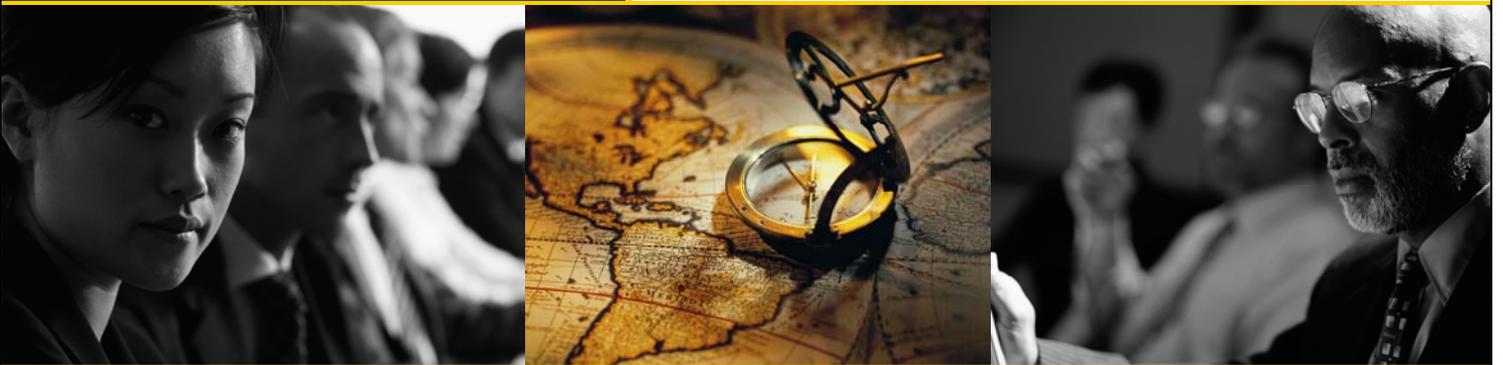


# School Efficiency Review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools

## FINAL REPORT



Evergreen Solutions, LLC

June 12, 2007

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Submitted by:



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June 12, 2007

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## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***



## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

On December 6, 2006, the Department of Planning and Budget of the Commonwealth of Virginia contracted with Evergreen Solutions, LLC to conduct a school efficiency review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools. This review focused on the financial, organizational, and operational effectiveness of the division.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools consists of approximately 5,000 students and is located in southern Virginia, approximately 90 miles south of Richmond along I-95 and approximately 80 miles north of Raleigh, North Carolina.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Evergreen's methodology for conducting the efficiency review included the following components:

- reviewing existing reports and data sources;
- conducting a diagnostic assessment, including interviews with School Board members, central office administrators, principals, association leaders, and community/business leaders;
- conducting employee surveys;
- establishing a Web site for study input;
- making analyses with comparison school divisions;
- visiting all schools in the division;
- conducting a public hearing;
- conducting the formal on-site view with a team of nine Evergreen consultants; and
- preparing the draft and final reports.

#### ***Review of Existing Records and Data Sources***

Initially, Evergreen consultants collected existing reports and data sources that provided us with recent information related to the various administrative functions and operations we would review in the school division.

More than 100 documents were requested from Mecklenburg County Public Schools. Examples of materials Evergreen requested include, but are not limited, to the following.



- School Board policies and administrative procedures;
- organizational charts;
- program and compliance reports;
- technology plan;
- annual performance reports;
- independent financial audits;
- curriculum and instruction plans;
- annual budget and expenditure reports;
- job descriptions;
- salary schedules; and
- employee handbook.

Data were analyzed from each of these sources and the information was used as a starting point for collecting additional data during our on-site visit.

### *Diagnostic Review*

A diagnostic review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools was conducted during the week of January 22, 2007. Two Evergreen consultants interviewed central office administrators, Board members, County Commissioners, and community leaders concerning the management and operations of Mecklenburg County Public Schools.

### *Employee Surveys*

To secure the involvement of administrators and teachers in the school efficiency reviews, three online surveys were prepared and disseminated in January 2007—one for central office administrators, one for principals/assistant principals, and one for teachers. Through the use of anonymous surveys, administrators and teachers were given the opportunity to express their views about the management and operations of the division. These surveys were similar in format and content to provide a database for determining how the opinions and perceptions of administrators and teachers vary. The MCPS survey results were compared to administrators and teachers in Evergreen's survey database.

The survey results are provided in the **Appendix**. Specific survey items pertinent to findings in the functional areas Evergreen reviewed are presented within each chapter.

### *Public Input*

A Web site was established for public input. Fifteen (15) respondents provided comments on the Web site. In addition, a public forum was held on February 6, 2007 at Boydton Elementary School. Nine individuals participated in the public forum.



### ***On-Site Efficiency Review***

A team of nine consultants conducted the formal on-site review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools during the week of February 5, 2007. As part of Evergreen's on-site review, we examined the following systems and operations:

- Division Administration
- Human Resource Management
- Financial Management
- Educational Service Delivery and Management
- Facilities Use and Management
- Transportation
- Technology
- Food Services

Prior to conducting the on-site review, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about MCPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted a detailed review of the structure and operations in their assigned functional areas. All public schools in MCPS were visited at least once.

### **COMPARISON SCHOOL DIVISIONS**

The Virginia Department of Education has developed a cluster code to identify similar school divisions for comparison purposes. Cluster identifiers were created by using data including, but not limited to, the cost per student for each major area, major drivers of costs, and ranking of costs. The Virginia public school divisions chosen for comparison to Mecklenburg County Public Schools are:

- Dinwiddie County
- Gloucester County
- Halifax County
- Isle of Wight County
- Pulaski County
- Wythe County



## **MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this section we include the major recommendations and commendations for each operational area.

### ***Division Administration***

Overall, MCPS is effectively managed by a superintendent and leadership team who are focused on student achievement. This focus has led to significant improvements over the past few years.

MCPS is commended for several operations and activities. The Board agenda and minutes are online and easily accessible to the school community and public. Fifty (50) percent of the School Board policies have been updated within the past 3.5 years. The superintendent has had outreach to the community through a Key Communicators Network and a business education partnership. The policy manual is on the Web so that division employees can access up-to-date policies. Legal expenditures have been contained.

Primary recommendations include the following:

- Work with the Board of Supervisors to change the terms of Board members so that terms are staggered over the four-year period.
- Require regular ongoing training of Board members in order to refocus the Board on their important role in making policy and setting direction for the school division.
- Adhere to Roberts' Rules of Order and elect a Board member as parliamentarian to ensure that the rules are adhered to, so that meetings are efficient and effective.
- Make better use of the consent agenda by putting more routine items under the consent agenda and voting on these items as a group.
- Develop a comprehensive administrative procedures manual that contains administrative procedures, and which can be used by school and central office administrators to ensure consistency among staff.
- Reassign job functions within the organizational structure.
- Implement a monthly schedule of meetings that focus the leadership team on developing consensus on important instructional issues.
- Develop a Leadership Academy for administrators and aspiring administrators.
- Administer an organizational climate survey to all MCPS employees on a regular basis.
- Eliminate one assistant principal at the elementary level.



- Adopt a strategic planning process that involves the entire school community, and includes a mission, vision, goals, strategies, timelines, responsible persons, and evaluation measures by which the plan can be evaluated.
- Develop and implement a plan for informing staff and Board members of the status of the current six-year plan.
- Implement a culture of accountability throughout the school division by ensuring that administrators and the superintendent receive annual written evaluations.
- Require a yearly self-evaluation by the School Board.

### ***Personnel and Human Resources Management***

The personnel department's goal is to move toward a fully functioning professional human resources department. The department is currently understaffed and lacking certain critical skill sets. A number of positive initiatives have been put in place by the new assistant superintendent of personnel and administration, but other changes need to be made. To effectively move toward the department's stated goal, some realignment of duties is required.

The personnel department is commended for putting a number of functions online. These include personnel policies, applications for employment, and professional development opportunities. Additionally, the department is commended for developing a more comprehensive recruitment program and recruiting internationally for teaching positions that are difficult to fill locally.

Recommendations in this chapter are intended to refine existing division processes and practices, and to provide guidance for the establishment of others. Primary recommendations include:

- removing all non-human resources responsibilities from the human resources department, and placing responsibility for benefits administration and professional development within the human resources office;
- hiring a full-time human resources specialist experienced in classification, compensation, and benefits administration;
- creating an internal standard operating procedure manual and making it available to all human resources department personnel;
- developing a proactive minority recruitment program;
- creating and implementing a plan to review classification descriptions on a regular basis;
- conducting performance reviews for all non-teaching MCPS employees on an annual basis; and
- designing and implementing a progressive employee discipline program and instructing managers on the proper use of progressive discipline.



### ***Financial Management***

The financial management functions for Mecklenburg County Public Schools are performed primarily by the finance director. The superintendent, with finance director support, has primary responsibility for preparation of the division's budget. The payroll clerk performs functions relative to fixed assets. The director of maintenance and procurement, the director of student support, the food service director, finance director and business manager share responsibilities for risk management. The MCPS Payroll Supervisor and Payroll Clerk perform the functions necessary to process disbursements for payroll, and the head accounts payable clerk processes accounts payable disbursements. The treasurer for Mecklenburg County collects revenues for the division and has signatory authority for all disbursements. The Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors approves the school division budget and the allotments for school division operations. Mecklenburg County Government and MCPS have established a solid working relationship. Evergreen's review of interagency functions and processes indicates a cooperative, collaborative working relationship.

In addition to a positive interagency working relationship, the division is commended for wisely managing funds to support education. Recommendations in this chapter are intended to refine certain existing division processes and practices in finance, and to provide guidance for the establishment of others.

Primary recommendations are:

- establish a budgetary process that creates a budget correlated to the adopted goals and objectives of Mecklenburg County Public Schools;
- develop a budget preparation calendar, including administrative and legislative dates presented on a timeline and coordinated with County and Commonwealth required dates for action;
- implement user-friendly financial reports;
- develop and implement a comprehensive fixed asset management system;
- initiate a coordinated School Board/County procedure for cash flow and the allocation of interest earnings;
- create a comprehensive school activity funds manual;
- strengthen internal controls; and
- develop and implement a comprehensive business and finance operating procedures manual.



### ***Educational Service Delivery and Management***

The MCPS Instructional Department has worked diligently and successfully to effect positive change in recent years. Evidence includes:

- heightened infusion of data analysis into instructional decisions at all levels;
- all MCPS schools and the division have met state criteria for accreditation and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the *No Child Left Behind* requirement;
- two elementary schools have been selected for the prestigious national Blue Ribbon Schools recognition for dramatic student achievement gains; and
- the MCPS Career and Technical Education Program has developed a comprehensive approach to offering students a broad array of courses that meaningfully relate high school instruction to postgraduation career opportunities.

Recommendations contained in this chapter relate to refining and balancing school and division needs to bring about consistency at the same time school characteristics are honored. They are also intended to increase equity of educational opportunities for all students. By strengthening its accountability and communications procedures, MCPS will enhance consistency and focus among its schools for the benefit of its entire student population.

### ***Facilities Use and Management***

Facilities use and management for Mecklenburg County Public Schools is the primary responsibility of the director of procurement and maintenance, who reports to the superintendent. School buildings and ancillary facilities are acceptably maintained and cleaned, but no all-encompassing preventive maintenance program appears to be in place. No neglect or significant deferred maintenance are in evidence on any of the permanent facilities. However, the inventory of mobile classroom units is, for the most part, in serious disrepair.

A new elementary school has been completed within the past year. A need exists to close two elementary schools because of declining population. These schools can be re-used as a new MCPS administration complex and as the MCPS Alternative Education Center. Some minor improvements have been made to existing schools in the areas of safety and security, electrical service, and HVAC.

Most prominent among the recommendations are:

- develop and implement a Facilities Master Plan process and strategy;
- eliminate mobile classrooms in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan;
- replace the current administrative complex with a more suitable facility, and in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan;



- prepare and implement a strategy for the achievement of full adequacy and equity of all school facilities in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan;
- review all policies concerning facilities in the MCPS School Board Policy Manual and incorporate all policy requirements in the preparation of the proposed Facilities Master Plan strategy;
- develop and implement a systematic energy management and conservation program for Mecklenburg County Public Schools, as part of the overall Facility Master Plan implementation; and
- develop a preventive maintenance schedule based on recommendations from a respected facilities maintenance organization, and as part of the Facilities Master Plan.

### ***Transportation***

The MCPS Transportation System provides the transportation services needed within the division (i.e. regular education, special education, vocational, athletics/field trips). Maintenance is performed at a centralized facility near the City of Boydton. Driver supply is adequate. The management of the system is performed by the transportation supervisor and a small staff.

No chronic service issues were found. Most complaints are handled via the transportation office along with budget and cost control items. The fleet is in good operating condition for its age. The division enjoys an enviable safety record which can be somewhat attributed to a low driver turnover rate and high experience level.

Some recommendations within this chapter provide cost efficiencies while others are targeted towards service improvements. A summary of recommendations include:

- Stagger bell times to reduce the number of buses utilized; thereby, reducing costs and capital outlay.
- Implement the Edulog routing system to consolidate routes and improve the division's ability to plan.
- Organize the transportation department to proactively dispatch buses.
- Conduct and maintain an accurate parts and supply inventory.
- Implement proper accounting procedures for outside vehicle maintenance repair.
- Increase the repair billing rate to more accurately reflect costs.
- Implement a system for measuring overall performance within the transportation department.
- Reduce the number of cars assigned to administration.



### ***Technology Management***

MCPS is operating technology at a highly commendable level in a number of areas. The division has developed a highly detailed Technology Plan that provides strategic direction for both instructional and administrative technology. The division is supporting a best practices organizational structure to obtain high-quality technical support. MCPS has an excellent trouble ticket staff and highly skilled, dedicated staff to provide technical support. The division has achieved a high level of technology integration in many of its classrooms and its Career and Technology Education offerings are superb in their use of technology.

Overall, Evergreen found far more that was commendable regarding MCPS technology than in need of improvement. Evergreen's seven recommendations for improvement are intended to assist a highly functioning area within the division achieve even greater levels of excellence. Evergreen's recommendations are:

- organize the technology department to report directly to the superintendent;
- add an additional part-time data administrator position;
- increase the number of technology resource teachers;
- increase technical staffing levels;
- find alternative space for technology storage and improve the facilities housing installed technology;
- offer instruction in keyboarding to students in elementary schools;
- develop procedures to assess technology use and satisfaction; and
- develop rigorous technology expectations for teachers and staff.

### ***Food Service***

The MCPS food services department is running a commendable program in many areas, including:

- improving student wellness through its adopted Wellness Policy;
- encouraging adult meal participation, providing students with greater supervision during the lunch period, as well as positive role models for healthy eating habits;
- providing adult role models through its Lunch Buddies Program;
- providing cafeteria managers and staff with important training on food services safety topics;



- regularly assessing its own productivity;
- seeking to improve its operations through the implementation of a state-of-the-art POS system;
- serving lunch meals that appeal to students, as shown in its high participation rates; and
- operating in a fiscally prudent manner, in most respects.

