



CSIS California School Information Services

May 19, 2011

Marc Jackson, Ed.D., Superintendent
Silver Valley Unified School District
35320 Daggett-Yermo Road
Yermo, CA 92398

Dear Superintendent Jackson:

The purpose of this management letter is to confirm the findings and recommendations formulated by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) for the Silver Valley Unified School District. In January 2011, FCMAT and the district entered into an agreement for FCMAT to perform the following:

1. Conduct a review of the Maintenance, Operations, Transportation and Safety Department and the Facilities and Procurement Department and review workflow requirements of both departments to provide recommendations for cost efficiencies and reduce redundancies. Review coordination efforts between departments on joint projects and make recommendations for improvement. The recommendations will serve as the basis to implement the most cost effective and efficient means to provide these services to central and site locations using best practices or current industry standards.
2. Review the staffing and organizational structure of both departments and make recommendations for improvement in workflow, balance of work load, and to improve accountability.
3. Review staffing formulas to ensure adequate staffing is available to meet districts and school site needs.
4. Review roles and responsibilities of director of facilities and procurement and the director of maintenance operations and transportation and make recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Review work order system implementation and make recommendations to improve functionality and decrease time to complete work assignments.

FCMAT conducted staff interviews at the district on March 9-10, 2011. The team also toured two school sites, two warehouses, the district office, the maintenance yard and the maintenance annex. Before and during the visit, the team collected and reviewed documentation. This management letter is the result of those efforts. As specified in the study agreement, no full report will be issued.

FCMAT

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Background

The Silver Valley Unified School District serves students in preschool through grade 12 and is located in the northeast portion of San Bernardino County. The district encompasses approximately 3,500 square miles and is divided into two primary geographic locations that are approximately 40 miles apart, one in the Yermo Valley and the other in Fort Irwin. The district administrative office, primary warehouse, bus barn and primary maintenance yard are in the Yermo Valley area along with one K-5 elementary school, one K-8 school, one high school and one alternative education center. Located in the Fort Irwin area are two elementary schools; one serving kindergarten through second grade and the other serving third grade through fifth grade; one middle school serving grades 6-8, and one preschool.

The district's enrollment for the 2010-11 school year is approximately 2,700 students; however, it has the facility capacity to serve approximately 4,000 students based on a ratio of 20 students to one classroom teacher. Several factors could significantly change this number, for example, the types of classes provided such as those for special education. At present, facility use is approximately 67% of capacity because of the relatively recent construction of a new school campus. The district projects flat enrollment over the next five fiscal years.

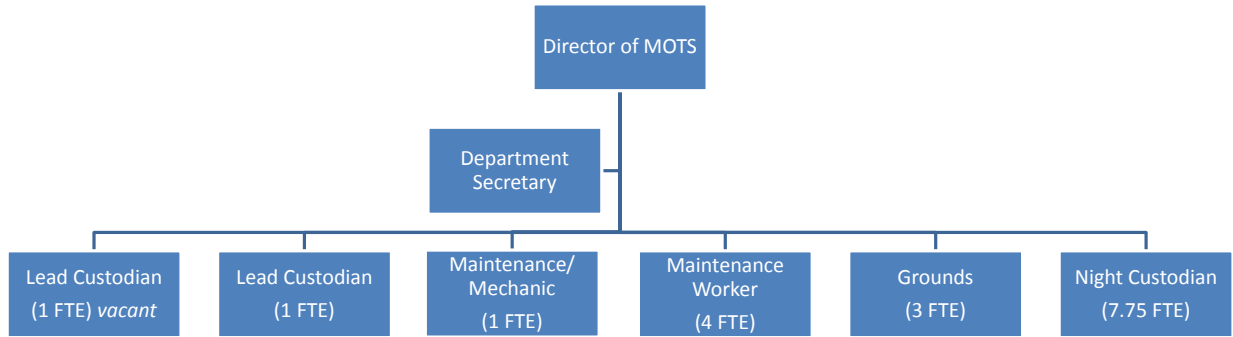
Staffing and Organization

The district divides the duties related to maintenance, operations, transportation, facilities, warehouse and procurement into two separate departments operating under the direction of two director positions. The director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety plans and oversees general maintenance activities, the coordination of transportation services, the management of the district's safety program, and the oversight of facilities inspections. The director of facilities and procurement coordinates and oversees district facilities projects, purchasing, asset inventory tracking, and warehouse management.

