



**CSIS** California School Information Services

# Contra Costa County Office of Education

## Management Review

October 2, 2013

**Joel D. Montero**  
Chief Executive Officer







CSIS California School Information Services

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October 2, 2013

Joseph A. Ovick, Ed.D., Superintendent  
Contra Costa County Office of Education  
77 Santa Barbara Road  
Pleasant Hill, California 94523

Dear Superintendent Ovick,

In March 2013 month, the Contra Costa County Office of Education and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement to provide a review of the county office's business, technology and human resources organization, staffing and workflow as they relate to a recent conversion to a new financial system. Specifically, the agreement states that FCMAT will perform the following:

1. Review the organization and staffing of the county's district payroll services, accounting services, district business services operations, technology, and human resources department. The review will include classified and management-level employees that perform business-related functions and a review of all related job descriptions as it relates to the system conversion.
2. Review job descriptions for district payroll services, accounting services, district business services, technology, and human resources department positions as it relates to the system conversion, interview staff and make recommendations for staff additions or reductions, if any. All recommendations will include estimated and calculated values for any proposed position reductions or enhancements to the organizational structure.
3. Review the current work flow and distribution of functions for all district payroll services, accounting services, district business services, technology, and human resources department positions as it relates to the system conversion, and make recommendations for improved efficiency. This will involve reviewing documentation, including policies and procedures, and gathering data regarding current practices, procedures and separation of duties. Additionally, the team may interview other staff to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of services delivered.
4. Review how help desk technical support is provided to internal and external users of the newly implemented financial system, and make recommendations for

**FCMAT**

Joel D. Montero, Chief Executive Officer

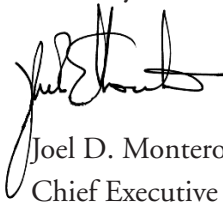
1300 17<sup>th</sup> Street - CITY CENTRE, Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533 • Telephone 661-636-4611 • Fax 661-636-4647  
755 Baywood Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Petaluma, CA 94954 • Telephone: 707-775-2850 • Fax: 707-636-4647 • [www.fcmat.org](http://www.fcmat.org)  
Administrative Agent: Christine L. Frazier - Office of Kern County Superintendent of Schools

improving service, organization, and efficiency. The team will interview both the help desk staff and internal and external users receiving services.

5. Review the staffing, support and organization for delivery of information technology support services relative to supporting the new financial system and make recommendations for improvement with a focus on:
  - a. All information technology positions that support the financial system operations
  - b. The quality and timeliness of delivery of services to internal users, comparing pre and post financial implementation levels

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations in the above areas of review. FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the Contra Costa County Office of Education and extends thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,



Joel D. Montero  
Chief Executive Officer

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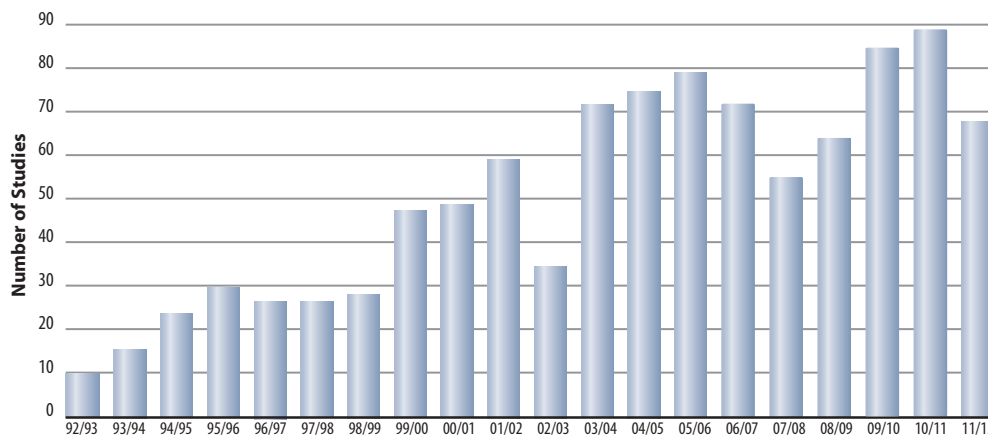
# About FCMAT

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 offices 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 Contra Costa County Office of Education (county office) is located in Northern California and serves approximately 170,000 students in 18 school districts. The county superintendent of schools and staff provide special education programs, supplemental programs, budget oversight and technical support to local school districts and charter schools.

In March 2013 the county office requested that FCMAT assess the impact of migrating from a financial management software system housed, maintained and supported by the Contra Costa Community College District to a new financial management software system housed, maintained and supported by the county office and 15 of the county's 18 districts. Specifically, the study agreement states that FCMAT will complete the following:

1. Review the organization and staffing of the county's district payroll services, accounting services, district business services operations, technology, and human resources department. The review will include classified and management-level employees that perform business-related functions and a review of all related job descriptions as it relates to the system conversion.
2. Review job descriptions for district payroll services, accounting services, district business services, technology, and human resources department positions as it relates to the system conversion, interview staff and make recommendations for staff additions or reductions, if any. All recommendations will include estimated and calculated values for any proposed position reductions or enhancements to the organizational structure.
3. Review the current work flow and distribution of functions for all district payroll services, accounting services, district business services, technology, and human resources department positions as it relates to the system conversion, and make recommendations for improved efficiency. This will involve reviewing documentation, including policies and procedures, and gathering data regarding current practices, procedures and separation of duties. Additionally, the team may interview other staff to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of services delivered.
4. Review how help desk technical support is provided to internal and external users of the newly implemented financial system, and make recommendations for improving service, organization, and efficiency. The team will interview both the help desk staff and internal and external users receiving services.
5. Review the staffing, support and organization for delivery of information technology support services relative to supporting the new financial system and make recommendations for improvement with a focus on:
  - a. All information technology positions that support the financial system operations

- b. The quality and timeliness of delivery of services to internal users, comparing pre and post financial implementation levels

## Study Guidelines

FCMAT visited the county office on June 3-5, 2013 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. Departmental Organization and Staffing, Job Descriptions and Workflow
- III. Financial System Technical Support
- IV. Summary of FCMAT Survey Results
- IV. Appendices

## Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Marisa A. Ploog, CPA, CFE, CGMA, CICA  
FCMAT Management Analyst  
Bakersfield, CA

Andrea Alvarado  
FCMAT Management Analyst  
Bakersfield, CA

Rita Beyers  
RSB Consulting  
Chula Vista, CA

Pam Viar  
FCMAT Consultant  
Sanger, CA

John Lotze  
FCMAT Technical Writer  
Bakersfield, CA

# Executive Summary

For more than two decades, the Contra Costa County Office of Education (county office) contracted with the Contra Costa Community College District, which developed, hosted and maintained a customized financial management software system sufficient for the county office and school districts. Among clients, this is nicknamed the Rumba system, after the terminal emulation software used to access the College Financial System application from desktop computers. Over time, the College Financial System continued to be modified to automate accounting functions and other basic processes, thus reducing the labor and detailed knowledge clients needed to perform these processes.

Although it used the College Financial System initially, the community college transitioned to other financial software, leaving the county office and its districts as the sole clients. To continue support for the system, the county office maintained a support contract with the community college and funded an additional liaison position employed by the county office but located at the community college. Among other duties, this position, titled District Technology Support Analyst, generated various reports required for reporting and reconciling information, such as census, taxes and retirement data, which were then used by county office and school districts' staff to complete routine budget, accounting and financial reporting duties.

Although the College Financial System was continually updated to automate processes, its command line interface (CLI) became antiquated as competing financial systems transitioned to graphical user interfaces (GUIs). GUI represents a major advance over CLI, which displays only text and is accessed solely by a keyboard, while GUI displays pictures and can use a mouse and keyboard for navigation. GUIs make software more accessible and easier to learn.

After receiving a cost estimate from the community college to upgrade the College Financial System's interface, the county office determined it would be more cost effective to convert to a different financial management software system. After multiple requests for proposals (RFPs) over a period of time, the county office decided to transition to the Tyler Technologies Munis financial software, referred to by the county office and clients as the CCCOE Financial System. The transition occurred in two phases, with seven volunteer districts converting July 1, 2011, and the nine remaining districts converting July 1, 2012. Three districts in the county continue to retain independent financial management software systems. The table below lists each agency and the dates they migrated or whether they retain an independent system.

## *Migration Schedule*

| July 1, 2011 Transition                 | July 1, 2012 Transition              | Independent System                       |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Acalanes Union High School District     | Antioch Unified School District      | Mount Diablo Unified School District     |
| Brentwood Union School District         | Byron Union School District          | San Ramon Valley Unified School District |
| Contra Costa County Office of Education | Canyon Elementary School             | West Contra Costa Unified                |
| Lafayette School District               | John Swett Unified School District   |  |
| Martinez Unified School District        | Knightsen Elementary School District |  |
| Oakley Union Elementary School District | Liberty Union High School District   |  |
| Pittsburg Unified School District       | Moraga School District               |  |
|   | Orinda Union School District         |  |
|   | Walnut Creek School District         |  |

In addition, over the last seven years the county office has undergone organizationwide change in its staffing and reporting structure, though not due solely to the migration of the new financial system software. The state's economic downturn and ongoing demands on financial resources also contributed to the county office's focused reduction in workforce to ensure ongoing fiscal stability. Although a financial assessment of the county office's financial system was not within the scope of work for this review, the county office reported that it has experienced a reduction of approximately 50% in operating costs, attributable to the new financial system software migration, and this level of reduction is expected to be ongoing; this has further supported the county office's efforts to reduce expenditures.

The College Financial System was used for many years and was modified to meet the operational needs of the county office and districts during that time. Migrating to any new financial system requires this same work, though the extent of work will depend on the functionality of the system selected. In addition, moving to the CCCOE financial software system required the county office to change from being a client of a financial system supported by an outside organization to being the host of the system and provider of the related services. Although there are many advantages to this, it includes new roles and responsibilities for county office staff that require more time, such as identifying solutions to system limitations and providing client support.

Migrating to a new financial system can result in long-term increased efficiency; however, many factors can adversely affect efficiency in the short term. Learning how to navigate in a new system can be time-consuming for even the most technologically proficient users. The additional time needed to learn routine tasks will vary by user but should diminish over time. Some tasks may require more or fewer steps to complete than before, and thus may take more time or improve efficiency. In interviews and on FCMAT's survey, county office staff and client districts acknowledged experiencing both.

FCMAT conducted a survey to obtain feedback regarding the migration experience and system support from users within the county office and external district clients. Most users viewed the CCCOE Financial System positively and identified many favorable changes. Survey responses indicated that 82% of users agree that the the CCCOE Financial System is quick, efficient and responsive. The most favorable attribute of the system is that financial transactions now post to the system immediately rather than taking 24 hours, which allows staff to view financial information in real time. The ability to proceed with tasks immediately after a transaction has been posted or a change has been made is a significant benefit to users countywide.

Sixty-six percent of survey respondents somewhat agreed or agreed that the financial system operates efficiently and provides the information they need. The biggest criticism reported by users is the lack of standardized reports that meet their needs, a circumstance that would have likely occurred with any software choice because many of the reports available in the former system were developed gradually over the life of the system.

Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents reported that the support provided by the county office on the new CCCOE Financial System has improved or greatly improved over that received while working in the former College Financial System, and 73% of respondents somewhat agreed or agreed that the support staff work in a cohesive well-organized manner. Processes and procedures for requesting assistance are clearly defined and communicated by the county office. In addition, 94% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that initial contact from support staff is timely, and 89% somewhat agreed or agreed that issues are resolved in a timely manner. These efforts

can be further enhanced by ensuring the consistency of guidance routinely provided by subject experts and the helpdesk support staff.

In the area of professional development, 70% of survey respondents somewhat agreed or agreed that they have access to professional development that enables them to use the CCCOE Financial System efficiently, and 79% somewhat agreed or agreed that they are encouraged to participate in CCCOE Financial System professional development to improve their skills and efficiency.

Greater detail regarding questions solicited in FCMAT's survey and summarized results are provided beginning on page 47.

As should be expected with a project of this magnitude, deficiencies were also identified during FCMAT's fieldwork. Some of these are system limitations, and others are the result of how the system was implemented to meet the needs of multiple agencies. Because assessment of the CCCOE Financial System's functionality is outside FCMAT's scope of work, issues staff members reported have not been independently tested or verified and should serve as information for further investigation.

Throughout FCMAT's fieldwork, users and clients provided considerable feedback related to the migration process and the ability of county office staff to provide support to clients during that transition. Details of this feedback are provided in the report, and where noted are based on multiple reports, observations and independent verification.



# Findings and Recommendations

## Departmental Organization and Staffing, Job Descriptions and Workflow

FCMAT interviewed staff members in the business and administrative services, human resources, and technology systems departments whom the associate superintendent of business and administrative services identified and who use the CCCOE Financial System for routine duties and assignments. FCMAT also had staff members complete individual task lists identifying routine duties they perform, and used these lists as well as information obtained during staff interviews and subsequent follow-up to review the duties listed in the job descriptions for each position.

### Business and Administrative Services

Changes in the organizational structure resulted in fewer positions in the business and administrative services department. Since July 2006, the county office has reduced the levels of administration in this department by eliminating two director positions supporting county office and district business activities and created a single controller, business operations position. This position reports directly to the associate superintendent, business and administrative services position, formerly titled deputy superintendent business and administrative services. One of the two division project specialist positions, each of which supported one director position under the former structure, was eliminated and a new district financial systems support manager position was created; this position reports directly to the associate superintendent, business and administrative services. The second division project specialist position was retained and reports to the new controller, business operations position. The table below shows the changes in the administrative structure.

#### *Business and Administrative Services Administrative Structure*

| July 2006  | May 2013  |
|--|---|
| Deputy Superintendent Business & Administrative Services | Associate Superintendent Business & Administrative Services |
| Director II District Business Services<br>(1)            | Controller, Business Operations<br>(1)                      |
| Director II Administrative Business Services<br>(1)      |   |
|  | District Financial Systems Support Manager<br>(1)           |
| Division Project Specialist<br>(2)                       | Division Project Specialist<br>(1)                          |

While under a service/support contract with the community college for the College Financial System, the county office funded and employed a liaison position of district technology support analyst, located at the community college. This position’s duties included generating various reports required for reporting and reconciling information, such as census, taxes and retirement data. County office and school districts’ staff used these reports to complete routine budget, accounting and reporting duties.

This position is not listed in any of the county office's organizational charts provided to FCMAT depicting staffing changes before and after the change to the new financial system. Staff members throughout the county office's business and administrative services department absorbed many of these duties, expanding their roles and responsibilities in many areas.

### **District Financial Systems Support Manager**

The job description states that this manager serves as a technical advisor and resource to county office departments and county school districts in areas related to the financial system technology; trains and supports users on various software applications and data queries; prepares operating instructions and procedures; updates user manuals; develops and supports system implementation projects; and sponsors and supports the development of user groups. The district financial systems support manager's task list indicates that routine tasks are consistent with those identified in the job description.

Feedback received through interviews and FCMAT surveys indicates that some district and county staff perceive the district financial systems support manager position as an agent of the new CCCOE Financial System software vendor rather than as employee of the county office. Interviewees indicated that some staff feel they are receiving a sales pitch when trainings are conducted, and that there is a defensive posturing regarding the software rather than attempts to resolve issues, and that open dialogue is suppressed rather than promoted during user group meetings.

Although currently assigned to the business and administrative services department, the district financial systems support manager position performs duties that more closely align with the technology systems department. This position was created to document, track and submit enhancements and modifications and plan trainings. Currently, the position focuses on enhancements, modifications, help desk assistance, running queries, training human resources users, and developing a statewide user group. Interviews indicated this position also travels to other potential software vendor clients to act as a reference on behalf of the county office. Because of this individual's extensive background knowledge of the system due to prior work experience with the software vendor, refocusing this position to meet internal transitional needs could better aid the county office's transition.

As its essential functions and tasks indicate, this position primarily provides support on the technical aspects of the CCCOE Financial System, with an emphasis on ensuring that districts and departments are supported during the system's implementation. Such support should be closely coordinated with the technology systems department. Reassigning the position to the technology systems department would help ensure that the coordination is as efficient and effective as possible. As the transition to the new financial system stabilizes and districts and departments become more efficient in its use, this position's job responsibilities will need to be assessed to determine a new role for the position or whether it is still needed.

### **Recommendation**

*The district should:*

1. Reassign the district financial systems support manager position to technology systems department and refocus the duties of the position to meet internal needs related to the transition to the new financial system. After the transition has stabilized, reevaluate the duties to determine a new role for the position or if it is needed.



## District Payroll Services

The district payroll services (DPS) department provides services, supports and assists the county office, 18 school districts and nine charter schools with payroll and retirement reporting.

The DPS department's responsibilities include the following:

- Serving as the liaison between county auditor/treasurer personnel and district personnel
- Assisting with payroll calculations, adjustments and processing
- Paying and reporting state and federal payroll taxes
- Preparing W-2s, worker's compensation payments, and abatements
- Auditing and processing State Teachers' and Public Employees' Retirement Systems (STRS and PERS) reports
- Auditing and processing payment and reporting of state unemployment insurance;
- Processing wage garnishments (IRS levy, Franchise Tax Board, Child Support)
- Establishing the payroll calendar;
- Processing Automatic Clearing House (ACH) direct deposits
- Distributing payroll warrants and payroll reports

The department is currently staffed by a supervisor, a payroll audit specialist, and four payroll audit technicians.

The supervisor was promoted to the position approximately six months ago from a payroll technician position in the same department. The job description for this position states that the supervisor will organize and direct the department's operations.

The county office evaluated the payroll audit technician positions and approved them for reclassification as payroll audit specialists effective July 1, 2013. This moved them from step 19 to step 22 on the classified employees' salary schedule. The key differences between the technician and specialist job descriptions are the preparation and analyses of complex issues and reports.

At the time of FCMAT's fieldwork, the DPS department was under the leadership of a supervisor, district payroll services and staffed by a payroll audit specialist and four payroll audit technicians. Since 2006, there have been times when positions in the DPS department were vacated, leaving the department with four staff: a payroll audit specialist and three payroll audit technicians. Two new technicians began work in spring 2013, bringing the total number of department members to six.

Although not indicated on either organizational chart provided by the county office, sometime between 2006 and 2013 the DPS department was under the leadership of a DPS manager.

The following table compares DPS department staffing as of May 2013, before the financial system change, with staffing as of July 2013 after the change.

*DPS Department Staffing*

| July 2006   | May 2013   |
|---|--|
| <b>Deputy Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> | <b>Associate Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> |
| Director II District Business Services<br>(1)                           | Controller, Business Operations<br>(1)                                     |
| Division Project Specialist<br>(1)                                      | **   |
| District Support Analyst<br>(1)   |  |
| Supervisor, DPS<br>(1)  | Supervisor, District Payroll Services<br>(1)                               |
| Payroll Audit Specialist<br>(1)   | Payroll Audit Specialist<br>(1)  |
| Payroll Audit Technician-Districts<br>(4)                               | Payroll Audit Technician<br>(4)*   |
| Office Assistant III<br>(1)   |  |

\*Position reclassified to payroll audit specialist effective July 2013

\*\* Two division project specialist positions reduced to one. Also created new district financial systems support manager position, which reports directly to the associate superintendent, business and administrative services.

Additional changes in the DPS department's staffing and reporting structure included eliminating a district support analyst position and an office assistant III position.

Staff members identified the following tasks as the most time consuming for both the supervisor and the specialists: audit, research, balance, adjust and transmit STRS and PERS monthly retirement; audit, analyze, balance, reconcile and prepare quarterly (form 941) taxes for school districts and charter schools; create, sort, and distribute reports and paychecks for each payroll; and create, balance, reconcile and transmit Employment Development Department (EDD) quarterly reports for school districts. The department processes approximately 150,000 warrants for the county office and school districts each year.