Evergreen's recommendations for further improvement of this efficient and effective program are:

- establish procedures to document extra and overtime work and compensate cafeteria workers as appropriate;
- evaluate the MCPS food services program performance relative to selected indicators each month and year;
- establish and implement a meal staffing formula for the MCPS cafeterias;
- seek to terminate the contract for uniforms and uniform cleaning;
- establish goals and programs to improve student breakfast participation, particularly among free and reduced-price students;
- establish goals and programs to improve student lunch participation at the high schools; and
- establish a minimum annual investment threshold for facilities and equipment.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Based on the analyses of data obtained from interviews, surveys, community input, state and division documents, and firsthand observations in Mecklenburg County Public Schools, the Evergreen team developed 118 recommendations in this report.

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, full implementation of the recommendations in this report would generate a net savings of over \$5.1 million over five years for improvements in MCPS operations. In addition, Evergreen recommends \$15 million in capital outlay expenditures over five years. Costs and savings presented in this report are in 2007 dollars and do not reflect increases due to salary or inflation adjustments.



**Exhibit 1**  
**Summary of Annual Costs and Savings**

Costs/Savings	Years					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>(\$287,420)</b>	<b>(\$305,690)</b>	<b>(\$330,010)</b>	<b>(\$331,410)</b>	<b>(\$330,010)</b>	<b>(\$1,584,540)</b>	
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>\$1,026,854</b>	<b>\$1,033,854</b>	<b>\$1,403,654</b>	<b>\$1,630,804</b>	<b>\$1,640,854</b>	<b>\$6,736,020</b>	
<b>Total Net Savings</b>	<b>\$739,434</b>	<b>\$728,164</b>	<b>\$1,073,644</b>	<b>\$1,299,394</b>	<b>\$1,310,844</b>	<b>\$5,151,480</b>	<b>(\$5,500)</b>
<b>Total Five-Year Net Savings Minus One-Time (Costs)</b>							<b>\$5,145,980</b>



***CHAPTER 1:  
INTRODUCTION***



## ***INTRODUCTION***

On December 6, 2006, the Department of Planning and Budget of the Commonwealth of Virginia contracted with Evergreen Solutions, LLC to conduct a school efficiency review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools. This review focused on the financial, organizational, and operational effectiveness of the division.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools consists of approximately 5,000 students and is located in southern Virginia, approximately 90 miles south of Richmond along I-95 and approximately 80 miles north of Raleigh, North Carolina.

**Exhibit 1-1** shows an overview of Evergreen's work plan for the efficiency review.

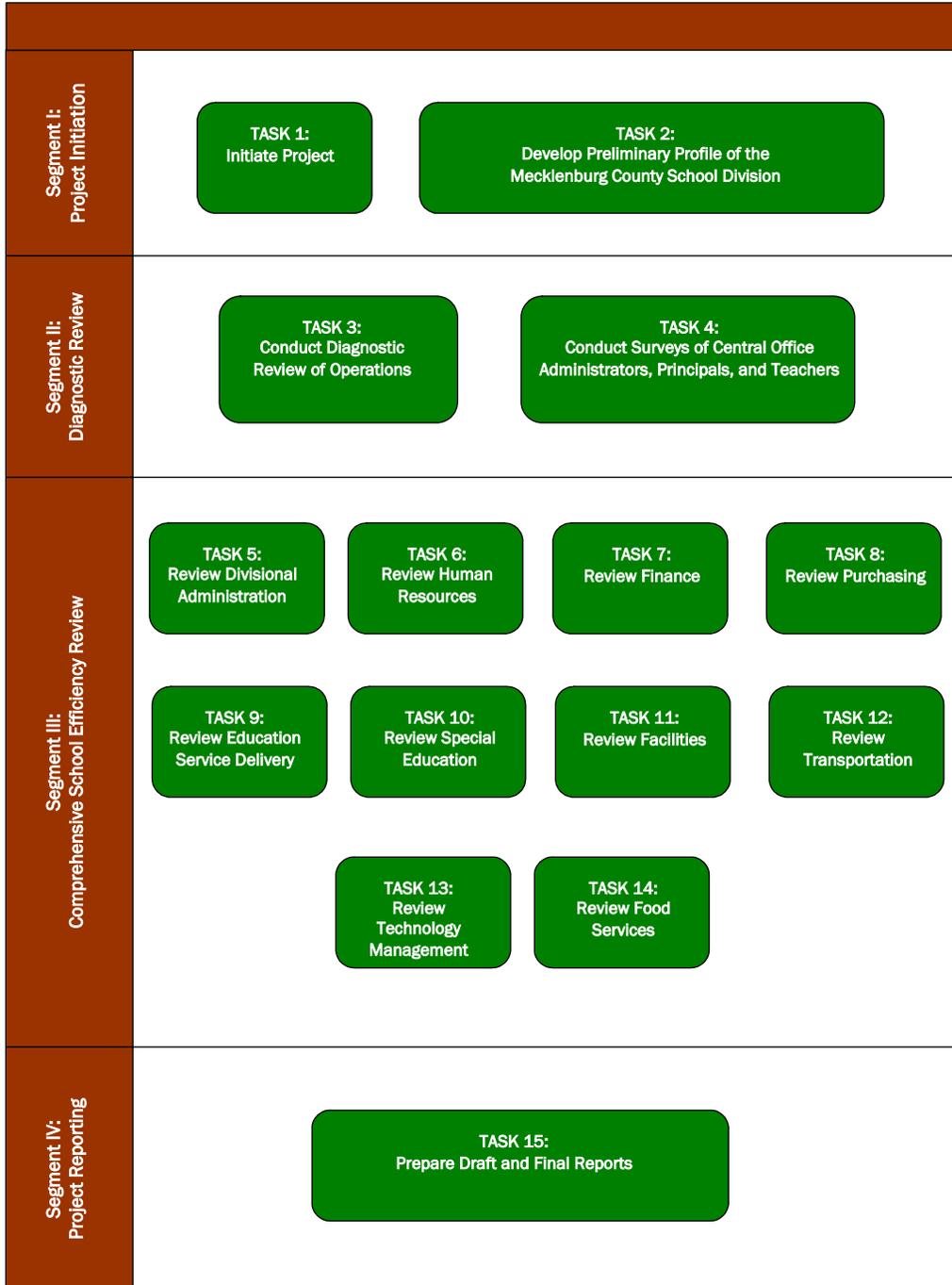
### ***1.1 METHODOLOGY***

Evergreen's methodology for conducting the efficiency review included the following components:

- reviewing existing reports and data sources;
- conducting a diagnostic assessment, including interviews with School Board members, central office administrators, principals, association leaders, and community/business leaders;
- conducting employee surveys;
- establishing a Web site for study input;
- making analyses with comparison school divisions;
- visiting all schools in the division;
- conducting a public hearing;
- conducting the formal on-site view with a team of nine Evergreen consultants; and
- preparing the draft and final reports.



### Exhibit 1-1 Overview of Work Plan for the Efficiency Review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools



### **REVIEW OF EXISTING RECORDS AND DATA SOURCES**

Initially, Evergreen consultants collected existing reports and data sources that provided us with recent information related to the various administrative functions and operations we would review in the school division.

More than 100 documents were requested from Mecklenburg County Public Schools. Examples of materials Evergreen requested include, but are not limited, to the following.

- School Board policies and administrative procedures;
- organizational charts;
- program and compliance reports;
- technology plan;
- annual performance reports;
- independent financial audits;
- curriculum and instruction plans;
- annual budget and expenditure reports;
- job descriptions;
- salary schedules; and
- employee handbook.

Data were analyzed from each of these sources and the information was used as a starting point for collecting additional data during our on-site visit.

### **DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW**

A diagnostic review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools was conducted during the week of January 22, 2007. Two Evergreen consultants interviewed central office administrators, Board members, County Commissioners, and community leaders concerning the management and operations of Mecklenburg County Public Schools.

### **EMPLOYEE SURVEYS**

To secure the involvement of administrators and teachers in the school efficiency reviews, three online surveys were prepared and disseminated in January 2007—one for central office administrators, one for principals/assistant principals, and one for teachers. Through the use of anonymous surveys, administrators and teachers were given the opportunity to express their views about the management and operations of the division. These surveys were similar in format and content to provide a database for determining how the opinions and perceptions of administrators and teachers vary. The MCPS survey results were compared to administrators and teachers in Evergreen's survey database.

The response rates for the three surveys are shown in **Exhibit 1-2**.



**Exhibit 1-2**  
**Evergreen Survey Response Rates for**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools**

Group	Number	Responses	Response Rate
Central Administrators	22	22	100%
Principal	18	20	90%
Teachers	612	251	41%

*Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.*

The survey results are provided in the **Appendix**. Specific survey items pertinent to findings in the functional areas Evergreen reviewed are presented within each chapter.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

A Web site was established for public input. Fifteen (15) respondents provided comments on the Web site. In addition, a public forum was held on February 6, 2007 at Boydton Elementary School. Nine individuals participated in the public forum.

**ON-SITE EFFICIENCY REVIEW**

A team of nine consultants conducted the formal on-site review of Mecklenburg County Public Schools during the week of February 5, 2007. As part of our on-site review, we examined the following systems and operations:

- Division Administration
- Human Resource Management
- Financial Management
- Educational Service Delivery and Management
- Facilities Use and Management
- Transportation
- Technology
- Food Services

Prior to conducting the on-site review, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about MCPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted a detailed review of the structure and operations in their assigned functional areas. All public schools in MCPS were visited at least once.



## **1.2 COMPARISON SCHOOL DIVISIONS**

The Virginia Department of Education has developed a cluster code to identify similar school divisions for comparison purposes. Cluster identifiers were created by using data including, but not limited to, the cost per student for each major area, major drivers of costs, and ranking of costs. The Virginia public school divisions chosen for comparison to Mecklenburg County Public Schools are:

- Dinwiddie County
- Gloucester County
- Halifax County
- Isle of Wight County
- Pulaski County
- Wythe County

## **1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT**

The final report for this study consists of the following 10 chapters:

- Chapter 1.0: Introduction
- Chapter 2.0: Division Administration
- Chapter 3.0: Human Resources Management
- Chapter 4.0: Financial Management
- Chapter 5.0: Educational Service Delivery and Management
- Chapter 6.0: Facilities Use and Management
- Chapter 7.0: Transportation
- Chapter 8.0: Technology Management
- Chapter 9.0: Food Service
- Chapter 10.0: Fiscal Impact and Recommendations

Chapters 2 through 9 contain findings, commendations, and recommendations of the operational area, and provide the following sequence:

- a description of the operation in MCPS;
- a summary of our study findings;
- a commendation or recommendation for each finding; and
- estimated costs or cost savings over a five-year period which are stated in 2006-07 dollars.

We conclude this report with a summary of the fiscal impact of the study recommendations in Chapter 10.



**CHAPTER 2:  
DIVISION ADMINISTRATION**



## *Chapter 2*

# ***DIVISION ADMINISTRATION***

This chapter reviews the staffing, organization, and management of Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS) and includes six major sections:

- 2.1 Governance and Board Issues
- 2.2 Policies and Procedures
- 2.3 Division Organization and Management
- 2.4 School Management
- 2.5 Planning and Accountability
- 2.6 Legal Services

Mecklenburg County Public Schools is managed by Superintendent Frank Polakiewicz and his leadership team. The school division has made significant strides in student performance during the past three years, with the division making AYP (adequate yearly progress), and nine of ten schools making AYP last year (2005-06).

The school division has been named an outperforming school division by Standards & Poors for the last three years. Clarksville Elementary, Chase City Elementary, Boydton Elementary, Buckhorn Elementary, and South Hill Elementary have been recognized as Distinguished Title I Schools. Chase City Elementary and Buckhorn Elementary have been named Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

Every organization, no matter how strong, has room for improvement. Effective organizations are continuously finding ways to improve, recognizing that an organization that remains static eventually begins to decline.

### **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Overall, MCPS is effectively managed by a superintendent and leadership team who are focused on student achievement. This focus has led to significant improvements over the past few years.

MCPS is commended for several operations and activities. The Board agenda and minutes are online and easily accessible to the school community and public. Fifty (50) percent of the School Board policies have been updated within the past 3.5 years. The superintendent has had outreach to the community through a Key Communicators Network and a business education partnership. The policy manual is on the Web so that division employees can access up-to-date policies. Legal expenditures have been contained.

Primary recommendations include the following:

- Work with the Board of Supervisors to change the terms of Board members so that terms are staggered over the four-year period.



- Require regular ongoing training of Board members in order to refocus the Board on their important role in making policy and setting direction for the school division.
- Adhere to Roberts' Rules of Order and elect a Board member as parliamentarian to ensure that the rules are adhered to, so that meetings are efficient and effective.
- Make better use of the consent agenda by putting more routine items under the consent agenda and voting on these items as a group.
- Develop a comprehensive administrative procedures manual that contains administrative procedures, and which can be used by school and central office administrators to ensure consistency among staff.
- Reassign job functions within the organizational structure.
- Implement a monthly schedule of meetings that focus the leadership team on developing consensus on important instructional issues.
- Develop a Leadership Academy for administrators and aspiring administrators.
- Administer an organizational climate survey to all MCPS employees on a regular basis.
- Eliminate one assistant principal at the elementary level.
- Adopt a strategic planning process that involves the entire school community, and includes a mission, vision, goals, strategies, timelines, responsible persons, and evaluation measures by which the plan can be evaluated.
- Develop and implement a plan for informing staff and Board members of the status of the current six-year plan.
- Implement a culture of accountability throughout the school division by ensuring that administrators and the superintendent receive annual written evaluations.
- Require a yearly self-evaluation by the School Board.

## **2.1 GOVERNANCE AND BOARD ISSUES**

Local school boards have traditionally governed public education in the United States with authority vested in them by the State. From the mid 1800s through the early 1900s, the number of school boards increased dramatically. The last major reform of school boards involved a shift to smaller elected boards comprised of community members with a professional superintendent as the CEO. There are approximately 95,000 School Board members on 15,000 local boards across the nation. Most boards have five to seven members. Eighty (80) percent of school districts across the country have fewer than 3,000 students.



In a widely cited 2000 report (entitled “Recommendations for 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Board/Superintendent Leadership, Governance and Teamwork for High School Achievement”), Goodman and Zimmerman found that school districts with quality governance had, among other things:

- a focus on student achievement and policy making;
- effective management without micromanagement;
- a trusting and collaborative relationship with the superintendent;
- a yearly evaluation of the superintendent, according to mutually agreed upon goals and procedures;
- governance retreats for evaluation and goal setting;
- long-term service of Board members and the superintendent; and
- a budget that provides needed resources.

