FCMAT
FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
CSIS California School Information Services

El Centro Elementary School District

Maintenance, Operations, Transportation and Grounds Organizational Review

April 7, 2017

Joel D. Montero
Chief Executive Officer



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Jon K. LeDoux, Superintendent
El Centro Elementary School District
1256 Broadway
El Centro, CA 922343

Dear Superintendent LeDoux:

In October 2016, the El Centro Elementary School District and FCMAT entered into an agreement for FCMAT to review the organization and staffing of certain district departments. Specifically, the study agreement states that FCMAT will complete the following:

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the district's Maintenance, Operations and Transportation and Child Nutrition/Warehousing departments and make recommendations for staffing improvements or reductions, if any, in the following areas:
    a. Maintenance and Operations (including grounds and custodial)
    b. Transportation
    c. Warehouse and Delivery
2. Evaluate the current workflow and distribution of functions in each of the above areas and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
3. Review the operational processes and procedures for each of the above areas and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations in the above areas of review. FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the El Centro Elementary School District 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

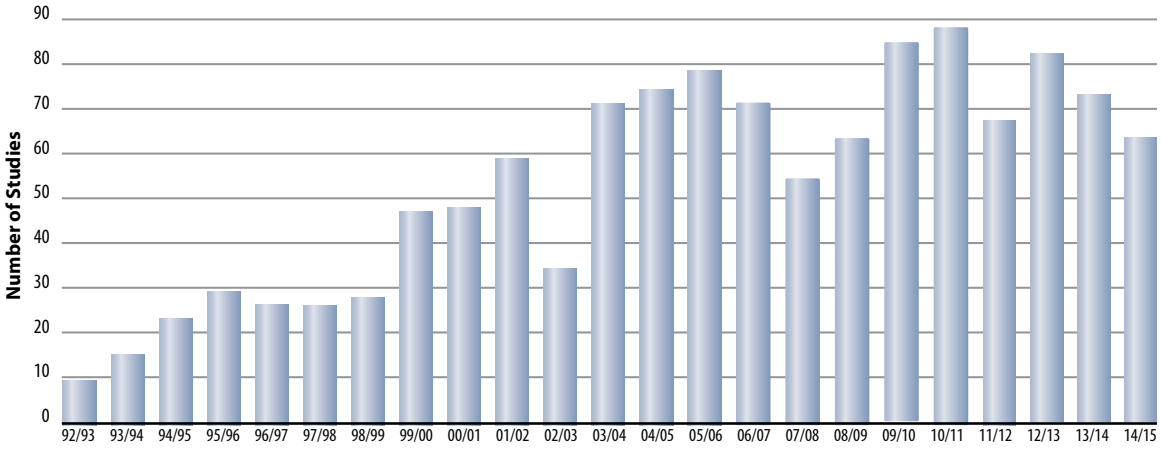
FCMAT's primary mission is to assist California's local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial, human resources and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related 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, support the training and development of chief business officials and help to create efficient organizational operations. FCMAT's data management services are used to help local educational agencies (LEAs) meet state reporting responsibilities, improve data quality, and inform instructional program decisions.

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 LEA 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.

FCMAT has continued to make adjustments in the types of support provided based on the changing dynamics of K-14 LEAs and the implementation of major educational reforms.

Studies by Fiscal Year



FCMAT also develops and provides numerous publications, software tools, workshops and professional development opportunities to help LEAs operate more effectively and fulfill their fiscal oversight and data management responsibilities. The California School Information Services (CSIS) division of FCMAT assists the California Department of Education with the implementation of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). CSIS also hosts and maintains the Ed-Data website (www.ed-data.org) and provides technical expertise to the Ed-Data partnership: the California Department of Education, EdSource and FCMAT.

FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill (AB) 1200 in 1992 to assist LEAs to meet and sustain their financial obligations. AB 107 in 1997 charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its statewide data management work. AB 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. AB 2756 (2004) provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans.

In January 2006, Senate Bill 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 more than 1,000 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 El Centro Elementary School District is a suburban K-8 elementary school district situated within and serving most of the city of El Centro as well as the community of Victoria Ranch in the adjacent city of Imperial. The district is approximately two hours east of San Diego in Imperial County and encompasses approximately 10 square miles. The primary local industry is agriculture. The district has nine K-6 elementary schools, two junior high schools serving students in grades 7-8, and one K-8 school. In addition, the district has one charter school within its boundaries. The district recently passed a general obligation bond and is planning to build a second K-8 school.

The district has a student enrollment of approximately 5,000 and is experiencing slight enrollment growth. The district was expanding more rapidly before the Great Recession, and is anticipated to return to similar rapid growth in the future based on the stability of the local economy.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Eric D. Smith, MPA
FCMAT Intervention Specialist
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Chris Johnston*
Director of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations
Pleasant Valley School District
Camarillo, CA

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Poway Unified School District
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Sanger, CA

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Bakersfield, CA

*As members of this study team, these individuals were not representing their respective employers but were working solely as independent contractors for FCMAT. Each team member reviewed the draft report to confirm its accuracy and to achieve consensus on the final recommendations.

Study and Report Guidelines

FCMAT visited the district on January 25-27, 2017 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documents. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Organizational Structure
- Maintenance
- Custodial
- Grounds
- Transportation
- Warehouse and Delivery

In writing its reports, FCMAT uses the Associated Press Stylebook, a comprehensive guide to usage and accepted style that emphasizes conciseness and clarity. In addition, this guide emphasizes plain language, discourages the use of jargon and capitalizes relatively few terms.

Executive Summary

Maintenance

The district lacks complete deferred maintenance and preventive maintenance plans. With the exception of heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems, most maintenance work is performed in response to emergencies and building system failures. For example, during recent rains, maintenance staff were required to clear clogged drains on a multipurpose room roof. Roof drain cleaning should be completed before the start of the rainy season. Reactive maintenance is more costly and less efficient than proactive maintenance.

The Maintenance Department's job descriptions and organizational chart are not aligned with the actual functions of management and line staff. For example, although all skilled maintenance II positions have the same job description, workers in this position have different areas of specialization. One individual almost exclusively performs locksmith duties and has a separate position on the organizational chart, but has the same job description as the other skilled maintenance II workers. This leads to confusion among the maintenance staff members and could result in charges of favoritism in work order assignments. Rewriting the job descriptions would clarify responsibilities and functions, and serve as a starting point for implementing other efficiency measures in the department.

The responsibilities of the maintenance, operations and transportation (MOT) director and the maintenance and grounds supervisor are not clearly delineated. This leads to confusion among maintenance staff, results in duplication of work, and hinders communication. Establishing clear areas of responsibility would help management establish long-term plans for deferred and preventive maintenance, and provide the clarity needed for planning and accountability.

Custodial

Responsibility for the district's custodial operation is divided between school principals and the transportation and custodial supervisor. Principals are responsible for the day-to-day supervision and evaluation of their custodians, but the transportation and custodial supervisor monitors their attendance, provides training, and procures custodial equipment on their behalf.

School principals are not familiar with custodial operations and lack the training and experience needed to assess a custodial employee's effectiveness. Evaluating custodians also creates additional responsibilities for the principals, who already must perform staff evaluations and increase academic performance at their schools. Principals sometimes use daytime custodians for services not included in their job descriptions, which adversely affects custodial schedules. The district should consider hiring a dedicated supervisor of operations and reassigning to this position responsibilities for equipment procurement and for supervising, evaluating, training, and monitoring attendance of custodial staff.

Custodial equipment and tools are not standardized throughout the district. Some sites reported having new equipment and hand tools, but others indicate they have obsolete equipment, old tools or a lack of hand tools. In some instances, custodial staff reported bringing their personal hand tools to work to perform minor maintenance at their sites.

Grounds

The district's groundskeepers lack equipment and vehicles, and many sites do not have adequate equipment or tools for employees to perform weekly tasks. Because of this, groundskeepers travel to and from sites to pick up equipment each day, resulting in a loss of productive time.

Employees reported that they have requested additional equipment or turned in equipment for repair, but interviews indicated that equipment repairs can take up to six months. Employees also expressed frustration with the slow pace of equipment purchases, which has resulted in employees bringing their own tools from home.

The Grounds Department has two vehicles for 5.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. As a result, some groundskeepers use their own vehicles to travel to and from sites. Although groundskeepers are reimbursed for mileage, they often do not have sufficient tools or repair parts to perform their jobs efficiently. The irrigation repair employee drives a truck with five-gallon buckets in the truck bed for parts storage; this is unsafe and inefficient. Providing all groundskeepers with district vehicles would allow the department to provide one set of tools for each employee rather than one set for each school site.

Transportation

The district does not separate and track transportation and vehicle maintenance to appropriate cost centers but needs to do so. The district's transportation budget also does not separate bus and non-bus vehicle expenses or general education and special education transportation expenses to track vehicle maintenance support, fuel and labor costs separately.

The district charges schools a flat rate of $150 or $300 for field trips, depending on destination. The district does not use a formula to calculate these charges, and the rates do not cover operating expenses.

The district's transportation facility is adequately equipped with two maintenance bays, office areas, and fleet parking. However, the maintenance bays are not accessible to vehicle maintenance staff after 2:30 p.m. or before 6:30 a.m. because of the need to park fleet vehicles inside the bus maintenance facility for security purposes. This limited access creates difficulties for vehicle maintenance staff.

Warehouse and Delivery

Interviews with staff and a review of documents indicated that the district's three stock clerks/drivers make three trips per day to each elementary school. One trip is to pick up food delivery carts and return them to the central kitchen. Purchasing an extra set of delivery carts would allow the district to eliminate this trip.

The warehouse print shop made 1.3 million copies last year and anticipates a 20% increase this year. The employee responsible for reprographics also performs shipping and receiving duties, verifies shipments to sites, handles UPS and FedEx, and makes the afternoon mail run. The district should consider restructuring or shifting duties, such as inventory management, pulling orders, and special deliveries, to a stock clerk or similar position in the department to increase efficiency.

Findings and Recommendations

Organizational Structure

A school district's organizational structure should establish the framework for leadership and the delegation of specific duties and responsibilities for all staff members. This structure should be managed to maximize resources and reach identified goals and should adapt as a district's enrollment increases or declines. A district should be staffed according to basic, generally accepted theories of organizational structure and the standards used in other school agencies of similar size and type. The most common theories of organizational structure are span of control, chain of command, and line and staff authority.

Span of Control

Span of control refers to the number of subordinates who report directly to a supervisor. Although there is no agreed-upon ideal number of subordinates for span of control, it is generally agreed that the span can be larger at lower levels than at higher levels of an organization because employees at the lower levels typically perform more routine duties and therefore can be more effectively supervised, according to *Principles of School Business Management* by Craig R. Wood, David C. Thompson and Lawrence O. Picus.

Chain of Command

Chain of command refers to the flow of authority in an organization and is characterized by two significant principles: unity of command suggests that a subordinate be accountable to only one supervisor; and the scalar principle suggests that authority and responsibility should flow in a direct vertical line from top management to the lowest level. The result is a hierarchical division of labor as described in *Principles of School Business Management*.

Line and Staff Authority

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

The purpose of any organizational structure is to help a district's management make key decisions to facilitate student learning while balancing its financial resources. The organizational design should outline the management process and its specific links to the formal system of communication, authority and responsibility needed to achieve a district's goals and objectives.

District MOT Organizational Structure

The district's MOT Department is managed by the director of MOT, who has two line supervisors: one supervises transportation and custodians, and one supervises maintenance and grounds. The director is also responsible for school facilities planning and construction. This responsibility will need to be assumed by the assistant superintendent of administrative services once the director of MOT retires. The span of control for the director of MOT is too broad. Typically,

districts of similar size and structure to El Centro Elementary have at least three line supervisors: one for transportation, one for maintenance and grounds, and one for custodial operations. Recommendations regarding the number and type of additional supervisorial personnel the district should have are provided later in this report.