In addition to these tasks, the department task lists included the following as regular assignments:

- Support district staff in resolving problems and issues
- Process various requests for financial corrections and adjustments (e.g., FICA, Medical)
- Balance, reconcile and transmit payroll taxes
- Prepare and download tax reports
- Upload, download and process ACH, and notify districts of changes
- Process workers' compensation tax abatements to employees
- Serve as liaison between the county office, districts, and external agencies;
- Create, analyze, audit, balance and reconcile W-2s.

At the time of the FCMAT fieldwork, The DPS supervisor had been in the position for approximately six months. In interviews, employees indicated that supervision of the department and its employees is shared by this position and the county office controller as a means of ensuring a smooth leadership transition. The supervisor's task list includes work similar to that done by the specialist and technicians. As the department leader, the supervisor needs to adhere more strictly to the duties of the job description, particularly in overseeing and auditing the work the technicians perform.

Consistent with interviews with many county office employees, DPS department staff commented that, with the migration to the CCCOE Financial system, they have taken on tasks and responsibilities previously performed by the community college's staff. DPS department staff indicated that they used to audit and review reports created by the community college but must now also create the reports. During the transition this required additional time to determine which data needed to be queried for reports, and how to access that data in the necessary format in the CCCOE Financial System. This included assessing the report formats in the system to determine if one or more of them contained necessary data. In many cases this was a complex task that required the assistance of technology systems staff. This exercise also increased the time needed to train and support district staff to complete these same tasks.

In the February 2013 DPS update, users in client districts were encouraged to seek assistance through the technology systems department's help desk, which provides customer service to the districts' staff. However, DPS staff continue to receive and respond to telephone calls and emails from district personnel regarding the CCCOE Financial System. Staff indicated that questions regarding routine tasks have begun to subside and callers tend to ask about unusual issues and new or infrequent processes. When technology systems staff provide assistance, a copy of the response is sent to the DPS supervisor.

Interviews with staff and survey results revealed a clear perception that the implementation of system components used and supported by DPS has not gone smoothly. There is a sense that for each step forward, there have been two steps backward. Some employees commented that representatives of the software vendor did not seem to understand how information should be linked in the system or what modifications would best serve a county office that supports multiple districts. For example, both base compensation and special compensation set up on the employee's primary screen are not linked; as a result, when DPS runs compensation reports, the special compensation is not automatically included and DPS staff must take extra steps to do so.

In addition, DPS is still unable to submit their Employment Development Department (EDD) reports using extensible markup language (XML), the method preferred by the state, so EDD reports are submitted in text format; this is not optimal but has been accepted by the state because the CCCOE Financial System cannot transmit XML. The CCCOE Financial System software vendor is aware of this problem and has been working on a solution.

ACH direct deposits cannot be automatically transferred to the financial institution because the CCCOE Financial System does not interface with the financial institution system. To submit ACH deposits, DPS staff upload the direct deposit file for each district, view the transmissions for accuracy, download and add all the districts together, and then send the transfer letter to the auditors.

Several workarounds have been implemented that either worked temporarily or require extensive work from the DPS employees to be used successfully. Some of the workarounds require DPS staff to extract data from each individual district. Others are a result of the CCCOE Financial

System's inability to interface with outside systems. Best practice is to identify the work required, the results needed, and work closely with the technology systems department and the system consultant to ensure that processes, including workarounds, are the most efficient possible.

Another key issue is that when the DPS department receives error reports from outside agencies, the reports often provide only the name of the employee for whom there is an error. The absence of additional identifiers, such as the local educational agency (LEA) of employment, forces the specialists to identify which agency must make the correction. This is inefficient and time-consuming.

The workaround created by technology systems provides DPS with limited searchable information, but reportedly the data is not kept up to date so the workaround is no longer a solution. DPS staff were not sure if this workaround was intended to be a temporary or permanent solution, and they have not informed the technology systems department that it is not working. Clear communication between the two departments would ensure that there is a continued focus and routine follow-up on unresolved issues and that continued efforts to identify satisfactory permanent solutions remain a priority.

Implementation was also made more challenging because the software vendor provided at least three different trainers before the current trainer, a retired supervisor of finance, was assigned to the DPS department. The DPS staff indicated that this trainer is well versed in California requirements and the assistance provided has been invaluable in moving the department's implementation forward.

The DPS department provided FCMAT with a chart of ten of the payroll audit specialist position's duties and contrasted the processes for performing these tasks in the College Financial System with those in the CCCOE Financial System. For seven of the 10 duties, the CCCOE Financial System requires the specialists to extract information by logging into each individual district's database, 16 in all, to compile one report or complete one process. In five of those seven assignments, the districts' databases must be entered and/or researched several times to complete the assignment accurately.

Sample process directions provided to FCMAT verified the existence of processes that must be repeated for each of 16 districts. DPS staff generally find that there are more manual processes when using the CCCOE Financial System than there were with the former College Financial System. Staff indicated that the amount of manual work required has resulted in overtime almost daily. The system's limitations in this area have created inefficiencies and increased costs.

Staff acknowledged that the technology systems department has worked with DPS department staff to streamline some processes; however, problems remain and some processes still take days to complete. Technology systems staff indicated that the payroll workarounds and enhancements are essentially complete; however, DPS staff indicate that additional improvements are essential to the efficiency of their work.

Staff indicated that sometimes the workarounds or enhancements that the DPS staff need or want are not possible because of the limitations of the CCCOE Financial System, so they cannot be implemented. Thus help desk tickets for these issues may be closed even though issues remain with the CCCOE system.

Interviews with staff and feedback obtained through FCMAT surveys indicate a widely held perception that the DPS department lacks the necessary technical knowledge or that it has received insufficient professional development training, and this may have contributed to the issues with implementation in this area. FCMAT interviews indicated that users sometimes tried

to use their old processes in the new system and attempted to create workarounds rather than adjusting to new ways of processing data and creating reports. Providing routine professional development and user training on navigating within and accessing data from a new financial system provides employees and clients with the best support to help them develop technology skills and helps ensure that they are using the CCCOE Financial System in the most efficient and effective way.

Employees acknowledged that although the former College Financial System made it easy to access reports that only needed to be reviewed prior to use, the CCCOE Financial System allows them to have a greater understanding of the origin of the data presented and thus employees have increased confidence in the information used in their calculations or reports. DPS department staff are pleased that they can run reports and review data in real time rather than waiting for reports or data that is hours or days old. The DPS department has also received feedback from districts that although the processes are more manual, they like being able to review their data and set up inquiries as they see fit.

FCMAT's survey of the county office's client districts reveals that they have concerns about the level of support available from the DPS department and the functionality of the CCCOE Financial System. Some of the districts' concerns mirror those of DPS department employees, including concerns that transactions are more complicated and time-consuming, and that districts are required to run processes that were previously done automatically for them by the College Financial System or by community college staff. Survey responses also indicated that districts' employees questioned whether the DPS department staff had sufficient technical ability or professional development training to adequately respond to questions regarding procedures for using the CCCOE system effectively. Several respondents indicated that DPS department staff have had to learn the system along with the districts and that their guidance does not always provide the best or most efficient way to use the system.

County office staff need to receive technical training focused on navigating within the CCCOE Financial System to complete routine tasks without requiring workarounds or enhancements.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Continue providing leadership development for the new supervisor. Ensure that this position assumes oversight of processes, establishes effective procedures, supports training of DPS employees, and leads the department in becoming the county experts in the CCCOE Financial System.
2. Identify and establish a plan to resolve the DPS department's issues with the CCCOE Financial System. This plan should include resolutions for the following issues: inability to submit EDD reports in XML format; identifying the LEA associated with each payroll error report; and transmitting ACH direct deposit data to financial institutions.
3. Document the enhancements and workarounds the DPS department staff are requesting and determine the feasibility and necessity of each request.
4. Establish regular communication between the DPS and technology systems departments regarding the status of help desk tickets. If tickets are closed

because of system limitations, determine how technology systems staff can best support DPS within the limits of the system.

5. Assess the technical skills of DPS department staff and establish an ongoing training program to increase each employee's technical knowledge and expertise.
6. Provide department employees with training designed to develop and expand the knowledge and skills needed to support district payroll offices.

## Accounting Support Services

The accounting support services department provides payroll, accounts payable (A/P), accounts receivable (A/R), attendance reporting and travel and conference reimbursements for the county office. The department is led by a supervisor who manages three positions that are responsible for processing payroll for approximately 760-800 county office employees, and three additional positions that responsible for accounting duties associated with A/R and A/P processing. One of the three payroll positions was vacant at the time of FCMAT's fieldwork.

The table below compares accounting support services department staffing before and after the change to the CCCOE Financial System.

### *Accounting Support Services Staffing*

| Accounting Services<br>July 2006                            | Accounting Support Services<br>May 2013                        |
|---|--|
| Deputy Superintendent<br>Business & Administrative Services | Associate Superintendent<br>Business & Administrative Services |
| Director II<br>Administrative Business Services<br>(1)      | Controller, Business Operations<br>(1)                         |
| Division Project Specialist<br>(1)                          | **   |
| Transportation Technician<br>(1)                            | Moved under General Services                                   |
| Supervisor, Accounting Services<br>(1)                      | Accounting Services Supervisor<br>(1)                          |
| Payroll Technician Classified<br>(1)                        |  |
| Payroll Technician Certificated<br>(1)                      | Payroll Technician<br>(3)                                      |
| Payroll Technician<br>(1)                                   |  |
| Accounting Specialist I<br>(1)                              | Accounting Specialist I<br>(1)                                 |
| Accounting Specialist II<br>(1)                             |  |
| Senior Accounting Assistant<br>(2)                          | Senior Accounting Assistant<br>(2)                             |
| Accounting Assistant<br>(1)                                 |  |

\*\* Two Division Project Specialist positions reduced to one.

Also created new District Financial Systems Support Manager position - reports directly to Associate Superintendent

Restructuring of the accounting support services department between July 2006 and May of 2013 resulted in the elimination and/or reassignment of three positions: the transportation technician position was reassigned to the general services department, and the accounting specialist II and accounting assistant positions were eliminated.

In addition to providing direction and support to the department, the supervisor is responsible for preparing all contracts including those for construction, rents, leases, budget management agreements and purchase orders. The job description for supervisor, accounting services states that this position is responsible for organizing and directing the daily operations and activities of designated funds and accounts including payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable and attendance accounting, and for coordinating, overseeing and participating in the preparation, maintenance and auditing of a variety of financial and statistical records, statements and reports.

With regard to the new CCCOE Financial System, the supervisor described her job as reassuring and supporting the department's employees and assisting them as they learned to do their jobs differently. When the supervisor needs assistance with the CCCOE Financial System, she will either go through the technology systems help desk or consult with district business services. Because the technology staff who support the help desk frequently consult with district business services staff when working the supervisor's issues, it is often faster for her to work with district business services directly. In addition to the supervisor, the department is staffed by two payroll technicians, an accounting specialist and two senior accounting assistants. One vacant payroll technician position is on hold, and one of the senior accounting assistants is being paid out of class to do this work. The July 2006 organizational chart indicates that the department was previously staffed by a supervisor, three payroll technicians, an accounting specialist I, an accounting specialist II, two senior accounting assistants, and an accounting assistant. The accounting assistant's primary responsibility was manual data entry. Once the CCCOE Financial System was implemented, the individual in that position was transferred to another department and the position was eliminated.

During the migration process to the new CCCOE Financial System, the accounting support services department reviewed and revised its policies, procedures and practices. Although this was initially more work, the result is that the system is working for them and they are able to be productive. This is particularly true for the department's accounting staff.

### **Payroll Services**

Before the migration to the CCCOE Financial System, the county office ran two payrolls each month. Although the system has no limit on the number of payrolls that can be run, the county office currently runs only one payroll per month and processes emergency pay checks as needed. The two payroll technicians are responsible for processing payroll for certificated and classified employees. Several staff reported that processing payroll in the CCCOE Financial System differs significantly from the former College Financial System and that balancing and reconciliation activities require more time.

The payroll technicians' job description lists the basic functions as performing a variety of technical accounting duties in preparing and maintaining the county office payroll; ensuring that employees are paid accurately and on time; and assisting employees with various payroll-related issues.

Employees indicated that, in addition to the responsibilities noted above, the payroll technicians are now responsible for accounting related to health and welfare benefits including health

benefits, life insurance and voluntary deductions such as 403B tax shelter annuities. This was previously the responsibility of accounts payable staff.

Completing this work requires additional verifications and reconciliations, and the added responsibility has affected the two technicians' ability to effectively produce the county office's monthly payroll. The department is further affected by the vacancy in the third payroll technician position, which remained unfilled at the time of FCMAT's fieldwork. Because of this, one of the senior accounting technicians is working out of class to ensure that payroll is completed timely and accurately.

The technicians work closely with a technician from the human resources department, which is responsible for the initial entry of employee information in to the system. Payroll services then verifies account strings, salary schedule placement, voluntary deductions, bank direct deposit and tax information.

Absence tracking is managed by human resources; however, if an employee uses more leave than they have accrued, payroll services prepares the deduction calculations. Employees expressed concern that there is not a good process for calculating the pay differential for absent teachers, such as when a six-hour-per-day teacher is absent and the substitute only works four hours. Education Code 44977(a) states that when an employee in a certificated position is on extended sick leave, the amount deducted from their salary cannot exceed the sum paid to a substitute. Best practice is to ensure that the calculations for differential pay are supported by documentation that identifies substitute payments, and for any differences to be clearly recorded in the calculation documents.

Staff indicated that the payroll services staff find it challenging to access all the information needed from the CCCOE Financial System to correctly run, monitor and audit payroll without extensive work by the technicians. For example, some fields do not export correctly, so the technicians do a two-step export to retrieve data and then use Microsoft Access or Vlookups (a Microsoft Excel process) to get all data into the proper format that can be reviewed. The technicians have resorted to exporting detailed employee data from the financial system into external software applications to look up job class and location codes when needed because they are unable to easily access this data directly from the CCCOE Financial System in a simplified manner. However only one employee has the technical expertise to maintain and update these tools; as a result, the department is at risk of reduced efficiency if that employee is absent or terminates employment. In addition, employees indicated that the workarounds developed to reduce the payroll technician's workload are not shared with the county's school districts or employees in DPS department.

In other instances, custom reports that technology systems staff develop using Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) to access past earnings and deductions data for employees lack important detailed information such as warrant numbers and check dates. SSRS reports need to include all details to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

Another frustration interviewees reported is that the CCOE Financial System does not allow users to view more than one screen at a time, making research more time consuming. Staff also described a significant challenge related to the process for running payroll. When payroll is finalized and ready to run, the technicians receive a general ledger error report. Payroll cannot be processed until all general ledger errors are fixed, so the technicians attempt to resolve all errors by researching them one by one. If they cannot resolve an issue, they place the error in a holding



account and the program accountants in the budgeting and accounting department research the issue and make corrective entries after payroll is run.

Staff in the budgeting and accounting department agreed that this process is cumbersome and time-consuming. In addition, they are concerned that this affects the encumbrance data used for projecting salary and benefit budget balances, and that as a result this data is not always accurate and must be reviewed and corrected monthly. This is made more difficult because the program accountants do not have access to payroll history or position control, which is necessary to effectively conduct research. During FCMAT's fieldwork, staff expressed interest in allowing the program accountants access to payroll history and view-only access to position control.

The payroll technicians provided FCMAT with a chart of 37 tasks that changed or were added with the move to the CCCOE Financial System. Seventeen of these tasks are new assignments for which payroll services was not previously responsible, including generating a monthly payroll, maintaining bank codes, authoring tutorials, building form definitions to allow importing of Microsoft Excel files, and using Microsoft Access reports.

None of the remaining 20 tasks were streamlined by the CCCOE Financial System. These tasks include developing step/longevity reports, issuing emergency and retroactive checks, and developing quarterly reports. The challenges and frustrations expressed to FCMAT indicate that although some reports have been developed to meet the payroll technicians' needs, their absence in other areas prevents optimal operational efficiency.

Although some county office employees have the perception that the payroll services department was minimally affected by the implementation of the CCCOE Financial System, the department's implementation of the system has been supported by the workarounds created and maintained by a staff member possessing advanced computer skills and a background in computer science engineering. This includes the creation of several specialized tools outside of the financial system to facilitate the technicians' work, which was not required with the previous system. Individuals interviewed indicated the perception that although the technology systems department would prefer that all workarounds to the system be created using Microsoft Excel, some payroll work is done more efficiently in Microsoft Access. As a result, only the technician who developed the workarounds has knowledge of the programming done in Microsoft Access.

When systems are developed and supported by one individual who alone possesses the knowledge and experience needed to maintain them, an organization's operations and efficiency are at risk; both will be adversely affected if that employee leaves the county office's employment or is on leave for an extended time. It is best practice to document each process for updating and maintaining these systems and cross-train at least one additional staff member in the steps needed to maintain the systems to ensure that they remain functional in the absence of the staff member who created them.

Some of the Microsoft Access programs developed are used to do the following:

- Balance employee benefits
- Balance unemployment insurance (UI) deductions
- Generate longevity pay for extended year and extra hours
- Pay staff development day earnings
- Create batches for timesheets for substitutes, hourly employees, and student workers

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) have also been created for processes such as finalizing payrolls.

In addition to the Microsoft Access programs, the technician routinely updates and maintains Microsoft Excel calculation worksheets, compatible with the CCCOE Financial System of pay types and coding, for tasks such as early terms, late starts, out of class, wage garnishment, disposable income, State Disability Insurance (SDI) docks, and SDI integration.

Employees indicated that the technicians requested an enhancement to the CCCOE Financial System through the district financial systems support manager approximately two months prior to FCMAT's fieldwork, but at the time of fieldwork had not received feedback regarding its possible implementation.

If the technicians need help with the CCCOE Financial System they can contact technology systems or meet with other districts' payroll employees to share ideas, but most often they try to resolve the issue themselves. Staff reported that budget constraints have prevented staff from attending external trainings.

## Accounting

Three employees are assigned to the accounting section of the accounting support services department: one accounting specialist I and two senior accounting assistants. Their work focuses mainly on the county office's accounts payable and receivable. Employees indicated that the CCCOE Financial System, particularly the accounts receivable module, is more user-friendly and customer service oriented than the College Financial System, and cited its ability to provide real-time data, its increased ability to research data and locate data quickly, its simplified invoicing, its ability to generate specialized reports in real time, the amount of detail it makes available, and the control each employee has over the system.

The accounting specialist I position's main responsibilities include creating invoices for vendors, late fees, outstanding balances, rents, and STRS billing; managing the petty cash account; monitoring and managing taxes including State Board of Equalization and out-of-state withholding taxes; and collecting and summarizing average daily attendance (ADA) for 19 LEAs including the county office. This position is also responsible for creating and maintaining all accounts receivable codes, charge codes for general billing, generating accounts receivable reports, and training districts' staff in use of the CCCOE Financial System's accounts receivable and general billing modules. The job description for the accounting specialist I position lists the following key responsibilities:

- Perform a variety of specialized accounting duties in support of assigned County Office accounts, funds, budgets and functions;
- Review analyze, maintain and adjust assigned funds, budgets and accounts;
- Prepare, audit reconcile and maintain a variety of financial and statistical records, reports and statements.

The accounting specialist I's current assignments fit this job description.

The job description for the senior accounting assistant position lists its main responsibilities as performing a variety of complex clerical accounting duties in support of assigned accounts and functions such as accounts payable, accounts receivable and purchasing; and preparing and maintaining a variety of financial and statistical records and reports. The major tasks of the senior accounting assistants fit this job description.

