



Victor Valley Union High School District

Staffing Review

July 16, 2007



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Julian Weaver, Superintendent
Victor Valley Union High School District
16350 Mojave Drive
Victorville, CA 92395

Dear Superintendent Weaver:

In January 2007 the Victor Valley Union High School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into a study agreement to provide a review of the district's certificated management, classified management and classified bargaining unit staffing. The study agreement specifies that FCMAT will perform the following work:

1. Review and evaluate the certificated management and administrative positions and job descriptions at the school sites and the district office and compare current staffing structure, responsibility, and salary levels with schools and districts of similar size and demographics. This portion of the study must be completed in time to meet the March statutory certificated reduction in workforce deadline should staff changes be recommended.
2. Review and evaluate the classified confidential, management, and administrative positions and job descriptions at the district office and sites and compare current staffing structure, responsibility, and salary levels with other school districts of similar size and demographics.
3. Review and evaluate the classified positions and job descriptions throughout the district included within the current CSEA bargaining agreement and compare current staffing structure and contract language with other school districts of similar size and demographics.
4. If pertinent, make recommendations for staffing changes that will increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs, and/or better serve the students, employees and community of the district.

The attached final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations.

Salary comparisons have been provided in a letter under separate cover.

FCMAT

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

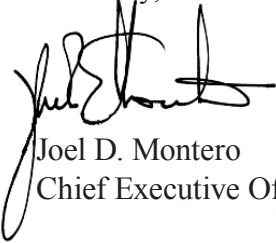
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We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and we extend our thanks to all the staff of the Victor Valley Union High School District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel D. Montero', with a stylized, cursive script.

Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer

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Foreword

FCMAT Background

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

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

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform more than 600 reviews for local educational agencies, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. Services range from fiscal crisis intervention to management review and assistance. FCMAT also provides professional development training. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The agency is guided under the leadership of Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer, with funding derived through appropriations in the state budget and a modest fee schedule for charges to requesting agencies.

Total Number of Studies..... 637

Total Number of Districts in CA 982

● Management Assistance..... 603 (94.66%)

● Fiscal Crisis/Emergency 34 (5.34%)

Note: Some districts had multiple studies.

● Districts (7) that have received emergency loans from the state.
(Rev. 4/3/07)

Study Agreements by Fiscal Year

| Fiscal Year | Number of Studies |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 92/93 | 10 |
| 93/94 | 15 |
| 94/95 | 22 |
| 95/96 | 28 |
| 96/97 | 25 |
| 97/98 | 25 |
| 98/99 | 27 |
| 99/00 | 47 |
| 00/01 | 48 |
| 01/02 | 58 |
| 02/03 | 33 |
| 03/04 | 70 |
| 04/05 | 73 |
| 05/06 | 78 |
| 06/07 | 55 (Projected) |

Victor Valley Union High School District

Introduction

Background

The Victor Valley Union High School District serves an area of 536 square miles in the high desert region of San Bernardino County, offering a wide variety of unique instructional programs and services to meet the needs of approximately 10,000 middle school and high school students who transfer from four local elementary school districts. The district operates two comprehensive high schools, three middle schools, a grade 7-9 preparatory school, one continuation school, an independent study program and a specialized program for students with special needs.

The district entered Program Improvement status approximately three years ago and has been struggling to improve student test scores by implementing various programs and instructional strategies. The addition of many specialized programs has required hiring additional teachers, classified staff and managers. The district has experienced budget issues and system breakdowns that have resulted in low morale and a lack of trust among employees and the community.

The current board and administration have been concerned about the difficult issues facing the district, including disappointing student performance, a lack of adequate facilities, and a lack of equitable compensation for employees. Prior to the recent bargaining agreement and the board's decision to provide a 10.25% salary increase to all employees, the teachers and managers had not had a salary increase for several years, except for normal step and column increases and an average increase of approximately \$1,000 per employee each year for health benefits. Salary comparison studies indicated that management salaries were lower than those in neighboring school districts while classified salaries and benefits were more comparable to other districts.

Teacher and management turnover has been high and the district has expressed concern about the difficulty of recruiting highly qualified teachers and managers, especially principals. There has also been a complete turnover in the district's administration. All of the district's top administrators are new to their positions, including the superintendent, assistant superintendent of educational services, assistant superintendent of business services and senior director of human resources.

In January 2007 the Victor Valley Union High School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into a study agreement to provide a review of the district's certificated management, classified management and classified bargaining unit staffing. The study agreement specifies that FCMAT will perform the following work:

1. Review and evaluate the certificated management and administrative positions and job descriptions at the school sites and the district office and compare current staffing structure, responsibility, and salary levels with schools and districts of similar size and demographics. This portion of the study must be completed in

time to meet the March statutory certificated reduction in workforce deadline should staff changes be recommended.

2. Review and evaluate the classified confidential, management, and administrative positions and job descriptions at the district office and sites and compare current staffing structure, responsibility, and salary levels with other school districts of similar size and demographics.
3. Review and evaluate the classified positions and job descriptions throughout the district included within the current CSEA bargaining agreement and compare current staffing structure and contract language with other school districts of similar size and demographics.
4. If pertinent, make recommendations for staffing changes that will increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs, and/or better serve the students, employees and community of the district.

Notes

Immediately prior to the start of FCMAT's field work, the district settled negotiations with the Victor Valley Teachers' Association (VVTA). FCMAT was informed that the board of trustees had not yet approved salary increases for the management team, but that a decision would be forthcoming to provide a similar salary package to management and confidential employees. In addition, the California School Employees' Association (CSEA) classified bargaining unit expects a "Me Too" clause to be implemented.

Salary comparisons will be provided in a letter under separate cover.

In addition to conducting staffing comparisons as required in the study agreement, several issues came to FCMAT's attention during the fieldwork. These additional issues and related recommendations are included for the district's consideration.

Scope point number 1 of the study agreement was addressed and information provided to the district in conferences and the exit letter dated February 13, 2007 to meet the March statutory certificated reduction in force deadline.

Study Guidelines

The FCMAT study team visited the district on March 5-7, 2007 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documents. This report is a result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Staffing Comparisons and Overview
- III. Staffing and Organization of Departments and Operational Areas
- IV. Additional Items

Study Team

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Executive Summary

There is a lack of systems throughout the district and communication is limited, creating an environment of low expectations and a lack of accountability among management or staff. There is no formal system to identify and solve problems.

The high turnover of administrators and board members and the apparent inconsistent operating procedures applied over the past several years have created systemwide weaknesses. Expensive and innovative programs were implemented to improve student achievement, but to date the expected results have not been achieved. Because of the high cost of implementing these programs, funds were not available for employee salary increases for several years.

The district lacks written policies, procedures or staffing formulas for classified or management positions. Although the districtwide management staffing level appears similar to that of comparable districts, staffing does not appear to be balanced fairly among sites. In comparable districts, certificated administrative ratios at school sites are usually based on student enrollment and a predetermined student-to-administrator ratio. The district does not currently adhere to a student ratio.

The CSEA classified bargaining unit contract includes a “me too” clause that is likely to take effect following the district’s recent settlement with the Victor Valley Teachers’ Association (VVTA). The district should carefully calculate the cost of other benefits provided to classified employees along with the 7% salary increase they received over a two year period. These other benefits, including additional vacation and sick leave, have a cost to the district in addition to the salary increase percentage already provided. Calculating the “me too” clause differential should include the total dollars added to the district’s costs on behalf of classified employees.