Recommendation

The district should:

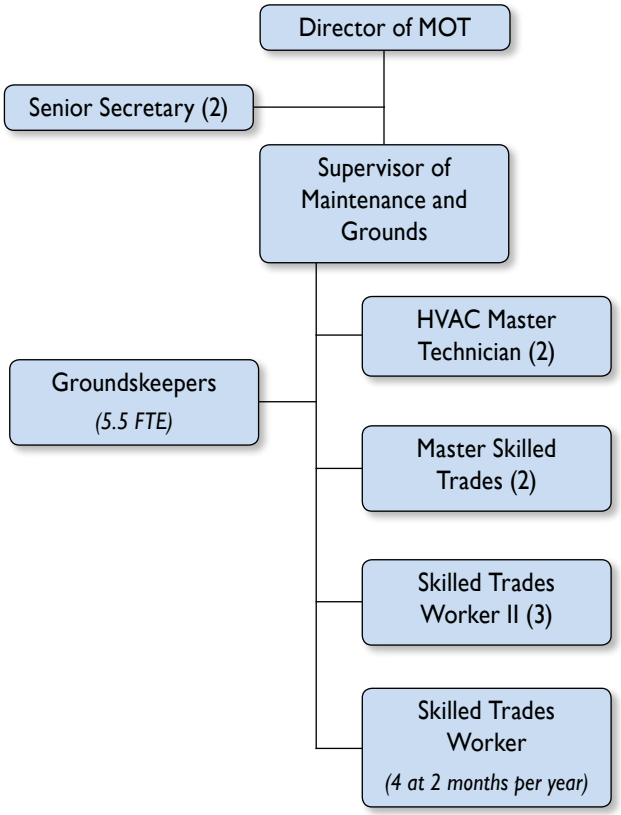
1. Reassign the responsibility for facilities planning and construction to the assistant superintendent of administrative services once the director of MOT retires.

Maintenance

Department Overview

The director of MOT has led the MOT Department since 2003 and has overseen maintenance since 1998. The maintenance and grounds supervisor reports to the director of MOT. Seven full-time maintenance staff, four part-year maintenance staff, and six grounds staff (5.5 FTEs) report to the maintenance and grounds supervisor.

MOT Organizational Structure



Job Descriptions and Duties

Because of budget cuts and staffing changes, the maintenance department has been reconfigured several times over the past 15 years. In its current configuration, there are two heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) master technicians, two master skilled trades workers, and three skilled trades II workers. During the summer, four bus drivers who drive special education transportation routes during the school year serve in skilled trades worker I positions, mainly painting classroom interiors.

In 2015, the positions of two master skilled trades workers who were specializing in HVAC repairs were reclassified to the title of HVAC master technician to allow those staff members to work almost exclusively on HVAC needs. Average daily high temperatures in El Centro exceed 95 degrees from May through mid-October, and when air conditioning units do not function, children have to be moved out of the affected classrooms. These conditions make HVAC repairs a matter of classroom safety.

Job descriptions for the other maintenance position classifications have not been updated since 1998. As a result, there is a lack of alignment between job descriptions, the organizational chart, and the actual functioning of the maintenance department. Although all three skilled maintenance II positions have the same job description, in practice workers have distinct areas of specialization. For example, locksmith duties are performed almost exclusively by one individual who is classified as a skilled maintenance II worker and has the same job description as the other skilled maintenance II workers, but who has a separate position on the organizational chart and has received training in locksmithing. This discrepancy leads to confusion among the maintenance staff members and leaves room for accusations of favoritism in work order assignments. This situation also occurs in the areas of plumbing and welding.

Job descriptions, the organizational chart, and actual work duties should all be in alignment. This is true for any department. Overly broad maintenance job descriptions and the equal sharing of skilled trades work is most often ineffective and is not recommended. As demonstrated by the way the department has chosen to operate, having specific trade work assigned to specific individuals with the training, tools and skills needed for the trade is a more effective way to operate.

It would benefit the district to rewrite the job descriptions for the skilled maintenance II staff members. This would provide clarity of responsibility, align the department structure with the way the department actually functions, and lay the groundwork for other efficiency measures recommended in this report.

It is common for school districts to establish specialization in positions such as these without precluding general maintenance assignments or work in other trades; this is accomplished by keeping general maintenance duties in the job descriptions and adding the area of specialization. Based on the current department structure and work assignments, the district could benefit from using the following three classifications:

- Skilled Maintenance II/Locksmith
- Skilled Maintenance II/Plumber
- Skilled Maintenance II/Welder

The skilled maintenance II/welder classification is not common in small and medium-sized school districts; a more common classification is skilled maintenance II/painter. However, in practice the district uses skilled maintenance I workers for painting during the summer, and somewhat evenly distributes painting work during the school year. Therefore, the welder position, which requires more specific tools and training, is more aligned with the district's needs.

Many maintenance staff members are under the impression that the position of master skilled trades, which is at a higher pay scale than the skilled maintenance II position, was established as a generalist maintenance position rather than a specialized position. In practice, the master skilled trades position is primarily responsible for electrician's duties, fire alarm repairs, telephone systems, and lighting needs, in addition to serving in a lead role on in-house projects. As with other positions, the job description, actual work assignments, and district needs must all be aligned. It is also important for each employee to know his or her role and purpose within the organization, and what skills would need to be acquired in order to advance within the organization. Thus it would benefit the district to rewrite the master skilled trades job description to include the specialization and project lead responsibilities. Sample language for project lead responsibilities is as follows:

- Plan and lay out assigned work

- Provide work guidance to coworkers and helpers as assigned
- Review the work of others as assigned; assist other maintenance personnel as required

Director and Supervisor Roles

FCMAT's interviews with staff and review of department procedures indicate that there is a lack of clear delineation of responsibilities between the director of MOT and the maintenance and grounds supervisor. This leads to confusion among maintenance staff, results in duplication of work, and hinders communication between maintenance staff and department management. For example, when asked about preventive maintenance work items, approximately half of the employees who indicated that they had shared possible preventive maintenance actions reported sharing those suggestions with the supervisor; the other half reported sharing the suggestions with the director. Even if the director and supervisor were keeping separate lists to merge later, this is not an efficient or organized way to gather staff input. Similar overlap and confusion in communication exists for nearly every issue inquired about, including the following:

- Both the director and supervisor review and approve every work order that comes in through the electronic work order system.
- Both the director and supervisor approve every non-emergency materials procurement request.
- Both the director and the supervisor approve tool purchase requests.
- Both the director and the supervisor perceive the other to be responsible for preventive maintenance planning.
- Some staff members report regular interaction with the director regarding routine matters that should be handled by the supervisor. This takes up the director's time and leaves the supervisor out of the flow of information.

Approximately one third of staff members interviewed referred to the director as "my supervisor," which is symptomatic of the role confusion in the department.

Although a moderate degree of overlap in responsibilities is normal, redundant work is inefficient and has negative consequences such as an overallocation of management time to routine tasks at the expense of strategic planning. Management structures work best when there are clear spheres of responsibility for both the director and the supervisor. For processes that involve both the director and supervisor, roles and responsibilities need to be defined and clear to all, including line staff so they know where to direct communication on a given issue.

In addition to defining roles, decentralizing routine decision making is critical to establishing efficient structures. Processes must empower those performing routine work to make the decisions needed to carry out their job duties and still have accountability. Without this balance, work processes become inefficient and overly dependent on the input of a single person within the organization. One of the many liabilities of this type of structure is that when this person is unavailable, work ceases until their input can be received.

It would benefit the district to review processes and establish clear responsibilities for both the director and the supervisor. This should include a clear statement that although the director is responsible for the overall results of the department, she is not responsible for individually achieving those results. The benefits of a clear delineation of responsibilities include increased efficiency, clarity for department staff, and structures that provide for accountability. The

following delegation/distribution matrix provides a way to determine the importance and assignment of various processes:

	High Stakes	Lower Stakes
Planning/ Strategic	Do	Guide
Routine	Delegate and Monitor	Release and Spot Check

It would be helpful for the director of MOT and the assist superintendent of administrative services to meet for a delegation/distribution process meeting. This meeting could start with a list of the various areas of responsibility and processes of the maintenance department. A suggested starting list is as follows:

- Work order system
- Tool purchases
- Stocking of parts
- Supply procurement
- Facilities use requests (civic center)
- Preventive maintenance planning
- Deferred maintenance planning
- Facilities planning
- Safety programs
- Inspections
- Irrigation schedules

This list would be broken down into a list of responsibilities and tasks for each key area. This distilled responsibilities list would then be reviewed using the delegation/distribution matrix above. The outcome of this process would be four responsibilities lists, one for each box of the matrix table:

1. The director's **Do** list: responsibilities that she must perform herself or that must remain under her direct control.
2. The **Guide** list: low-risk yet strategic issues, for which the supervisor must perform the work while guided by the director.
3. The **Delegate and Monitor** list: responsibilities that must belong to the supervisor, who will regularly report work results to the director.
4. The **Release and Spot Check** list: responsibilities that belong to the supervisor; the director performs only spot checks on these items to ensure compliance with directives.

Department Operations and Efficiency

Overview

The director of MOT has established many well-defined operating procedures. Maintenance staff and the supervisor are aware of these and of the clear mandate that they be followed. The director of MOT is equally aware of the need for increased efficiency in the department and has expressed this to maintenance staff. Maintenance staff mentioned "windshield time" (a term for driving time) and "efficiency" throughout FCMAT's interviews. A review of department operations with an eye on efficiency is warranted.

Work Order System

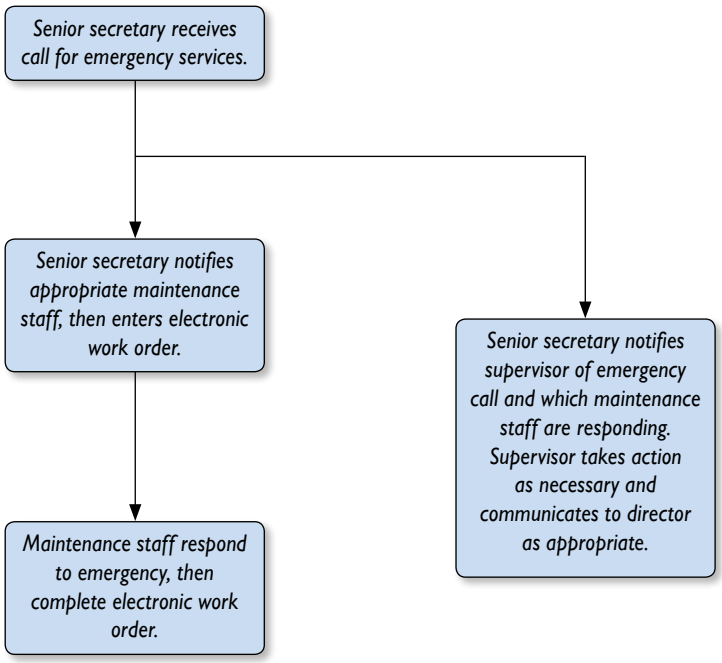
The maintenance department uses two work order systems: School Dude Direct for routine work orders, and a paper-based system for emergency work orders. Most routine work orders are generated at the sites. Every work order is electronically routed to the director of MOT, who individually approves each work order. After approval from the director of MOT, the work order arrives in the queue of the supervisor, who then assigns the work order to maintenance staff. Maintenance staff use iPads to receive and complete work orders using the School Dude application. Work orders are given a priority of "safety," "high," "medium," or "low." Staff members have been trained and understand the need to address work orders according to their priority.

Emergency work orders are handled separately. When an emergency arises, such as the failure of an HVAC unit, school staff telephone the maintenance department senior secretary, who notes the request and, depending on the severity of the emergency, alerts the supervisor of maintenance via either email or telephone. The supervisor then alerts maintenance staff of the emergency via hand-held radio, which all maintenance staff members carry. Maintenance staff respond to this verbal request for service. The senior secretary then generates a paper emergency work order and places it in the maintenance staff member's mailbox. At the end of the work day the maintenance staff member completes the paper emergency work order, noting time and materials. The emergency work order is not documented in the electronic work order system.

The use of two work order systems is not efficient and does not make full use of the electronic work order system. The paper-based emergency work order system is less efficient than the electronic system and, because orders are not entered into School Dude, deprives the district of the opportunity to capture valuable data about where emergencies are occurring, which could be used when planning long-term maintenance and creating equipment replacement schedules. Efficient organization calls for a single work order system with streamlined processes that route the work request to the correct tradesperson as quickly as possible.