Staff indicated that the senior account assistants' main duties are responsibility for the county office credit cards and the charges made by card users; disbursing vendor checks; monitoring and auditing vendor checks; monitoring and auditing district employee travel; keying in STRS and PERS payments; and balancing mini-batches to maintain accuracy when closing accounts payable batches biweekly.

The senior accounting assistants also reportedly have the ability to void and maintain checks in the CCCOE Financial System. Before this system was implemented, the district business services department had this responsibility. The senior accounting assistants also have the authority to override the system to allow payments and to manage overpayments. Staff indicated that the senior accounting assistants are not required to notify someone if they override the system. Thus in this area the county office lacks a reliable system of checks and balances that segregates duties to ensure that at least one individual involved in a process will identify and/or prevent error, misappropriation or fraud from occurring.

One significant change that the CCCOE Financial System brought to accounts payable is the way district credit card charges are processed. In the past, charges were entered manually into the accounts payable system. Now, they are imported directly from the financial institution, which eliminates manual entry and increases efficiency. This has allowed the department to expand the allowable use of credit cards for travel and conference expenditures, reducing the need for travel advances and other such items.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Fill the vacant payroll technician position.
2. Develop a standard operating procedure for calculating pay differentials that ensures the county meets the requirements of Education Code 44977(a).
3. Explore options that increase the capability to look up job class and location codes, and identify options for streamlining the 20 tasks in the list provided by the payroll technicians.
4. Develop a support system for the Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel tools developed by the payroll technician. Ensure this support includes written SOPs for updating and maintaining each system and cross-training of at least one additional staff member. Ensure that these tools are maintained for maximum department effectiveness.
5. Establish a communication system to ensure that information about enhancements and SSRS requests is provided to all employees who need or could benefit from this information.
6. Research the viability and cost benefit of updating SSRS reports to include the details needed to complete essential payroll audit tasks.
7. Give program accountants access to payroll history and view-only access to position control screens.

8. Ensure that there are sufficient protections, including a review and/or approval process, for system overrides and issuing or voiding of checks.

## Purchasing

The purchasing department is responsible for the centralized procurement of supplies and equipment, in compliance with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws governing school district purchasing. Obtaining bids to secure the best price and ensuring consistent quality in products and services are essential to maximizing the county office's purchasing power.

The department is under the direction of the controller, business operations, and includes two purchasing technicians, a purchasing assistant and an office assistant II position. These employees complete routine purchasing operations for the entire county office. Their duties include receiving and reviewing for accuracy and approval hard copy requisitions; entering data into the CCCOE Financial System and creating each purchase order; printing and distributing copies of each purchase order; and acknowledging receipt of items in the CCCOE Financial System to support accounts payable staff members' payments of invoices.

Under the previous organizational structure, staff members in the purchasing department were under the direction of the director II general services/facilities planning. No changes were indicated other than the change in leadership. The table below compares the department's staffing before and after the change to the CCCOE Financial System.

### *Purchasing Department Staffing*

| July 2006   | May 2013   |
|---|--|
| <b>Deputy Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> | <b>Associate Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> |
| Director II<br>General Services / Facilities Planning<br>(1)            | Controller, Business Operations<br>(1)                                     |
| Purchasing Technician<br>(2)  | Purchasing Technician<br>(2)   |
| Purchasing Assistant II<br>(1)  | Purchasing Assistant II<br>(1)   |
| Office Assistant II<br>(1)  | Office Assistant II<br>(1)   |

Staff indicated that each position in the purchasing department is focused on a concentrated area of work. One of the two purchasing technician positions is responsible for processing approximately 95% of the purchase orders and 98% of procurement card (ProCard) purchases, while the second position manages contracts, newspaper notifications and telephones.

One purchasing technician is retiring in September 2013, and the purchasing assistant II position was approved for reclassification to a purchasing technician position beginning July 1, 2013. The duties purchasing staff described for their positions were generally consistent with the duties identified in each job description.

The purchasing technician position is responsible for researching and evaluating vendors and contracts, processing purchase orders, updating various materials, training district staff in purchasing processes, and other purchasing-related duties.

The purchasing assistant position is responsible for researching purchase requests and product information, making recommendations regarding products and vendors, preparing purchase orders, compiling data and reports, resolving discrepancies, and other related duties.

The implementation of the CCCOE financial system has created efficiencies in the purchasing process that reduce the need for many of the functions of this position. These efficiencies have likely reduced the department's staffing needs and may justify the elimination of the vacant position.

The office assistant position is responsible for compiling information, preparing reports, reviewing document for accuracy, establishing and maintaining a file system, processing various forms, and other related duties. This position also serves as receptionist, answering telephones and directing calls to the appropriate person.

The purchasing department has established processes and business practices that increase its efficiency. The desk manuals for entering requisitions and processing purchase orders are accessible through the county office's internet portal. These documents are user-friendly and contain step-by-step instructions including screen shots. Although the purchasing technician is now responsible for the entire process of creating purchase orders, employees indicated that implementing ProCards has reduced the number of purchase orders the county office produces from approximately 4000 to approximately 500 annually. This has greatly increased the efficiency of the purchasing process.

In the College Financial System, the purchasing technician received a five-part color coded carbon purchase order request from sites and departments. After the request was checked for accuracy and signed by the purchasing supervisor, the purchasing technician would assign a hand-typed purchase order number, enter data into system, and distribute the copies. With the move to the CCCOE Financial System, the purchasing technician receives a hard copy requisition approved by the manager or supervisor, reviews the request for proper signatures, items requested and amount, and enters the data into the financial system to process the purchase order.

This process includes entry of data, release of purchase order, posting the purchase order to the general ledger accounts and printing the purchase order. The purchase order is then distributed electronically or by mail to the vendor, and a copy I sent to the originating site or department. The county office's Administrative Regulation 3310.1(a) has not been updated to reflect the changes in the requisition and purchase process; it still refers to the use of a five-part NCR form.

The county office has established procedures for the use of ProCards. Staff members assigned these cards are required to attend trainings and follow specific guidelines for their use, including a preapproval process for purchases. With the retirement of one purchasing technician and reclassification of the purchasing assistant II to a purchasing technician, the duties formerly assigned to the now retired purchasing technician have been redistributed to the two purchasing technicians.

There is a clear segregation of duties for entering new vendors into the accounts payable system. Under the College Financial System, the accounts payable position created vendors in the financial system; however, with the CCCOE Financial System the purchasing department is responsible for creating each new vendor and entering their information into the system. The purchasing department flags the vendor for 1099 if applicable and receives form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification, from the accounting department. This improves internal controls because the same individual or position does not have the ability to both create a vendor and pay a vendor.

A common problem in the former College Financial System was the existence of multiple vendor accounts for a single vendor. This occurs when different individuals create a new vendor account when one already exists. When a vendor has multiple accounts it can be difficult to retrieve accurate data from the system. If the vendor seeking information about a payment has multiple accounts, the person assisting them may not locate all payment history because it is coded under multiple vendor accounts, and may thus give inaccurate information. Creating multiple vendor accounts for the same vendor also creates confusion regarding which of the vendor's accounts is the most appropriate to use when issuing a purchase order. Eliminating duplicate accounts makes the vendor list more manageable and easier to maintain and update when a vendor's information changes. Staff reported that the ability to search any field in the CCCOE Financial System has significantly reduced duplication of vendor accounts.

Because the College Financial System did not provide real-time information, it took 24 hours to complete some processes including canceling a purchase order and reissuing it to a vendor. The CCCOE Financial System allows for more efficiency and improved customer service because transactions and entries post immediately to the system once approved.

Communication and training is essential to the success of any organization. With the implementation of the CCCOE Financial System, it was critical to train both county office and district staff in navigating the new financial system and new processes for completing tasks. The purchasing technician was assigned to create desk manuals and keep them current with each version update of the software; however, these duties are not indicated in the position's job description. Each manual created provides an overview of the content area and explains the process for completing the entry or transaction and its purpose. The desk manuals created for purchasing are easy to understand and provide the user with step-by-step instructions, including screen shots. The manuals are available on the county office's internet portal and are easy to access from its website. The purchasing technician continues to train district staff as needed.

Staff indicated that developing these support materials and training staff were new responsibilities and a new role added to the purchasing technician position as a result of the adoption of the CCCOE Financial System. However, the reduction in the number of purchase orders prepared and the ability to retrieve information in real time allowed the time needed for these new responsibilities. Although creating training manuals and training materials required more time initially, now that they are established and users are becoming more competent in the system there is time for additional tasks. Some of this time is used for weekly meetings with accounts payable and technology staff to collaborate on system issues.

Occasionally it is necessary for the purchasing technician to help district and county office staff with troubleshooting such as entering, posting or receiving and printing a purchase order or viewing and printing reports. When assistance is needed, the technology systems department help desk is the first point of contact for district staff. When the request for assistance is submitted to the help desk, a unique ticket is assigned to the request.

If the technology systems department determines that the support request is not directly associated with connectivity or computer issues, the ticket may be escalated to the purchasing technician. The purchasing technician is an identified user in the help desk system and if necessary can provide technical assistance by initiating a GoToAssist to help the individual. A GoToAssist allows the purchasing technician to view and take control of the user's screen. The purchasing technician can view the help desk ticket on the county office internet portal, allowing them to see original comments and the status of the request. If the purchasing technician is able to resolve the issue, the ticket is closed. If the purchasing technician is unable to resolve the issue, the ticket

is escalated to the district financial systems support manager. District staff are also able to access the county office's Internet portal and view the status of help desk tickets. The status of tickets is discussed at weekly meetings that include the purchasing technician and technology systems department staff, and at user group meetings.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Postpone filling the vacant purchasing assistant II position, and consider eliminating it.
2. Update the description of the requisition and purchase order in Administrative Regulation 3310.1(a) to reflect current practice.
3. Update the job description for the purchasing technician position to include the responsibilities of maintaining training documentation and providing training in purchasing processes on the CCCOE Financial System. The job description should also address the requirement that this position be a user in the help desk system and capable of assisting with troubleshooting.

## Fiscal Services

The fiscal services department provides budget and accounting services for the county office's programs and departments. According to the organizational chart dated May 7, 2013, this department is under the direction of the associate superintendent, business and administrative services. However, the county office's website indicates that the department is under the direction of the controller, business operations. It is best practice to ensure that the organizational structure clearly identifies key areas of authority and responsibility and that lines of authority and reporting are logical, clearly identified and established, and communicated. As an organization's structure changes, organizational charts need and websites need to be updated.

The table below compares fiscal services department staffing before and after adoption of the CCCOE Financial System.

### *Fiscal Services Department Staffing*

| July 2006   | May 2013   |
|---|--|
| <b>Deputy Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> | <b>Associate Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> |
| Director II<br>Administrative Business Services<br>(1)                  |  |
| Division Project Specialist<br>(1)                                      |  |
| Supervisor, Fiscal Services<br>(1)                                      | Manager of Budget & Accounting<br>(1)                                      |
| Program Accountant (specialized)<br>(7)                                 | Program Accountant<br>(4)  |
| Senior Accounting Assistant<br>(3)                                      | Senior Accounting Assistant<br>(1)   |
|   | Accounting Assistant<br>(1)  |

A manager of budget and accounting oversees the fiscal services department's daily operations and is supported by four program accountant positions, one senior accounting assistant position and one accounting assistant position. The department's staffing has been reduced by six positions, or 46%, since July 2006.

In addition to providing direction and support to the department, the manager of budget and accounting stated that this position is responsible for developing annual budgets, interim reports, multiyear financial projections, and budget documentation for the governing board. Additional duties include calculating and initiating district billings, completing a variety of annual reports, and maintaining the schedule of fixed assets.

The manager indicated that the CCCOE Financial System has provided greater flexibility, making her job more efficient; however, the workload has increased and new duties have been added as a result of the new system. When the manager needs assistance with the financial system, she contacts the district financial systems support manager directly rather than contacting the technology systems department.

The program accountant position's main responsibilities are accounting and budgetary work related to developing, establishing, analyzing, auditing, reconciling and maintaining the financial records of assigned programs. This position prepares, audits and updates a variety of financial, statistical and budget reports using the financial, human resources, and payroll modules in the CCCOE Financial System, and works closely with the district advisors to balance county auditor reports and reconcile payroll and cash.

The senior accounting assistant is responsible for a variety of complex clerical accounting duties such as accounts payable, accounts receivable and purchasing; this includes reviewing accounts for errors and making appropriate adjustments. This position calculates, assembles, reviews and posts a financial and statistical data; reviews ledgers and journal entries to ensure accuracy; balances, adjusts and reconciles accounts; inputs a variety of accounting data into the CCCOE Financial System; develops spreadsheets and generates a variety of computerized lists and reports; and maintains automated financial records.

The accounting assistant position is responsible for performing a variety of complex clerical accounting duties in conjunction with the senior accounting assistant. This position performs general office duties including data entry, logging cash receipts, maintaining files, and retrieving, sorting and distributing mail.

The fiscal services department staff members' duties reported during interviews and noted on employee task lists are generally consistent with those in their job descriptions. As in other cases, the move to the CCCOE Financial System resulted in additional duties for many of this department's staff, but all those identified fall within the job descriptions.

Fiscal services staff use the CCCOE Financial System extensively. A common frustration shared during interviews was that the expectation of increased efficiencies and reduced workload with the move to the new financial system had not been entirely fulfilled.

Although the CCCOE Financial System is flexible and can provide resources the former College Financial System could not, this flexibility also creates the potential for more errors such as differences in the entry and format of data in the financial system by other departments with different objectives, including human resources and payroll. This creates inefficiencies because reconciliations are needed when differences are identified. In addition, the College Financial System had a standard chart of accounts used by both the county office and the districts, but the CCCOE Financial System is not as consistent across all agencies; it allows each district to establish its own



detail account numbers for items other than core resource, goal and function account codes. The manager of budget and accounting is the only position authorized to create and edit the general ledger chart of accounts internally. It is best practice to ensure that more than one position is trained and able to add an account to the general ledger in case an employee is absent.

The fiscal services office has also found it challenging to maintain encumbrances of salaries, statutory benefits and health and welfare benefits. Program accountants provide financial information to program staff to help them manage their budgets. This includes current program budgets, expenses to date and projected remaining balance for the fiscal year. A functional encumbrance system can calculate projected salary and benefit costs at any time during the year, based on a reasonable methodology, for the remainder of the year to help program managers ensure that expenditures are equal to or less than the amounts budgeted. Without accurate encumbrances, available budget balances may be over- or understated.

The budget for salary and benefits is encumbered at the beginning of the fiscal year. Staff reported that the CCCOE Financial System does not accurately reduce or recalculate the encumbrance when payroll is posted. As a result, staff must manually reverse the encumbrances monthly, then re-encumber the available budget. In addition, program accountants must calculate step and longevity increases for staff anniversary dates throughout the year to develop more accurate encumbrances and project true remaining balances for the remainder of the year. The software vendor does not currently have a solution for this issue.

In the College Financial System, ledgers were closed at the end of each fiscal year. The CCCOE Financial System requires closing ledgers monthly, and if an adjustment or correction is made after the closing process, the process is repeated to capture the changes. This can be time-consuming.

The department manager is the first point of contact for program accountants when they experience system issues or have questions on how to navigate within the CCCOE Financial System; they do not contact technology systems or the help desk directly. Enhancement requests are submitted when a custom change to the software or a specialized report would improve the system's performance and help staff better complete routine complex duties.

Submitting expenditure reimbursement claims to federal and state agencies is one of the duties of a program accountant. These claims require detailed information, such as the employee's title and salary and benefits paid during a specific time, which is not always accessible from a single report in the financial system. A frequent frustration staff expressed during interviews is that when custom reports are requested there is often inadequate progress and/or follow-up.

Staff also indicated that workarounds or enhancements created did not always produce the result needed. For example, the custom accounting entry the software vendor developed to streamline the process for correcting or modifying payroll entries does not work in all cases. This was designed to simplify the process for creating and posting entries and capture the information in payroll reports. Payroll corrections are made when an employee is paid from an incorrect account or the funding source(s) identified for that position change after a payroll has posted. The custom accounting entry established is useful only when the entire amount paid to the employee is to be reclassified; it cannot split the allocation between multiple accounts.

For example, if an employee moved from one site to another and the change was not entered into the financial system before payroll posting, the salary and benefits would be expensed to the incorrect site. Although the employee was paid the correct salary, the entire expense must be re-located to the correct site. This can be accomplished through the established short cut step. This

entry type is also reflected on the payroll history reports, which are commonly used for obtaining detail information for reporting. However, if the correction is split between several accounts it must be corrected using a journal entry, and journal entries are not reflected on the payroll history report. Thus if, for example, 100% of an employee's salary was charged to the Title I program, but 50% of the salary should have been charged to the Title III program, the only way to reclassify 50% of the salary would be through a journal entry, which would not be reflected on the payroll history report. Thus the payroll history report would no longer capture and reflect all transactions.

The program accountants reconcile all data by program to produce a complete payroll history report. The lack of functionality extending to partial reclassifications results in the program accountants relying on spreadsheets to ensure accurate reporting, which is inefficient. Staff reported that a request for an enhancement was submitted to improve this process, but the status of the request was unknown at the time of FCMAT's fieldwork.

The county office needs a standard procedure for requesting an enhancement that clearly defines the process for submitting and responding to a request including who may submit a request, the method and format in which it should be submitted, assessment or evaluation of the request, approval or denial, and the communication of the decision and status.

### **System Accessibility**

An additional request was made to the manager of budget and accounting to give program accountants the ability to view employees' personnel histories. Although program accountants have access to the personnel history screen in the CCCOE Financial System, the screen only shows the position the employee currently holds; no position history is shown. Access to this information is needed to prepare accurate expenditure reports and grant claims for funding. Errors or omissions in this data could result in a loss of funding.

For example, claims for Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) reimbursement can be submitted up to two years after the close of the fiscal year. These claims require an LEA to identify the position associated with salaries reported in the claim. The inability to access employees' position history makes it challenging to complete these duties in a timely manner. Staff reported that the program accountants requested access to view the employee master screen; however, as of FCMAT's fieldwork staff members were unaware of the status of this request.

The program accountants indicated that it is difficult to track accounts receivable balances for revenue streams that share the same resource and object codes after receipts are posted in the subsequent fiscal year. Without a specific program identification code, the detail of cash receipts is lost when funding sources share the same resource and object code. Staff indicated that it is also difficult to track balances for accounts receivable because of the inability to identify cash receipts and outstanding receivable balances for specific programs in the detail general ledger.

It is best practice to routinely reconcile account balances and establish a standard process for posting receipts, clearing excess balances or additional receipts. In addition, supporting documents for cash receipts need to clearly indicate the source of the receipt, the applicable fiscal year, and, if the receipt is from a prior year, the related accounts receivable identifier. If an account receivable was not established, the receipt should be posted directly to the appropriate revenue account but should have entry detail that clearly identifies the fiscal year to which it applies. The program accountants reported that they have expressed the need for a balance sheet report that shows receipts and outstanding balances for established accounts receivable. This expectation

suggests that there is a lack of clear understanding of how to reconcile and identify outstanding accounts receivable balances and/or prior year carryover.

