



FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE TEAM

CSIS California School Information Services

Wasco Union High School District

Maintenance, Operations and Transportation Review

April 24, 2019



Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer







CSIS California School Information Services

April 24, 2019

Lori Albrecht, Superintendent
Wasco Union High School District
2100 Seventh Street
Wasco, CA 93280

Dear Superintendent Albrecht:

In September 2018, the Wasco Union High School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for management assistance. Specifically, the agreement states that FCMAT will perform the following:

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the MOT department (including maintenance, grounds, custodial and transportation) and make recommendations for improved effectiveness and efficiency of organization and staffing, if any.
2. Evaluate the workflow and distribution of functions within the MOT department and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
3. Review the MOT department's operational processes and procedures and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations in the above areas of review. FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the Wasco Union High School District, and extends thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

FCMAT

Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer

1300 17th Street - CITY CENTRE, Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533 • Telephone 661-636-4611 • Fax 661-636-4647
755 Baywood Drive, 2nd Floor, Petaluma, CA 94954 • Telephone: 707-775-2850 • Fax: 661-636-4647 • www.fcmat.org
Administrative Agent: Mary C. Barlow - Office of Kern County Superintendent of Schools



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About FCMAT

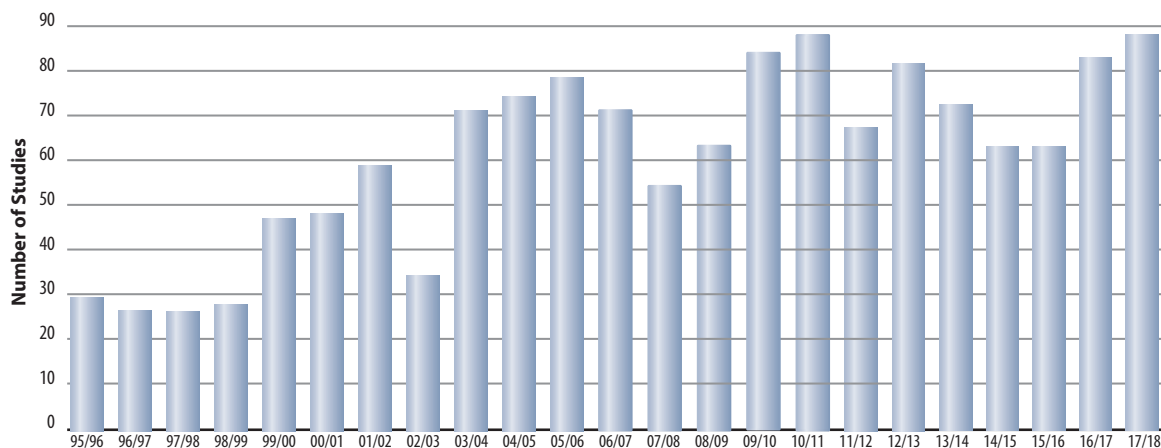
FCMAT's primary mission is to assist California's local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial, human resources and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related school business and data services. FCMAT's fiscal and management assistance services are used not just to help avert fiscal crisis, but to promote sound financial practices, support the training and development of chief business officials and help to create efficient organizational operations. FCMAT's data management services are used to help local educational agencies (LEAs) meet state reporting responsibilities, improve data quality, and inform instructional program decisions.

FCMAT may be requested to provide fiscal crisis or management assistance by a school district, charter school, community college, county office of education, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Legislature.

When a request or assignment is received, FCMAT assembles a study team that works closely with the LEA to define the scope of work, conduct on-site fieldwork and provide a written report with findings and recommendations to help resolve issues, overcome challenges and plan for the future.

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

Studies by Fiscal Year



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

FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill (AB) 1200 in 1992 to assist LEAs to meet and sustain their financial obligations. AB 107 in 1997 charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its 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.

On September 17, 2018 AB 1840 was signed into law. This legislation changed the how fiscally insolvent districts are administered once an emergency appropriation has been made, shifting the former state-centric system to be more consistent with the principles of local control, and providing new responsibilities to FCMAT associated with the process.

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 Wasco Union High School District is located in Kern County and, according to Ed-Data.org, had an enrollment of 1,864 students for the 2017-18 school year. The district is composed of one comprehensive high school, Wasco High School, and one continuing education high school, Independence High School. The district receives students from four area elementary school districts: Wasco Union, Lost Hills Union, Semitropic and Maple. The district provides transportation for approximately 182 general education and special education students on five bus routes. The district is approximately 750 square miles and generally a rural environment encompassing the city of Wasco and surrounding communities of Lost Hills, Maple, Semitropic and other unincorporated areas on the west side of Kern County.

In September 2018 the district requested that FCMAT review its maintenance, operations and transportation programs.

Study and Report Guidelines

FCMAT visited the district on November 26-27, 2018 to conduct interviews, collect data and review documents. Following fieldwork, FCMAT continued to review and analyze documents. This report is the result of those activities and is divided into the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Organizational Structure
- Fiscal Considerations
- Maintenance
- Grounds
- Custodial
- Transportation
- Appendix

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.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Shayleen Harte
FCMAT Deputy Executive Officer
Bakersfield, CA

Chris Johnston*
Assistant Superintendent Business Services
Pleasant Valley School District
Camarillo, CA

Laura Haywood
FCMAT Technical Writer
Bakersfield, CA

Tim Purvis*
Director of Transportation
Poway Unified School District
San Diego, CA

*As members of this study team, these consultants were not representing their respective employers but were working solely as independent contractors for FCMAT.

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

Executive Summary

To serve its students' needs, the district has a unique model of maintenance, operations and transportation (MOT) service delivery that requires nearly all MOT staff members to possess and maintain a bus driver license. Rather than look outside to substitute bus drivers, the district is able to quickly cover driving needs internally, sometimes to the detriment of other operational areas such as grounds, maintenance or custodial functions. This spirit of "all hands on deck" extends to other services that MOT provides. Maintenance workers assist with grounds work. Grounds workers and custodians provide event setup and parking lot monitoring duties. A mechanic hand washes vehicles. Staff members are quick to address a wide variety of service requests.

MOT expenditures and overtime costs have grown steadily, according to district leadership. However, with all MOT staff performing a blend of duties, it is not clear what services, or which programs that MOT supports, are the primary drivers of those cost increases. The district lacks cost tracking mechanisms to adequately track expenditures by service or program. As a prerequisite step to understanding what is driving up costs, the district must implement improved cost separation tracking procedures.

Similarly, to truly understand staffing and overtime expenditures, the district must implement more specificity in time tracking procedures, documenting both the service provided and the program supported. Based on the data available, the district is adequately staffed in custodial and grounds services. However, due to operational inefficiencies and a lack of planning, the district does not realize the full benefit of these staffing levels. Maintenance Department staffing should be increased to properly maintain district facilities. Lack of planning also limits the effectiveness of the department. Comprehensive preventative maintenance and deferred maintenance programs should be developed and implemented to maintain school facilities at the high level the district and community expects.

State pupil transportation revenue covers nearly 60% of the district's transportation program expense, a significant advantage over the statewide average of 35%. It is a challenge to identify the district's exact per pupil and per vehicle expenses for pupil transportation because expenses are blended in many areas of the MOT budget.

The district operates five buses daily for general education and special education pupil transportation. The district depends on MOT staff not routinely assigned to daily transportation bus routes and its two vehicle mechanics to work as substitute school bus drivers when needed, such as routine activity trips, late bus runs and to cover driver absenteeism. The district should consider employing up to two additional staff members whose primary responsibility is to perform substitute transportation coverage.

The district's MOT model is appropriate for the program size. However, the district lacks a dedicated operational level supervisor or coordinator to assist the director of MOT with the legal complexities and challenges of operating a pupil transportation program. The district should evaluate the current level of responsibilities of the MOT secretary and determine if these duties would be more appropriately met by having a transportation operations supervisor or coordinator supervised by the director of MOT.