It would benefit the district to transfer its current paper-based emergency work order process to the School Dude work order system, and to create a more efficient procedure that improves response time and streamlines recordkeeping. A best practice for receiving and responding to emergency service requests would be for the senior secretary to alert the appropriate maintenance staff member when they receive a request, based on a chart provided by the supervisor; alert the supervisor; and enter the emergency request in School Dude.

The following flow chart illustrates this process:



Under the district's current procedure, the director of MOT reviews each work order before the supervisor assigns the work. This is not an effective use of the director's time and is rare in school districts. It would be more efficient for the director to establish a list of allowed and disallowed work to guide the supervisor in assigning work orders. The work orders could then be routed directly to the supervisor, who would use his judgment and the director's instructions to properly assign work orders. If uncertain about the appropriateness of a work order, the supervisor can check with the director, and the director could perform spot checks or weekly reviews to ensure compliance by the supervisor. This workflow structure is common in school districts, frees the director's time for higher-level planning tasks, and addresses previously-noted issues with the distribution of work between the director and supervisor.

Daily Logs and Accountability

The district has two accountability procedures for maintenance staff. When closing out work orders in the School Dude system, maintenance staff are required to input the time spent and the materials used for the work order. At the end of the work day, maintenance staff are also required to fill out "dailies" -- a log with an hour-by-hour account of time, location, and materials used. Maintenance staff members report spending an average of 20 to 30 minutes per day on this documentation, and arriving at the maintenance yard well before the end of their shift each day so they have sufficient time to complete the daily log. Maintenance managers reported a concern that staff return to the yard well before the end of the work shift. Daily accountability of maintenance staff is important; however, duplicate processes are inefficient, and time filling out paperwork is time not spent completing work orders. These duplicate processes need to be consolidated into a single process. As staff complete work orders they can enter the time completed, total time spent, and materials used into the School Dude system, along with pertinent notes. This will provide full accountability and tracking of time, and the documentation can be completed throughout the day as time permits. This will allow more time to complete work orders, compile the data in an electronically available format, and remove the reason some maintenance staff give for arriving in the maintenance yard early.

Stocking of Parts

The maintenance and grounds supervisor maintains a stock of doorstops, safety glasses and earplugs. Maintenance staff maintain a bare minimum stock of repair parts and supplies in their vehicles or work areas. Standard practice for maintenance departments is to stock high-use materials and supplies, regularly-used parts, and specialty parts that take a long time to receive when ordered. Availability of parts and supplies is critical to efficient operations. Even if a nearby store stocks a part, the time it takes to go to the store, wait in line and process paperwork results in a loss of efficiency to the district that could be avoided if the part were held in district stock. Because the district has adequate parts storage space and knowledgeable maintenance staff, it would benefit from taking three actions to remedy this situation.

1. A review of the past year's purchases and consideration of stocking a six-month to one-year supply of all high-use and frequently-purchased parts and supplies. These include common fasteners, consumables like caulking, standard paint colors, and even glazing materials.

2. Development of a plan to stock lock sets, plumbing fixtures, and HVAC components, with the input of maintenance staff.

3. A review of equipment that has reached or exceeded its intended life cycle, and subsequent stocking of any parts for this equipment that take a long time to order. For example, if there is a thirty-year-old air conditioning unit with a non-standard sized compressor, the district should consider ordering now and stocking the compressor to avoid extended outages. Availability of these parts and supplies will reduce response time and increase the time maintenance staff can spend on productive repairs rather than driving and procurement, resulting in further gains in efficiency.

Purchasing and Procurement

The director of MOT has established clear purchasing procedures for the maintenance department. Blanket purchase orders may be used only for purchases up to $200. Any purchase over $200, even for consumables such as paint, requires a separate purchase order. In addition, neither maintenance staff nor the supervisor are permitted to make any purchase over $50 without written approval from the director. If a purchase over $50 is needed, even for supplies like fasteners, a "green slip" must be filled out. Maintenance staff submit this form to the supervisor; upon his approval the form is routed to the director, who must sign it before purchasing can take place.

Maintenance staff report regularly having to work around these procedures to complete their work orders. Some staff members reported breaking larger materials and supply purchases into smaller orders, then making multiple trips to avoid the $50 threshold -- a clear waste of time. Others reported emergency situations during which they implored suppliers for a part needed to repair school equipment, promising to bring a new purchase order by the end of the day. Staff members also reported receiving verbal permission to bypass procedures in an emergency, but expressed uneasiness about risking discipline for breaking the rules to complete their jobs.

Although the need for purchasing controls is important, the $50 and $200 thresholds are overly strict and cause many inefficiencies that impede employees' ability to complete work orders. Best practice for school district purchasing procedures is to make distinctions among supplies, parts and non-capitalized equipment, with appropriate purchasing procedures and thresholds for each.

Abuse of the purchasing procedures is addressed through disciplinary action for the individual involved rather than through greater restrictions on all staff.

It would benefit the district to establish new purchasing procedures as this would improve efficiency and productivity and facilitate budgeting without compromising accountability. Two issues will need to be addressed: whether there is a necessity for separate purchase orders for single purchases over $200; and the purchasing limits on maintenance staff. A review of *California School Accounting Manual* Procedure 770 would inform this process. A common threshold for requiring creation of a separate purchase order is $500 for a single item. Unless the district is capitalizing items valued at less than $500, the $500 threshold for purchase of a single item will serve to track inventory (pursuant to Education Code Section 35168) and will reduce the total number of purchase orders and consequently the volume of paperwork. This change would allow blanket purchase orders for an average year's worth of supplies to be opened at the beginning of the fiscal year, encumbering those funds and providing a more accurate view of account balances when those are periodically checked. In addition, it would benefit the district if management increased the purchasing limit for maintenance staff to $250 for supplies as a starting point. Individuals who abuse this limit would face disciplinary action on an individual basis. This change will empower staff; the increased trust will improve morale; and efficiency will improve.

Tools

The availability of tools and equipment directly affects maintenance employees' ability to perform their jobs, which reflects on their professional pride and credibility. Because of this, interview questions relating to tools elicited emotional responses. Staff reported both enthusiasm for the acquisition of new, specialized tools like a tungsten insert gas (TIG) welder, and frustration at the lack of some basic tools. Three maintenance staff members reported sharing a single cordless reciprocating saw. Staff also reported driving to school sites to borrow tools from their colleagues, a clear waste of time that could otherwise be devoted to completing work orders. Maintenance staff also reported bringing personal tools to work to properly complete certain tasks. Compounding these issues is the lack of clarity in job descriptions, which sometimes results in perceived inequalities in assigned tools, and opens the door for accusations of favoritism. Staff reported finding some shared tools, like the sewer snake, inoperable when needed to respond to an emergency.

All maintenance staff members need to have a common set of basic tools, and specialized tools needed for specific trades need to be available to those tradespersons. When there is a disparity between the tools needed and the tools available, the district needs to have a clear process for ensuring that all staff have the tools they need to perform their jobs. This would demonstrate to maintenance staff that their jobs are valued and that no one is receiving preferential treatment.

It would benefit the district to change its procedures to remedy the current situation. The practices outlined below are common and helpful:

1. Establishing a yearly tool budget, setting 20% aside for replacing broken tools during the year ahead and spending the remaining 80% at the beginning of the fiscal year for tools and known replacement needs.

2. Holding a meeting for all maintenance staff members, at which four tool and equipment lists are established: basic tools, trade-specific tools, shared tools, and wish list equipment. The basic tools list includes wrenches, screwdrivers, cordless drills, and other tools that every maintenance staff member needs.

3. Purchasing the tools needed on the basic tools, trade-specific tools, and shared tools lists.

4. Creating a check-in and check-out procedure for shared tools and equipment. The maintenance and grounds supervisor would be responsible for tracking use and ensuring that shared tools, like the sewer snake, are always in good repair. This individual would also provide corrective discipline to individuals who are not properly caring for equipment.

5. Creating a wish list for tools and equipment for the group, with the understanding that if money is saved by caring for equipment, the saved money from the tool fund will be used for the wish list items. A visible list like this can provide motivation for the group to better care for the equipment they have.

A process like the one above ensures that staff members have the tools they need, leading to increased productivity. It also increases efficiency by reducing the time spent driving to obtain tools. The openness and accessibility of the process to employees and others also helps engage staff members, makes use of their expertise, and dispels accusations of favoritism, thereby improving morale.

Staffing Levels

During interviews, both maintenance staff and district leaders expressed two common perceptions: that the school facilities are generally in poor condition compared to what is desired for the children, and that these conditions might be remedied by the addition of maintenance staff members.

To determine whether additional staffing would improve the condition of facilities requires reviewing the types of facilities needs. FCMAT's interviews with employees, review of documents and site inspections indicate that the district has many facilities needs that are not of the type that can be remedied by routine maintenance, nor or they the result of a lack thereof. These needs include repaving of parking lots, rebuilding of large amounts of sidewalk, repainting of entire schools, and reroofing entire campuses. The district has put forth and its voters have passed a facilities bond, so it will have the resources needed to address these and other major needs.

Determining whether the current staffing is appropriate for routine maintenance needs begins with standard maintenance staffing formulas, but must also take into consideration the age of the facilities, the condition of the buildings, the extent to which complex work items are handled in-house or contracted out, and factors such as location and weather conditions.

The Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA: Leadership in Education Facilities) provides a formula for determining appropriate maintenance staffing based on the desired level of service. The levels of service are as follows:

- Level 1 – Showpiece Facility (the highest standard)
- Level 2 – Comprehensive Stewardship (this is the recommended staffing level for schools)
- Level 3 – Managed Care (work order response time can be lengthy, and facilities' conditions remain stagnant)
- Level 4 – Reactive Management (facilities' conditions deteriorate at an accelerated rate)

- Level 5 – Crisis Response (maintenance staff can only respond to emergencies)

Using the APPA formula for maintenance staffing (http://www.appa.org/fourcore/), the following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions the district needs for each level of service:

Level of Service	# of FTE
Level 1 – Showpiece Facility	7.7
Level 2 – Comprehensive Stewardship	6.0
Level 3 – Managed Care	4.4
Level 4 – Reactive Management	3.8
Level 5 – Crisis Response	2.0

The following factors must also be considered:

- The severe heat in El Centro that requires additional attention to HVAC
- Maintenance staff are assigned remodeling projects, and the school facilities are overdue for modernization work

These factors warrant the addition of 1.0 FTE to the staffing levels noted above. Therefore, to achieve the recommended Comprehensive Stewardship level of service, the district needs 7.0 FTE maintenance staff, which is the number it now has.

Based on this analysis, the district's maintenance staffing level is adequate for routine maintenance services. However, several factors mitigate this statement. As noted earlier, some current processes reduce the department's efficiency, and actions are needed to remedy this. There is also a lack of preventive maintenance work. Implementing a preventive maintenance plan will reduce the number of system failures and thus the number of emergency repairs needed, which will effectively increase productivity. The age of facilities is also a factor. Major maintenance work that is deferred, like reroofing, often results in emergency work orders for maintenance staff. With the recent passage of a facilities bond, the district is on the verge of addressing its backlog of deferred maintenance. As this occurs, emergency repairs will be reduced, which will increase the department's productivity. Finally, in-house projects must be considered. Although in-house remodeling of offices and restrooms is a cost-effective way to complete work, it adds to the workload and interferes with the department's ability to complete preventive maintenance. The district will also need to keep in mind that Public Contract Code section 20114 limits the amount of labor maintenance personnel can expend on a job to 350 hours.

All of these factors will need to be addressed. With improved efficiency, implementation of preventive maintenance, completion of deferred maintenance projects, and careful selection and scheduling of in-house projects, the current maintenance staffing level will be adequate to meet the district's routine maintenance needs in a timely manner. If the recommendations in this report are not implemented, the district will need to hire additional maintenance staff to respond to emergency work requests.

Maintenance Planning

In any organization, one of the maintenance department's challenges is to move away from reactive maintenance and toward proactive maintenance. The district's maintenance department is no different. The vast majority of work orders are in response to facility problems and system

failures. Reactive maintenance is less efficient and more costly than proactive maintenance. The key to more proactive maintenance is careful maintenance planning.