The board asked that the administration freeze classified positions as they became vacant, but the savings expected from the freeze have not been realized because substitutes have been hired to fill the vacancies. If positions are frozen, the use of funds for substitutes should not be approved. The district must carefully evaluate which positions are essential and allow only those positions to be filled with substitutes.

The high schools have two principals, one for grade 9 and one for grades 10-12. This structure is costly and the board should evaluate it annually.

Employees at all levels will need training to ensure that performance standards are met. A wide range of employees reported that the greatest need for training is among new managers and the security staff. Nearly every person interviewed by FCMAT mentioned safety and security issues.

The district’s workers’ compensation costs are nearly double those of similar school districts. This is in part because the district has not identified a specific employee to act as a risk manager. An employee should be assigned to oversee workers’ compensation, safety, property and liability issues.

The administration should work closely with the personnel commission to conduct a thorough study of classified positions, including updates to job descriptions and a salary comparison for all management and bargaining unit positions.

The workload of the director of facilities is excessive. This position is responsible for maintenance, operations and grounds, and for current and planned major construction projects. Another employee should be assigned to supervise maintenance employees and assign work orders.

The central enrollment center (CEC) has a high level of employee turnover, and student records are not available to school staff in a timely manner. The district may wish to revisit FCMAT's prior report containing recommendations regarding the CEC.

Four instructional aides at the Susie Matthews special education school also drive buses. If employees are absent, the instructional minutes for that day may be shortened because the aides/bus drivers are asked to drive multiple bus routes. The district might consider returning driving duties to the transportation department so that aides can work the full day in an instructional capacity.

The district should consider seeking a complete transportation study prior to recruiting a new transportation director. Most pupil transportation programs are costly and the district's is more so because of the extensive before- and after-school remedial programs offered. Routing, dispatching and assignment of personnel should be reviewed to determine if changes can be made to reduce costs and increase services.

Because some board members are new, the board may wish to seek training and might consider developing a long term strategic plan for the future. A strategic plan could help future administrators and governing boards avoid decisions that may have long term negative consequences.

Principals and budget managers report that they are not included in the budget development process, especially the budgets for categorical programs. The district should include principals in budget development and better plan the use of categorical funding to provide maximum learning opportunities for students.

Findings and Recommendations

Staffing Comparisons and Overview

Certificated Management Staffing

The district's certificated managers have not received a salary increase for many years. Employees indicated that they felt that most or all of the district's management salaries were lower than those of neighboring districts. Interviews with many certificated managers and principals indicated that morale was low and managers felt overworked and under-appreciated. The district expressed concern regarding the difficulty of recruiting principals and other school administrators.

There has also been a complete turnover in the district's administration. All of the district's top administrators are new to their positions, including the superintendent, assistant superintendent of educational services, assistant superintendent of business services and director of human resources. Most school principals and assistant principals are also new to their current positions, though some have been employed by the district in other positions for some time.

Many of the significant program changes made during the past few years may have been implemented without proper planning or thorough research. Principals have been expected to make major changes and improve student achievement without sufficient support or training from the district's administration.

The district entered Program Improvement approximately three years ago. At that time, the district's programs and structure were altered significantly. Changes included the addition of ninth grade campuses at the district's two high schools, each with its own principal and support staff. As a result, each high school has two principals and two sets of support staff. This duplication is expensive.

The district plans to build new school facilities to accommodate the ninth grade programs at both high schools. Although the district is eligible for hardship funding to build the facilities, it should carefully analyze these programs, including the success of their teaching strategies and outcomes, before proceeding with construction and the long term operational costs of new facilities.

Administrator-to-student ratios differ significantly at the two comprehensive high schools, creating management staffing inequities. Silverado High School has approximately 1200 more students than Victor Valley High School, but administrative staffing levels at the two schools are similar. The ninth grade campuses each have a principal, two assistant principals and one student leadership council (SLC) coordinator. The campuses for grades 10-12 have one principal, two assistant principals, one athletic director and an activities director. The activities director and athletic director are considered management positions, which is unusual for a high school. The district needs to develop fair and equi-

table staffing ratios for certificated administrators at school sites. Principals must be held accountable for leading and managing their schools. The district should also consider making the positions of head counselor, athletic director and activities director part of the certificated bargaining unit rather than management positions.

The district might consider eliminating one of the special education director positions. A district the size of Victor Valley needs only one such director with adequate support staff to manage its special education teachers and programs.

District office certificated management staffing includes numerous director positions. Reducing the number of director positions, reviewing all positions and programs, and reorganizing duties, lines of reporting and communication could improve efficiency and effectiveness at the district office.

Many of the district's job descriptions are out of date and do not reflect the actual job responsibilities. This includes the job descriptions for certain directors, especially the director of compensatory education. As a result, the actual current tasks of some positions have not been approved by the district's governing board. Updating job descriptions and securing board approval for them would remedy this situation.

FCMAT compared the district's staffing to that of four similar districts. The district's staffing and organizational chart do not align tasks and assignments with the desired outcomes, goals and priorities that were shared with FCMAT during interviews with district staff. FCMAT believes the district should consider changing the current district office organization, especially in the management of special education, categorical programs and school improvement.

The information in this report was shared informally with the district to meet the March statutory deadline for possible certificated reductions in force.

Table 1: Comparison of Certificated Management Staffing at District Offices

| Position | Antelope Valley 24,700 ADA | Hesperia 20,000 ADA | Chaffey 23,191 ADA | Victor Valley 10,300 ADA | Apple Valley 14,000 ADA |
|--|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Superintendent | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Deputy Superintendent | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| Ed Services | | | | | |
| Assistant Superintendent | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Directors | | | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| | | | | | |
| Human Resources | | | | | |
| Assistant Superintendent | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| Senior Director | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Business | | | | | |
| Assistant Superintendent/ CBO (Classified) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Director | | | | 1 | |
| | | | | | |
| Special Ed/ Student Support Services /CWA | | | | | |
| Director | | | 3 | | 1 |

Table 2: Comparison of Certificated Management Staffing at School Sites

| Position | Antelope Valley | Hesperia | Chaffey | Victor Valley | Apple Valley |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Comprehensive High School | 1 Principal 5 AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio 1:510 | 1 Principal AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio | 1 Principal AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio | 2 Principals 9th and 10-12 4 AP/ VP * ** | 1 Principal 3 AP/ VP Admin-to-student ratio 1:570 |
| Alternative Education/C-School | 1 Principal 1 AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio 1:240 | 1 Principal AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio | 1 Principal AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio | 1 Principal 1 AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio 1:395 | 1 Principal NO AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio 1:300 |
| Jr. High/Middle School | | 1 Principal AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio | | 1 Principal AP/VP Admin-to-student ratio 1:340 | 1 Principal 2AP/VP per Admin-to-student ratio 1:350 |

* The administrator-to-student ratio at Victor High School, including 1 open AP position, is 1:420—current actual is 1:505

** The administration-to-student ratio at Silverado High School is 1:597

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide ongoing training for principals and assistant principals, and hold them accountable for leading and managing their schools.
2. Improve communication among the management team; include principals and other managers in the decision making process.
3. Update the school site administrative staffing allocations to ensure equitable staffing based on student enrollment.
4. Revise job descriptions and job titles to better match duties, and secure board approval for the revised documents.
5. Evaluate the need for two special education administrators and the need for various certificated directors in excess of what similar districts have.
6. Consider changing the activities director, athletic director and head counselor positions from management positions to certificated bargaining unit positions, as is the practice in similar districts.
7. Review the management staffing organizational structure and consider combining or eliminating positions as attrition occurs.
8. Review and determine the cost effectiveness of staffing and operating ninth grade campuses as separate entities.