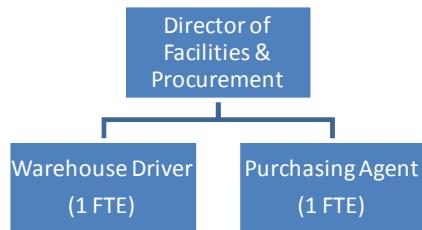
The support staff for these two departments is as follows:

Position	FTEs
Maintenance workers	4 FTE
Lead custodian	1 FTE
Maintenance/mechanic	1 FTE
Grounds workers	3 FTE
Lead custodian	1 FTE
Day Custodians **	6.75 FTE
Night Custodians	7.75 FTE
Warehouse driver	1 FTE
Purchasing agent	1 FTE

The organization chart below displays the staffing of the Maintenance, Operations, Transportation and Safety Department. Day custodians are under the direction of each school site administrator during the regular school year. During the summer months, their duties are directed and overseen by the director of MOTS and are not reflected in the chart.



The organization chart below reflects the current staffing of the Facilities and Procurement Department.



The district contracts with First Student, an independent contractor, to manage and operate transportation services districtwide. All transportation operational staff, including administrative, support, and driver staff, are provided by First Student. All the duties of operating the Transportation Department are directly and solely managed by First Student, including all staff assignments, supervision and evaluation of employee work. Fleet management is also provided by First Student.

Transportation operations are housed in the district bus barn, which is maintained by the MOTS Department. Staff members indicated that there is little to no interaction between those responsible for transportation services and the director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety.

Director of Maintenance, Operations, Transportation and Safety

During interviews, it was reported by staff members that the director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety had little involvement with their daily routine. Other than visiting the evening custodians once or twice during the school year, the director has little or no communication regarding work procedures or schedules. Until the position was vacated recently, most issues related to custodial staff were handled by the lead custodian. The lead custodian position was recently vacated and remained unstaffed at the time of FCMAT’s fieldwork.

During FCMAT interviews, the school site administration and staff indicated that there is a general lack of communication between the school sites and the director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety. Routine maintenance requests often take several months to receive a response. Administrators reported that the lack of communication regarding the status of repairs or projects is extremely frustrating. The director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety rarely visits school sites for inspections or follow-up on repairs or projects. The same concerns were voiced districtwide regarding the completion and follow-up of work orders submitted for facility maintenance.

The staff perceives that the director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety does not sufficiently fulfill his administrative responsibilities and spends most of his time in the office. Little of the director’s time is focused on delegation, oversight and follow-up of staff assignments, and the director has not kept current with local, state and federal regulations pertaining to the department and its employees.

Based on interviews with staff members and site visitation, FCMAT found that the district does not comply with fire and life safety requirements. Staff members could not provide documentation to demonstrate that fire alarm systems were annually inspected and certified. Inspections of equipment during site visitations confirmed that these inspections do not occur. District staff members confirmed that the handicapped wheelchair lifts at two schools have never been certified and commissioned and are not operational. FCMAT viewed the lift at one site and found that there are no barriers or placards indicating that the lift was not operational other than the various storage items that surround the lift. Interviews with staff members confirmed the backflow preventers at each school are not annually inspected and certified as required. Employees have also not received the mandated initial and ongoing training on asbestos and lead awareness.

The director reported that a significant amount of his time is devoted to his involvement in litigation regarding contracts with a vendor. Staff members also spend a considerable amount of time traveling between the two primary district locations at Yermo Valley and Fort Irwin.