Program accountants have provided training and consultation for new staff as well as ongoing training on the general ledger/financial modules to county office and district staff. Program accounting staff reported that they too need additional training on the system to be successful in working through issues and supporting the county office and district users.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Ensure that organizational charts and websites accurately show the organizational structure and lines of reporting authority.
2. Ensure that an additional position is trained and able to add an account to the general ledger.
3. Establish a standard procedure for requesting system enhancements, work-arounds, and/or custom reports. The procedure should clearly identify the process for submitting a request for enhancements, including who may submit a request; the method and format in which it should be submitted; the party or parties responsible for assessment or evaluation of the request and approval or denial; and the timing and form of communication regarding the decision and status.
4. Review the program accountants' access to the financial system and determine if it feasible to give them access to view the employee master screen or establish a process for requesting the information they need from human resources. Communicate with program accountants regarding the status of this access.
5. Explore the types of balance sheet reports accessible to accounting staff to determine if a report is available that shows entry details that affect established accounts receivable transactions. Ensure that a standard operating procedure for reconciling accounts receivable is established that includes steps for adjusting invoiced amounts when there are differences in revenue receipts.
6. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for accounting staff sufficient to ensure that they are proficient in navigating the financial system and completing routine accounting entries and lookups required to perform their jobs and support and train users.

## District Business Services

The district business services department provides financial advisory services to the county office fiscal services department, 18 school districts in the county and the Contra Costa Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). Services include advisory and support services for routine financial responsibilities; distribution of state apportionment and other revenues; preparation of deposits and journals; fund, account and cash reconciliations; commercial warrant auditing and review; 1099 tax reporting; and oversight, including monitoring and approval of financial and budget activities and collective bargaining commitments under Assembly Bill (AB)1200 and AB2756.

The district business services department is led by a manager, district business services (who is currently working outside of their existing job title’s classification, also known as working out of class), three district advisor positions and three fiscal services technician positions. The department reports directly to the associate superintendent, business and administrative services.

The department was restructured and staffing changes were made between July 2006 and May 2013. Changes included eliminating a supervisor, district fiscal services position, and replacing it with a manager, district business services position. Staff were offered an early retirement incentive in fiscal year 2010-11, which resulted in turnover in four out of seven positions including the supervisor, district fiscal services position. Staff reported that this significantly reduced the level of experience in the department, and as a result an existing district advisor position was identified as a lead position and an additional district advisor position was staffed.

The organizational chart shows the manager, district business services position as vacant and lists an additional position for the individual currently working out of class and fulfilling the management duties; the chart lists this latter position as simply “out of class managers DBS.” Although individuals interviewed reported that the staff member fulfilling these duties was identified as a lead district advisor, a job description for a lead position was not provided and the organization chart does not clearly identify a lead position. Thus the county office’s intentions for staffing in this department are unclear.

Staff reported that the lead district advisor routinely works more than 40 hours per week because of training activities. The county office has not determined whether it will fill the lead district advisor position if the individual working out of class in this position is formally selected to fill the manager position, or if the lead district advisor position will be eliminated once the determination is made.

Staff also indicated that the fiscal services technician position was approved for reclassification effective July 1, 2013 because the move to the CCCOE Financial System had an extensive impact on the position’s duties.

The table below shows district business services department staffing levels before and after the change to the CCCOE Financial System.

***District Business Services Department Staffing***

| District Financial Services<br>July 2006                                | District Business Services<br>May 2013                                     |
|---|--|
| <b>Deputy Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> | <b>Associate Superintendent<br/>Business &amp; Administrative Services</b> |
| Director II District Business Services<br>(1)                           |  |
| Division Project Specialist<br>(1)                                      |  |
| District Support Analyst<br>(1)   |  |
| Supervisor, District Financial Services<br>(1)                          | Manager, District Business Services<br>(1) Vacant*                         |
|   | Out of Class Manager, District Business Services*<br>(1)                   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| District Advisor<br>(3)                     | District Advisor<br>(3)                       |
| Fiscal Services Technician-Districts<br>(3) | Fiscal Services Technician-Districts**<br>(3) |

\*Currently staffed with an employee working out of class

\*\*Reclassified effective July 2012

In interviews, FCMAT inquired about changes to routine duties. As in other departments, many tasks formerly managed by the College Financial System and/or supported by community college staff now require the district business services department staff's time and assistance. These tasks include the following:

- Check printing for districts for weekly and emergency accounts payable
- Retrieval of data files for accounts payable processing functions including reconciliations and retrieval of the backup files that go to the county treasury
- Annual 1099 and 1096 tax reporting to the IRS & Franchise Tax Board
- Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS) account code validation upload from CDE
- District and county office staff training

Because the district business services staff serve many different LEAs countywide, the increased demand on time is compounded because each LEA has separate databases in the CCCOE Financial System.

The duties reported by the staff member working out of class in the manager, district business services position are consistent with those noted in the job description dated August 2008. However, this job description does not include some duties brought about as a result of the change to the CCCOE Financial System, including providing training and assistance to school district and county office staff on the financial system. The job description also includes an outdated line of reporting authority that needs to be updated.

The district advisor position is responsible for providing extensive consultation and technical assistance to district personnel. Among other duties, this position provides assistance and support for budget development and revision and for accounting and financial reporting activities. As in most county offices, the extent of fiscal support varies depending on the size and needs of individual districts. Small school districts often require additional technical support from the county office because they have limited economic resources and staffing; they frequently cannot afford a chief business official position and so look to the county office for help with budget and financial accounting and reporting required by the state.

Staff members in district advisor positions have been very involved with the move to the CCCOE Financial System, modifying processes based on the functionality of the new software and supporting district personnel throughout the transition. Staff members report that their duties include developing materials used to provide workshops and other trainings, with a focus on these new processes. These and all other duties are consistent with those identified in the district advisor job description; however, the job description has not been updated to reflect the changes in reporting and line of authority that have taken place since 2006.

The district advisor positions' duties often require access to financial and personnel data to effectively and efficiently support small school districts. Staff in this position report that they are not able to access the payroll entry screens, payroll data, and/or personnel data in the financial system's human resources module. This makes it difficult to provide efficient customer services to district staff. Staff in this position often need to help district personnel make or correct entries, or enter information on behalf of districts.

Staff assigned to budget development and financial management tasks often need accesses to both financial and human resources data to ensure the accuracy of budget and financial accounting. A strong internal control system can establish access controls that limit a user's ability to modify and/or view financial information based on the duties of each position. Segregating duties is a common challenge for small school districts because they typically have fewer positions to which duties can be assigned. However, accesses can be provided that limits the staff member's ability to create and/or post entries, and these functions can be assigned to a second party if a concern exists. It is not uncommon for a position of this type, with an extensive span of duties, to have system accesses more consistent with that of superusers (i.e., access to a majority of the financial system's modules and the ability to create and approve transactions) and/or a management position in larger district business offices to reduce challenges in performing the essential duties of the position.

The role of the fiscal services technician -- districts position includes a variety of routine tasks that support districts' financial activities, including the following:

- Auditing school district accounts payable
- Processing and posting monthly apportionments, warrants and deposits
- Preparing spreadsheets and related fiscal reports
- Calculating, posting and auditing financial accounting entries while ensuring accurate funding accounting
- Serving as a technical resource to personnel and districts, including financial system support

Similar to other reports by county staff, the workload of this position increased when the county office changed to the CCCOE Financial System.

One of the fiscal services technicians is also responsible for direct technical support calls and has a lead role as a trainer for accounts receivable and accounts payable. Users frequently contact this person directly, which results in her entering help desk tickets into the system. The support role has reportedly increased considerably with the move to the CCCOE Financial System, reducing the time available to carry out regular duties.

The department leads specific user groups, focusing on topic-specific discussions and guidance. Meetings are held monthly and are used to share enhancements to the CCCOE Financial System as well as best practices and tips and tricks for navigating the system. Staff reported that the community college did not provide these types of user trainings to support the former system and that leading the trainings has created additional demands on staff time.

Although department staff noted increased demands on time as a result of the change to the CCCOE Financial System, they also acknowledged benefits including access to real-time data, the ability to automatically create emergency warrants, and the ability to access and research the details of a particular transaction.

## Recommendations

*The COE should:*

1. Update the business and administrative services organizational chart to include the district business services department's actual approved positions, both vacant and staffed.
2. Update the manager, district business services job description to include duties related to training and user support for the CCCOE Financial System and changes in the reporting line of authority.
3. Update the district advisor job description to reflect changes in reporting and line of authority.
4. Review CCCOE Financial System accesses for the district advisor positions and design it to be more consistent with the access given to superusers or managers.

## Human Resources

The human resources department provides many services to county office employees including recruitment and selection of candidates for employment, credential services, position classification, salary and benefits administration, contract interpretations, safety and wellness, uniform complaint procedures, and training and employee relations. The human resources department monitors credentials and assignments for all teachers in the county to ensure that teachers are properly credentialed in their subject area. The department also supports county school districts by providing a variety of services including the coordination of job fairs and trainings.

The department is led by a deputy superintendent, human resources and a manager, human resources who is working out of class and being paid at a higher salary range. The manager, an executive assistant I and a credentials analyst report to the deputy superintendent. The following staff report to the manager: a benefits specialist, a human resources assistant III (currently working out of class as a benefits analyst), a human resources assistant II, two human resources assistant Is (one of whom is working out class as a human resources assistant II), and two office assistant IIs (one of whom is part-time and working out of class).

A May 2010 organizational chart shows that at that time the department was led by an associate superintendent with a human resources manager, an executive assistant I, credentials analyst, human resources specialist, benefits technician, and three STRS counselors reporting to him. At that time the following employees reported to the human resources manager: three human resources assistants II, two human resources assistants I, a benefits specialist and a credentials technician.

The table below shows human resources department staffing as of May 2010 and July 2013, before and after the implementation of the CCCOE Financial System.

*Human Resources Department Staffing*

| May 2010  | May 2013  |
|---|---|
| <b>Associate Superintendent<br/>Human Resources</b> | <b>Deputy Superintendent<br/>Human Resources</b>                                      |
| Manager,<br>Human Resources<br>(1)                  | Manager,<br>Human Resources<br>(1) (out of class)                                     |
| Executive Assistant I<br>(1)                        | Executive Assistant I<br>(1)  |
| STRS Counselors<br>(3 Part-time)                    |   |
| Credentials Analyst<br>(1)                          | Credentials Analyst<br>(1)  |
| HR Specialist<br>(1)                                | duties absorbed by benefits analyst position  |
| Benefits Technician<br>(1 vacant)                   |   |
|   | HR Technician<br>(1)  |
|   | HR Assistant III<br>(1)<br>(out of class as benefit analyst)                          |
| HR Assistant II<br>(3)                              | HR Assistant II<br>(1)<br>(+1 HR assistant I working out of class)                    |
| HR Assistant I<br>(2)                               | HR Assistant I<br>(2)<br>(-1 working out of class as II)                              |
| Benefits Specialist<br>(1)                          | Benefits Specialist<br>(1)  |
| Credentials Technician<br>(1)                       |   |
|   | Office Assistant II-(P/T)<br>(1)<br>(working out of class as accounting assistant.)   |
|   | Benefits Analyst<br>(1)<br>(-1 working out of class as human resources assistant III) |

Restructuring and changes in staffing and reporting for the human resources department between May 2010 and May 2013 resulted in the elimination and/or reassignment of two full-time and two part-time positions. Four of the department's 12 employees are working out of class, and the department has one open position.

The county office needs to assess the human resources department's needs and the ability of current staff to meet them, create a plan to meet any needs that are not being met, and work towards a more permanent staffing structure. It would benefit the county office to consider establishing an appropriate title and job description for the human resources assistant III who is currently working out of class as a benefit analyst, and to include the benefit specialist's current assignments any assessment made.



FCMAT interviewed the manager, human resources assistant III/benefits analyst, benefits specialist, and credentials analyst. Human resources staff generally perceive the CCCOE Financial System as a financial system with a human resources component. The employees stated that they resolve problems by developing workarounds and collaborating with user groups.

Staff members indicated that the CCCOE Financial System is improving but it is not as effective as they had thought it would be; however, there was a general consensus that they are becoming more comfortable with the system as they work through the issues with it.

The human resources manager's main responsibility with regard to the CCCOE Financial System is to attend the weekly coordinating meetings. In these meetings, the manager represents the human resources department's interests and ensures that the department's issues and points of view are heard. The technology systems department has been responsive to the human resources department's needs and has shown department staff how to extract information from the CCCOE Financial System. For example, technology systems developed a process for human resources staff to create seniority reports needed to conduct employee layoffs. Although human resources personnel had to be very specific about what was needed, once technology systems staff understood the need they developed a process that allows human resources to run accurate reports themselves.

#### **Human Resources Assistant III/Benefits Analyst**

The human resources assistant III began working out of class as the benefits analyst in May 2013 when the benefits analyst retired. As a human resources assistant III, this employee's primary responsibility was to implement the human resources module of the CCCOE Financial System; the job description defines this job as providing technical assistance and training for county office employees and county school districts in the human resources functions of the CCCOE Financial System.

Staff described the following as responsibilities of the human resources assistant III:

- Building all position control numbers
- Running longevity reports
- Monitoring, verifying and uploading employee absences
- Tracking compensatory time
- STRS and PERS reporting
- Implementing accurate full-time equivalent positions (FTEs)
- Maintaining accrual tables for sick leave, vacation, and other employee leave

The task list for the human resources assistant III indicates that this employee updates employees' data daily and does the following weekly: provides wage and paycheck information and explanations; has paychecks reprinted; and builds, monitors, and updates the employee self-service (ESS) module.

Because the human resources assistant III position was responsible for building the code to make the CCCOE Financial System work for human resources, this staff member contacts the software vendor directly if there is a problem with the system; assistance is not first sought from technology systems staff, the district financial systems support manager, or any other local resource. As the person responsible for implementing the human resources module, the human

resources assistant III is the person that technology systems and school districts call when they need assistance.

While working with the CCCOE Financial System, the human resources assistant III has also worked with staff from other departments, particularly payroll and accounting, to ensure an accurate and collaborative system. As part of the collaboration, the departments have had to resolve procedural issues that existed in the College Financial System. In general, the human resources assistant III articulates what outcome is necessary and then works with staff from other departments to develop a solution.

For example, the departments collaborated to resolve the issue of how to calculate the full-time equivalent (FTE) for employees who work less than eight hours per day. The College Financial System defined a classified employee who worked a six-hour day as 1.0 FTE for payroll so the salary schedule calculation would be accurate. Human resources defined that same employee as 0.8125 FTE because the employee worked less than an eight-hour day. In the College Financial System, this difference did not affect the overall work because the two modules did not interact with one another. However, in the CCCOE Financial System it was necessary to establish a single method for calculating FTEs.

Human resources also collaborated with the payroll department to create a workaround to have the CCCOE Financial System correctly report STRS and PERS.

Payroll staff determined an annual rate that human resources staff must enter for the system to calculate correctly. Although a successful workaround was developed to achieve the needs of both departments, it has not been reported to technology systems or the software vendor. As mentioned previously, communication with the technology systems department is essential to the continuous improvement and implementation of the CCCOE Financial System, to maintenance of the system and support to client school districts in their implementation, and to prevent duplication of the work to develop workarounds.

In addition to the STRS and PERS issue, staff indicated that the CCCOE Financial System's human resources module does not allow for multiple supervisors to be assigned to an employee who is employed in two positions. In addition, although employees are able to input their leave through ESS, the system has not eliminated the need for hourly time sheets, nor does it work easily with SmartFind Express, the substitute employee calling system. However, staff commented that entering employees is much easier and more efficient in the CCCOE system because the system automatically populates fields.

Survey responses indicated that school district personnel agree that the CCCOE Financial System does not have a robust and flexible human resources module. There are concerns that the process for requesting and creating enhancements is slow, which may result in issues becoming problematic before critical enhancements are ready.

District employees' comments also supported the concern that the employee master allows only one job classification per employee, so employees with more than one position or job are not accurately recorded in the system. District personnel mentioned that they are still using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets because the system lacks fields for data such as college coursework.

There are also serious concerns about the system's inability to support district seniority and seniority within classifications. The CCCOE Financial System maintains only an employee's current position, which is inadequate for district seniority tracking. These issues are critical to the work of human resources departments and should be priorities when considering enhancements to the CCCOE Financial System.

## Benefits

Benefits administration is currently performed by the benefits specialist, who has been in the position for 4 ½ years. When the benefits analyst retired in May 2013, the benefit specialist assumed the duties of that position. This position's current responsibilities include reconciling all benefits accounts including cash in-lieu of benefits, health and welfare, life insurance, disability insurance, union dues, and voluntary deductions. The benefits specialist works closely with the accounting services department to ensure the accuracy of payroll, accounts receivable and accounts payable.

The benefits specialist continues to be integrally involved in the CCCOE Financial System's benefits development. This employee has created all of the deductions; mapped the premium table; created groups and classes; and established how the data applies to the bargaining units, ESS, auxiliary, and management. Although the initial work is time-consuming, demand for this work can be expected to decrease once the system is established and implemented.

Additional duties of the benefits specialist mentioned during FCMAT's fieldwork include setting up both annual and employee portions of employee/employer health and welfare benefits; manually adjusting paychecks as needed prior to printing; and monitoring and maintaining the escrow benefits account because the county office collects funds over a 10-month period and pays vendors over a 12-month period. Although it is most advantageous for an LEA to make payments for benefits earned over the allowable 12 month period, collecting benefits and paying the provider over 10 months could increase efficiencies by alleviating time-consuming reconciliation processes and reducing the risk of under- or over-accruing liabilities at year end.

The task list for the benefits specialist includes the additional tasks of monitoring and updating employee records daily; weekly entry of new hire, termination, and retirement data; and monthly updating of Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), retiree and qualifying event data. This employee also conducts training on the benefits module when requested.

The June 2012 job description for the benefits specialist position includes the following responsibilities:

- Provide administrative support duties in human resources office functions such as recruitment or benefit administration
- Provide information and assistance to employees, job applicants and the general public regarding personnel functions, policies and procedures
- Prepare and maintain a variety of manual and automated personnel files, records and reports; process enrollment of benefits for employees
- Serve as a technical resource regarding employee benefits
- Provide COBRA notification to eligible employees
- Process COBRA payments
- Assist with retirement, medical, dental and vision benefits for early retirees

The June 2010 job description for the benefits analyst states that the following are basic functions of the position:

- Serve as a technical resource to employees; communicate accurate information regarding employee benefits to employees, administration, management and benefit providers
- Oversee administration of benefit enrollment and COBRA benefits

- Assist in coordination of benefits for early retirees
- Supervise and evaluate the benefits specialist
- Monitor employee absences
- Serve as the county office's claims coordinator for workers' compensation

A review and comparison of the main functions of the benefits specialist and benefits analyst job descriptions with the work described during interviews and on the benefits specialist's task list indicates that the benefits specialist has assumed key functions of the benefits analyst position, including management of retiree benefits, COBRA benefits and maintaining eligibility lists.

## Credentials

The credentials analyst is responsible for ensuring that all certificated staff employed by the county office and each district are properly credentialed for their assignments. This position is also responsible for supporting the districts by performing some tasks previously done by the community college, such as maintaining and updating credential codes. The staff member currently in this position constructed the credentials structure for the CCCOE Financial System and is reportedly the only individual who knows how this structure works. In the past, one of the human resources assistant II positions supported the credential analyst's work; at this time, the assistant's assignments are mainly human resources-related, with less time to spend on credentials.

As noted previously in this report, it is best practice to ensure that at least two people are trained in any essential functions performed by a position so that there is a backup for the primary position. It would also be best practice to develop standard operating procedures that document duties related to the credentials system.

The credential analyst is responsible for credentials codes for 16 school districts. The codes are now standardized and match the state codes. To maintain the integrity of the codes, the analyst has sole access to add and delete codes. This has improved the accuracy of the codes and of assignment monitoring. As discussed previously, however, the districts each have separate databases and the analyst must log in to each district's database to access the required information.

Credentials monitoring is a significant portion of the analyst's work; this employee must ensure that no employee with an expired credential receives a paycheck. A custom expired credential report has been created to help with this responsibility. Districts are now responsible for monitoring credentials, ensuring that they upload renewed credentials, and deleting expired credentials from the system. If expired credentials are not deleted, the employee is included on the expired credentials list even if they have a valid credential.