Classified Management and Bargaining Unit Staffing

School districts make management staffing decisions and create positions based on student needs and community expectations. Most of the classified management and confidential positions work in the district office under the administrative supervision of the assistant superintendent of business, assistant superintendent of instructional services, senior director of human resources, or the superintendent. In the case of Victor Valley, the district also has a personnel commission that oversees classified recruitment and hiring.

Classified management and bargaining unit staffing data was obtained from four districts in the region (Antelope Valley Union High School District, Apple Valley Unified School District, Chaffey Joint Union High School District and Hesperia Unified School District) which operate secondary school programs that are similar in size and demographics.

Data was obtained for all classified management, confidential and bargaining unit positions in the district office and in school sites operating junior high school, middle school, and high school programs. Because of smaller numbers and significant variation of programs such as continuation, magnet, charter and special education, staffing data for these programs was not obtained.

Comparing classified management positions by title is difficult because of the various titles in each district. Therefore, FCMAT compared the number of management/confidential positions per enrolled student. Bargaining unit positions are found at the district office and at school sites. Table 3 identifies all of the district's classified bargaining unit positions by site.

Classified Management/Confidential Staffing, District Office

Classified management and confidential staffing data is summarized in Tables 3A and 3B and indicates the full time equivalent (FTE) positions in each of several generic staffing categories, the total staffing at the district office and at the school sites. In addition, the mean staffing levels in the comparison districts are reported.

Tables 3A and 3B: Classified Management/Confidential Staffing Comparison, District Offices

Table 3A: Classified Management Staffing, District Offices

| Management Positions ,* District Office (D.O.) | Victor Valley | Apple Valley | Antelope Valley | Chaffey | Hesperia |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Enrollment ** | 12,379 | 15,716 | 25,312 | 24,982 | 20,267 |
| Deputy Superintendent, Business | | | | 1 | |
| Assistant Superintendent, Business | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Chief Financial Officer | | | 1 | | |
| Director Facilities/Project/Planning/Acquisition | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| Director Food Services | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Director IT/Network/Database | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Director Maintenance/Operations | 1 | 1 | | 2 | |
| Director Personnel/Human Resources | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Director Risk Management | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Director, Fiscal/Accounting/Categorical | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Director, Purchasing/Warehouse/Printing | 1 | | | 1 | 1 |
| Director, Transportation | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| Director/Chief of Security/Police | | | | | 1 |
| Assistant Director Food Services | | | 1 | | 2 |
| Assistant Director Personnel/Human Resources | | | | | 1 |
| Assistant Director Facilities/Projects/Planning | | | | | 1 |
| Assistant Director IT/Network/Database | | | | | 1 |
| Manager Business Services | | | 1 | | |
| Manager Personnel/Benefits/Position Control | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Manager, Accounting | | | | 1 | |
| Manager, Facilities/Projects/Planning | | | 1 | 2 | |
| Manager, Print Shop | | | | 1 | |
| Manager, ROP Operations | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Supervisor Fiscal/Accounting | | | | | 1 |
| Supervisor Food Services | 2 | | | | 1 |
| Supervisor Risk/Safety/Benefits | | | | | 2 |
| Supervisor Transportation | | | | | 2 |

| Management Positions ,* District Office (D.O.) (continued) | Victor Valley | Apple Valley | Antelope Valley | Chaffey | Hesperia |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Supervisor, Maintenance/Operations | 2 | | | | 1 |
| Supervisor, Printshop/Photo Shop | | | | | 2 |
| Supervisor Intervention Liaison | | | | | 1 |
| Supervisor Plants/Grounds | | | | | 1 |
| PINCO Storekeeper I | | | 1 | | |
| Social Worker | | | | | 1 |
| Sergeant Security/Police | | | | | 1 |
| Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent | | | | 1 | |
| Administrative Asst. to the Supt. | | | | | |
| Administrative Asst. to the Dep. Supt. | | | | 1 | |
| Administrative Asst. to the Asst. Supt. | | | | 3 | |
| | | | | | |
| Management Positions * (School Site) | | | | | |
| Cafeteria Manager | | | 8 | | |
| Director Campus Security | | | 9 | | |
| Security/Police Officer | | | | | 6 |
| Supervisor, Plant Custodian | | | | | 4 |
| Supervisor, Night Custodian | | | | | 1 |
| Supervisor, Food Services | | | | | 2 |
| School Administrative Assistant/Principal Secy | | | | | 2 |
| | | | | | |
| Total FTEs Classified Management, D.O. | 12 | 9 | 14 | 21 | 26 |
| D.O. Classified Management FTEs Per Student | 0.0010 | 0.0006 | 0.0006 | 0.0008 | 0.0013 |
| Total Classified Management FTEs | 12 | 9 | 31 | 21 | 41 |

* Position titles are generic for survey purposes

** Enrollment for 2005-06

Table 3B: Classified Confidential Staffing, District Offices, and Combined Data for Classified Management/Confidential Positions at District Offices

| Confidential Positions, * District Office (D.O.) | Victor Valley | Apple Valley | Antelope Valley | Chaffey | Hesperia |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Administrative Secretary to the Board of Trustees | | 1 | | | |
| Administrative Secretary to Superintendent | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| Administrative Secretary to Deputy Superintendent | | | | | 1 |
| Administrative Secretary to Assist. Supt. | 2 | | 4 | | |
| Administrative Secretary (other) | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 5 |
| Manager Fiscal/Accounting/Budget | | 1 | | | |
| Accountant/Accounting Technician | | | 1 | | |
| Personnel/Cred/Payroll/Benefits/Risk Techs | | 3 | 7 | | 3 |
| Administrator IT/Network/Database | | 1 | | | |
| Supervisor Transportation Shop | | 1 | | | |
| Food Services Supply Manager | | 1 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Confidential Positions * (School Site) | | | | | |
| Food Services Supervisor III | | 2 | | | |
| Plant Supervisor | | 2 | | | |
| Administrative Secretary to Principal | | | 10 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Total FTEs Classified Confidential, D.O. | 4 | 12 | 14 | 0 | 10 |
| D.O. Classified. Confidential FTEs. Per Student | 0.0003 | 0.0008 | 0.0006 | 0.000 | 0.0005 |
| TOTAL Classified Confidential FTEs | 4 | 16 | 24 | 0 | 10 |
| | | | | | |
| Total Management/Confidential FTEs, D.O. D.. | 16 | 21 | 28 | 21 | 36 |
| Classified Management/Confidential FTEs Per Student | 0.0013 | 0.0013 | 0.0011 | 0.0008 | 0.0018 |
| | | | | | |
| Mean District Office Management/Confidential FTEs Per Student in Comparison Districts | | 0.0013 | | | |
| | | | | | |

* Position titles are generic for survey purposes

** Enrollment for 2005-06

School districts tend to give different titles to similar positions. Therefore, to make a valid comparison between the surveyed districts, FCMAT calculated the mean FTE ratio for the district office management and confidential positions. Victor Valley's mean is 0.0013 FTE per enrolled student. This figure is comparable to Apple Valley Unified School District, slightly higher than Antelope Valley and Chaffey, and less than Hesperia. The combined mean of all the comparison districts is identical to the mean for Victor Valley: 0.0013 FTE per enrolled student.

The district's staffing for district office management and confidential positions closely matches the average staffing for similar positions in the comparison districts.