Section 22.1-25 of the Code of Virginia provides that the Board of Education “divide the Commonwealth into school divisions” and that school divisions in existence as of July 1, 1978, remain school divisions in the Commonwealth until further action of the Board of Education. MCPS, as a school division in operation at that time, has maintained its own independent school division, which is governed by a nine-member School Board. The powers and duties of the School Board are further delineated in Section 22.1 of the Code. The ability to adopt policies, approve personnel actions, adopt budgets, and enter into contractual agreements are among the many broad powers given to local school boards in this section of the Code.

## FINDING

The MCPS School Board is comprised of nine members elected by voters in Mecklenburg County. The average tenure of a MCPS Board member is 7.2 years. As may be seen in **Exhibit 2-1**, most Board members have served on the Board for more than three years. The remaining four members have served from one month to three years.

Regular meetings are held once a month at the School Board office on the third Monday of the month. Additional meetings are called occasionally for special topics, and these meetings have primarily focused on student discipline or personnel. The regular meetings last approximately three to four hours. The public is welcome to attend, and there is scheduled time on the agenda for citizen input.

Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia also allows the local board to have closed meetings for such purposes as student matters, personnel matters, selected consultations with legal counsel, and under specified conditions, discussion of acquisition of real estate. The MCPS School Board meets regularly in closed sessions at the end of its regular meetings for one or more of these reasons. The Board meets in closed sessions for student matters on the Wednesday before each regularly scheduled Board meeting.



**Exhibit 2-1  
MCPS Public Schools Board Members  
2006-07 School Year**

Name	Title	Term Expires	Years Served	Profession
Thomas Coleman	Chair	December 31, 2007	2 years	Chief of Security, Corrections
Lewis Ashworth	Member	December 31, 2007	6 years	Retired Builder
B. A. Bowen	Member	December 31, 2007	6 years	State Trooper
Eddie Callahan	Member	December 31, 2007	10 years	Farmer
Billy Driggs	Member	December 31, 2007	3 years	Retired
Glenn Edwards	Member	December 31, 2007	2 years	Contractor
James Hall	Member	December 31, 2007	26 years	Farmer
Mary Hicks	Member	December 31, 2007	1 month	Retired Teacher
Willis Woodall	Member	December 31, 2007	10 years	Corrections Officer

*Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Superintendent's Office, 2007.*

The superintendent develops an agenda and background information for each meeting. This information is usually provided to the Board members the Wednesday prior to the meeting.

As may be seen in **Exhibit 2-1**, all Board member terms end in December of 2007. Should all choose to run for re-election, they would be running at the same time. There is potential for significant disruption in the Board's operation, due to the simultaneous terms the members hold.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-1:**

**Work with the Board of County Supervisors to change the terms of Board members so that terms are staggered over the four-year period.**

Having staggered terms would provide more stability in Board governance. In addition, it would allow existing Board members to induct new Board members in a more systematic manner than has been provided for in the past. This change may result in a School Board that is seen as more cohesive in the school community.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

The MCPS School Board has adopted the Code of Ethics recommended by the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA). The Code of Ethics is posted in several locations in the central office. The content of the code is stated below:

*As a member of my local school board, I will strive to be an advocate for students and to improve public education, and to that end:*

- 1. I will have integrity in all matters and support the full development of all children and the welfare of the community, Commonwealth, and Nation.*



2. *I will attend scheduled Board meetings.*
3. *I will come to Board meetings informed concerning the issues under consideration.*
4. *I will make policy decisions based on the available facts and appropriate public input.*
5. *I will delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent, and establish a process for accountability of administrators.*
6. *I will encourage individual Board member expression of opinion and establish an open, two-way communication process with all segments of the community.*
7. *I will communicate, in accordance with Board policies, public reaction, and opinion regarding Board policies and school programs to the full Board and Superintendent.*
8. *I will bring about desired changes through legal and ethical procedures, upholding and enforcing all laws, state regulations, and court orders pertaining to schools.*
9. *I will refrain from using the Board position for personal or partisan gain, and avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety.*
10. *I will respect the confidentiality of privileged information and make no individual decisions or commitments that might compromise the Board or administration.*
11. *I will be informed about current educational issues through individual study and participation in appropriate programs, such as those sponsored by my state and national school board associations.*
12. *I will always remember that the foremost concern of the Board is to improve and enhance the teaching and learning experience for all students in the public schools of Virginia.*

Even though all members of the MCPS School Board have signed this Code of Ethics, survey results, as shown in **Exhibit 2-2**, indicate a concern with the Board's understanding of the educational needs of students in the community.

- Fewer than 35 percent of teachers *agree* with the statement "School Board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division," compared to more than 53 percent in the comparison group of teachers (i.e., teachers in Evergreen's survey database).
- Fewer than 28 percent of building administrators *agree* with the statement "School Board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division", compared to over 52 percent in the comparison group of building administrators.
- Fewer than 19 percent of central office administrators *agree* with the statement "School Board members know and understand the education needs of students in the school division", compared to over 73 percent of the comparison group of central office administrators.



**Exhibit 2-2  
Evergreen Survey Results  
School Board Members Knowledge of Educational Needs  
MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	18.2%	68.1%	73.9%	23.9%
Principals	27.8%	61.1%	52.9%	37.1%
Teachers	34.7%	48.6%	53.7%	32.1%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

The comments on surveys as well as the comments in interviews reinforced these statements. Comments such as “they are an obstacle” and “they try to micromanage” were repeated several times by MCPS employees. Other comments included the following:

- *(They) fail to communicate with school personnel in a positive manner.*
- *Division employees...see the Board increasingly as adversaries.*
- *I have had employees literally sick to their stomach and call in sick (to avoid going to SB meetings).*
- *Micromanagement by the School Board gets in the way of getting things done.*

Section 22.1-253.13:5 of the Code of Virginia requires that “each local School Board shall require its members to participate annually in high quality professional development at state, local, or national levels on governance, including, but not limited to, personnel policies and practices; curriculum and instruction; use of data in planning and decision making; and current issues in education as part of their service on the local board.”

MCPS School Board members attend some of the conferences sponsored by the Virginia School Board Association. Some School Board members commented, however, that their colleagues do not attend the sessions offered at these conferences, even though they register for the conferences. The comments from surveys and interviews indicate a need for a high quality professional development.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-2:**

**Require regular ongoing training for Board members in order to refocus the MCPS School Board on its important role in making policy and setting direction for the school division.**

Board members should be committed to attend training sessions. There are a number of professional organizations and individuals who provide this type of training to school boards.



The training should be scheduled on a regular basis to incorporate a culture of professionalism within the Board.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact of this recommendation can be determined once the Board decides how they wish to receive this training. Facilitator costs can vary widely, depending upon whether they are sponsored by a professional organization or whether they are private contractors.

### **FINDING**

During the interviews with staff, there were comments that the Board often does not follow their own rules and do not function as a corporate body. Each member of the School Board is allowed to speak as long as they want and as many times as they want on each issue.

A review of minutes and videotapes from meetings confirmed that School Board meetings are often contentious. Many votes are split (5-4), sometimes on items that should be routine (such as the appointment of the superintendent's designee). Members often talk simultaneously, without recognition from the School Board Chair. In addition, Board members were observed making disparaging remarks to staff and visitors at the meetings.

To ensure that meetings run in a timely, effective, and professional manner, the role of the chair and parliamentarian are crucial in these situations.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Recommendation 2-3:**

**Adhere to Roberts' Rules of Order and elect a Board member as Parliamentarian to ensure that the Board adheres to these rules.**

The determination to hold more effective Board meetings will result in meetings that are more meaningful and will have a positive impact on the division. The Board Chair should monitor participation to ensure that Board members do not monopolize conversations. Once the Board decides to be more respectful of each other's time, they can have more meaningful discussions around policy issues, goal setting, and student achievement.

### **FINDING**

The MCPS School Board meetings are lengthy. A review of the minutes from 2006 indicated that 10 of 12 regular meetings adjourned around 10:30 p.m. or later. Five of these ten meetings adjourned after 11:00 p.m., with three of these meetings adjourning after 11:30 p.m. The minutes also indicate that the School Board does not make good use of its consent agenda. During 2006 meetings, only two items appeared under the consent agenda: approval of minutes and payment of bills. Both of these items were voted on as separate items. In 10 of the 12



meetings, there was discussion regarding the payment of bills, with dissenting votes apparent in these ten meetings.

Many Board meetings do not seem to be productive. Several staff and Board members commented that the Board spends an excessive amount of time on items that should be more routine, including the payment of bills, the appointment of the superintendent’s designee, and the awarding of contracts. Survey results in **Exhibit 2-3** suggest that employee groups do not see the Board members as knowledgeable and understanding the operations of the school division.

**Exhibit 2-3**  
**Evergreen Survey Results**  
**School Board Members Knowledge of Operations**  
**MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	59.1%	31.8%	72.8%	23.9%
Principals	38.9%	44.5%	62.9%	31.4%
Teachers	45.0%	36.3%	59.9%	24.4%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

Comments on surveys supported this view, with statements such as:

- *There seem to be roadblocks into getting things done. We have to go to the School Board every time we want something done.*
- *(They) do not understand the complexities of the school division.*

A consent agenda allows the School Board to focus on larger policy issues and reduces the amount of discussion for routine matters. There were several items under the action section of the Board agenda that could have been grouped under the consent agenda. If the Board were agreeable to having their executive sessions prior to the 7:00 p.m. meeting, they could place personnel items under the consent agenda. In addition, items such as field trip request, awarding of health insurance contracts, awarding of bids, school fees, issuance of RFPs, and appointments to advisory councils should be considered for a consent agenda.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-4:**

**Make better use of the Board Consent Agenda by putting more routine items under the Consent Agenda and voting on these items as a group.**

A Consent Agenda does not require a separate vote on each item, but is voted on as a group of items. It is important to note, however, that a Board member could ask to have an item removed from the Consent Agenda if there is a need for further discussion and/or a separate vote. The use



of the Consent Agenda could free up the Board's time to focus on their important responsibilities in setting direction, policy, student achievement, and large budget issues.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

The MCPS Board meets monthly, with additional meetings called as needed. The meetings are properly publicized with agendas distributed in advance to Board members. The members of the School Board generally receive their agendas, with supporting back-up material, the Wednesday prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.

The Board agenda packet is distributed to the Board members, administrative staff, and the media. In addition, a copy of the packet is kept with the clerk for public review. The minutes of Board meetings are posted on the MCPS Web site, as are the agendas.

## **COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for having its agenda and minutes on line.**

## **2.2 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Code of Virginia (Section 22.1-253.13:7) specifies that each local school board maintain and follow up-to-date policies that should be reviewed at least every five years. In addition, this section of the Code states that each Board will address the following:

- *a system of two-way communication between employees and the local board and administrative staff;*
- *the selection and evaluation of all instructional materials;*
- *the standards of student conduct and attendance;*
- *school-community communications and community involvement;*
- *guidelines for parents to provide instructional assistance to their children in the home;*
- *information about procedures for addressing concerns;*
- *a cooperatively-developed procedure for personnel evaluation; and*
- *grievance and dismissal procedures of teachers.*



The Code further states that copies of the policies must be kept at each school and in every public library, and made available to employees and the general public.

Policies and procedures are an important vehicle for communicating expectations to students and employees. In addition, policies and procedures provide a way to:

- establish a distinction between Board policymaking and procedures development by the administration;
- provide guidelines for personnel and students to use;
- provide some assurance of consistency and continuity in decision making by staff;
- help orient Board members and employees to the school division; and
- assist the general public in understanding how decisions are made.

Board policies are an important tool for a school board and should be stated clearly enough to provide appropriate direction to the staff.

## **FINDING**

The coordination of policy development in Mecklenburg County Public Schools is managed through the director of federal projects. The Board Policy Manual addresses all the major provisions specified in Code. A review of the policy manual by Evergreen consultants found that MCPS has used the policy service provided by the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) to update its manual for the past 10 years. The manual is updated, using VSBA as a source.

A review of over 300 policies within the manual found that 50 percent of the policies have been revised within the past 3.5 years. The revision status of the MCPS Policy Manual is shown in **Exhibit 2-4**.

It is clear that Mecklenburg County Public Schools has made a concerted effort to update its policies within the past few years. Within the next year, it will need to continue this effort to ensure that more policies are updated.

## **COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for updating 50 percent of its policies within the past 3.5 years.**

## **FINDING**

The MCPS Policy Manual is available on the division's Web site. A review of a hard copy of the manual and the Web site revealed that the online policy manual is kept up to date. In addition, hard copies are maintained in public libraries in Mecklenburg County.



**Exhibit 2-4  
Revision Status of the  
MCPS Policy Manual**

Classification	Section Title	Prior to 1997	1998–2002	2003-06	2007
A	Foundations and Basic Commitments	50%	0%	50%	0%
B	School Board Governance and Operations	47%	1%	41%	1%
C	General School Administration	36%	21%	29%	14%
D	Fiscal Management	39%	5.5%	50%	5.5%
E	Support Services	30%	18%	48%	4%
F	Facilities Development	56%	22%	22%	0%
G	Personnel	37%	20%	43%	0%
H	Negotiations (not applicable in Virginia)				
I	Instruction	8%	34%	57%	1%
J	Students	7%	31%	62%	0%
K	School-Community Relations	27%	27%	46%	0%
L	Education Agency Relations	25%	25%	25%	25%
Total	All Policies	28%	22%	47%	3%

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Board Policy Manual, 2007.

**COMMENDATION**

**The MCPS Board Policy Manual is maintained on the division’s Web site so that employees, parents, and the community have easy access to all Board policies.**

**FINDING**

The MCPS Board Policy Manual has many policies that require consistent standards and guidelines for administrators to use during the implementation of the policy. There are many procedural (or regulatory) documents incorporated into the MCPS Board Policy Manual. However, the user must read through a fairly comprehensive index to find procedures, which can be a time-consuming task.

While effective procedures are generally in use, and while some departments have developed their own procedures, there is no central listing of these procedures.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-5:**

**Develop a comprehensive procedures manual that contains administrative procedures, and that can be used by school and central office administrators to ensure consistency among staff.**

The administrative procedures manual should include information that reflects various Board policies and appropriate departmental procedures to implement. The manual would be an important reference tool that would be readily accessible to administrators. MCPS sections should include:

- General Information



- Instruction
- Records Management
- Student Services
- Special Education
- Health Services
- Financial Procedures
- Technology
- Human Resources
- Transportation
- Maintenance
- Food Services

The procedures manual should be cross-referenced to Board policy.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **2.3 DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

How well an organization performs is in large measure a reflection of how well it is organized and managed. To determine how well the organization and management are performing, usually a set of standards are used to measure performance.