The credentials analyst plans and implements training for district personnel in collaboration with the district financial systems support manager. This includes seeking formal and informal input from district personnel to determine what training is needed. The training sessions are usually well attended. If someone is absent, the analyst contacts them and reviews the training information with them. This individual also often travels to districts to provide individual assistance and support on the CCCOE Financial System and other credential monitoring tasks.

The CCCOE Financial System is not capable of directly downloading credentials from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) because the financial system has separate databases for each district. Any downloads from the CCTC would require the analyst to them perform 16 uploads, one for each district. As a result, the credentials analyst enters

credential information manually. It may be more efficient to have each district download their own credentials data from the CCTC.

The CCCOE Financial System's credentials module is an improvement over the College Financial System because of its increased accuracy and ability to adjust the system to work with the needs of the county office and the districts.

The credentials analyst's task list includes creating and editing credential codes upon request; approving credentials and maintaining CCCOE credential screens daily; reviewing credential reports; maintaining and updating No Child Left Behind (NCLB) screens; and adding Statewide Educator Identifier (SEID) numbers weekly. Monthly tasks include auditing districts' credential screens; identifying missing data for the county office and districts; training district personnel on the credentials module; and monitoring assignments.

The job description for the credentials analyst position includes the following responsibilities:

- Perform complex technical duties in monitoring certificated assignments and renewals to ensure compliance with state credential requirements
- Oversee applications and other documents to ensure that certificated personnel hold valid and proper credentials
- Train, direct and guide assigned personnel

This position is included in the professional administrative salary schedule at step 10. The task lists and FCMAT's fieldwork indicate that the duties being performed align with those in the job description.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Assess the human resources department's needs and the ability of staff to meet those needs. Create a plan to implement a more permanent staffing structure that eliminates situations in which employees are working out of class.
2. Document the work the human resources assistant III, benefits specialist, and credentials analyst perform related to the CCCOE Financial System. Ensure that standard operating procedures and desk manuals are created to document human resources processes and procedures.
3. Consider having each district download its own credentials data download from the CCTC.

## Technology Systems Department

Implementing and providing ongoing support for a new financial system has had a considerable impact on the county office's technology systems department. To prepare for new equipment, duties and specialized knowledge, the department was reorganized and staffing increased by four positions, or 24%.

The table below shows the department's staffing before and after the implementation of the CCCOE Financial System. Positions with a \* have full-time responsibilities supporting the new CCCOE Financial System; positions with a \*\* have part-time responsibilities supporting the new CCCOE Financial System.

For positions identified with a \*\*, FCMAT did not evaluate essential duties listed in the job descriptions if they do not pertain to supporting the CCCOE Financial System. Positions without an asterisk were excluded from this study because the county office did not identify them as supporting the financial system software.

### *Technology Services Department Staffing*

| June 2009                          | January 2013   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Director<br>(1)                    | Chief Technology Officer*<br>(1)                                       |
| --                                 | Network Administrator*<br>(1)  |
| --                                 | Database Administrator*<br>(1)   |
| Division Project Specialist<br>(1) | Division Project Specialist*<br>(1)                                    |
| --                                 | Printer Support Technician*<br>(1)                                     |
| Technology Support Liaison<br>(2)  | Technology Support Liaison*<br>(1)                                     |
| --                                 | System Support Representative*<br>(1)                                  |
| --                                 | TS Manager - Payroll Support*<br>(1)                                   |
| --                                 | Electronic Communications Specialist*<br>(working out of class)<br>(1) |
| --                                 | Web/Data Systems Engineer**<br>(1)                                     |
| --                                 | Coordinator**<br>(1)   |
| Network Project Manager<br>(1)     | Network Project Manager<br>(1)   |
| Network Engineer<br>(3)            | Network Engineer<br>(2)  |
| Desktop Support Technicians<br>(2) | Desktop Support Technicians<br>(1)                                     |
| Computer Technicians<br>(2)        | Computer Technicians<br>(3)  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Computer Network Technicians<br>(3)           | Computer Network Technicians<br>(2)           |
| Student Information Systems Specialist<br>(1) | Student Information Systems Specialist<br>(1) |
| Technology Specialist<br>(1)                  | --  |

FCMAT reviewed job descriptions for each position identified as responsible for providing material support for the CCCOE Financial System and its users. FCMAT used interviews with staff and employee task lists to assess duties listed in job descriptions and to evaluate the organization of staffing and distribution of functions.

The employee in the electronic communications specialist position is not performing the essential duties described in the job description, which include the development of publications and web documents; development, support and evaluation of educational websites; and other communications-related work. Rather, this employee has been focused primarily on supporting the financial system conversion, particularly for human resources and payroll. Additional duties reported during interviews included supporting district staff by identifying sources to obtain data from the financial system. Interviews and a draft job description provided to FCMAT during fieldwork indicated that the county office has started evaluating this position to align it more accurately with developing CCCOE Financial System trainings and other professional development programs to support staff.

Because all districts have almost completed the first full year on the financial system, the county office has indicated interest in transitioning from project implementation to system maintenance. However, some essential components are still being implemented, such as an employee training module in human resources, and clients are not familiar with how to accomplish tasks in the new system. In addition, the original support plan relied on the software vendor to provide sufficient training and documentation, but duties were reassigned and staffing increased when the software vendor was unable to meet the county office’s needs. Without suitable alternative resources, the county office will need to continue its efforts developing user documentation and providing training for both internal and external clients. Maintaining the number of staff committed to supporting the CCCOE Financial System is essential to continued progress.

Interviews and survey results indicated that a standard response provided to those who submit a request for support, either to the software vendor’s technical support or the district financial systems support manager, is to ask the requestor to test how specific options and settings will work within the CCCOE’s system configuration and determine if they are a viable solution. Neither subject matter experts nor the county office’s technology systems department is asked to test these options and settings, document how they work, or analyze how the configuration may affect all clients.

Testing needs to be contained at the county office, with the technology systems department and subject matter experts sharing testing and documentation responsibilities to help build knowledge of the system. This testing and documentation will continue to require increased labor until the system is fully implemented and functioning sufficiently.

The fact that each district has its own database in the CCCOE Financial System has unforeseeably increased the labor demand on the technology systems department because it requires processes (such as updating account code validation rules) to be performed separately on each

database. The county office has worked with the software vendor to modify some processes, such as the accounts payable check printing process, to be run once. However, numerous processes, such as creating custom reports, still must be performed on each database. With only one to two years of data in the CCCOE Financial System, the county office may find it beneficial to evaluate the advantages, disadvantages and cost of consolidating the databases to maximize efficiencies for the entire organization, particularly the technology systems, business and administrative services and human resources departments.

The technology systems department dedicates approximately eight hours of labor per day, distributed between two positions, to developing custom reports in Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) from the data in the CCCOE Financial System database. SSRS is a server-based report generation software system that can be used to create interactive and printed reports.

Creating custom reports using this process requires specialized knowledge and can be time-consuming. Because of this, CCCOE Financial System support staff attempt to find alternative workarounds instead of requesting new custom reports, especially if the data is needed quickly. There are more requests for custom reports than staff are able to provide. Sometimes the workarounds are labor-intensive, especially if they involve running multiple reports separately for every district database to consolidate information.

In addition, technology systems staff indicated that they have sometimes created custom reports but never received feedback on whether the report met the client's needs. Establishing priority guidelines, such as assigning higher priority to reports that are used frequently and/or by all or most of the financial system clients, would help organize the workload and use labor more efficiently.

Some positions in the technology systems department duplicate and may undermine support roles in other county office departments. For example, the duties of the technology services manager, payroll support position and the district payroll services department duplicate one another. Both internal and external clients indicated a desire for the district payroll services department to have more working knowledge of the CCCOE Financial System so that it can be a more proficient resource.

The county office could increase efficiency in reviewing system issues by using as trainers those staff members who are subject area experts in departments responsible for fiscal oversight, such as district business services and district payroll Services. This idea is discussed in additional detail in the Documentation and User Group Trainings section of this report.

In addition, expanding the trainer role to act as the first level of support for task-related questions and guidance could increase and support the authority of each department. In these areas, the technology systems department's role would shift to one of support for the subject area experts rather than trying to duplicate or replace their vital role. This would increase labor efficiencies in the technology systems department.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Continue reviewing the duties performed by the employee in the electronic communications specialist position and develop a new position and title that accurately reflects the revised duties.



2. Maintain the current level of technology systems staffing in support of the CCCOE Financial System to ensure adequate support for the continuing implementation of new human resource components, and continue this level of staffing until systemwide transition-related needs have stabilized.
3. Assign the task of testing and documenting options and settings to CCCOE subject area experts or technology systems department staff.
4. Evaluate the advantages, disadvantages and cost of consolidating district databases to reduce labor and inefficiencies.
5. Develop, communicate and apply guidelines for prioritizing the development SRSS custom reports.
6. When applicable and feasible, reassign lead training roles to departments that have responsibility for fiscal oversight, and change the technology systems department's role from primary to supplemental support in these cases.



# Financial System Technical Support

## CCCOE Financial System Help Desk

The county office developed the online help desk ticket system internally, and it went live on July 1, 2012, after the first group of districts completed the first year of transitioning to the CCCOE Financial System. At the time of FCMAT's fieldwork, the system had tracked more than 1,700 tickets for issues ranging from password resets to custom report generation, and various software errors. The county office estimates that this number of requests was significantly lower than the number requests for assistance received the first year of implementation.

The assistance request process is documented. A request for assistance is initiated either by telephoning a dedicated help desk number or submitting an online ticket. Telephone requests are entered manually into the online ticket system.

The help desk system allows a technician to be assigned and an issue to be escalated if needed. At the first level of support, the request goes to one of three technology systems department staff members, who can reset passwords and answer basic support questions. If a request requires specialized knowledge, it is escalated to second level support, which includes additional staff from technology systems as well as subject matter experts from district business services and district payroll services. If the second level of support is unable to resolve a request, the ticket is escalated to third level support, which includes the district financial systems support manager in the business and administrative services department and individual staff contact with the software vendor's technical support.

Interviews and surveys indicated that the documented procedure to request assistance is not consistently followed. Eighty-six percent of district clients that responded to the FCMAT survey report they have submitted requests to second- and third-level support rather than to the help desk during the six months prior to FCMAT's fieldwork. This makes it difficult to monitor, track, analyze and report resolution trends and progress. It is best practice to require that all requests be initiated through the help desk system so that a log of issues is automatically generated and the information used to help identify support trends and needs for additional staffing, staff development, software enhancements and training topics.

For easily resolved support requests, clients reported they were pleased with the response time and follow-up. However, clients indicated that they are not consistently notified when more complex issues are resolved, placed into pending status awaiting response from the software vendor's technical support, require other research, or are otherwise affected. This lack of long-term follow-up has created an environment of miscommunication. Clients and support staff believe requests are in different statuses and have differing points of view regarding how long requests take to be resolved. Clients are not made aware of the solution being used to resolve their requests, which prevents them from providing feedback about the efficacy of the solution.

Because it was developed internally, the help desk software lacks the ability to update clients when tickets are updated or the status changes and does not allow clients to request the status of their tickets. Effective help desk software has these capabilities. It is unclear whether it would be cost-effective to modify the current help desk system to add status update features; however, robust help desk software is available at low or no cost, and the improved communication they provide would be advantageous.

When a new financial system is implemented it is not unusual for educational agencies to desire software enhancements to improve clients' operations. In addition, because California public

schools are a new and small portion of the CCCOE Financial System software vendor's client base, improvements are needed to bring the software into compliance with state reporting requirements, laws and regulations. In larger school installations such as the county office and its 16 participating school districts, the requests for enhancements can be numerous.

The county office does not have a consistent, formal process for its staff or clients to submit enhancement requests. Thus, as is the case with other types of requests, staff members reported submitting requests in a variety of ways. For enhancement requests, these included the help desk, the district financial systems support manager, or in a financial system leadership meeting where representatives from many county office departments are present. A centralized, consistent process for submitting and reviewing enhancement requests, such as via help desk software, improves tracking and prioritization of requests.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Require that all requests for financial system support be submitted through the help desk system, and enforce this requirement.
2. Provide status updates for complex requests. Analyze and determine whether it is more cost effective to add status update features to the existing help desk software or to change to software that has these features.
3. Track software enhancement requests using the help desk software.

## Documentation and User Group Trainings

The CCCOE Financial System software was developed as a flexible system to appeal to a broad range of public sector clients. Most of the software company's clients are in the eastern United States; California school districts are a new and small segment of the clientele. Because of the broad target market, the system has many different options and security settings. The software manufacturer supports the system mainly through trainings, telephone calls, online support requests and online forums.

At the time of FCMAT's fieldwork, all districts had transitioned to the new system and almost completed either a first or second full fiscal year of use. The county office is interested in transitioning from project implementation to maintenance. It is common for the use of resources to increase for project implementation and return to sustainable levels when a project enters the maintenance stage. However, in the county office's case, the client districts' needs for increased training, documentation and support is still great.

The software vendor provides clients with document templates, called vanilla documents, to use as a foundation for documenting their settings; however, the vendor does not communicate the purpose or function of available options.

The county office found the vanilla documents to be too basic to be of use to its clients and subsequently began developing local documents and video podcasts to provide guidance. Documents are crafted by a small team of county office employees, consisting of at least one subject matter expert and one technology systems department staff member. District clients are welcome to participate in developing video podcasts to share with the local community. Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents access documents using the CCCOE Financial System portal. The documentation is consistently presented, posted in an accessible area, and well received by

the county office's clients. However, interviews and survey results indicate concern that documentation is not kept up to date with the current software version. In addition, supplementary documents are needed to help bridge the differences between the College Financial System and CCCOE Financial System. For example, a commonly voiced concern was the lack of reports available in the CCCOE Financial System compared to those in the College Financial System.

Clients spend a significant amount of time parsing and compiling data fields from multiple reports exported to Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access to create something that resembles information compiled in the College Financial System. In addition, technology systems department staff spend a significant amount of time creating custom reports for clients that resemble reports previously available in the College Financial System. There is no documentation demonstrating sample reports or guidance regarding which reports to use for various purposes. Documenting the options and information available in each report, whether predefined or custom built, would help familiarize clients with available resources, minimize time spent running and compiling data fields from multiple sources, and reduce requests for custom reports.

During the first year of the financial system's implementation, the county office contracted with the software vendor to provide training for the first group of transitioning districts. Clients believe the contracted trainers did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of California school district regulations, environment and reporting requirements to set up and use the CCCOE Financial System efficiently. Unsatisfied with the quality of training received, the county office created a new district financial systems support manager position to assist in planning training, enhancements and modifications. The individual hired into this position is a former employee of the software manufacturer and brought background knowledge that would be beneficial in performing these duties.

Subsequently, local subject-area users groups and statewide users group were developed to facilitate subject-based trainings and encourage knowledge sharing. The county office's clients appreciate the local subject-area user groups meetings. However, time constraints and lack of detailed system knowledge are ongoing concerns. In addition, agendas for these meetings are not communicated far enough in advance to allow clients to plan and schedule for participation, and the lack of beginning and advanced topics makes it difficult for clients to determine the appropriateness of the trainings for their staff. Currently, the county office has not identified subject matter experts in all areas who prepare and host all meetings; identifying these experts in all needed areas and having them prepare and host meetings would ensure that topics and guidance are timely and appropriate. Establishing subject matter experts as meeting leaders now will allow the user group meetings to become an effective support tool to help the county office fulfill its role under Assembly Bill 1200 by providing additional ways for the county office to guide districts in improving fiscal procedures, standards and accountability.

Having a representative from the technology systems department at all user group meetings to support the content area expert leading group discussion would help the technology systems staff develop a greater understanding of county and district processing issues and priorities, assist with technical questions, and document items for further research.

## Recommendations

*The county office should:*

1. Review and update existing documentation after every major software update.

2. Develop documentation to help users run processes and reports in the CCCOE Financial System that meet the same needs as those previously produced using the College Financial System.
3. Create sample documents that show the reports available, report documentation that describe their content and options, and demonstrate results.
4. Develop and communicate user group training agendas further in advance to allow clients to plan for participation.
5. Develop, communicate and implement beginning and advanced training topics to make trainings more efficient for attendees.
6. Assign subject matter experts as leaders in all content areas to plan and host user group training meetings with assistance from technology services staff.

### **Best Practices For Support Staff and Users**

It is essential that support staff be technically proficient in navigating the CCCOE Financial System and accessing data in order to effectively support end users. It is best practice for each department to identify and document essential tasks and processes associated with processing and financial reporting. Effective industrywide best practices include developing written standard operating procedures (SOPs) and step-by-step processes that do the following:

- Identify all required data necessary for completing each task/process
- Identify the system reports available to access that data
- Explain how to navigate within the system to obtain those reports
- Explain how to complete the task or process

This process will help identify CCCOE Financial System limitations in accessing data and the dependency on that data. Once a limitation is identified, possible solutions can be explored, including the development of enhancements, custom reports and/or other approaches for obtaining necessary data. Each potential solution should be assessed and a decision made based on the nature of the task or report and its priority. This process should be conducted using a team approach that includes those responsible for completing the task, those who have authority to make decisions and those who contribute to the solution. A timeline for completion of the workaround and/or enhancement should be established and a single accountable party identified to manage the entire process and resolve the matter. Routine progress updates should be provided to all parties involved to ensure that all staff understand and are able to effectively communicate the status to others. Once a solution is achieved, department staff should be sufficiently knowledgeable to support and train other users because they have been a part of the process and solution. All steps for this process should be documented in a standard operating procedure (SOP) and communicated to all concerned.

## Summary of FCMAT Survey Results

FCMAT developed a 23-question survey to obtain feedback from both county office and district financial system clients regarding the support provided by the county office for the CCCOE Financial System. The county office distributed invitations to complete the survey to all financial system client users. Forty-six responses were recorded: 17 from county office, 29 from client districts. Two of the 46 respondents reported that they were only system support users and so received a version of the survey that omitted questions 3-21.

The goal of the survey was to obtain unbiased information. Participants were assured that survey responses would be summarized identifying attributes of the respondents would not be disclosed. The survey was hosted at a third party location and focused on the content and opinions provided by the participants. Information on the source of information was sought only when clarification was needed.

