

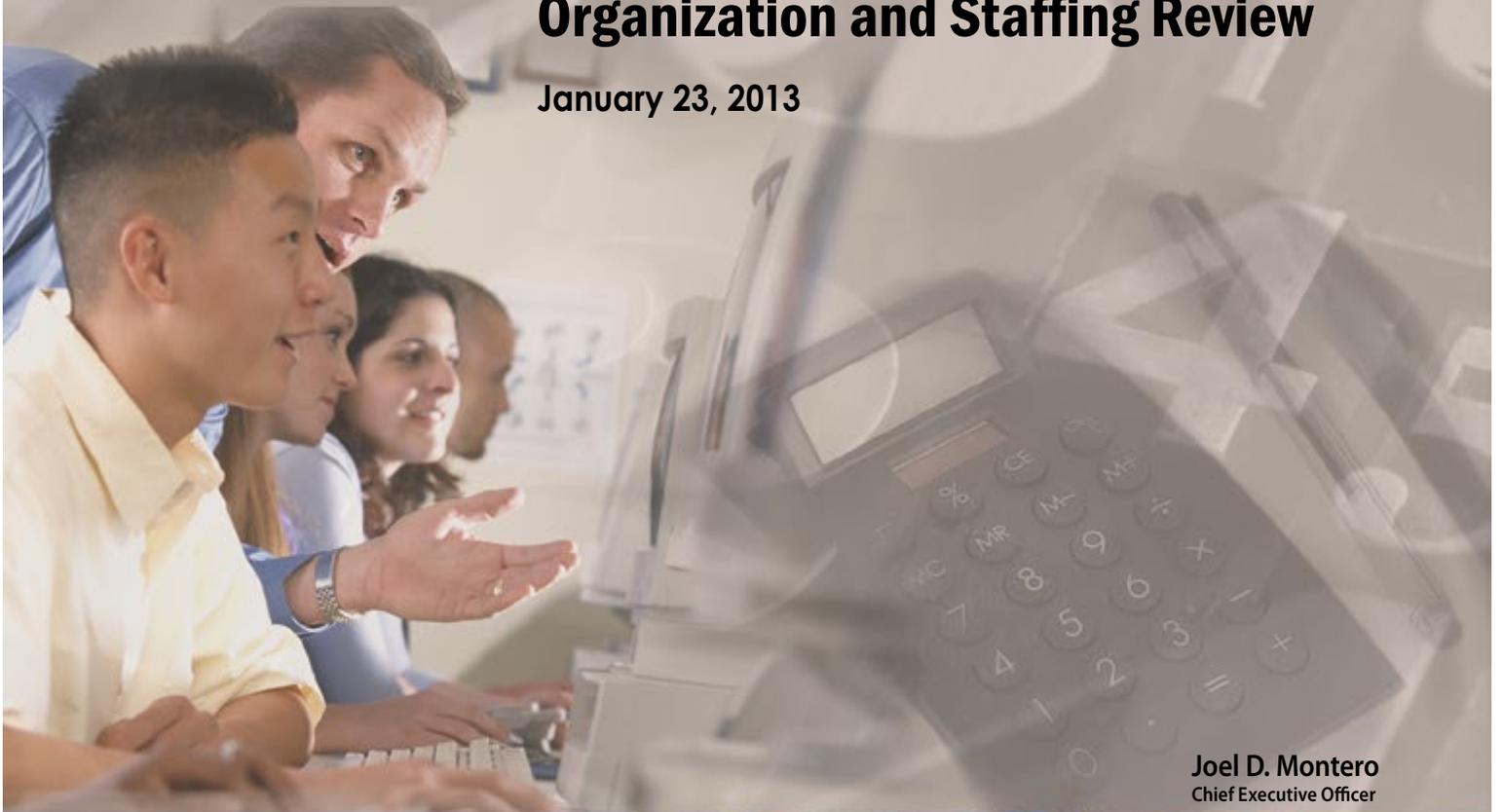


**CSIS** California School Information Services

# Tehama County Department of Education

## Organization and Staffing Review

January 23, 2013



**Joel D. Montero**  
Chief Executive Officer







## CSIS California School Information Services

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January 23, 2013

Larry Champion, Superintendent  
Tehama County Department of Education  
1135 Lincoln Street  
Post Office Box 689  
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Dear Superintendent Champion:

In March, 2012, the Tehama County Department of Education entered into a study agreement with the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT). Specifically, the agreement states that FCMAT will perform the following:

1. An organizational and staffing review of classified support staff that will include but not be limited to the district's central office departments and workflow. The review will consist of the following departments: Superintendent's Office, Business Services and Personnel.
2. The Team will provide comparative staffing data for class six county offices or school districts of similar size and structure and provide recommendations to improve the efficiency that may reduce costs of the county office. The county office comparison will include at least six comparable class six county offices or school districts located in the geographical region and may include comparable county offices utilized in the collective bargaining process by the Tehama County Office of Education.
3. The Team will review job descriptions for all department positions, interview staff and make recommendations for staffing improvements. All recommendations will include estimated and calculated values for any proposed position reductions or enhancements to the organizational structure.
4. The Team will evaluate the current work flow of the central office and provide recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations. FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve you and extends thanks to all the staff of the Tehama County Department of Education for their cooperation and assistance during fieldwork.

### FCMAT

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

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Administrative Agent: Christine L. Frazier - Office of Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Joel D. Montero in black ink, featuring a stylized 'J' and 'M'.

Joel D. Montero  
Chief Executive Officer

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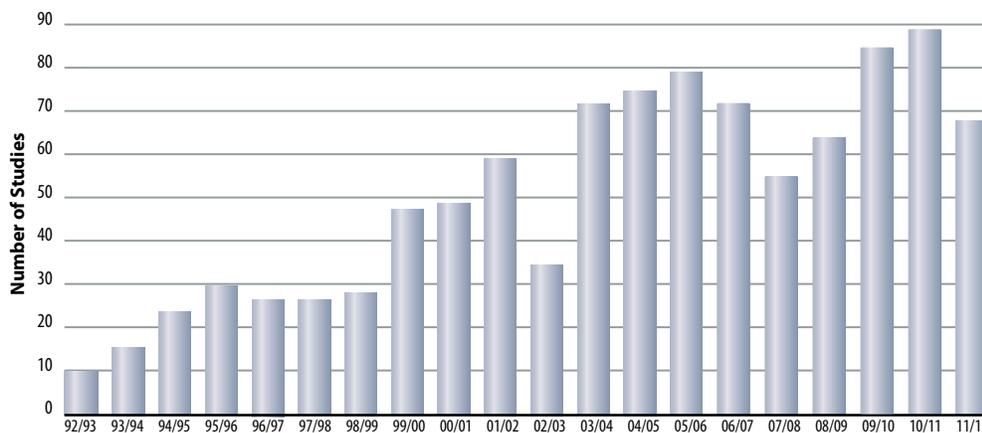
# About FCMAT

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

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

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

**Studies by Fiscal Year**



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

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

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

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

# Introduction

## Background

The Tehama County Department of Education (county office) is located in the town of Red Bluff and was established in the mid-1800s by the California Legislature. It encompasses approximately 3,000 square miles containing 17 school districts that serve 10,293 students in grades K-12. Because it serves between 7,000 and 14,999 students, it is one of six class VI county offices of education in the state. Other Class VI county offices are Lake, Mendocino, Nevada, San Benito and Yuba. The county office employs approximately 260 management and non-management staff, excluding vacancies, short-term employees and substitutes.

The countywide student population is 59.9% white, 34.1% Hispanic, 2.2% Native American, 0.83% African-American, 0.66% Asian, 0.3% Pacific Islander and 0.3% Filipino. Fourteen percent, or 1,538, of the county's students are English learners. Countywide, the average pupil-to-teacher ratio is 20.2-to-1, which is lower than the state average of 24.2-to-1.

The county office provides instruction to students in juvenile detention facilities and other specialized educational settings. Its special education programs serve 38 students with disabilities in nine classes on three public school campuses and at the county office. The county's 17 districts and their charter schools formed the Tehama County special education local plan area (SELPA) to provide leadership, support, coordination and technical assistance in the area of special education. The county office also operates Safe Education & Recreation for Rural Families (SERRF) and the Regional Occupation Program (ROP).

Pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 1200, the county office provides fiscal oversight and financial reporting to the State of California for the 17 school districts in its jurisdiction. In accordance with the Williams settlement agreement, the county office also monitors and maintains approximately 3,600 California teaching credential registrations and provides or coordinates an array of support services, including curriculum and instruction support, school and community services, and student support services such as student records, truancy reduction, services for homeless children, counseling, and healthcare.

## Study Guidelines

FCMAT visited the county office on August 1-3, 2012 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documents. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Organizational Structure
- III. Central Office Departments' Staffing and Structure
- IV. Staffing Comparison
- IV. Appendices

## Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Julie A. Auvil, CPA, CGMA  
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Susan Grinsell, CPA  
FCMAT Consultant  
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Chief Human Resources Officer  
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\*As a member of this study team, this consultant was not representing her employer but was working solely as an independent contractor for FCMAT.

# Executive Summary

The Tehama County Department of Education (county office) is one of six Class VI county offices in California and serves approximately 10,300 students in 17 school districts. Over the past year, the county office has worked on lapsation with several of its member school districts to provide more efficient and economical services. The county office is also seeking ways to make its central office operations more efficient and effective for itself and its districts.

The county office reported difficulties in constructing an organizational chart, and one of the main issues this study encountered was the inordinately broad span of control in every department and function reporting to the deputy superintendent. This was also the case in the human resources and business services departments, with all department staff reporting to their respective assistant superintendent. Director positions, which normally involve supervisory duties, did not have employees reporting to them.

The county office also has a multitude of job classifications and titles. FCMAT found redundant job titles, job descriptions with different job titles but the same job duties, and a custom of allowing an employee's former job title and salary to follow them to the next position. For example, if an employee changed positions from support secretary III to receptionist, the new job title became "support secretary III/receptionist." This practice has created job titles unique to individuals and made it difficult to determine a hierarchy of positions within departments that can be displayed on an organizational chart or communicated easily to employees.

The county office should change some job titles and duties, and have middle management positions such as directors support staff positions. Detailed recommendations in the report are designed to help provide staff with a well-organized structure that does the following:

- Groups positions with similar job duties.
- Has several positions within a classification.
- Arranges classifications according to increasingly responsible duties related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for each classification.
- Includes increased compensation for more complex classifications.

The county office should also consider engaging a vendor to conduct a compensation and classification review. These types of studies review and update compensation for salaries and benefits for regular full-time employees in all current job classifications and may include developing new classification structures and job descriptions, evaluating job evaluation methodologies to determine internal equity, conducting a custom tailored salary survey, developing competitive pay systems, recommending strategies to implement new compensation structures and ensuring that appropriate administrative and procedural guidelines are in place to maintain proposed changes to the system.

Many positions have been classified as management or confidential but do not qualify for such a description under the definitions provided in Government Code sections 3540.1(g) and (c). The district should consider moving these positions from the salary schedule for classified management, administrative support, and confidential positions to the unrepresented office technical unit (OTU) salary schedule. However, because the county office has established many individualized job titles, the OTU salary schedule does not contain many of the positions that need to be moved. Thus FCMAT was not able to quantify the recommendations regarding this issue.

The organizational structure of the county office's human resources and business services departments lacks a balanced approach to supervision. FCMAT's recommendations include a new structure to correct this issue.

There is a lack of communication and teamwork between the human resources and business services departments that affects the efficiency of the central office. Past behaviors of management employees have affected the interactions of support staff in both departments, and the county office will need to make significant efforts to bring these departments together to work as a cohesive team. One change that could help accomplish this would be to identify the leadership responsibilities for the position control system. The business services and human resources department use different position control systems, and neither department understands the district's overall needs.

County office administrators and staff consistently reported that evaluations have rarely been completed, and that when performed they often have consisted of conversations rather than written documentation. Most employees indicated that they had not received an evaluation in many years. Although the deputy superintendent has begun implementing annual evaluations, much work remains to achieve compliance in this area.

# Findings and Recommendations

## Organizational Structure

School leaders in the Tehama County Department of Education are exploring ways to better educate students and improve school performance by evaluating the current organizational structure. An effective organizational structure in a county office of education establishes the framework for leadership and the delegation of specific duties and responsibilities. As the county office's and its districts' enrollment increases or declines, an effective organizational structure will adapt as necessary. A county office should be staffed according to generally accepted theories of organizational structure and the standards used in other school agencies of similar size and type. The most common theories of organizational structure are span of control, chain of command, and line and staff authority.