Findings and Recommendations

Organizational Structure

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

Span of Control

Span of control refers to the number of subordinates who report directly to a supervisor. Although there is no agreed-upon ideal number of subordinates for span of control, it is generally agreed that the span can be larger at lower levels than at higher levels of an organization because employees at the lower levels typically perform more routine duties and therefore can be more effectively supervised, according to *Principles of School Business Management* by Craig R. Wood, David C. Thompson, Don I. Tharpe and Lawrence O. Picus. When dynamic conditions require frequent schedule or assignment changes, a higher frequency of communication is needed between leaders and subordinates. This increase in communication needs decreases the effective span of control.

Chain of Command

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

Line and Staff Authority

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

The purpose of any organizational structure is to help a district's management make key decisions to facilitate student learning while balancing its financial resources. The organizational design should outline the management process and its specific links to the formal system of communication, in addition to the authority and responsibility needed to achieve a district's goals and objectives. Authority in a public school district originates with the elected governing board, which hires a superintendent to oversee the district. Through the superintendent, authority and responsibility are delegated to the district's administration and staff.

MOT Department Organizational Structure

The district's Maintenance, Operations and Transportation (MOT) Department is managed by the director of MOT, who has worked for the district in this capacity for more than twelve years. Prior to his tenure with the district the director worked for two smaller districts, also as the director of MOT. Line supervision is accomplished by individuals who do not have "supervisor" in their title. The lead gardener-groundsman provides line supervision for grounds staff, the lead custodian provides line supervision for custodial staff and the MOT secretary provides line supervision for bus drivers. The director himself provides line supervision for maintenance staff and mechanics. The director is not responsible for school facilities planning and construction. The director of facilities oversees facilities planning, construction, and project bidding and also serves as the principal of the continuation high school.

It is common for small districts to accomplish line supervision with lead workers instead of incurring the full cost of supervisory positions. However, it is not common for the MOT secretary to take on the high level of responsibility seen in Wasco UHSD. Considering the workload and the size of the department, if the MOT secretary were not performing line supervision duties, the span of control of the director of MOT would be too broad for effective operation. There is a legitimate need for a person to fill the responsibilities that the MOT secretary has assumed. This is discussed later in the Transportation section of the report.

As noted, it is common for small districts to use non-supervisory staff in line authority positions, but this model of organization has inherent pitfalls associated with it. Line staff intuitively realize that the person with line authority over them lacks disciplinary authority. The non-supervisor with line authority is tasked with leading line staff to achieve district goals but is often not a part of the district leadership meetings that articulate the district goals. The solution to both these issues is clarity and communication: clarity of expectations for all staff; clear, consistent rules and procedures; and a shared understanding by all staff members of where the district is heading and why will help facilitate efficient operations.

The district employs a unique model of workload distribution for line staff. Statewide, bus driver positions are rarely full-time positions. To provide the full-time employment opportunities necessary to attract drivers, many districts supplement bus driver hours with grounds or custodial work. This supplemental work augments the work of full-time grounds or custodial staff. In Wasco UHSD the number of bus routes, length of those routes, and high number of field trips and athletic events, combined with the inability to find substitute drivers, creates a unique situation. This results in a situation where the district expects every employee in the MOT Department to possess and maintain a bus driver license. For example, many custodians are bus drivers first and custodians second, working split shifts. Other MOT staff, like grounds and maintenance workers, regularly have to forgo their regular job assignments to drive bus routes, field trips, or athletic events. The MOT secretary and the mechanics also serve as backup drivers, if needed.

To adjust to the ever-changing activities schedule, the MOT Department is constantly rearranging staff schedules. Driving pulls staff away from their other duties of custodial, maintenance, and grounds. Staff must sometimes leave their secondarily prioritized work undone, even though it appears on the surface that staff time was invested in completing the work. The amount of coordination work necessary for daily operations exceeds what would be seen in a similarly sized department operating under a different staffing model.

Organizational Behavior

School districts are complex organizations. School districts piece together funding streams of state, federal, and local dollars to care for a wide array of student needs: transportation, feeding, social-emotional health, college and career readiness, special education, general education and more. Filling these roles requires complex and dynamic organizations. Leading organizations of such complexity is no easy task.

The study of organizational behavior seeks to understand why groups behave as they do, and how to effectively influence the behavior of an organization. Ultimately, effective management is predicated on the ability to guide organizational behavior. School districts throughout California have successfully used systems theory to understand and positively shape organizational behavior. Based on the work of Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Ross Ashby, systems theory and systems thinking provide tools for understanding and shaping complex organizations.

The basic principles of systems thinking are the interdependence of subsystems within an organization, the need for subsystems to work collaboratively for an organization to thrive, and the vitality of communication between subsystems as a prerequisite condition for collaborative work.

In addressing problems, looking at a single subsystem may not provide the complete context for a solution. Systems thinking requires looking at all related subsystems to find the best solution for organizational success.

As applied to a school district, systems theory classifies separate departments as subsystems of the organization. Each department is not isolated, but is a necessary part of the whole. Departments are therefore interdependent. For example, without payroll, few people would come to work. Without maintenance or custodial, office and classroom spaces would quickly become uninhabitable. The success of the district depends on collaboration between departments, which itself depends on communication between departments. The most practical application of systems thinking comes with understanding both the importance of and the need to facilitate communication while teaching department leadership to have a systemwide perspective.

Interviews revealed multiple examples of the MOT Department providing inadequate budget planning data to the business office. MOT leadership shared examples of the excellent work accomplished by the MOT Department, and questioned the necessity of the budget planning requests. From the perspective of a non-complex or simple organization, this MOT perspective may be logical. While it is true that MOT is accomplishing MOT work, from a systems thinking perspective, this does not promote organizational success. For the organization as a whole to thrive, MOT must communicate with the business office and provide the necessary information for budget planning. Senior district leadership should not have to order departments to communicate. Instead, it would be worthwhile to invest time in communicating and developing a systems thinking perspective in all department leaders.

In addition to recognizing the importance of communication, practitioners of systems thinking seek to identify and break down communication barriers. Interviews and document review showed that district leadership have established procedures that aim to communicate districtwide information and context to all staff members. This is an extremely effective technique for improving organizational health. During interviews, some MOT line staff reported a lack of understanding about the district's need for budget planning. Although information was being shared with MOT leadership, the message was not communicated well with other MOT staff. To help reinforce understanding, the district should include graphical data about the budget in its presentations to staff, making the information more accessible. If every individual in the

organization understands their distinct role and the organizationwide effects of their behavior, the organization will be more successful.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider developing a systems thinking mindset in department leadership so that districtwide success is prioritized above department goals.
2. Include graphical representations of budget data to make district financial information accessible to all staff members.
3. Ensure that the director of MOT clearly communicates the district's goals to all non-supervisors with line authority.

Fiscal Considerations

In the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) era, Wasco UHSD, like many districts with a high unduplicated pupil percentage (UPP), saw steady and significant funding increases due to supplemental and concentration grant funding. The mandate to provide increased or improved services to UPP students accompanied those additional funds. Many staff reported that the district scrambled to manage this new funding and subsequent new programs.

As with many school districts, the additional funding arrived faster than the district was able to fully build staff capacity to manage it, especially with the turnover in the director of business services position three times in six years. During the years of consistently increasing funding this situation was tenable, as additional funding increased faster than growing expenditures. However, now that the state has fully implemented the LCFF, a shift in the financial situation is expected. The future of unrestricted general fund revenue growth appears to be the cost of living adjustment (COLA) only. The district's nearly double-digit percentage year-over-year revenue growth previously experienced will now be replaced by comparatively sparse COLA growth estimated at under 4% annually over the next few years. Simultaneously, districts foresee significant upward pressures to expenditures due to the continued escalation of the California Public Employees' Retirement System and the California State Teachers' Retirement System employer contributions, special education contributions, contractually obligated step and column wage growth, and inflationary pressures on basic goods and services. For most school districts, these increased expenditures outpace the limited COLA-driven revenue growth. District leadership, aware of these future year budget pressures, have begun planning and considering districtwide operational efficiencies.