Classified Bargaining Unit Staffing

The CSEA leadership indicated that clerical, custodial, maintenance and security positions are understaffed. A classified staffing comparison with other local districts is included in this report. The CSEA stated that the district has been fair and that salaries and benefits for their members have not been a major issue, though they do fully expect the “me too” clause to be implemented now that negotiations with the VVTA have been completed.

The CSEA settled their 2005-06 and 2006-07 negotiations last spring. The settlement included a 2% salary increase for 2005-06, an additional 5% effective July 1, 2006 and several language changes relating to extra vacation and sick days for long-term employees. The difference between the VVTA settlement of 10.25 percent and the amount provided under the CSEA settlement is the cost the district will incur to implement the “me too” clause.

Over the years, the district may have agreed to add extra vacation and /or sick days in lieu of salary increases. Increased vacation and sick leave, increased longevity stipends and similar items represent costs which should be included as part of the total bargaining settlement. To do otherwise sends a false message that these items have no dollar cost. The district may not have considered the additional costs or discussed the true cost of these items with the CSEA, and it appears that the district’s cost to provide these extra items may not have been considered by the CSEA leadership in discussions regarding implementation of the “me too” clause.

The relationship between VVTA and CSEA is strained. Both groups should consider meeting to discuss important district issues, build trust, share concerns specific to each group, and begin to formulate ideas to reduce costs for items such as health benefits.

The district needs to conduct a reclassification study. The last reclassification study was done in 1991. Many job descriptions do not appear to reflect actual job duties being performed. The study should include a thorough review of salaries and benefits. It appears that the classified bargaining unit has a high level of vacation and sick leave benefits compared to those of neighboring districts. FCMAT has encountered many districts with similar “me too” provisions; however, the extra vacation days and sick days in the district’s CSEA contract are not common.

As a cost saving measure, the board recently implemented a classified hiring freeze. However, substitutes have often been hired to fill these vacancies so only partial savings have been realized. The consensus among the classified staff and management is that those who advocate most get a position filled, whether it is a substitute or replacement employee.

On occasion, this process has involved administrators or teachers violating the chain of command and lobbying individual board members. The district had classified staffing formulas in the past, but they have not been followed for several years. Most districts use staffing formulas based on pre-approved criteria. Implementing and following staffing formulas would prevent arbitrary, political, and unauthorized staffing decisions.

Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 summarize classified bargaining unit staffing data, indicating the FTE positions in each of several generic staffing categories. Table 4 provides a summary of total staffing for positions located in the district office and at school sites. Tables 5, 6 and 7 provide comparisons with similar districts, including the mean staffing levels for the district office, high schools and junior high schools.

Table 4: Victor Valley Union High School District Classified Bargaining Unit Staffing

| | | Jr. High/Middle Schools | | | High Schools | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| LOCATION | District Office | Cobalt | Hook | Victor Valley | Silverado | Victor Valley |
| Enrollment | N/A | 710 | 1,068 | 726 | 3,451 | 2,382 |
| FTE Bargaining Unit Positions | | | | | | |
| Accounting | 6.00 | | 1.00 | | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Custodial | 1.00 | 3.30 | 5.31 | 4.00 | 11.00 | 9.50 |
| Food Service | | 2.50 | 3.63 | 2.94 | 11.29 | 7.03 |
| General Office/Clerical/Secretary | 32.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 16.00 | 13.00 |
| Grounds | 6.00 | | | | | |
| Instructional Support | 1.00 | 3.75 | 9.13 | 9.13 | 17.81 | 13.00 |
| Library/Media | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.00 |
| Maintenance | 15.00 | | | 1.00 | | 1.00 |
| Printing | 1.00 | | | | | |
| Purchasing | | | | | | |
| Risk Management | | | | | | |
| School Site Operations | | | | | | |
| Security/Safety | 1.00 | 2.00 | 2.29 | 2.00 | 8.00 | 6.00 |
| Technology | 4.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.88 | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| Transportation | 29.91 | | | | | |
| Warehouse/Delivery | 2.00 | | | | | |
| Total FTE | 99.91 | 18.55 | 28.35 | 25.94 | 69.10 | 53.53 |

*Classified Bargaining Unit Staffing, District Office***Table 5A: Comparison among Districts of Total Classified Bargaining Unit Staffing, District Office**

| | Victor Valley | Apple Valley | Antelope Valley | Chaffey | Hesperia |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Enrollment ** | 12,379 | 15,716 | 25,312 | 24,982 | 20,267 |
| FTE Bargaining Unit Positions | | | | | |
| Accounting | 5.00 | 14.00 | 5.00 | 12.88 | 8.00 |
| Custodial | 1.00 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Food Service | 1.00 | 7.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| General Office/Clerical/Secy | 16.00 | 16.00 | 12.00 | 32.93 | 23.00 |
| Guidance/Counseling | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 |
| Grounds | 7.00 | 8.00 | 0.00 | 4.00 | 12.00 |
| Instructional Support | 4.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 5.00 | 55.00 |
| Maintenance | 8.00 | 11.00 | 1.00 | 49.25 | 22.00 |
| Printing | 1.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.50 | 7.00 |
| Purchasing | 0.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 1.00 |
| Risk Management | 0.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Security/Safety | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Technology | 4.00 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 15.00 | 5.00 |
| Transportation | 44.00 | 64.00 | 0.00 | 43.92 | 0.00 |
| Warehouse/Delivery | 2.00 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 5.25 | 6.00 |
| Total Classified Bargaining Unit FTEs | 93.00 | 135.00 | 26.00 | 179.73 | 143.00 |
| Classified Bargaining Unit FTEs Per Student | 0.0075 | 0.0086 | 0.0010 | 0.0072 | 0.0071 |
| | | | | | |
| Mean D.O. Bargaining Unit FTEs Per Student in Comparison Districts | | 0.0060 | | | |

** Enrollment for 2005-06

Table 5B: Comparison Among Districts of Classified Bargaining Unit Office Support Staffing, District Office

| | Victor Valley | Apple Valley | Antelope Valley | Chaffey | Hesperia |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Enrollment ** | 12,379 | 15,716 | 25,312 | 24,982 | 20,267 |
| FTE Bargaining Unit Positions*** | | | | | |
| Accounting | 5.00 | 14.00 | 5.00 | 12.88 | 8.00 |
| General Office/Clerical/Secy | 16.00 | 16.00 | 12.00 | 32.93 | 23.00 |
| Purchasing | 0.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 1.00 |
| Risk Management | 0.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 |
| Office Support (Management) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| Office Support (Confidential) | 4.00 | 8.00 | 14.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| Total FTEs, Classified. Bargaining Unit | 25.00 | 36.00 | 33.00 | 50.81 | 43.00 |
| Classified. Bargaining Unit FTEs Per Student | 0.0020 | 0.0023 | 0.0013 | 0.0020 | 0.0021 |
| | | | | | |
| Mean D.O. Bargaining Unit FTEs Per Student in Comparison Districts | 0.0019 | | | | |

* Position titles are generic for survey purposes

** Enrollment for 2005-06

*** Includes Bargaining Unit, Management and Confidential Positions

The mean ratio of district office classified bargaining unit positions in the comparison districts is 0.0060 FTE per enrolled student; the Victor Valley UHSD has a mean ratio of 0.0075 FTE per enrolled student. This figure is lower than that of Apple Valley but higher than that of the other comparable districts. It appears that Antelope Valley may categorize their district office employees differently from other districts, which may account for the difference in their case.