### Span of Control

Span of control refers to how employee relations are structured between leaders and subordinates in an organization. Span of control can also refer to the number of subordinates reporting directly to a supervisor. A broad span of control exists when a manager oversees many subordinates; a narrow span of control exists when a manager oversees few subordinates. Although it is a simple concept, span of control has widespread implications for the study of organizations. Although there is no agreed-upon ideal number of subordinates for span of control, it is generally agreed that the span can be larger at lower levels of an organization than at higher levels because subordinates at the lower levels typically perform more routine duties and therefore can be supervised more effectively. In order to become a more efficient organization, the county office will need to review the span of control for the director level positions. These positions, although in leadership roles, have little or no supervision responsibilities of subordinate employees.

### Chain of Command

Chain of command refers to the flow of authority in an organization and is characterized by two significant principles: unity of command, which suggests that a subordinate is only accountable to one supervisor, and the scalar principle, which suggests that authority and responsibility should flow in a direct vertical line from top management to the lowest level. The result is a hierarchical division of labor and includes the order in which authority and power in an organization is wielded and delegated from top management to every employee at every level of the organization. In the Tehama County Department of Education, the chain of command is not discernible beyond the level of the assistant superintendent, and recommendations for consideration are included in this report.

### Line and Staff Authority

Line authority is the relationship between supervisors and subordinates; it refers to the direct line in the chain of command. For example, the assistant superintendent of business services has direct line authority over the director of business services, and the director of business services has direct line authority over the business services department staff. Conversely, staff authority is advisory in nature. Staff personnel do not have the authority to make and implement decisions, but act in support of line personnel. The organizational structure of local educational agencies contains both line and staff authority.

The purpose of any organizational structure is to help county office management make key decisions to facilitate student learning and assist its districts while balancing its financial resources. The organizational design should outline the management process and specific links to the formal system of communication, authority and responsibility needed to achieve the county office's goals and objectives. County office administrators indicated that they had experienced difficulty in creating an organizational chart and could not determine which department should be responsible for creating it. This is typically a duty of the human resources department because it delineates responsibilities for supervision and evaluation.

The organizational chart that was ultimately created includes an inordinately broad span of control assigned to the deputy superintendent, with every department and function reporting to this position. This type of structure is typical of smaller organizations or single units within an organization, but is not appropriate for a county office the size of Tehama.

Because the span of control is horizontal, with every department reporting to one position, the county office lacks a clearly defined organizational structure to guide its daily operations. The organizational chart needs to create a framework for leadership and the delegation of specific duties and responsibilities. To accomplish this, a more expansive chain of command is needed, with department heads reporting to administrators at the assistant superintendent level, and these administrators reporting to the deputy superintendent.

The county office's organizational chart also contained a mixture of departments, positions and functions, and omitted many positions in the organization. It is acceptable to have an organizational chart that provides functions, but the main purpose of an organizational chart is to show the organization's structure and the relationships and ranks of the positions in that structure. It is best to avoid combining a functional organizational chart with a structural one.

Eleven, or 61%, of the 18 job descriptions provided by the county office did not indicate the position's supervisor, but instead used phrases such as "under general supervision," "under minimal supervision," or "under the direction of an assigned supervisor." The remaining seven job descriptions typically listed only one supervisor, or stated that the position "coordinates and maintains a variety of work from more than one supervisor;" and some of these employees had two supervisors, depending on which job duties they were performing. Although certain job descriptions cannot be specific because of differences in departments and possibly sites, including the title of a single immediate supervisor whenever practical helps reduce both confusion and the potential for power struggles between supervisors by creating clear line authority.

The county office's many job titles and classifications for positions will complicate the human resources department's task of creating an organizational chart. Some job titles at the same salary grade, commonly known as classifications, are redundant. For example, the county office has eight job titles related secretarial functions, a clerical assistant II position, and a support secretary I position, all of which are listed at salary grade 18. In addition, the county office customarily allows an employee's previous salary and title to follow the employee to their new position. As a result, job descriptions have been created that are unique to each individual. For example, the receptionist was formerly a support secretary III, so when she transferred to the receptionist position her job title became support secretary III/receptionist, and a new job description was written to match this new position. This practice creates confusion and could result in the county office paying the salary of a higher classification than is appropriate for the duties of an employee's new position.

The county office's job descriptions lack a date of adoption. It is best practice to update job descriptions continually and include dates of adoption and revision. Further, some job descriptions indicate identical assigned duties but different salaries. This is the case with the positions of accounting technician and secretary/bookkeeper. This makes it difficult to create a hierarchy of positions within a department. In interviews, staff indicated that they are also uncertain about their relationship to colleagues with regard to the organization's hierarchy. This situation hindered FCMAT's ability to perform cost analyses because positions do not exist in more than one non-represented bargaining unit and so do not transfer from one unit to another.

An effective organizational structure groups jobs with similar duties, includes several positions in a given classification, and arranges classifications according to the level of responsibility, duties, skills and abilities required, with higher compensation for classifications with more complex duties and responsibilities. For example, the position of support secretary III/receptionist would typically belong in a secretarial group with titles such as office assistant (entry level), administrative assistant (mid-level), and executive assistant (advanced level). A receptionist would be considered an entry level position because the position requires less knowledge and fewer skills and abilities than an administrative assistant. However, because the county office has created job descriptions that apply to only one person, this type of structure is not in place.

Job classification and compensation issues are outside the scope of this study and therefore are not discussed in this report. However, once a position classification plan is in place, the county office will need to develop guidelines for analyzing new positions to ensure that the job and its demands fit within the organizational structure. Adopting rules and procedures for reclassifying positions is a best practice, as is communicating these to all employees. The human resources department will need to maintain the classification system, analyze requests, and hold managers accountable for following adopted policies.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Assign the responsibility of creating and updating organizational charts to the human resources department, and change job descriptions to reflect this duty.
2. Create a more expansive chain of command, with each department head reporting to an assistant superintendent, who then reports to the deputy superintendent.
3. Develop an organizational chart that shows the structure of the entire organization, and refrain from combining a functional organizational chart with a structural one.
4. Include the title of the immediate supervisor in job descriptions wherever practical.
5. Discontinue allowing an employee's previous salary and title to follow them to a new position.
6. Include the dates of adoption and any subsequent revisions on all job descriptions, and update job descriptions continually.

7. Conduct internally or contract with an outside vendor for a classification and compensation review or comparison study to create groups of positions with similar duties; devise a tiered structure from entry level to professional positions; determine salary ranges based on the duties and responsibilities assigned; determine where current job classifications fall within the tiered structure; and eliminate unnecessary classifications and create new classifications when needed.
8. Give the human resources department the authority to maintain the county office's organizational structure once it is established by the classification and compensation review or comparison study. Ensure that the structure includes lines of reporting, career progression paths, salary grades and job responsibilities.

# Central Office Departments' Staffing and Structure

## Superintendent's Office

The office of the superintendent has two full-time equivalent (FTE) administrative assistants, a 1.0 FTE support secretary III/receptionist, a deputy superintendent and the county superintendent. The position of administrative assistant to the superintendent is titled "executive assistant to the superintendent/office manager," and the position of administrative assistant to the deputy superintendent is titled "administrative assistant to the deputy superintendent."

The superintendent is in the fifth year of employment with the county office, is actively involved in community affairs, and has hired a deputy superintendent to attend to the county office's day-to-day operations. The deputy superintendent and the executive assistant to the superintendent/office manager are the only positions that report directly to the superintendent.

## Services to Districts

The county office is working with small districts on consolidation and has assigned the deputy superintendent and the assistant superintendent of human resource services/school superintendent to act as small school superintendents during the lapsation of some of the small districts. The county office and the many small districts have a mutual interest in pursuing consolidation in accordance with Education Code Sections 35780 -35787. Lapsation or consolidation can include dissolving districts or annexing an entire district into one or more adjoining school districts. The county office successfully lapsed one of its small districts as of June 30, 2012 and is working toward lapsing/consolidating three more during fiscal year 2012-13.

County office administrators expressed interest in providing human resources and fiscal services to small districts to improve countywide efficiency while potentially providing revenue for the county office. The superintendent is also interested in exploring ways to increase revenues and reduce expenditures because the county office anticipates deficit spending for fiscal years 2012-13 through 2014-15 as reported in its multiyear financial projection filed with its 2012-13 adoption budget.

## Deputy Superintendent

The deputy superintendent has been with the county office for three years. This position is considered part of the superintendent's office and is responsible for managing day-to-day operations and supervising all senior management employees. Since the deputy superintendent began working at the county office, this position has also been responsible for facilities and curriculum and instruction. In addition, this position serves as superintendent for two of the three small school districts that are undergoing lapsation.

## Span of Control

Interviews with county office administrators and staff and a review of the county office's organizational chart indicated that approximately 25 to 30 departments and/or functions report to the deputy superintendent, who has organized the managers and department heads into teams and meets with management team leads once a month. However, as noted earlier, this span of control is too great for one position, and the organization's chain of command is not clearly understood.

As the county office reviews its organizational structure, it will need to consider defining management positions that supervise employees and oversee the work of a department. Managers must

ensure that staff members understand all policies and procedures and perform their duties in a timely and accurate manner. Managers must also serve as a liaison between their department and other divisions to identify and resolve problems and design and modify processes and procedures as needed. It is not efficient to have managers perform routine daily functions of their department; these functions should be assigned to department support staff.

County office administrators and staff consistently reported that evaluations are rarely completed in the departments analyzed, and when they are completed, they frequently consist of informal conversations rather than formal written evaluations. Most employees indicated that they had not received an evaluation in many years. The deputy superintendent has started evaluating management employees. Implementing a complete evaluation system for all employees will require that lines of authority be clearly identified.

### **Executive Assistant to the Superintendent**

The executive assistant to the superintendent has been with the county office and in the same position for 18 years. Other classified support staff in the departments reviewed have also been with the organization for many years. The job description for the executive assistant to the superintendent states that this position's basic function is to do the following:

Perform a wide variety of highly responsible, confidential, and complex administrative duties to relieve the Tehama County Superintendent of Schools; provide support to the Tehama County Board of Education; and coordinate and oversee the general office functions of the Tehama County Department of Education.

This position is listed on the county office's salary schedule for classified management, administrative support, and confidential positions. Although it is not listed on the organizational chart, staff indicated that this position reports to the superintendent. However, the superintendent did not indicate that this position reports to him, and the position's job description does not list its supervisor. Based on the position's title, it would be logical for this position to report to the superintendent. This is an example of how a job description that does not list a supervisor contributes to a lack of clarity regarding reporting and lines of authority.

### **Supervision of Clerical Staff**

The job description for this position states that it is responsible for the following:

Supervising and providing work assignments to the Support Secretary III/Receptionist; exercising supervisory responsibility over office clerical staff, when necessary; training and evaluating the performance of assigned staff; assign and review the work of others; participate in selection, termination and discipline procedures.

Although it is not typical to have one manager for all clerical staff, this arrangement seems to be effective in this case, and this structure is frequently found in other areas of organizations such as maintenance departments, in which a custodian works at a school site that is led by a school principal but is supervised by a director of maintenance who is located in another facility. However, it can often confuse employees to have one person as their supervisor while they are working directly with another administrator.

Although this supervisory system works for the county office, it is more common for the immediate supervisor, who has the most contact with the employee's daily work, to be responsible for writing the employee's performance review. Changing the current structure may diminish the sense of teamwork among the clerical staff; however, the county office may find that difficulties arise in the current reporting structure once a formal supervision and evaluation process is estab-

lished. The county office will need to analyze this structure after a formal evaluation system is in place.

The atmosphere throughout the main office is collegial, and there is a sense of teamwork among the clerical staff. For example, clerical staff cover the front desk in the absence of the receptionist and are willing to help in other departments when workloads increase.

### **Revolving Fund**

The executive assistant's job description also gives this position control of the revolving and petty cash funds, and responsibility for maintaining adequate records and account balances. Revolving cash funds are typically used for payments that must be made immediately and therefore cannot be processed through accounts payable or payroll. The maximum amount allowed in any district's or county office's revolving cash fund is governed by Education Code section 42800.

The executive assistant indicated that this position is responsible for writing and signing checks from the revolving fund. However, this account requires only one signature to negotiate a check, and the executive assistant and the superintendent are the only authorized signers for the account. This arrangement provides insufficient internal controls because it creates an opportunity for checks to be written without the county office's knowledge and authorization. Further, it is not typical for financial responsibilities to be assigned to a department other than business services. Sufficient internal controls would further segregate duties to safeguard cash assets and to ensure that signers on the account are not able to also write and/or sign checks.