FCMAT found duplicative efforts among the director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety and the director of facilities and procurement. In addition, there is no indication that the district has clear procedures to determine which administrator is responsible for a particular project. Staff members indicated that the director of facilities and procurement is occasionally involved with maintenance projects depending on the workload and/or availability of the director of MOTS. The district staff reported that projects under the responsibility of the director of MOTS are often late, and the director of facilities and procurement steps in and assists by providing direction and oversight to ensure project completion. Incomplete jobs were noticeable during site and department visits, and FCMAT inquiries with staff validated the ongoing delays.

Two district facility improvement projects remained unfinished at the time of FCMAT's fieldwork. The school board approved a bus barn improvement project approximately three years ago. Several district staff members indicated that this project was first outsourced under the direction of the director of warehousing and procurement. During the initial planning stages, it was determined that the project would be more cost-effective if completed in-house utilizing the district maintenance staff. When the project shifted to in-house staff, the direction and oversight of this project became the responsibility of the director of MOTS. The Warehousing and Procurement Department managed the acquisition and delivery of materials necessary to complete the job, but many of the materials were utilized for other purposes or have become obsolete because of the lack of progress on this project.

A second project under the direction and oversight of the director of MOTS was the acquisition and installation of a walk-in freezer for food services as a result of the decreasing functionality and useful life of the existing freezers. Interviews with the district staff found that some pertinent parties were not involved in the planning of this project, including food services. The staff had no discussions on specifications, locations and budgetary issues before the new freezer was acquired.

Staff interviews and site visits found that many essential elements of planning, coordination and follow-up are absent in facilities maintenance and improvement projects.

During the planning phases of any project, the director responsible for overseeing the project should develop a project time schedule that outlines the progress and anticipated completion dates. The director should communicate the progress to all those affected. In addition, routine inspections should ensure the project stays on schedule, and completion goals are met.

Director of Facilities and Procurement

Facilities

The director of facilities and procurement is primarily responsible for any large building projects, capital improvement, or modernization along with the procurement, inventory and delivery of goods to the school sites. No large new facility or modernization projects are scheduled, and staff members did not indicate that any were needed.

Procurement

District procurement functions fall under the direction of the director of facilities and procurement. District staff members submit and approve purchase orders with an automated accounting system. Each school submits requisitions for custodial materials and supplies to the MOTS Department, where they are reviewed, approved, and the purchase order is entered into the system by the department secretary. All other purchase orders are entered into the system by site or department personnel and routed for appropriate approvals. Once all necessary approvals are obtained, the director of facilities and procurement finalizes the processing of purchase orders and sends them to vendors via U.S. mail or fax.

The district's procurement and warehousing procedures are uncommon for districts of this size. Many districts use drop shipments, also known as "just in time" delivery, instead of maintaining the traditional operation of centralized ordering, receiving, inventory and delivery of goods. Because large vendors are willing to store and deliver goods and materials directly to school sites, districts no longer have to operate costly warehousing and delivery systems. Most supply companies are also willing to implement electronic ordering systems, with safeguards and reporting abilities to track budgets and supplies as they are ordered.

Staff members indicated that a significant amount of time frequently passes from the submission of a purchase requisition to the final delivery of goods to the site or department. Although this is partly because of the initial authorization steps of purchase order approval, it takes a substantial amount of time to receive goods from vendors in a centralized location and redistribute them to departments or school campuses.

The district should eliminate the positions of director of MOTS and director of facilities and procurement and create one director position to oversee all areas of operation. The creation of a director of maintenance, operations, transportation, facilities and safety would absorb the responsibilities of both existing positions. The district should develop a job description for the new position considering immediate needs and long-term goals. The most critical goals should include health and safety compliance issues that may result in substantial penalties or the withholding of state funding.

Goals for the new director position should be clearly defined and consistently communicated. The director should establish communication with all district administration and frequently visit schools. The position should also be closely involved with assigning routine work requests and following up on repairs to ensure work is completed according to district standards.

The director position should retain or establish a network of resources to contact as questions arise. The county office is often a knowledgeable source for local support. The director should also attend conferences and training sessions such as those provided by the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) and California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), organizations that sponsor workshops across the state through the year. Both organizations hold annual conferences, typically in Sacramento, that are attended by many of the state's directors, business managers and superintendents so they can stay apprised of new and existing laws and regulations regarding school facilities issues.