The comparison of the office support sub-group includes classified bargaining unit and management/confidential employees and is provided to address the concern regarding district office staffing expressed in interviews. This comparison indicates that Victor Valley has 0.0020 FTEs per enrolled student, which is lower than Apple Valley and Hesperia, equal to Chaffey and higher than Antelope Valley. Again, it appears that Antelope Valley may categorize their office support personnel differently from other districts.

The comparison of classified bargaining unit and management/confidential positions in district offices is adversely affected by variations in how classified support positions are designated, as management or confidential positions, and by differences in the staffing of programs such as transportation, food services, custodial and maintenance.

*Classified Bargaining Unit Staffing, Jr. High/Middle Schools***Table 6: Comparison Among Districts of Classified Bargaining Unit Staffing for Jr. High and Middle Schools**

| District | School | Grades | FTE | Enrollment | FTE Per Student |
|--|-------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Hesperia USD | Hesperia Jr. | 7-8 | 58.00 | 2,155 | 0.027 |
| | Ranchero | 7-8 | 47.00 | 1,394 | 0.034 |
| | | | Mean | 1,774.50 | 0.030 |
| Apple Valley | Apple Valley | 6-8 | 44.00 | 1,027 | 0.043 |
| | Sitting Bull | 6-8 | 31.00 | 948 | 0.047 |
| | Vista Campana | 6-8 | 44.50 | 1,172 | 0.038 |
| | | | Mean | 1,049.00 | 0.043 |
| Victor Valley HSD | Cobalt | 7-8 | 18.55 | 710 | 0.026 |
| | Hook | 7-8 | 28.35 | 1068 | 0.027 |
| | Victor Valley Jr. | 7-8 | 25.94 | 726 | 0.036 |
| | | | Mean | 834.67 | 0.029 |
| Mean Ratio of Staff FTE to per enrolled student for all comparison sites (5 Jr. high/middle schools) | | | 0.038 | | |

Table 6 indicates that the mean ratio for classified bargaining unit positions at junior high / middle schools in the comparison districts is 0.038 FTE per enrolled student, while that of the Victor Valley Union High School District is 0.029 FTE per enrolled student.

*Classified Bargaining Unit Staffing, High Schools***Table 7: Comparison Among Districts of Classified bargaining Unit Staffing Comparison for High Schools**

| District | School | Grades | FTE | Enrollment | FTE Per Student |
|---|------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Antelope Valley UHSD | Highland | 9-12 | 90.00 | 3,361 | 0.027 |
| | Knight | 9-12 | 65.00 | 3,197 | 0.020 |
| | Lancaster | 9-12 | 79.00 | 3,120 | 0.025 |
| | Antelope Valley | 9-12 | 95.00 | 2,108 | 0.045 |
| | Littlerock | 9-12 | 67.00 | 1,924 | 0.035 |
| | Eastside | 9-12 | 29.00 | 1,347 | 0.022 |
| | | | Mean | 2,509.50 | 0.029 |
| Chaffey JUHSD | Etiwanda | 9-12 | 59.50 | 3,324 | 0.018 |
| | Chaffey | 9-12 | 74.63 | 3,160 | 0.024 |
| | Los Osos | 9-12 | 51.69 | 3,030 | 0.017 |
| | Montclair | 9-12 | 60.16 | 2,960 | 0.020 |
| | Rancho Cucamonga | 9-12 | 50.25 | 2,730 | 0.018 |
| | Alta Loma | 9-12 | 54.38 | 2,697 | 0.020 |
| | Ontario | 9-12 | 55.87 | 2,508 | 0.022 |
| | Colony | 9-12 | 44.38 | 2139 | 0.021 |
| | | | Mean | 2,818.50 | 0.020 |
| Hesperia USD | Hesperia | 9-12 | 82.00 | 3,243 | 0.025 |
| | Sultana | 9-12 | 78.00 | 2,751 | 0.028 |
| | | | Mean | 2,997.00 | 0.027 |
| Apple Valley USD | Apple Valley | 9-12 | 67.00 | 1,938 | 0.035 |
| | Granite Hills | 9-12 | 63.50 | 2,166 | 0.029 |
| | | | Mean | 2052.00 | 0.032 |
| Victor Valley UHSD | Silverado | 9-12 | 69.10 | 3,451 | 0.020 |
| | Victor Valley | 9-12 | 53.53 | 2,382 | 0.022 |
| | | | Mean | 2,916.50 | 0.021 |
| Mean FTE Per Student for All Comparison Sites (18 high schools) | | | | | 0.027 |

Table 7 indicates that the mean ratio for classified bargaining unit positions at high schools in the comparison districts is 0.027 FTE per enrolled student. The Victor Valley UHSD staffing ratio for classified bargaining unit positions at high schools is .0021 per enrolled student, which is significantly lower than the comparison districts.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Encourage the certificated and classified bargaining unit leadership to meet to strengthen relationships and to begin discussions about health benefit options.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the hiring freeze.
3. Establish strict criteria for determining which positions need to be filled immediately and which should remain unfilled.
4. Postpone decisions about filling positions until all unfilled positions are identified.
5. Discontinue filling nonessential positions with substitutes.
6. Determine which unfilled classified positions should be permanently eliminated.
7. Develop staffing ratios and formulas for all classified positions; establish guidelines so that positions are added or subtracted objectively based on factual data.
8. Work with the personnel commission to contract for a reclassification study to be conducted by an outside agency. This study should include revised job descriptions for each position, as well as comparative salary and benefit data.
9. Implement the classified “me too” clause, but consider all of the costs associated with the extra vacation and sick days that were provided to CSEA in the 2005-06 contract settlement.
10. Review classified management/confidential staffing levels annually.
11. Develop classified management and bargaining unit staffing formulas, especially for school sites, to ensure that staff positions are distributed equitably based on student enrollment.

Staffing and Organization of Departments and Operational Areas

In addition to the management and classified staffing comparisons, FCMAT reviewed staffing and operational issues in various district departments and operational areas.

Risk Management

The district lacks a professional risk management position and is incurring a high level of unnecessary costs as a result. The executive assistant to the assistant superintendent of business is responsible for duties related to workers' compensation. The director of fiscal services and the payroll staff also assist by making sure that basic workers' compensation procedures are accomplished. Because these staff members have little time after completing their regular assigned duties, they are not able to give priority to workers' compensation management.

The district's workers' compensation costs and open claims are high. The premium rate for the district is approximately \$6.80 per \$100 of payroll, which is more than twice the average of \$2 to \$3 that most districts pay. The cost of hiring and retaining an experienced risk manager would more than pay for itself through reduced premiums and claims. The district could also consider asking the joint powers authority (JPA) for temporary part time assistance to control costs.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider establishing a risk management position to manage workers' compensation, safety and property and liability issues.
2. Consider asking the JPA for temporary part time risk management expertise to control costs.
3. Develop an injury prevention program that includes training.
4. Conduct a formal analysis of workers' compensation injuries and claims, and use this analysis to develop a prevention program focused on the most common and significant worker injuries.

Clerical and Secretarial

School site clerical staff expressed great concern about students' verbal abuse and profanity, and frustration at what they felt were inconsistent expectations and consequences regarding student behavior and discipline. Clerical staff also indicated concern about staffing inequities and the lack of objective criteria to determine appropriate staffing allocations. Staff turnover is high in certain areas such as the central enrollment center (CEC). This could be partially due to management philosophy and employee supervision practices.