The executive assistant's job description also includes the following duties, which in many county offices are provided by the business services, maintenance, and technology departments:

- Maintenance of the master set of vehicle keys and department keys, including all sites, checking out keys when necessary.
- Maintenance of the department phone system, calling service and programming, when necessary.
- Approve phone bills monthly. [and] Administrator of Department credit cards, and provide training.
- Maintain department security alarm codes.

These functions would be better performed by the operations, information technology, business services and maintenance and operations departments, respectively.

### **Board-Related Duties**

As is typical for this position, it is also responsible for many duties related to the county board of education. Staff indicated that other county office administrative assistants perform these same functions for the small school districts that are undergoing consolidation/lapsation and those whose superintendent responsibilities rest with the county office's assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent position.

The executive assistant has sufficient knowledge and expertise regarding these functions as well as the resources and relationships to assist the county's small district boards and their clerical staff with matters related to their boards. Assimilating these duties into executive assistant position will provide better efficiency, and offering these services to other small districts may present the county office with an additional opportunity to increase revenue while helping smaller school districts benefit from an economy of scale that they could not achieve on their own.

### **Support Secretary III/Receptionist**

The support secretary III/receptionist has been with the county office for 18 years and in the present position for approximately nine years. This position reports to the executive assistant to the superintendent/office manager and is considered part of the superintendent's office staff. According to the job description, this position "provides secretarial, clerical, and reception support; assists other departments with secretarial functions."

This position has a great deal of interaction with the public and with county office employees, including answering many telephone calls, the majority of which are related to the preschool program. Staff indicated that if an employee does not answer their phone when a call is transferred to them, the call is transferred back to the receptionist, who asks whether the caller wishes to leave a voice mail message or call back at another time. It would be more efficient to set the telephone system to automatically send calls to voice mail if the employee being called does not answer.

The support secretary III/receptionist indicated that 60% of her work day is spent providing support to other departments, with the highest volume of work attributed to the Safe Education and Recreation for Rural Families (SERRF) program, which is a categorical program that receives restricted funding and requires matching funding. However, the county office's position control report shows that the secretary position is charged to the general fund unrestricted budget.

#### **Substitute Calling**

This position also has considerable interaction with the human resources department. The job description states that the position "assists substitute teacher candidates with application process, and maintains accurate records; and maintains and distributes substitute teacher list to Tehama County schools." To help maintain the substitute list, the support secretary III/receptionist sends packets to prospective substitutes, registers the substitutes for online orientation, and notifies districts of substitute availability.

Currently, department secretaries telephone individual substitutes to arrange for their service. Purchasing and implementing an automated system for substitute calling that includes absence tracking for all employees could allow the county office to better track absences, obtain substitutes more efficiently, and possibly realize a financial savings by reducing the amount of time multiple departments spend on these tasks. Because the support secretary III/receptionist already has a great deal of knowledge regarding substitutes and interacts with all departments, it would be logical to give this position responsibility for operating any new system.

Department secretaries who already arrange for substitutes could help set up the system and operate it when covering the reception desk. Substitute calling and absence tracking is a large task to give to this busy position; however, transferring SERRF program-related clerical duties back to that program could allow this position to take on a new role such as this.

#### **Human Resources and Confidential Functions**

Because many of the support secretary III/receptionist's duties and functions are of the type typically supervised by a county office's human resources department (e.g. duties related to managing substitutes as indicated above) it would benefit the county office to analyze these functions and determine whether the position should be supervised by that department.

Because this position assists various departments, it sometimes works with confidential information, allowing public access to the receptionist's desk could jeopardize the confidentiality of

any information left on the desk or computer screen, particularly if the receptionist leaves the workstation.

### **Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent:**

The administrative assistant has been with the county office for 14 years, including 10 years in this position, which reports to the deputy superintendent. The job description states that this position is to:

Assist and relieve the Associate Superintendent of paperwork and impedimenta so that he/she may devote maximum attention to the central problems of education in order that the Department can play its effective part in the education process.

The associate superintendent's job title was changed to the deputy superintendent position approximately one year ago, but the job description has not been updated with this change.

Like many other job descriptions reviewed, this job description needs to be updated and does not meet legal requirements for the position's designation. This position is listed as an exempt position; however, it does not meet the requirements for positions designated as management, confidential, or exempt.

### **Confidential, Management or Supervisory Positions and Classifications**

State law defines the tasks that make a position confidential, management, or supervisory in nature as follows:

- Government Code section 3540.1(g) defines management positions as any employee having significant responsibilities for formulating or administering agency or departmental policies and programs or administering an agency or department.
- Government Code section 3540.1(c) defines confidential employees as any employee who is required to develop or present management positions regarding employer-employee relations or whose duties normally require access to confidential information that contributes significantly to the development of management positions.
- Government Code section 3540.1(m), defines supervisory employees as any individual, regardless of the job description or title, having authority, in the interest of the employer, to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees, or responsibility to direct them, or to adjust their grievances, or effectively to recommend this action, if, in connection with the foregoing, the exercise of this authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment. Employees whose duties are substantially similar to those of their subordinates shall not be considered to be supervisory employees.

The county office's Superintendent's Policies 4140(a) and 4240 also discuss the legal definitions of management, confidential, and supervisory employees. For positions within the scope of this study, this report includes recommendations as needed regarding reclassifying positions, but the county office will need to review positions not discussed in this study to determine whether they comply with the above laws and policies and whether to reclassify them.

### **Exempt and Nonexempt Positions**

County office staff indicated that under prior administrators not all employees were being consistently compensated for overtime work. The county office instituted a more structured procedure for working overtime during October 2011; however, county office staff reported that they do not report all of the hours worked.

Education Code sections 45127 and 45128 state that classified employees must be compensated at the overtime rate for time worked beyond eight hours per day or 40 hours per week, and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provides that employees covered by it must receive overtime pay equal to at least one-and-one-half times their regular rate for any hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek. However, exemptions are applied for employees in executive, managerial or supervisory positions, and county office management positions are typically considered exempt.

The county office does not have separate salary schedules for management, supervisory and confidential employees. Having these would help distinguish classifications and requirements for overtime-exempt positions and allow the organization to move positions that do not meet these requirements to the OTU salary schedule.

For positions within the scope of this study, this report includes recommendations regarding whether the position has been appropriately classified as exempt or nonexempt, and the salary schedule on which it should be placed, but the county office will need to review positions not discussed in this study to determine whether they are correctly classified as exempt or nonexempt.

Several positions on the county office's salary schedule for classified management, administrative support, and confidential positions are designated as "flex." The county office's Administrative Regulation (AR) 4213.3 defines this as working a flexible schedule and exempt from overtime, but also states that "hours worked in excess of 40 in a calendar week shall be compensated on an overtime basis as specified by state and federal guidelines." This designation is unique and may not be legally required.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Create an organizational structure to establish a framework for leadership and the delegation of specific duties and responsibilities.
2. Create a comprehensive evaluation system for all employees that is consistently implemented and enforced.
3. After establishing a formal supervision and evaluation system and processes, analyze whether the current structure, under which all clerical staff report to the executive assistant to the superintendent/office manager, will continue to work or needs to be changed.
4. Expand the number of signatories on the revolving account to four by eliminating the executive assistant and adding the assistant superintendent of business, director of business and deputy superintendent. Transfer the duties related to the revolving fund to the business services department.
5. Transfer the duties listed in the findings above from the executive assistant to the superintendent/office manager position to other departments or positions as indicated.
6. Should county services to small districts undergoing lapsation continue in the future, transfer to the executive assistant's position the performance and oversight of duties related to school board meeting management, board poli-

- cies, Brown Act requirements and other support functions for small school districts.
7. Consider programming the telephone system to automatically send calls to voice mail if an employee does not answer.
  8. Conduct a time study of the support secretary III/receptionist position to determine if a portion of the position should be charged to the SERRF program or whether the workload justifies the SERRF program seeking additional clerical help.
  9. Consider purchasing an automated substitute calling system that includes employee absence tracking, and assign the support secretary III/receptionist position responsibility for operating the system.
  10. Analyze the functions of the support secretary III/receptionist position to determine whether supervision of this position should transfer to the human resources department.
  11. Consider moving any duties involving confidential information from the support secretary III/receptionist position to the department that generates them.
  12. Revise the job description of the administrative assistant to the deputy superintendent to include the deputy superintendent's current title.
  13. Review the job descriptions and duties performed by employees not included in this study and considered management, supervisory or confidential, and reclassify positions to comply with Government Code sections 3540.1(g), (c) and (m).
  14. Review overtime exemptions in the Education Code and FLSA, and consult with its legal counsel to determine if each position designated as exempt has been classified correctly and treated in compliance with overtime regulations.
  15. Consider creating separate salary schedules for management, supervisory and confidential positions. Move positions that do not qualify for inclusion on these salary schedules to the OTU salary schedule.
  16. Analyze whether the "flex" designation given to some positions on the salary schedule for classified management is legally required.

## Business Services Department

The business services department provides fiscal support to county office programs and to 17 school districts in Tehama County. Services include district fiscal services, internal business support, access to the county office's chart of accounts, Escape financial system management and user support, payroll preparation and oversight, DocStar (an electronic document filing system) support, and public records act compliance.

### Assistant Superintendent – Business

The assistant superintendent – business was hired on July 1, 2012 following 10 years of service as the chief business official for a large elementary school district in the county. This position supervises the business services department and the printing technician position. The printing technician and the following 10 positions in the business department report directly to the assistant superintendent business services:

- Director of business services
- Director of internal fiscal services
- Payroll specialist/system operator
- Business systems support specialist
- SELPA budget assistant/MAA coordinator
- Five full-time accounting technicians

Six of these 11 positions are defined as classified management and are at different ranges on the salary schedule, and four of these six positions earn overtime pay. Both the high ratio of management to staff in a single department and the fact that management positions earn overtime pay are unusual. The latter is an indication that these positions may be misclassified and out of compliance with Government Code section 3540.1(g), Education Code sections 45127 and 45128, and the FLSA.

The job description for the assistant superintendent – business position states that this position is to:

Lead and supervise the Tehama County Department of Education's budget and business services department. Personally perform first line tasks for TCDE and Tehama County school districts including budget, payroll, financial recordkeeping, reports, and required oversights.

In many county offices of education, this position or its equivalent is also responsible for supervising and overseeing maintenance and operations; transportation, including special education transportation and all vehicle fleet maintenance; information technology; and/or risk management departments. In addition, because the department has supervisory positions and support staff, day-to-day tasks could be performed by support staff rather than by the assistant superintendent.

The job description for the assistant superintendent – business position also contains some functions and duties that are more typically assigned to an internal director position, including the following:

- Prepare State fund apportionments computations monthly.

- Classify and compute tax apportionments to CSSF to distribute income to proper County School Service Fund accounts.
- Responsible for encumbrances and liquidation to be sure all purchase orders and travel orders are cleared in order to have accounting of current liabilities and receivables at the end of the year; and that prior year current liabilities and receivables are properly processed.
- Classify incoming CSSF checks or funds to correct accounts and deposit the same with the County Treasurer.

### **Director of Business Services**

This classified management position is at range 32 on the salary schedule and is exempt from overtime pay. The person in this position has been employed by the county office since 1996 and recently moved to this position after two years as the director, internal fiscal services. The position is under the direction of the assistant superintendent – business. The job description states that this position is responsible for the following:

*. . . planning, organizing, controlling and directing various aspects of business services, both internally as well as in relation to Tehama County school districts and charter schools; providing advice, support and oversight to county districts in areas related to budgeting, internal control procedures, accounting, legal issues and other finance-related matters.*

Although the position's duties include "monitoring various fiscal activities," there is no formal assignment to supervise other business services department personnel. This is unusual, as is the fact that the position is responsible for both internal and external operations in an organization of this size that employs both an assistant superintendent and an additional director who is responsible for internal operations.

The job description for the director of business services position also includes some duties and functions more commonly performed by an assistant superintendent of business, including the following:

Oversight of districts' budget and financial reports to proactively identify potential solvency issues and coordinate all district fiscal oversight activities related to AB 1200. Review and certify interim budgets and prepare recommendations of approval or disapproval for dissemination to the State and individual district's board.

Review districts' collective bargaining agreements required by AB 1200 and make recommendations to districts if the multi-year impact on the district's economic uncertainties reserve shows the district below the State required amount.

Review, interpret and communicate legislative laws, Education Code, and other legal issues to school district administrators and staff, and County Office administrators.