While there has been much written about effective organizations, David Hardesty, the president of West Virginia University, has recently summarized this research with the following ten characteristics:

- The mission is clearly articulated and communicates the essence of the organization to the public.
- There is a powerful vision that is well-articulated and easily understood that guides the organization into the future.
- There is an adherence to shared values throughout the organization.
- There is a balanced and cohesive group of leaders who reflect different talents and styles.
- There are clear and measurable objectives that guide the work of those within the organization.
- There are mechanisms for receiving customer feedback and input, through such strategies as focus groups, surveys, and open hot lines.
- Continuing education is a top priority in the organization.
- There is a determined pursuit of excellence.



- There is a well thought out decision-making process that involves people in a meaningful way.
- There are periodic celebrations of successes.

## FINDING

**Exhibit 2-5** shows the current organizational chart for Mecklenburg County Public Schools. As shown, there are:

- two assistant superintendents, six elementary principals, and one director who report directly to the superintendent;
- three middle school principals who report directly to the assistant superintendent for Personnel;
- two high school principals and four directors who report directly to the assistant superintendent for Instruction; and
- one director and one business manager who report directly to the director of finance.

Job functions assigned within the current organization require that the assistant superintendent of personnel be directly involved with all student discipline cases. Typically, the chief Instructional administrator or the director of student services is responsible for student discipline matters to ensure that there is a direct link to the school and instructional for these students.

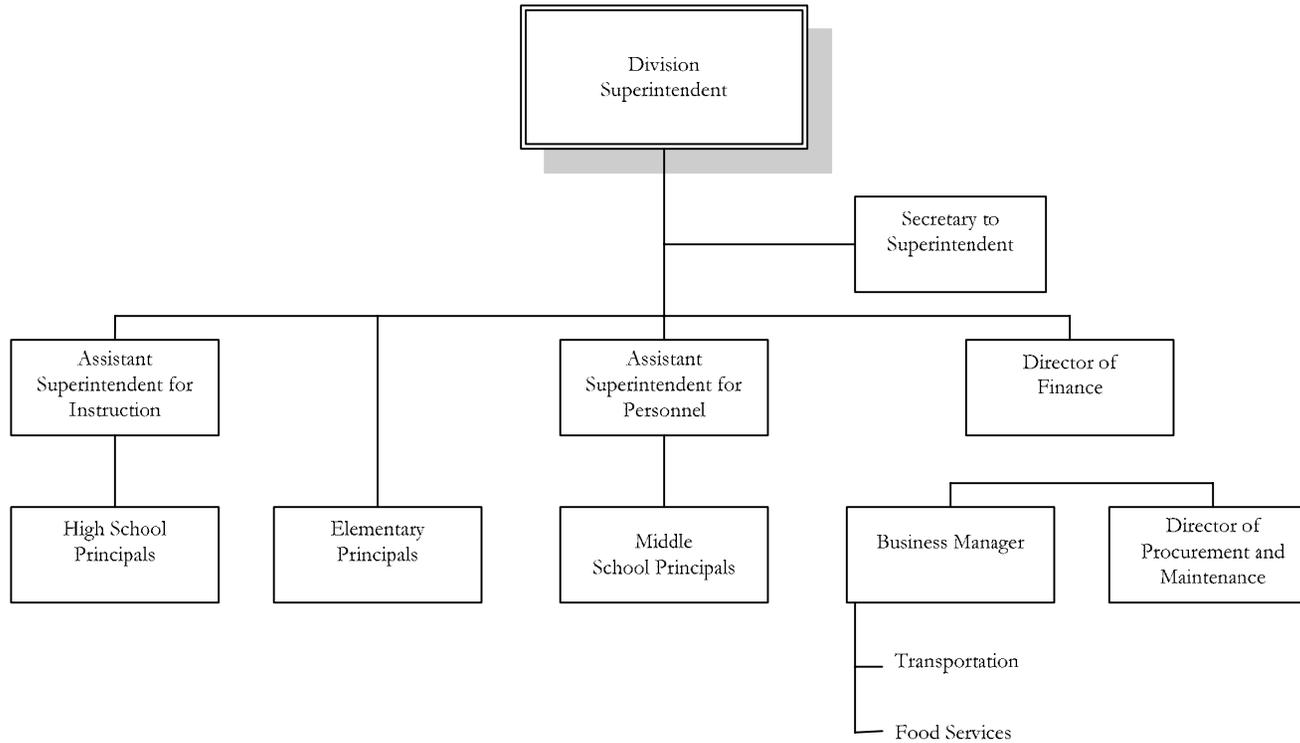
MCPS has operated with an efficient administrative structure. Evergreen has conducted extensive surveys of division and school-level personnel on a variety of topics related to central office management. When asked to respond to the statement that the school division has too many layers of administrators, fewer than 37 percent of teachers *disagree* with this statement compared to 39 percent in the Evergreen peer group. Over 83 percent of building administrators *disagree* with this statement, compared to 56 percent of building administrators in the Evergreen peer group. The general perception of teachers and building administrators in MCPS is that there are not excessive layers of administration.

**Exhibit 2-6** compares MCPS to peer divisions in disbursements for administration. As **Exhibit 2-6** indicates, the peer division average expenditure is \$269 per pupil, while MCPS expenditures are \$186 per pupil, or \$83 less per pupil. When ranked, MCPS is spending less per pupil on administration than four of its six peer divisions.

While the administrative costs are low, there are some shifts in organization that could be made to improve the efficiency of the current structure. The person primarily responsible for personnel is also responsible for student discipline. This job function reportedly occupies almost 50 percent of her time. A district with over 700 employees should have a full-time human resources director. The person in this position could then focus on important human resources functions, such as salary studies, employee recruitment, and staff development.



**Exhibit 2-5**  
**MCPS Current Organizational Chart**  
**2006-07 School Year**



Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2006.

**Exhibit 2-6**  
**Administration Disbursements in Peer School Divisions**  
**Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Administration	Per Pupil Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$908,351</b>	<b>\$185.76</b>
Dinwiddie County	\$741,457	\$165.17
Gloucester County	\$1,307,228	\$213.04
Halifax County	\$1,911,087	\$257.21
Isle of Wight County	\$1,799,603	\$352.70
Pulaski County	\$2,885,132	\$585.24
Wythe County	\$516,501	\$123.65
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$1,438,479</b>	<b>\$268.97</b>

*Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.*

Similarly, technology is an increasingly important function within a school division. Technology departments, however, cross over two important functions: administrative and instructional. This function is so critical to managing student data-based functions as well as administrative functions that it should be moved from the business office in the superintendent's office.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 2-6:

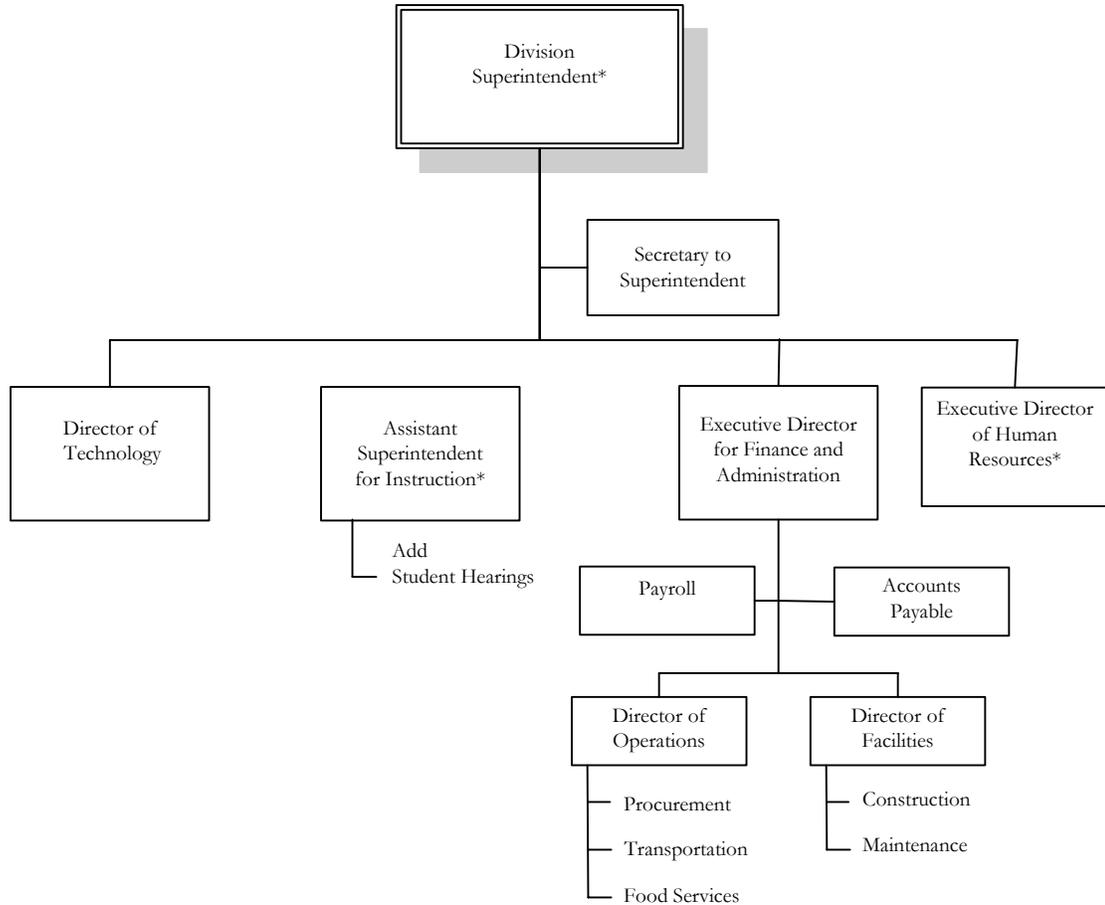
#### **Reassign job functions within the MCPS organizational structure.**

**Exhibit 2-7** presents a proposed organizational chart with the realignment of some job functions. The following actions are recommended:

- reduce the number of assistant superintendents to one;
- reclassify the assistant superintendent for personnel to an executive director of human resources;
- move all responsibilities for student discipline to the director of student services;
- reclassify the director of finance to an executive director of finance; and
- have the director of technology report directly to the superintendent.



**Exhibit 2-7**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools**  
**Proposed Administrative Organizational Chart**



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.

\*Principals should continue to report to these three administrators.

Realigning central functions will enable the human resources to focus primarily on personnel issues. In this realignment, the student services office would assume those responsibilities typically associated with student services in other school divisions. The reclassification of two positions to executive director would make clear their focused responsibilities as well as their role in supervising directors in the organization.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There will be no fiscal impact to this reorganization, primarily because the salaries of the executive directors would be comparable to their existing salaries. Nonetheless, MCPS may wish to conduct a thorough classification study to determine whether these salaries are in line with their responsibilities within the organization (see **Chapter 3**).



## FINDING

Having an open communication style and a decision-making process that are inclusive is critical for success. Research from effective schools and studies of successful businesses have demonstrated that this inclusive process is an important component of organizational improvement.

The superintendent carries out his responsibilities with his leadership team, which is composed of two assistant superintendents, six directors, ten principals, one business manager, and one supervisor. This leadership teams meets on an as-needed basis, generally every other month. During meetings, senior managers discuss a variety of topics that are pertinent to the administration and instruction within the division. This year the team has met twice with minutes kept from both of these meetings.

In addition, principals initiate meetings as needed. The elementary principals meet once a month and invite appropriate members of the central administration to attend these meetings. The secondary principals have met less frequently, but also invite appropriate members of the central administration to attend these meetings. Principals generally set the agenda for these meetings and invite other staff to add to their agenda as needed. Other meetings are called on an as-needed basis.

Interviews with administrative staff revealed that there has been little action taken as a result of the meetings. Some administrators expressed frustration that recommendations have been provided (such as for gifted education, alternative education, and report cards), but that action is not taken or there is little follow up.

## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation 2-7:**

**Implement a monthly schedule of meetings that focuses the leadership team on developing consensus and taking action on important instructional issues.**

The superintendent and his staff should carefully plan monthly meetings so that they focus on items requiring discussion and action. Other items that are merely informational could be distributed in a memo, brief report, or email. By focusing the agenda, there may be an opportunity to obtain input and consensus on into important issues facing the school division. Plans for follow-up should be made at the meeting, complete with designation of those responsible. The superintendent or his designee should monitor effective implementation.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



**FINDING**

Across the nation and in the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is a concern about an impending shortage of administrators. A significant portion of the nation’s principals are nearing retirement. A recent study conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals found that approximately 50 percent of surveyed districts reported a shortage of qualified candidates for administrative positions.

A Rand Research Report has indicated that a significant portion of school administrators are nearing retirement age. This report also indicates that the age at which people enter school administration has risen gradually. In 1988, 38 percent of new principals were 40 years of age or younger. In 2000, that percentage had decreased to 12 percent.

MCPS offers a yearly retreat to its administrative staff, during which they set goals for the year and focus on team building. In addition, the staff, under the leadership of the superintendent, have engaged in yearly book studies, focusing on such books as *Good to Great* by Collins, *Monday Morning Leadership* by Cottrell, *Credibility* by Kouzes and Posner, and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Albom.

**Exhibit 2-8** indicates that the majority of both central office and building administrators *agree* that there is high quality professional development to MCPS senior managers.

**Exhibit 2-8  
Evergreen Survey Results  
Availability of Professional Development for Administrators  
MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	13.7%	63.7%	20.4%	75.9%
Principals	33.4%	55.5%	57.9%	31.6%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for providing professional development by focusing them focusing them on book study as an effective means to develop a shared experience.**

**FINDING**

The Virginia General Assembly requires the State Superintendent to identify issues related to supply and demand in both teacher and administrative areas. Several factors appear to distract teachers from entering administration, including the increased testing and accountability, the amount of stress, and the amount of time that is required. Another factor is related to the lack of



preparation for that role of administrator. Reports continually stress the need to identify and prepare employees with leadership potential.

Discussions with administrators revealed that MCPS provides little or no leadership training for aspiring principals. A recent memo from the State Superintendent (dated February 2, 2007), however, has informed local school divisions that they may apply for competitive grants to develop a leadership development program in partnership with an institution of higher education. MCPS administrative staff have indicated that they plan to pursue this opportunity.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 2-8:**

#### **Develop a Leadership Academy for administrators and aspiring administrators in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.**

The Leadership Academy should include topics such as the division's special education plan, the strategic plan, cultural competency, management of student records, *No Child Left Behind* requirements, data analysis, and data reporting requirements. Topics could also include leadership styles and decision-making processes. MCPS should plan to offer this academy with existing resources, if it is not successful in the competitive grant application mentioned earlier.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

While the competitive grant may allow the school division to develop an elaborate leadership academy, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, should the division not receive a competitive grant.