Job descriptions for clerical staff are out of date and need to be revised to reflect actual duties. The reclassification study recommended earlier in this report would address this issue.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Establish districtwide student behavioral expectations.
2. Enforce consequences for poor student behavior.

Facilities, Maintenance and Grounds

The director of facilities supervises maintenance, operations and grounds as well as facilities. With the amount of school construction under way and planned for the near future, the district might consider other options to provide better maintenance supervision. One option is to assign the maintenance supervisor position more responsibility, which would reduce the director's workload and enable an increased focus on major construction projects. Another option is to provide one or two on-site lead positions in maintenance so that the maintenance supervisor has more time to assist the director.

It appears that there may be a lack of general maintenance workers. In addition, maintenance employees are allowed to accept telephone requests for work directly from the schools, circumventing the normal work order process. The work order system should be used for all repair requests so that priorities can be set and staff assigned efficiently. Telephone requests should be made for emergencies only.

The district has not addressed the need for more maintenance, custodial or grounds workers as student enrollment has increased and schools were built. Vandalism is a significant problem and help is lacking to promptly remove graffiti or repair other damage. School campuses need maintenance and a higher standard of cleanliness.

Grounds staff stated that there are not enough employees to keep up with the workload. The department budget does not provide enough funds to purchase sufficient supplies and equipment. There is some dissatisfaction in the department regarding work schedules. Four grounds staff work Monday through Friday, and three grounds staff work Tuesday through Saturday. This schedule enables the district to perform certain tasks when students are not on campus, but most of the grounds employees feel that it would be better if they were all on the same schedule. The grounds employees appreciate their supervisor and his support but would like more communication between staff and management.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Determine if the maintenance staffing level is appropriate.
2. Consider realigning the supervisory duties in maintenance to allow for better employee supervision and provide more time for the director to oversee major construction projects.
3. Consider installing a surveillance system to reduce school vandalism.
4. Use the work order system consistently.
5. Discontinue accepting telephone requests for repairs, except for emergencies.
6. Determine how much emphasis the district wishes to place on the condition and appearance of school grounds, then evaluate and prioritize the needs and budget the grounds department accordingly.

7. Schedule regular staff meetings for grounds staff to discuss issues with supervisors.

Custodial

Custodial supervision is centralized. The district's operations supervisor supervises and evaluates 42 day and night custodians, determines job assignments, orders and distributes custodial supplies and materials, and coordinates waste management. The operations supervisor also oversees custodial work for summer and extended year programs. This employee is on call 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

The operations supervisor indicates that more custodians are needed districtwide, especially at Silverado High School and Victor Valley High School. He indicated that the district is at least five custodians short and substitutes are often not available. The schools cannot open all restrooms because there is not enough custodial time to clean all of them each day.

Most principals are satisfied with the custodial staff at their schools. However, a few principals indicated that it is sometimes difficult to get things done because they have no supervisory authority over the custodians. The district had a plant manager supervisory model in the past. Sites and principles want to return to a plant manager model of supervision, mainly to improve communication and service. The current operations supervisor agrees that the site plant manager model would make communication easier for principals, but recommends that the plant managers report for work later in the day to enable them to provide some on-site supervision of the night custodians and be present for some night activities. Plant managers would only be needed at the two large high schools; other sites could function with lead custodians. Returning to a plant manager model would facilitate communication during the day and could also be designed to provide some night supervision and support.

The operations supervisor suggests that he retain overall supervision of all custodians because the principals want better communication but not the job of formal evaluation and discipline of custodians. However, the principals indicated that they would not object to evaluations being brought back to the school site administration and appear to prefer that custodians be supervised by site administrators. The operations supervisor suggests that he retain control of the custodial budget to ensure that custodians receive necessary equipment and supplies because the lack of these items was one reason for the change to the current model from a plant manager model a few years ago.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Evaluate the need for additional custodial staff based on the FCMAT staffing comparisons and on the needs of individual school sites.
2. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of returning to the plant manager model at both comprehensive high schools, with site administrators solely or collaboratively responsible for supervision and evaluations.

Security

School safety and security constitute the district's single greatest concern. Principals stated that the number and experience of security staff is inadequate. FCMAT concurs with this assessment. Custodians often assist with student security because of the lack of coverage during passing periods and lunch. Some security personnel are deemed to be physically incapable of performing their jobs in an adequate manner. Absenteeism is a problem among security staff, and it is very difficult to find substitutes. Security staff do not have standard or easily recognized uniforms.

Security personnel feel that they do not receive adequate training. This may contribute to the escalation of confrontations and injuries to security personnel or students. Security staff should receive training in defusing conflict situations as well as in first aid and CPR. The training should also include a focus on self defense and on containment techniques, with the goal of reducing or eliminating injuries to security staff and students. There does not appear to be consistent enforcement of zero tolerance policies regarding drugs and weapons. Security personnel also expressed concern about student profanity and stated that they experience frequent verbal abuse from students.

Several of the campuses, especially Victor Valley Junior High, are configured in a way that makes them difficult to monitor with the current number of employees.

The district has several sworn school resource officers (SROs), but they are not able to cover the entire district during school hours. The board of trustees approved the elimination of a newly planned district police force from the 2006-07 budget so that the district could afford the initial salary increase for teachers.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Evaluate the need for additional security staff based on the FCMAT staffing comparisons and on the needs of individual school sites.
2. Work with the personnel commission to revise job descriptions for security staff as needed and to recruit qualified candidates.
3. Provide training for security staff that includes CPR, first aid, conflict resolution, self defense, and student containment procedures.
4. Consider establishing minimum physical qualifications for security staff to prevent injury.
5. Assign security staff in pairs whenever possible.
6. Conduct ongoing advertising for and recruitment of security personnel and substitutes.
7. Require and provide standard, recognizable uniforms for security staff.

Warehouse

The warehouse staff appear to be satisfied with their current staffing levels except at peak times. This department enjoys a high level of cooperation and teamwork, and there are positive relationships among the employees. As student enrollment and classrooms are added, the warehouse operations and level of service should be taken into consideration.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review warehouse staffing and service levels as enrollment increases.

Library

The district has one certificated librarian; the school sites have library technician support. The library technicians appreciate the direction and assistance provided by the certificated librarian. The district does not follow through on lost books and materials. There does not appear to be sufficient focus on resolving this issue, and the cost of replacing lost textbooks is increasing each year.

Recommendations:

The district should:

1. Develop and enforce procedures to provide better control over lost textbooks and other library materials.

Central Enrollment Center (CEC)

FCMAT completed a review of the district's CEC in October 2006. A number of recommendations in that study, including moving student files back to the schools, have not been implemented. The CEC has a high rate of staff turnover and substitutes are difficult to find. Staff shortages make it difficult to deliver student files to the schools in a timely manner. The district might wish to redefine the procedures in place at the CEC and consider other strategies to make this department more efficient and effective. The administration and board should revisit the recommendations from FCMAT's October 2006 report.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review and attempt to determine the reason for the high turnover of staff at the CEC.
2. Consider realigning the procedures of this department to increase efficiency.
3. Review the recommendations in FCMAT's previous report to determine if further changes should be made to ensure better service to students.

Transportation

The director of transportation position is currently vacant, and the department is being supervised by a department employee acting as an interim director. The district should decide how the department should be structured before advertising for a new director.

A large number of students are transported each day because of the large geographic area served by the district. Instructional programs at all sites include remedial classes before and after school. Providing home-to-school bus service for students taking remedial classes has increased transportation complexity and operational costs. The school bell schedules do not allow much flexibility in routing.