### **Director, Internal Fiscal Services**

This classified management position under the direction of the assistant superintendent – business is at range 29 on the salary schedule and is exempt from overtime pay. The position is vacant and the county office has not yet determined whether to fill it. The individual who previously held this position is now the director of business services. The job description states that this position involves the following:

. . . extensive analytical, interpretive and communication activities, in a computerized reporting environment. The position is responsible for the oversight of daily and long range functions of the fiscal department.

The job description also states that the position requires various skills “which will be applied in dealing with program managers, business and clerical staff”. However, there is no formal assignment to supervise other personnel.

It is unusual for a director of internal services position not to be responsible for managing internal operations in an organization of this size that also has an assistant superintendent. In addition, some supervision of other employees is usually assigned to a position at this level.

This position is at a lower salary range than the director of business services position. Director positions with responsibility for county office budget and accounting duties are usually placed at the same salary range as the director position responsible for external budget, accounting and fiscal oversight of school districts because the level of responsibility is similar and both require specialized knowledge.

The job descriptions for the director of business services and the director, internal fiscal services will need to be revised to properly segregate internal and external duties between the two while balancing the level of and complexity of duties. This would enable both positions to be placed at the same salary range.

Depending on the salary range selected for these positions, the total cost of compensation could increase or decrease; however, because of the many possible steps on the salary schedule and the fact that management positions were excluded from the study agreement, no further analysis was conducted.

### **SELPA Budget Assistant/MAA Coordinator:**

This is a classified management position at range 24 on the classified management salary schedule. Although the organizational chart lists the assistant superintendent – business as the supervisor for Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA), the job description states that the position is under the direction of the assistant superintendent for special schools and services. The job description lists the title of this position as “SELPA Budget Assistant” but the salary schedule lists it as “SELPA Budget Assistant/MAA Coordinator.”

The SELPA budget assistant has worked for the county office for 20 years in a variety of positions. Although the duties assigned to this position have existed for some time, the position was created in 2012 after the departure of another employee. A review of the job description and interviews with staff indicate that the SELPA budget assistant portion of the position includes responsibilities similar those of a director while the MAA coordinator portion of the position has responsibilities similar to those of an accounting technician.

Both the job description and FCMAT’s interviews with county office staff indicate that this position does not have significant responsibilities in formulating county office policy and does not administer any major county office programs. As a result, it does not meet the criteria for classification as a management position as defined in Government Code section 3540.1(g). FCMAT was not able to determine the cost of potentially moving this position to the OTU salary schedule because the position does not exist on that schedule.

### **Payroll Specialist/System Operator (Confidential)**

This classified management position is at range 23 on the salary schedule and is identified as a confidential position. The position is vacant and the county office is holding it open pending the release of this report.

This position is under the direction of the assistant superintendent – business and performs a variety of technical payroll duties for the county office and school districts, and ensures the accuracy of a variety of employee payroll information, forms, records and reports. Although the position has access to information that is not public, it does not comply with the definitions of a confidential employee in Government Code section 3540.1(c) and the county office's superintendent's policies 4140(a) and 4240. These regulations state that a position is confidential and thus excluded from any bargaining unit only if it has access to the employer's collective bargaining information. Neither the job description nor interviews with staff indicated that this position has significant responsibilities in formulating county office policy, administering any major programs, or access to the county office's collective bargaining information. Consequently, the position is neither management as defined in Government Code section 3540.1(g), nor confidential as defined in the code and policies cited above.

The position's job description does not formally assign the responsibility to lead, oversee or supervise any business office positions. However, the position supervises the work of two accounting technicians and thus qualifies to be considered supervisory as defined in Government Code section 3540 (m) and, assuming the job description is changed as suggested above, would best be included in a supervisory salary schedule such as recommended earlier in this report.

### **Position Control and Payroll Procedures**

The payroll specialist/system operator position is responsible for maintaining the county office's position control database within the Escape financial software. This data includes demographic and payroll information for each employee. Allowing one person to access all financial system software screens needed to create and pay employees does not provide the separation of duties needed to ensure strong internal controls because a fictitious employee can be created and paid without the county office's knowledge.

Giving the human resources department responsibility for maintaining the position control system would provide for the proper internal controls. However, because of the complexity of the position control modules in the Escape software, human resources staff would need training and support to carry out this responsibility. Because this reassignment of duties would be substantial, the transition would need to take place during a time of low workload. Related validation of budget controls, such as appropriate account codes for positions and available funding sources, would need to remain with business services department staff.

Moving these responsibilities to human resources could provide a more effective arrangement of personnel, payroll and budget operations, and provide valuable cross-training in position control between the human resources and the business services departments. Cross-training in payroll and retirement reporting would also become available for business services department staff because the payroll specialist/systems operator would have more time for it. Because this transition would be critical to many operations, a detailed plan would be needed.

Article 18.2 of the county office's contract with the classified employee bargaining unit specifies that step movement for these employees will occur on the anniversary of their hire. To accomplish this, the county office must create two account lines in position control each fiscal year for each classified employee. Both lines must be reviewed for accuracy, which doubles the work.

Payroll is dependent upon the information included in position control. It would increase payroll efficiency to negotiate with bargaining units to change the step movement date to the first day of each fiscal year.

All county office employees submit timesheets for both month-end and supplemental payroll that show all time worked. Changing to a system under which timesheets show only exceptions to an employee's regular work schedule would significantly reduce the number of timesheets and the time needed to process them. Because such a system assumes that a full paycheck is due to the employee unless other information is provided, it requires immediate supervisors who know the employees' schedules to note their attendance and be accountable for reviewing and approving timesheets, though responsibility for absence tracking would remain with the human resources department.

### **Business Systems Support Specialist**

This classified management position at range 21 on the salary schedule is under the direction of the assistant superintendent – business. In 2011 the position was converted from an accounting technician position. The same person has occupied both positions for the past seven years. According to the job description, the position assists with “[the] development, documentation, testing, training, and implementation of new and existing computerized business systems; develops and provides system support and services”.

Staff interviewed indicated that the position directs the work of another accounting technician; however, the job description includes no formal assignment to supervise business services department personnel.

Both the job description and interviews with staff indicated that this position neither has significant responsibilities in formulating county office policy nor administers any major county office programs, and therefore should not be considered a management employee as defined in Government Code section 3540.1(g). It would be more appropriate to place this position in the OTU. The cost of this change cannot be determined because the position does not exist in the OTU or its salary schedule. Depending on the OTU salary range selected for this position if it is moved, its total compensation could either increase or decrease.

### **Printing Services Technician**

This is a classified management position at range 16 on the salary schedule. The individual in this position has been employed by the county office for 11 years and in this position since 2006.

Although the job description states that this position operates “under general supervision,” the fact that this position is under the direction of the assistant superintendent – business is both widely understood and depicted in the current organizational chart.

The position is responsible for printing, duplicating and maintaining the county office's printing services for the county office, its member school districts and several outside agencies. Staff indicated that this position is also responsible for delivering items to the county's school districts twice a week. The job description lists multiple essential duties related to printing and includes “other related duties as may be assigned;” however, it does not include delivery or courier services as an essential function.

The position's job description and interviews with staff revealed that this position has no significant responsibilities in formulating county office policy, administering major county office programs, or supervising other employees, and it does not have access to the county office's collective bargaining information. Therefore, the position should not be classified as manage-

ment, confidential or supervisory as defined in Government Code sections 3540.1(g), (c) and (m).

It would be more accurate to classify this position in the OTU, with the director of internal business as its supervisor. It is not possible to determine the cost of this change because the position does not exist in the OTU or its salary schedule. Depending on the OTU salary range selected for this position if it is changed, total compensation could either increase or decrease.

### **Accounting Technician, Accounting and Payroll Technician, and Accounting & Retirement Technician:**

The business services department has five full-time technicians. The job description for these positions states that their basic functions, to be performed under an assigned supervisor, are as follows:

. . . provide general office support; provide varied and responsible clerical support services; organize office activities and coordinate flow of communications' assure smooth and efficient office operations, perform a variety of accounting duties in support of assigned accounts and functions; process related financial forms, documents and transactions; prepare and maintain accurate financial and statistical records and reports.

These positions are in the unrepresented OTU and perform a large quantity and variety of complex and responsible accounting tasks to help prepare, audit and analyze complex budget and financial records and reports for school districts and the county office. The positions also perform other moderately complex budget and accounting duties, including processing related financial forms, documents and transactions, and preparing and maintaining accurate financial and statistical records and reports.

The tenure of the five individuals in these positions varies from a few weeks to 29 years. One accounting and payroll technician performs mostly payroll-related duties for school districts and distributes county office payroll. The other accounting and payroll technician assists in preparing county office supplemental payroll but is also responsible for preparing accounts payable, posting tax journals to school district books, and accounting for cash and direct deposits. The accounting and retirement technician is responsible for the county office's and school districts' state teachers' retirement system (STRS) and public employees' retirement system (PERS) reporting and compliance. The other two accounting technicians' duties include entering data, printing accounts payable checks, updating website content, and preparing bills for county office services. All technicians regard the assistant superintendent – business as their immediate supervisor.

There is only one accounting technician job description for these accounting technician positions, but the OTU salary schedule supports three classifications of accounting technicians: accounting technician, accounting and payroll technician, and accounting and retirement technician. Because they have similar job duties and would likely fall within the same classification, level of complexity and skill in an effective organizational structure, it would benefit the county office to use one job title for all of the accounting technician positions.

Interviews with staff and a review of the department's structure and the tasks performed by each position indicate that the quantity and complexity of work are not evenly distributed among the accounting technicians. All five accounting technicians reported performing some clerical duties, but one reported performing more than the others, including preparing correspondence, scheduling conference rooms, organizing calendars for meetings of employees and user groups,

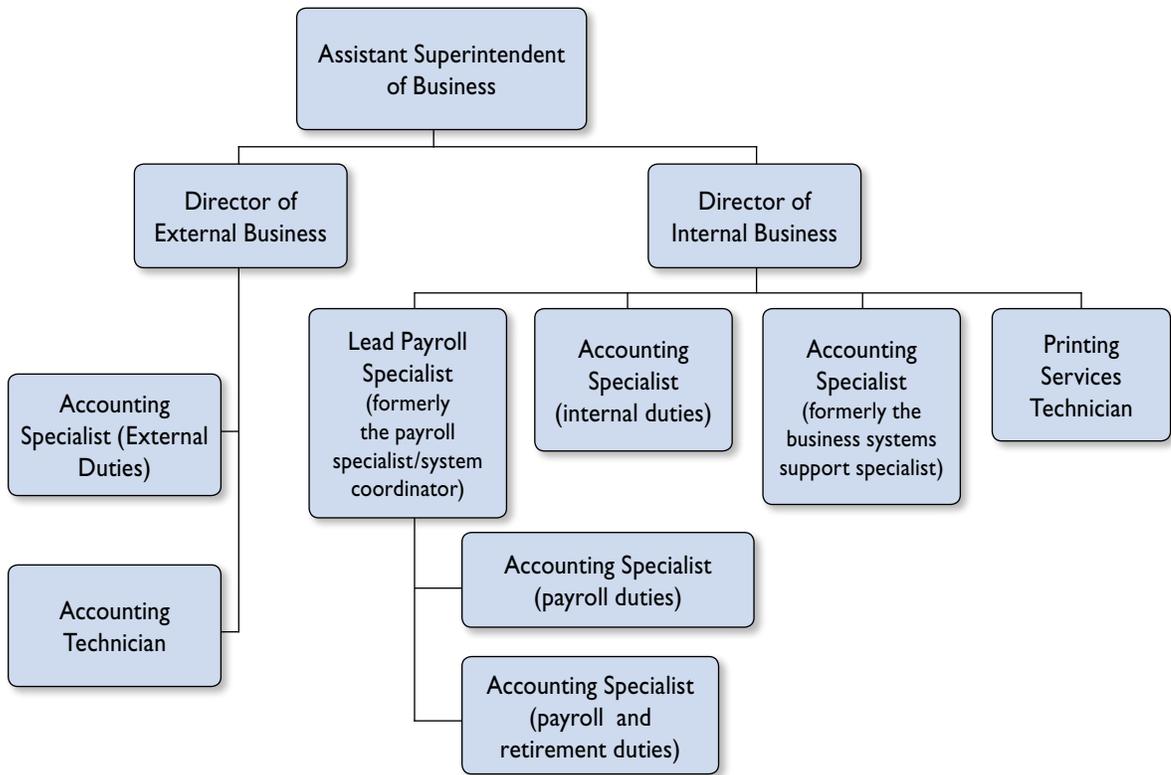
arranging workshops, updating access codes for printers and copiers, and maintaining a directory of district personnel that includes responsibilities and extensions. The most recently created accounting technician position had less work assigned to it than the others. Duties that are less technical and complex, such as general office support and clerical support, could be assigned to a position with a lower salary.