## **FINDING**

Best practices indicate that periodic assessment of employees and client groups is essential to ensure that an organization operates in a continuous improvement mode. Information gleaned from these assessments can help the agency make necessary adjustments in order to ensure there is continuous improvement. How employees feel about their jobs, their peers, and management can affect their individual productivity and the ability of the agency to achieve its objectives.

An important part of an organization's growth is its ability to monitor the organizational climate to ensure that it maintains focus on continuous improvement. Many businesses and organizations routinely survey their employees to obtain important input and feedback that helps shape future goals and strategies. Indeed, this is a critical characteristic of a highly effective organization.

MCPS does not routinely administer an organizational climate survey to its employees. This employee information would help management to determine the extent of issues or concerns related to organizational within the school community. Without this employee information, management relies primarily on an informal network to ascertain issues or concerns.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-9:**

**Administer an organizational climate survey to all MCPS employees on a regular basis.**

Without a formal process, managers usually rely on their instincts or the willingness of employees to communicate with them. Most employees, however, are hesitant to communicate anything but positive information to their supervisors. An organizational climate survey taps into the perceptions and realities of various groups. The survey should be administered to ensure anonymity of its respondents. The survey should be done periodically and at least every three years to detect any trends and changes in employee perceptions.

A variety of surveys can be found through professional organizations and online resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The exact cost, however, cannot be determined until the division selects an instrument and determines necessary fees. The estimated cost of administering a survey is approximately \$2.00 per employee, or a total of \$1400 for 700 employees.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Administer Organizational Climate Survey	(\$1,400)	\$0	\$0	(\$1,400)	\$0

**FINDING**

Communication with community stakeholders is an important activity for division management. Having the business community and other community leaders understand the mission of the school division is critical to support within the community. So important are these relationships that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) includes a section on stakeholder and community relationships in accreditation standards.

The superintendent has been active in developing these relationships within the community. He has created a “Key Communicators” group whose purpose is “to solicit input from key community contacts and leaders regarding issues that impact the school division”. This group meets the first Thursday of each month. In addition, a business-education partnership has been formed. The goal of this partnership is to serve as a foundation to support the school division.

**COMMENDATION**

**The MCPS Superintendent is commended for having initiated multiple vehicles to solicit stakeholder involvement in and support of Mecklenburg County Public Schools.**



## 2.4 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The primary focus in any school division is on the education of its students. The delivery of educational services occurs at the school level through prescribed curricula and programs. School-level management is critical to the success of a school division. The parameters for school-level management decisions typically include scheduling, safety and security, student discipline, employee retention, and school climate. In order to support schools as they strive to achieve their goals, divisions typically adopt standards to determine how positions should be budgeted and assigned. Having appropriate staffing in place is critical to ensure schools are managed effectively and efficiently.

In addition, one of the emerging management and organizational models in both the public and private sectors is one called site-based management. In this model, teams of individuals who actually provide the services are given decision-making authority and are held accountable for the results. The school as the focal point for change is emphasized throughout *No Child Left Behind*.

The rationale for a school-based management model includes the following:

- The school is the primary unit of change; those who work directly with students have the most informed opinions about what will be most beneficial.
- Significant and lasting improvements take considerable time; local school personnel are in the best position to sustain improvements over time.
- Site-based management supports the professionalization of the teaching profession, which leads to more desirable outcomes.
- The school principal is a key figure in school improvement.

Site-based management is expected to result in higher student performance, more efficient use of resources, increased satisfaction and skills of school-based personnel, and greater involvement and support of the school division.

### FINDING

Site-based management is a way to structure internal relationships so that more authority and accountability is placed in the school. It is viewed as a major component of school reform efforts and a way to help improve student achievement. In this decentralized model, decision-making authority is given to the team of individuals who actually provide the service. It is a management and organizational model in both the public and private sector. Site-based management also results in increased skills and satisfaction in school administrators and teachers.

There is evidence of site-based management in Mecklenburg County Public Schools. Building administrators, for example, are given BLT (building leadership team) funds at each school. These teams develop proposals and submit their proposals to the assistant superintendent for instruction. Once approved, they are able to use these funds as proposed. Building



administrators, for the most part, state they are given a great deal of latitude with regards to budgets and other items that affect their schools.

**Exhibit 2-9** shows the comparison data of administrators and teachers. As can be seen, over 77 percent of central office administrators and slightly over 72 percent of building administrators *agree* that “school-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the division”.

**Exhibit 2-9**  
**Evergreen Survey Results**  
**Role of School-Based Personnel**  
**MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	77.3%	13.6%	88.0%	5.4%
Principals	72.3%	16.7%	62.9%	22.9%
Teachers	55.0%	29.5%	60.4%	22.4%

*Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for moving towards a site-based management model for decision making.**

**FINDING**

While principals are given a great deal of latitude, administrative staff indicated some frustration. There were also some comments made during the interviews and on the surveys that there may not be enough coordination among schools. These differing points of view may be seen in **Exhibits 2-10 and 2-11.**

- While close to 61.1 percent of building administrators *agree* with the statement “authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level”, only 36.4 percent of central office administrators and 25.9 percent of teachers agree.
- While 77.8 percent of building administrators *agree* that “site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers”, only 45.5 percent of central office administrators and 42.6 percent of teachers *agree*.

These items indicate that the majority of building administrators have some level of satisfaction with site-based management. This satisfaction, however, is not shared by all employees. Some staff indicated that there should be more consistency within the division and more direction coming from the central administration to ensure that best practices are used division-wide.



**Exhibit 2-10  
Evergreen Survey Results  
Authority for Administrative Decisions  
MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	36.4%	31.8%	55.4%	30.4%
Principals	61.1%	5.6%	44.3%	31.4%
Teachers	25.9%	30.3%	28.5%	19.1%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 2-11  
Evergreen Survey Results  
Site-Based Budgeting  
MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	45.5%	22.8%	50.7%	17.8%
Principals	77.8%	5.6%	70.3%	13.5%
Teachers	42.6%	16.7%	44.5%	27.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-10:**

**Review and refine the site-based management strategies in place to ensure that there are internal structures and parameters in place to promote consistency among schools and to ensure that best practices are used division-wide.**

As mentioned earlier, site-based management is a way to structure internal relationships so that more authority and accountability is placed in the school. Structures must be in place, however, to ensure that there is coordination and consistency within the various units of the organization. Site-based management does not mean that everyone does what they want. The concept does mean that the organization has a structured way to approach decision making and ensures that the processes in place involve appropriate individuals. In this approach, for example, special programs would be developed with the input of principals and teachers. Once a program was developed, however, each unit would be expected to implement the program as intended.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



**FINDING**

The materials given to Evergreen consultants indicate that MCPS use staffing standards that exceed the Virginia Standards of Quality. The Virginia Standards of Quality (SOQ) recommend the following principal/assistant principal allocations:

- Elementary Schools: One half-time principal to 299 students, one full-time principal at 300 students, one half-time assistant principal at 600 students, and one full-time assistant principal at 900 students.
- Middle Schools: One full-time principal employed on a 12-month basis and one full-time assistant principal for each 600 students.
- High Schools: One full-time principal employed on a 12-month basis and one full-time assistant principal for each 600 students.

In MCPS, each school is assigned a full-time principal. In addition, the high school is assigned two full-time assistant principals. **Exhibit 2-12** shows the current placement for assistant principals.

**Exhibit 2-12  
MCPS Assistant Principal Positions  
2006-07 School Year**

School	Level	Student Population	Assistant Principals	VA SOQ Standard
Boydton	K-5	166	0	.5 @ 600 students 1.0 @ 900 students
Buckhorn	K-5	255	0	.5 @ 600 students 1.0 @ 900 students
Chase City	K-5	535	1	.5 @ 600 students 1.0 @ 900 students
Clarksville	K-5	394	1	.5 @ 600 students 1.0 @ 900 students
LaCrosse	K-5	317	0	.5 @ 600 students 1.0 @ 900 students
South Hill	K-5	623	1	.5 @ 600 students 1.0 @ 900 students
Bluestone Middle	6-8	538	1*	1.0 AP for each 600 students
Park View Middle	6-8	610	1*	1.0 AP for each 600 students
Bluestone High	9-12	728	2*	1.0 AP for each 600 students
Park View High	9-12	744	2*	1.0 AP for each 600 students

*Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, and Mecklenburg County Public Schools.*

\* These four schools have half-time administrative assistants, in addition to their assistant principals.

As can be seen in **Exhibit 2-13**, the MCPS staffing ratio for principals and assistant principals is above the peer division average and state average for staffing principal and assistant principal positions.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-11:**

**Eliminate one assistant principal at the elementary level.**

**Exhibits 2-12 and 2-13** show that there is an excess position at this level. By eliminating one position, MCPS can save substantial dollars and redirect them towards other instructional staffing needs.

**Exhibit 2-13  
MCPS Principals and Assistant Principals  
Per 1,000 Students  
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Total Principals and Assistant Principals Per 1,000 Students
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>4.09</b>
Dinwiddie County	3.36
Gloucester County	3.27
Halifax County	3.57
Isle of Wight County	3.55
Pulaski County	3.93
Wythe County	4.12
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>3.69</b>
<b>State Average</b>	<b>3.90</b>

*Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.*

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The cost of a position at the elementary school is based on a salary of \$46,241 with a fringe benefits rate of \$12,947, for an annual total of \$59,188.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Eliminate One Assistant Principal Position	\$59,188	\$59,188	\$59,188	\$59,188	\$59,188

**2.5 PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Strategic planning is an important management tool that serves several purposes. Strategic planning:

- helps an organization focus its energy;
- ensures that all members of the organization are working towards the same goals; and
- allows the organization to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.



Effective strategic planning in school divisions:

- leads to action;
- builds a shared vision that is based upon shared values;
- is an inclusive, participatory process in which Board and staff have shared ownership;
- promotes accountability to the community;
- is based on quality data;
- requires an openness to questioning the status quo; and
- is a key part of effective management.

Strategic planning is different from long-range planning in its emphasis. Long-range planning generally includes the development of a plan for accomplishing a set of goals over a period of several years. Long-range planning assumes that the current knowledge about the future is sufficiently reliable. Long-range planning is typically done by a few people in positions of leadership.

Strategic planning assumes that an organization must be responsive to a constantly changing, dynamic environment. Strategic planning emphasizes the importance of making decisions that will ensure organizations can respond to these changes. As such, a strategic plan is a document that changes as circumstances change. Strategic planning is essential for school divisions to improve in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

A strong strategic plan includes the following components:

- a mission statement that answers the question: “why do we exist?”;
- a vision statement that answers the question “What will success look like?” (This vision statement is often what inspires a group to achieve its mission);
- a set of overarching goals with specific strategies designed to help reach the goals;
- an action plan that specifies timelines and responsibilities; and
- an evaluation plan that includes specific measurable outcomes to determine the attainment of goals.

## FINDING

MCPS has developed a long-range, six-year plan for 2006-12, which is dated November 20, 2006. The plan covers several areas, including student performance, quality teachers and staff, safe and healthy environment, effective and efficient operations, enrollment changes, regional programs and services, parent and community involvement, and school division needs. Each area has a list of goals and objectives, as well as timelines and expected outcomes. The plan was developed by a large group of employees, mostly administrators.

While the plan covers a six-year period with objectives and activities to help meet the objectives, some members of the school community are uncertain what the objectives are and what progress has been made. Survey results supported this concern. Specific results are shown in **Exhibit 2-14**.



- Slightly over 61 percent of school administrators believe that the strategic planning effort needs major or some improvement, compared to 50 percent of school administrators in the peer group.
- Similarly, 72.7 percent of central office administrators believe that the strategic planning effort needs major or some improvement, compared to 55.4 percent of school administrators in the peer group.

**Exhibit 2-14**  
**Evergreen Survey Results**  
**Strategic Plan’s Role in Decision Making**  
**MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	36.4%	36.4%	87.0%	3.7%
Principals	83.3%	11.1%	89.5%	5.3%
Teachers	63.8%	8.4%	66.4%	8.1%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

Conversations with employees and Board members suggest that the reason for the discrepancy between groups of employees may be due to their knowledge of strategic planning. School personnel seemed to understand that their work was tied to student achievement, because of the local, state, and national emphasis in this area. Central office administrators, however, address broad-based operational areas. The fact that the six-year plan was only recently supported may have influenced how they answer this question. There was no evidence that the plan had been presented, discussed, or adopted by the School Board.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-12:**

**Adopt a strategic planning process that involves the School Board and entire school community, and that includes a mission, vision, goals, strategies, timelines, responsible persons, and evaluation measures by which the plan can be evaluated.**

A comprehensive strategic planning process brings students, staff, community, and the School Board together to develop a shared vision and mission as well as articulate over-arching goals and strategies to guide the entire division for the future. An effective strategic plan reflects the importance of each department in the school division. In addition, the plan specifies how to evaluate the accomplishment of the goals. The strategic planning process brings these groups together to revise and modify these written goals and strategies on a frequent basis. The School Board should be actively engaged in the plan’s development and then adopt the plan.



## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools has public reports of data required through Virginia's accountability program as well as through NCLB, as do all school divisions in Virginia. These reports contain very specific data and test results. While this information is helpful to a school community, it is not sufficient to adequately determine how well the division is achieving the goals it has set for itself in its Six-Year Plan. An essential part of an accountability system is the public reporting of these data.

There is no evidence that MCPS has publicly reported results of the achievement of goals in its six-year plan to the School Board or its school community. This lack of reporting may account for why Board members and administrators had difficulty articulating the goals in the Six-Year Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 2-13:**

#### **Develop and implement a plan for informing staff and Board members of the status of the current Six-Year Plan.**

MCPS should periodically discuss the progress of the Six-Year Plan at staff meetings and report on the progress of the Plan to the Board at least yearly. The implementation of this recommendation could be accomplished through staff meetings and periodic reports to the School Board. Several benefits could be realized through this reporting process.

- the plan will become well-known to the school community;
- school administrators will become more aware of their essential role in accomplishing the goals;
- Board members will have a heightened awareness of their role in ensuring that resources are allocated; and
- departments and individuals could be recognized when they make significant contributions to the achievement of the goals of the plan.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



**FINDING**

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in the role of personnel evaluation and its relationship to school improvement. Personnel evaluation allows educators to determine the quality of how well they perform as well as gain direction for improving their performance. Evaluation can be a powerful tool for communicating the expectations of the division and for ensuring employees continue to grow.

The National School Boards Association has identified several key works of the School Board. One of these focuses on the need to establish a strong accountability process and indicates that school boards should:

*...measure the performance of all school staff members, administrators and the School Board itself against student achievement objectives.*

In addition, Section 22.1-294 of the Code of Virginia states that:

*Each local school board shall adopt for use by the division Superintendent clearly defined criteria for a performance evaluation process for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors that are consistent with the performance objectives set forth in the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents as provided in § 22.1-253.13:5 and that includes, among other things, an assessment of such administrators' skills and knowledge; student academic progress and school gains in student learning; and effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline.*

**Exhibit 2-15** indicates that there is some concern about personnel evaluation among administrators.

- Fifty (50) percent of central office administrators *agree* with the statement “division employees receive annual performance evaluations,” while 41 percent *disagree*.
- While close to 78 percent of building administrators agreed with the statement “division employees receive annual performance evaluations,” 22 percent *disagree*.

