



**FCMAT**

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT  
ASSISTANCE TEAM

CSIS California School Information Services

# El Dorado County Office of Education

## Transportation Review

September 20, 2018



**Michael H. Fine**  
Chief Executive Officer







**CSIS California School Information Services**

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September 20, 2018

Ed Manansala, Ed.D., Superintendent  
El Dorado County Office of Education  
6767 Green Valley Rd.  
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear Superintendent Manansala:

In May 2018, the El Dorado County Office of Education and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for a transportation review. Specifically, the agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Review the transportation delivery system for all special education and homeless assistance transportation, including but not limited to, routing methodology, bus ridership averages, scheduling, operations and staffing, and general fund contribution, and make recommendations for improvements and potential cost savings, if any.
2. Evaluate the transportation department's organizational structure and staffing, and make recommendations for staffing improvements or reductions, if any.
3. Review the transportation department operational processes and procedures, including the use of technology for program support areas, safety and training program, required school bus driver record maintenance and professional development, and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
4. Review the COE's vehicle maintenance program identifying industry standard best practices, compliance with Title 13 Code of Regulations, California Air Resources Board and local Air Quality Management District regulations, vehicle maintenance records, school bus safety checks and district fleet preventive maintenance program design and documentation, inventory control and district fleet inventory assessment, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.
5. Review the COE's transportation facility to include terminal offices, fueling infrastructure, fleet parking, county storm water requirements and adherence, hazardous materials best practices and security, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.

**FCMAT**

Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer

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

This report contains the study team's findings and recommendations.

FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the El Dorado County Office of Education and extends thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael H. Fine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'F'.

Michael H. Fine  
Chief Executive Officer

# Table of Contents

About FCMAT .....	iii
Introduction .....	1
Executive Summary .....	3
Findings and Recommendations.....	7
Transportation Funding and Finance .....	7
Routing and Scheduling .....	13
Staffing .....	19
Vehicle Maintenance, Fleet and Facility.....	23
Driver Training and Safety .....	29
Technology.....	33
Appendices .....	35



# About FCMAT

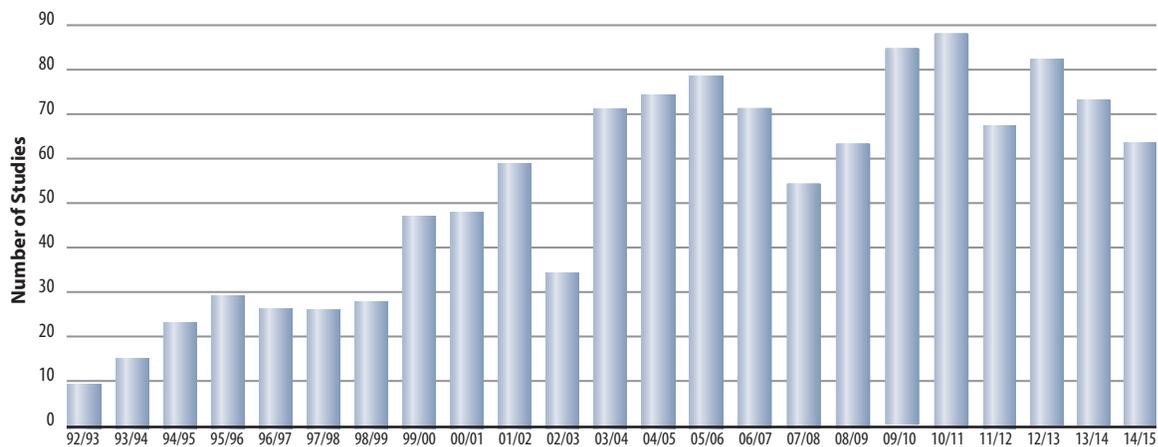
FCMAT’s primary mission is to assist California’s local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial, human resources and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related 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](http://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 state-wide 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 Michael H. Fine, 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 Dorado County Office of Education transports nearly all of the students it serves. El Dorado County is approximately 1,786 square miles; however, transportation is provided only to those students and programs on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Lake Tahoe Unified School District, although in El Dorado County is not a part of the county's Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), and does not participate in the county office special education program or transportation services. This results in a transportation service area of approximately 1,576 square miles.

The county office serves 281 students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and provides special education transportation service to approximately 288 pupils on 38 bus and van routes. The county office charges districts "other local revenue" for providing McKinney-Vento Act homeless transportation to seven students. It also provides special education transportation for nine students under an arrangement for districts that cannot provide the service economically.

## Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Scott Sexsmith FCMAT Intervention Specialist Bakersfield, CA	Marsa Miller FCMAT Consultant Tehachapi, CA
Leonel Martínez FCMAT Technical Writer Bakersfield, CA	Mike Rea FCMAT Consultant Sonoma, CA

Each team member reviewed the draft report to confirm its accuracy and to achieve consensus on the final recommendations.

## Study Guidelines

In March 2018 the El Dorado County Office of Education requested that FCMAT review its student transportation services. FCMAT visited the county office on May 2-4, 2018 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
- Transportation Funding and Finance
- Routing and Scheduling
- Staffing

- Vehicle Maintenance, Fleet and Facility
- Driver Training and Safety
- Technology
- Appendices

FCMAT's reports focus on systems and processes that may need improvement. Those that may be functioning well are generally not commented on in FCMAT's reports. 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

## Transportation Funding and Finance

School transportation is the poorest-funded element of California's education budget. The county office receives \$442,444 from the state for pupil transportation and is anticipating expenses of \$3,349,589 for the 2017-18 fiscal year. The county office has never charged excess cost to the SELPA member districts, but is working towards a gradual cost sharing that begins with the districts providing 10% of the cost in 2018-19 and tops out at 50% at year five. The plan would be based on assigning percentages to each school district based on P2 ADA and ridership.

FCMAT believes ridership and mileage should be the criteria for distribution of costs. ADA generally has little correlation to special education transportation costs. Further, FCMAT's observation and experience indicate that districts will soon begin to discuss taking responsibility for transporting some special education students. An application and responsibility plan would facilitate this process. Bus routes are not efficient, and driver time assigned the routes seems excessive.

## Routing and Scheduling

The county office has 38 current bus and van routes transporting 288 students or 7.6 students per route. This is a low average number attributable to poor routing, but also the low passenger capacity of vans. School buses have greater capacity and also ensure a safer environment, with a well-trained driver and a vehicle that is more highly regulated. The use of vans exposes the county office to needless liability.

Two nurses are assigned to students with serious medical conditions, and one bus aide is assigned to a bus with high student behavior issues. The county office should consider assigning aides to a small number of buses that transport students with the highest needs such as those with emotional disorders, autism and medical (seizure) or behavioral issues. The use of satellite bus yards and the allowance for bus drivers to park buses at home should be discontinued. Buses should be parked at the county office bus facility, with all employees reporting to this location. Bus routes are scheduled with a window time of 10 minutes before or after school begins and 10 minutes before or after it ends. Delivering pupils after the morning bell time or picking them up before the afternoon bell time reduces the number of necessary educational minutes.

The bid process allows drivers to select their preferred bus route based on their seniority position. The collective bargaining agreement language provides for two bus route bids by drivers during the school year, one in September after the school year has begun and one in February. Bidding days should be changed to be immediately before the school year begins, and October 1 to encourage more efficient bus routing and cost control. Extended School Year (ESY) routes are developed and assigned to drivers to closely align to school year routes.

At the time of FCMAT's visit, transportation service was being performed on eight school buses and 30 nonschool bus vans. California Vehicle Code Section 545 defines a school bus and requires students to be transported to and from school or school activities in this type of vehicle. Section 545(b) allows an exception if the vehicle is designed for and carries fewer than nine passengers plus the driver. Although transporting students in vans might be slightly less expensive, it creates a potential for exposure and liability for the county office because of the significant difference in care and protection for students. School bus drivers legally must receive significant training and certification, and buses must conform to federal and state regulations. These requirements are far in excess of those for other passenger vehicles and create a different standard of care for students transported in buses compared to nonschool bus vans.

## Staffing

The county office Transportation Department has grown significantly over the years and the number of support staff members for an operation of this size has not grown at the same pace. The staff should include a supervisor/trainer, two dispatchers, one router-scheduler, a driver instructor, an as-needed delegated behind-the-wheel instructor and a half-time utility person.

The job description for driver mentions many common job duties, but omits the requirements for the appropriate license, special certificate, or medical card. A note on the salary schedule indicates school bus drivers receive a 10% differential when assigned to a bus instead of a van; however, the drivers of these two types of vehicles should actually have separate job descriptions.

## Vehicle Maintenance, Fleet and Facility

**Vehicle Maintenance** - The CHP Motor Carrier Division annually inspects buses and records, issuing a terminal inspection grade. The county office has received the highest grade of “satisfactory,” indicating general compliance with laws and regulations under the CHP purview. Vehicle maintenance is performed under contract by the Placerville Union School District, which charges \$66 per hour and parts at cost. The county office fronts some parts funding to the district. This practice should be discontinued.