Most of the duties performed by the accounting technicians are relatively complex, but the job description also includes less complex duties. Because of this, a new job description is needed, and it would be appropriate to convert four of the five positions to accounting specialists. The fifth position, which currently has the greatest number of clerical duties, could remain unchanged other than consolidating clerical duties to this position. It is not possible to determine the cost of these changes because the suggested new positions do not exist in the OTU or its salary schedule; however, the changes would probably result in an increased cost of total compensation.

Staff also indicated that in some cases one position performs dissimilar duties, which can create inefficiencies. This was the case both for the accounting technician positions and for the business systems support specialist position discussed earlier. For example, one position is responsible for accounts payable and posting property tax receipts and cash for the county office and school district, as well as for the county office's supplemental payroll. Assigning each position duties that are related to each other would increase efficiency.

### Potential Reorganization

Following the changes recommended above would result in a reorganized business services department with the lines of authority and responsibility shown in the following organizational chart:



### **Payroll Unit and Internal Business**

A complete separation of business staff assigned to support school districts and those assigned to support county office programs and personnel is not practical or advisable. However, it would be beneficial to assign all payroll and retirement duties to a payroll unit that is overseen by the director of internal business. Because county office and school district operations have much in common, including business practices, payroll and retirement regulations, categorical program compliance, and federal and state financial reporting, staff assigned primarily to internal operations in these areas can be valuable resources for both school districts and the county office.

The chart above shows the director of internal business supervising a payroll unit consisting of one full-time equivalent (FTE) lead payroll specialist position and 2.0 FTE accounting specialist positions that are responsible for all regular and supplemental payroll and retirement processing, analysis and reporting for both the county office and school districts. Significant cross-training would need to be provided to ensure that more than one employee is able to perform all critical duties assigned to these three positions.

The chart above also shows the director of internal business supervising two accounting specialist positions: one that would be primarily responsible for specialized and complex budgeting, accounting, analysis and reporting for county office operations, including accounts payable, inventory and contract billing; and another that would be primarily responsible for supporting the Escape financial system for the county office and school districts, including technical support and acting as a liaison with the vendor for modifications and improvements, including those needed to meet user groups' needs. The second position could also continue to be responsible for preparing and managing contracts, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and related bills or invoices, as well as preparing monthly financial reports for the board and coordinating mandated costs services.

The director of internal business would also supervise the printing services technician.

### **External Business**

Assembly Bill (AB) 1200 (1991) which was strengthened by AB 2756 (2004) requires county superintendents to exercise a fiscal oversight role and thus require a staff to perform these specialized duties under the supervision of the director of external business. Good communication and flexibility in assigning available specialists and technicians during peak workloads can help create an effective and efficient business services department that functions as a single unit.

Because the director of external business has significant responsibilities related to the county's 17 districts, and because the fiscal oversight aspects of this work can be intricate and sometimes controversial, direct supervision of internal staff needs to be kept at a minimum. However, having an accounting specialist under the supervision of the director of internal business would make it possible to perform specialized and complex budget and accounting functions related to school districts (excluding payroll and fiscal oversight functions).

Because many functions will reside under the director of internal business, including those provided to the county's school districts, the director of external business will need to coordinate with the director of internal business to ensure that the school districts' needs are being met.

Conversely, the director of internal business will need to coordinate with the director of external business to ensure that internal clerical needs are met. The department's clerical position will perform duties for both the internal and external sections. Because of the size of the department, it is not possible to have two clerical positions, and placing all positions except the accounting

specialist with external duties under one director would result in too large a span of control. This arrangement is not uncommon but makes communication and coordination vital.

### **Duties, Job Descriptions and Internal Controls**

Regardless of whether the county office reorganizes its business services department, there is a need to revise job duties, job descriptions, and the classification of certain positions as discussed above. When making such changes, it is vital to incorporate effective internal controls. The following concepts and procedures are foundational to an effective internal control structure:

- **System of checks and balances**  
This includes formal procedures to initiate, approve, execute, record and reconcile transactions. The procedures will identify the employee responsible for each step and the time period for completion. Key areas of checks and balances include payroll, purchasing, accounts payable and cash receipts.
- **Separation of duties**  
This includes implementing adequate internal accounting procedures and separating job duties to protect the county office's assets. No one employee should handle a transaction from initiation to reconciliation, and no one employee should have custody of an asset (such as cash or inventory) and maintain the records of related transactions.
- **Cross-training**  
This helps ensure that more than one employee is able to perform each job so that when an employee takes vacation or is absent for other reasons, another staff member can perform their duties. Inadequate cross-training is often a problem even in the largest business offices.

Although the above components are vitally important, an organization's internal control environment is also part of the culture and is thus more than the sum of these items: it reflects the tone of an organization, influences employees' behavior, and is the foundation for all other components of internal control.

It is the role of senior level administrators to be involved in and review job descriptions for all positions to ensure that each staff member's work is as indicated in their job description. After revising job descriptions, the county office will need to provide each employee with a copy of their job description and establish a policy to do the same whenever an employee is hired or changes positions, or the job description is changed.

### **Departmentwide Challenges**

#### **Employee Turnover**

The business services department has been affected by high employee turnover, and as a result two of its 11 positions were unfilled and three were newly filled at the time of this review. The director, internal fiscal services and the payroll specialist/system operator positions were vacant. Both of these are classified management positions. One accounting technician has been with the department for approximately eight months and another for less than a month, and, as mentioned earlier, the assistant superintendent – business, was hired on July 1, 2012.

Even with these organizational challenges, the staff have completed all critical work and FCMAT found no serious lack of compliance with laws and regulations. However, the frequency of turnover and the length of time positions remain vacant have resulted in a loss of institutional knowledge, some random assignment of ongoing work to existing personnel in the interim, and inadequate training for new employees.

This situation has led to an undesirable backlog of work, including but not limited to a lack of physical inventory of fixed assets and corresponding reconciliation with related financial records; incomplete reconciliation of the past year's second interim reporting period (P-2) certifications and 2010-11 revenue limit accruals for school districts; and year-end closing for the county office and school districts. Immediate attention to these issues is essential to ensure that financial records accurately reflect the fiscal positions of school districts and the county office and to maintain state funding.

### **Desk Manuals**

The department also lacks desk manuals and a manual of department policies and procedures. Effective desk manuals contain detailed explanations of daily work processes and help ensure consistent and accurate financial transactions, a better understanding of job responsibilities, and high quality training for new employees.

An effective manual of department policies and procedures provides written standards regarding business transactions such as those related to Cal Cards, supplemental payroll, and accounts payable. This provides an opportunity to plan and describe adequate internal controls and offers direction for the business office, other county office sites and school districts.

### **Cross-Training**

Because staff have not been cross-trained in critical functions such as attendance accounting and retirement reporting, the county office is not able to continue essential business office functions without interruption. It would benefit the county office to increase cross-training so that every position has at least one other employee who can temporarily perform its duties in the event of illness, vacation or resignation.

### **Inventory**

The county office completed its last inventory of fixed assets during the summer of 2011 and recently reassigned inventory duties to an accounting technician; however, the county office has not reconciled the physical inventory with the accounting records as required by AR 3440. In addition, some recently purchased items have not been tagged, and questions have arisen about items that appear to have been removed from the warehouse. AR 3440 requires an inventory of assets and includes the requirements in Education Code section 35168 regarding inventory of each item that was purchased with federal funds and has a value of more than \$500 and a useful life of one year or more. The Code of Federal Regulations Title 34, Section 80.32 also requires that a physical inventory be completed at least once every two years.

### **Work Environment and Communication**

County office administrators and staff reported that the business services department does not always respond favorably and positively to requests and inquiries, understand its clients' needs, or have a professional working environment. Several staff and administrators indicated that there is a significant lack of understanding and respect between the human resources and business services departments, including verbal altercations in front of others, and antagonistic and emotional outbursts by administrators and staff in both departments. Several staff members in these departments indicated that they felt isolated, chastised and unable to do their best work. However, other administrators and staff failed to concede the existence of this difficult situation and believe that increasing communication is not desirable. Although the situation has improved recently, effective communication remains essential to stability and effective leadership. Without open and regular communication, inefficiencies and inaccurate information may go undiscovered.

Because human resource and business functions are interrelated, an emphasis on mutual understanding and joint problem solving is needed, and department administrators need to model this type of behavior and discuss it in detail with their staffs. It is vital for these departments to work closely with one another because if payroll personnel do not receive accurate information about employees from human resources, they will not be able to process payroll or have sufficiently accurate position control data for budget projections.

This lack of openness and knowledge regarding the need for connection between human resource and business processes and procedures may be the cause of several inefficiencies including duplicate databases, cumbersome application of position control systems, consistently late time sheets that compromise supplemental payroll processing, excessive position calendars, and step increases on the anniversaries of employees' dates of hire.

The business services and human resources departments need to hold regular interdepartmental staff meetings to improve verbal and written communication, provide consistent and reliable information, and promote openness in decision making. Routine informal meetings can also help address and resolve issues before they become a problem, foster more personal communication and reduce time spent resolving issues later.

### **Resolution of Work Issues**

Business services staff members indicated that immediate supervisors do not routinely address and resolve issues identified when work is being done. For example, staff concerns about the unusual classification of occupational therapists with regard to their PERS contributions and inconsistent application of overtime moratorium policies have not been resolved. Without consistent resolutions of such issues, staff will eventually stop bringing concerns to supervisors.

Conversely, timely resolution of issues by supervisors will help business services department staff remain attentive and observant, which creates a strong internal control environment to help meet operational goals, produce reliable financial reports and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Staff members' observations are the first line of defense against fraud, abuse or misappropriation, and are thus essential to detecting circumvention of laws and implementing best practices, policies and procedures.

### **Serving Small Rural Districts**

Administrators and staff reported that many small rural school districts need help with budgets, accounting, payroll and retirement reporting. This situation occurs in many county offices, and some have adjusted their organizational structure to provide these services while recovering costs. If the county office implements the organizational changes recommended in this report, including consolidating clerical work in one accounting technician position and reassigning position control to the human resources department, it could devote staff time to providing these services to small rural districts.

Most county offices enter into an MOU with the school district that specifies the services to be provided, the supervision of personnel, the term of the agreement, the costs to be reimbursed to the county office, and other provisions.

The MOU typically states where the services are to be provided (either at the school district's offices or in the county office business services department) and specifies that supervision of the county office staff performing the services is the responsibility of the county office but that input from the district's supervisory staff is allowed.

Determining costs to be recovered requires including the cost of salary and benefits of the personnel providing the services, and the cost of items such as the supervision of these staff, the use of county office equipment, additional equipment purchased to perform work at district sites, and other such costs attributable to the services provided.

Services can be personalized to meet the needs of individual districts, but care is needed to limit services to providing technical expertise and to exclude administrative decision making. For example, county office staff could agree to prepare and input payroll or accounts payable for a participating district but would not be authorized to approve those entries and transactions.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Revise the job description of the assistant superintendent – business to remove day-to-day tasks.
2. Revise the job descriptions of the assistant superintendent – business and director, internal fiscal services to move the following duties from the assistant superintendent to the director.
  - Prepare State fund apportionments computations monthly.
  - Classify and compute tax apportionments to CSSF to distribute income to proper County School Service Fund accounts.
  - Responsible for encumbrances and liquidation to be sure all purchase orders and travel orders are cleared in order to have accounting of current liabilities and receivables at the end of the year; and that prior year current liabilities and receivables are properly processed.
  - Classify incoming CSSF checks or funds to correct accounts and deposit the same with the County Treasurer.
3. Revise the job descriptions of the assistant superintendent – business and director of business services positions to move the following duties from the director to the assistant superintendent.
  - Oversight of districts' budget and financial reports to proactively identify potential solvency issues and coordinate all district fiscal oversight activities related to AB 1200. Review and certify interim budgets and prepare recommendations of approval or disapproval for dissemination to the State and individual district's board.
  - Review districts' collective bargaining agreements required by AB 1200 and make recommendations to districts if the multi-year impact on the district's economic uncertainties reserve shows the district below the State required amount.
  - Review, interpret and communicate legislative laws, Education Code, and other legal issues to school district administrators and staff, and County Office administrators.
4. Revise the job descriptions of director of business services and the director, internal fiscal services to separate internal and external services between the

two positions and to provide the same level of complexity, specialty and responsibility in essential functions, duties, knowledge and management.

Place both director positions at the same salary range on the classified management, administrative support, and confidential positions salary schedule.

Change positions' titles to director of external business and director of internal business.

Fill the director of internal business position after these changes are completed.