Compiled comments summarize common discussion points and have not been independently verified.

| District Type | Supported Districts | Responded | Participation |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Elementary    | 9                   | 5         | 56%           |
| High          | 2                   | 2         | 100%          |
| Unified       | 4                   | 3         | 75%           |
| County        | 1                   | 1         | 100%          |
| Combined      | 16                  | 11        | 69%           |

| District Type | Individual Responses | Representation |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Elementary    | 10                   | 21.7%          |
| High          | 3                    | 6.5%           |
| Unified       | 16                   | 34.8%          |
| County        | 17                   | 37.0%          |
| Combined      | 46                   |                |

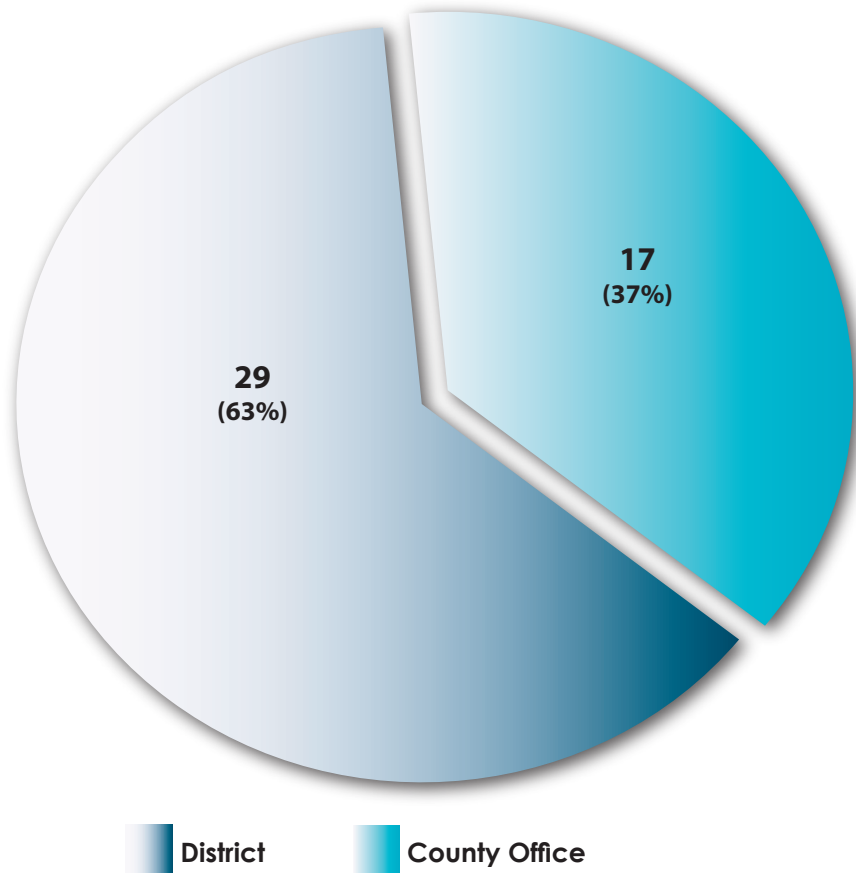
| District                                  | Type       | Grade Span | Certified 2012-13 Enrollment | Responses Received | Conversion Date |
|---|------------|------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Brentwood Union School District           | Elementary | K-8        | 8,426                        | 2                  | 7/1/2011        |
| Byron Union School District               | Elementary | K-8        | 1,686                        | 0                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Canyon Elementary School                  | Elementary | K-8        | 73                           | 1                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Knightsen Elementary School District      | Elementary | K-8        | 472                          | 0                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Lafayette School District                 | Elementary | K-8        | 3,435                        | 0                  | 7/1/2011        |
| Moraga School District                    | Elementary | K-8        | 1,856                        | 0                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Oakley Union Elementary School District   | Elementary | K-8        | 4,745                        | 1                  | 7/1/2011        |
| Orinda Union School District              | Elementary | K-8        | 2,488                        | 3                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Walnut Creek School District              | Elementary | K-8        | 3,543                        | 3                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Acalanes Union High School District       | High       | 9-12       | 5,349                        | 2                  | 7/1/2011        |
| Liberty Union High School District        | High       | 9-12       | 7,704                        | 1                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Antioch Unified School District           | Unified    | K-12       | 18,852                       | 9                  | 7/1/2012        |
| John Swett Unified School District        | Unified    | K-12       | 1,600                        | 0                  | 7/1/2012        |
| Martinez Unified School District          | Unified    | K-12       | 4,087                        | 3                  | 7/1/2011        |
| Mount Diablo Unified School District*     | Unified    | K-12       | 32,001                       | N/A                | N/A             |
| Pittsburg Unified School District         | Unified    | K-12       | 10,560                       | 4                  | 7/1/2011        |
| San Ramon Valley Unified School District* | Unified    | K-12       | 30,757                       | N/A                | N/A             |
| West Contra Costa Unified*                | Unified    | K-12       | 30,398                       | N/A                | N/A             |
| Contra Costa County Office of Education   | County     | --         |                              | 17                 | 7/1/2011        |

Grade and Enrollment data Obtained from DataQuest

\*District does not use the Contra Costa County Office of Education financial system and was excluded from participating in the survey.

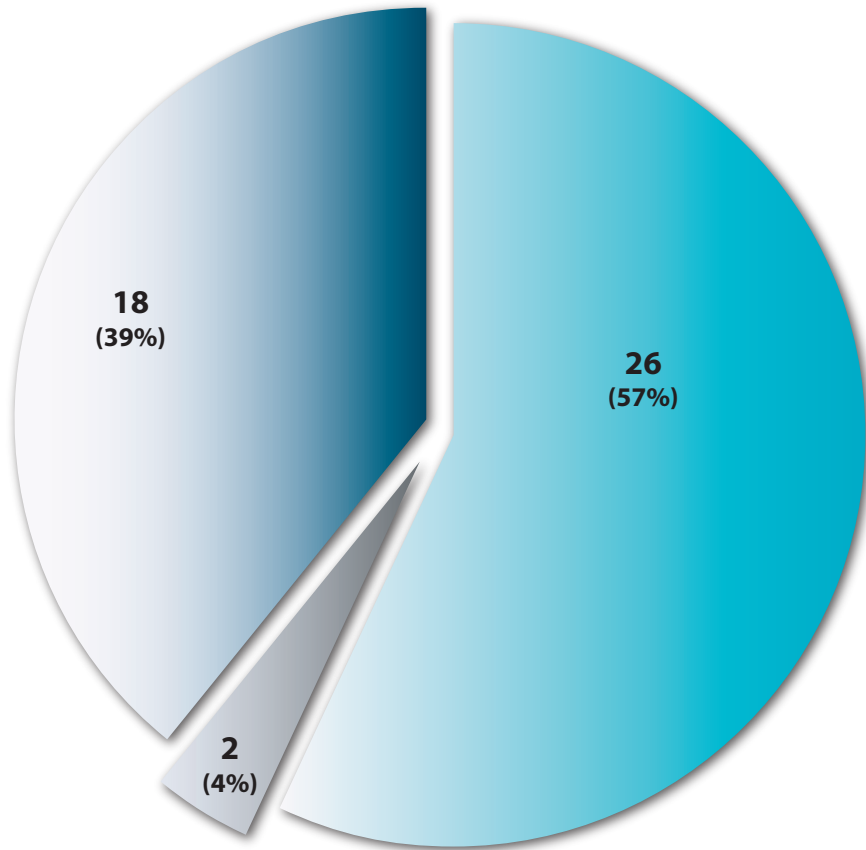





1. Are you employed by the county office of education or a district?



Total Respondents: 46

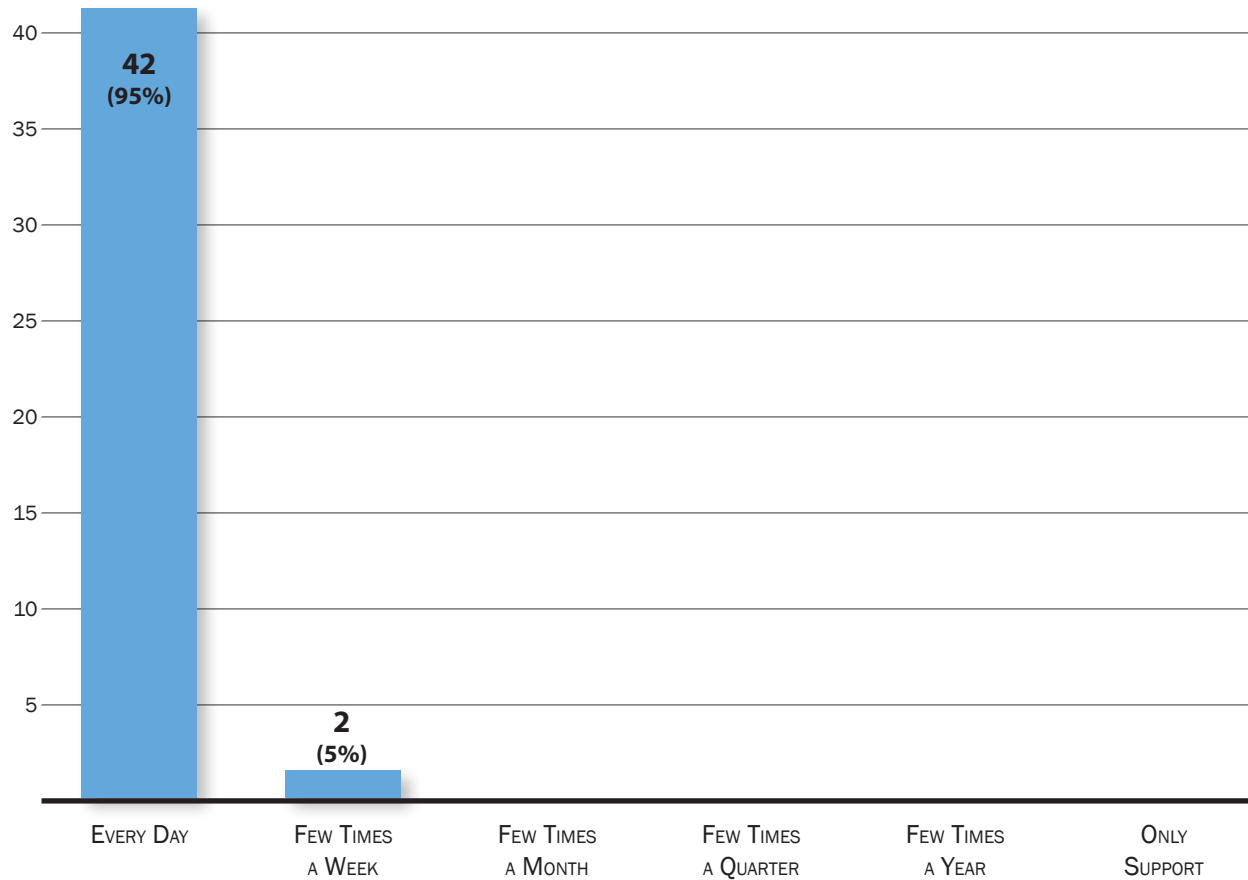
2. Do you use the CCCOE financial system in performing your duties?



-  I am a user of the financial system
-  I regularly support other users in the use of the financial system
-  Both

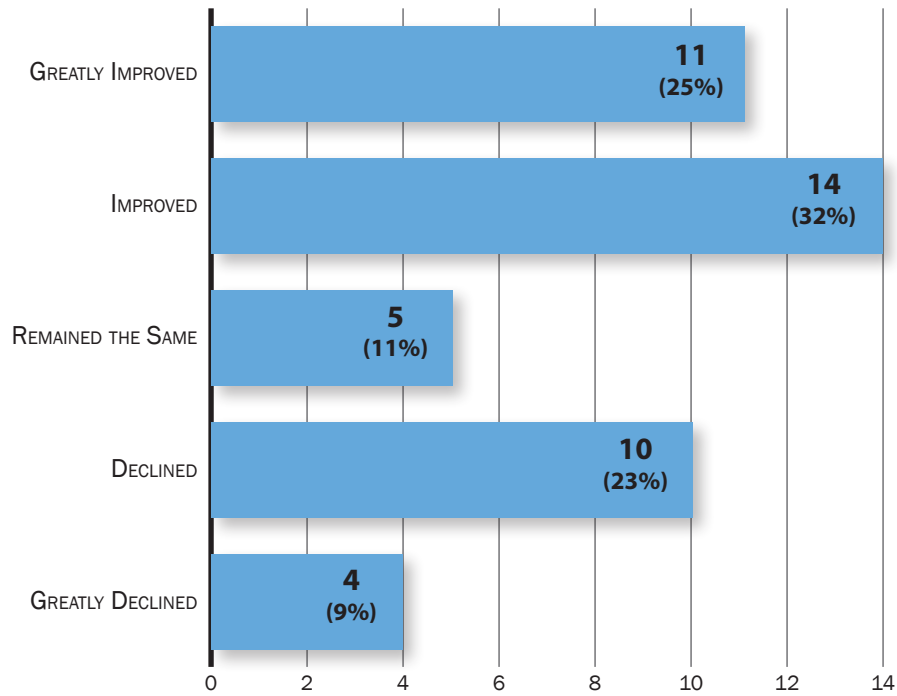
Total Respondents: 46

3. How frequently do you use the CCCOE financial system in any capacity? (look-ups, reports, entry, approvals, etc.) Select the frequency from the list below that fits best.



Total Respondents: 44

4. In comparing support provided from the Rumba system to the new CCCOE financial system, the level of support has:



Total Respondents: 44

**Compiled comments:**

- Support staff, especially subject matter experts in district payroll services, continue to learn the system. The knowledge in the new system is less than that of the districts.
- The problem isn't with the support, it's with the system.

5. I use the following CCCOE financial system modules in performing my duties (select all that apply):

|   | Responses  | Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|
| General ledger                            | 26         | 11%        |
| Budgeting                                 | 21         | 9%         |
| Treasury management                       | 7          | 3%         |
| Requisitions                              | 14         | 6%         |
| Purchase orders                           | 19         | 8%         |
| Accounts payable                          | 17         | 7%         |
| Fixed assets                              | 5          | 2%         |
| General billing                           | 14         | 6%         |
| Accounts receivable/cash receipting       | 15         | 7%         |
| Payroll/ESS & TimeKeep                    | 27         | 12%        |
| HR management                             | 25         | 11%        |
| Workflow (routing)                        | 12         | 5%         |
| Munis Office (export to Microsoft Office) | 13         | 6%         |
| Content management                        | 4          | 2%         |
| Security                                  | 4          | 2%         |
| Other                                     | 4          | 2%         |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>227</b> |            |

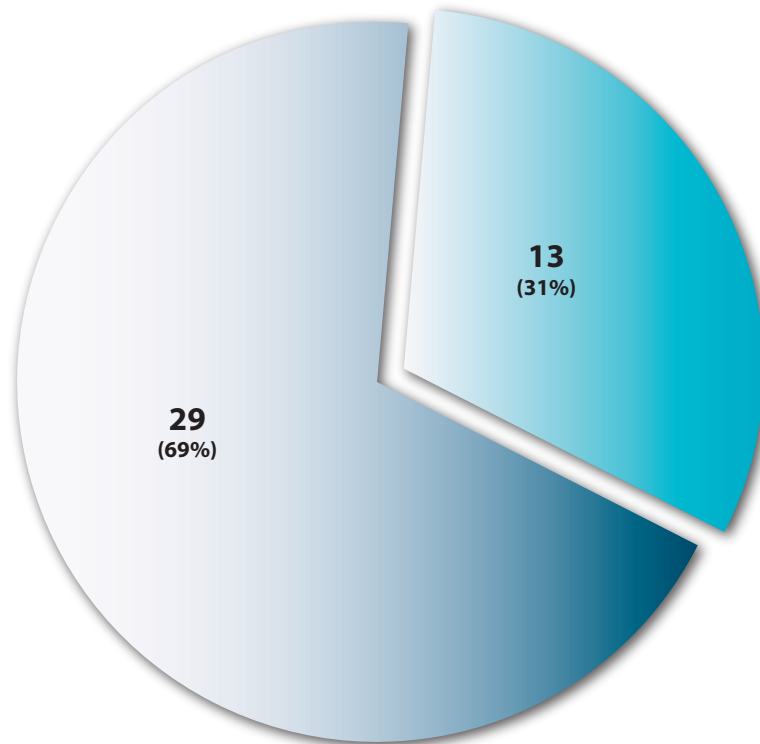
6. How has the migration to the new financial system impacted routine processes for entering individual transactions?

- More data is available.
- Some routine processes require additional time and effort because of additional processing steps needed.
- The import ability, as opposed to manual keying data, increases efficiency.
- Workarounds required by the system increase daily processing time.
- Some modules do not contain all the information needed. Gathering reports and exported data for compilation has increased labor demands.
- Keying the cash offset in journal entries requires the user to enter twice as many lines as before, increasing entry time.
- Ability to import time and attendance payroll batches from Microsoft Excel has been an improvement to our processes.

7. How has the migration to the new financial system impacted processes that require data processed through the financial system?

- New real-time information provides accurate and instant reports.
- It is difficult to extract information with the existing reports.
- Invoices can be customized to better suit vendors and can be printed immediately.

8. Do you access the Munis Internal Portal and system documentation available through the portal?



Yes

No

Total Respondents: 42

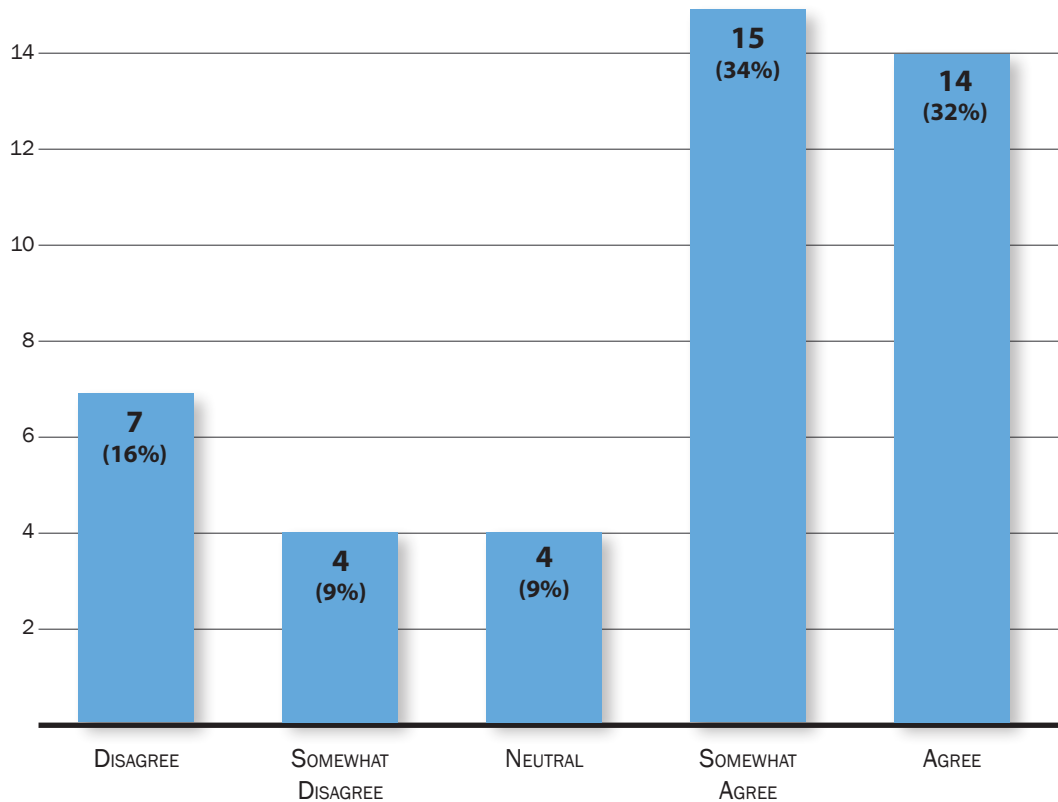
9. Please estimate how frequently you have requested technical assistance for the CCCOE financial system in the past six months using the following methods:

| Number of Requests Made  | 0  | 1-2 | 3-5 | 6-10 | >10 | unsure/<br>indeterminable |
|--|--|-----|-----|------|-----|---------------------------|
| <i>Types of Requests</i>                                       | <i>Number of Respondents Making Number of Requests Above</i> |     |     |      |     |                           |
| Total requests for technical assistance through any method     | 6  | 4   | 4   | 12   | 17  | 1                         |
| CCCOE Support Help Desk web form                               | 17   | 6   | 5   | 7    | 8   | 1                         |
| CCCOE Support Help Desk phone line                             | 20   | 11  | 5   | 6    | 2   | 0                         |
| Direct contact with Technology Systems staff                   | 5  | 11  | 7   | 6    | 13  | 2                         |
| Direct contact with lead/subject expert staff                  | 9  | 8   | 8   | 6    | 9   | 4                         |
| Direct contact with District Financial Systems Support Manager | 17   | 12  | 4   | 5    | 4   | 2                         |
| Direct contact with the Tyler/Munis company                    | 27   | 11  | 3   | 1    | 2   | 0                         |
| Other  | 32   | 1   | 1   | 0    | 0   | 10                        |