**Fleet** - The county office’s fleet consists of 93 vehicles consisting of school buses and other passenger vans and support vehicles. The transportation fleet of school buses and vans (approximately 45 vehicles) was almost completely replaced over the past three years. Because this is a large fleet, consideration could be given to developing an in-house vehicle maintenance program. The new school buses came equipped with video systems, but their use was not approved by CSEA; however, these video systems have significant benefits, and the county office should reconsider their use. A Global Positioning System (GPS) was piloted, but abandoned after it did not meet expectations. The county office should continue to explore the purchase and use of GPS systems.

**Facility** - Several years ago, the county office moved to a separate transportation facility that consists of some paved parking area and an old mobile home that was converted to offices and an employee lounge. The offices are in poor shape. The office offers little office privacy, particularly for the dispatch office, and has relatively poor ventilation for the restroom.

The facility would not be large enough for all buses and employee vehicles to be parked there. The county office should consider leasing or developing a comprehensive site that would include appropriate office space, an employee lounge area, restrooms, a fueling facility and a bus washing facility. A vehicle maintenance shop should also be considered. The county office’s total vehicle needs could be better served with all of these services in-house and at a centralized site, and meeting all vehicle needs at this location would likely be more cost-effective.

## Driver Training and Safety

The county office complies with all the laws, regulations and best practices on school bus driver training, documentation and safety. The Transportation Department has also developed a van driver training program that has proven to be effective. As a result, accidents have declined. Key office staff members should be trained in the “reasonable suspicion” aspect of the federal drug and alcohol testing program. Drivers hired mid-year should receive the same orientation that was provided at the beginning of each school year. The Special Education Department should provide consistent, annual training for school bus drivers on student disabilities and strategies to mitigate behaviors and issues on the bus. Many employees use county office vehicles every day, and each should be trained on reasonable use and procedures as well as defensive driving. Substitute van drivers are not always well prepared for the route or the students; therefore, they should receive

additional training. The county office has few bus aides, but all should be trained in practices, procedures and strategies to mitigate behaviors and issues on a school bus or van.

### **Technology**

Approximately three years ago, the county office purchased a comprehensive school transportation software suite called “Traversa.” The program modules include bus routing and scheduling, vehicle maintenance work orders and tracking, field trip scheduling and driver information. However, this program is only marginally used for routing, by printing route sheets. The program can do much more, including powerful routing to assist with more efficiency and reduction of costs. The county office should invest in staff training and support to ensure this program is effectively utilized.



# Findings and Recommendations

## Transportation Funding and Finance

School transportation in California has been inadequately funded for many years. Until 1977, school districts and county offices of education reported their operational costs to the California Department of Education (CDE), and the state reimbursed those costs in the subsequent year. Capital costs were never reimbursed. After the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, the state gradually reduced the percentage of reimbursement. In the 1982-83 school year, the state capped the apportionment to each district and county office at 80% of the reported cost amount. Cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) were granted only occasionally. As costs rose and revenue remained static, the state's share of funding covered approximately 45% of reported costs in the 2008-09 school year. That was the highest recent year of funding and was identified as each participating county office of education or school district's approved apportionment. During the Great Recession, the state reduced all categorical program funding, including transportation, by approximately 20%. This reduction effectively means that the state now covers less than approximately 35% of the statewide cost of pupil transportation, with individual districts and county offices of education varying widely in the percentage amount of funding.

With the implementation of the state's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in the 2013-14 fiscal year, school districts and county offices continued to receive the amount certified in April 2013. Under the LCFF, transportation revenue has never received a COLA, is restricted to transportation use and is subject to a maintenance of effort (MOE), that requires districts and county offices to spend at least as much as they receive. For the El Dorado County Office of Education, that amounted to \$442,444 for special education transportation. The following table illustrates special education transportation expenditures by fiscal year.

### *Expenditures for Special Education Transportation by Fiscal Year*

2015-16	\$3,128,276
2016-17	\$3,748,939
2017-18 (Projected)	\$3,349,589

State funding is expected to cover approximately 13.2% of the county office transportation budget. Because the state suspended school transportation data reporting when the LCFF was implemented, it is impossible to compare the county office transportation costs with those of neighboring or comparative county offices. Based on data prior to LCFF, this percentage is below the average state funding, which covers approximately 35% of the overall state expenditures for pupil transportation.

Assuming the 2017-18 budget is accurate, the county office's transportation cost per pupil will be approximately \$11,590 (based on 288 student riders). The CDE stopped collecting statewide school transportation data when the LCFF was implemented. The last statewide annual cost per pupil average was approximately \$6,500 for special education transportation. Based on this information, the county's comparative costs are nearly double the statewide average in the 2012-13 fiscal year, and the average cost per route, calculated by dividing the 2017-18 fiscal year transportation budget by the 38 routes, is \$88,147 per route. This per-route cost is comparable to what

FCMAT has observed statewide; however, the higher-than-average pupil amount indicates a large number of routes use low-capacity van-type vehicles. Approximately 7.2 students are routed per bus or van.

The county office charges districts “other local revenue” for providing McKinney-Vento Act homeless transportation to seven students. It also provides special education transportation for nine students under an arrangement for districts that cannot provide the service economically. The county office charges the districts \$63 per student per day based on round-trip service (half if the service is one-way). Based on approximately \$88,147 per route, and 7.2 students per route over a 180 day period, this equates to \$68 per student per day. The county office reported that the rate was announced to increase to \$68 per student for the 2018-19 fiscal year, which will align with the current cost per pupil, per day for the service, including vehicle maintenance and support costs. The reported “other local revenue;” however, has declined sharply during this fiscal year. In 2015-16, the amount was \$589,285. In 2016-17, the amount was \$569,319, but the amount for the 2017-18 fiscal year is projected to be only \$80,601.

The county office accounting and transportation staffs reported before the 2017-18 fiscal year, the Transportation Department provided adult disabled transportation service for the Alta California Regional Center. Much of this service was integrated with that of older students transported by the county office, but approximately 45 passengers rode to their programs on about three school buses and five nonschool bus vans. The reduction of this service, of course, reduces revenue.

The number of bus routes and drivers would normally be expected to decrease in correlation to service and revenue reduction, but they remained relatively constant due to an enrollment increase of approximately 40 students. This indicates that routes were not reduced, and special education student transportation was simply spread over a larger number of vehicles, increasing county office costs with no real increase in service other than more empty space on buses and vans. The number of overall special education students transported has not significantly increased since the previous year.

State funding has been relatively static for the past 35 years. As costs increased, funding remained at approximately the 1982-83 levels. Demographic changes as well as the increase in the need for special education transportation has influenced the changes at the county office over the intervening years. In the mid to late 1980s, most county offices in the state began charging back the districts they served for most excess costs over revenues for special education transportation services. The county office has never implemented this practice, which is unsustainable.

In approximately 2009, the county office began discussing with its school districts a plan to share some of these excess costs, and a plan is expected to be implemented for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Two proposed plans that are only slightly different were studied. One would be based on prior year P2 ADA and prior year January ridership, and the other would be based on current year P2 ADA and current year January ridership, which would be adjusted at year's end.

Costs would be distributed to each school district with 40% of the total cost based on either prior or current P2 ADA depending upon the model. The remaining 60% of costs would be based on student ridership or use of transportation based on either prior or current January ridership depending on the model.

The excess cost of approximately \$2.9 million would be distributed in a gradually increasing percentage to the districts in each of the next five fiscal years, with 10% charged in the 2018-19 fiscal year. An additional 10% would be increased each year until the district participation amount of 50% is reached.

Although this is a significant change, most county offices in the state that provide special education transportation service charge 100% of excess costs to school districts. The county office's proposed charge-back model still represents a significant "contribution" to the school districts compared to statewide practices and reflects its commitment to providing low-cost services. In fact, the model may not be sustainable in the future, and the county office may need to increase the amount it charges.