5. Ensure that both the salary schedule and job description use the same title for the SELPA budget assistant/MAA coordinator position.
6. Move the SELPA budget assistant/MAA coordinator position into the OTU.
7. Change the status of the payroll specialist/system operator position from classified management to supervisory.

Create a new job description for this position that includes its supervisory and oversight responsibilities, including reviewing transactions for accuracy and compliance with laws and regulations.

8. Assign responsibility for maintaining the county office's position control system to the human resources department, and provide human resources department staff with training in the position control module of the Escape software.

Develop and carefully review a plan to move position control duties and responsibilities from the payroll specialist/system operator position in the business services department to the human resources department. Ensure that the county office's executive leadership, management staff, and human resources and business services departments' staff peruse the plan and provide input prior to implementation.

9. Consider negotiating with its classified employee bargaining unit for contractual language that would allow employees to move to the next step on the salary schedule each July 1 and require that new employees work for at least six months prior to July 1 in order to move to the next step.
10. Consider changing the processing of timesheets for payroll to a system that reports only exceptions to regular work schedules.
11. Transfer the supervisory duties being performed by the business systems support specialist to the director of internal services position, and move the business support specialist position into the OTU.
12. Revise the job description of the printing services technician position to include the delivery/courier services already being performed as an essential function, and add the title of the position's supervisor.

Move this position into the OTU and transfer supervision of the position to the director of internal business.

13. Use one job title for all accounting technician positions.
14. Review and reorganize the duties of the accounting technicians and the business systems support specialist so that similar and related specialized duties are not spread across multiple positions (e.g. all accounts payable and property tax duties should be assigned to one or at most two positions) and so that dissimilar or unrelated duties are not assigned to the same position.  
  
Create a new job description for these positions to reflect the complex duties being performed, and change four of the five positions to accounting specialists.  
  
Assign general office support and varied responsible clerical support duties to the remaining accounting technician position, but leave it otherwise unchanged.
15. Reorganize the business services department to show new lines of authority and responsibility as indicated in the organizational chart and discussion above.
16. Incorporate the principles of a sound internal control structure when assigning job duties to positions, revising job descriptions and reclassifying positions.
17. Involve appropriate senior administrators in the review and revision of job descriptions.
18. Provide each staff member with a copy of their job description, and establish a policy to do the same for all employees when they are hired, change positions or their job description is changed.
19. Hire experts to help complete the backlog of work in the business services office and to provide advice and training for new staff.
20. Develop desk manuals for every position; ensure that each employee includes step-by-step procedures for all assigned duties in the desk manual for their position.
21. Create a policies and procedures manual for the business services department.
22. Ensure that adequate internal control procedures are in place and that employees are cross-trained in all key areas of responsibility.
23. Conduct an inventory of all equipment with an original cost exceeding \$500, and implement policies and procedures to ensure that the inventory is kept current in accordance with AR 3440, California Education Code and the Code of Federal Regulations.
24. Initiate regular interdepartmental staff meetings between the human resources and business services departments.

Ensure that the assistant superintendents for both departments attend these meetings and model cooperation, respect and professionalism.

Ensure that the meeting agendas include items from both departments and are exchanged in advance so that everyone's concerns are addressed.

Ensure that the superintendent and/or a deputy superintendent develops a protocol to measure progress and intervene if progress does not occur.

25. Foster an organization-wide culture that encourages staff to remain vigilant and to bring questions and concerns to direct supervisors for follow-up and resolution.

Encourage supervisors to resolve these issues and communicate the outcome to staff in a timely fashion. When an issue is beyond a supervisor's authority to resolve, it should be forwarded up the chain of command.

26. Explore the possibility of providing payroll, budget and accounting services small school districts to help them improve efficiencies in these areas and to provide the county office with additional revenue.

## Human Resources Department

### Overview

The human resources (HR) department staff consists of the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent, HR analyst, credentials analyst, administrative secretary, and HR program assistant. The county office as a whole has experienced extraordinarily employee longevity, and this is especially true of the human resources department. The department has strong systems in place and understands the importance of excellent customer service. Human resources staff members have experience and knowledge in their areas of responsibility, and the department is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The department performs all human resources functions except those related to position control and uses most technology effectively.

The department has an adequate number of staff, but individual job titles do not allow for cross-training or an equitable distribution of work. Based on best practices, the department would be more effective if some positions shared job titles and there was more overlap of duties among positions.

The human resources department was unable to provide an organizational chart and staff were unable to describe the department's hierarchy. It would benefit the department to reclassify its staff to achieve a well-organized hierarchy as discussed in the organizational structure and business services sections of this report.

### Assistant Superintendent Human Resource Services/School Superintendent

The employee in this position has been with the county office for 32 years, including 13 years in the current position. The position's job description states that it does the following:

. . . serves as the chief human resources officer to plan, organize, direct, and administer human resource services across all county office programs, services and departments; administers employment, transfer, promotion, layoff, and separation processes; acts as the chief negotiator in the collective bargaining process; plans, directs, and administers the employer/employee relations process, including grievances; and coordinates and directs personnel, resources, communications, and information to meet school, district, and Tehama County Department of Education needs.

This position reports to the deputy superintendent; however, the job description also states that this position is under the direction of the county superintendent.

The role of this position is to oversee and direct the policies and procedures for the county office's personnel operations. The position has also been assigned superintendent responsibilities at two of the county's small, rural districts, and there are discussions about increasing that role and decreasing the position's human resources responsibilities.

It is important to have an individual who is knowledgeable about human resources legal issues oversee that department. However, no other individual on staff is as knowledgeable in this area, so caution and careful planning is warranted and when considering any change in human resources department leadership.

### Classification, Compensation, and Employee Evaluations and Performance

This position is not responsible for all employee classification and compensation issues, or for creating a process for regularly monitoring supervision and employee evaluations. Superintendent Policies 4115, 4215, 4315 and 4216 all refer to employee evaluations; however, as indicated

earlier, almost all county office administrators and staff reported that they had not been evaluated for time periods ranging from one to 14 years.

Managers have not been provided with training to help them understand their role in assigning and evaluating work, and the issue has received inconsistent attention. The superintendent and deputy superintendent will need to reinforce the roles of supervision and evaluation if they are to become part of the organizational culture.

In addition to evaluations, supervisors are assigned to document employee performance. This is most often needed when an employee fails to perform satisfactorily. However, county office administrators and staff indicated that rather than provide feedback to employees regarding their work performance, administrators move duties to another employee to accommodate the low performance of some. As a result, some positions are classified and compensated at a higher level than they should be.

The role of a supervisor when evaluating employee performance is to provide constructive criticism and accurately communicate the facts, the rule violated, the impact of the violation and the directive for improvement. Failure to adequately communicate these points can leave employees confused about the issue and how to remedy the problem.

One of the most common trainings in this area for school district employees is the FRISK documentation model created by the law firm of Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo. FRISK stands for the following:

- Facts evidencing the employee's unsatisfactory conduct.
- Rule or authority violated by the employee's behavior
- Impact of the employee's unsatisfactory conduct on the workplace.
- Suggestions to help the employee improve performance and directions for proper conduct expected.
- Knowledge of the employee's right to respond to corrective documents placed in their personnel file.

This model also helps when a record of employee discipline is needed.

If an employee remains unsuccessful after a supervisor's constructive criticism and accurate communication, the county office must be prepared to document the problems and behaviors and issue appropriate notices as provided by collective bargaining agreements and county office policies.

Employees need to be given clear expectations regarding policies and procedures, and the consequences of not following them. It would benefit the county office to have the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent continue to assist in this area to ensure that documentation is complete and processes are followed in accordance with written contracts and law. However, the superintendent or deputy superintendent may need to provide support in more difficult cases.

### **Hiring**

Interviewees indicated that the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent leads all certificated employment interviews and checks references before employees are hired. Performing day-to-day management functions such as these prevents this position from devoting enough time to legal and policy issues and analyzing best personnel practices. Program

managers are best suited to carry out these day-to-day duties and to understand their staffing needs and the qualities desired in applicants.

The county office follows best practices and meets legal requirements by having the human resources department make final job offers, set appropriate compensation, and provide general orientation for new employees. FCMAT was not able to definitively determine to what extent department managers are providing new employees with specific orientation regarding the department, program or service to which they are assigned. Managers are normally better equipped to provide this type of orientation.

### **Interdepartmental Communication and Cooperation**

Many employees indicated that there is a lack of communication and teamwork between the human resources and business services departments, which decreases efficiency. There was a poor relationship in the recent past between the leaders of these departments and subsequently their staffs. This has diminished since the hiring of a new assistant superintendent – business, and relationships now appear more stable. However, each department focuses on its own issues in isolation from the other.

In the past, staff from the two departments held meetings to improve communication and cooperation; however, because these meetings were not productive, many staff members question the value of interdepartmental meetings. To overcome this, leaders will need to take on the challenging task of team building and of modeling and communicating an expectation of cooperation.

As discussed earlier, because human resources, fiscal and payroll functions are unavoidably linked, an emphasis on joint problem solving is needed. The lack of communication has led to a situation in which neither department's needs are understood or adequately addressed, and the lack of shared knowledge and openness contributes to these difficulties.

As indicated earlier, regular meetings of the two departments' staffs are needed to increase cooperation, communication and efficiency, however challenging this may be.

Meeting agendas might include topics such as the following:

- How to route the personnel request form most efficiently.
- Setting up the process for the personnel request form: what requires approval and from which position in which department.
- When a position control update is needed.
- Changes to policies and procedures that will affect the departments.
- Changes to collective bargaining agreements and how to include them in policies and procedures.
- Payroll deadlines and how they relate to information coming from the human resources department.

### **Administrative Secretary**

The administrative secretary has been with the county office and in the current position for three years. According to the job description, this position does the following:

- . . . performs a variety of complex and responsible secretarial and clerical assignments, to relieve the administrator of clerical and administrative detail by coordinating, orga-

nizing, leading, and participating in the various operational aspects of the administrator's assignment.

Individuals interviewed stated that this position spends 50% to 80% of an average day performing recruitment tasks such as posting advertisements, screening applicants, updating questions and administering testing. This position also supports the human resources department in the areas of layoffs, collective bargaining information, document management, mandated reporting and workers compensation. These duties are not indicated on the position's job description and are more typical of a human resources specialist position with confidential status.

When the assistant superintendent is acting as superintendent for a small school district, the administrative secretary provides support with board agendas, minutes, correspondence, school accountability report card (SARC) reports, employee handbooks, recruitment, and other items. These tasks are related to board management and, because of the need for expertise and relationships with small school district boards, are better suited to the executive assistant to the superintendent position.

The administrative secretary position also performs routine tasks listed in the job description such as "[r]eceive, sort, and screen individual department mail; prepare departmental outgoing mail on a daily basis." Although these are better suited to a receptionist position because they can easily be completed at the front desk, the office configuration prevents reassignment.

This position is listed at range 18 on the salary schedule and the job description indicates it has confidential status. However, range 18 on the salary schedule includes only an administrative secretary position that lacks confidential status, while range 19 includes a human resources technician/administrative secretary position that has confidential status.

### **HR Analyst**

The HR analyst has been employed by the county office for 22 years, including 18 years in the human resources department. This position reports to the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent and according to the job description is responsible to "assist in matters relating to the operation and efficiency of the human resources department."

According to the job description, this position is responsible for many non-management tasks but is also on the negotiations team and coordinates the evaluation system. In addition, this position acts in a management capacity when the assistant superintendent who also acts as superintendent for some small school districts is away at meetings or trainings.

Non-management tasks such as maintaining records, coordinating substitutes and monitoring short-term contracts are routine and should be reassigned to other human resources staff.

Conversely, complex executive tasks such as participating on the negotiations team are not appropriate for this position and would be better suited to the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent position.

Either this position or the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent would be a logical choice to attend to recruitment for positions that attract multiple in-house candidates or that are otherwise difficult or controversial.

Because the assistant superintendent acts as superintendent for some smaller districts in the county and is thus away from the office frequently, it would benefit the county office to consider reclassifying the human resources analyst position as a personnel manager and assigning it appropriately complex duties if the county office's services to small districts continue in the future. The estimated cost of this change would be approximately \$3,000 per year for salary and statutory

benefits. This does not include health and welfare benefits because the county office already pays for these. To calculate this cost, FCMAT compared the current employee's salary at range 22, step VI on the salary schedule to step IV of the payroll manager position, which is at range 25 on the salary schedule. Step IV was chosen because it is the first step in range 25 that exceeds the employee's current salary; the change would result in a 5.2% salary increase.

