

May 31, 2018

Judy Flores, Superintendent
Shasta County Office of Education
1644 Magnolia Avenue
Redding, CA 96001

Dear Superintendent Flores:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the Shasta County Office of Education with an update regarding progress made in implementing the recommendations identified by the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) in its final report dated November 2, 2017.

In July 2017, the Shasta County Office of Education and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for management assistance regarding the Whitmore Union Elementary School District. Specifically, the agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Review the district's oversight process and practices/responsibilities for the three nonclassroom-based charter schools authorized outside district boundaries, and make recommendations for improvements, if any.
2. Review the district's website for compliance with the Brown Act and EC minimum statutory requirements, and make recommendations for improvements, if any.

The report issued in November 2017 provided a number of recommendations for the operational areas identified in the scope of work. Per Section 2(B), item 7 of the study agreement, the Shasta COE has requested a follow-up review of the district's progress on implementing FCMAT's recommendations. FCMAT visited the district again on May 10, 2018 to collect data, conduct interviews and review supporting documentation to evaluate the district's progress on implementing recommendations contained in the November 2, 2017 report.

The original recommendations below are followed by the district's responses during interviews and follow-up emails and include FCMAT's observations.

Recommendations

Recommendation No. 1 – The district should:

Adopt a comprehensive oversight checklist to monitor financial and academic performance; develop policies and procedures; and evaluate renewal criteria for best practices and effective oversight.

FCMAT

Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer

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Administrative Agent: Mary C. Barlow - Office of Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Status: Implemented

District response: A reference sheet is used to establish deadlines and reminders to each charter organization in Epicenter for financial and other mandated information. Academic performance is currently evaluated by a consultant and paid for by the charter schools directly. The primary focus is to determine initial student skill assessment at the time of entry to the charter and provide learning methodologies designed to bring students up to grade level.

District is working with legal counsel to review and update existing policies and procedures. The projected completion date is in 2018-19 school year.

Renewal criteria will focus primarily on evidence of student achievement, meeting timelines, and fiscal accountability.

Recommendation No. 2 – The district should:

Monitor charter progress with the transition plan in accordance with Education Code requirements for the limited purpose waiver.

Status: Implemented

District response: The governing board wants updates on evaluation measure for student progress for district and charter students.

FCMAT observation: The consultant will be issued a summer contract to identify how students are progressing. The contract between the consultant and the district is currently under legal review.

Recommendation No. 3 – The district should:

Ensure that all elements for boundary exceptions are supported and notifications to appropriate agencies are timely.

Status: Implemented

District response: Both charter organizations that had limited purpose waivers have new petitions approved in accordance with the waiver guidelines. One of these charters is seeking the approval of another petition that is currently pending approval with another school district.

Recommendation No. 4 – The district should:

Utilize CARNet tools and NACSA 12 essential practices, standards and concepts as a basis for structured oversight.

Status: Implemented

District response: All three charter organizations have embraced the Epicenter software platform. There have been two training events for charter administrators, principals and office personnel on how to use the software for reporting purposes and tools to evaluate student progress.

The district's governing board members have expressed strong support for the Epicenter software. Student progress can be demonstrated during board meetings providing board members

visual online real-time information. In addition, the board can request to see the central depository of required financial documents without waiting for a subsequent board meeting.

Recommendation No. 5 – The district should:

Establish a schedule of activities to monitor and review with sufficient time for the charter operators to comply with district expectations.

Status: Implemented

District response: District is using Epicenter software that includes master calendar capability. This software electronically notifies each charter organization of due dates and uploads data supplied by each charter organization into the data warehouse. Notifications are done well in advance of deadlines with reminders as the deadline approaches.

Recommendation No. 6 – The district should:

Post the following required items to its website:

- a. Board agendas including agendas of closed sessions as required under the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- b. Each school year's SARC report.
- c. The 2016-17 and 2017-18 LCAPs.
- d. Requirements for the Sex Equity in Education Act.
- e. Requirements related to the Integrated Pest Management Plan.

Status: Partially Implemented

District response: The district is posting board agendas within the required timelines and board minutes following the meeting on its webpage.

FCMAT observation: While not in the original report, the district is integrating a master calendar of events with the school calendar. The district is working with the webpage developer to make this adjustment. All but one board meeting minutes were posted on the webpage. The district will post the missing meeting minutes.

District response: The SARC and Sex Equity in Education Act are currently available on the webpage; however, students do not have a sports program therefore not all posting requirements are applicable to the district.

FCMAT observation: While the district has posted the LCAP guidelines, the LCAP plan has not been updated to the webpage. The district anticipates this to be complete by the end of the current school year, at which time the prior year plans will also be available on the webpage.

Recommendation No. 7 – The district should:

Post the following recommended items to its website:

- a. All board and committee agendas and minutes of meetings that have delegated authority to exercise formal action of the district.
- b. Title I and Title II regulations regarding a public entity to take appropriate steps to communicate with individuals with disabilities.
- c. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- d. Pay schedules based on the advisory from CalPERS and requirements under PERL.
- e. Pupil Suicide Prevention.
- f. Categorical program monitoring.
- g. Sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education.
- h. Sudden cardiac arrest symptoms.
- i. Other policies and procedures outlined in this section.
- j. It is recommended that the district post all financial reports including the adopted budget, first and second interim and unaudited actuals on its webpage under the “Financial” section.
- k. Send notification to parents and post the Integrated Pest Management schedule provided by the independent company that performs this service.
- l. Stakeholder communication.

Status: Partially Implemented

District response: In the process of evaluating all web posting requirements listed above and will post applicable items in accordance with FCMAT’s recommendations.

This concludes FCMAT’s follow-up review of the Whitmore Union Elementary School District for the Shasta County Office of Education. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me at ddeal@fcmat.org or at (661) 802-0228.

Sincerely,



Deborah Deal, CFE, CICA
Intervention Specialist