The two proposed formulas are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Because FCMAT has had statewide experience with these formulas, it provides the following comments and suggestions:

1. The formula does not directly distribute the county office's revenue, but only acts to distribute the excess costs. This is the preferred method of developing these formulas.
2. The formula utilizes a portion developed by ridership, a reasonable criterion that directly relates to the service. It would be more clearly defined if the amount was selected as a specific full-service day in mid-January rather than the ridership for that month. Creating an objective amount is difficult because January ridership could vary. Ridership must be the number scheduled to ride on that date instead of the number that actually rides (absence due to sickness, etc.)
3. The formula utilizes a portion developed by school district ADA. This is *not* a reasonable criterion because it does not directly relate to the provision of special education transportation. Counties that have utilized ADA as a criterion have experienced disproportionate district costs and benefits that do not correlate to the expense of providing special education transportation. Mileage would be a more related criteria. Many county offices have developed formulas utilizing one-way mileage from the student's home to the program he or she attends (using Google Maps or a similar program) and utilized that mileage in the calculation that develops the percentage of cost distributed to each district. Although this mileage is not the same as the distance traveled on the route with other students, it is a constant, objective amount that can be easily derived and utilized with confidence. Mileage is an important factor in the overall cost of pupil transportation and will vary from the percentage derived from ridership alone.
4. The percentage for ridership and mileage could remain at 60% for ridership and 40% for mileage, but would likely be more reasonable if established at 50% for each, not weighing either above the other.
5. Utilizing data collected in the prior fiscal year and assigned to the current fiscal year would allow districts and the county office to budget properly and avoid experiencing the last-minute adjustments.
6. The current proposal suggests 50% of the costs transferred to the county office in January with the remaining 50% in June. This again is a very kind proposal, but essentially burdens the county office with fronting the revenue to cover the costs early in the year. It might be more reasonable to transfer the amounts three times during each fiscal year, with one in the fall (September), one in the winter (January), and one in the spring (June).

7. FCMAT has observed the progression of special education transportation program transfers over the past 25 years. History suggests that once districts are charged for special education transportation costs, they begin discussing whether they could provide services less expensively. Although they typically lack knowledge of special education transportation complexity and logistics, many districts nevertheless begin taking back some of their special education transportation. They usually begin transporting some of the “easiest” students: those who live in and attend a program in their district. As that occurs, the cost to operate the county office’s program increases, and districts begin to take responsibility for more of their special education student transportation.

As this pattern continues, most county offices of education eventually determine they can no longer sustain a special education transportation program, and they cease operations. County offices that continue to transport serve a few students at a tremendous cost: usually those that the districts cannot economically serve. FCMAT has observed that the most efficient systems are those that transport all special education students under one program. When districts begin to take responsibility for special education transportation, economies of scale and reasonably efficient logistics cease, resulting in a much higher number of routes countywide than those necessary for a single supplier, often double the number or more.

In recent years, FCMAT has performed several studies for school districts, SELPAs or county offices that want to know how to re-establish the single-supplier approach.

The county office and its districts should anticipate that a number of districts will begin to take responsibility for some special education transportation. An application process including detailed plans would ensure that districts are prepared. It would also be prudent for the county office to plan for the decrease in students. A decrease in the number of students requiring transportation does not always result in a bus-route reduction or driver layoffs, but probably will result in shorter routes.

The county office charges its programs 25 cents per mile to “rent” a van only for Community Based Instruction (CBI) or field trips and \$1 per mile for a van with a driver from the Transportation Department. The county office should evaluate these charges since they do not appear to even cover the costs of this service. School transportation field trip charges typically utilize a per-mile amount for the cost of operating the bus and a per-hour amount for the *expense* of providing the service. The amount charged to utilize a county office van should include all vehicle operating, maintenance and capital costs. The county office business office staff indicated these billings have not occurred in recent years, transportation personnel reported that CBI vans are regularly utilized with and without drivers. The county may not have a process to log and report vehicle use to ensure programs are appropriately charged.

Bus and van drivers work on the county academic calendar but students attend programs in districts and adhere to the district calendar. As a result, drivers are paid their normal rate for several days they do not have to work and for other days when they drive students who are not on the county office calendar. This results in additional costs for the county office. Because of occasional calendar differences between the county office and the districts, drivers often cannot be assigned additional work on the days they are paid, but no buses are running, resulting in low efficiency.

The Placerville Union School District performs bus and van maintenance under contract. Drivers can use some spare vans located at the district bus yard when their assigned vehicle is being inspected, serviced or repaired. However, drivers sometimes remain at the yard while the repair is being made, resulting in greater cost for the county office. Greater expense also results from the fact drivers must drive their vehicle to and from the district for maintenance service and are paid for this time. Because most drivers are already working eight hours per day, this places most drivers in overtime status.

The county office's business office staff reported that it pays the Placerville Union School District approximately \$5,000 up front each school year to purchase and stock bus and van parts. This arrangement is unnecessary. The county office and district often disagree about when these parts are utilized, how they are recognized on district invoices and the potential inter-mingling of stock parts on the shelves. Further, the district mechanic was unaware of this practice. The county office apparently does not receive credit for this amount other than some specific fuel door parts for the Ford Transit that the mechanic reported were paid for up front. It would be far more reasonable to discontinue this practice and instead have the district charge the county office for parts as they are purchased and used. Bulk purchasing could still be used to benefit from economy of scale but would require a commitment from the district. The district presumably benefits from supporting a program with the additional revenue over expenses it receives by providing vehicle maintenance service for the county office.

The fleet of buses and vans have been replaced over the past few years, and the average age of both is approximately 3.5 years. This represents a tremendous fiscal commitment over the past three years and a necessary one since the previous fleet was quite old.

The step one salary for drivers is \$15.55 per hour, and bus drivers are paid a 10% premium above this amount (explained as a clarifying note on the approved salary schedule). This is a relatively competitive amount compared to what FCMAT has observed statewide. The county also provides relatively generous health and welfare benefits, with drivers receiving full family dental and vision, as well as a life insurance policy. Health and welfare benefits are capped for eight hours per day drivers at approximately \$510, which covers the cost of employee only health care under some plans offered. Drivers and part-time employees receive a pro-rated amount. The dispatcher position is paid at \$20.40 per hour at step 1, and the lead driver II is paid at \$18.95 per hour at step 1.

Route contract times for drivers do not appear to be well-managed. Bus drivers receive 20 minutes for pretrip inspection while van drivers receive 10 minutes. Each route includes break and fuel times that often amount to more than an hour and a half each day. The county office does not have fuel on site.

To fuel, drivers must be on paid time and travel to a commercial card-lock location (unmanned location where a card, personal identification number and vehicle mileage are necessary to complete the operation). Although drive break times are assigned within route times and generally comply with Article 14.5 of the collective bargaining agreement, they are usually not at the shift's mid-point, and employees do not generally take breaks at the transportation office. Transportation Department staff reported that in the past, drivers were scheduled at 40 hours that could not be used in a flexible manner. Dispatchers or office staff could assign work to drivers at any time within the 40 hours, but the county office discontinued this practice in favor of articulated shifts. Department staff indicated it is more difficult to make up time for drivers and coordinate occasionally-scheduled early dismissal schedules. This does increase some salary cost for the county office, but likely complies with Labor Code requirements. Drivers are

required to make up time when their routes are reduced because of student absences or change due to the permanent decrease in student riders. Brief periods of time (15 minutes or less) are expected to be made up by washing or cleaning the assigned vehicle, and longer periods are assigned by the department. Because the department can rarely assign such work, drivers really do not perform any additional service for the extra pay.

The county office never pays parents who choose to transport their child instead of receiving transportation service. If approved, the district would make this arrangement and pays for it.

The county office does not utilize the services of any other outside transporter like a taxi service. It has no nonpublic school contracts for service with any county office students. Any of these contracts and any transportation would be a district commitment.

## Recommendations

*The county should:*

1. Consider working towards a higher excess cost contribution percentage than 50% for its districts that receive special education transportation service.
2. Consider adjusting the proposed cost-sharing formula with districts to be based on 50% ridership and 50% mileage based on the prior-year data at specific time points. Transfer the funds three times a year.
3. Develop an application and responsibility plan for districts that want to transport some of their own special education students in the future.
4. Evaluate and adjust CBI and field trip rates. Ensure that users are charged for the use and operating costs of these vans.
5. Consider ways to adjust driver work calendars to align more with the calendars of the districts they serve.
6. Work to shorten excessive route times.
7. Discontinue the annual \$5,000 parts fund for the Placerville Union School District.

## Routing and Scheduling

Superintendent's Policy 3540 generally follows California Education Code and Vehicle Code regarding the general need to provide special education pupil transportation and the various manners in which it may be provided. There is no great detail relative to the manner or method in which that service may be performed.

Under federal law entitled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) codified as Section 20 US Code, Chapter 33, students with certain disabilities are entitled to be evaluated and have an individualized education program (IEP). Transportation may be required for these students as a related service for them to access their educational opportunities. The principles of IDEA are a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) so that services are as close as reasonably possible to those received by a student's nondisabled peers.

The county office has provided pupil transportation service as a related service for students who require it as dictated by their IEP. It has 23 programs (23 different teachers) at 20 special education school sites, usually at district host schools. The county office special education administrative staff reported that all special education students are routinely offered transportation service because they are rarely placed at their regular school of attendance. This is a rare practice. FCMAT often sees approximately 10-15% of special education students provided with transportation as compared to the county office, where almost all special education students receive this service.

El Dorado County is geographically large, with long distances between student homes and their programs, which are often outside the school district where they live.

At the time of FCMAT's visit, 281 students had IEPs, and the Transportation Department reported transporting 288 students on 38 routes. One additional driver was in the process of being hired, and the department indicated this would add another route, bringing the total to 39.