Account Codes and Separation of Costs

Account code structures create the accounting framework through which a school district can track revenues and expenditures. As with any tracking system, districts must make the decision of what to track, and in how fine of detail to track it. The minimum financial tracking standards are set by the California Department of Education (CDE) through the standardized account code structure (SACS) as detailed in the California School Accounting Manual (CSAM). The independent financial audits of the district indicate no significant problems with SACS reporting compliance. The district's financial accounting software offers the ability to track financial transactions at a finer detail than the minimum standard. This is pertinent because a finer level of detailed tracking will be necessary to implement operational efficiencies in the MOT Department.

While the financial reports show the year-over-year increases in MOT spending, those reports do not contain the level of detail necessary to determine what specific actions are the primary drivers of the cost increases. The MOT Department includes four distinct services: maintenance, grounds, custodial, and transportation. Those services provide support for a wide array of district programs/functions: the primary instructional program, special education, extracurricular activities, athletics, community services, general district administration, and facilities construction. To know how to save money, the district first needs to know very specifically how it is spending money.

The current and previous directors of business services took important steps in improving the account code structures of the district to be able to identify and track cost centers. FCMAT recommends additional steps to ensure that the district fully tracks the following costs for all MOT activities:

- A separate optional SACS code should be used for each service in the MOT Department: maintenance, grounds, custodial, and transportation.
- As pertinent, the district should account for the following functions and subfunctions for each service, using either the function code or optional code parameters: instruction, special education, pupil transportation, extracurricular activities, school-sponsored athletics, community services/civic center activity usage, maintenance, grounds, custodial, and facilities construction.

With this level of detailed tracking in place, the district will be able to target cost drivers. With the current data available, the district does not objectively know if the additional MOT expenditures are due to increased transportation needs or increased maintenance needs, or if the increased costs are due to supporting a growing array of extracurricular activities or increased demands of the core instructional program. Implementing these account structures will also allow for multiyear trend analysis, to further target savings. District leadership will have the tools necessary to see if spending patterns are aligned to district values and priorities and to make informed decisions.

Once the business office has fully implemented the more detailed account code structure, staff must be trained on its use. This does not mean that line staff such as custodians need to know the details of the account code structure, but they need to understand why it is important for them to properly account for spending. Most importantly, staff need to know that with each expenditure, whether it be time or materials, that they need to record two important parameters: the service they were providing (maintenance, grounds, custodial, or transportation) and what program they were supporting (e.g., instruction, special education, extracurricular activities).

Budget Planning

Interviews and budget document review revealed a lack of adequate budget planning originating from the MOT Department to the business office. This deficiency has proved problematic for district financial planning. From a systems thinking perspective, the district should consider communication, support, and accountability improvements to bolster the health of this subsystem of the organization and to benefit the entire organization. While there is no single cause for the lack of adequate budget planning, there are several solutions.

Although all department heads do not need to be accountants, they must appreciate the necessity of accurate budgeting. Improved budget planning should be a work goal for the MOT Department, upon which department leadership will be evaluated by the superintendent. This action underscores the necessity of budget planning, demonstrates that it is a district priority, and includes an accountability mechanism.

The district should provide budget training for the director of MOT to build the internal capacity of staff. In addition, the district could seek collaboration with a budget-savvy MOT director so that the director of MOT has a job-alike mentor for budget planning.

Budgeting, in its most basic form, requires answering three questions: What are we going to do? When are we going to do it? How much will it cost? When a department leader can answer these three questions with specificity, the groundwork for accurate budgeting is present.

The challenge comes when a department cannot answer these questions. In the case of MOT the district needs to undertake two key steps to get to the point of developing accurate budgets.

The first, as noted above, is accurate cost tracking by service provided. The second involves budget information or plans. Routine maintenance costs, with a small factor of variance, typically follow a steady trend. The same is true for bus maintenance, grounds work, and custodial services. Prior year costs are an excellent indication of what will be needed in future years. If accurate by-service cost tracking is not in place, then past year spending reports are not useful for planning. The account code structure work recommended in this report, once implemented, will set the groundwork for solving this problem for the district.

Routine tasks and replacement of failed components is only one part of what an MOT Department does. A successful MOT Department also undertakes planned work. Budgeting for planned work requires a department to have specific work plans. During the course of the study the MOT Department was unable to furnish comprehensive MOT work plans for preventative maintenance, deferred maintenance, turf care, tree care or vehicle maintenance. The development of comprehensive work plans will give the district the tools needed for more accurate MOT budget planning.

Budget Controls

When FCMAT questioned the MOT Department about the lack of budget planning, department leadership expressed a feeling of lack of knowledge and control over the department budget. Although the budget has been decentralized for years, and MOT has been provided some district office assistance, historically the MOT Department focused merely on performing the work and relied on the director of business services to manage the MOT budget. MOT leadership does not have an organizationwide perspective, which led to the department not being accountable for incorporating financial savings in its operations.

Building the capacity of MOT leadership to inform and participate in budget planning is an effort that will serve the district well. Establishing a monthly standing meeting facilitated by either the superintendent or director of categorical programs would formalize efforts to improve communication between MOT and business services.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop and implement a more detailed tracking of MOT expenditures to separate costs both by the service provided and the program supported.
2. Train MOT staff on cost separation procedures.
3. Make improved budget planning a goal of the MOT Department that includes MOT work plans for preventative maintenance, deferred maintenance, turf care, tree care and vehicle maintenance.
4. Provide budget training for the director of MOT.
5. Establish a monthly communications meeting between business services and MOT.

Maintenance

The function of the Maintenance Department is to ensure that district buildings and building systems perform reliably, through inspection, repair, and replacement of parts and components. Maintenance best serves the educational program when the buildings necessary to support teaching and learning are safe and functional.

Maintenance Staffing Levels

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

- Level 1 – Showpiece Facility (the highest standard)
- Level 2 – Comprehensive Stewardship (this is the recommended staffing level for public schools)
- Level 3 – Managed Care (work order response time can be lengthy, and facilities' conditions remain stagnant)
- Level 4 – Reactive Management (facilities' conditions deteriorate at an accelerated rate)
- Level 5 – Crisis Response (maintenance staff can only respond to emergencies)

Using the APPA formula for maintenance staffing (<http://www.appa.org/fourcore/>), and analyzing the district's facilities, the following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) maintenance positions the district needs for each level of service, if all routine maintenance tasks are performed in-house:

Level of Service	# of FTE
Level 1 – Showpiece Facility	4.1
Level 2 – Comprehensive Stewardship	3.0
Level 3 – Managed Care	2.1
Level 4 – Reactive Management	1.7
Level 5 – Crisis Response	1.1

The Maintenance Department has two general maintenance workers. The district outsources heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) maintenance. Based on average school district HVAC technician staffing levels and climate conditions in the Central Valley, maintenance of the district's HVAC equipment requires approximately 0.5 FTE. Combining the outsourced 0.5 FTE with the district's 2.0 FTE, the district has approximately 2.5 FTE maintenance support. Using the APPA formula, the district's maintenance level of service is between managed care and comprehensive stewardship.

When a Maintenance Department is staffed at the managed care level, staff spend more time on reactive maintenance and less time on preventative maintenance and facilities improvement. With comprehensive stewardship level staffing or above, a district is investing sufficient resources to counteract the wear and tear of time and usage. With managed care, time and use will take their toll, and facilities conditions will decline. The relative newness of district facilities hides this fact, but unless the district invests more in maintenance staffing, the condition of facilities will decline. Increased maintenance staffing levels will ensure that a comprehensive stewardship level of mainte-

nance is achieved. When considering how to increase staffing in the Maintenance Department, the district should study the financial efficiency of insourcing versus outsourcing the HVAC work that requires licensed staff. Many districts realize significant savings by insourcing HVAC services.

Maintenance staff and district leadership reported that up to 20% of maintenance worker time is spent on non-maintenance activities, including bus driving, event setup, grounds work, and movement of offices and people related to facilities setup. Only bus driving is recorded separately. Therefore, non-maintenance duties are only partially tracked.