District support is imperative to ensure the director attains the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure the MOTFS Department complies with all appropriate regulations. The district could be held legally and financially responsible for health and safety issues and areas where the department is out of compliance.

The district should reassign procurement, including routing and processing purchase orders, to the Business Services Department.

If the district needs outside services to manage a large-scale project, it should retain a qualified construction management firm specifically for the new project. This is common practice for most districts of comparable size.

The district should establish new procedures to order and deliver supplies. “Just in time” ordering has increased efficiency at districts throughout the state. Establishing the process is fairly simple and usually well received by the site staff. This will eliminate the need to handle supplies as they are received by the district warehouse and loading and delivering supplies to the sites.

Maintenance Services

The district is staffed appropriately in maintenance compared to districts of equal size, however; the delivery of services to the sites can be significantly enhanced. The current approach to assigning and conducting maintenance services leads to a tremendous amount of lost labor hours, mostly because of the time necessary to travel to and from school sites that are up to 40 miles away.

The Maintenance and Operations Department’s staffing structure is typical of school districts of similar size. Using this system, one or two maintenance workers are assigned to a district vehicle, and respond on an as-needed basis to work requests throughout the district. This approach has proved ineffective in meeting the maintenance needs of larger districts or districts with geographic characteristics similar to those of Silver Valley Unified, largely because of travel time.

The district should research the possibility of establishing a mobile maintenance team. This practice is commonly found in larger school districts as well as districts with demographic characteristics similar to those of Silver Valley Unified. Mobile maintenance teams typically consist of two or three maintenance technicians who travel from site to site, usually spending one week at a time at each facility. All preventative and corrective work orders are completed during the scheduled team visit. A visit letter informs the site administrator when the team is arriving, requests a prioritized list of suggested work be submitted by an established deadline, and requests a meeting to discuss site maintenance needs.

The prioritized work order list includes a section for sites to submit their “wish list.” The scheduled preventative maintenance scope of work is provided to inform the site administrator of the tasks to be completed with every visit. A current list of outstanding work orders will help the site administrator develop the prioritized work list. Mobile team maintenance has proved to be effective and time-efficient at school districts with limited resources.

If the district initiated a mobile maintenance concept, the Tiefort View warehouse could be used to accommodate the maintenance staff during its scheduled visits to the Fort schools. This would eliminate the need to purchase mobile shops or trailers to park on location.

At present, maintenance workers spend much of their time traveling to sites to determine the problem, obtaining approval, purchasing materials/parts, and returning to the site to complete work. This is an inefficient practice.

FCMAT toured the maintenance yard at Yermo Valley and the maintenance annex at Fort Irwin and found that they have no adequate materials inventory. Of further concern was the lack of apparent inventory control for tools or materials. A standardized materials inventory should be developed and a system for routine inventory replenishing should be established to ensure that materials for routine repair and maintenance are available for routine work order assignments.

The district should develop an equipment/materials procurement manual that outlines policies and procedures for equipment and supply purchases. Like Silver Valley Unified, many school districts use procurement cards with set purchase limitations that can be established specifically to permit purchases with specific vendors and/or types of materials and supplies. These controls help streamline procurement procedures and eliminate paperwork and approval time. Each purchase can also be tied to job/project and included on the work order. The director should review receipts for procurement card purchases to ensure they are appropriate and accurately charged to the appropriate project for budgeting and tracking purposes.

Staff interviews and a review of documentation indicated that the use of district Cal Cards has become routine, even for nonemergency or immediate need items. The routine assessment of open and new work orders should provide adequate time to schedule work and acquire necessary materials. Violations of district CAL Card use policies should be addressed timely and result in disciplinary actions if they persist.

Custodial Services

Based on district information, custodial staffing is at approximately 103% of capacity according to the CASBO statewide custodial formula. However this custodial staffing calculation can be somewhat misleading since the district operates facilities that have much higher student capacity levels than those that are operational because of low enrollment. This formula also does not typically consider the staff time for off-site administrative offices, which could reasonably provide for a small modification of FTE. FCMAT allowed for a small adjustment to the formula to account for administrative space based on the square footage calculation.