The department also transports seven homeless students across district lines as required by the Federal McKinney-Vento Act. In addition, it transports nine special education students for school districts that requested the service because they could not easily or economically provide it. Districts pay \$63 per student, per day for round-trip service.

At the time of FCMAT's visit, transportation service was being performed on eight school buses and 30 nonschool bus vans. California Vehicle Code Section 545 defines a school bus and requires students to be transported to and from school or school activities in this type of vehicle. Section 545(b) allows an exception if the vehicle is designed for and carries fewer than nine passengers plus the driver. Although transporting students in vans might be slightly less expensive, it creates a potential for exposure and liability for the county office because of the significant difference in care and protection for students. School bus drivers legally must receive significant training and certification, and buses must conform to federal and state regulations. These requirements are far in excess of those for other passenger vehicles and create a different standard of care for students transported in buses compared to nonschool bus vans.

Teachers and administrators interviewed by FCMAT generally indicated that service generally meets their needs and drivers are caring. The biggest concerns were the occasional late bus (often because of driver absenteeism and the lack of available substitute drivers) and the significant

student behavior problems and the lack of adequate mitigating strategies (often due to the limited space and human support in the buses and vans).

The Transportation Department is occasionally requested to participate by telephone in the IEP process, advising on the potential service possibilities for new students. Once transportation service is determined in the IEP, administrators complete a transportation service form that includes student information and service information. An alternate address is allowed if it is within two miles of the primary or home address (often day care), and an emergency contact and information sheet is completed. The Transportation Department generally receives the information necessary to appropriately serve students. Transportation service is expected to be provided within three days of the request, and the department generally meets this expectation. Once the service is scheduled, drivers are required to contact the family to introduce themselves and communicate the details. Parents receive a letter entitled: “Special Services Transportation Guidelines/Procedures” that details the expectations of special education transportation service from the county office. To expedite loading, parents are expected to have students prepared approximately 15 minutes before the bus arrives, and drivers are expected to wait only two minutes if students are not prepared. All of this appears to meet generally expected practices in the provision of special education pupil transportation.

At the beginning of each school year and of the Extended School Year (ESY or summer school), the Transportation Department receives a list of students and their program location details. The department typically creates an index card for each student and stacks them based on the school of attendance and the proposed order of pickup. This allows the software routing program to determine path of travel and create route sheets with detailed driving directions. Although this program can perform more efficient routing, the Transportation Department staff is not skilled or comfortable with it. This will be discussed more in the technology section of this report.

The schools report generally efficient service, except when a high number of drivers call in sick. The department does what it can to consolidate service on those days; however, some routes run later than their posted schedule.

El Dorado County is large, and the educational programs are scattered throughout the county, often far from where students live. Special education and transportation staff reported that parents frequently complain about the length of their child’s ride. The county office does not have a ride time limit nor is there any in laws or regulations, but some students are sensitive to extended times on a bus. Although most students have reasonable ride times, approximately 15% or fewer have times that exceed one hour. To reduce ride times for these students to one hour or less would be extremely expensive and create inefficient bus routes.

The county office bus routes generally follow the accepted principles of bus routing, with students at the furthest location from school picked up first and others gathered along the way. Special education bus routes generally pick up students who attend one or more schools. Because of the reasonable separation of bell times among the program schools, most bus and van routes can pick up and drop off two groups of students in the morning. This efficiency is repeated in the afternoon.

Greater route efficiency is limited by the lower capacity of the nonschool bus van-type vehicles. These vehicles often have student passenger capacities of seven. Their possible seating arrangements also do not give drivers any reasonable options to divide students who are experiencing interpersonal difficulties with others. A movement to larger-capacity school buses would resolve the liability issue, help develop more efficient bus routes, and allow drivers some room in the bus to help manage student behavior issues.

Route efficiency can also be reduced by special education students who have a doctor's requirement for a shorter ride or students who cannot be on the same bus together.

Students who are emotionally disabled (ED) or autistic often cannot ride together as well as, occasionally, those with a significant age difference. ED students can exhibit severe physical or emotional reactions to situations or individuals. Age differences can be difficult to manage since older students may be unable to filter their actions, conversations and vocabulary.

The county office has worked diligently to limit the number of bus aides or monitors. Two nurses ride with students who have extreme medical conditions, and one bus has an aide assigned for students with behavior problems. The county office should consider placing one aide per bus route with significant need. This would be only for those routes with ED students, significant age-range differences or the most severe autistic students. Implementing this change would resolve some of the interpersonal and safety issues on the bus and allow the county office to create more routing efficiency. Fewer than 20% of the bus routes are expected to need aides.

The county office transportation staff expressed concern that larger buses may not be able to traverse some county roads. However, these buses are similar in size to the existing county office buses. They are van-type vehicles with a school-bus body that can accommodate up to five wheelchair positions (wheelchair only) and up to 24 ambulatory seating locations (ambulatory only) or some combination of wheelchair and ambulatory students.

The county office also indicated buses routinely traverse on private and unpaved roads. School district and county office vehicles typically traverse down a short private driveway or require passengers to meet the bus at the roadway side of their property. Although these are often severely disabled students, and the practice is to pick them up at their door, the county office should evaluate those who live farther back along private roads and driveways to minimize the potential damage and exposure to vehicles. Families could also be required to upgrade roads or trim trees to ensure buses can safely travel to a student's home.

The county office transportation department staff reported that during times of extreme driver absenteeism, the department can consolidate up to four routes without significant tardiness to school. If that is the case, staff should investigate whether it is possible to consolidate the routes permanently.

Some routes could be consolidated, which would help reduce costs. Routes that seem to be able to be run in seven hours are scheduled at eight. This practice should be examined.

The county office has created a system of "satellite" bus yards. It has five, but there have been more in the past, and most are located at school sites. The locations offer no secured parking or any other amenities that would include driver access to restrooms, storage for oil or other vehicle fluids or fuel. Language in the collective bargaining agreement allows drivers who live within 10 miles of a satellite location to park the vehicle at their home instead. As a result, few park at satellite yard locations. The county office bus yard in Placerville is also considered a satellite yard and three drivers park their bus or van there. No one parks at any of the remote satellite bus yards. This historical practice essentially allows drivers to use county office vehicles to commute to work, and they occasionally drive their assigned bus or van while off the clock. A driver accident or injury would be a county office insurable event. Administrative staff indicated that in the past, drivers routinely utilized vehicles for personal use or errands. That practice was ceased several years ago, but drivers likely use their bus or van for a personal errand occasionally.

This system of satellites also creates several other problems or unreasonably increases costs in the following ways:

- When a driver calls in sick or is otherwise absent, the substitute must drive to that driver's home to retrieve the bus. He or she first must go to the county office to get a route sheet and spare keys since the sheet is often not in the bus, and the sick driver often does not answer the door. As a result, these routes always run late.
- When a bus or van parked at a personal home does not start or otherwise has a potential mechanical condition, the district mechanic is dispatched to that location. If the bus cannot be repaired, the route will run extremely late or not run at all. If the bus is repaired, it will still be late.
- Drivers are paid additional route time to drive back and forth to the satellite during the mid-day. This creates additional unnecessary cost for the county office and essentially nullifies the argument that these locations save time and fuel.
- Drivers are expected to check their mail boxes at the county office transportation facility daily. Some do not, causing some occasional service issues when a route change is not communicated. Traveling to the transportation facility also creates additional paid time.
- Managing and supervising school bus and van drivers is difficult. Their work location is on the road. When they do not have a single base of operation, it is almost impossible to supervise and communicate with drivers.
- The potential for accidents, damage or theft of the bus or van located at a private unsecured location is significantly greater than at a secured bus yard developed for that purpose.
- Bus and van routes seem to have been developed for specific drivers based on where they live rather than for maximum efficiency.
- Administrative or office staff in the Transportation Department should be able to observe each driver every morning before every shift to ensure that the employee is not impaired in any way. Currently, administrative or office staff never see drivers.

All of these problems can be resolved by eliminating the practice of satellite yards and allowing drivers to park the county office vehicles at their homes. This will require a change to the collective bargaining agreement language.

Only seven routes are assigned to satellite yards, and all others are assigned to the county office transportation facility. In the future, all bus and van routes should be assigned to the county office transportation facility, and no driver should be allowed to park a bus at home.

The county office has established a practice that allows a bus to arrive at school during a "window period" of 10 minutes before or after the bell time. However, staff rarely retrieve students from the bus when it arrives 10 minutes early, generally waiting until the bell time. This practice can be rather problematic since a student's academic time should start with the regular bell time. Allowing a regular education bus to routinely arrive after morning bell time should not be acceptable. If this occurs, the students are late and deficient in their designated educational time.