District leadership need accurate information on how much time maintenance staff spend on non-maintenance activities. If detailed time tracking shows that maintenance workers are pulled away from maintenance work more than 5% of their scheduled time, then the staffing allocation should be revisited for the possible need to increase staffing. In the long term, the practical consequence of understaffing maintenance is the neglect of critical preventative maintenance work. Repair work gets prioritized first, because there is a customer to please. In time, a lack of maintenance leads to system failures, disrupted classrooms, and ballooning costs.

Work Order System

The MOT Department uses an online work order system and equips staff members with electronic devices to receive and document work orders. When properly used, this work order system will provide accountability of staff, work order tracking for end users, and important data for budget and repair planning. In current practice, a large amount of maintenance work being done is not documented in the work order system. This is because of a strong habit of people asking maintenance staff to do things when they see them rather than using the work order system. Maintenance staff members can track verbal requests in the work order system but do so inconsistently. Department leadership should remind all district staff that except for emergencies, work orders must be submitted through the work order system. Department leadership should hold maintenance staff members accountable for keeping the system updated with all tasks completed.

Key and Hardware Issues

A review of the work order system revealed a high volume of key, lock, and hardware work order requests. Many of these requests are related to the functionality of the keys. The district should provide locksmith and hardware training to maintenance staff to ensure that repairs are completed correctly the first time. Even if some of this work is contracted out, maintenance staff should possess sufficient knowledge to recognize if the contractor properly completed the work or not. In addition to standard locksmith training courses available, hardware manufacturers, having a vested interest in the reputation of their products, are frequently willing to provide on-site skills training. The district should research availability of these resources.

The district should also solicit the assistance of its key system manufacturer or a locksmith with expertise in master key systems for a review of the district's key system. The key system should be reviewed with district leadership and site principals, comparing the existing system to the desired functionality. Alterations to the key system are possible that would result in more functionality of the system, and result in lower frequency of key requests.

Preventative Maintenance Planning

End users report that the Maintenance Department is quick to respond to minor issues but is sometimes overcome by larger, yet preventable problems. A reported example of this is that

teachers who submit a work order for a broken desk receive same day service. Yet, during rains, the gutters overflow and create a mess due to a lack of proactive cleaning. This skew toward reactive attention and away from proactive preparation has two root causes. The first is the aforementioned staffing concerns. When staff have limited time it is natural that they address the small, simple tasks; but this leaves larger issues unattended. The need for preventative maintenance planning is equally important.

The MOT Department has a preventative maintenance plan that is high-level and lacks specific actions. Based on document review, the plan is partially executed. The district should use the existing document to create an updated and comprehensive plan. A preventative maintenance plan starts with a list of all facilities, the structures at each facility, and the building components and systems for each structure. Examples of building components and systems are: roofs, gutters, floors, doors, plumbing valves, HVAC units and bleachers. The Uniformat II Classification for Building Elements, Level 3 “individual elements” is a helpful starting point for cataloguing the various building components and systems that require preventative maintenance. The list can be found at: <https://arc-solutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Charette-Marshall-1999-UNIFORMAT-II-Elemental-Classification....pdf>. For each building system or building component listed, the plan should note the monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, seasonal, and yearly tasks needed to proactively maintain those systems. The plan should also note if the work will be completed by district staff or contractors, and the costs associated with each task. A comprehensive preventative maintenance plan will prevent many emergency response situations, improve facility functionality, and aid in budget planning.

Of course, to be effective the MOT Department must use the preventative maintenance plan. Document and work order system review showed that only some preventative maintenance work orders are processed through the work order system. The system has a module available that will automate the preventative maintenance work orders. If used effectively, the preventative maintenance module only needs to be entered once. The system will automatically generate the work orders at the intervals prescribed in the preventative maintenance plan and track the completion of the work.

Deferred Maintenance Plan

The district recently set aside funds for deferred maintenance, but still needs to develop, or solicit the development of, a comprehensive deferred maintenance plan. The State Allocation Board (SAB) form 40-20, Five Year Plan, Deferred Maintenance Program is, in itself, not a comprehensive deferred maintenance plan. It is a summary output of a true deferred maintenance plan, and was formerly used by the SAB to establish program eligibility. A true deferred maintenance plan is far more extensive, and contains, at a minimum, the following components:

- a list of all facilities
- a list of all building systems for each facility (this list will likely mirror the building systems list noted above and used to develop the preventative maintenance plan)
- the original construction or reconstruction date of the building system
- the typical life expectancy of the building system
- the current condition of the building system
- the restoration or replacement tasks necessary to ensure the facility functions as designed, along with the timing intervals of need.

Staff reported they do not know if the Maintenance Department or the Facilities Department would be responsible for developing and implementing the deferred maintenance plan. No single best practice fits every district. FCMAT recommends that district leadership assign responsibility for the deferred maintenance program to the director of facilities and planning because the MOT Department is chiefly equipped for addressing day-to-day operational issues, and deferred maintenance requires long-term planning and perspective. Because of the limited size of maintenance staff, the district should expect to contract out for all or most deferred maintenance work. Many projects will fall under the California Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Act informal and formal bidding requirements. The Facilities Department has experience navigating these bidding laws and also has experience overseeing large contracts, while the MOT Department does not.

Non-Maintenance and Peripherally Related Duties

Review of the work order system and staff interviews showed that the district assigns most furniture-moving tasks to maintenance staff. Because most furniture moving requires no special tools or training, the district should shift the assignment of furniture moving to custodial staff. Custodial staff hours are less costly to the district than maintenance staff hours, but they can accomplish the tasks with the same timeliness.

Staff also reported that maintenance staff have spent a significant amount of time supporting facilities projects. This includes setting up temporary office and classroom space and moving furniture and equipment. The district should properly account for the cost of any work that supports the facilities program, and not routine maintenance work.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider increasing maintenance staffing levels to achieve a comprehensive stewardship level of service.
2. Study the financial efficiency of insourcing versus outsourcing HVAC repair services.
3. Track all maintenance staff time invested in non-maintenance activities.
4. Ensure that non-emergency work orders are submitted through the work order software instead of through verbal requests to maintenance staff.
5. Ensure maintenance staff use the work order system to track all work.
6. Provide hardware and locksmith training to maintenance staff.
7. Review the effectiveness of the master key system design and make adjustments as needed.
8. Develop a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan.
9. Use the work order system to automate preventative maintenance work order generation and tracking.

10. Develop a comprehensive deferred maintenance plan.
11. Assign the execution of the deferred maintenance plan to the director of facilities and planning.
12. Use custodial staff for furniture moving tasks instead of the higher-paid maintenance staff.
13. Distribute the costs of maintenance staff time invested in facilities projects to the facilities project funding source.

Grounds

Organization and Leadership

Two line staff and one lead gardener-groundsman comprise the Grounds Department staffing. The two line staff report to the lead gardener-groundsman who reports to the director of MOT. The lead gardener-groundsman is new to the district and has 11 years of experience as a grounds worker at a neighboring district. Line staff have no formal sub-specialization. Both workers perform all tasks and receive daily work direction from the lead.

Interviews with line staff revealed gaps in technical knowledge and inconsistent use of generally accepted best practices for irrigation and turf management. The district should provide support for the lead through training in irrigation systems, pesticide use, and turf maintenance. The lead should then train line staff to increase their capacity and improve their job performance.

Grounds Staffing Levels

APPA: Leadership in Education Facilities, formerly known as the Association of Physical Plant Administrators, provides a formula for determining appropriate grounds staffing based on the desired level of service, as follows:

- Level 1 – State of the Art (the highest standard)
- Level 2 – High Level (this is the recommended staffing level for schools)
- Level 3 – Moderate Level
- Level 4 – Moderately Low-Level
- Level 5 – Minimum Level

Using the APPA formula for grounds staffing, the following table shows the number of FTE positions the district needs for each level of service:

Level of Service	# of FTE Required
Level 1- State of the Art	4.0
Level 2- High Level	2.7
Level 3- Moderate Level	2.0
Level 4- Moderately Low-Level	1.2
Level 5- Minimum Level	0.7

The Grounds Department is staffed with 3.0 FTE, equivalent to slightly above the recommended Level 2 level of service. However, an additional consideration is that the district’s grounds staff regularly perform non-grounds duties. Until this non-grounds time is accurately accounted for, it will not be possible to quantify the impact on grounds staffing. The non-grounds duties reduce the effective staffing level of the department and, once quantified, the staffing should be revisited. With the information available at the time of this study, the Grounds Department staffing appears to be appropriate to provide the recommended level of service.