The CASBO formula considers the square footage of sites and the number of students, staff, classrooms, offices and general purpose areas. The CASBO formula for custodial staffing is used in the table below and is as follows:

Each of the following numbers is added to obtain the total:

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

The result is divided by four to indicate the number of custodians needed to clean and maintain a building. These guidelines are based on industry time-driven standards. However, as a result of the state's economic downturn and the resulting fiscal issues for public education, many districts reduced staffing levels to less than the industry standards to sustain financial stability.

Based on the information provided by the district, the chart below reflects the total districtwide custodial staffing level established by CASBO's formula.

District-wide Totals			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	145	1:13	11.15
Students	2719	1:325	8.37
Classrooms	200	1:13	15.38
Square Footage	382050	1:18,000	21.23
Total			56.13
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	14.03

Current District-wide FTE 14.5 103.33%
Difference 0.47

District-wide Adjusted for District Office 14.64
Current District-wide FTE 14.5
0.14 100.96%

Based on the information provided by the district, the charts below show the custodial staffing levels by site established by CASBO's formula.

YERMO SCHOOL			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	17	1:13	1.31
Students	301	1:325	0.93
Classrooms	23	1:13	1.77
Square Footage	41356	1:18,000	2.30
Total			6.30
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	1.58

FORT IRWIN MIDDLE SCHOOL			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	17	1:13	1.31
Students	345	1:325	1.06
Classrooms	36	1:13	2.77
Square Footage	78598	1:18,000	4.37
Total			9.51
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	2.38

LEWIS ELEMENTARY			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	32	1:13	2.46
Students	629	1:325	1.94
Classrooms	45	1:13	3.46
Square Footage	80700	1:18,000	4.48
Total			12.34
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	3.09

SILVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	28	1:13	2.15
Students	483	1:325	1.49
Classrooms	32	1:13	2.46
Square Footage	62364	1:18,000	3.46
Total			9.57
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	2.39

NEWBERRY SCHOOL			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	8	1:13	0.62
Students	155	1:325	0.48
Classrooms	11	1:13	0.85
Square Footage	23576	1:18,000	1.31
Total			3.25
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	0.81

TIEFORT VIEW INTERMEDIATE			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	24	1:13	1.85
Students	488	1:325	1.50
Classrooms	26	1:13	2.00
Square Footage	57723	1:18,000	3.21
Total			8.55
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	2.14

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CENTER			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	8	1:13	0.62
Students	80	1:325	0.25
Classrooms	19	1:13	1.46
Square Footage	28133	1:18,000	1.56
Total			3.89
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	0.97

COLIN POWEL PRESCHOOL			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers	11	1:13	0.85
Students	238	1:325	0.73
Classrooms	8	1:13	0.62
Square Footage	9600	1:18,000	0.53
Total			2.73
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	0.68

District Office			
	Total #	Ratio	Recommended Custodial Staff
Teachers		1:13	0.00
Students		1:325	0.00
Classrooms		1:13	0.00
Square Footage	43667	1:18,000	2.43
Total			2.43
Total Divided By 4		Total/4	0.61

Staff members perceive that there are staff shortages in the MOTS Department. However, FCMAT believes the restructuring of leadership in the MOTS and Facilities and Procurement departments will lead to increased accountability and expectations, which will result in further efficiencies.

Each of the district’s daytime custodians reports to and is under the direct supervision of the principal at each site. With this configuration, school sites operate independently of one another, and districtwide standardization of procedures for cleaning, product use and purchasing is inconsistent or nonexistent. This affects sites using substitute custodians because they spend much time on site-specific training.

The lead custodian position was vacated just before FCMAT’s visit to the district, reportedly leaving night custodians unsupervised. The lead custodian position supervised the daily operations of the custodial services division.

The district should fill the open lead custodian position if fiscally feasible, and the schedule for this position should be flexible. The lead custodian should develop districtwide standardization regarding cleaning procedures, products used, and the purchasing of products. The lead custodian should also be involved in the operation and procedures provided by the day custodian regardless of the reporting protocol. Communication should be established between the director of maintenance and operations, each site principal, and the lead custodian so the custodial division can meet the expectations in the policy and procedures manual.