The same window period is allowed in the afternoon. Drivers often arrive early so they can park before the traffic from parents picking up regular education students. The county office transportation and academic staff reported that once the bus arrives, students are regularly escorted to the bus to be loaded regardless of whether the bell has rung. Again, this would not happen with

regular education students. The only reasonable window period in the morning is before the bell to allow reasonable time to unload the bus (considering that wheelchairs often take 5-10 minutes each) and for students to participate in a breakfast program. The only reasonable window period in the afternoon would be after the bell, allowing teachers and aides to escort students to each bus. Many special education programs do not pay aides to be at the classroom before bell times, and contract time stops when the afternoon bell rings. Teachers and classroom aides are motivated to participate in this system, but students do not benefit.

In the past, the county office provided a great deal of mid-day transportation for students who required therapy appointments provided by California Children's Services, a state agency that offered some medical or therapeutic services for special education students. Recent rulings require that agency to transport these students or compensate for their transportation. The county office has worked to reduce these arrangements, and transports only two students to mid-day therapy appointments at California Children's Services.

The collective bargaining agreement language provides for two bus route bids by drivers during the school year, one in September after the school year has begun and one in February. When they start the next school year, drivers maintain the number of hours they had at the end of the last school year. A bid allows drivers to select their preferred bus route based on their seniority position. The county office Transportation Department creates routes along with the bus or van assignment, and those bid packages must be available for inspection a week before bidding. Management staff from the Human Resource Department, a representative from the California School Employees Association (CSEA) as well as transportation department key staff are present at the bid session. Bidding generally progresses quickly; however, the most recent bidding session was reportedly difficult, with numerous questions and challenges about the accuracy of the bid packages.

Although student information, program locations, bell times and other factors might change at the beginning of the school year, the Transportation Department staff should create a deadline to establish bus route packages. Any student information or other changes would be implemented after the routes have been selected. It is almost impossible for special education bus routes to remain static; however, accuracy as of the deadline date is important to ensure credibility of the process.

Districts and counties throughout the state bid for bus routes in several different ways. Many school districts and counties bid only once but allow drivers to "bump" after a window period. Some bid before the school year and again a month or two after routes are established. However, changing drivers often disrupts student routines. It can take time for students to feel comfortable with a new driver and for the driver to become familiar with the new students on his or her route. Having the first bidding a month after the beginning of school creates uncertainty and results in additional cost for the county office to guarantee pay for each driver based on the routes in spring of the previous school year. Routes in the spring are typically at their highest numbers of passengers, while routes at the beginning of the school year are at their lowest. This practice also encourages the department to create routes to match the driver guarantees at the beginning of the school year instead of focusing on efficiency. The county office should change the bidding times so that the first is one week before the school year, and the second is October 1 when most routes have stabilized.

The county office has no bidding for ESY routes, although the contract includes language that seems to refer to this process. These routes generally provide service for programs that are approximately 20 days long. Drivers are assigned to the routes and often assume the one that

most closely approximates their regular school year route; however, this affects efficiency. Many students sign up for the ESY program, but few actually attend. The county office transportation staff reported that they usually have approximately 35 ESY routes, but they are rarely consolidated based on the number of riders. Most ESY programs operate for a half-day, but most routes are eight hours per day. This is an extremely expensive program when it is not properly managed.

The Transportation Department created a separate student database system that is the primary source for all student data, emergency contact numbers and other data. It is not integrated into the bus routing program. The department has read-only access to the county office Aeries student information system, which can provide helpful information.

## Recommendations

*The county should:*

1. Consider replacing all van routes with bus routes to reduce liability and increase potential route capacity.
2. Consider better managing the use of private roads and driveways.
3. Immediately consolidate bus and van routes if it can be accomplished without decreasing student attendance.
4. Hire and assign bus aides for routes with ED students and students with significant autism.
5. Develop efficient bus routes without arbitrary reduced limits for the driver workday.
6. Eliminate the use of satellite bus yards. Park all buses and vans at the county office bus yard, and assign all drivers to report to that location for work.
7. Eliminate the window times that allow student delivery after morning bell time and pickups before afternoon bell times.
8. Create an arbitrary information deadline for establishing bus route bid packages. Change the bidding times to one week before the school year begins and again on October 1.
9. Consolidate ESY bus routes.

## Staffing

The Transportation Department is staffed as follows:

- 1 FTE transportation supervisor/trainer
- 1 FTE lead driver II
- 1 FTE dispatcher
- 38 part-time school bus drivers (two of these drivers are on some type of leave)
- Approximately 14 temporary substitute drivers (with a variety of availabilities)

The lead driver II is preparing to retire in approximately a year and a half. The department should prepare to select and train a replacement.

This Transportation Department is large considering the number of bus routes, employees and special education students transported, but it has operated without reasonable office, training and administrative support for years. The dispatcher classification operates as a router-scheduler. The lead driver II classification performs the functions of a dispatcher. The county office should create a router-scheduler classification that is paid the same as the dispatcher. The department has too many employees for the supervisor to adequately train.

The department should also have a state-certified school bus driver instructor and a delegated behind-the-wheel instructor who can train on an as-needed basis (not on a regular contract). All of the vehicle maintenance is performed at the Placerville Union School District bus yard by district employees since the county office has no maintenance employees. If all drivers are required to park their vehicles at the county office bus yard, it would be reasonable to have some type of utility person located at the bus yard. This position would have light-maintenance duties such as charging batteries, switching light bulbs, etc., and could be on site in the mornings to perform this work. The position would also be available to drive as a last-minute substitute and perform custodial work.

For an operation of this size, the appropriate staffing should be as follows:

- 1 FTE transportation supervisor/trainer
- 2 FTE dispatchers
- 1 FTE router-scheduler
- 1 FTE driver instructor
- 1 occasional delegated behind-the-wheel instructor (used as-needed only, could be a qualified assigned driver)
- 0.5 FTE utility person (light maintenance/custodial/driving)

Two nurses ride with students who have significant medical needs, and one aide rides on a bus to assist with student behavioral issues. These are employees of the Special Education Department paid from their budget, and the Transportation Department does not manage, supervise or evaluate them.

The department has absenteeism that ranges from four to 10 drivers per day. During flu season, up to 14 drivers can be absent, making it extremely difficult for the department to cover all bus and van routes. Exacerbating this issue is a provision that allows drivers to take vacation days when students are being transported. Many school districts and counties pay vacation days as per

the contract, but prohibit drivers from taking days off during the regular school calendar with an understanding that they will take vacation during winter break, spring break and summer. The county office has allowed this practice, but recently changed their policy to limit it. The result was a negotiated settlement with the union that reportedly would allow some limited prearranged vacation absence. This practice presents some obstacles for the Transportation Department. Unlike other departments that can absorb the absence of an employee, pupil transportation requires a driver per route every day to ensure that students arrive on time in the morning and afternoon.

The department has 10 drivers who are school bus certified. Some bid on a van route. If a number of school bus drivers are absent, the department reassigns a school bus certified driver on a specific day to ensure an employee with the proper license drives the bus.

The job description for driver mentions many common job duties, but omits the requirements for the appropriate license, special certificate, or medical card. A note on the salary schedule indicates school bus drivers receive a 10% differential when assigned to a bus instead of a van; however, the drivers of these two types of vehicles should actually have separate job descriptions.

Recruiting for school bus or van driver positions can be difficult. The Transportation Department generally has trained willing van drivers to become school bus drivers. However, traditional recruitment methods are often unsuccessful for school bus or pupil transportation positions. The Human Resources and Transportation departments can recruit through advertisements in local newspapers or Craig's List, notices in school newsletters, and the like. Banners on a bus parked in a prominent geographic location are another recruiting strategy.

Drivers are required to wear identifying name tags, but have no uniforms although the department has occasionally issued county office shirts. Bus and van drivers often become the public face of the county office and employees should be clearly identified with at least a uniform shirt and jacket so parents do not question the identity of the individual who picks up their child. This is similar to all county office vehicles being clearly marked with the county office logo (which was not the case a few years ago).

The driver handbook was outdated, but transportation department staff and union officials worked collaboratively to update the document to reflect current practices and standards. It is nearly complete and prepared for ratification. The handbook has become a part of the collective bargaining agreement process, which is unusual but appears to work well.

## Recommendations

*The county should:*

1. Make the following personnel adjustments:
  - Hire a second dispatcher and develop a router-scheduler position.
  - Hire a driver instructor.
  - Create an occasional delegated behind-the-wheel instructor position.
  - Create a half time utility person position.
2. Create different job descriptions for a certified school bus driver and a van driver.

3. Develop and require drivers to wear an identifying uniform.
4. Prepare for the retirement of the lead driver II. Select and train a replacement.



# Vehicle Maintenance, Fleet and Facility

## Vehicle Maintenance

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) Motor Carrier Inspector Unit annually inspects buses, and records related to vehicle maintenance, driver information, timekeeping and federal drug and alcohol testing. It produces a report of findings entitled the “Safety Compliance Report/Terminal Record Update,” more commonly known as the “terminal grade.” The county office’s most current inspections are as follows:

- 7/16/16: Satisfactory
- 6/20/17: Satisfactory

“Satisfactory” is the highest grade awarded to any motor carrier and indicates general compliance with laws and regulations governing school bus safety. An “unsatisfactory” grade is serious. In each case, CHP clearly advises that a failure to correct the deficiencies can result in a recommendation to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to revoke the county’s motor carrier operating authority, filing a complaint with the district attorney for potential prosecution, and filing an injunction. Charges can be brought against the board and the superintendent for failure to address these issues. School administrators are typically unaware of these inspections or the potential seriousness of such CHP actions.