Preventive Maintenance and Inspections

Successful preventive maintenance and inspection plans include in-house preventive work as well as contracted inspections and work. In 2015 the district's two HVAC master technicians developed a preventive maintenance plan for the district's HVAC units; the district has no formal preventive maintenance plan for other equipment or facilities. However, the department recently purchased the PM Direct module for School Dude, which allows it to include preventive maintenance in the electronic work order system. The district needs a preventive maintenance plan that draws on the expertise and site-specific knowledge that district maintenance staff possesses. It would benefit the district to include the following building systems in such a plan:

- Roofs
- HVAC
- Walls
- Electrical
- Gas lines
- Plumbing supply and waste
- Fire alarms

For contracted preventive maintenance and inspection, the district relies on vendors to contact the district to schedule work. Although the department reports that this works well, the district needs to be in control of this process rather than rely on vendors to schedule critical inspection work. Best practice would be to enter this work into the PM Direct module of School Dude and assign the supervisor to schedule the work with the vendor. Items to input include backflow preventer testing, fire alarm service and inspection, fire sprinkler service and inspection, bleacher inspection, playground inspection, wheelchair lift inspection, and fire extinguisher service.

Deferred Maintenance Planning

During interviews, the general consensus expressed was that the schools need major repairs, and FCMAT's site inspection confirmed this. Although work items that can be performed by in-house maintenance staff are well cared for, major systems such as HVAC units and boilers, beyond the ability of maintenance staff to replace were found to be failing.

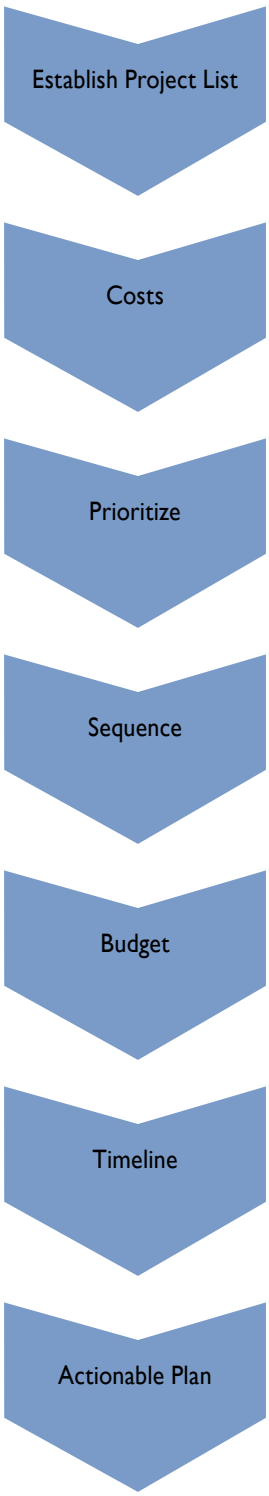
In the spring of 2016 the architectural firm of Tate Snyder Kimsey (TSK) conducted a facility needs assessment and issued a report that included an extensive list of major systems repair and modernization needs. The total facilities and maintenance needs exceed $117 million, more than $33 million of which is for high priority repair needs. These needs, along with construction needs, were the basis for the $22 million Proposition 39 general obligation bond measure that the district put forth and voters approved in November 2016.

The district does not have a comprehensive deferred maintenance plan or a formal process for prioritizing and sequencing projects. Proper sequencing and long-term planning of deferred maintenance and modernization projects is needed to maximize the use of funding and move away from reactive maintenance. Deferred maintenance and modernization work must also be carefully coordinated with site construction to maximize efficiency. For example, if pavement rehabilitation work is completed before underground utilities work, workers will have to cut

through new pavement to install utilities, resulting in duplication of work and inferior results. There is also the risk that without careful planning the list of needs will exceed available funding, and that funds may be spent without addressing the most critical needs. In addition, under the current project planning system, Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals presented in April establish priorities for deferred maintenance projects for the following summer. This provides insufficient time for project development and bidding, and it is reactive in nature and does not allow for project sequencing. Although community goals are important information for the planning process, so are unseen site conditions like sewer pipe problems, building system life cycle considerations, and the input of maintenance staff. The LCAP process is important, but it should add to the deferred maintenance plan, not override it.

Every district needs an actionable deferred maintenance plan. This begins with a list of comprehensive project needs developed using multiple sources of information: primarily a facilities needs assessment but also community input, equipment life cycle considerations, and input from maintenance staff. The list needs to be prioritized based on safety, urgency, cost of deferral, project sequencing, system life cycle data, and community input. Then funding sources must be considered and sought and the projects funded as prioritized.

The district will need to establish procedures for developing a deferred maintenance plan that is properly coordinated with site construction needs. An outline of a suggested procedure follows:



Safety Programs

Maintenance line staff described regular informal safety meetings and quarterly classroom-style extended safety training. The district has properly completed its Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Three-Year Asbestos Reinspection report update. However, no staff

members were able to properly describe how to recognize whether a wall has asbestos in the stucco. Answers varied from admitting they did not know to suggesting they could have it tested.

Title 40, part 763, Subpart E of the Code of Federal Regulations addresses asbestos-containing materials in schools. Section 763.84 requires local education agencies to "Ensure that all custodial and maintenance employees are properly trained . . ." Employees should know which school sites have asbestos-containing materials, and should know to reference the Three-Year Asbestos Reinspection report to see if materials they will be working on could contain asbestos.

The district will need to train all maintenance and custodial staff on use of the Three-Year Asbestos Reinspection report, and provide clear guidance on when the report should be referenced. During subsequent "tailgate" safety meetings, it would be beneficial to provide staff with reminders and quizzes on proper asbestos safety procedures.

Employee Engagement

FCMAT found district maintenance staff to be highly skilled, experienced in their trades, and technically knowledgeable. During interviews, the maintenance line staff expressed respect for the director of MOT and a desire to provide the district's students with better school facilities. Simultaneously, staff members expressed discouragement at the condition of the schools and the perception of their work. Staff described a lack of communication from supervisors and management. When asked about receiving information about contracted summer projects like painting, many maintenance staff stated that they did not know about the work when the contractors arrived to perform it. No staff members interviewed were able to state the district's vision or mission, or the department's goals.

Some of the processes reviewed earlier in this report, such as the $50 limit on supply purchases, are highly restrictive and communicate a lack of trust in employees. Employees also indicated they have a desire to improve their skills but stated that they have limited opportunities for professional training.

Employee engagement is critical to employee motivation and the retention of skilled workers. Gallup's *2012 Q12 Meta-Analysis* on the impacts of employee engagement found that increased employee engagement provides the following benefits: higher productivity, lower turnover rates, fewer safety incidents, reduction in employee theft, less absenteeism, and improved work quality. The Society for Human Resource Management has a number of publications to guide the development of an engaging work environment, and numerous books have been written on the subject. One such book, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, by psychologist Daniel Pink, identifies three main areas to focus on to develop greater employee motivation and engagement: autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

It would benefit the district to ensure that its management focuses on developing employee engagement. As discussed earlier in this report, there are processes that can be tailored to allow autonomy and demonstrate trust in employees' judgment. These processes do not preclude accountability.

To develop mastery, maintenance staff can be provided with opportunities for training to improve their technical skills and knowledge. Having the proper tools will also increase the employee's ability to develop mastery in their trades.

To help maintenance staff develop a sense of purpose about their work, management can meet with the staff and together develop department goals that support the district's mission and

vision. Regular communication with staff about the department's progress towards those goals will help establish a sense of purpose, which leads to greater engagement.

Recommendations

The district should:

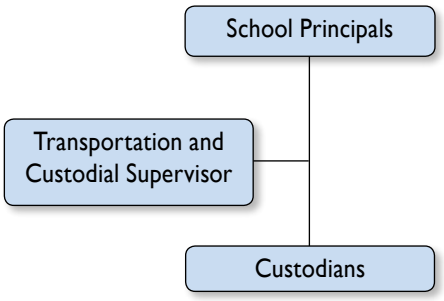
1. Rewrite the job descriptions for the skilled maintenance II positions.
2. Rewrite the job descriptions for the master skilled trades positions.
3. Establish clear responsibilities for the director of MOT and the supervisor of maintenance and grounds.
4. Review maintenance department processes and clearly define the director's and supervisor's roles within these processes.
5. End the paper-based emergency work order system and use the electronic work order system for emergency work orders.
6. Establish a new procedure for emergency work order communications.
7. Establish a more efficient procedure for reviewing and assigning work orders.
8. Remove duplicative maintenance staff accountability procedures and establish a single procedure for tracking expenditures of time and materials.
9. Follow the procedures outlined in this report for stocking regularly-used parts and supplies as well as specialty parts that take a long time to order.
10. Adopt new purchasing procedures for maintenance staff that will improve efficiency.
11. Adopt the procedures described in this report for providing tools to maintenance staff.
12. Maintain current staffing, adopt the efficiency measures described in this report, and review staffing in one year.
13. Develop and implement a preventive maintenance and inspection program.
14. Develop an actionable deferred maintenance program.
15. Hire third-party inspectors to oversee quality assurance on non-DSA construction projects.
16. Increase training in asbestos safety procedures.
17. Develop a program to improve employee engagement.

Custodial

The organizational structure of the custodial employees is site-based. The elementary schools have two custodians working two shifts: 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The two junior high schools have three custodians who also work partially overlapping day shifts. The district has no night custodians. Each school principal is responsible for supervising and evaluating the custodians at their school. At the middle school and junior high school this responsibility has been delegated to the assistant principals.

The district only has one job description for custodians, and there is no difference in pay between the morning and afternoon custodians. All custodians work eight-hour shifts, with the exception of two half-time custodians at the Science and Technology for Children (STC) and Home School Academy and the Family and Community Together (FACT) Center/Parent Center.

Custodial Organizational Structure



School principals are not trained in or familiar with the nuances of custodial operations, and they lack the training necessary to assess the effectiveness of a custodial employee. The current structure can also lead to inconsistencies in management and standards across the district, which may result in a lack of progressive discipline for ineffective custodial employees and their transfer to other schools without being held accountable for substandard performance. With no central management oversight, there is the potential for such employees to continue performing at substandard levels.

Evaluating custodians also creates additional responsibilities for school principals, who already have many other responsibilities, including evaluations of certificated staff and improving academic performance. Another concern with this structure is that principals sometimes use day custodians for services that are not in their job descriptions, which adversely affects custodial schedules.

The district has a transportation and custodial supervisor. However, this position is responsible only for providing custodians with training, acquiring supplies and equipment for custodial staff, and approving and processing employee attendance. The transportation and custodial supervisor estimates that about 30% of his time is spent on these tasks. The transportation and custodial supervisor does not provide input into custodian evaluations.

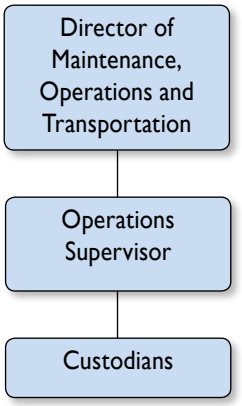
School principals develop the custodial schedule for their schools; there is no standard districtwide schedule. Custodial staff indicated that classroom carpets are to be vacuumed, pencil sharpeners emptied, and tile areas dry mopped daily, but this is not always done. Restrooms at all sites are cleaned daily. The district has a custodial standards handbook, but it has not been updated since October 2012.

There is also disparity between school sites in the supply of small hand tools and equipment. Site custodians can perform minor maintenance, but some are hindered because of a lack of small hand tools at their site. In some cases the inequity between school sites is extreme. Some custodians indicated that their school's parent-teacher organization had purchased dollies, leaf blowers, carts, power drills and screw driver sets, but others stated that their schools had no hand tools.

Similarly, custodians reported significant variances among schools in the type and repair of custodial equipment. Although the district initially reported that each school was equipped with a backpack vacuum cleaner, shampooer, carpet extractor, floor scrubber, buffer, and gas blower, subsequent interviews revealed that many schools either lacked some or all of this equipment or that it was present but in ill repair. Only a few schools had pressure washers.