**Exhibit 2-15  
Evergreen Survey Results  
Evaluation of Personnel  
MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	50.0%	41.0%	75.4%	14.3%
Principals	77.8%	22.2%	81.1%	0%
Teachers	72.6%	7.2%	87.6%	2.2%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*



During interviews with central office and building administrators, only two indicated that they had been evaluated within the past year. Most of those interviewed indicated that they could not recall when they were last evaluated.

Some School Board members did indicate that they had evaluated the superintendent last fall, but some indicated that they were not sure if this was finalized and presented to the superintendent.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 2-14:

**Implement a culture of accountability throughout the school division by ensuring that the superintendent and all other administrators receive annual written evaluations.**

An evaluation process that includes all levels of an organization is critical to establish accountability throughout the organization. Evaluations should include goal setting and measurement tied to the division's strategic goals. They should also be consistent with the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* as specified by the Commonwealth.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

The self-evaluation of a school board can be very useful. The intent of a self-evaluation is to improve the performance of others within the division by improving the performance of the Board. There are several reasons why self-evaluation is important, but perhaps the most critical is that it promotes the concept of accountability throughout the division with the Board setting the example.

The MCPS School Board has tried to conduct a self-evaluation, but only four members have completed it. The MCPS School Board should consider actively promoting a self-evaluation as a way to provide an example to the school community. Self-evaluation, if done correctly, can lead to reflection and improvement.

A sample school board self-evaluation is shown in **Exhibit 2-16**.



**Exhibit 2-16  
Sample Board Self-Assessment Instrument**

Statement	Adequate	Needs Improvement
The Board has a common understanding of its roles and responsibilities		
Board members understand the mission and programs of the division.		
The relationship of the members to staff is clear.		
The Board attends to policy decisions which guide the staff's activities.		
The Board receives regular reports on finances, programs, and other important matters.		
The Board has approved comprehensive personnel policies.		
The Board regularly evaluates and develops the superintendent.		
The Board regularly monitors and evaluates progress towards its strategic goals.		
The Board's discussions are confined to published agenda items.		
Board members follow parliamentary procedures during meetings.		
All members of the Board are prepared for discussion by reading materials ahead of time.		
Our meetings are business-like and cordial.		

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 2-15:**

**Require a yearly self-evaluation by the MCPS School Board, employing an external facilitator if necessary.**

An evaluation process that includes all levels of a school division is critical to establishing accountability throughout the organization. It is important for the governing body to engage in a process of continual self-evaluation to ensure that it continues to serve its constituents in an effective manner.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**2.6 LEGAL SERVICES**

School divisions obtain legal services in one of two ways: through in-house counsel or with outside firms or attorneys. Larger school systems can generally obtain services of one large diversified firm that can handle the variety of needs; smaller divisions usually depend on more than one firm. Because of the unique nature of school divisions and local governments, it is not unusual in Virginia for school divisions to secure their services from the city or county in which they reside. Fees for services can vary widely, depending upon the location and specialization required.

Section 22.1-82 of the Code of Virginia allows school divisions to employ legal counsel to:

*Advise it concerning any legal matter or to represent it, any member thereof or any school official in any legal proceeding to which the School Board, member or official may be a party....All costs and expenses of such advice and all costs, expenses and*



liabilities of such proceedings shall be paid out of funds appropriated to the School Board.

**FINDING**

Legal services are provided to Mecklenburg County Public Schools by Reed Smith of Richmond in matters related to personnel and student affairs, and Slayton, Bain and Clary of Lawrenceville in matters regarding contracts, property acquisitions, and other business issues.

Exhibit 2-17 shows the division’s legal expenses for the past three years.

**Exhibit 2-17  
MCPS Legal Expenses  
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Legal Fees	School Years		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Reed Smith	\$0	\$2,530	\$2,357
Slayton, Bain & Clary	\$3,387	\$3,872	\$1,551
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,387</b>	<b>\$6,402</b>	<b>\$3,908</b>

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Finance Office, November 2007.

Exhibit 2-18 shows each peer division’s per student legal expenses for the past three fiscal years.

**Exhibit 2-18  
Comparison Legal Expenses Per Student  
MCPS and Peer School Divisions  
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

School Division	Legal Expenses Per Student		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Mecklenburg	\$.70	\$1.32	\$.80
Dinwiddie	\$10.63	\$1.91	\$4.17
Gloucester	\$1.22	\$.20	\$2.49
Halifax	\$2.63	\$.61	\$1.61
Isle of Wight	\$6.12	\$5.73	\$5.94
Pulaski	\$4.15	\$2.80	\$8.43
Wythe	\$9.24	\$5.09	\$1.99
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$4.96</b>	<b>\$2.52</b>	<b>\$3.63</b>

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Finance Office, and Peer Divisions, Spring 2007.

When comparing the legal expenses in MCPS with those of other school divisions in the peer group, average costs are less that of the comparison group average in two of the three years shown. In two of the three years, the cost of legal services is significantly less than any other division in the comparison group. The containment of legal expenses is attributed to the fact that all requests for legal assistance must go directly through the superintendent.

**COMMENDATION**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for minimizing legal expenditures.



**CHAPTER 3:  
PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**



## *Chapter 3*

# ***PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT***

This chapter reviews the personnel and human resources management of Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS). The review is organized around the eight sections listed below:

- 3.1 Organization and Management
- 3.2 Personnel Policies and Procedures
- 3.3 Personnel Records
- 3.4 Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention
- 3.5 Compensation and Classification
- 3.6 Performance Assessment
- 3.7 Professional Development
- 3.8 Employee Relations

### **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

MCPS is a mid-size school division with approximately 920 employees, including 382 teachers, and 10 schools serving slightly more than 4,700 students. Officially, traditional human resources functions are handled by the personnel department.

The department's goal is to move toward a fully functioning professional human resources department. The department is currently understaffed and lacking certain critical skill sets. A number of positive initiatives have been put in place by the new assistant superintendent of personnel and administration, but other changes need to be made. To effectively move toward the department's stated goal, some realignment of duties is required.

The personnel department is commended for putting a number of functions on-line. These include personnel policies, applications for employment, and professional development opportunities. Additionally, the department is commended for developing a more comprehensive recruitment program and recruiting internationally for teaching positions that are difficult to fill locally.

Recommendations in this chapter are intended to refine existing division processes and practices, and to provide guidance for the establishment of others. Primary recommendations in this chapter include:

- removing all non-human resources responsibilities from the human resources department, and placing responsibility for benefits administration and professional development within the human resources office;
- hiring a full-time human resources specialist experienced in classification, compensation, and benefits administration;
- creating an internal standard operating procedure manual and making it available to all human resources department personnel;



- developing a proactive minority recruitment program;
- creating and implementing a plan to review classification descriptions on a regular basis;
- conducting performance reviews for all non-teaching MCPS employees on an annual basis; and
- designing and implementing a progressive employee discipline program and instructing managers on the proper use of progressive discipline.

### **3.1 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

Human resources functions are performed primarily by the assistant superintendent of personnel and administration and the certification specialist. Additionally, some benefits administration duties are performed by the payroll section of the accounting department and the primary responsibility for professional development rests with the assistant superintendent for instruction. The assistant superintendent of personnel and administration reports directly to the superintendent and, by all accounts, has sufficient access to the superintendent to discuss any human resources issues that arise.

The organizational chart for human resources functions, depicted in **Exhibit 3-1**, includes those job titles of division positions that perform human resources-related duties, including the additional duties not currently performed by the personnel office.

#### **FINDING**

As currently configured, the personnel department lacks a distinct identity that is focused strictly on human resources functions.

The assistant superintendent for personnel and administration has responsibility for a number of duties that are not related to human resources management. Alternatively, benefits and professional development are traditional human resources functions that are not primarily administered by a personnel office. Human resource responsibilities are sufficiently critical to the division's success that a distinct department with a sole focus on human resources is warranted.

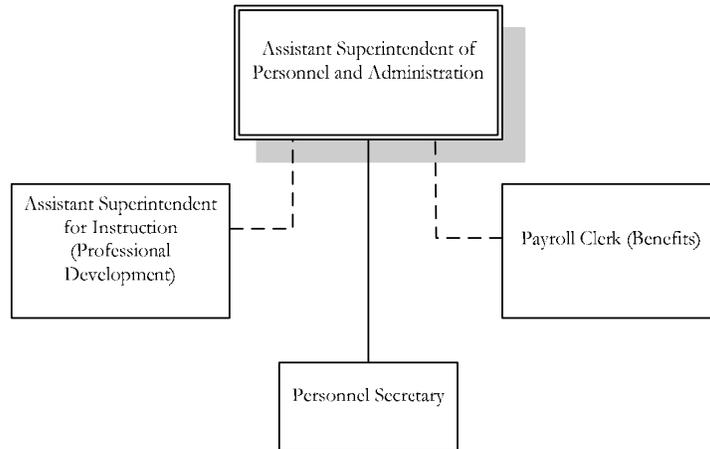
Given that labor costs typically account for 80 percent of a school district's expenditures and that human resource issues are frequently the cause of employee litigation, the current situation is untenable.<sup>1</sup> The superintendent for personnel and administration has expressed the desire to make the personnel department a professional human resources department, and an organization with over 900 employees needs to have employees dedicated strictly to the human resource function.

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<sup>1</sup> In general, human resource issues are a common area for employee litigation, however, there is no evidence that this is true for MCPS.



**Exhibit 3-1  
Current Organization of the Personnel Department**



Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2007.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-1:**

**Create a distinct human resources department that is responsible for all aspects of human resources administration.**

The creation of a distinct human resources department will provide a message to employees, management, and the School Board that MCPS is moving towards increased specialization and professionalization in the area of human resources. The assistant superintendent of human resources should have the responsibility for developing human resource policies and ensuring their effective administration.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation should have no fiscal impact since it involves reorganization and not the creation of a new administrative unit.

**FINDING**

The assistant superintendent of personnel and administration has responsibility for a number of functions that are not related to human resources and does not have authority over the customary human resources functions of benefits administration and professional development.

In addition to her human resources responsibilities, the assistant superintendent for personnel and administration also is responsible for student discipline hearings, field trip approvals, and homebound approvals. Conservatively, these administrative tasks consume 30 percent of her time. The split responsibilities of the assistant superintendent for personnel and administration prevent her from focusing all her time and energy on the administration of human resources functions.



The administration of benefits is typically performed by human resources due to the close relationship between compensation and benefits. Taken together, compensation and benefits comprise the majority of total compensation management. Within the realm of human resources, total compensation management is an emerging best practice.

Professional development is another area that is typically administered by human resources. The close relationship between performance evaluation and professional development strongly suggests that the two areas be administered by the same department, and performance evaluation is the natural domain of human resources.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-2:**

**Remove all non-human resources responsibilities from the human resources department, and place responsibility for benefits administration and professional development within the human resources department.**

Removing the functions that are not human resources-related will free up more of the assistant superintendent's time to focus on the human resources functions that need to be performed. Moving benefits administration and professional development to human resources should more properly align these functions with corresponding responsibilities.

Major areas of responsibility for the human resources department should include:

- employment policies and procedures;
- recruitment and retention;
- classification;
- compensation;
- benefits;
- records management;
- hiring;
- performance evaluation;
- professional development; and
- employee relations.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation should have no fiscal impact since it involves reorganizing responsibilities.

## **FINDING**

The personnel department is understaffed.



The traditional benchmark for human resources staffing is one human resources professional for every 100 employees served. Technological innovations in many areas of human resources management (such as online employment applications, benefits registration and performance evaluations) have improved productivity. As a result, some human resources organizations have adjusted their traditional benchmarks and now recommend a benchmark of one human resources professional for every 200 employees served.

Currently, MCPS has two people committed solely to human resources functions and approximately 920 employees. The ratio is thus 1:460. While some human resources functions are performed by other departments, this is offset by the assistant superintendent of personnel and administration’s responsibilities in areas other than human resources.

**RECOMMENDATION**

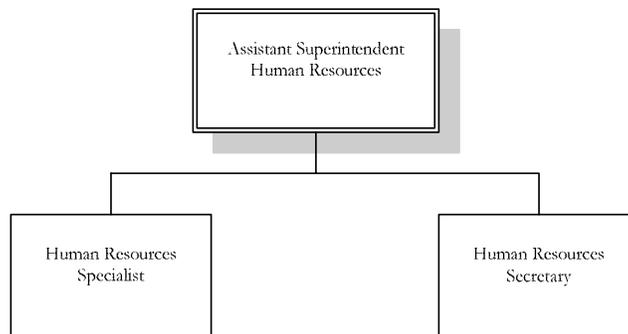
**Recommendation 3-3:**

**Hire a full-time human resources specialist experienced in classification, compensation, and benefits administration.**

By hiring a full-time human resources specialist, the division will bring the ratio to a more acceptable 1:220 level. This individual could bring much needed experience and attention to the administration of the division’s compensation program.

The addition of a human resources specialist will change the organizational structure. The proposed structure is shown in **Exhibit 3-2**.

**Exhibit 3-2**  
**Proposed Organizational Chart for the MCPS Human Resources Department**



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.

With the addition of a human resources specialist, work responsibilities can be better clarified. A suggested alignment of personnel and responsibilities is shown in **Exhibit 3-3**.



**Exhibit 3-3  
Proposed Alignment of Human Resources Staff and Work Responsibilities  
in Mecklenburg County Public Schools**

Title	Work Responsibilities
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources	Department Leadership and Direction Policy and Procedure Development Employee Relations Hiring Recruitment and Retention
Human Resources Specialist	Compensation Management Classification Management Benefits Administration Performance Evaluation Professional Development
Certification Specialist	Clerical duties Certification Records Management

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend on the level of experience the prospective hire possesses. Generally, the expected range for someone in this job classification is \$40,000 - \$58,000. If the division hires someone with several years of experience, the expected cost is approximately \$44,000 per year plus benefits. With a 28 percent benefit cost, the annual cost is approximately \$56,320.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Hire Human Resources Specialist	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)

**FINDING**

Current employees in the personnel department lack the necessary experience and training.

The assistant superintendent for personnel and administration is in her first year in the position and has no formal background in personnel administration at the division level. This could be offset if she had a well-trained, human resources staff. However, at present, she is only supported by a certification specialist, who also is not formally trained in human resources administration. Her primary responsibilities are to perform clerical functions and track teacher certifications.