**Other support methods:**

- Local staff

10. The CCCOE financial system operates efficiently and provides me with the information I need.



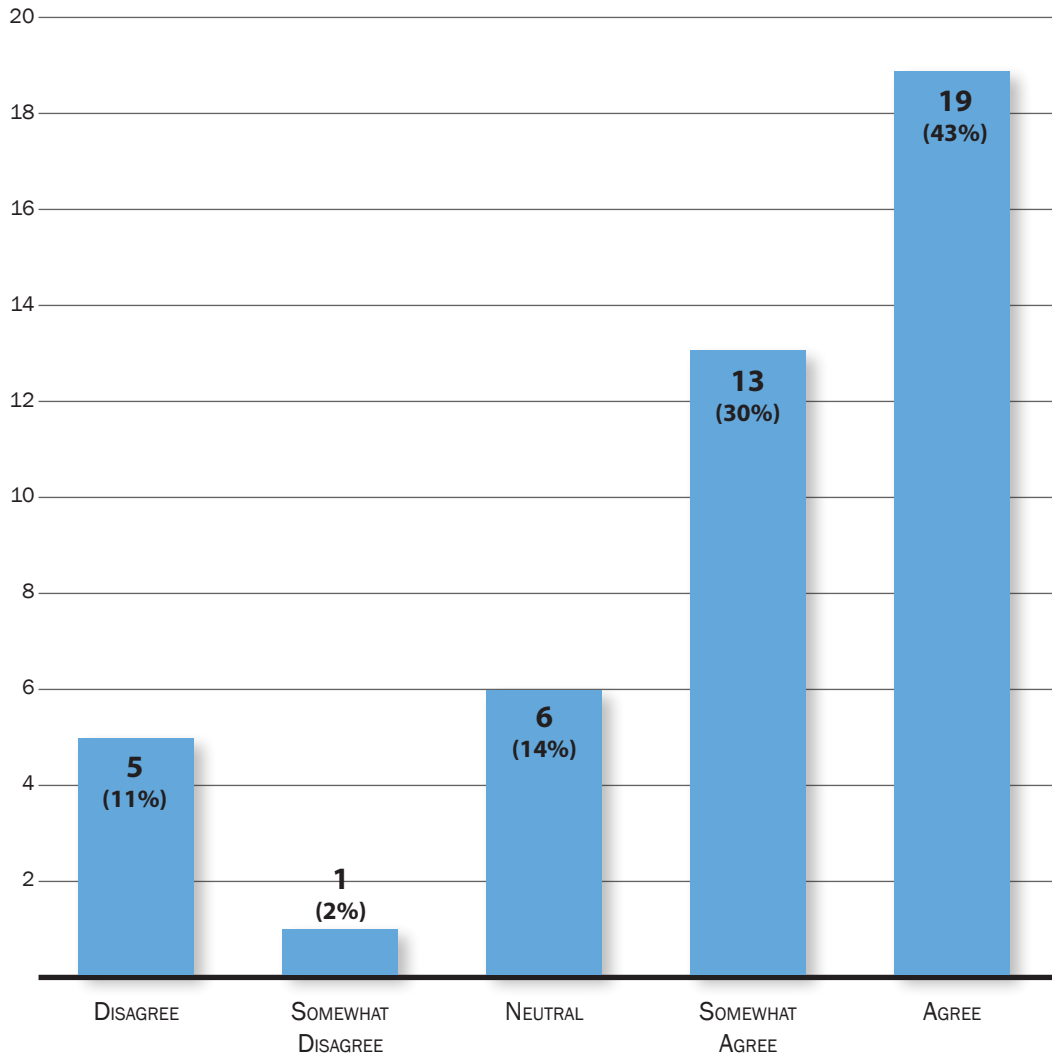
**Total Respondents: 44**

**Compiled comments:**

- Users can't always find what they are looking for and need help locating it.
- Reports options are poor and it is difficult to gather information through reports.
- Microsoft Excel spreadsheets are used to track information to more efficiently meet deadlines and complete tasks.
- Data is compiled in Microsoft Excel in order to create local reports.



11. The support staff of the CCCOE financial system work in a cohesive and well organized manner enabling them to meet the needs of the users.

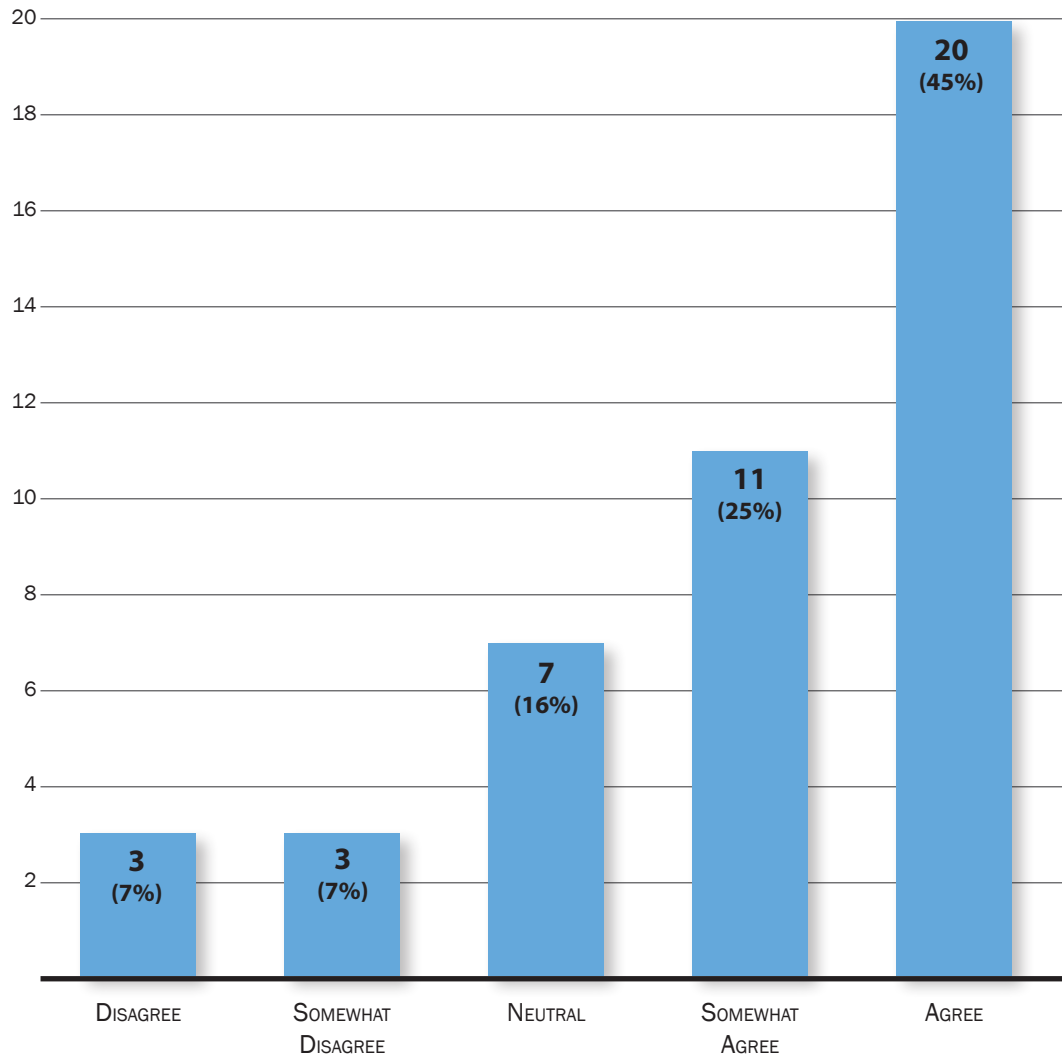


**Total Respondents: 44**

**Compiled comments:**

- Material and information is not consistently communicated. Sometimes material conflicts with other module trainings. Other times, information may be shared in a one-on-one setting and not in a group setting.
- Staff work well together to provide assistance or direct client to another department.
- Subject matter experts and help desk sometimes provide conflicting answers.

**12. I have access to professional development that enables me to use the CCCOE financial system efficiently.**

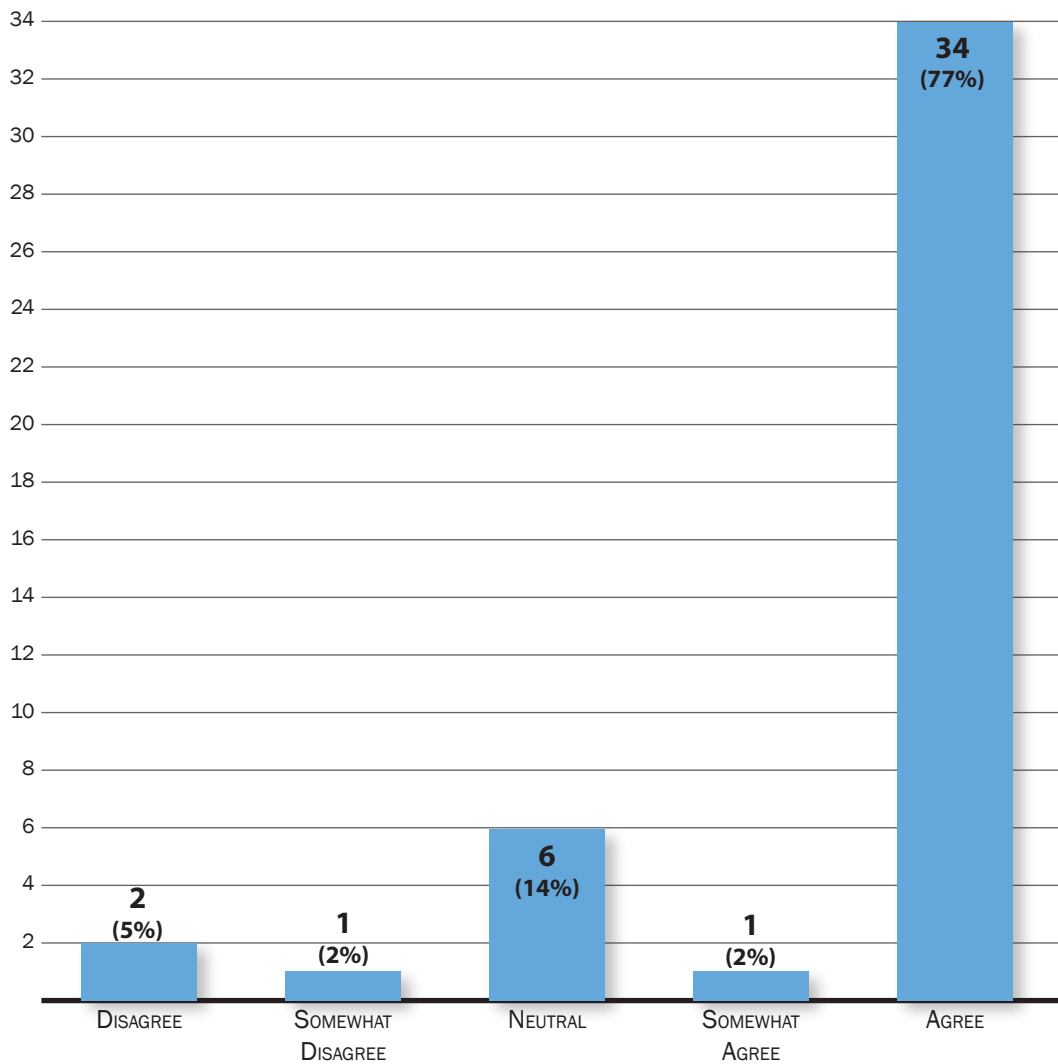


**Total Respondents: 44**

**Compiled comments:**

- Trainings and user groups are not always on topic and time is used inefficiently. Agendas are not followed and presenters are taken off task by individual requests to test/troubleshoot specific areas of the software by individual participants.
- Clients are at different levels of expertise, but the trainings are all provided at one level.
- User Groups are a great venue to share information and get training.
- Timing and agendas for trainings are not communicated in a timely fashion.

13. I am encouraged by my district or department to participate in CCCOE financial system professional development to improve my skills and efficiency.

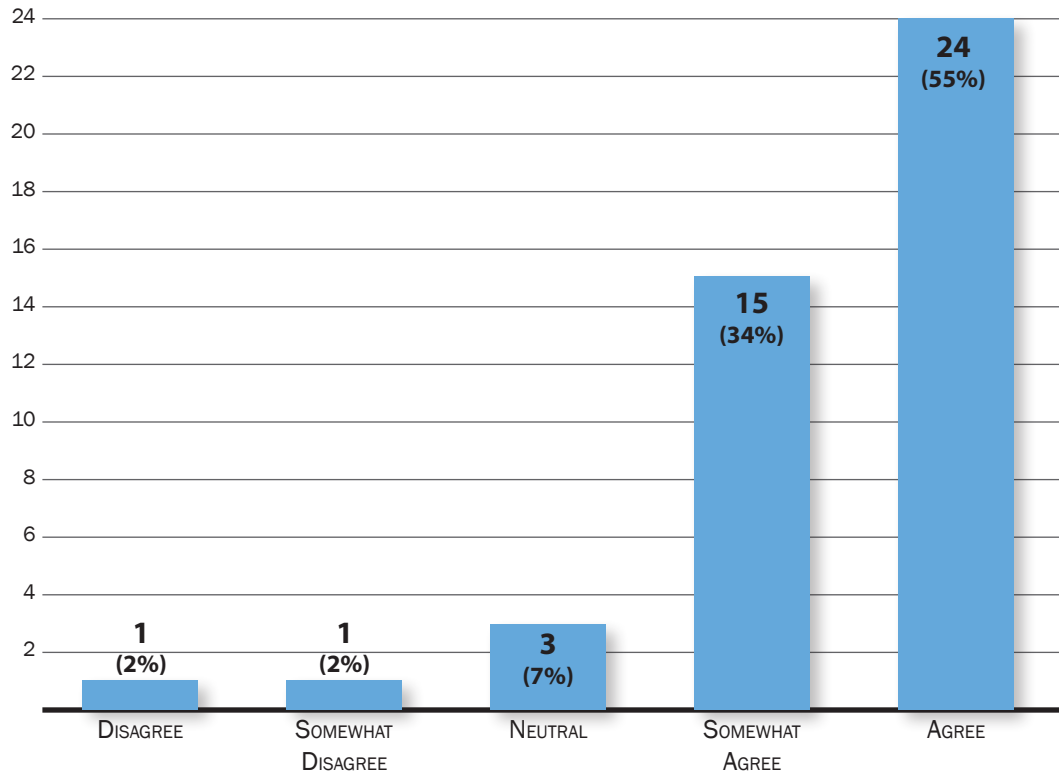


Total Respondents: 44

Compiled comments:

- It isn't feasible for small districts' staff to attend all workshops due to time constraints.

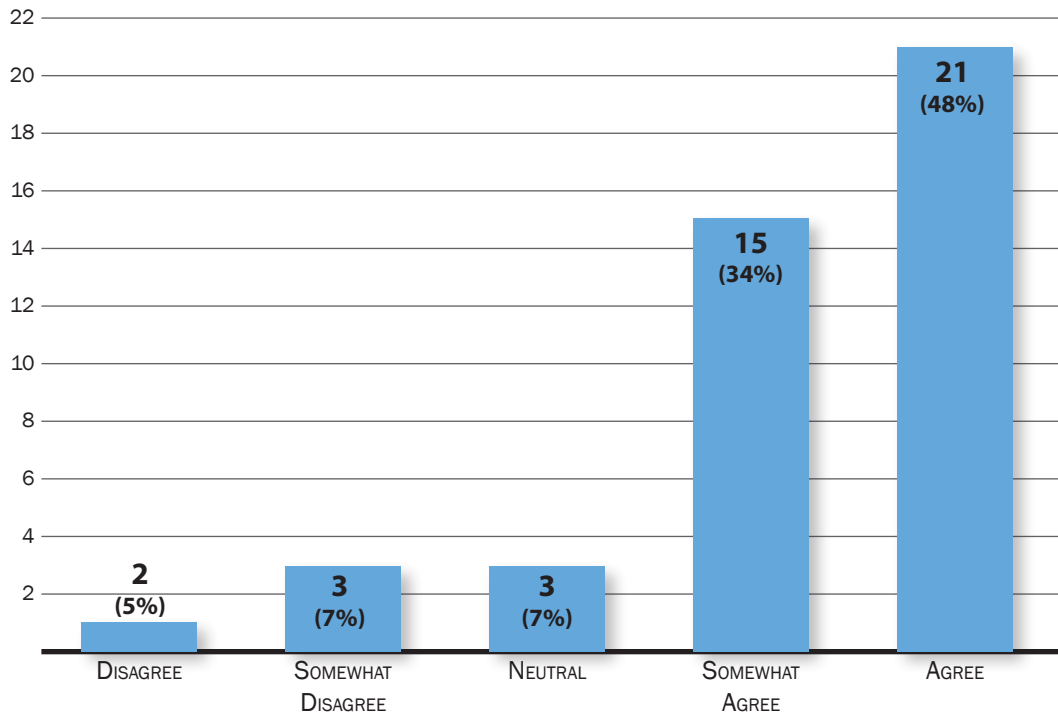
14. In my opinion, the equipment and software I use to access the CCCOE financial system are up to date.



Total Respondents: 44

Compiled comments:

- none

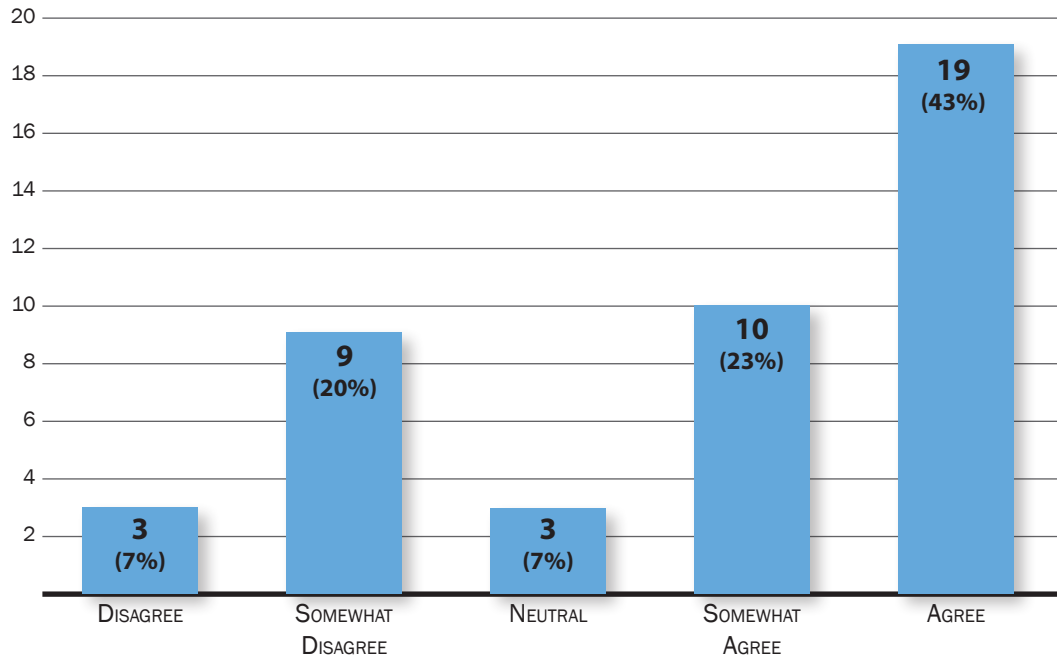
**15. Access to the CCCOE financial system is quick, efficient and responsive.**

**Total Respondents: 44**

**Compiled comments:**

- It is generally responsive, but occasionally there are systemwide issues.
- The application sometimes closes in the middle of data entry or processing.