A more effective organizational structure for custodial operations would be to have an operations supervisor who supervises all custodians and reports directly to the director of maintenance, operations and transportation.

Possible Revised Custodial Organizational Structure



This structure would lead to better accountability for scheduled tasks and crew assignments as well as increased efficiency. The operations supervisor would need to develop a central job training program for current custodians and a specialized training program for new custodians. The supervisor would also need to standardize and oversee the ordering of supplies and equipment. Having the ability to efficiently manage all custodial assets from the perspective of the district would allow the supervisor to better identify equipment needs and distribute equipment and supplies more equitably.

The operations supervisor would need to consult with school principals when establishing schedules and when evaluating custodians so that the schools' needs are met and evaluations are complete and thorough.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider creating an operations supervisor position.
2. Ensure that the operations supervisor has responsibility for supervising and evaluating all district custodians.

3. Require the operations supervisor to seek input from the school principals when evaluating site custodians.

4. Revise the job description of the transportation and custodial supervisor to exclude custodial-related responsibilities.

5. Reassign the responsibility for establishing school custodial schedules from school principals to the operations supervisor.

6. Ensure that the operations supervisor seeks input from school principals on custodial schedules.

7. Have the operations supervisor develop a central job training program for current custodians and a specialized training program for new custodians.

8. Ensure that the operations supervisor standardizes custodial supplies and equipment to ensure a more equitable distribution among schools.

9. Require the operations supervisor to update the custodial standards handbook.

Staffing Levels Based on Cleanliness Standards

Although there is no nationwide standard for describing standards of cleanliness, the U.S. Department of Education has established five levels of cleaning, which are quantified by estimating the square footage of a building that a custodian working an eight-hour shift can reasonably be expected to complete to each level (the eight-hour shift includes two 15-minute breaks and a 30 minute lunch break).

Level 1

Results in a spotless and germ free facility, as might normally be found in a hospital environment or corporate suite. A custodian with proper supplies and tools can clean approximately 10,000 to 11,000 square feet to this level in eight hours.

Level 2

Includes vacuuming or mopping floors daily and sanitizing all surfaces. A custodian can clean approximately 18,000 to 20,000 square feet to this level in an eight-hour shift. This is the uppermost standard for most school cleaning and is generally reserved for restrooms, special education areas, kindergarten areas, or food service areas.

Level 3

Carpets are vacuumed and surfaces students use are sanitized every other day on a schedule that alternates days for these two tasks. A custodian can clean approximately 28,000 to 31,000 square feet to this level in eight hours. This level of cleaning is the norm for most school facilities. It is acceptable to most interested parties and does not pose any health issues. Classrooms are cleaned daily, which includes dumping trash and cleaning common area surfaces such as sinks and door handles.

Level 4

Includes cleaning classrooms every other day, vacuuming carpets every third day, and dusting once a month. A custodian can clean 45,000 to 50,000 square feet to this level in eight hours. This level of cleaning is not normally acceptable in a school environment.

Level 5

Trash cans might be emptied and carpets vacuumed only weekly. One custodian can clean 85,000 to 90,000 square feet to this level in eight hours. This level of cleaning can rapidly lead to unhealthy conditions.

The figures above are estimates. The actual number of square feet per shift a custodian can clean will depend on additional variables, including the employee's abilities and training, type of facilities, flooring, wall covers, number of windows, restroom layouts, gym and athletic facilities, and offices, all of which must be taken into account when determining workload expectations. In addition, partial shifts, such as when one eight-hour custodian is shared among two sites, require time for transportation between sites, which reduces the amount of square footage an eight-hour-per-day employee can clean.

There are also intermediate levels of cleanliness. For example, a lower Level 3/Upper Level 4 standard of cleanliness would entail daily dumping of trash from each classroom, and cleaning common area surfaces such as sinks and door handles (Level 3 requirements). However, classrooms might be cleaned properly every other day and carpets vacuumed less frequently, in accord with Level 4 standards.

Custodial Staffing Based on CASBO Formula

The district is staffed with 25.0 FTE custodians, excluding the 1.0 FTE assigned to the warehouse and the 0.5 FTE assigned to the district office. Custodial staffing has been based on historical practice rather than objective criteria. Several custodians indicated that each site was staffed with an additional 0.5 FTE before the Great Recession; however, there is no record of how the additional 0.5 FTE was justified.

One objective means at arriving at custodial staffing is to use the California Association of School Business Officials' (CASBO's) custodial staffing formula. This formula is based not only on square footage but also on the number of students and staff and the type of facility, whether classrooms, offices or general purpose areas. The formula does not include administrative facilities or after-school programs, but it serves as a starting point for staffing for cleaning of classrooms to a high Level 3 or even a Level 2 standard. The CASBO custodial staffing formula is based on the following:

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

The sum of the above is divided by four to arrive at the number of custodians needed to clean a facility. An additional .0625 FTE is added to the total for community impact on the use of facilities.

Applying this formula to the district results in a recommended staffing level of 20.6 FTE custodians. The district's current custodial staffing level of 25.0 FTE is 121% of what the formula recommends. These results suggest that the district is overstaffed by 4.4 FTE custodians. However, even at these staffing levels, district custodians are having a difficult time meeting Level 3 cleanliness standards, as confirmed by FCMAT's observations of some schools.

Part of the reason for this may be that the district operates Breakfast in the Classroom at all grade levels in its elementary schools and the After School Education and Safety (ASES) program at all elementary school sites. Staffing in excess of the CASBO formula may be warranted because of the additional workload these programs create. The district will need to identify the additional staffing in excess of the CASBO formula needed to serve these programs and modify the formula accordingly.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Use the CASBO custodial formula as a starting point to arrive at an adequate number of custodians for each school site.
2. Modify the CASBO custodial formula to include the impact of the Breakfast in the Classroom and ASES programs.
3. Annually monitor changes in student enrollment, classroom use, number of teachers and building square footage at each school, and use this information to adjust custodial staffing using a modified CASBO formula.

Grounds

Department Overview

The district's grounds staffing structure is typical of many school districts of similar size. At the time of FCMAT's visit, the district employed 5.5 FTE groundskeepers, who report to a maintenance and grounds supervisor, who in turn reports to the director of MOT. The groundskeepers check in at the operations facility daily, and their assignments are as follows:

- Three groundskeepers are assigned to multiple sites; duties include a weekly visit to each to perform edging, pruning and general landscape maintenance.
- One groundskeeper is assigned to mowing responsibilities for all sites.
- One groundskeeper is assigned to irrigation repairs for all sites.
- One half-time employee is assigned to miscellaneous mowing and filling in for absent employees.

The grounds department does not have a lead groundskeeper position; this position was eliminated during budget reductions in 2008. All supervisory decisions rest with the supervisor of maintenance and grounds, who has been with the district for seven years and has a background in residential construction. The supervisor may need additional training in landscape maintenance to ensure adequate technical expertise.

The director of MOT has been in the director role since 1998. She possesses institutional and historical knowledge that has benefited the district greatly. As the district begins to plan for the director's pending retirement, it would be beneficial to ensure that the director's successor is hired some time before the director's retirement to ensure time for cross training and thus minimize the sudden loss of institutional and functional knowledge. The district could also benefit from involvement in professional organizations such as the Coalition of Adequate School Housing (CASH) and CASBO, which provide opportunities for networking and collaboration on current best practices.

Job Descriptions

None of the grounds job descriptions reviewed during fieldwork had been updated since October 1998. Although job descriptions are not meant to list the exact number of tasks performed or every possible scenario that an employee may face, they should include the general scope and level of the work to be performed. The groundskeeper job description lacks detailed information on specific responsibilities such as irrigation pump and timer repair, heavy equipment operation, and landscape fertilization. It is a best practice to update job descriptions every two to three years to ensure they reflect current laws and industry standards.

The current groundskeeper job description does not include the skills and abilities needed for irrigation repairs. The district needs to include these skills and abilities in the groundskeeper job description, or it may benefit from having and including them in a technician position dedicated to this task.

Staffing

Success in grounds management depends on well-trained personnel with skills in a variety of areas. Like other maintenance and operations functions, staffing for grounds-related services varies among school districts throughout the state. The most common factors that affect staffing of grounds crews at schools include the following:

- The school size in acreage
- The number and types of outdoor spaces to be maintained
- The type and extent of natural and hardscape features
- The extent to which grounds crews perform unrelated tasks

The Florida Department of Education has established a formula for grounds maintenance staffing that is applicable to school districts nationwide. The formula is based on two types of grounds: general grounds that require tasks such as mowing, gardening and trimming, and athletic fields or other special open space areas that require a higher amount of care. The formula indicates that there should be one groundskeeper for every 40 acres of property, one groundskeeper for every 500,000 square feet of athletic field, and one additional groundskeeper.

The district's documents indicate that it has 153 acres of property, including an estimated 3,078,913 square feet of athletic fields. Using the above formula, FCMAT calculates that the district needs 11.0 FTE groundskeepers for adequate staffing. The calculations are as follows:

Staffing Calculation

District Facilities	Total Acreage	Athletic Fields Square Footage
De Anza Magnet	14.7	421,443
Desert Garden Elementary	10.3	351,817
Desert Garden Elementary, North Field	3	0
Harding Elementary	8.1	206,032
Hendrick Elementary	10.9	317,088
Kennedy Middle School	16.6	99,374
M.L. King Elementary	12.2	263,375
Lincoln Elementary	7.7	234,232
McKinley Elementary	10.4	406,580
Sunflower Elementary	10	222,484
Math and Science Center	2.2	0
Fields North of Sunflower Elementary	17	0
Washington Elementary	9.4	278,221
Wilson Jr. High	14.4	278,267
Central Warehouse	5.2	0
District Office	1	0
Subtotals	***153.1***	***3,078,913***

Groundskeepers FTE	
Current staffing	5.5
Calculated Required Staffing:	10.99
Practical Required Staffing:	11.0
Current Staffing as a percentage of Calculated Staffing	50%

FCMAT relied on numbers provided by the district to arrive at these calculations. If vacant land, or land that is not actively maintained as play fields, was included in the calculations, then the results could be inflated.

Landscape maintenance complements a district's buildings and its general atmosphere. The physical condition of a campus can have a significant impact on the learning environment and on the attitudes and impressions of the district's students, faculty, parents and community. The district will need to review its level of grounds care and determine if the conditions on its campuses support its educational mission and meet the community's standards.

Safety

Grounds personnel indicated that personal protective equipment is readily available to them and that they are trained in its proper use. However, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends an employee use protective footwear (OSHA code 1910.136) when working in areas where there is a risk of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects. This is a concern during daily grounds maintenance. Interviews indicated that grounds employees do not wear protective footwear.

Employees received annual mandated safety training and stated that they have weekly safety reminder meetings. However, more specialized training is not provided. Grounds maintenance is one of the more hazardous positions in a school district because these employees use rotating and cutting equipment. This justifies special training in reducing such hazards.

The district is located in an area that experiences extreme temperatures. This requires the district to train all employees and supervisors in heat illness prevention. Employees indicated that planning, provisions for water and shade, and emergency response procedures have been put into place. On average, El Centro has 147 days per year with an ambient temperature above 95 degrees (U.S. Climate Data). California Code of Regulations, Title 8, section 3395 states the following:

> When the temperature equals or exceeds 95 degrees, employers must provide one 10-minute 'preventive cool-down rest period' every 2 hours. During the first 8 hours of a shift, the cool-down periods may be provided at the same time as the rest periods already required by the Industrial Welfare Commission Order No. 14 (California Code of Regulations, title 8, section 11140).

The district appears to be meeting the requirements of the OSHA safety order, but this requires additional time for breaks, pre-work safety meetings, regular communication, reminders to drink water, and effective observation.

When considering staffing levels, the district may need to take into account the additional rest periods employees may need in hot weather. Estimates may vary based on each employee's stamina, health condition, and the type of work they are performing. Additional information about the risks of heat-related illness can be found at https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/pdfs/all_in_one.pdf.