Grounds

FCMAT team visited several district sites and found that in most cases, the grounds showed signs of neglect with overgrown lawns and shrub beds, trees in need of trimming and substandard conditions throughout the campuses. However, the condition of these sites reflects the considerable workloads of the grounds crew. Three FTE grounds workers are assigned to maintain all district location, including a comprehensive high school, which includes the preparing all athletic fields.

Staff members reported that before completion of the newest school, Tiefort View, the district employed four full-time grounds, and the schools were in better condition. The Grounds Department spends most of its time mowing and preparing athletics fields, with little time remaining for preventive maintenance. During site visits, FCMAT observed leaking backflow devices along with numerous areas that needed attention and repair. The district repairs backflow devices in-house; however, annual certifications have reportedly been neglected.

The district should consider adding one additional full-time grounds position. In addition, the district should consider hiring extra summer help to help prune, aerate, weed, and perform light tree trimming. This is a common practice among districts and would be effective in managing the high demands of the Grounds Department.

Training and Safety

The district does not have standardized hiring or training practices to ensure candidates are screened for qualifications that meet maintenance and operations requirements. Adequate screening, including up-to-date skills tests, are necessary to reduce the risk of hiring unqualified candidates. Continuing professional education standards and training ensure employees continue to be effective.

All maintenance and operations job descriptions should be reviewed and revised as the department reorganizes. Clear eligibility standards should be established, and skills tests should be designed so that applicants can demonstrate competence.

The district lacks training programs for the maintenance, operations and grounds staff and is out of compliance in a number of areas related to health and safety. Brief, occasional safety meeting, also called “tailgate meetings” are held, but FCMAT found no current written district policies, procedures or supporting documentation regarding training, safety issues, or departmental protocols with the exception of the online training modules managed by the Risk Management Department. These modules cover areas such as blood borne pathogens, sexual harassment and child abuse reporting etc.

The director of MOTS is not current regarding maintenance and operations safety standards, mandated staff training for the department, and documentation of past training.

The director of maintenance, operations, transportation and safety should immediately develop a standardized training program to bring all district procedures, departments, and sites into compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. This program should include consistent, standardized initial and ongoing training for all maintenance and operations staff.

The director should implement a monthly safety meeting for the maintenance, operation and transportation staff to improve communication and education and to resolve issues as they arise.

The director should also ensure all mandated regulatory training is scheduled, occurs, and is documented and should maintain all employee records on mandated safety and health training. Software programs could be utilized for ease of tracking. Training should include the following topics:

- A hazard communication plan
- Asbestos
- Lead
- Antimicrobials
- Blood-borne pathogens
- Materials safety data sheets (MSDS)
- An illness and injury prevention program (IIPP)
- Fire extinguisher
- Integrated pest management (IPM)
- Forklift training/scissor lift training (if applicable)
- Respiratory protection
- Hand and power tool safety
- Ladder safety
- Back safety
- Electrical safety
- Driver safety

Policy and Procedures Manual

The MOTS Department lacks a policies and procedures manual. A manual should be developed to outline legal and procedural mandates that keep the department in compliance and functioning optimally.

The manual should include 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

The manual should be developed with the assistance of the Human Resources Department and follow district procedures for administrative approval. All Maintenance, Operations, Transportation and Safety Department staff should be held accountable for following established policies and procedures. The manual should be reviewed by the California School Employees Association (CSEA) representative for suggestions and approval before being implemented.

Electronic Work Order System

The district uses a Web-based electronic work order system (Livetime Help Desk). This system can track and schedule preventive maintenance, inspections, routine maintenance requests etc. and is used by all sites and departments as the primary tool for submitting work orders (incidents) to MOTS. Although operational, the system requires detailed configuration to maximize functionality. MOTS uses the system only to submit, accept and assign work orders.