### **Position Control**

The divide between the departments and position control applications has significantly affected the ability to integrate the Escape financial software across the two departments for position control functions. The business services department uses the Escape system, but the human resources department uses FileMaker Pro and does not use most of the Escape software's modules. Because neither department has been assigned to integrate the two software products, neither can oversee position control or make essential decisions regarding the software.

Interviews with county office staff and a review of personnel data indicated that similar data is being kept in FileMaker Pro and the Escape position control systems, which results in a duplication of efforts and can lead to inaccuracies. For example, the position control reports indicate that the credentials analyst is in the administration department instead of the human resources department. For position control to be fully functional, the human resources department needs to load all human resources information into the Escape system and limit the use of FileMaker Pro to information that cannot be entered into the Escape system.

Assigning management of the position control system to the human resources department as recommended earlier in this report would help improve communication, provide a better internal control system, and require the department to analyze ways to integrate the two systems.

To reduce duplication of work and increase accuracy and efficiency, the personnel manager position could take primary responsibility for transferring most position control functions from FileMaker Pro to the Escape position control software systems. This would improve the position control system and as a result help the county office more accurately project salary and benefit costs and prevent overstaffing. Some functions in the Escape system, such as seniority lists, are more accurately performed with FileMaker Pro and thus will need to remain in that program.

Running both the Escape system and FileMaker Pro simultaneously for a time would allow parallel testing procedures to help ensure the accuracy of data. However, because this can interfere with normal operations, it is best done from October through February when the human resources workload is lighter.

As the human resources department transitions most functions to the Escape system, staff will need to become familiar with the Escape system's position control module and its capabilities, and compare the reports it generates to those used currently. This should provide information about which elements need to be included in the new system and help the department determine how it will enter information into the Escape system without duplicating work or data.

Interviews with human resources department staff revealed that staff do not adequately understand the scope and purpose of position control or its effect on the entire organization. Thus it will be critical to implement best practices for training all department staff, including providing mandatory training in use of the new system and ensuring that they understand the necessity of mastering it so that position control data, budget development, multiyear projections and payroll are reliable and accurate for the entire organization.

Effective management of data entered into the Escape system will require transferring most position control functions to the human resources department, which will set up and maintain various functions in the system including work calendars and salary schedules, as well as add positions, remove a person from a position when they leave it, place new hires in positions, and advance positions from one fiscal year to the next.

One of the initial steps in setting up the position control module annually is the input of more than 100 work calendars. Using standard work calendars in the position control system and inputting only deviations from them, such as when an employee is on leave, would reduce workload and increase efficiency.

Daily duties needed to keep the position control module up to date are best assigned to the HR specialist who is lowest in seniority. Business services department staff can continue to provide account codes for positions because of their knowledge of budget and payroll. This division of duties should help provide a link between the departments.

Position control functions must be separated to provide the internal controls needed to ensure that only board-authorized positions are entered into the system, that the human resources department hires only employees authorized by the board, and that the payroll department pays only employees hired for authorized positions. The proper separation of duties is a key factor in creating strong internal controls and a reliable position control system. The table below shows a suggested distribution of labor between the business services and human resources departments to help provide the necessary internal control structure for position control.

### *Suggested division of duties for position control*

Task	Responsible Department
Approve or authorize position	Superintendent or Designee
Input approved position into position control, with estimated salary and budget. Each position is given a unique number	Human Resources Department
Enter demographic data into the main demographic screen, including the following: Employee name Employee address Social Security number Credential Classification Salary schedule placement Annual review of employee assignments	Human Resources Department
Update employee benefits Review and update employee work calendars Update salary schedules	Human Resources Department
Annually review salary schedules Account codes Budget development Budget projections Multiyear projections Payroll deduction information Salary projections	Business Services Department

Human resources and payroll department staff will need training in their assigned responsibilities when the new system is implemented. Direction and oversight from management will also be needed.

## Hiring and Approval

When a site or department manager submits a request to hire an employee, they complete a personnel action form with the proper budget account code and send it to the human resources department where it is checked for accuracy (including the number of hours, days and proper job title) and to determine which approvals will be needed. The human resources department is responsible for obtaining all approvals. The superintendent's signature is required on all personnel action forms, though this may not be needed in all cases.

The form is then forwarded to the business services department for budget approval. If the request is for a new position, additional approvals may be required. The human resources department is then responsible to notify the requesting site or department that the position has been approved or disapproved. Once the position is approved, the new position is created in Escape and hiring begins.

When the position has been filled, the human resources department enters the new employee's information into the position control system. This includes demographic data, starting salary, hire date and other information.

The county office currently uses a checklist to ensure that all required information has been collected from new employees. This document will need to be revised to include steps for data to be entered properly into the Escape system. Implementing an electronic and automated tracking system for approvals could also improve efficiency by making it possible to determine where the document is in the approval process at any time and by allowing information to be routed electronically to position control, human resources and payroll after the appropriate approval.

## Credentials Analyst

The credentials analyst has been at the county office for 22 years, including 18 years in the human resources department. This position reports to the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent and according to the job description is responsible to "audit all certificated personnel throughout Tehama County; assist and provide current information on credentials to applicants, teachers and school district personnel in Tehama County."

The credentials analyst job description designates this position as management, and the salary schedule shows it as exempt from overtime pay. However, the job description and interviews with staff indicate that this position does not formulate county office policy or administer any major county office programs and therefore should not be considered a management employee as defined in Government Code section 3540.1(g), but instead should be included in the OTU. It is common for human resources staff to be classified as confidential employees if they help develop positions used in collective bargaining. However, county office administrators and staff did not indicate that this was the case for this position.

Based on the concept of a well-organized hierarchy within departments as discussed earlier in this report, it would benefit the county office to reclassify this position as a human resources specialist position. The cost associated with this change cannot be determined because there is no such position in the classified management administrative support and confidential positions in the OTU or the salary schedules, and depending on the OTU range selected, changing this position could result in either an increase or decrease in the total cost of compensation.

Interviews with staff members and review of the job description for this position revealed that several tasks, including the following, could be more efficiently accomplished by other positions:

- Overseeing the evaluation of all substitute teacher applications and the timely preparation and distribution of a list of available personnel to all school districts, which is better suited to the receptionist position.
- Composing and typing correspondence related to substitute teachers, which is better suited to the receptionist position.
- Serving as backup for the receptionist, which would be more appropriate for other administrative assistants.

### **Cross Training**

Although all human resources employees have experience in and knowledge of some job duties other than their own, little or no cross-training has been provided in some key functions, and this could place the county office at risk. Cross-training two other human resources staff members in these functions would help create a team of human resources specialist positions that can share functions. It is important to enable more than one employee to perform each function in the department so that when one staff member is absent another can perform their duties. Creating teams and redistributing duties among them would help the county office by increasing the sharing of workloads, and creating additional cross-training opportunities.

### **Desk Manuals**

The human resources department lacks desk manuals. It is best practice to have desk manuals and/or a common document with policies and procedures that provides step-by-step procedures for each job duty to ensure proper internal controls and provide a better understanding of each position's responsibilities. The procedures can also help other employees perform necessary functions when the employee normally assigned to a particular duty is absent.

### **HR Program Assistant**

The HR program assistant has been with the county office for five years, including three years in the current position. This position reports to the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent and, according to the job description, is responsible to "represent and assist in executing the goals and objectives of the Human Resource Services Department; perform a variety of specialized and technical duties."

Based on the concept of a well-organized hierarchy within departments as discussed earlier in this report, it would benefit the county office to consider replacing this position with a third human resources specialist position to increase efficiency. This position serves as the receptionist for the department and performs both lower level tasks and higher level tasks appropriate to a program assistant position, such as leave tracking and preparing budget materials and annual reports. The department needs a position that performs higher level responsibilities full time to assist the two other human resources specialists.

Receptionist duties could be transferred to the support secretary III/receptionist, who is seated at the main reception desk, where mail-related, substitute services, and absence tracking tasks can be performed easily. These changes would divide workloads more equitably and create opportunities for cross-training to ensure continuity of service. As is the case with changes proposed in all departments, the county office may need to consult with legal counsel regarding these modifications.

## Short-Term Contracts

In interviews, staff indicated that the county office processes approximately 200 to 400 short-term contracts annually for tutoring, monitoring, program participants and coaches for its Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA), First 5 grant, SERRF, and county math grant programs. This takes a significant amount of time and is an inefficient use of resources. Automating processes, eliminating paper records, and/or placing some amounts paid on a stipend schedule could help increase efficiency.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Reclassify human resources department staff to achieve a well-organized hierarchy. Specifically, consider conducting internally or contracting with an outside vendor for a classification and compensation review or comparison study to create groups of positions with similar duties; devise a tiered structure from entry level to professional positions; determine salary ranges based on the duties and responsibilities assigned; determine where current job classifications fall within the tiered structure; and eliminate unnecessary classifications and create new classifications when needed.
2. Revise the job description of the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent to indicate that the position reports to the deputy superintendent.
3. Exercise caution in any plans to change the leadership of any department because of the specific expertise needed.
4. Ensure that the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent position is responsible for and has the support needed to manage and oversee all employee classification and compensation issues and policies, and that a process is created for regularly monitoring supervision and employee evaluations
5. Develop trainings led by the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent to help managers understand their role in assigning and evaluating employees' work.
6. Ensure that the superintendent and deputy superintendent reinforce the role and importance of supervision and evaluation so that it becomes part of the organizational culture.
7. Reinforce the importance of attention to and documentation of employee performance and using the FRISK process for poor performance.
8. Clarify and emphasize to employees at all levels the district's expectations regarding policies and procedures, and the consequences of not following them.
9. Involve the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent in all issues related to evaluations and discipline.

10. Reassign responsibility for leading employment interviews and reference checking to the hiring department manager, depending on the position being filled.
11. Consider training higher level administrative support staff to help check references.
12. Ensure that the human resources department helps develop interview questions and processes, and trains interview teams to ensure compliance with applicable laws regarding recruitment.
13. Ensure that the assistant superintendents in the human resources and business services departments work jointly with their staffs on team-building, understanding the needs of the other department, and clarifying expectations regarding interdepartmental cooperation.
14. Initiate regular interdepartmental staff meetings of the human resources and business services departments.
15. Transfer responsibility for the position control module to the human resources department.
16. Set up standard work calendars in the position control system and deviate from them only in unique situations, such as when employees are on leave.
17. Consider reclassifying the administrative secretary position to a human resources specialist position with confidential status, or adjusting the job description to the duties being performed.
18. If the county office continues to provide services to small school districts, reassign duties related to small school district board management from the administrative secretary to the executive assistant to the superintendent
19. Reassign routine tasks such as mail receiving, sorting and preparation from the administrative secretary to the receptionist, if the office configuration changes.
20. Assign human resources primary responsibility for transitioning position control functions from FileMaker Pro to the Escape position control system, and for managing the position control system.
21. Ensure that the human resources department implements and uses the Escape position control module.

To ensure the accuracy of data, continue to use FileMaker Pro for a time while implementing, testing and learning the Escape position control module.
22. Assign the daily duties needed to keep the position control module up to date to the HR specialist who is lowest in seniority.
23. Review the position control system for proper internal controls.

24. Ensure that training in the Escape position control module is provided to human resources department staff members and payroll department staff for all their assigned areas of responsibility and that managers provide clear direction and oversight.
25. Revise its checklist to ensure that all required information is entered accurately into the Escape system.
26. Reduce the complexity of the personnel action form and new hire approval process by doing the following:
  - Explore using an electronic system with automatic tracking for the new hire approval process.
  - Consider converting forms to an electronic format with fields that can be filled out.
  - Consider whether the superintendent's approval is necessary for every personnel action form.
27. Transfer routine tasks such as maintaining records, coordinating substitutes and monitoring short-term contracts from the HR analyst to other human resources staff.
28. Remove the human resources analyst from participation on the negotiations team because this duplicates the role of the assistant superintendent human resource services/school superintendent, who also serves on the team.
29. Move the credentials analyst position into the OTU, and transfer the following duties as indicated:
  - *Transfer to the receptionist position:*  
Overseeing the evaluation of all substitute teacher applications and the timely preparation and distribution of a list of available personnel to all school districts.  
Composing and typing correspondence related to substitute teachers.
  - *Transfer to other administrative assistants:*  
Serving as backup for the receptionist.
30. Develop desk manuals. Ensure that each employee includes step-by-step procedures for all assigned duties in the desk manual for their position.
31. Ensure that adequate internal control procedures are in place and that employees are cross-trained in all important areas of responsibility.
33. Consider consulting with legal counsel regarding reconfiguration of departments.
34. Analyze options for automating processes and eliminating paper records for short term contracts to increase productivity. Consider the feasibility of placing amounts paid for these types of services on a stipend schedule.