School buses are required to be inspected every 45 days or 3,000 miles, whichever occurs first, according to Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 1232 (13 CCR 1232). The county office does not operate a vehicle maintenance shop or employ any mechanics, but contracts with the Placerville Union School District for vehicle maintenance service involving both school bus and nonschool bus vehicles. Because of this contract arrangement, FCMAT did not perform a full evaluation of the contractor’s vehicle maintenance operations. The CHP terminal inspection rating suffices to indicate that the district maintains the county office school buses to acceptable standards. However, the district inspects school buses approximately every 30 days, which is necessary because these vehicles reach the maximum mileage before the 45-day deadline. The district is staffed by one journeyman mechanic and one 0.75 FTE mechanic’s helper. In addition to the approximately 93 fleet county office vehicles, the district also maintains its own fleet of nine school buses and eight nonschool bus vehicles as well as the fleet of nearby Camino Elementary School District, composed of four school buses.

There is no legal or regulatory requirement on maintaining nonschool bus vehicles. The district inspects and services these vehicles on a rotation of approximately 6,000 miles based on the recommended manufacturer’s interval for service. Since these vehicles transport students, they should be inspected more frequently while maintaining the manufacturer’s recommended intervals (oil, fluid, filter changes, etc.).

The district charges the county office \$66 per hour for labor and the actual cost of parts. The county office pays the district \$5,000 at the beginning of the school year to purchase common parts in advance (belts, hoses, filters, etc.) and place them in stock. This process is difficult to adequately audit. Although having some common parts in stock is convenient, it would be more fiscally prudent for the district to purchase parts when necessary and invoice the county office directly when they are utilized. The county office has explained this process, and the district’s mechanic was aware of it, but indicated that the county office purchased fuel doors, which have a tendency to break frequently, for the Ford Transit vans.

The district operates older vehicle maintenance software program called the Transportation Information Management System (TIMS). TIMS generates work orders that assist in invoicing the county office and can generate vehicle history reports if necessary. The county office has not requested these reports.

The county office has invested significantly in bus and vehicle replacement over the past three years, and the projected cost of capital outlay for 2017-18 is \$220,000. This has decreased the cost of vehicle maintenance. The county office reported that several years ago, before the vehicle replacement program, the maintenance contract cost more than \$400,000 per year. It now is projected to cost approximately \$167,571, according to the 2017-18 second interim budget. Some vehicle maintenance is still covered under warranty.

Recent state legislation requires school transportation providers to train school bus drivers on the need to check buses after every route to ensure that students are not left unattended on the vehicles. In addition, the transportation safety plan must also include the procedure, which is covered in the driver training and safety section. The county office must also install some type of compliant electronic device for this purpose by the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. The county office is aware of this requirement. The district purchased electronic child-checking devices for the county office school buses during the 2016-17 school year before the dissemination of the new regulations (13 CCR 1294). These new regulations were adopted in January, 2018. The county office should ensure the devices purchased comply with these regulations since the manufacturers did not have them available until recently. Some legislation was introduced in Sacramento that may delay implementation of this device until the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.

## **Fleet**

The county office fleet is composed of the following:

- Ten school buses
- Thirty-five passenger vans or sedans for Transportation Department use
- One spare van at the district shop for drivers to return to base
- One vehicle for the Sierra Ridge Regional Occupational Program (ROP)
- One vehicle for delivery of audiovisual equipment
- Three Community Based Instruction vans parked at the transportation lot
- One Workability van
- One vehicle for the Tunnel St. program
- One warehouse vehicle
- One mobile dental vehicle
- Six Maintenance Department vehicles
- Two child development department vehicles
- Two vehicles for the western slope van pool
- One vehicle for the kitchen
- Twenty-seven vans for head start or early Head Start

The Transportation Department vehicles were mostly replaced, but one of the buses is old and nonoperational. The average fleet age of the school buses is 3.7 years, and the average fleet age of the vans or sedans in the Transportation Department is 3.2 years, making this a new fleet. At the time of FCMAT's 2009 review of the Transportation Department, many of the school buses and vans were quite old, replacement was necessary. Such replacement reduces cost and increases student safety. Many of the older vehicles that were replaced were light-duty minivans. The newer vans are sturdier, should provide safer service, and may last longer.

The county office Transportation Department staff reported that the two-way radio system was recently upgraded and provides more reliable coverage. In any rural, mountainous community, it is difficult to have complete two-way radio communication coverage, but the staff indicated communication is limited in only a few areas. However, the Transportation Department staff reported that the transportation facility is located in a gully and therefore has poor cellular service.

Many school transportation providers utilize Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to determine student transportation vehicle locations. The county office transportation staff reported that they contracted with Synovia to provide these devices and service. The GPS information was primarily intended to help collect data for Medi-Cal billing reimbursement for some special education students. GPS can be helpful, particularly in rural areas, to pinpoint the location of buses and vans and can help support drivers who receive parent complaints about timeliness. However, Synovia staff reportedly installed the devices improperly, causing mechanical issues on the school buses and requiring the district to repair them. The devices could not provide the desired information, and the relationship with Synovia was terminated. Still, these devices could be beneficial for the county office, and the department should continue to explore alternatives for obtaining them.

Drivers are compensated one day per month to wash and clean their bus or van. They can wash buses at the district facility, and all vans or other vehicles are washed at a local vehicle wash facility called "Splasherville." An inspection of a small number of school buses and vans found that interior and exterior cleanliness are inconsistent. Because students with special needs are often more environmentally sensitive than other students, maintaining clean and sanitary bus and van interiors should be a higher priority. A review of invoices from Splasherville indicated that only 19 vans were washed in January, 2018, and only 13 in February, 2018.

The county office was considering the utilization of video camera technology on the bus routes, and new buses were outfitted with cameras. However, the union objected, and the systems are no longer used. Some employee representative groups perceive that these devices would be utilized to record employees acting inappropriately. Instead, these devices are usually utilized to record student discipline issues and support drivers. The cameras assist in keeping drivers and students safe, and their use therefore should not be decided by the employee union.

## Facilities

Over the past few years, the transportation office moved from the main complex to a property on the northside of the community college campus adjacent to the county office offices. The property was reportedly a maintenance storage facility with a double-wide mobile home that has been converted to the offices and a drivers' lounge. A small area has been paved for bus, van and employee parking, and the yard has lights. The facility has been broken into several times, with the perpetrators stealing gasoline from vehicles and attempting to break into the office.

The office offers little office privacy, particularly for the dispatch office, and has relatively poor ventilation for the restroom.

Because the facility lacks fuel on site, drivers must travel to a commercial card lock facility to fuel their vehicles. This is an unstaffed fueling station that requires the user to have a fuel card and enter a personal identification number (PIN) and the mileage to fuel. The county office can utilize two locations. The county office is exempt from federal excise tax for gasoline, and the supplier adheres to this exemption. With 93 vehicles in its fleet, it would seem appropriate for the county office to explore developing its own fueling facility. It is projected to spend over \$200,000 in fuel for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

The department cannot wash vehicles or perform any maintenance on site since it lacks an approved sump system as well as the permits necessary to operate an industrial shop.

The Transportation Department has grown incrementally over the years, evolving into a relatively large operation; planning should be done to ensure it is adequately supported.

If the county office takes the actions necessary to move drivers and vehicles to a base location instead of parking vehicles at drivers' homes, the transportation facility would require some work. The current location may not be sufficient for such an operation, depending on the size of the parcel and the potential limitations of use or permitting. In addition to the vehicles belonging to the Transportation Department, the county office has many others that could be parked at a single location. The facility would need to be large enough for employee and vehicle parking, fuel, and potentially, a vehicle maintenance shop. The county office should explore the feasibility of developing its own on-site vehicle maintenance program and shop since it loses a significant amount of labor time and efficiency performing these tasks off-site. This change would also benefit program provision since drivers would be less likely to be late for routes when a bus or van has a minor mechanical problem.

The transportation facility has maintenance needs, and the county office should explore the cost-effectiveness and reliability of developing an appropriate transportation facility.

If the county were to do a complete financial analysis, they may determine that operating its own vehicle maintenance facility would be less expensive for the county office and would include a fueling system, vehicle washing capability and a shop with a more professional office at a single location.

The drivers' contract includes a significant amount of time daily to drive to remote locations and fuel their vehicles. The county office could easily support an on-site fueling system. Driver hourly costs would decrease, and the cost of fuel would be less when purchased in bulk.