The agricultural farm position and the agricultural farm facilities were not included in the grounds staffing calculations presented here. The uniqueness of that position is beyond the scope

of a staffing formula. Department leadership should carefully monitor workload and overtime to increase efficiency in those facets of the Grounds Department.

Pesticide Use

In addition to Department of Pesticide Regulation and County Agricultural Commission rules, public schools must follow the requirements of the Healthy Schools Act of 2000. Interviews and documents reviewed appear to indicate that the district is in compliance with Healthy Schools Act requirements. However, interviews indicated staff have an inconsistent understanding of those requirements. Follow-up training and checks for understanding would ensure that line staff fully understand what is required of them. Checks for understanding do not need to take the form of formal testing. One method other districts employ is a regular verbal walk-through of important procedures.

The County Agricultural Commissioner's Office can provide an informal program review. These offices will typically send staff to review program requirements and procedures with district staff. This step proactively ensures program compliance.

Turf Care Plan

The Grounds Department maintains a variety of turf areas, from ornamental lawns and athletic practice fields to the football stadium field, which is a community asset. Interviews indicated that the turf areas do not meet the community's expectations. The district should solicit the development of a turf care plan for each type of turf area maintained. A well-developed turf care plan will contain all of the following components: turf area, grass species, intended use (light athletics, heavy athletics, ornamental only, etc.), appearance requirements, irrigation requirements (in inches of water per week, per season), seasonal mowing heights, aeration schedules, overseeding schedules, soil testing protocol, soil amendment schedules, fertilization schedules and usage limitations. In addition to the written components of the plan, a map should be provided that identifies which turf areas are subject to which turf care plan. The district owns most of the equipment necessary to execute the turf care plans and has sufficient staffing to run the equipment. What is needed is the outside expertise to develop the turf care plans.

Usage limitations also need to be examined. There is a practical limit to how much foot traffic an area of turf can endure without becoming degraded. Staff reported that the stadium field has periods of heavy usage due to football and soccer seasons and the use by the Bengals community youth activities. In addition to immediate turf degradation, this leads to soil compaction that results in long-term problems for the field. In addition to implementing a turf care plan that will include aeration and soil amendment, the district should consider usage limitations on the stadium field. Although the football field is the most desirable location, the district possesses excellent practice fields that should be used when possible.

Tree Care Plan

In addition to excellent design, the noteworthy attractiveness of the high school campus may be attributed in part to the numerous trees throughout the grounds. This includes both young and long-established trees. The young trees are small enough for district grounds staff to maintain. District staff do not possess the specialized equipment or expertise necessary to maintain the numerous large trees.

FCMAT was not provided a district tree care plan, and considering the size, number of trees, and proximity to students, the district should solicit the development of a tree care plan. A comprehensive tree care plan should catalog and map the locations of all trees taller than six feet or greater than 1.5” in trunk diameter at chest height. The tree care plan should document and make recommendations for all of the following: tree species, irrigation needs (if any), pest control needs (if any), fertilization needs, frequency of inspection needs, frequency and type of trimming work, and potential safety concerns. For any trees whose size, age, or condition indicates a safety risk, a certified arborist should complete a tree risk assessment. An example is available through the Tree Care Industry Association, ANSI A300 (Part 9) Tree Risk Assessment and can be found at: https://www.tcia.org/TCIA/BUSINESS/ANSI_A300_Standards_/TCIA/BUSINESS/A300_Standards/A300_Standards.aspx?hkey=202ff566-4364-4686-b7c1-2a365af59669. Having a tree care plan in place will improve campus safety and aesthetics, and facilitate budget planning.

Irrigation Systems

The district lacks a central irrigation control system. Irrigation is managed through a patchwork of separate irrigation control clocks. Staff report no central planning of irrigation schedules. Staff members adjust irrigation clocks based on what they perceive as needed, and make efforts to save water through seasonal adjustments. In practice, less experienced staff making adjustments based on perception typically results in overwatering. The district should invest in basic soil moisture monitoring equipment and provide staff training on its use. Typical cost of a soil moisture probe is under \$100. These tools will inform decision making by providing an objective measure of the effects of different irrigation schedules. Long term, the district should invest in a single centralized system for irrigation control. A decade ago, replacing multiple decentralized clocks with a single system was extremely expensive due to the cost of trenching in communications wire between the components. Many systems now use cellular signals to communicate, greatly reducing the overall system cost. Centralized irrigation control will improve landscaping and turf conditions, and typically results in lower water bills.

Non-Grounds Duties

The district tracks the amount of time it diverts grounds workers away from grounds duties to drive buses. The Grounds Department staff regularly work overtime due to this non-grounds work, often requiring the grounds work to be either made up or left undone.

Staff report spending a significant amount of time on athletic field preparation work. This work is included in the staffing formula calculations presented here. However, the grounds staffing formula does not account for event security, parking lot monitoring, or post-game litter cleanup. All of those duties, which staff report doing, are not included in the calculation, and for accounting purposes should be considered non-grounds work. The time and costs of those duties should be recorded separately, and the costs distributed to the program being supported. These steps are necessary for the district to have a true measure of event and special activity costs, without inadvertently inflating the MOT budget. Properly distributing costs to the driver of those costs will enable better budgeting and facilitate efficiency efforts.

Although some overtime costs are driven by non-grounds duties, some are built into the schedule. For instance, staff reported that overtime is regularly offered to come in early and use leaf blowers to clean the high school campus. While using leaf blowers prior to the start of the school day is in the best interest of students, building overtime into a schedule is generally poor practice. The district should instead alter the grounds staff schedule to come in early and leave early on the days that the early leaf blowing occurs. If the extra hour is needed on particular

Thursday afternoons for event preparations, then overtime could be granted on those days. Overtime should be used as needed rather than built into the schedule.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide support for the lead gardener-groundsmen through training in irrigation systems, pesticide use, and turf maintenance.
2. Build the capacity of line staff through training by the lead gardener-groundsmen.
3. Accurately track the amount of time grounds staff spend on non-grounds duties, and revisit the staffing allocation accordingly.
4. Provide grounds staff with annual training, and quarterly refreshers, in Healthy Schools Act compliance.
5. Request an informal pesticide use program review from the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.
6. Develop and implement a comprehensive turf care plan.
7. Manage traffic on the stadium field to minimize soil compaction and turf degradation.
8. Develop a tree care plan.
9. Hire an arborist to complete a tree risk assessment for any trees whose size, age, or condition indicates a potential safety hazard.
10. Provide staff with training and tools for monitoring irrigation systems.
11. Invest in a centralized irrigation control system.
12. Plan staff schedules to minimize overtime.

Custodial

Organization and Leadership

The lead custodian heads the custodial services component of MOT and reports to the director of MOT. The lead custodian has served in this capacity for five years, and has worked in the district for 20. Line staff report to the lead custodian and receive work direction from him. The lead custodian supervises custodians and has authority to discipline or evaluate line staff. The director of MOT solicits the lead custodian's input for the custodial portion of evaluations of those drivers who also provide some custodial duties.

In daily operations the lead custodian receives supply orders from line staff, places aggregated supply orders with vendors, and distributes supplies. However, the lead custodian does not have information about the supply budget, and is not involved in budget planning for custodial supplies. For the lead custodian to best execute his job duties, he needs information about budget goals and constraints. He can make informed decisions for the good of the district only when he has that information. Similarly, as the person with the most direct knowledge of custodial supply needs and ordering patterns, the lead custodian should be involved in departmental budget planning. Department leadership will have the most accurate information for budget planning if they solicit information from the person with most direct knowledge of the spending needs.