The district does not have a formal procedure for prioritizing and assigning work requests. During interviews, staff members reported that the current work order system was implemented without formal user training on using it to its full potential. Employees are frustrated with the inability to track the status of outstanding work requests and indicated that existing work orders are often closed when the work is still incomplete. There is no follow-up to assess the completion or quality of work.

The director of MOTS should develop a plan to fully implement the system. The system should be used to routinely evaluate work order status and progress as well as delegate new work order assignments to ensure workloads are balanced. The system can also be used to assess the effectiveness of the time each staff member spends on assignments.

The director of MOTS should coordinate formal training for district personnel that will use the work order system. If the current Web-based program does not have the capabilities necessary to meet the needs of a comprehensive maintenance and operations division, the district should explore the options of a formal work order system i.e. (School Dude) or (Maintenance Tracker). A software program designed for maintenance and operations has the abilities to track preventative maintenance scheduling, safety meetings, asbestos inspections etc.

The district should establish a policy that designates one person to submit work orders for each site or department. These centralized site/department submission controls would require all other staff members to submit a work order request to that assigned representative, who would determine whether a work order is necessary or a similar one has been submitted. This protocol will help the maintenance department prioritize work orders and daily assignments and improve the response to district needs.

Vehicle and Equipment Replacement

The maintenance and operations vehicle and equipment inventory needs replacement vehicles based on the mileage and condition of existing vehicles. The district replaced some support fleet vehicles in the past; however, there is no formalized replacement program.

The Maintenance and Operations Department should establish and implement a vehicle and equipment replacement program. A formalized replacement program would include criteria (e.g. mileage, age, condition) to evaluate vehicles or equipment annually and determine which should be replaced. This change will also require the district to establish and monitor a replacement budget.

Five-Year Deferred Maintenance Program

The director of MOT has had limited involvement with the state's five-year Deferred Maintenance Program (DMP). The DMP provides state matching funds to help school districts with expenditures for major repair or replacement of school building components to ensure safety. This typically includes roofing, plumbing, heating, air-conditioning, electrical systems, wall systems, and floor systems. An annual basic grant is provided for the major repair or replacement work listed on the five-year plan (Form SAB 4020), which is a projection of deferred maintenance work to be performed districtwide over the next five years.

An extreme hardship grant is provided in addition to the basic grant if the district has a critical project on its five-year plan that must be completed within one year for health and safety or structural reasons.

The plan is not intended as an expenditure report, so the reported project costs should be estimates, and the district is not required to perform all the work listed on the plan. New or revised plans for the current fiscal year must be submitted to the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) by the last working day in June for that fiscal year. The five-year plan allows a district to designate an individual approved by the district's governing board to act on the district's behalf as a contact for the OPSC regarding the DMP. If part one of the five-year plan is not completed, the district superintendent must sign the form and serve as OPSC's point of contact.

Beginning with the 2005-2006 fiscal year, school districts and county offices of education are required to establish a facilities inspection system (FIS) as a condition of participation in the DMP. This is according to Senate Bill 550, which modified Education Code Section 17070.75(e). The requirements of the FIS are not defined in law other than to state the system should ensure that each school of the district or county office of education is maintained in good repair. The design of the FIS is determined at the local level. The one exception is for school sites identified by the California Department of Education (CDE) as ranked in deciles 1-3 based on the 2003 Academic Performance Index (API) and that were newly built before January 1, 2000.

Before submitting a new or revised version of the plan, the proposals and plans for expending funds for the deferred maintenance of school district facilities must be discussed in a public hearing at a regularly scheduled school board meeting. The form's certification section asks the district to enter the date this occurred, and this requirement must be met each time a revised plan is submitted to the OPSC.

A district may amend its approved five-year plan as needed for the current and future fiscal years. Plan revisions are not required for estimated cost changes or for moving a project already listed on the plan into a different fiscal year. A revised plan should be submitted to the OPSC for any of the following reasons:

- The plan has expired.
- Deferred maintenance work will be performed that is currently not listed on the plan or at a school not on the plan.
- To remove the project(s) if the exact same work was entirely paid for under the School Facility Program modernization or the Federal Renovation Program.