A comprehensive study of the transportation department could help the district determine the adequacy of staffing and increase operational efficiency.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Determine the most effective transportation department structure before advertising for a new director of transportation.
2. Consider conducting a comprehensive study of the transportation department soon to determine the adequacy of staffing and the most effective routing and dispatching process.

Technology

The district has made a significant investment in technology. The technology department has three employees who are responsible for network maintenance, training and repairs. Employees expressed concern that the amount of work is overwhelming and cannot be managed by three people. They suggest that the district consider adding two positions: one teacher training specialist and one software engineer. FCMAT completed a review of the district's technology department in October 2006. The district should revisit the recommendations from FCMAT's October 2006 report.

Silverado high school would like a technology employee to manage the lighting and sound equipment at the performing arts center. If added, this position would best be paid using categorical funds or facilities funds because this facility is used primarily by community groups.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Revisit the recommendations of FCMAT's October 2006 report and evaluate the need for additional positions in the technology department based on the needs of schools and on the district's equipment investment risk.

Special Education

The district's Susie Matthews program was established in 2003-04 as an alternative to sending special education students to nonpublic schools. This campus also houses expelled special education students. Most students are enrolled in special day classes, but some are enrolled in independent study.

Susie Matthews has its own transportation program. The classified staff includes three instructional aide/bus driver positions. These employees provide transportation to and from school and serve as classroom aides during the day. These positions are paid bus driver wages even for the instructional aide portion of their work day. If one or more of these employees is absent, others are required to drive additional routes and there is a loss of instructional minutes.

FCMAT has not encountered combined instructional aide/bus driver positions in other districts. It appears that a more efficient service model would be to return the home-to-school transportation duties to the transportation department and allow the instructional aides to work in that capacity without bus driving duties. This would prevent the loss of instructional minutes when employees are absent.

The Susie Matthews site is small and crowded. It will not accommodate future growth and there is no practical way for the site to be expanded in its current location near the district office. Teachers are paid for an additional hour because they do not have a preparation period. In addition, aides in the resource specialist program (RSP) are eight hour per day employees, but two of those hours are not spent serving students. Reducing the RSP aides to six hours per day would reduce costs.

The classified staff expressed concern about student and employee safety because of the lack of adequate security staff and the wide range of needs and disabilities among the students served at Susie Matthews. Although it is small, this school needs additional security staff based on criteria that are different from those used at other sites. This may also be the case in considering custodial coverage at this site.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider transferring pupil transportation duties for the Susie Matthews site to the transportation department and eliminating the bus driver duties of the instructional aide/bus driver positions.
2. Consider reducing the eight hour per day RSP aides to six hours per day so that all of their time is spent working with students.
3. Develop staffing ratios for security employees and custodians assigned to Susie Matthews to accommodate the special needs and disabilities of the students.

4. Consider developing a facility plan for special education to accommodate future growth if the desire is to continue the same type of special education program that currently exists at Susie Matthews.

Frozen Classified Positions

The board implemented a freeze on classified positions to save money and provide time for the administration to evaluate the need for positions at school sites and the district office. Substitutes have been hired for several open positions; other positions are on hold or being considered for elimination. Data from the district's business office indicates that if none of the frozen positions are filled, the district would save approximately \$582,000; however, when the cost of substitutes is included in the calculation, actual savings are reduced to \$280,000.

Indicating that a position is frozen but filling it with a substitute or permanent employee can present a contradictory and confusing picture and undermine the district's credibility. The district needs to conduct a thorough review of all frozen positions, decide which positions should remain unfilled, and prohibit the hiring of substitutes for those positions. When budget conditions improve or priorities change, the district can consider allowing certain positions to be filled.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Keep frozen positions vacant.
2. Carefully evaluate the need for each position that becomes vacant and consider moving employees from one position to another to better meet the needs of the district while reducing less needed positions.
3. Hire substitutes only when circumstances are such that having a substitute in place is mandated.

Personnel Commission and Human Resources

The California Education Code authorizes and provides guidance for operating a personnel commission. Although the district's board of trustees approves a budget and employees are paid by the district, a separate board governs the activities of the personnel commission.

The various duties of the personnel commission and the human resources department are easily blurred. A personnel commission is usually responsible for establishing classified job descriptions, position hierarchy, recruitment and testing processes related to hiring, and all activities leading up to the employment of classified employees. The human resources department is usually responsible for all employment activities once an employee is hired by the district.

The district's personnel commission may be undertaking certain responsibilities that are often managed by the human resources department in other districts. It is possible that this could lead to a conflict of interest for the director of classified personnel, who answers directly to the commission board rather than to the board of trustees.

Some job descriptions are out of date and some job classes may need to be eliminated. In addition, the board of trustees may decide to eliminate certain positions as part of the budget reduction process. If the job classification study recommended by FCMAT in this report is approved, the commission will be responsible for conducting the study. If the study is conducted, the district and the personnel commission must work together to ensure that employees accept the process and that it is coordinated with the approval of the CSEA bargaining unit. Because the study could be expensive and take years to fully implement, a cooperative effort by the district and the personnel commission is essential to the process.

Disciplining classified employees is difficult because of personnel commission rules. Some principals have given up on formal discipline of employees because they think the personnel commission has created many technical obstacles. The principals' perception is that the personnel commission is out of touch with what is occurring at the sites and with the personnel needs of the sites. Student discipline issues have taken precedence over classroom observation and evaluation of teachers.

In addition, hiring new personnel is perceived as difficult under the personnel commission rules. Principals were critical of the hiring practices and stated that extra points may be unfairly added to applicants for criteria not related to the job. Hiring lists are unacceptable because the candidates are not qualified, especially in the area of security. The principals believe that rankings are arbitrary and that there is perceived favoritism regarding who is tested and who is placed on the lists. FCMAT was not able to confirm or deny these opinions. As a result of these perceptions, the principals often use substitutes to bypass the personnel commission hiring lists and the candidates they consider to be unqualified.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Define and clarify the responsibilities of the human resources department and the personnel commission to prevent any perceived conflict of interest and overlap of duties.
2. Consider approving a full classified classification study, including updating job descriptions and a salary comparison.
2. Allow principals to have input into the development of classified staffing ratios or formulas.

Board of Trustees

Over a period of several months FCMAT met individually with four board members on separate occasions. All four board members expressed concern regarding the fairness of budget and staffing reductions. The VVTA contract specifies class sizes and staffing formulas for teachers, but no similar formula exists for management or classified positions. The board asked the superintendent to proceed with this FCMAT study to provide data on management and classified staffing in comparable districts to ensure that the district is addressing staffing in an equitable manner.

Some board members expressed a desire to add a classified board secretary position to assist board members with correspondence and other issues. Because budget reductions have resulted in layoffs throughout the district, FCMAT suggests that this position be considered as part of an overall future staffing strategy. Adding a new position at this time might result in unnecessary criticism. Board members also expressed the need for accurate information from the administration and expressed interest in boardsmanship training. Board members need complete information when addressing issues such as student achievement, employee compensation, enrollment growth or decline, and facilities.

The administration and principals should provide the board with information about their schools and programs and explain the duties of managers and classified staff. This could include structured visits to school sites for board members and principals to observe and discuss the work being done by clerical staff, custodians, counselors and school administrators. This would provide board members a better understanding of the various roles of managers and classified employees in the operation of the district. Board members also need a systematic, ongoing training program in many areas of school district operation. Board member training and training for all staff should be included in the district's strategic plan.