## Staffing Comparison

The California County Superintendents' Educational Services Association (CCSESA) classifies county offices of education from Class I to Class VIII by size (Class I is the largest and Class VIII the smallest) based on their prior year K-12 average daily attendance (ADA). The ADA calculations include districts, county office-operated programs and charter schools, but not regional occupational centers or programs (ROC/P), adult education or community colleges. Under this system, the Tehama County Department of Education is considered a Class VI county office because has an ADA of 7,000 to 14,999.

Data for a comparison of the county office's central office was obtained from the five other Class VI county offices in California. Although comparative information is useful, it should not be the only measure of appropriate staffing levels. County offices are complex and vary widely in demographics, operating programs, job descriptions and resources. Careful evaluation is needed because generalizations can be misleading if significant circumstances are not taken into account when comparing job functions for staff positions.

The following staffing comparison table includes enrollment data from the CCSESA Classification of Counties 2012 and other data obtained directly from the comparison county offices.

*Staffing Comparison*

County Office	Tehama County Department of Education	Lake County Office of Education	San Benito County Office of Education	Nevada County Superintendent of Schools	Mendocino County Office of Education	Yuba County Office of Education
Enrollment	10,293	8,578	10,744	11,607	12,137	13,192
No. of Districts	17	7	11	10	12	5
Financial System	Escape	Escape	QSS	QSS	QSS	SunGard BusinessPLUS
2012-13 General Fund Expenditures	\$17.7 Million	\$9.7 Million	\$9.3 Million	\$12.3 Million	\$17.9 Million	\$12.7 Million
# Warrants Processed Annually(Excluding Payroll) -- COE	3,786	2,516	1,775	6,330	2,870	4,217
# Warrants Processed Annually (Excluding Payroll) -- Districts	14,752	8,859	8,120	14,175	25,600	9,241
# Employees (FTEs)	212	102	83	104	125.4	207.8
Payroll Frequency (EOM / Supplemental)	EOM + Supplemental	EOM + Supplemental	EOM	EOM + Supplemental	EOM + Supplemental	EOM + Supplemental
Average # Paychecks per pay period - COE	178	163	105	562	240	330
Average # Paychecks per pay period - Districts	771	856	1,200	1,539	3,300	530
# Purchase Orders Processed Annually	473	1,085	760	1,064	860	1,250
<b>Staffing FTE and position description</b>						
Office of the Superintendent	Superintendent (1.0)	Superintendent (1.0)	Superintendent (1.0)	Superintendent (1.0)	Superintendent (1.0)	Superintendent (1.0)
	Deputy Superintendent (1.0)	Superintendent's Secretary (0.75)	Executive Administrative Assistant/Office Manager (1.0)	Assistant to the Superintendent (1.0)	Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent (1.0)	Administrative Support/Secretary to the Superintendent (1.0)
	Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Office Manager (1.0)		Receptionist/Records Clerk (1.0)	Support Secretary (1.0)	Administrative Secretary/ Coast Center (0.4)	
	Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent (1.0)					

County Office	Tehama County Department of Education	Lake County Office of Education	San Benito County Office of Education	Nevada County Superintendent of Schools	Mendocino County Office of Education	Yuba County Office of Education
	Support Secretary III/ Receptionist (1.0)					
Human Resources Department						
Merit District?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Department Head:	Assistant Superintendent Human Resource Services/School Superintendent (1.0)	Senior Director, Human Resources/Student Programs & Services (1.0)	Personnel Credentials Supervisor (1.0)	Superintendent	Executive Director, Human Resources/Technology (1.0)	Director of Human Resources (1.0)
	Administrative Secretary (1.0)	Administrative Assistant, Human Resources (1.0)			Confidential Administrative Secretary (1.0)	
Support Staff:	HR Analyst (1.0)	Office Manager/Credentials Analyst (0.25)	Personnel Analyst (1.0)	Confidential Credentials Analyst (1.0)	Credentials Analyst/HR Assistant (1.0)	Human Resources Technician (1.0)
	Credentials Analyst (1.0)	Fingerprint Technician, Human Resources (0.8)	Personnel Clerk (1.0)	Support Services Secretary (0.5)		Receptionist/CalSTRS Secretary (0.2)
Business Services Department	HR Program Assistant (1.0)		Fingerprint/Typist Clerk (1.0)			
Department Head:	Assistant Superintendent -- Business (1.0)	Sr. Director Business Services (1.0)	Assistant Superintendent, Business Services/Transportation (1.0)	Associate Superintendent, Business Services (1.0)	Associate Superintendent, Business Services (1.0)	Director of Fiscal Services (1.0)
			Administrative Assistant, Business Services (1.0)	Executive Assistant (1.0)		
Areas Reporting to Department Head:	Business Services	Business Services	Business Services and Transportation	Business Services and Technology	Unknown	Business Services
Supervisory Staff:	Director of Business Services (1.0)	Director of Technology (1.0)	Director of Business Services (1.0)	Business Managers (3.0)	Fiscal Services Coordinator/Internal (1.0)	

County Office	Tehama County Department of Education	Lake County Office of Education	San Benito County Office of Education	Nevada County Superintendent of Schools	Mendocino County Office of Education	Yuba County Office of Education
	Director, Internal Fiscal Services (1.0)					Fiscal Services Coordinator/External (1.0)
Support Staff:	Accounting Technicians (5.0)	Coordinator, Business Services (1.0)	Payroll/Retirement Analyst (1.0)	Business Services Advisors (3.0)	Accountants (3.0)	Budget Analyst (1.0)
	Business Systems Support Specialist (1.0)	Fiscal Specialist III (4.0)	Bookkeeper (1.0)	Business Services Specialist (1.0)	Account Technician I (6.4)	Technician Support Specialist (1.0)
	Payroll Specialist/System Operator (1.0)	Payroll & Benefits Specialist (1.0)	Accounts Payable/Purchasing Support Clerk (1.0)	Business Services Technician III (4.5)	Account Technician II (1.0)	Accountant/Payroll (1.0)
	Printing Services Technician (1.0)	Budget Analyst (1.0)		Accountants (3.0)		Accountant/Fiscal (1.0)
		Technology Assistants (2.0)		Payroll Technician III (1.0)		Account Technicians (3.0)
				Payroll Analyst (1.0)		
				Technology Coordinator (0.5)		
				Computer Analyst (1.0)		
Total County Office FTE	21.00	12.80	12.00	19.00	20.80	15.20

Notes:

^ = Positions expressed in FTE. • \* Denotes an 11-month work schedule. • ~ Denotes a school year only work schedule. Positions shown in italic font are considered part of the department being reported. However, for purposes of this study, these positions are excluded for comparison purposes. Yuba COE: The receptionist/CalSTRS secretary is assigned for 0.8 of her position to the curriculum and instruction department.

The Class VI county offices surveyed, including Tehama, reported that they each have between 12.0 FTE and 21.0 FTE central office staff, with an average of 16.8 FTE. Tehama County has a total of 21.0 FTE central office staff, which is the highest staffing level in the comparison. Of the county offices compared above, Tehama is fifth in student enrollment but serves the largest number of districts.

All county offices in the comparison have similarly staffed superintendents' offices, with 1.0 to 2.0 FTE of clerical assistance, but Tehama is the only county office in the comparison that employs a deputy superintendent. However, because senior management positions were not included in the study agreement for this review, no recommendations are made regarding such positions.

The Tehama Department of Education has the largest human resources department staff in the comparison, with 4.0 FTE. The other county offices reported between 1.5 and 2.2 FTE for employee populations of 104.00 to 207.8 FTE. Those county offices with approximately half of the employee population reported half of the number of human resources staff. With the exception the Yuba County Office of Education, all county offices had from 41.5 to 69.33 employees per human resources staff position, with Tehama ranking fourth at 53.

The business services departments in the six county offices in the comparison had from 15.4 to 6.0 FTE employees processing between approximately 72,000 to 25,000 purchase orders, payroll warrants and/or accounts payable warrants during a fiscal year. The Tehama Department of Education's business services department has 10.0 FTE staff, the same as that of the Yuba COE, and is neither the largest nor the smallest in all categories of items processed in a fiscal year. The average business services department staffing for all county offices in the comparison was 10.65 FTE.

## Recommendation

*The district should:*

1. Make no additions or reductions to classified support positions in the superintendent's office, human resources department and business services departments.



# Appendix



# Appendix A

## Study Agreement





**FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM  
STUDY AGREEMENT  
March 17, 2012**

The FISCAL CRISIS AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the Team, and the Tehama County Office of Education hereinafter referred to as the COE, mutually agree as follows:

**1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT**

The Team provides a variety of services to school districts and county offices of education upon request. The COE has requested that the Team provide for the assignment of professionals to study specific aspects of the Tehama County Office of Education 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**

1. The Tehama County Office of Education is requesting that the FCMAT Team conduct an organizational and staffing review of classified support staff that will include but not be limited to the district's central office departments and workflow. The review will consist of the following departments: Superintendent's Office, Business Services and Personnel.
2. The Team will provide comparative staffing data for class six county offices or school districts of similar size and structure and provide recommendations to improve the efficiency that may reduce costs of the county office. The county office comparison will include at least six comparable class six county offices or school districts located in the geographical region or and may include comparable county offices utilized in the collective bargaining process by the Tehama County Office of Education.

3. The Team will review job descriptions for all department positions, interview staff and make recommendations for staffing improvements. All recommendations will include estimated and calculated values for any proposed position reductions or enhancements to the organizational structure.
4. The Team will evaluate the current work flow of the central office and provide recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

1. **Orientation Meeting** - The Team will conduct an orientation session at the COE to brief COE management and supervisory personnel on the procedures of the Team and on the purpose and schedule of the study.
2. **On-site Review** - The Team will conduct an on-site review at the COE office and at school sites if necessary.
3. **Progress Reports** - The Team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the on-site review to inform the COE of significant findings and recommendations to that point.
4. **Exit Letter** - The Team will issue an exit letter approximately 10 days after the exit meeting detailing significant findings and recommendations to date and memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
5. **Draft Reports** - Electronic copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the COE administration for review and comment.
6. **Final Report** - Electronic copies of the final study report will be delivered to the COE following completion of the review. The final report will be published on the FCMAT website. Written copies are available upon request by contacting the FCMAT office.
7. **Follow-Up Support** – Six months after the completion of the study, FCMAT will return to the COE, if requested, to confirm the COE's progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report, at no cost. Status of the recommendations will be documented to the COE in a FCMAT Management Letter.

### 3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

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

- |    |                         |   |
|----|-------------------------|---|
| A. | <i>Julie Auvil, CPA</i> | <i>FCMAT Fiscal Intervention Specialist</i> |
| B. | <i>To be Determined</i> | <i>FCMAT Org/Staff Consultant</i>           |
| C. | <i>To be Determined</i> | <i>FCMAT Personnel Consultant</i>           |

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 COE will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon acceptance of the final report by the COE.

**Based on the scope of work identified in section 2 A, estimated total cost is \$12,000.**

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

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

### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COE

- A. The COE will provide office and conference room space while on-site reviews are in progress.
- B. The COE will provide the following (if requested):
  - 1. A map of the local area
  - 2. Existing policies, regulations and prior reports addressing the study request

3. Current or proposed organizational charts
  4. Current and two (2) prior years' audit reports
  5. Any documents requested on a supplemental listing
  6. Any documents requested on the supplemental listing should be provided to FCMAT in electronic format when possible.
  7. Documents that are only available in hard copy should be scanned by the district and sent to FCMAT in an electronic format.
  8. All documents should be provided in advance of field work and any delay in the receipt of the requested documentation may affect the start date of the project.
- C. The COE Administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the Team prior to completion of the final report. The final report will be posted on the FCMAT website.

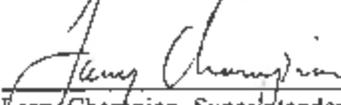
Pursuant to EC 45125.1(c), representatives of FCMAT will have limited contact with pupils. The COE shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

## 6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

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

<i>Orientation:</i>	<i>April/May 2012</i>
<i>Staff Interviews:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Exit Interviews:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Preliminary Report Submitted:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Final Report Submitted:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Board Presentation:</i>	<i>to be determined</i>
<i>Follow-Up Support:</i>	<i>if requested</i>

7. CONTACT PERSONName of contact person: Larry ChampionTelephone: (530) 528-7323 FAX: (530) 529-4120E-mail: lchampion@tehamaschools.org / cstephens@tehamaschools.org

  
Larry Champion, Superintendent  
Tehama County Office of Education

05/10/2012  
Date

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

May 17, 2012  
Date