The lack of human resources experience possessed by the current personnel exposes the division to potential litigation risk. While current personnel do have access to others with human resources experience and legal counsel, the current personnel lack the necessary experience in dealing with potential employee relations, FLSA, and other related issues.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-4:**

**Place the current personnel department employees on an accelerated human resources training program with an emphasis on personnel, FLSA and employee relations law.**

Training for the current human resources personnel should initially be concentrated in those areas where a lack of experience could most easily expose the division to potential litigation. Typically, these areas include employee discipline, termination, pay, and discrimination (EEO).

Due to advances in distance-based learning, the cost of effective training has declined considerably. Online courses, webinars and other Web-based applications have reduced the cost of formal training. Additionally, a great deal of information is available through professional associations such as SHRM and IPMA.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact of this recommendation should decrease over time. Given the current training needs in this department, an initial investment of \$5,000 over the current training budget in the first year would be reasonable with \$1,000 in subsequent years.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Provide Human Resources Training	(\$5,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)

**FINDING**

The personnel department does not have a clearly defined mission or accompanying performance goals.

Despite its small size, the personnel department must perform numerous activities on a daily basis in order to fulfill its responsibilities. However, without a unifying theme and clearly related goals, the tasks performed can become a series of unrelated activities with little clear purpose. A clearly stated theme (or mission statement) helps to clarify activities and give them a clearer focus. It also lets stakeholders know the department’s priorities and primary emphasis. Ideally, the department’s mission statement should be easily understood and related to the MCPS overall strategic plan.

Related to the mission statement, the personnel department should also develop a series of high-level goals. These goals should reflect the department’s most important objectives in the primary service delivery areas. To be meaningful, the goals must be measurable. Additionally, the goals must be reasonably attainable and within the department’s ability to achieve.

An example of a sample mission statement and accompanying performance goals are contained in **Exhibit 3-4**.



**Exhibit 3-4  
Sample Mission Statement and Accompanying Performance Goals**

\*Sample\*

Human Resources Department Mission Statement

“The Human Resources Department will recruit, retain, train and compensate employees in an equitable manner while safeguarding the division’s resources.”

Department Performance Goals  
(To be achieved By January 1, 2008)

The division’s policy manual will be revised to reflect all changes approved by the School Board.  
 All job applications will be stored in an electronic database.  
 All non-classified job descriptions will be updated to reflect revised job responsibilities.  
 A market study will be done for all job classifications.  
 A comprehensive benefits statement will be distributed to all employees.  
 A sign-out system will be implemented for all employee records.  
 Job applicant interview training will be conducted for all Principals.  
 Performance evaluation forms will be reviewed and updated as needed.  
 Professional development needs assessment surveys will be distributed to all certificated staff.  
 Conflict resolution training will be offered to all front-line managers.

\*Sample\*

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-5:**

**Develop a clearly worded mission statement and accompanying performance goals.**

By adopting a mission statement and accompanying performance goals, the personnel department can provide purpose to work activities and prioritize service demands.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and should have no fiscal impact.

**FINDING**

Due to a lack of clearly stated goals, the personnel department lacks sufficient accountability mechanisms. Without performance goals, it is not possible to accurately measure the personnel department’s performance in critical areas. By monitoring progress against the performance goals on a regular basis, the department will be better able to track its progress and provide a higher level of service to MCPS employees.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-6:**

**Monitor progress against department performance goals and review its overall performance on an annual basis.**

After the performance goals are established, periodic status checks can be performed throughout the year. At the end of the year, the personnel department can review its performance internally and set the following year's goals.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and should have no fiscal impact.

**FINDING**

The MCPS personnel department does not conduct regular satisfaction surveys of division employees.

Customer satisfaction is an important goal for any internal service provider. For the MCPS personnel department, its customers are division employees. A key component in measuring the personnel department's success should be the overall satisfaction of the personnel department's customers in the key areas of service provision. At present, the personnel department does not collect these data.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-7:**

**Construct an online customer satisfaction survey and administer the survey on an annual basis.**

After the personnel department administers the survey and collects the results, the initial results should serve as a customer satisfaction baseline. Future survey results can be measured against the baseline and highlight potential trends in customer satisfaction.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and should have no fiscal impact.



### **3.2 PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Clearly stated personnel policies and procedures are necessary for a number of reasons. They serve to clearly define expected behavior, delineate the consequences for violating these expectations, and detail the necessary steps for performing many critical tasks. Additionally, personnel policies and procedures serve as a reference point for employees and management, and are a critical component in combating arbitrary actions that can result in litigation.

Internal standard operating procedures can also assist new employees in learning the proper way to perform work tasks and reduce employee uncertainty.

#### **FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools has placed all personnel policies online for review. This practice allows division employees to review current policies and serves as a reference for potential employees.

#### **COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for placing personnel policies online for employee use.**

#### **FINDING**

The organization of the current online policies is difficult to navigate and many items lack detail.

Online policies are arranged alphabetically according to a policy reference code. While this organization is logical as part of the division's over policy manual, policy topics are not arranged or organized by subject and are therefore difficult to navigate. Additionally, for many subjects, there is only a broad policy statement, adoption date, and a legal reference. In summary, the online personnel policies are not user friendly.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

##### **Recommendation 3-8:**

**Create a distinct personnel employee manual that is easier to navigate, and distribute this manual in hard copy to all new employees.**

Employee handbooks should be designed as a resource for all employees, with information they may need to refer to frequently in order to meet the terms and conditions of their employment. A typical school division employee handbook includes basic information about the division, such as a staff directory, welcome from the superintendent, addresses and locations of division offices and schools, general statistics about the division (e.g., enrollment for the past five years, number of employees), the division mission, and annual goals.



An example of the table of contents of an employee handbook for a school division is included in **Exhibit 3-5** on the following page.

As depicted in the exhibit:

- **Section 1** includes general information about the school division and statewide education regulations impacting the division.
- **Section 2** provides brief descriptions of each department; this section helps direct employees to the appropriate staff member for specific questions and helps inform employees about programs and functions of each department/functional area.
- **Section 3** includes specific personnel policies and procedures.
- **Section 4** describes employee pay practices.
- **Section 5** discusses the employee benefits package.

The sample employee handbook included here may contain more information than the MCPS Employee Handbook would need. However, the categories included in the sample are important to include in an MCPS Employee Handbook.

The assistant superintendent of human resources should coordinate the creation of the employee handbook. This action would include generating some sections (e.g., personnel policies and procedures) and coordinating inclusion of others (e.g., staff directory, superintendent’s welcome message).

Since many school divisions in Virginia and school districts across the country post their employee handbooks online, there are a multitude of sample documents available to division staff to use as templates. However, should the division choose to utilize software templates to create the handbook, a low-cost version of employee handbook development software could be purchased for approximately \$200.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division. However, should the division decide to purchase employee handbook development software to assist in the process, an additional cost of \$200 would be incurred.

### **FINDING**

The personnel department lacks an internal standard operating procedures manual.

A standard operating procedures manual documents the steps that are used to perform critical department work tasks. The manual (also sometimes referred to as a desk manual) serves as a safeguard in the event that the department loses critical personnel and helps maintain institutional memory. Additionally, the manual serves as an important resource for new employees.



**Exhibit 3-5  
Sample Employee Handbook  
Table of Contents**

SECTION 1-- WELCOME TO LEON COUNTY SCHOOLS	SECTION 4--PAYROLL SERVICES
The School Board of Leon County School Board Meetings District Organizational Structure Department Phone Numbers Schools and Principals District Map Strategic Plan Goals Florida System of School Improvement & Accountability State Education Goals Education Standards Commission Employment Practices Discrimination Policy Statement Prohibition of Harassment of Employees Code Of Conduct Confidential Student Records Access Clean Air Policy Bloodborne Pathogens Control Plan Hazardous Substances Weapons or Firearms on School Property Drug Free Workplace Additional District References Clean Air Policy Bloodborne Pathogens Control Plan Hazardous Substances Additional Reference Sources	Calculation of Salary Direct Deposit of Paychecks Overtime Pay for Contracted Employees Miscellaneous Payroll Deductions Stop Payment Procedure for Payroll Checks Uniform Allowances Calculation of Salary Direct Deposit of Paychecks
	SECTION 3--POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
	Accidents and Injuries at Work Appointment Instructions for New Employees Courier Mail Procedures and Guidelines Credit Union Employee Assistance Wellness Program Employee Recognition Programs Leon County Blood Bank FIRN Leaves of Absence How to Determine Leave Accrual Personnel Records Reassignments Recreational Discount Cards Resignations Retirement Sick Leave Bank Summer School Hiring Suspension and Dismissal Transfers Travel Reimbursement Procedures Unpaid Leave and Employee Benefits Vacancy Advertisement Worker's Compensation Holidays Liability Insurance Unemployment Compensation Social Security Years of Experience Verification Emergency Closing of Schools Safety and Evacuation Procedures
SECTION 2--DEPARTMENTS AND SERVICES	
Community Involvement Department Early Childhood Education Program Intervention Services Staffing Services Health Services Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative Exceptional Student Education/Student Services Facilities Department Food Services Instructional Media Center Technology Information Services Student Services Maintenance Department Staff Development Department Transportation Department Planning & Policy Department Employee Relations Teaching & Learning Finance Department Purchasing Risk Management Minority Business Enterprise Office	
	SECTION 5--EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SUMMARY
	General Notice General Information Flexible Benefits Plan Non-Flexible Benefits Enrollment COBRA General Notice General Information Flexible Benefits Plan

Source: Leon County Public Schools, Florida, 2006.



## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 3-9:

**Create an internal standard operating procedure manual and make it available to all human resources department personnel.**

The assistant superintendent of human resources should coordinate the compilation of the standard operating procedure manual. The manual should be arranged by topic and include the necessary steps to accomplish critical and frequently performed work tasks. The manual may not include all activities performed by the department since special projects frequently arise. However, it should include all tasks performed on a regular basis.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

### 3.3 PERSONNEL RECORDS

The maintenance of complete and accurate personnel records is one of the most crucial responsibilities of a human resources department. Human resources personnel are relied upon to produce reports, generate personnel statistics, and ensure the division maintains compliance with local, state, and federal regulations regarding personnel.

## FINDING

MCPS does not have record destruction policies related to personnel records. The Virginia Public Records Act authorizes the Library of Virginia to issue retention schedules that state agencies and localities must follow. The Library's Records Management and Imaging Services Division releases *Records Retention and Disposition Schedules* that provide instructions and guidelines for maintaining and disposing of records.

Personnel records retention and disposition guidelines are provided in General Schedule No. 3, Human Resources/Personnel Records. Items referenced and their retention schedules include:

- Attendance Records - retain as long as administratively required;
- Certification Records - retain three years after employee departure, then destroy;
- Employee Personnel File - retain 50 years after termination, then destroy;
- Exit Interview Files - retain three years, then destroy;
- Leave Records - retain three years or until audited, then destroy;
- Promotion/Demotion, Layoff, Termination, or Tenure Records - retain three years, then destroy; and



- Verification of Employment Records – retain three years after request, and then destroy.

The majority of division personnel records impacted by records retention schedules are maintained by the assistant superintendent of personnel and administration.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-10:**

#### **Develop and adhere to a records disposition policy related to personnel records.**

The assistant superintendent of human resources should draft a Board policy related to personnel records disposition. The policy should adhere to Virginia Public Records Act. Further, the assistant superintendent of human resources should develop a plan to implement the Board policy and maintain responsibility for adhering to the plan. To provide accountability for personnel records management, the assistant superintendent of human resources should maintain responsibility for the disposition of records according to the prescribed schedule.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

## **FINDING**

MCPS does not take sufficient steps to ensure the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Personnel records for active personnel are located in unlocked filing cabinets within an area that is easily accessible to the public in the central administration building.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-11:**

#### **Lock the filing cabinets containing personnel records.**

Active personnel records should be moved to a secure room and a formalized sign-out procedure should be implemented. According to MCPS Policies and Procedures related to personnel records, “every effort should be made to protect and preserve the privacy of an employee”. Currently, the personnel records for active employees are kept in a non-secured common area in filing cabinets that either cannot be locked or are not locked.

Ideally, the division should take the following steps to secure active personnel records:

- locate a room in proximity to the human resources department that contains a locked door;
- move active personnel files to this secure room;
- issue keys to the secure room only to authorized human resources personnel;



- limit access to the secure file room only to authorized human resources personnel;
- lock the personnel files in lockable filing cabinets (the current filing cabinets have locking capability);
- issue keys to the filing cabinets to the same personnel identified above; and
- maintain a formal sign out log to keep a record of all removal of personnel records.

If a secure location is not immediately available, the division should immediately implement the above last three steps listed above.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to Mecklenburg County Public Schools.

### **FINDING**

The division does not scan personnel records and keep electronic copies. Personnel records are critical documents. They contain the history of all personnel-related activities, and serve as a critical line of defense against potential complains and possible litigation. Given the importance of personnel records, the fragile nature of paper documents, and the reduced cost of electronic scanning devices, it is increasingly common for human resources departments to implement programs to scan personnel documents and maintain electronic filing systems. Electronic files can be kept both on-site (for desk-top access) and off-site (to serve as a critical back-up in the event of fire or other natural disaster).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Recommendation 3-12:**

**Purchase a scanner and appropriate software and implement a phased scanning program for MCPS personnel records.**

Scanning machines have become increasingly common and as they have become more popular within the market, the price has come down accordingly. Scanners come with a variety of features and prices range from \$250 to \$1,500. After a scanner is purchased, the human resources department should designate the certification specialist to scan all new personnel records first and then work toward scanning the records of all current employees.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

A practical, high-volume scanner and software should cost approximately \$500. Scanning can be done by current staff.



Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Purchase a Scanner and Appropriate Software	(\$500)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**3.4 RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND RETENTION**

Employee recruitment, hiring, and retention are key functions for any human resources department. To be effective in these critical areas, any human resources department must be proactive and place an effective recruitment and retention plan in place and work toward achieving success against that plan.

**FINDING**

The personnel department is in the process of developing a recruitment plan.

Prior to the 2006-07 academic year, the personnel department did not have a recruitment plan. The assistant superintendent for personnel and administration has placed the primary components of an overall recruitment plan in place and is in the process of formalizing the plan.

The draft recruitment plan includes the following goals:

- Goal 1: Improve student achievement through qualified staff.
- Goal 2: Provide a comprehensive support network for all students.
- Goal 3: Continually improve teacher performance and quality.
- Goal 4: Increase retention rate of teachers/staff.

According to the evolving recruitment plan, recruitment will take place at the following colleges, universities, and job fairs:

- VASPA Conference
- Longwood University
- Radford/Virginia Tech
- NC A&T University/Guilford College/NC Central University
- William & Mary University
- Hampton University
- James Madison University
- Virginia State University

Advertising for division openings will be placed in the following locations:

- Local Newspapers
- MCPS Webpage
- DOE Webpage
- *Richmond Times Dispatch*



- Raleigh News & Observer
- Teacher-teacher.com
- Career Builder.com University Career Centers

Considering the absence of a recruitment plan, the overall satisfaction levels for the division’s recruitment efforts is surprisingly high when compared to peer districts. **Exhibit 3-6** shows the administrator, principal and teacher response percentages for the MCPS recruiting function. Peer response percentages are also shown.