## Recommendations

*The county should:*

1. Discontinue the practice of paying the district \$5,000 in advance of each school year for parts stock.
2. Reconsider the use of video systems on buses and vans.
3. Continue to explore reasonable GPS systems for the county office pupil transportation vehicles.

4. Explore the cost-effectiveness and viability of developing an appropriate transportation facility for the county office.
5. Evaluate the development of it's own fueling facility.



## Driver Training and Safety

School bus driver training in California is highly regulated. Prospective school bus drivers must receive a minimum of 20 hours of classroom training and 20 hours of behind-the-wheel training (E.C. 40080-40089) on curriculum developed by the CDE's Office of School Transportation. Teaching all the classroom training units generally takes approximately 35 hours, and behind-the-wheel training can take at least that number of hours. In addition, school bus drivers must receive a minimum of 10 hours of in-service training time every year. The training can only be conducted by a state-certified school bus driver instructor (E.C. 40084.5). Behind-the-wheel training may be given by a delegated behind-the-wheel instructor, which is another certification allowed by law and performed by the CDE's Office of School Transportation. The training must be meticulously documented and recorded. In addition, school bus drivers must submit to a background check including fingerprinting for licensing and for employment, and random drug and alcohol testing in compliance with Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) rules (49 CFR 382).

The county office's driver training records appear to be in order, with no significant deficiencies, indicating that the transportation supervisor/trainer meets the requirements of keeping the department's drivers up to date on required training.

The county office has a transportation safety plan in compliance with E.C. 39831.3. The plan has also been revised, as recently required, to include new child check requirements and ensure that drivers check their bus at the conclusion of each route to ensure that no child is left on the bus unattended. The plan must be in place and available for inspection by a CHP officer at each school. The county office reported that it has delivered a plan to each of its school sites.

According to E.C. 39831.5 school bus emergency evacuation drills and student safety instruction must be performed annually, and specific records kept for students in grades K-6. Specific safety information must also be announced before every field trip. The Transportation Department is aware of these regulations and appears to have conducted such drills.

The Driver's Handbook and the Transportation Safety Plan does include a limited visibility policy in compliance with VC 34501.6. This law requires that such a policy be in place and gives the drivers the discretionary authority to cease operation of the vehicle when visibility is less than 200 feet.

A new law requires that school bus drivers must receive training on checking their bus after every route or run to ensure that no students are left behind unattended. The driver's handbook mentions this procedure, and drivers have received the training.

The handbook is developed collaboratively with the union and has been understood to be part of the collective bargaining agreement although that document's transportation article does not mention the handbook.

The Special Education Department has provided special training for school bus and van drivers almost every year to assist them in understanding student disabilities and strategies that may help mitigate negative student behaviors. This is a positive practice and should occur annually.

The department has occasional school bus accidents. The supervisor/trainer reported that accidents are evaluated by reviewing incident, determining if it was preventable, and remedial training with drivers is performed as necessary. Accident data showed four accidents have occurred to date in 2017-18. When the supervisor/trainer was hired in the 2015-16 school year, the department had 21 at-fault accidents. The current supervisor/trainer has worked to proactively train school bus and van drivers.

The transportation supervisor/trainer reported that the department utilizes the DMV Employer Pull Notice Program. This requires each commercial driver to be enrolled so the county receives annual reports of a driver's record and gets notification of any accident or moving violation. Although not required by law, van drivers are included in this notification program as well as any other employee who drives a county office vehicle, to include maintenance, food service, head start and all of the other vehicles. This is a positive practice.

The federal DOT Drug and Alcohol Testing Program is managed by a third-party administrator: Comprehensive Drug Testing (CDT) of Long Beach, California. The Human Resource Department (HR) receives direct communication from the company on random drug and alcohol testing for employees and communicates the list of individuals to the transportation supervisor. The transportation supervisor immediately schedules individuals for their test at a local clinic. If the transportation supervisor is on the list, she goes for the test immediately. The transportation supervisor is under the impression that these random tests need to occur immediately on the day the list is received. However, these tests can occur on another day of the month as long as the individuals are not otherwise notified and the list's secrecy is not compromised. However, the tests need to occur immediately before, during or after performing "safety sensitive" work. Once a driver is notified that he or she has been selected for a random test, the driver must report immediately. Refusal is treated as a positive test.

The transportation supervisor was also trained in detecting and testing drivers for "reasonable suspicion." At least one responsible individual is required to receive training in this detection and the related procedures. One of the more critical aspects of supervision of school bus drivers and other drivers is the ability to greet employees and make a reasonable assessment on their ability to safely transport students. As reported in the previous section of this report, almost no drivers actually report to the office for any shift, so it is impossible for the county office to assess each driver. Moving drivers to a single yard will assist in this process. In most school transportation operations, drivers check in with the dispatch office before every shift to receive the key for their bus or vehicle and any important communication. The county office would benefit from training all office staff on detecting the conditions of impairment as outlined in the federal drug and alcohol testing program.

When drivers are hired, they receive a comprehensive information and education packet regarding the drug and alcohol testing program as the federal law requires. Drivers annually receive a refresher course on the federal regulations and an informative booklet. The last page of the document is a tear-out sheet that records their receipt of the training and booklet.

Drivers perform a daily pretrip inspection. School bus drivers have a more comprehensive inspection form than van drivers. These drivers submit these forms to the transportation office daily as required by law (for school bus drivers), and the documents are inspected by the office staff. School bus drivers are allotted 20 minutes for the pretrip inspection. Van drivers are allotted 10 minutes, which is an adequate amount of time for these inspections.

The transportation supervisor/trainer has developed a comprehensive van driver training presentation for the department. This program covers the important aspects of special education transportation and defensive driving. In addition, she works with these drivers behind the wheel on defensive driving skills. The county office should consider providing defensive driver training for any county office employee who drives a vehicle, especially those who transport students.

Substitute van drivers are not always trained on the routes they serve and can occasionally get lost or experience difficulties with the disabilities or behaviors of some students. Additional training should be provided.

Bus aides are rarely utilized and are typically paraprofessionals who also serve in the classroom setting. The Transportation Department should develop and provide some additional training on the issues faced on a school bus and strategies to mitigate these behaviors.

13 CCR 1229 requires that drivers demonstrate proficiency on any commercial vehicle before driving it unsupervised. As required, the county keeps records of each vehicle and which drivers are proficient on it, and these are updated when a driver attains any new proficiency. The supervisor generally performs the proficiency training and certification, and the department is aware that drivers must be proficient to drive a commercial vehicle.

The department provides annual in-service training at the beginning of each school year. This specialized department training generally lasts three days and includes a variety of guest speakers and training topics that are mandatory and valuable for bus and van drivers. Monthly in-service meetings are scheduled for approximately one hour each and contain valuable training information for school bus drivers and staff.

Original classroom training is regularly provided for new candidates to become school bus drivers. This is generally provided on a countywide basis through the Driver Trainer Advisory Council. The county office's supervisor/trainer commits to part of this training. The new candidates who become bus drivers are usually the van drivers who are interested in the training. Renewal classroom training is required for any school bus driver in the last year of certificate validity, and a minimum of 10 hours is required. The council also generally performs this training on a countywide basis. The supervisor/trainer performs all behind-the-wheel training, accident retraining and safety ride-checks of the drivers on their routes.

Although department drivers receive a great deal of training at the beginning of the school year, little training is provided for drivers that are hired mid-year. Van or school bus drivers hired mid-year should receive consistent orientation training similar to that provided at the beginning of the school year. One option is for these sessions to be videotaped and utilized through the year for new drivers.

## Recommendations

*The county should:*

1. Provide the required "reasonable suspicion" training on the federal drug and alcohol testing program for all transportation office staff.
2. Create a mid-year orientation program for all new drivers that reiterates the important topics covered at the beginning of the school year.
3. Ensure the Special Education Department provides annual training for school bus drivers.
4. Consider providing defensive driver training for any county office employee who drives a vehicle, especially those who transport students.
5. Provide more comprehensive and preparatory training for substitutes.
6. Develop a training program for bus and van aides.



## Technology

Approximately two years ago, the Transportation Department purchased the Traversa school transportation bus routing program, a comprehensive web-based system developed by Tyler Technology. Tyler also has another program entitled Versatrans. These are powerful programs that can perform bus routing and bus route optimizing. Traversa differs from Versatrans in that it includes a suite of transportation programs that includes field trip booking, bus routing, vehicle maintenance tracking and driver information, including licensing expirations.

Traversa is used only to print route sheets and directions as noted in the Routing and Scheduling section of this report. The automated routing function is not being utilized. This is a very powerful program that can create efficient routes and optimize those routes. A skilled router would need to operate the program, as some local information is necessary.

Providing training and support for the key staff members who will use the program are important in ensuring success. Districts commonly purchase these programs without having individuals in the Transportation Department who are skilled at the software systems. Many school transportation dispatchers and routers are promoted from the position of bus driver without the requisite office or computer skills. A much greater amount of time and funds should be invested in training those who will operate the program.

