports
3589	Van	Ford	1987

The shortage of available vehicles causes the employees to work assignments in teams, thus affecting the availability of staff to address other, smaller maintenance needs.

New or used equipment including a flatbed trailer with a tandem axle and a tractor with a bucket and scraper should be purchased to improve staff efficiency and increase time available to maintain grounds.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop a vehicle and equipment replacement program and begin to replace old equipment and vehicles on an annual schedule. Set aside funds in the budget for this purpose. Reassess equipment and vehicle needs annually.

Portable Classrooms

Several vacant portable classrooms are located throughout the district. Several of these buildings have been abandoned because of leaky roof systems, dry rot and mold issues. In some cases, these abandoned classrooms are being used for storage and special programs, and one classroom at an elementary site is being used as an office and storage space for the head custodian.

The district should consider having these buildings removed from the school site if they are not safe or cannot be used to support educational programs. Some of the rooms are consuming electrical power and may require custodian cleaning time. Before taking any action to sell or dispose of the portable classrooms, the district should verify whether the removal and discounting of square footage of these buildings would adversely affect eligibility in Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) programs.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Contact OPSC and investigate the potential effects of removing unused portable classrooms and decreasing district square footage for facilities.
2. Research the costs of removing unused portable buildings from school sites.
3. Consider the possibility of selling the buildings as surplus if they have a remaining useful life for purposes other than housing students.
4. Investigate the costs of repair to put buildings back into operable condition if they are safe for student or staff housing and have a remaining useful life.

Assessment of District Facilities

The following items were noted in site observations:

- The curb appeal (front of school) in most cases was very good. The lawns were mowed and trimmed. Fence lines were free of weeds, hallways and corridors were clean and shrubs and trees well trimmed.
- The exterior appearance of schools suggested that painting is done on a scheduled basis and is part of the district's five-year maintenance program. However, the team confirmed that the five-year plan was developed by the CBO and does not necessarily reflect the anticipated deferred maintenance projects planned over the next five years.
- The condition and appearance of school roofs indicates that they need repair and should be included on a replacement schedule.
- Concrete/cement is in need of replacement or repair at various school sites.
- In some school restrooms the handles on sinks have been replaced with a very inexpensive version of residential plumbing fixtures. Restroom fixtures should meet the specifications for school or industrial applications.
- Some school sites do not provide ample storage for custodian cleaning supplies and chemical mixing equipment.
- One major facility issue the district needs to address is carpet replacement and the removal and replacement of damaged floor tiles and remaining asbestos floor tiles.

- The team observed that cafeteria table replacement has been a priority at some sites. The older versions of tables at some sites do not set up and break down easily, requiring additional custodial time when the cafeterias are cleaned twice each day.
- The lack of efficient floor scrubbing equipment is an issue. All custodians should have modern floor scrubbing machines for large tile areas such as cafeterias and gymnasiums.
- Graffiti is sometimes painted over with paint that does not blend.

The goals and objectives of the M&O department and the services it provides to school sites should be reviewed and updated continuously. They should also be considered during budget development and monitoring and used to adjust staffing allocations and improve processes and procedures. This will help to ensure that the district's facilities are appropriately maintained to preserve and extend their useful life.

It will take adequate funding and time to achieve the goals recommended in this report. Staffing in the maintenance program is low compared to other districts. If the district is unable to add more staff, the next best option is to invest in up-to-date equipment and tools so that the staff can improve operating standards and become more efficient in the use of their time.

Equipment does not have to be purchased all at once, but a replacement schedule should be developed as soon as possible, with new items purchased each year until all the needed equipment is acquired and put to use.

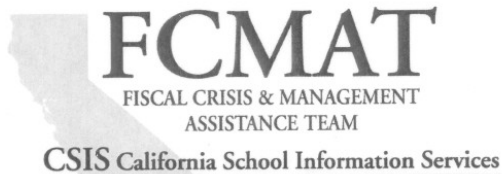
Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure that the condition of each district school provides a safe and secure setting for students and staff and creates an environment where children want to learn.
2. Have matching paint available and cover the graffiti area so that it blends in. Transfer the responsibility for painting over graffiti from the day custodian to the maintenance department and supply a small airless paint gun.

Appendices

Appendix A - Study Agreement



FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
STUDY AGREEMENT
November 19, 2007

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

1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

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

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

The scope and objectives of this study are to:

- 1) Conduct a review of the District's Maintenance and Operations Department and provide recommendations for improvements in the following maintenance, grounds, and custodial areas:

Roles and responsibilities
Appropriate staffing levels
Efficiency
Supervision of employees

B. Services and Products to be Provided

- 1) Orientation Meeting - The Team will conduct an orientation session at the District to brief District management and supervisory personnel on the procedures of the Team and on the purpose and schedule of the study.
- 2) On-site Review - The Team will conduct an on-site review at the District office and at school sites if necessary.
- 3) Progress Reports - The Team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion

of the on-site review to inform the District of significant findings and recommendations to that point.

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

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

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

- A. FCMAT Employee
- B. Two FCMAT M&O Consultants

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

4. PROJECT COSTS

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

- A. \$500.00 per day for each Team Member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, preparing and presenting reports, or participating in meetings.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals, lodging, etc. The District will be billed for the daily rate and expenses of the independent consultant, only. Based on the elements noted in section 2 A, the total cost of the study is estimated at \$6,500. The District will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon acceptance of the final report by the District
- C. Any change to the scope will affect the estimate of total cost.

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

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT

- A. The District will provide office and conference room space while on-site reviews are in progress.
- B. The District will provide the following (if requested):
 - 1) A map of the local area
 - 2) Existing policies, regulations and prior reports addressing the study request
 - 3) Current organizational charts
 - 4) Current and four (4) prior year's audit reports
 - 5) Any documents requested on a supplemental listing
- C. The District Administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the Team prior to completion of the final report.

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

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

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

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

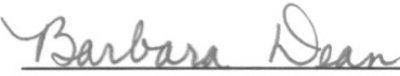
7. CONTACT PERSON

Please print name of contact person: Brenda Weil, CBO

Telephone 559-646-2731, ext 2014 FAX 559-888-0210

Internet Address bweil@parlier.k12.ca.us

 11/26/2007
Rick Rodriguez, Superintendent Date
Parlier Unified School District

 11/20/07
Barbara Dean, Deputy Administrative Officer Date
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

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