The lead custodian also lacks information on the overtime budget. When FCMAT questioned department leadership and line staff about when overtime is permitted, there was no clear process for granting overtime. Staff reported that sometimes the lead custodian can authorize overtime, and sometimes it requires the approval of the director. The MOT Department should establish clear guidelines for custodial overtime approval. Staff are far more likely to follow rules when they know what they are. If the situation and changing needs of the district are too complex to set a simple rule for overtime, then at a minimum the district should inform the lead custodian about the overtime budget goals and parameters.

Custodial Staffing

Although there are no nationwide standards of cleanliness, the U.S. Department of Education has established five levels of cleaning, including the number of square feet that a custodian working an eight-hour shift can reasonably expect to complete:

- Level 1 cleaning results in a “spotless” and germ-free facility as might normally be found in a hospital or corporate suite. At this level, a custodian with proper supplies and tools can clean approximately 10,000 to 11,000 square feet in eight hours.
- Level 2 cleaning is the uppermost standard for most school cleaning and is generally reserved for restrooms, special education areas, kindergarten areas, and food service areas. This includes vacuuming or mopping floors daily, and sanitizing all surfaces. A custodian can clean approximately 18,000 to 20,000 square feet in an eight-hour shift at this level.
- Level 3 cleaning is the norm for most school facilities. It is acceptable to most interested parties and does not pose any health issues. Classrooms are cleaned daily, which includes dumping trash and cleaning common area surfaces such as sinks and door handles. Carpets are vacuumed and surfaces used by students are sanitized every other day. A custodian can clean approximately 28,000 to 31,000 square feet in eight hours at this level.

- Level 4 cleaning is not normally acceptable in a school environment. Classrooms are cleaned every other day, carpets vacuumed every third day, and dusting done once a month. A custodian can clean 45,000 to 50,000 square feet in eight hours at this level.
- Level 5 cleaning can rapidly lead to an unhealthy situation. Trash cans may be emptied and carpets vacuumed only weekly. One custodian can clean 85,000 to 90,000 square feet in eight hours at this level.

While the figures above are estimates, they are an excellent starting point for establishing standardized schedules. The actual number of square feet per shift a custodian can clean will also depend on variables such as the type of facilities, school activity schedules, type of flooring and wall coverings, the number of windows, restroom layouts, gym and athletic facilities, and offices.

The California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) custodial staffing formula is a widely used tool for estimating custodial staffing needs. The following table shows the formula, as applied to the Wasco UHSD:

Wasco UHSD Custodial Staffing Based on CASBO Formula													
	Enrollment			Classrooms			Building Area			Teachers/Staff			Recommended Staffing
Schools	Students	Formula Divisor	FTE	Classroom Equivalents	Formula Divisor	FTE	Square Feet	Formula Divisor	FTE	Teachers/Staff	Formula Divisor	FTE	CASBO Recommendation
Wasco High School	1,757	325	5.41	88	13	6.77	205,505	18,000	11.42	66	13	5.08	7.167
Independence High	107	325	0.33	6	13	0.46	7,788	18,000	0.43	9	13	0.69	0.479
District Office	N/A	325	N/A	N/A	13	N/A	10,160	18,000	0.56	N/A	13	N/A	0.564
Maintenance/Warehouse	N/A	325	N/A	N/A	13	N/A	13,080	50,000	0.26	N/A	13	N/A	0.262
TOTAL	1,864		5.74	94	0	7.23	236,533		12.68	75		5.77	8.472

Chart source for enrollment: Ed-Data 2017-18

Notes on variations from the CASBO formula:

For the district office, student, teacher, and classroom equivalent data is not applicable. The calculation is based on square feet.

For the maintenance/warehouse area, student, teacher, and classroom equivalent data is not applicable. An alternative square footage divisor was used in the formula to account for the lesser cleaning needs of this facility.

District documentation provided inconsistent information about custodial schedules and staffing. The difficulty of determining the allocation of hours per week for custodial duties appears to indicate a need for better internal department record keeping, especially given the ever-changing transportation schedules that impact cleaning time. Documents indicate that the custodial department is staffed between 70 and 75 hours per week, the equivalent of 8.75 and 9.38 FTE. The CASBO custodial staffing formula indicates that approximately 8.5 FTE are needed to provide the district with level 2 cleanliness in areas that require it, and no less than level 3 cleanliness everywhere else. During FCMAT's review of district facilities the level of cleanliness observed was inconsistent, with a few instances of level 2, some level 3, multiple instances of level 4 and a few instances of level 5. Overall, the cleanliness fell short of the level 2 and 3 level standards expected in most schools.

The lack of cleanliness is the result of two factors: non-custodial duties infringing on cleaning time, and departmental inefficiencies. By implementing the recommendations of this report the district will be able to correct the inefficiencies that result in a level of cleanliness that does not match the staffing levels. Secondly, through better department organization, the district will be able to mitigate the effects of non-custodial duties pulling staff away from cleaning tasks.

Cleaning Assignments

Business and operations leaders traditionally view even distribution of work as a key component of efficient operations, particularly for routine tasks.

The custodial assignments of the district do not yield an even distribution of work. There is a very low correlation between the time assigned to clean an area and the amount of cleaning necessary. When asked about the time necessary to clean a standard classroom, staff answers varied from 15 to 30 minutes per room. However, on one custodial assignment dividing the number of rooms by the number of minutes assigned revealed approximately 10 minutes allotted per room. Staff reported that over the past 10 years cleaning schedules have been adjusted but not thoroughly reviewed. Over that same 10-year period, facilities have been constructed and modernized, and staff hours have changed. The assignment schedule should have changed as well.

When asked about cleaning standards, staff members were unable to provide specific answers regarding the district's cleaning expectations. They were also unable to describe how they know if they are performing their cleaning tasks well. Several custodians stated that "we know we are doing well if no one is complaining." A measurable metric is needed.

The district needs to take several steps to address the challenges noted here. The first step is a custodial assignment and cleaning analysis. To complete the analysis, the district needs to first list all the rooms and areas that require custodial services and then make a list of all the cleaning tasks required for each area. For example, for a particular classroom the daily cleaning tasks might be: empty the trash, clean the sink, vacuum the floors, and wipe down the desks. Using standard cleaning task references like those available from CASBO, the district can determine the estimated time required to accomplish those tasks. The result of this is a spreadsheet that shows every space, the cleaning tasks for that space, and the time allotted to clean the space.

Once the cleaning load and time requirements are established, the spreadsheet serves as a reference tool for the second step: reallocating cleaning assignments with even work distribution. This will result in more efficient and consistent cleaning results using the existing resources. If the total time required significantly varies from the staffing hours, then the district must go through a second iteration of the analysis, this time either adding or removing cleaning tasks to match the resources available.

Next, the district needs to establish, communicate, and reinforce cleaning expectation standards. These standards need to use concrete, objectively measurable language to communicate the expectations. For example: after cleaning, a person looking at the toilet should see no soils or stains, and the person should smell no restroom odors. After vacuuming, a person looking at the carpet should see no debris on top of the carpet. The cleaning expectation standards should be included in the custodial handbook and staff should be trained on the standards.

Once the cleaning expectation standards are established and communicated, staff need quarterly refresher training and accountability. Department leadership can accomplish this through a cleaning inspection checklist that lists the room components to be cleaned and the objective criteria for determining cleanliness. For example, under the heading "carpet" there would be two

checkboxes: no visible debris on the carpet, or visible debris on the carpet. The lead custodian would then use the cleaning checklist to inspect and provide specific actionable feedback to staff. This type of data-based feedback reinforces expectations and leads to improved job performance and consistency of service.

Non-Custodial Duties

As with other maintenance and operations positions previously discussed, student transportation takes precedence over custodial cleaning assignments. Staff report being frequently pulled away from custodial cleaning tasks for transportation coverage. The challenge is compounded because substitute custodians are only intermittently available. When this occurs, custodians report that they are told to complete what they can. This is interpreted differently by different employees, and inevitably leads to inconsistent levels of cleaning. It was reported that some staff members take it upon themselves to coordinate with other custodians to fill in gaps in custodial coverage while others do not.