The fiscal year in which a district revises the plan will become the plan's starting year and will project for four fiscal years. The OPSC will not accept revisions to the five-year plan for prior fiscal years.

A five-year plan project is required to involve repair and replacement of one of the school facility components stated in law or approved by the State Allocation Board and to have approached or exceeded its normal life expectancy. It also must be located in a district-owned facility used for school purposes.

Facility components with a history of continued repairs that indicate a shortened life expectancy may be included as eligible items.

The director of maintenance, operation and transportation should arrange for assessments of building roof systems, paving needs, painting requirements, asbestos removal, HVAC replacement requirements, etc.

The director of maintenance, operations and transportation should prioritize projects and develop a five-year plan to correct system deficiencies. This plan can be modified each year as requirements change. Administration of the program is relatively simple. The director should be trained on how to submit the plan to the governing board and state. The OPSC has a handbook to on this, and it is available at the following Web address:

http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/opsc/Publications/Handbooks/DMP_Hdbk.pdf

Preventative Maintenance

The district operates without a formalized or written plan on scheduled preventative maintenance. A preventative maintenance plan should include a database of district buildings and equipment that may require ongoing preventative maintenance and repair. A preventative maintenance plan would typically include purchase prices, anticipated life expectancies, replacement schedules and budgetary information needed to implement the program. With the absence of a scheduled preventative maintenance program, the maintenance and operations department primarily responds to emergencies.

The district should implement a comprehensive scheduled preventative maintenance program to keep facilities and equipment in an acceptable operating condition. A scheduled preventative maintenance program includes regular inspection and maintenance efforts performed *before* facilities deteriorate or equipment breaks down. This is distinguished from a remedial maintenance program, which restores and/or repairs facilities and equipment occurs *after* a malfunction.

The probable and desired result of a scheduled preventative maintenance program would include the following:

- Increased life of school buildings and district equipment.
- Improved operating efficiency of equipment with fewer breakdowns.

- Lower operating costs, resulting in less impact on the general fund
- Improved safety
- Improved customer satisfaction; less school disruption and downtime because of remedial maintenance activities.

Scheduled preventative maintenance is an investment that ultimately results in reduced costs.

The essential elements of a preventative maintenance program include the following:

- A department policy that includes funding sources.
- A database of all facilities and equipment that require cyclical preventative care and maintenance.
- A chart reflecting the scheduled preventative maintenance.
- A computer database of priorities for preventative maintenance items.
- A computer database organized by site that identifies all equipment and buildings, including name, location, description, age part number or date of purchase, I.D. number, etc.
- A computer database that indicates in chronological order when servicing or equipment replacement should occur.
- A financial plan, funding sources, and budget codes necessary to track expenditures on school preventative maintenance.
- A calendar of projects that may need to be contracted (This may be tied to five-year deferred maintenance plan).
- A program that updates the district facilities and equipment inventory each year and reflects the changes that occurred in the current year as a result of maintenance performed, the addition of new equipment or facilities, facilities demolition, the sale of equipment, or any other changes to the status of facilities or equipment.
- A long range (five-year) financial plan showing the possible impact of the scheduled preventative maintenance program.
- A budget for the scheduled maintenance program that is separate from the routine maintenance program.

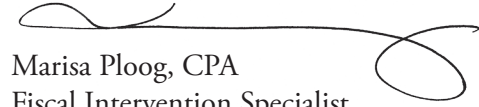
Employee Morale

Interviews with maintenance and operations staff indicate that employee morale is low. The staff generally perceives it is overworked and unappreciated, particularly in the custodial and grounds departments. Most employees believe they are frequently reassigned from more routine tasks to emergencies. There is a clear lack of consistency in assignment delegation, scheduling and oversight.

The director of MOTS should establish communication with his staff through monthly staff meetings to improve communication and resolve department issues as they arise. The director should also organize and engage in staff appreciation activities to further enhance morale.

This concludes FCMAT's work for the Silver City Unified School District. FCMAT extends its appreciation to the district staff for their cooperation during fieldwork. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact me at (661) 304-7072.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke that ends in a large circular flourish.

Marisa Ploog, CPA
Fiscal Intervention Specialist