These programs can also generate regular management assistance reports that include student data, mileage information, vehicle maintenance deadlines and driver license expiration dates. These can help make the system function more efficient and reduce employee time to maintain this information.

The department has not embraced this software, and does not use it to its full capability. Utilizing this system for optimized bus routing instead of relying on local information and routing based on the driver's needs, will likely result in significantly fewer bus routes and lower costs.

Further, this software can assist the department in quickly developing reports that can be utilized to charge costs to districts for route and trip services.

## Recommendation

*The county should:*

1. Evaluate the training needs of staff on the use of Traversa to best use the system and to provide needed reporting.



# Appendices

**A: Estimated Shortfall and Proportional Share Calculations**

**B: Study Agreement**



# Appendix A - Estimated Shortfall and Proportional Share Calculations

## Special Education Home to School Transportation Estimated Shortfall and Proportional Share Calculations March 2018

District	ADA (P1 - reported)	ADA % of Total	# of Riders (as of January 2018)	% of Riders
BlackOakMine	1,177.03	5.7%	25	10.37%
Buckeye	4,589.06	22.3%	47	19.50%
Carnino	444.07	2.2%	6	2.49%
EDUHSD	6,395.27	31.0%	58	24.07%
GoldOak	457.44	2.2%	10	4.15%
GoldTrail	680.75	3.3%	5	2.07%
Indian Diggings	18.27	0.1%	0	0.00%
Latrobe	132.42	0.6%	0	0.00%
MotherLode	1,002.03	4.9%	17	7.05%
Pioneer	290.31	1.4%	8	3.32%
Placerville	1,226.06	6.0%	20	8.30%
PollockPrimes	659.99	3.2%	16	6.64%
Rescue	3,524.74	17.1%	29	12.03%
Silver Fork	6.05	0.0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,603.49</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Notes and assumptions:**  
 Shortfall amounts will be based on prior fiscal year final numbers  
 ADA will be based on prior fiscal year P-2 certified numbers  
 Riderhip will be determined in January of the prior fiscal year  
 Current year payments will be by county transfer from districts 50% in January, 50% in June  
 For subsequent year budgeting purposes, estimates will be based on:  
 Current year EDCOE second interim projections for shortfall amounts  
 Current fiscal year P-1 reported  
 Current fiscal year riderhip in January  
 Estimated cost escalation factor

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23

<b>Annual Shortfall</b>	\$2,826,544	\$3,109,198	\$3,420,118	\$3,762,130	\$4,138,343
Total Shortfall	\$2,826,544	\$3,109,198	\$3,420,118	\$3,762,130	\$4,138,343
% of Shortfall shared with Districts	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%
\$ of Shortfall shared with Districts	\$282,654	\$621,840	\$1,026,035	\$1,504,852	\$2,069,172
\$ of Shortfall paid by EDCOE	\$2,543,890	\$2,487,359	\$2,394,083	\$2,257,278	\$2,069,172
40% ADA	\$113,062	\$248,736	\$410,414	\$601,941	\$827,669
60% Riderhip	\$169,593	\$373,104	\$615,621	\$902,911	\$1,241,503

**Annual Shortfall Distribution 40% ADA/60% Riderhip**

District	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	ADA	Riderhip	ADA	Riderhip	ADA	Riderhip	ADA	Riderhip	ADA	Riderhip
<b>Total</b>	\$113,062	\$169,593	\$248,736	\$373,104	\$410,414	\$615,621	\$902,911	\$1,241,503	\$827,669	\$1,241,503
BlackOakMine	6,459	17,593	24,052	38,704	23,446	63,861	34,387	93,663	128,050	47,283
Buckeye	25,182	33,074	58,257	72,763	91,412	120,059	134,072	176,086	310,158	184,348
Carnino	2,437	4,222	6,659	9,289	8,846	15,327	12,974	22,479	35,453	17,839
EDUHSD	35,094	40,815	75,909	89,793	127,392	148,158	186,841	217,298	404,139	256,906
GoldOak	2,510	7,037	9,547	15,481	9,112	25,544	13,364	37,465	50,830	18,376
GoldTrail	3,736	3,519	7,254	7,741	13,560	12,772	19,888	38,621	27,347	51,515
Indian Diggings	100	0	100	221	364	0	534	18,733	534	734
Latrobe	727	0	727	0	2,638	0	3,869	0	5,319	0
MotherLode	5,499	11,963	17,462	12,097	19,960	43,426	29,275	63,691	97,966	40,253
Pioneer	1,593	5,630	7,223	3,505	5,783	20,436	8,482	29,972	38,454	11,662
Placerville	6,728	14,074	20,802	7,868	24,423	51,089	35,820	74,930	110,750	49,252
PollockPrimes	3,622	11,259	14,881	24,770	13,147	40,871	19,282	59,944	79,226	26,513
Rescue	19,342	20,407	39,749	44,896	70,212	74,079	102,977	108,649	211,626	141,593
Silver Fork	33	0	33	73	121	0	177	0	177	243
<b>Total</b>	\$113,062	\$169,593	\$248,736	\$373,104	\$410,414	\$615,621	\$902,911	\$1,241,503	\$827,669	\$1,241,503



## Appendix B - Study Agreement



CSIS California School Information Services

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### FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM STUDY AGREEMENT April 18, 2018

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the team, and the El Dorado County Office of Education, hereinafter referred to as the COE, mutually agree as follows:

#### 1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

The team provides a variety of services to local educational agencies (LEAs). The COE has requested that the team assign professionals to study specific aspects of the county operations. These professionals may include staff of the team, county offices of education, the California State Department of Education, school districts, or private contractors. All work shall be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this agreement.

#### 2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

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

1. Review the transportation delivery system for all special education and homeless assistance transportation, including but not limited to routing methodology, bus ridership averages, scheduling, operations and staffing, and general fund contribution, and make recommendations for improvements and potential cost savings, if any.
2. Evaluate the transportation department's organizational structure and staffing, and make recommendations for staffing improvements or reductions, if any.
3. Review the transportation department operational processes and procedures, including use of technology for program support areas, safety and training program, required school bus driver record maintenance, and professional development, and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
4. Review the COE's vehicle maintenance program identifying industry standard best practices, compliance with Title 13 Code of Regulations,

California Air Resources Board and local Air Quality Management District regulations, vehicle maintenance records, school bus safety checks and district fleet preventative maintenance program design and documentation, inventory control and district fleet inventory assessment, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.

5. Review the COE's transportation facility to include terminal offices, fueling infrastructure, fleet parking, state storm water requirements and adherence, hazardous materials best practices and security, and make recommendations for improvement, if any.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

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

### 3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The FCMAT study team may also include:

<i>A.</i>	<i>To Be Determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Staff</i>
<i>B.</i>	<i>To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Consultant</i>
<i>C.</i>	<i>To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Consultant</i>

### 4. PROJECT COSTS

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

- A. \$800 per day for each staff team member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, presenting reports, or 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 COE will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon COE's acceptance of the final report.

**Based on the elements identified in section 2A, the total not-to-exceed cost of the study will be \$19,600.**

- 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 17<sup>th</sup> Street, City Centre, Bakersfield, CA 93301.

### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COE

- A. The COE will provide office and conference room space during on-site reviews.
- B. The COE will provide the following if requested:
  - 1. 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 COE and sent to FCMAT in electronic format.

5. Documents should be provided in advance of fieldwork; 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 COE shall upload all requested documents.

C. The COE's administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the report resulting from the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the team prior to completion of the final report.

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

## 6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

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

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

## 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 COE 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 fieldwork, the COE 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 COE does not provide written notice of termination prior to completion of fieldwork, the team will complete its work and deliver its report and the COE will be responsible for the full costs. The COE 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 COE 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 COE. 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 COE in any manner without prior express written authorization from an officer of the COE.

9. **INSURANCE**

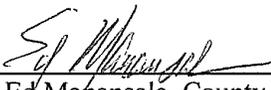
During the term of this agreement, FCMAT shall maintain liability insurance of not less than \$1 million unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by the COE, automobile liability insurance in the amount required under California state law, and workers compensation as required under California state law.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

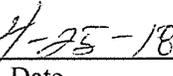
10. **HOLD HARMLESS**

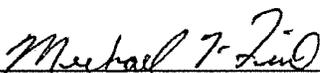
FCMAT shall hold the COE, its board, officers, agents and employees harmless from all suits, claims and liabilities resulting from negligent acts or omissions of its board, officers, agents and employees undertaken under this agreement. Conversely, the COE shall hold FCMAT, its board, officers, agents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

Contact person: Kevin Monsma, Deputy Superintendent  
 Telephone: (530) 295-2261  
 E-mail: [kmonsma@edcoe.org](mailto:kmonsma@edcoe.org)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. Ed Mansala, County Superintendent  
 El Dorado County Office of Education

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Michael H. Fine  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

April 18, 2018  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date