Because staffing gaps in custodial coverage are common, the district should plan for these gaps. This is best accomplished with primary and essential task schedules. The cleaning task analysis previously noted can be used to create these schedules. The primary schedule is the list of tasks for fully staffed days. The essential schedule is a pared-down version of that list, focused on the critical tasks necessary to achieve a sanitary campus: emptying of trash and cleaning of toilets. For each custodial schedule, the district should make two laminated sheets: the primary schedule and the essential schedule. Typically, essential tasks take 50% of the time of the primary tasks. When circumstances pull staff away and substitutes are not available, the lead custodian should communicate to line staff who will cover the empty assignment, and their own, by resorting to the essential tasks list. If the custodial assignments are properly allocated, one custodian can cover two essential task lists in a single shift.

In addition to bus driving duties, staff report frequently being pulled away from cleaning assignments to prepare for, or clean up after, campus events. This includes clubs, special meetings, athletic events, and community events. FCMAT recommends implementing the tracking procedures noted throughout this report. The time recording system should be adjusted to allow staff to account for time to set up for and break down events. The staffing calculations noted above allocate staffing based on cleaning tasks, not event setup tasks. Properly tracking time on event setup and breakdown will enable the district to measure if a significant portion of custodial time is devoted to events. If the measurement reveals that more than 3%-5% of custodial time is spent on event activities, then the custodial staffing should be adjusted accordingly. Furthermore, the district should charge staff time to the programs and events supported. Not doing so obscures the true costs incurred, and prevents the district from having the data needed to plan staffing and execute efficiency measures.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide the lead custodian with information and goals for supply budgets.
2. Solicit the input of the lead custodian in custodial budget planning.
3. Provide the lead custodian with information about overtime budgets.

4. Provide the lead custodian and custodial staff with clear parameters about overtime approval.
5. Maintain the current custodial staffing levels.
6. Undertake a custodial assignment and cleaning analysis.
7. Reallocate custodial assignments with even work distribution.
8. Establish cleaning expectation standards. Train staff on the standards and hold them accountable for their completion.
9. Develop and use a cleaning inspection checklist.
10. Establish primary and essential cleaning schedules to create a contingency plan for when non-custodial tasks take precedence over cleaning.
11. Ensure that the lead custodian communicates staffing gaps to custodial line staff, so that the work of temporarily unstaffed cleaning assignments can be properly covered.
12. Accurately track and distribute the costs of non-custodial tasks that are performed by custodial staff members.

Transportation

Funding and Finance

Pupil transportation in California has been inadequately funded for decades. Until 1977, school districts and their county offices reported their transportation expenses to the CDE, and the state would reimburse those costs in the subsequent year. Capital expenses were never reimbursed. Following 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 their reported costs. Only occasionally through the years have there been any COLAs for pupil transportation. As expenses continued to rise and the revenue remained essentially static, the state's share of the funding covered approximately 45% of the reported costs in the 2008-09 school year. That was the highest recent year of funding, and it was identified as each participating county office's 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 varying widely in funding percentage.

With the implementation of the state's LCFF in the 2013-14 fiscal year, school districts and county offices continued to receive the amount certified in April 2013. Under LCFF, transportation revenue has never received a COLA, is restricted to transportation use and is subject to a maintenance of effort that requires districts to spend at least as much as they receive. For 2017-18, the district received \$314,000 in pupil transportation funding and transportation expenses were \$526,594. State revenue covered approximately 59.6% of the district's transportation program costs, with the district's general fund covering the rest. Because the state suspended school transportation data reporting at the outset of LCFF, there is no way to compare the district's transportation costs with neighboring or comparative districts. Based on data prior to LCFF, the district receives revenue well above the statewide average of 35% for transportation support services and its general fund contribution for pupil transportation is significantly lower than most districts. As a result, the district can support some level of non-mandated general education pupil transportation to assist students living farthest from Wasco High School.

FCMAT was unable to identify a student or vehicle cost per mile because the district does not separate these expenditures in the MOT program budget or between dedicated special education transportation and general education transportation. For vehicle maintenance expenditures, costs also are not separated between parts and fuel for either special education or general education buses. In many cases, it was a challenge to identify a parts inventory purchase unless the part was specific to the type of unit requiring the repair. Without an accurate separation of costs for fuel, routine vehicle maintenance inspections and general repairs, it is impossible for the district to identify individual vehicle operating expenses or any other support fleet expenses (e.g., vehicles used for nutrition services or other programs) in the MOT budget.

The district does not have an electronic fuel management system; therefore, district staff use manual logs to identify the amount of fuel pumped and into which district vehicle. This process is reasonably accurate in identifying total gallons of diesel and unleaded fuel pumped but does not provide an accurate tracking of fuel by vehicle and program type into the district's vehicle maintenance software, and the district cannot reconcile individual fleet vehicle mileage. An electronic fuel management system would be capable of tracking fuel consumption by individual district vehicle. An added benefit is that an electronic fuel management system would integrate

the tracking of mileage through direct communication with the district vehicle maintenance system, thus removing the manual step of keying in vehicle mileages to generate both the mandated school bus 45-day/3,000-mile safety inspections and routine vehicle maintenance scheduling.

Interviews and a review of vehicle maintenance records showed that some percentage of vehicle repairs are performed without generation of a vehicle maintenance work order. FCMAT is unable to quantify what percentage of the work may be performed without documentation, including related tracking of parts and labor. Tracking of all vehicle maintenance repairs and inspections should be done using a work order system and the vehicle maintenance software. Determining the district's expense to operate a specific vehicle and track by program type (e.g., special education transportation, general education transportation, school site support vehicle, grounds or maintenance support vehicle) is nearly impossible.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Implement greater separation of transportation expense tracking from the other portions of the MOT budget.
2. Consider implementing an electronic fuel management system capable of tracking fuel consumption by individual vehicle.
3. Track all vehicle maintenance repairs and inspections using a work order system and the district's vehicle maintenance software.

Transportation Delivery

The district provides transportation for both general education and special education students coordinated on five routes daily. The district serves approximately eight special education students on one dedicated morning run, with one general education bus performing this afternoon run prior to its general education run. The district operates four general education buses. Five staff members are assigned school bus routes as a regular duty with other shared maintenance and operations duties. Two additional drivers are utilized for late bus runs as assigned or needed. Collectively, the district's transportation program utilizes five to seven staff members daily for home-to-school general education and special education transportation needs. The district does not employ staff dedicated to substitute school bus route and activity trip coverage, but rather utilizes nearly all its MOT staff as both substitute school bus drivers and activity trip drivers as needed. As previously discussed, this results in district maintenance and operations staff being assigned, sometimes several times weekly, to perform transportation duties, which negatively impacts other maintenance and operations work. Daily coverage of the district's pupil transportation program takes priority over routine maintenance and operations work, causing a hardship during periods of driver absenteeism or heavy activity trip scheduling. In a smaller district, it is common and appropriate to have maintenance and operations personnel licensed as school bus drivers, but these staff members should not routinely be assigned as back-up drivers because other essential needs in the district's MOT program cannot be adequately met.

The district has a relatively large rural geographic area. As a result, several bus routes are longer than many routes performed in a metropolitan and even suburban environment. As a result, the route times are slightly higher than in comparable districts in more densely populated areas. In examining the district's staffing by FTE, nearly 5.0 FTE personnel are assigned to nearly five hours daily of pupil transportation, with two additional staff performing late activity bus needs as assigned.

In addition to routine pupil transportation duties, MOT staff perform a large percentage of the district's extracurricular and co-curricular activity trips. Additional routine driving assignments are given both to MOT staff who have a daily route assignment and to other MOT staff assigned to perform an activity trip or backfill a daily route assignment to allow the regularly assigned driver to perform an activity trip. When an illness or activity trip impacts daily transportation, the district cannot consolidate routes because of its rural environment, necessitating coverage by other MOT staff. Many school districts employ permanent substitute staff to cover route vacancies that occur because of illness and other necessary transportation duties such as activity trips. Routinely utilizing other maintenance and operations staff impedes the district's ability to ensure that routine maintenance and operations work is performed. The district should evaluate the benefit of employing up to two additional staff members whose primary responsibility is to perform substitute transportation route and activity trip coverage. These two staff members would cover driving needs before any other maintenance and operations staff are utilized for this purpose, thereby reducing the impact on maintenance and operations responsibilities. The district could also utilize these two staff members to assist with maintenance and operations duties on the rare occasion when they are not needed to drive.