There is little evidence of a systematic approach to planning and decision making. Decisions are sometimes perceived to be made arbitrarily or spontaneously without consideration of the consequences and without an evaluation of reasonableness related to the district's overall plan, values and goals. A long range plan is needed. The superintendent recognizes this need, supports a formal planning process and has begun working with the board to plan systematically.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide boardsmanship training for board members.
2. Schedule training workshops for board members regarding the district's budget and staffing.
3. Plan school site and department visits for board members to ensure better understanding of the roles of management and classified employees.

4. Consider developing a five year strategic plan to address major issues facing the district.

Include representatives from the board, management, employee groups, students and the community in the strategic planning process.

Engage the services of an outside facilitator with extensive experience in conducting strategic planning in school districts, using an interview process to select a consultant or firm that can meet the district's needs.

5. After it is developed, adopt the formal strategic plan and use it to guide all of the district's operations and decisions until it is revised.
6. Conduct an annual review of the five year strategic plan to determine if any changes are needed.

Additional Items

In addition to items requested for this study, FCMAT found several related areas that are worthy of the district's consideration. These are discussed briefly here.

Categorical Funding

The district receives a considerable amount of categorical funding that does not appear to be budgeted and used effectively because large balances are carried over each year. A lack of communication between the categorical program director and the sites makes it difficult to implement positive changes. Principals and budget managers report that they are not included in the budget development process, especially when it comes to budgets for categorical programs.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Improve communication between the director overseeing the categorical funds and school administrators by including the principals in budget planning.
2. Review the use of categorical funding received by the district and the projected carryover balances.
3. Ensure that the budget development process includes planning regarding how to allocate and spend categorical funds to achieve the goals and objectives set by the board of trustees.

Climate of Respect and Civility

There is evidence of a lack of respect and civility among both students and employees. Students are allowed to use profanity and make disparaging remarks to other students and to staff. FCMAT also witnessed employees treating each other disrespectfully during a budget workshop.

Even in difficult situations, students and employees should treat others with respect and courtesy. Staff should set positive examples for student behavior.

It appears that the district's staff and students may have become desensitized to an ongoing negative environment. The disrespectful manner in which people treat each other has become so commonplace that many students and staff appear not to recognize that it exists and do not appear to know how to change.

An atmosphere of trust, respect and civility is important to students and staff and thus should be an expectation at every organizational and operational level. If this does not occur, low student achievement and employee dissatisfaction are apt to continue.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Include an expectation and goal of respect and civility in the district's mission statement, core values, and strategic plan.
2. Establish mutual trust and respect as fundamental standards of behavior.
3. Insist that management require respect and civility toward, from and among students and staff at all times.
4. Set a positive tone and encourage teachers to teach students how to behave in class and to treat others with respect.
6. Hold students accountable for improper behavior.
7. Ask parents and the community to help students learn and demonstrate respect.
8. Ensure that all employees treat parents and members of the community with respect.

Teachers

The VVTA expressed negative feelings toward management and classified staff. The perception expressed was that there were too many administrators and too many classified employees, and that teachers were the lowest priority. Teachers do not believe that the management and classified employee groups have shared in budget reductions. Thus communication is strained.

Teachers and the community need to understand that when enrollment grows and additional classrooms are added, teachers are needed but so are support staff such as custodians, security and maintenance staff. A formula for adding classified staff would help address this concern and ensure that classified staff are added using a process that is similar to that which is used for teachers.

The relationship between the teachers and the district's administration is strained. Teachers are concerned about student discipline and feel it is a leadership issue at the sites. Teachers also expressed concern about security, maintenance and custodial services.

The need for more administrative attention to student discipline issues at the school sites has been discussed in other areas of this report. Teachers indicated that they feel strongly that clear rules, consequences for violating the rules and consistent enforcement are essential. Districtwide standards for appropriate behavior and consequences for inappropriate behavior need to be developed, with an emphasis on consistent enforcement of rules.

Recommendations

The district should

1. Meet regularly with the teachers' leadership team to discuss the budget. This should include an explanation of changes that have been made or will need to be made in management and classified areas because of increased enrollment, new classrooms and other facilities. Reductions in other classified and management staffing should also be explained.
2. Distribute a newsletter to all staff and parents about what the district is doing to address budget issues.
3. Analyze the recommendations in this report regarding comparative management and classified staffing.
4. Share with all constituents the budget reductions or staffing adjustments that will be made to management and classified employee groups.
5. Enforce student discipline and behavioral rules and ensure that enforcement is consistent for all students.

Appendix

Appendix A: Study Agreement

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
STUDY AGREEMENT
December 18, 2006

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

1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

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

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

The scope and objectives of this study are to:

1. Review and evaluate the certificated management and administrative positions and job descriptions at the school sites and the district office and compare current staffing structure, responsibility, and salary levels with schools and districts of similar size and demographics. This portion of the study must be completed in time to meet the March statutory certificated reduction in workforce deadline should staff changes be recommended.
2. Review and evaluate the classified confidential, management, and administrative positions and job descriptions at the district office and sites and compare current staffing structure, responsibility, and salary levels with other school districts of similar size and demographics.
3. Review and evaluate the classified positions and job descriptions throughout the district included within the current CSEA bargaining agreement and compare current staffing structure and contract language with other school districts of similar size and demographics.
4. If pertinent, make recommendations for staffing changes that will increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs, and/or better serve the students, employees and community of the district.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

- 1) Orientation Meeting - The Team will conduct an orientation session at the District to brief District management and supervisory personnel on the procedures of the Team and on the purpose and schedule of the study.
- 2) On-site Review - The Team will conduct an on-site review at the District office and at school sites if necessary.
- 3) Progress Reports - The Team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the on-site review to inform the District of significant findings and recommendations to that point.
- 4) Exit Letter - The Team will issue an exit letter approximately 10 days after the exit meeting detailing significant findings and recommendations to date and memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
- 5) Draft Reports - Sufficient copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the District administration for review and comment.
- 6) Final Report - Sufficient copies of the final study report will be delivered to the District following completion of the review.

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

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

- A. Michele McClowry, FCMAT Fiscal Intervention Specialist
- B. Virgil Barnes, FCMAT Consultant
- C. Two FCMAT Human Resources Consultants

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

4. PROJECT COSTS

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

- A. \$500.00 per day for each Team Member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, preparing and presenting reports, or participating in meetings.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals, lodging, etc. Based on the elements noted in section 2 A, the total cost of the study is estimated at \$10,000. The District will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon acceptance of the final report by the District

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

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

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT

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

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

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

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

Orientation: January 22, 2007

Certificated & Management schedule

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Staff Interviews: | January 22-23, 2007 |
| Exit Interviews: | January 23, 2007 |
| Preliminary Report Submitted | (Estimated) February 27, 2007 |
| Final Report Submitted | To be determined |
| Board Presentation | To be determined |

Classified Confidential, Management, & Administrative positions; and classified positions, job descriptions and staffing structure and contract language comparisons schedule

Staff Interviews: To be determined

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Exit Interviews: | To be determined |
| Preliminary Report Submitted | To be determined |
| Final Report Submitted | To be determined |
| Board Presentation | To be determined |

7. CONTACT PERSON

Please print name of contact person: Julian P Weaver, Superintendent

Telephone 760 955-3201, ext 202 FAX 760 245-4634

Internet Address Jweaver@vvuhsd.org

Julian P. Weaver 1/29/07
Julian P. Weaver, Superintendent Date
Victor Valley Union High School District

Barbara Dean 2/1/07
Barbara Dean, Deputy Administrative Officer Date
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

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