Vehicles and Equipment

Employees indicated that only two groundskeepers are assigned district vehicles. The remaining employees use their personal vehicles for travel and are reimbursed for mileage. Because of this, each school was given a container to hold all of the requisite grounds maintenance tools. Employees indicated that several of the schools do not have adequate equipment or tools for weekly tasks; the equipment is either missing or nonfunctional. Groundskeepers must travel to other schools to pick up working equipment. Employees reported that they have requested additional equipment or turned in equipment for repair, but that it can take as long as six months

to receive new or repaired items. Employees expressed frustration with the delays in equipment purchases, and as a result of these conditions many employees bring their own tools from home.

A review of the district's vehicle fleet revealed that some vehicles are not ideal for their current use. For example, a groundskeeper who maintains irrigation equipment uses a standard pickup truck, which is not equipped with lockable tool and part boxes. The employee places repair parts in five-gallon buckets in the bed of the truck. This means the parts are loose during travel and unsecured throughout the day. Involving department employees when making decisions about the type and style of replacement vehicles would help eliminate these kinds of issues and ensure that vehicles meet the department's needs.

Providing all groundskeepers with district vehicles would allow the department to provide one set of tools for each employee rather than one set for each school site. This would increase groundskeepers' accountability and sense of ownership.

Purchases

Grounds personnel indicated that only one groundskeeper is authorized to make purchases. The department maintains little stock, which necessitates routine visits to local vendors to order material or repair parts using standing purchase orders. The grounds staff member who makes purchases records the work order number on the receipt and submits it to the grounds administrative staff for tracking

Grounds staff are required to obtain approval from their supervisor for t purchases that exceed $200.This is different than the $50 threshold used by maintenance staff. Moreover, because the cost of materials for many routine repairs exceeds $200, this hinders the efficiency. It would benefit the district to raise the threshold for supervisor approval. Periodic review of purchasing patterns can identify potentially improper purchases or abuses without delaying or hindering needed repairs.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide professional development for the supervisor of maintenance and grounds personnel.
2. Ensure that appropriate managers and supervisors join professional development organizations relevant to their positions, such as CASBO and CASH.
3. Update job descriptions to include changes in skill requirements and current law.
4. Adopt the Florida Department of Education grounds maintenance staffing formula as a general guideline for adding or reducing grounds maintenance personnel.
5. Verify the square footage of play fields maintained.
6. Consider adding grounds positions based on the Florida Department of Education formula
7. Purchase steel-toed shoes for grounds maintenance employees.

8. Provide all groundskeepers with district vehicles that are furnished with all of the tools and equipment needed to perform all tasks required of the groundskeepers.
9. Increase the single-purchase limit from $200 to $500
10. Increase the level of safety training provided to groundskeepers.

Transportation

School transportation in California was fully funded until 1977. School districts reported their operating costs, and in the subsequent year the state would fully reimburse the costs. Between 1977 and the 1982-83 school year, California reduced the percentage of reimbursement, and in the 1982-83 school year the state capped each school district's revenue at 80% of the reported costs for that year. In subsequent years, the state has occasionally granted a cost of living adjustment (COLA), but not enough to keep pace with increasing costs. During the Great Recession, all categorical programs were reduced by approximately 20%, and that transportation funding was never restored.

In the 2012-13 fiscal year, the district had an approved apportionment of $138,666 combined for home-to school transportation (HTS) and transportation of severely disabled and orthopedically impaired students (SD/OI). Statewide, school transportation funding currently covers less than 35% of districts' total costs. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) maintains school transportation funding at the level previously received, as an add-on to each district's base grant.

There is also a maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement that each district spend as much as it receives from the state; school transportation funding cannot be used for any other purpose. There has been no COLA for school transportation funding since the LCFF funding model was implemented in 2013-14.

The district's 2015-16 unaudited actual financial report shows total pupil transportation expenses of $1,067,454. Thus state revenue covered approximately 13% of school transportation expenses that fiscal year, which is well below the statewide average of approximately 35% (last calculated in 2013 and likely even lower now) but not necessarily a cause for concern: the district's state revenue reflects the expenses the district reported when the funding was capped 34 years ago, and it is likely the transportation program was much smaller then.

The California Department of Education (CDE) collected and published school transportation data in the past but has not done so since the LCFF began. The district's transportation cost per student for the 2015-16 fiscal year was approximately $2,924, which is significantly less than the statewide average cost per student of $6,500 in the last year that the CDE collected such data. This indicates that the district's transportation program is operating relatively efficiently.

The district does not track its transportation expenses separately for transportation other than the Riverside County Office of Education routes operated by the district. Expenses for Home-to-school general education transportation for students who attend schools outside their school of residence because their local school has too many students (commonly known as overflow students), and district special education transportation support are not differentiated in program budget tracking. For example, the district's fuel account shows its expense for fueling all of its vehicles, including but not limited to school buses used for both special and general education.

Expenses for vehicle repairs are inconsistently tracked to a specific vehicle, but the district usually does not track parts expenses by specific vehicle and charge them to the relevant internal program budgets. Labor expenses are also not calculated and tracked so they can be charged to the correct internal programs. As a result, the district's transportation program expense is likely inflated because the district is not separating unrelated expenses (e.g. fuel, oil, supplies and some parts) from the operational line budgets within the transportation program.

It is challenging but beneficial to identify and track separately expenses for mandated special education transportation and expenses for non-mandated general education transportation, as well as transportation expenses and costs associated with various internal programs such as

maintenance and operations, food and nutrition, and warehouse. This enables a district to better identify the true costs of general and special education transportation as well as other programs.

According to district documents, the district scheduled approximately 200 field trips, 174 band and orchestra trips and 38 sports trips during the 2015-16 school year, for a total of 412 trips for extracurricular activities. For twenty-eight of the field trips the district contracted private charter buses. At the time of FCMAT's fieldwork, the district had conducted 139 field trips so far in 2016-17 and had contracted private charter buses for approximately 16 of these. Usually districts have more field trips in the second half of the school year, so presumably the district's transportation staff will schedule and support approximately the same number of field trips during 2016-17 as they did in 2015-16.

The district contracts for private charter buses for many of its longer trips, such as to San Diego and Riverside County locations. The district charges schools a standard fee of either $150 or $200 depending on the distance traveled, for the most common destinations. The only exception to this is one field trip per class to any approved location within the city of El Centro. Most school trip locations are identified in advance and assigned one of the two fees. If a private bus is chartered, the actual expense is charged to the school program.

It is unlikely that the district's fees cover its vehicle operating and labor expenses for extracurricular trips. Establishing a standard fee structure is convenient for the district's schools and is common in school districts. However, it is essential that prior year actual vehicle and labor costs for these trips be tracked and be averaged using a formula based on common destinations and/or other factors to ensure that the fee structure covers transportation expenses. In some cases, a district may choose such a fee model but also intentionally pay a percentage of the cost from its general fund.

The district's transportation program maintains a list of approved charter transportation providers that meet both district and legal requirements to operate as a special pupil activity bus.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Track its various transportation expenses separately to ensure that it is correctly tracking its costs for both general and special education transportation, as well as costs associated with internal programs such as maintenance and operations, food and nutrition, and warehouse.

2. Review its actual field trip transportation costs annually and adjust its fee structure accordingly to ensure that it covers both vehicle operating expenses and labor expenses.

Routing and Scheduling

The district provides transportation for general education and special education students, operating 11 daily routes. The district uses its own school buses for eight of these routes, its own passenger van for one route, and buses owned by the Riverside County Office of Education for two routes.

The two routes operated under contract for the county office transport approximately 66 of the district's pre-K migrant students; one of these two routes is operated for the Calexico Unified School District.

Four of the district's eight school buses are used for routes that transport approximately 253 overflow students; the remaining four buses are used to transport special education students whose individualized education programs (IEPs) require it.

The district's passenger van used on one route is allowable as long as it is in compliance with California Vehicle Code Section 545(b). Section 545 requires that students be transported in school buses for home-to-school trips and field trips, but section 545(b) allows the use of vehicles other than school buses if they are designed for and carry nine or fewer passengers plus the driver. Wheelchair passengers are limited and reduce the total number of passengers that can be transported. The route that uses the passenger van carries fewer than nine passengers and can be operated legally. However, passenger vans are statistically less safe than school buses.

The district employs five special education bus assistants; four of the assistants are assigned one each to each special education route, and one assistant is assigned to one bus route for migrant students. The district transports 112 special education students daily using five buses, so its special education load factor is 22.4 students per bus, excluding the one passenger van, which is slightly higher than the average that FCMAT normally observes.

The district does not provide general education student transportation based on the distance students live from their local school; all general education transportation is for overflow students. The district provides mandated and required transportation for special education students and for overflow general education students; it provides no non-mandated home-to-school transportation.

The district does not use a software program for bus routing, which is not unusual for an operation of its size. However, there are several widely used routing programs that could provide ease of routing and help optimize efficiency and any needed or future school boundary adjustments. The district may want to explore the advantages of implementing an electronic routing system.

It was not possible for FCMAT to identify a per-bus expense because the district does not track various transportation costs separately.

The district has 11 school bus driver positions. To improve employment contracts to retain drivers, the district has expanded school bus driver positions to also include skilled trade worker, custodian and warehouse delivery work. The district has two school bus driver classifications: general education school bus driver and special education school bus driver. This is unusual in FCMAT's experience. The positions' requirements are identical, and the skills needed to operate equipment and manage students are similar. Although special education students are transported in smaller buses and general education students in larger buses, this is a result of program locations and the need for curb-to-curb transportation for special education students versus group stops for general education students. Separate classifications for these positions implies that one requires more or less competency and compensation than the other. It would be beneficial to combine these two driver classifications into one.

The district's assignments for school bus drivers and special education transportation assistants are as follows:

- Four special education school bus drivers are also skilled trade workers, working eight hours daily on 12-month contracts
- Two general education school bus drivers are also custodial workers, working eight hours daily on 12-month contracts

- One general education school bus driver is also the warehouse delivery driver and summer custodian, working eight hours daily on a 12-month contract
- Two general education bus drivers working eight hours daily on a 12-month contract
- Two general education bus drivers working 6.75 hours daily on 10.5-month contracts
- Five special education transportation assistants working eight hours daily on 10.5-month contracts

The district recently hired two retired bus drivers as substitutes. This will be a significant help because the district did not have any substitute drivers prior to this, which meant that the transportation and custodial supervisor had to drive one or more times per week.

The transportation and custodial supervisor is now driving the passenger van route daily. The district will need to review and consider the advantage of hiring a permanent substitute school bus driver, perhaps assigned to other related duties when not operating a school bus. This would ensure continuity should one of the 11 permanent drivers be absent.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Explore the benefits and consider implementing one of the commonly used electronic bus routing systems.
2. Consider combining the positions of general education school bus driver and special education school bus driver into one position and job description.
3. Review the advantages of hiring a permanent substitute school bus driver and perhaps including other related duties when they are not needed to operate a school bus.

Organization, Staffing and Driver Training

The district's transportation functions are part of the MOT Department. The assistant superintendent of business has direct responsibility for several departments, including the MOT Department. There is a director of MOT that has direct responsibility for the transportation department, and the transportation and custodial supervisor is responsible for supervising both the transportation and custodial staff and programs. The transportation department office is staffed as follows:

- 1.0 FTE supervisor split 50/50 between transportation and custodial
- 0.5 FTE senior secretary split 50/50 between transportation and maintenance and operations
- 2.0 FTE master skilled trade workers
- 4.0 FTE special education school bus drivers who are also skilled trade workers, working eight hours daily on 12-month contracts
- 2.0 FTE general education school bus drivers who are also custodial workers, working eight hours daily on 12-month contracts
- 1.0 FTE general education school bus driver who is also the warehouse delivery diver and summer custodian, working eight hours daily on a 12-month contract

- 2.0 FTE general education bus drivers working eight hours daily on a 12-month contract
- 2 .0 FTE general education bus drivers working 6.75 hours daily on 10.5-month contracts
- 5.0 FTE special education transportation assistants working eight hours daily on 10.5-month contracts

The transportation and custodial supervisor oversees the transportation program's daily operations, which include all daily routes, the vehicle maintenance program, weekly field trip scheduling and coordination, and the custodial program. Although the supervisor is scheduled to work from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily, most days the supervisor works from 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It is not unusual for the supervisor to receive staff calls by 5 a.m. if absences are being reported and the supervisor is needed to operate a route. The supervisor schedules and maintains all daily student transportation routes. Although the general education routes are somewhat static, the nature of special education routes requires constant adjustment to the schedules as students are added or deleted, or program times and locations alter. The supervisor processes and schedules schools' requests for field trips and assigns the trips to drivers weekly; oversees the vehicle maintenance staff; and ensures that the district meets legal requirements for vehicle maintenance as well as all general repairs and preventive maintenance schedules.