Interviews indicated a need for the district to effectively communicate to all MOT staff who perform late evening activity trips that they must ensure they are off the clock and not in paid status for a minimum of eight hours before reporting back for duty the following morning per Department of Transportation (DOT) legal commercial driving regulations. This requirement should be clearly defined and communicated to all transportation staff prior to the start of each school year.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) Motor Carrier Inspector Unit annually inspects buses, vehicle maintenance records, driver records, driver timekeeping records and federal drug and alcohol testing records. It produces a report of findings entitled the Safety Compliance Report/Terminal Record Update, more commonly known as the "terminal grade." The results of the district's two most recent inspections are "satisfactory," which 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 very serious. In the case of an unsatisfactory grade, CHP clearly advises that a failure to correct the deficiencies can result in a recommendation to the Public Utilities Commission to revoke the district's motor carrier operating authority.

School buses are required to be inspected every 45 days or 3,000 miles, whichever occurs first, per Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 1232 (13 CCR 1232). FCMAT inspected vehicle maintenance records, and the district complies with these regulations.

The vehicle maintenance shop is staffed by two mechanics, which is appropriate for the district's fleet size. The mechanics are also licensed school bus drivers and are called upon to drive when needed. The district's vehicle mechanics should only be used to drive in emergency cases for school bus routes and activity trips.

Staff reported that the mechanics also provide bus maintenance for 17 buses from the Wasco Union Elementary School District and four buses from the North Kern Vocational Training Center.

The district has recently purchased Synovia tablets and scanners for student bus passes and data collection on recently purchased school buses. In addition, the new buses are equipped with Wi-Fi and have power outlets for student Chromebooks. Some older buses also are equipped with the technology. Gatekeeper video surveillance systems have been placed in all district buses. Staff indicated they have not received instruction in how the student bus pass system will be used and what student protocols related to this system will be implemented. The district should either add to an existing technology plan or create a separate transportation technology plan with the involvement of transportation staff. This information should be included in the driver training program to inform transportation staff how the new bus technology will be utilized with students, operated and maintained.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider employing up to two additional staff members whose primary responsibility is to perform substitute transportation coverage.
2. Consider not depending upon maintenance and operations staff, including vehicle mechanics, to perform routine transportation coverage.
3. Ensure that the DOT driving requirements are effectively defined and communicated immediately to all driving staff, and annually review these prior to each school year.
4. Create a transportation technology plan with district transportation personnel outlining how the new bus technology will be implemented.

Transportation Organization and Staffing Levels

The district's pupil transportation program exists within the MOT organizational structure, which is appropriate based on FCMAT's experience and is generally accepted for programs of 20 or fewer school bus routes. This benefits the district in terms of staffing both for leadership and operations. Combining the district's pupil transportation service with maintenance and operations can also benefit with staff retention as this allows for shared position responsibilities in a smaller program. FCMAT most often finds in similar models that a district will have an operations type technician with the title of supervisor or coordinator of transportation as a direct report to the MOT director.

The district's MOT secretary performs many of the daily transportation organizational tasks for route coverage, assignment of activity trips, and communication/coordination of bus repairs that affect daily route coverage and schedule planning. Transportation is quite specialized, with stringent Title 13, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and CDE operating requirements, guidelines and best practices. Both the initial licensing and annual in-service and proficiency requirements are among the most demanding of the federal and state commercial licenses.

School bus routing requires specific training and knowledge. Whether a district employee uses electronic routing software or performs manual routing, expertise and knowledge in positioning legal and safe school bus stops is essential for safe pupil transportation. In addition, ensuring appropriate load counts and timing of school bus routes, as well as the frequent changes to special education routing can be a challenge. The district's minimum day bell schedules, along with activity trip requests, must be processed timely and accurately so that students receive the optimum support.

Coordination between district vehicle maintenance personnel and the maintenance schedules of school buses must exist to ensure no interruption of service and that stringent school bus vehicle maintenance requirements are met and documented per Title 13 requirements. It is not unusual for the district's pupil transportation program to communicate daily with many parents and others in the community. School bus drivers must receive appropriate documented training to meet state requirements, along with training on vehicle proficiency and student behavior management.

Although the district's MOT leadership and operations support staff are proficient, the district should evaluate the current level of responsibilities of the MOT secretary and determine if these duties would be more appropriately met through an MOT transportation operations supervisor or coordinator reporting to the director of MOT.

The district prioritizes pupil transportation support. However, doing so impedes the district's ability to ensure custodial, maintenance and operations functions are addressed daily. The district reports a relatively high amount of overtime expense, but in reviewing the district's labor costs in the MOT budget, FCMAT could not specifically identify what amount of staff overtime is specific to transportation. The district should identify this amount, and should explore adding staff that will ensure the needed substitute and activity trip driver coverage but without a routine impact on MOT responsibilities.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Evaluate the responsibilities of the MOT secretary and determine if these duties would be more appropriately met by a transportation operations supervisor or coordinator position reporting to the director of MOT.
2. Correctly code and track the overtime of MOT staff dedicated to transportation coverage to determine those costs.

Appendix

Appendix A

Study Agreement

FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE TEAM

CSIS California School Information Services

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM STUDY AGREEMENT September 10, 2018

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

1. **BASIS OF AGREEMENT**

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

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

2. **SCOPE OF THE WORK**

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

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the MOT department (including maintenance, grounds, custodial and transportation) and make recommendations for improved effectiveness and efficiency of organization and staffing, if any.
2. Evaluate the workflow and distribution of functions within the MOT department and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
3. Review the MOT department's operational processes and procedures and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

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

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The FCMAT study team may also include:

<i>A. To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Staff</i>
<i>B. To be determined</i>	<i>FCMAT Consultant</i>
<i>C. 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 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 district will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon the district's acceptance of the final report.

Based on the elements noted in section 2A, the total not-to-exceed cost of the study will be \$18,900.

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

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

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT

- A. The district will provide office and conference room space during on-site reviews.
- B. The district will provide the following if requested:
 1. Policies, regulations and prior reports that address the study scope.
 2. Current or proposed organizational charts.
 3. Current and two prior years' audit reports.
 4. Any documents requested on a supplemental list. Documents requested on the supplemental list should be provided to FCMAT only in electronic format; if only hard copies are available, they should be scanned by the district and sent to FCMAT in electronic format.
 5. Documents should be provided in advance of 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 district will upload all requested documents.
- C. The district's administration will review a preliminary draft copy of the report resulting from the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the team prior to completion of the final report.

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

6. **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

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

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

7. **COMMENCEMENT, TERMINATION AND COMPLETION OF WORK**

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

8. **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR**

FCMAT is an independent contractor and is not an employee or engaged in any manner with the district. The manner in which FCMAT's services are rendered shall be within its sole control and discretion. FCMAT representatives are not authorized to speak for, represent, or obligate the district in any manner without prior express written authorization from an officer of the district.

9. **INSURANCE**

During the term of this agreement, FCMAT shall maintain liability insurance of not less than \$1 million unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by the district, automobile

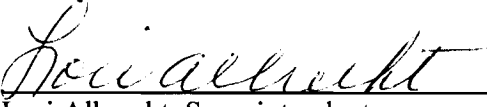
liability insurance in the amount required under California state law, and workers' compensation as required under California state law. FCMAT shall provide certificates of insurance, with Wasco Union High School District named as additional insured, indicating applicable insurance coverages upon request prior to the commencement of on-site work.

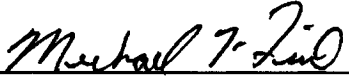
10. HOLD HARMLESS

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

11. CONTACT PERSON

Name: Griselda Aceves, Director of Business Services
 Telephone: (661) 758-7458
 E-mail: graceves@wascohsd.org


 _____ September 14, 2018
 Lori Albrecht, Superintendent Date
 Wasco Union High School District


 _____ September 10, 2018
 Michael H. Fine, Date
 Chief Executive Officer
 Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team