**16. The CCCOE financial system is rarely unavailable or performs slowly, negatively affecting my productivity.**

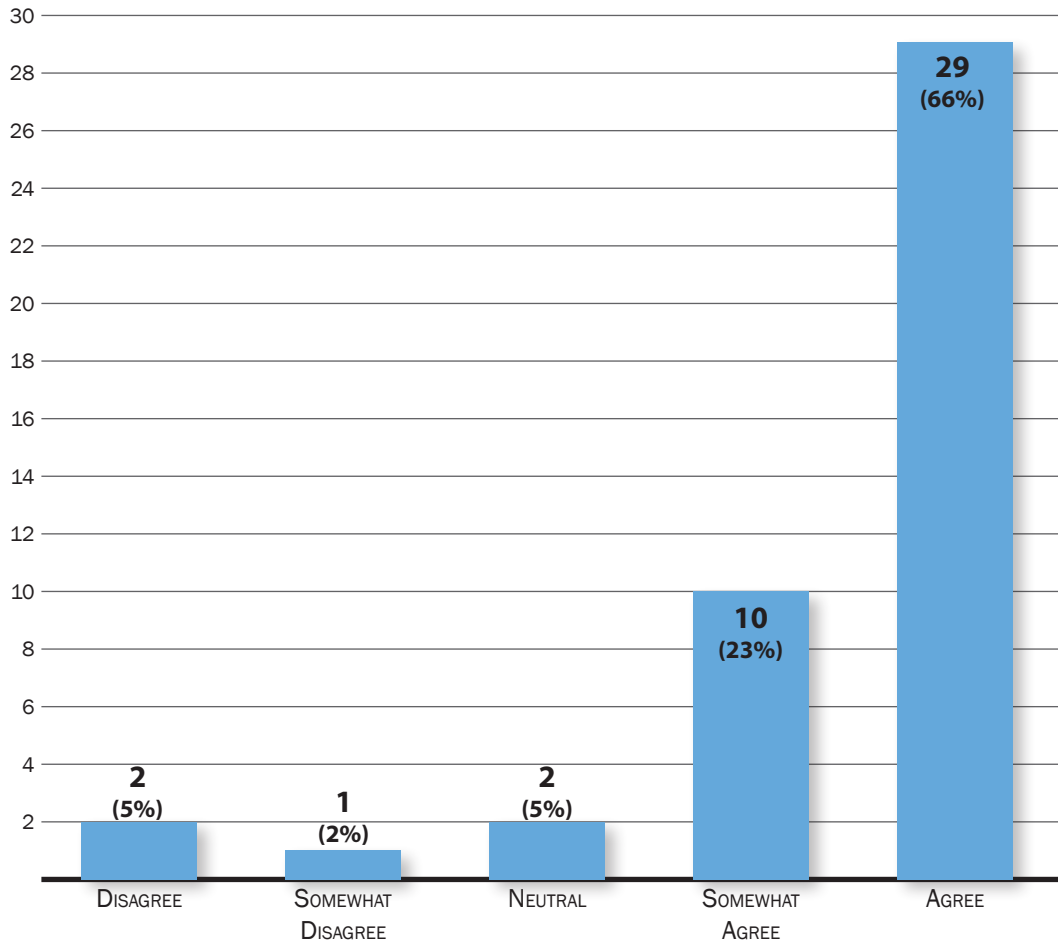


**Total Respondents: 44**

**Compiled comments:**

- Historically, there have been slowdowns with payroll processing, but that appears to be corrected.
- Notifications for upgrades are not occurring on a timeline that allows districts to plan for planned outages.
- The system slows during certain processes.

17. The process and procedures to request assistance with the CCCOE financial system are clearly defined and communicated.

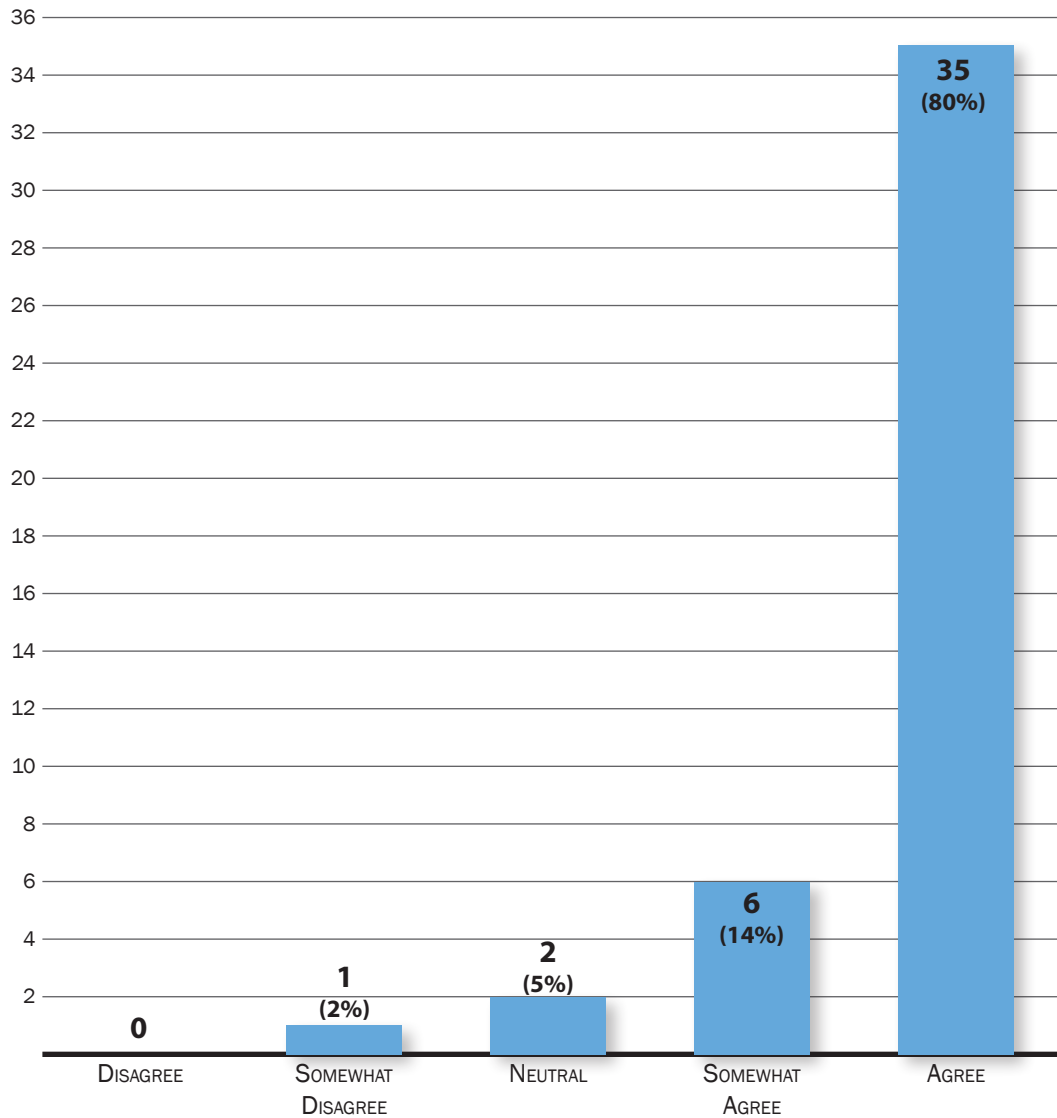


Total Respondents: 44

Compiled comments:

- None.

18. When I request support for the CCCOE financial system, initial contact from support staff is timely.



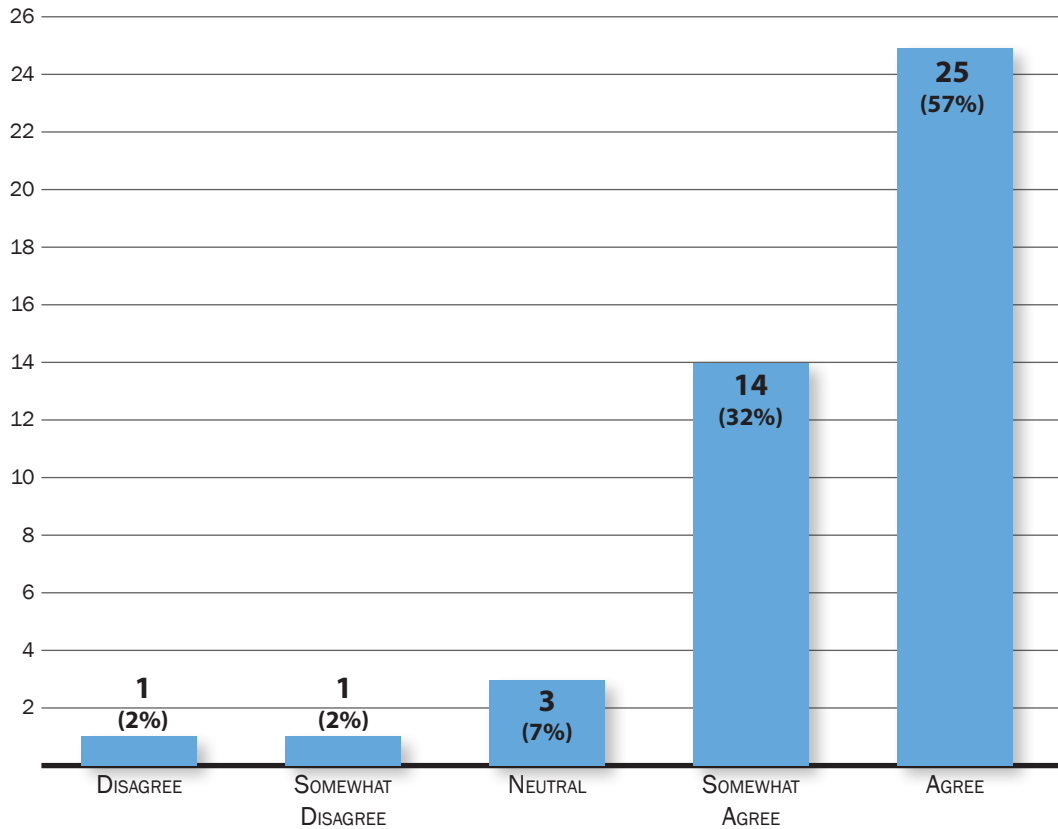
Total Respondents: 44

Compiled comments:

- None.



19. When I request support for the CCCOE financial system, my issue is resolved timely.

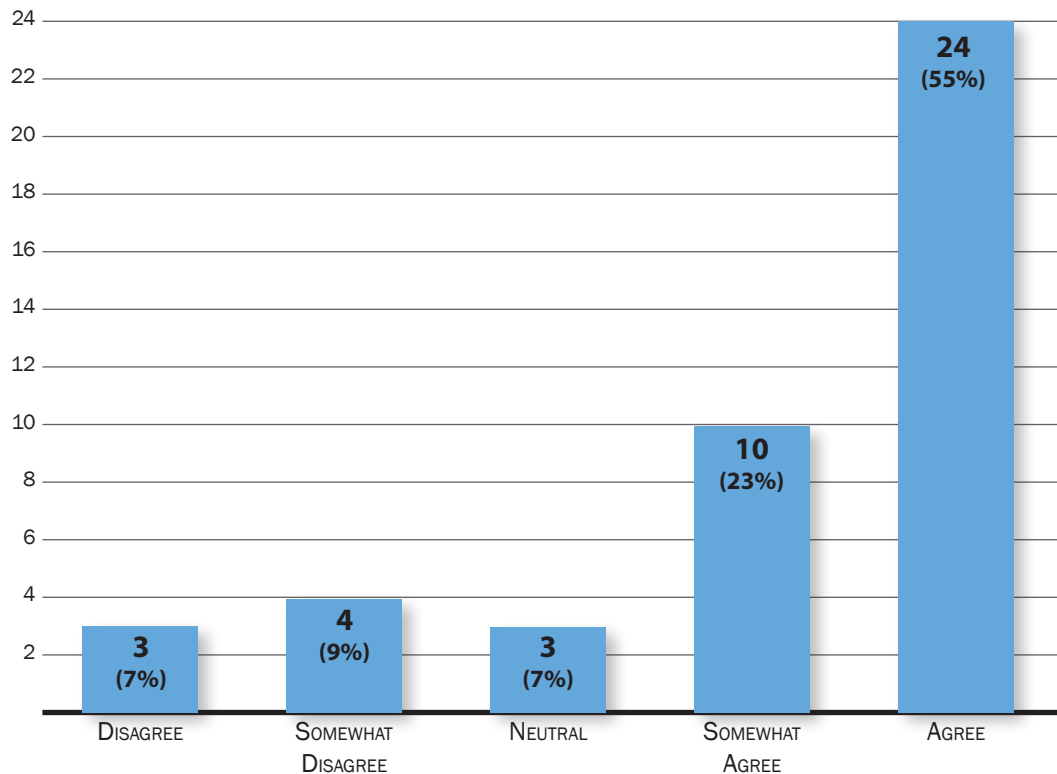


Total Respondents: 44

Compiled comments:

- Support requests that can be resolved internally at CCCOE are resolved timely. Delays appear to be due to CCCOE staff researching the issue and learning more about the financial system.
- Support requests that are escalated to Tyler Technologies are not resolved in a timely manner.

20. When changes or updates are applied to the CCCOE financial system software, I am notified in advance of the changes and when they will occur.



**Total Respondents: 44**

**Compiled comments:**

- Some support departments have been good about communicating the timing of updates, like the district business services department. But this information is not uniformly distributed across all disciplines.
- Some changes have occurred that were not communicated to clients.
- When changes are made, the details of what is changing and how it will affect clients is not communicated.
- Some clients rely on other clients to communicate when updates are going to occur; the information is not always distributed widely by the CCCOE.

**21. Please describe what you believe are the strengths of the support provided by the CCCOE for the financial system?**

- Support staff are friendly, responsive, sincere, dedicated, patient, courteous, cooperative and accommodating.
- Support staff are doing the best with the resources they have.
- User groups, online ticket system, help desk phone line, how to guides, and other forms of support are valued.
- The growth in support staff knowledge is visible and appreciated.
- Support staff value researching and responding to support requests quickly.

**22. Please describe what you believe to be areas of concern of the financial system supported by the CCCOE?**

- Clients would like to see staff continue to increase their knowledge of the system and district operations, including developing more staff with systemwide expertise.
- Reports limitations.
- Enhancement limitations.
- More training on business function processing that the prior system performed automatically.
- Keeping documentation updated to the current version of the software.

**23. Do you have any other comments or suggestions related to the support of the CCCOE financial system?**

- Non-technical staff does not understand district needs. Increase training for these support staff.
- Share what issues other districts have encountered so all can learn from it.
- Increase documentation. Examples: what modules do, how they do it.
- Update the software to the most current version to resolve existing issues.



# Appendix

## Study Agreement





CSIS California School Information Services

**FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM  
STUDY AGREEMENT  
March 25, 2013**

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the team, and the Contra Costa 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 assign professionals to study specific aspects of the county operations. These professionals may include staff of the team, county offices of education, the California State Department of Education, school districts, or private contractors. All work shall be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this agreement.

**2. SCOPE OF THE WORK**

**A. Scope and Objectives of the Study**

**Background:**

For many years, the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) had been using an integrated financial system developed and supported by the Contra Costa Community College District (CCCCD). CCCOE recently completed a conversion from this system to Tyler Technologies' Munis integrated financial solution. Day-to-day support for the new system is now provided by CCCOE staff instead of the CCCC. As a result of the conversion, many functions in business, payroll, and information technology were impacted by changes in workflow and responsibilities. CCCOE would like FCMAT to conduct a study to review the impact of these changes and make recommendations for improvement where needed.

1. Review the organization and staffing of the county's district payroll services, accounting services, district business services operations, technology, and human resources department. The review will include classified and management-level employees that perform business-related functions and a review of all related job descriptions as it relates to the system conversion.

2. Review job descriptions for district payroll services, accounting services, district business services, technology, and human resources department positions as it relates to the system conversion, interview staff and make recommendations for staff additions or reductions, if any. All recommendations will include estimated and calculated values for any proposed position reductions or enhancements to the organizational structure.
3. Review the current work flow and distribution of functions for all district payroll services, accounting services, district business services, technology, and human resources department positions as it relates to the system conversion, and make recommendations for improved efficiency. This will involve reviewing documentation, including policies and procedures, and gathering data regarding current practices, procedures and separation of duties. Additionally, the team may interview other staff to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of services delivered.
4. Review how help desk technical support is provided to internal and external users of the newly implemented financial system, and make recommendations for improving service, organization, and efficiency. The team will interview both the help desk staff and internal and external users receiving services.
5. Review the staffing, support and organization for delivery of information technology support services relative to supporting the new financial system and make recommendations for improvement with a focus on:
  - a. All information technology positions that support the financial system operations
  - b. The quality and timeliness of delivery of services to internal users, comparing pre and post financial implementation levels

**B. Services and Products to be Provided**

1. Orientation Meeting - The team will conduct an orientation session at the COE to brief management and supervisory personnel on the team's procedures and 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 – Approximately 10 days after the exit meeting, the team will issue an exit letter briefly summarizing 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’s administration for review and comment.
6. Final Report - Electronic copies of the final report will be delivered to the COE’s administration following completion of the review. The final report will be published on the FCMAT website. Printed copies are available from FCMAT upon request.
7. Follow-Up Support – If requested, FCMAT will return to the COE at no cost six months after completion of the study to assess the COE’s progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report. Progress in implementing 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. | Scott Sexsmith   | FCMAT Management Analyst, Project Lead |
| B. | Diane Branham    | FCMAT Chief Management Analyst         |
| C. | To be determined | FCMAT Consultant                       |
| D. | To be determined | FCMAT Consultant                       |

Other equally qualified staff or consultants will be substituted in the event one of the above 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 as follows:

- A. \$500. per day for each team member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, preparing and presenting reports, or participating in meetings. The cost of independent consultants will be billed at the actual daily rate based on the provisions of Education Code section 84041.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals, and lodging.

- C. 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 COE's acceptance of the final report.

**Based on the elements identified in section 2 A, the total estimated cost of the study will be \$12,000.**

- D. 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 during on-site reviews.
- B. The COE will provide the following if requested:
1. A map of the local area.
  2. Existing policies, regulations and prior reports that address the study scope.
  3. Current or proposed organizational charts.
  4. Current and two (2) prior years' audit reports.
  5. Any documents requested on a supplemental list. Documents requested on the supplemental list should be provided to FCMAT only in electronic format; if only hard copies are available, they should be scanned by the COE and sent to FCMAT in electronic format.
  6. Documents should be provided in advance of field work; any delay in the receipt of the requested documents may affect the start date of the project. Upon approval of the signed study agreement, access will be provided to FCMAT's online SharePoint document repository, to which the COE shall upload all requested documents.
- C. The COE's administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the report resulting from 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 pupils. The COE shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

## 6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following tentative schedule outlines the planned completion dates for different phases of the study:


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

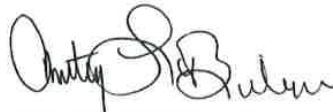
## 7. CONTACT PERSON

Name of contact person: Bill Clark, Associate Superintendent, Business

Telephone: (925) 942-3418 FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: [bclark@cccoc.k12.ca.us](mailto:bclark@cccoc.k12.ca.us)

 \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Joseph Ovick, Ed.D., Superintendent Date  
 Contra Costa County Office of Education

 \_\_\_\_\_ March 25, 2013 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Anthony Bridges, CFE Date  
 Deputy Executive Officer  
 Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