The requirements for school bus driver training in California are contained in Education Code Section 40080 and subsequent code sections. School bus drivers must receive a minimum of 20 hours of classroom training in all units of the *Instructor's Manual for California's Bus Driver's Training Course*. A minimum of 20 hours of behind-the-wheel training is required from the *Instructor's Behind-the-Wheel Guide for California's Bus Driver's Training Course*. School bus drivers must also complete a minimum of 10 hours of in-service training each year to maintain their special certificate validity. Special classroom training is required in the last year of certificate validity to renew. All testing is performed by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) through a special officer at each California Highway Patrol (CHP) office. It requires many more than 20 hours to adequately cover all of the units in the referenced manual for both classroom and behind-the-wheel training. Most school districts teach a minimum of 35 hours in the classroom and spend at least that many or more hours performing behind-the-wheel instruction for new employment candidates. All driver training records must be maintained and retained in compliance with laws and regulations.

The district has one state-certified school bus driver instructor on staff, who is also the transportation and custodial supervisor. The supervisor holds the primary responsibility for maintaining the driver training records, performing all classroom and behind-the-wheel training, and ensuring that staff receive the necessary original, ongoing and renewal training. FCMAT reviewed approximately 10% of the driver training records and found them in compliance with laws and regulations. Most of the drivers receive approximately 15 hours of in-service training each year. Although this is adequate and legal, the supervisor does not have enough time to perform regular ride-alongs or other enhanced driver training. The driver training records are well organized in folders in a locked cabinet in the supervisor's office, ensuring privacy and confidentiality.

The district could increase its driver training capacity by helping one of its qualified school bus drivers attend the CDE Driver Instructor Training Academy. The district could expand an existing school bus driver position to include, as needed, school bus driver instruction such as behind-the-wheel and classroom training, original and renewal driver training and driver record maintenance, and facilitation and design of in-service programs. The additional district driver

instructor could also be used as needed to help the transportation and custodial supervisor with the various supervision duties discussed above. It would benefit the district to explore the benefits of creating a position such as this.

Education Code 39831.3 requires that a school district have a transportation safety plan and a copy of it at each school. It can be requested by any officer of the CHP for inspection. There was no evidence that the district has a transportation safety plan. Although the components of such a plan exist in various transportation documents, this information has not been placed into a single transportation plan document.

Education Code 39831.5 requires school districts to perform school bus safety instruction and evacuation drills annually for certain grade levels that ride the bus, and keep records of the drills. The district is in compliance with this law.

The drivers are enrolled in the DMV Pull Notice Program, so the district receives regular copies of their driving record. The MOT director receives these notices electronically and the supervisor also has access to them. The drivers are also enrolled in a drug and alcohol testing program as required by federal law. The transportation and custodial supervisor is also in the pool of tested employees. An outside company manages the drug and alcohol testing program. It generates a random list of employees for testing and sends it to the district's human resources office. The list is then forwarded to the MOT director to ensure that drivers are tested. This testing is properly administered.

In addition, the transportation and custodial supervisor is oversees the district custodial program and staff, which is discussed earlier in this report.

Although the district's transportation program is appropriately positioned within the MOT Department, based on the number and type of routes and the fleet size, the program needs a dedicated transportation supervisor position rather than one that also has numerous non-transportation supervisorial duties.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Explore the benefits of changing a district school bus driver position so that it also has the duties of a state-certified driver instructor.
2. Immediately create a transportation safety plan that contains all elements required by Education Code 39831.3.
3. Assess the responsibilities of the current transportation and custodial supervisor, and consider creating an additional supervisor position to supervise the district's custodial employees and operations.

Vehicle Maintenance, Fleet and Facility

The CHP's Motor Carrier Division inspects school buses, maintenance records, driver records and federal drug and alcohol testing program records annually. The CHP provides a report known as the "Safety Compliance Report/Terminal Record Update" that grades the school district in the above areas. This is commonly known as the "terminal grade." The district has received the CHP's highest grade, "satisfactory," on its two most recent terminal inspection reports. A satisfactory grade indicates compliance with laws and regulations in these areas.

The district owns 12 school buses, and it maintains and houses three county office buses that it operates for the county office's migrant program. The district's bus fleet includes both transit style buses (large buses with the engines located in the rear of the bus) and conventional school buses (a bus body attached to a truck-type chassis with the engine located in the front). The district also has a few smaller transit style buses. The average age of the district's bus fleet is 15.2 years. The district purchased two buses in fiscal year 2015-16 and plans to purchase one bus during fiscal year 2016-17. The district transports students in a relatively small geographic area, except in the case of some extracurricular activity trips. Based on the district's annual total mileage and use, it would be appropriate for the district to budget for one or two new buses annually.

School bus maintenance is heavily regulated in California. Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 1232 (13 CCR 1232), requires that school buses undergo a preventive maintenance inspection every 45 days or 3,000 miles, whichever comes first. No other vehicle in California is required to have such frequent inspections. Specific elements of the bus must be inspected; the most critical are steering, brakes and suspension components. In addition to the regulated inspection items, the motor carrier (in this case the district) is required have a written preventive maintenance program for all other elements of the vehicle. All of the district's preventive maintenance is based on the 45 day/3,000 mile safety checks; there is no evidence that the district has a preventive maintenance program based on accumulated mileage. This can be problematic because it does not provide a schedule for preventive maintenance items and tasks. The result can be too little or sometimes too much maintenance.

The district's vehicle maintenance shop is responsible for maintaining the school buses and approximately 24 other district vehicles. These other vehicles include 14 pickup trucks, four cargo vans, two passenger vehicles and one Transit Connect small utility vehicle. Approximately 25% of these vehicles are more than 20 years old, and two are more than 25 years old. Because fleets like this often grow old without accumulating high mileage, it becomes increasingly challenging for vehicle maintenance staff to locate parts from an original equipment manufacturer (OEM), and they are often forced to rely on non-OEM parts or used parts. Several of the district's maintenance and grounds vehicles are old and need to be replaced. The district lacks a vehicle fleet replacement schedule and associated budget.

Some district maintenance, operations and custodial staff indicated that they did not have access to a district vehicle to meet their job requirements. In some cases staff reported driving their personal vehicles for district business. The districts needs sufficient district vehicles for staff who need them for district business.

The district has two vehicle mechanics, both of whom are master skilled trades workers, who maintain the district's fleet of approximately 36 buses and fleet vehicles. This is approximately 18 vehicles per mechanic, which is close to the average that FCMAT normally observes. The mechanics have overlapping shifts (6 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.), which allows greater shop coverage. There are no other shop personnel. Drivers fuel and wash their own buses.

The district has not implemented an industry-standard electronic vehicle maintenance system. Several such systems are available and are reasonably priced. Having such a system would allow better tracking of the both the district's school bus safety checks and any preventive maintenance schedules it develops for its school buses and other vehicles. It would also allow better tracking and separation of repair and labor expenses, which would make it possible to charge them to the appropriate program or department. Without an electronic vehicle maintenance system, the district is also unable to generate routine vehicle maintenance reports and vehicle cost histories to determine operating expenses and recommendations for vehicle replacement.

The district does not keep inventory records or cost information for the vehicle parts on hand, and the department has never done a physical parts inventory. An effective electronic vehicle maintenance system could help the district better track its parts inventory and cost information, and generate valuable tracking and report data for managers.

Drivers must perform a daily pre-trip inspection of their buses. If any defects are reported, they are documented and the documentation is forwarded to the shop for future repair. If there is any critical safety item, the bus may be taken out of service immediately. Mechanics are on duty when drivers report in the morning and until they have returned from their routes in the afternoon. Drivers often go directly to the shop and speak with mechanics about defects in their buses.

The California Air Resources Board adopted its Truck and Bus Rules relative to diesel particulate exhaust in December 2010. The rules are codified as 13 CCR 2022 and 2022.1. The rules require that diesel school buses with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 14,000 pounds have a level 3 diesel particulate filter by January 1, 2014. District staff reported that its fleet complies fully with this rule, and FCMAT's cursory inspection of some buses confirmed this.

Shop staff have the tools needed to work on the district's fleet; however, the shop does not have any vehicle lifts capable of lifting a school bus. Wheel lifts have become common, are relatively inexpensive, and allow a bus or other vehicle to be raised so mechanics can perform a thorough undercarriage inspection, a steam cleaning of vehicle chassis if needed, and save time on many types of repairs.

Facility

The district's transportation offices are in the same location as its maintenance and operations offices. The office space is somewhat cramped but sufficient for the number of support staff. The district's MOT, warehouse and food and nutrition support center is relatively large and allows parking for employee vehicles as well as all buses and support vehicles.

The vehicle maintenance shop has two interior repair bays that are large enough for the district's fleet, but access is limited by mid to late afternoon because the district's support fleet returns and is parked inside the bays for security reasons. The limited access makes it challenging to perform any repairs that take more than a single day. These repairs either have to be delayed until the next day, or the vehicle has to be stored outside overnight and possibly worked on outside. Imperial County's high temperatures during most of the year make it a potential health hazard to perform physical work in the heat. The district has sufficient space to create a secure vehicle parking area, and it could make outside working space more usable by constructing a shade or awning outside the maintenance bays to protect staff from direct sun and heat when working on vehicles outside.

The district's bus fleet parking area is large and spacious, allowing sufficient room for the buses to park and maneuver safely. However, the surface is dirt, which makes it a challenge to keep the fleet clean. In wet weather the area becomes muddy and does not have enough drainage.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Budget for one or two new buses annually.
2. Develop a documented preventive maintenance schedule separate from the required 45 day/3,000 mile school bus safety inspections.

3. Establish a fleet vehicle replacement schedule, and budget to replace two to three support vehicles annually.
4. Immediately assess its maintenance, operations and custodial vehicle needs and make changes to ensure that employees have enough vehicles and the right type of vehicles for those who need them to perform their jobs.
5. Implement an electronic vehicle maintenance software system that is capable of tracking vehicle maintenance and repair as well as parts inventory information, and that can produce useful reports for management.
6. Purchase one mobile wheel lift set.
7. Examine possible designs for building a secure vehicle parking area.
8. Consider paving its fleet parking area.
9. Build a shade awning over the work area outside the vehicle maintenance bays.

Warehouse and Delivery

The district warehouse is a central receiving location for all departments and schools. Custodial, general office and food products are received at this location and delivered daily to each site. Orders from vendors are often delivered directly to each site. The district's internal mail is organized and sorted at the district office, but the warehouse staff make two mail runs per day.

Deliveries

Information provided by the district indicates that the three stock clerk/delivery drivers deliver items to their respective sites three times per day. The district calls the three daily runs the supply route, lunch route and money route. On the supply route, drivers deliver canned goods, paper products, breakfast, and bread (the school kitchens are small and lack storage, so require daily stocking of basic goods). During the lunch route, drivers deliver only the hot lunches prepared at the central kitchen. On the money route, the drivers pick up the empty food transport containers, soiled towels, and money from the point-of-sale devices.

The district could eliminate the daily money route if it purchased approximately 18 more transport containers for the central kitchen. This would give the kitchen a second set of containers that could be used the following day. Empty containers at each site could be loaded into the delivery trucks and returned to the central kitchen each day during the lunch route. Money from point-of-sale devices could be stored in the school safe overnight and the funds collected during the next day's lunch route. Eliminating the money route would also allow the district to complete deliveries with two drivers.

Receiving and Inventory

The district does not have written operations policies and procedures that hold warehouse/delivery and department and school site staff accountable for the proper receiving of materials. It is best practice to ensure that orders are verified within 48 hours of receiving and shortages confirmed by the warehouse staff, and to call vendors to correct errors within 72 hours.

The stock clerk/delivery driver/reprographics clerk verifies that all deliveries are accurate. He works closely with the child nutrition department to ensure orders have been filled, the product is not expired, and perishable goods are rotated. The district does not use an inventory management system for food products. Rotating stock and verifying inventory has become a priority recently to ensure that the district hasn't ordered too many items and that items have not expired, resulting in lost revenue.

The warehouse stocks a variety of office, instructional and custodial supplies, but the amount of inventory is minimal. FCMAT did not review actual stock on hand or records of adjustments because of picking errors, obsolescence or damage. The district uses an antiquated inventory management system. It would benefit the district to, at a minimum, include all child nutrition products in the inventory management system to ensure accurate counts for ordering and rotation.

Reprographics

Reprographics operates from the main warehouse and prints black-and-white copies in quantities greater than 500; orders for less than 500 copies are competed by each school. The reprographics department does not print color copies or perform any design work for brochures, certificates, posters or calendars. If specialized items are requested, the reprographics department gets estimates and forwards those to the requesting school site for approval and budget coding.

Reprographics is staffed with one clerk, produced more than 1.3 million copies last year and, based on the current trend, anticipates an approximate 20% increase this year. The scheduling indicates that the reprographics clerk spends a maximum of 2.75 hours per day completing reprographics orders from schools. If this employee is on vacation or absent, the orders are not completed by other staff. Based on interviews, the average turnaround time for a reprographics order is 24-48 hours during the school year and three to five days during the summer because of the volume of work.

Because of the variations in reprographic machine speeds and types of finishing, an industry staffing formula for print shops is not readily available. The district would need to perform a self-evaluation to determine what is generally acceptable.

Warehouse Organization and Staffing

At the time of FCMAT's fieldwork, staffing at the warehouse consisted of the following:

- 3.0 FTE stock clerk/delivery drivers
- 1.0 FTE stock clerk/delivery driver/reprographics clerk
- 0.5 FTE bus driver/stock clerk/delivery driver

The duties performed by these staff members are generally consistent with their job descriptions. These individuals report to the director of child nutrition. Employees indicated that this reporting structure was implemented because the majority of items delivered are food products. The district operates a central kitchen at the warehouse location.

The district may be able to increase efficiency by restructuring its delivery process. Currently, warehouse orders such as classroom or custodial supplies are delivered by the 0.5 FTE employee during the mail run. Special deliveries are scheduled as needed among the remaining employees, which reduces efficiency and creates frustration among employees. Accumulating supply orders and delivering them every other day may allow the warehouse staff to complete other tasks more efficiently. Pick-up of surplus materials, equipment and textbooks could be scheduled on certain dates and times that ensure the most efficient travel. Help with moving furniture and equipment could be scheduled by appointment for dates and times that increase efficiency.

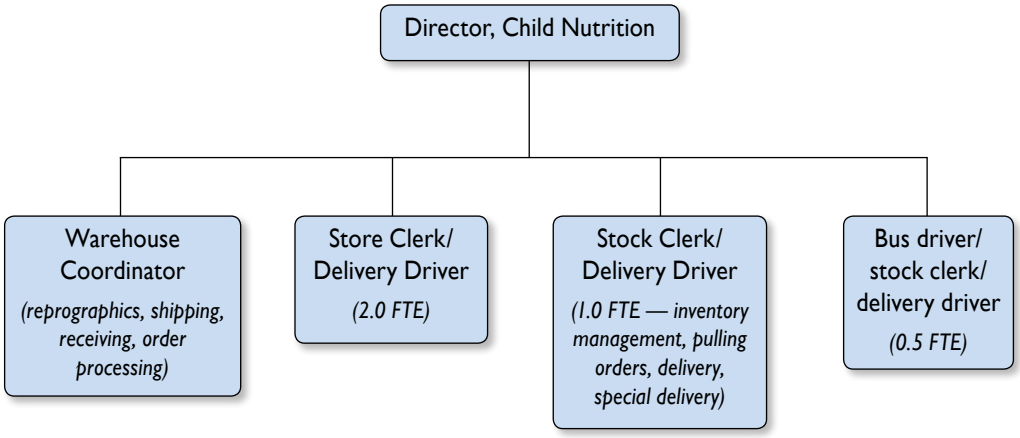
If food deliveries are reorganized to eliminate the money route as indicated above, one stock clerk/delivery driver could be given the following tasks:

- Inventory management
- Pulling orders
- Delivery three days per week
- Shipping and receiving

With the increase in reprographics requests, an average of 6-10 special delivery requests per week for items such as surplus pick up and furniture moves, an increase in shipping and receiving responsibilities, and a need for greater inventory control, the district could benefit from creating a warehouse coordinator position to organize all warehouse activities. This position could be created from an existing position and include responsibilities for reprographics, organizing shipping and receiving, inventory control, and processing warehouse orders.

A possible revised organizational structure for warehouse staff is provided below.

Possible Warehouse Organization



Equipment and Safety

The warehouse has three delivery trucks, which are in good working order. The warehouse equipment is in good condition, and the number of pallet jacks is appropriate. Employees were aware of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS, a.k.a. SDS) but were not able to identify the location of the binder that contains the SDS. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) Hazardous Communication Standard 29 CFR 1910.1200(g) requires that the chemical manufacturer, distributor or importer provide users with an SDS for each hazardous chemical. OSHA requires hazardous communication training because employees have the need and the right to know the hazards of chemicals they are exposed to when working, and what protective measures are available to prevent their adverse effects.

The district stores a number of cleaning supplies for the custodial staff. Although safety measures are in place, there was no spill kit available nor were warehouse staff aware of the purpose of such an item. OSHA recommends that facilities that have chemicals have a spill kit that includes safety goggles, absorbent pads, gloves, disposal bags, and related items, and ensure that all staff are familiar with the chemicals stored at their location. The OSHA Pocket Guide on worker safety for warehouses can be found at: https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3220_Warehouse.pdf

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Eliminate the money route and have two drivers make all food deliveries. Purchase additional transport containers to make this possible.
2. Add food goods to the inventory management system, and consider updating to a newer and more robust inventory management system.
3. Consider creating a warehouse coordinator position from an existing position.
4. Develop and implement written policies and procedures for receiving deliveries to ensure accountability and efficiency.

5. Ensure that warehouse staff become familiar with the chemicals stored in the warehouse by reviewing the SDS sheets.
6. Ensure that a spill kit is on site and readily accessible.

Appendix

Study Agreement

FCMAT
FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
CSIS California School Information Services

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
STUDY AGREEMENT
October 24, 2016

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the team, and the El Centro Elementary School District, hereinafter referred to as the district, mutually agree as follows:

1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

The team provides a variety of services to local education agencies (LEAs). The district has requested that the team assign professionals to study specific aspects of the district's 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.

In keeping with the provisions of Assembly Bill 1200, the county superintendent will be notified of this agreement between the district and FCMAT and will receive a copy of the final report. The final report will also be published on the FCMAT website.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the district's Maintenance, Operations and Transportation and Child Nutrition/Warehousing departments and make recommendations for staffing improvements or reductions, if any, in the following areas:

   a. Maintenance and Operations (including grounds and custodial)
   b. Transportation
   c. Warehouse and Delivery

2. Evaluate the current workflow and distribution of functions in each of the above areas and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

3. Review the operational processes and procedures for each of the above areas and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

1. Orientation Meeting - The team will conduct an orientation session at the district to brief district 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 district office and at school sites if necessary.
3. Exit Meeting - The team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the on-site review to inform the district of significant findings and recommendations to that point.
4. Exit Letter – Approximately 10 days after the exit meeting, the team will issue an exit letter briefly memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
5. Draft Report - Electronic copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the district's administration for review and comment.
6. Final Report - Electronic copies of the final report will be delivered to the district's administration and to the county superintendent following completion of the review. Printed copies are available from FCMAT upon request.
7. Follow-Up Support – If requested by the district within six to 12 months after completion of the study, FCMAT will return to the district at no cost to assess the district's progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report. Progress in implementing the recommendations will be documented to the district in a FCMAT management letter. FCMAT will work with the district on a mutually convenient time to return for follow-up support that is no sooner than eight months and no later than 18 months after completion of the study.

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The FCMAT study team may also include:

A. To be determined	*FCMAT Staff*
B. To be determined	*FCMAT Consultant*
C. To be determined	*FCMAT Consultant*
D. To be determined	*FCMAT Consultant*
E. To be determined	*FCMAT Consultant*

4. PROJECT COSTS

The cost for studies requested pursuant to Education Code (EC) 42127.8(d)(1) shall be as follows:

A. $500 per day for each staff member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, presenting reports and participating in meetings. The cost of independent FCMAT consultants will be billed at their actual daily rate for all work performed.

B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals and lodging.

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

Based on the elements noted in section 2A, the total not-to-exceed cost of the study will be $24,900.

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

Payments for FCMAT's services are payable to Kern County Superintendent of Schools - Administrative Agent located at 1300 17th Street, CITY CENTRE, Bakersfield, CA 93301.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT

A. The district will provide office and conference room space during on-site reviews.

B. The district will provide the following if requested:

1. Policies, regulations and prior reports that address the study scope.
2. Current or proposed organizational charts.
3. Current and two prior years' audit reports.
4. 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 district and sent to FCMAT in electronic format.
5. Documents should be provided in advance of field work; any delay in the receipt of the requested documents may affect the start date and/or completion date of the project. Upon approval of the signed study agreement, access will be provided to FCMAT's online SharePoint document repository, where the district will upload all requested documents.

C. The district'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 district shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following schedule outlines the planned completion dates for different phases of the study and will be established upon the receipt of a signed study agreement:

Orientation:	to be determined
Staff Interviews:	to be determined
Exit Meeting:	to be determined
Draft Report Submitted:	to be determined
Final Report Submitted:	to be determined
Board Presentation:	to be determined, if requested
Follow-Up Support:	if requested

7. COMMENCEMENT, TERMINATION AND COMPLETION OF WORK

FCMAT will begin work as soon as it has assembled an available and appropriate study team consisting of FCMAT staff and independent consultants, taking into consideration other jobs FCMAT has previously undertaken and assignments from the state. The team will work expeditiously to complete its work and deliver its report, subject to the cooperation of the district and any other parties from which, in the team's judgment, it must obtain information. Once the team has completed its fieldwork, it will proceed to prepare a preliminary draft report and a final report. Prior to completion of field work, the district may terminate its request for service and will be responsible for all costs incurred by FCMAT to the date of termination under Section 4 (Project Costs). If the district does not provide written notice of termination prior to completion of fieldwork, the team will complete its work and deliver its report and the district will be responsible for the full costs. The district understands and agrees that FCMAT is a state agency and all FCMAT reports are published on the FCMAT website and made available to interested parties in state government. In the absence of extraordinary circumstances, FCMAT will not withhold preparation, publication and distribution of a report once fieldwork has been completed, and the district shall not request that it do so.

8. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

FCMAT is an independent contractor and is not an employee or engaged in any manner with the district. The manner in which FCMAT's services are rendered shall be within its sole control and discretion. FCMAT representatives are not authorized to speak for,

represent, or obligate the district in any manner without prior express written authorization from an officer of the district.

9. INSURANCE

During the term of this agreement, FCMAT shall maintain liability insurance of not less than $1 million unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by the district, automobile liability insurance in the amount required under California state law, and workers compensation as required under California state law. FCMAT shall provide certificates of insurance, with El Centro Elementary School District named as additional insured, indicating applicable insurance coverages upon request.

10. HOLD HARMLESS

FCMAT shall hold the district, its board, officers, agents and employees harmless from all suits, claims and liabilities resulting from negligent acts or omissions of its board, officers, agents and employees undertaken under this agreement. Conversely, the district shall hold FCMAT, its board, officers, agents and employees harmless from all suits, claims and liabilities resulting from negligent acts or omissions of its board, officers, agents and employees undertaken under this agreement.

11. CONTACT PERSON

Name: Kristy Curry, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services
Telephone: (760) 352-5712 extension 8517
E-mail: kcurry@ecesd.org

11/16/16
Kristy Curry Date
Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services
El Centro Elementary School District

October 24, 2016
Michael H. Fine Date
Chief Administrative Officer
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team