**Exhibit 3-6**  
**Administrator, Principal and Teacher Survey Responses**  
**on Personnel Recruitment in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/Outstanding	Needs Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/Outstanding
Central Office Administrators	40.9%	31.9%	64.1%	23.9%
Principals	55.5%	38.9%	60.0%	34.3%
Teachers	39.8%	27.9%	48.2%	28.8%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for its progress to implement a recruitment plan.**

**FINDING**

MCPS does not track the success of its recruitment efforts. Since the division has not previously had a recruitment plan in place, it is not surprising that it does not track the success of its recruiting efforts. Without collecting the relevant data, the division cannot conduct analysis of its overall recruiting efforts, including basic cost/benefits analysis.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-13:**

**Collect data related to all recruitment efforts, including advertisements, conferences, job fairs, and all related outreach programs.**

At a minimum, the division should collect information related to costs, employees successfully recruited, and the time required to fill each vacancy.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented at no cost to Mecklenburg County Public Schools.



## **FINDING**

Last year MCPS began to recruit teachers in the Philippines to fill positions that have been difficult to recruit locally, and especially in special education.

Most school divisions have positions that are not easily filled through local and regional recruiting efforts. One such area for MCPS is special needs instructors. In an effort to fill these positions, the division recruited teachers from the Philippines to fill these critical positions.

The program has been somewhat controversial. Despite concerns over the cultural assimilation of the Philippino teachers, principals indicated to Evergreen Solutions that the teachers are performing well in the classroom. Overall, the program appears to be successful.

## **COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for its international recruitment program designed to fill difficult to recruit positions.**

## **FINDING**

MCPS does not have a program to recruit African-American teachers.

In a division where 50 percent of all students are African-American, it is critical to ensure that the division has a representative number of minority teachers. The division is currently visiting historically minority colleges in an accelerated effort to recruit African-American teachers, however, the division has no comprehensive plan to actively recruit or retain African-American teachers.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-14:**

#### **Develop a proactive African-American recruitment program.**

MCPS can do a number of things to successfully recruit minority teachers. Among the potential steps are:

- concentrating recruitment efforts at historically African-American colleges and universities (currently under way);
- including more minorities in hiring decisions;
- creating a special advisory committee that specializes in minority outreach and recruiting; and
- expanding advertisement in media that are aimed at minority consumers.

The issue of minority recruiting is of concern to the community. For example, the following comment was made in the Evergreen Solutions public forum:



*The surrounding counties are able to find and hire minority teachers who are highly qualified according to the NCLB mandates, why is it that Mecklenburg County Public Schools seems to have a difficult time finding and hiring minorities—other than leaving the country?*

**FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools does not have a succession plan in place.

Although the division does track the tenure of its employees in anticipation of recruiting vacancies, no formal succession plan is in place. This will become a critical issue in the near future as a number of MCPS employees reach retirement age.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-15:**

**Identify critical areas where turnover is likely and work with the effected departments to develop a comprehensive retention and succession plan.**

A retention and succession plan will help ease the transition from the current generation of employees to subsequent generations. Key components include identifying likely areas of transition, effective recruitment tools for the next generation of employees, and a mentoring system for current employees to acclimate new employees to MCPS operations.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented at no cost to Mecklenburg County Public Schools.

**FINDING**

During the current academic year, MCPS has implemented an online system to collect job applications. The advantages to this strategy are numerous, including:

- reduced administrative time and cost;
- expansion of the applicant pool;
- ease of collection and retention of applicant information;
- ease of distribution of application information to stakeholders; and
- simpler report generation through database queries.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for adopting an online application system.**



### 3.5 COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION

A well-constructed classification system will organize employees into proper job classifications according to the work performed. Classification systems must be regularly monitored because jobs often evolve due to changes in technology, evolving job skills, changing missions, reorganizations and the introduction of new jobs to the system.

In order to attract and retain the best and brightest employees, school divisions must provide competitive salaries. Employee compensation includes both salaries and fringe benefits; divisions should focus on both to ensure total compensation packages for employees are fair and competitive.

#### **FINDING**

Most MCPS classification descriptions are missing critical information.

Evergreen Solutions was provided copies of the division's classification descriptions. Classification descriptions typically include:

- Title
- Primary Function
- Qualifications
- Reports To
- Performance Responsibilities
- Terms of Employment
- Evaluation
- Date Last Revised

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

##### **Recommendation 3-16:**

**Create and revise classification descriptions to accurately include job duties being performed by division staff and that reflect a consistent and legally defensible format.**

Noticeably absent from the class descriptions are the FLSA status of the classification and the physical requirements of the position as related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In order to comply with ADA guidelines, the division must identify the essential functions of jobs in the division, along with the physical requirements needed to perform the essential functions. The division is required by the ADA to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with a disability who seek a job with the division and can perform the essential functions of the job he or she seeks. To avoid any potential for issues related to adherence to ADA guidelines, the essential functions of jobs must be up-to-date and clearly represented in a job description.

A sample of categories to include in a classification description is included in **Exhibit 3-7**. These categories were generated by the Virginia School Boards Association, which provides sample classification descriptions for nearly 50 K-12 education job titles.



**Exhibit 3-7  
Sample Job Description Categories**

<p><b>SAMPLE SCHOOL DIVISION JOB DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>Job Title: Division: Pay Grade/Step: Reports to: FLSA Status: Prepared/Revised Date: Approved By: Approved Date:</p> <p>General Statement of Job:</p> <p>Essential Duties and Responsibilities: <i>(Other duties may be assigned)</i></p> <p>Supervisory Responsibilities:</p> <p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education and/or Experience</li> <li>Language Skills</li> <li>Mathematical Skills</li> <li>Reasoning Ability</li> <li>Certificates, Licenses, Registrations</li> <li>Physical Demands</li> <li>Work Environment</li> </ul> <p>Terms of Employment:</p> <p>Evaluation Criteria:</p>
---

Source: Virginia School Boards Association, 2006.

There are numerous cost-effective job description software programs that utilize templates to help organizations create legally sound and effective job descriptions.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

Most MCPS classification descriptions are outdated and there is no plan in place to review classification descriptions in a systematic and organized fashion. The vast majority of the division’s classification descriptions were last revised in January 1995. Thus, job descriptions have not been updated in over 12 years. In addition to missing possible changes in the duties performed, there is a very real possibility that some jobs have evolved to such an extent that they are improperly designated according to FLSA regulations. Major changes were made to the FLSA guidelines that were effective in August 2004. Although the division does maintain FLSA designations for each job classification, these designations may be incorrect if they are based on outdated data.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-17:**

**Create and implement a plan to review classification descriptions on a regular basis.**

Classification descriptions should be examined on a rotating three-year cycle. As classification descriptions are revised, they should be examined against the revised FLSA guidelines.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The initial cost for this recommendation is included in **Recommendation 3-18**. Subsequent action can be performed by human resources department staff at no additional cost.

**FINDING**

A widespread perception exists that MCPS employees are undercompensated.

As part of Evergreen Solutions’ review process, division employees were surveyed about various aspects of the division’s operations. **Exhibits 3-8 through 3-10** show the survey results related to employee compensation.

**Exhibit 3-8  
Central Office Administrator Responses to Compensation Survey Items  
in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Question	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	27.3%	68.2%	33.1%	48.7%
My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	31.8%	59.1%	42.4%	37.0%

*Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

**Exhibit 3-9  
Principal/Assistant Principal Responses to Compensation Survey Items  
in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Question	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	16.7%	72.2%	33.0%	38.6%
My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	11.2%	88.9%	20.0%	48.6%

*Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*



**Exhibit 3-10  
Teacher Responses to Compensation Survey Items  
in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Question	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	12.0%	78.1%	34.2%	52.3%
My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	17.1%	77.3%	30.1%	61.4%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

The survey responses show that compensation issues are clearly of concern to MCPS employees. The results are noticeably striking for principals and teachers as less than 20 percent of respondents either *agree* or *strongly agree* that salary levels within the division are competitive. Although the results are somewhat better for administrators, the percentages are still notably below peer district responses.

The survey results listed above to have some validity, especially where principals are concerned. **Exhibit 3-11** shows a comparison of principal, teacher and teacher aide salaries for MCPS and the peer divisions of Dinwiddie County, Gloucester County, Halifax County, Isle of Wright County, Pulaski County and Wythe County.

**Exhibit 3-11  
Annual Position Salaries  
2004-05 School Year**

School Division	Average Principal Salary	Average Teacher Salary	Average Teacher Aide Salary
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$62,372</b>	<b>\$38,244</b>	<b>\$15,323</b>
Dinwiddie County	\$71,827	\$41,728	\$11,727
Gloucester County	\$76,213	\$40,818	\$17,447
Halifax County	\$62,300	\$37,654	\$12,215
Isle of Wight County	\$79,694	\$43,147	\$16,308
Pulaski County	\$68,411	\$36,870	\$16,395
Wythe County	\$64,865	\$37,101	\$10,214
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$69,383</b>	<b>\$39,366</b>	<b>\$14,232</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

Among principals, MCPS has the second lowest average salary. For teachers, MCPS ranks in the middle of the distribution (though below the peer average). For teacher aides, MCPS ranks third (and above the peer average).



Exhibit 3-12 presents the data shown above with an emphasis on market differentiation.

**Exhibit 3-12**  
**Annual Position Salary Differentiation**  
**2004-05 School Year**

Type of Position	Average MCPS Salary	Average Peer Salary	Dollar Difference	Percentage Difference
Principal	\$62,372	\$70,552	(\$8,180)	(13.1%)
Teacher	\$38,244	\$39,553	(\$1,309)	(3.4%)
Teacher Aide	\$15,323	\$14,051	\$1,272	8.3%

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

Although Evergreen Solutions did not conduct a full-scale market analysis, compensation issues were a frequent topic of concern, especially for non-certificated personnel. A review of pay levels for transportation, food service, and clerical personnel reveal that pay levels are low. Subsequent to Evergreen Solutions review, MCPS issued an RFP for the compensation study; proposals are due in May 2007.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 3-18:

**Implement the market study which is being conducted.**

Due to the critical impact of compensation on recruitment and retention, the division needs to carefully review the results of the proposed compensation study and implement the study's recommendations.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is unknown at this time.

## 3.6 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

All employees should strive to meet their full work potential. Performance assessment is a critical component in helping employees meet their full potential. Regular assessment and feedback are necessary to help employees understand work expectations and map out a path toward continuous improvement. Employees that are not regularly evaluated often lack direction and without evaluation and feedback, confusion often arises over the expectations that managers have for their employees.

## FINDING

Annual performance evaluations are not conducted for all MCPS employees. In discussions with MCPS management, administrative staff frequently stated that performance evaluations were sporadic for non-teaching personnel. Consistent with MCPS policy, teachers receive full evaluations on a rotating two-year cycle, with new teachers evaluated on a more regular basis.



To assess the regularity of performance reviews, Evergreen Solutions reviewed the personnel files of five administrators, five principals, 20 teachers and 10 classified personnel. The results of this review are listed below:

- For administrators, no clear pattern was found for performance evaluation. No record was found of any evaluations performed in 2006. Most administrators were evaluated in 2004 and 2005, but the record of evaluations prior to 2004 is sporadic.
- Three of five principals have not received performance evaluations since 2003. The other two principals were reviewed in 2006, but prior to that had not been reviewed since 2002. From the review of personnel records, it is apparent that principals were regularly reviewed until approximately 2002, at which point regular reviews were discontinued.
- As noted above, teacher reviews appear to take place every two years, with more frequent reviews taking place for newly hired teachers.
- For classified (non-certificated) personnel, performance evaluation is sporadic. For two employees in maintenance, there is no record of any evaluations having been done. Only three of the 10 employees examined had been evaluated in 2006. Overall, no clear pattern of performance assessment was evident.

The results of the personnel records review support Evergreen survey data. When asked whether the division performs annual performance reviews, only 50 percent of administrators *agree* or *strongly agree*. The percentage rose to 72 percent for principals and teachers, though it is unclear if principals were referring to the evaluations they received themselves or the evaluations they performed on teachers and other site-based staff.

The importance of regular evaluation is supported by an additional survey item collected by Evergreen consultants. **Exhibit 3-13** shows the survey results related to performance evaluations for administrators, principals, and teachers.

**Exhibit 3-13**  
**Central Office Administrators, Principals, and Teachers**  
**Survey Responses for Personnel Evaluation**  
**in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major/ Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding	Needs Major/ Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding
Central Office Administrators	50.0%	31.9%	60.9%	18.5%
Principals	50.0%	50.0%	40.0%	34.3%
Teachers	20.3%	59.4%	52.9%	35.0%

*Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

The results show that teachers have a far more favorable attitude toward performance evaluation than do principals and administrators. Although the survey does not indicate why this result is found, of the three groups surveyed, only teachers receive performance reviews on a regular



basis. Less than one in three administrators describe the personnel evaluation process as *adequate* or *outstanding*.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-19:**

#### **Conduct performance reviews for all non-teaching MCPS employees on an annual basis.**

The superintendent or his designee should enforce annual completion of performance evaluations by all supervisory staff in the division. To ensure that evaluations are completed in a timely fashion for all employees, the superintendent should communicate to supervisors that timely and accurate completion of reviews for subordinate employees reflects on their capabilities as supervisors. To make this process more meaningful, MCPS may want to consider “timely completion of subordinate performance evaluations” as a performance measure for supervisors.

Data related to performance evaluations are great tools for gauging the overall success and performance of the division. This information is beneficial and informative to the School Board and the community, and can be used by MCPS senior managers to identify areas in which employees are performing above average and areas in which skills can be improved.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact for this recommendation.

## **FINDING**

When completed, performance evaluations are submitted on paper. No electronic database of performance evaluations is maintained.

Given the advances in Web-based technology, an online performance evaluation system can be implemented easily and at virtually no cost. The advantages of an online evaluation system are listed below:

- reduced administration time and cost;
- easily put in a searchable database format;
- ease of tracking missing evaluations;
- information easy to aggregate or disaggregate by employee type and location; and
- data easily searched for trends in evaluations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-20:**

#### **Implement an online performance evaluation system in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.**



An online performance evaluation system should be considered a priority. The advantages to moving to an online system are apparent, and time should be made to implement this priority.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact for this recommendation. The information technology staff, working with the assistant superintendent of human resources, should be able to implement this recommendation.

### **FINDING**

Performance evaluation forms for the superintendent, administrators and teachers are not fully aligned with the Virginia DOE's Proposed Guidelines developed in response to the Education and Accountability Quality Enhancement Act of 1999.

The Virginia General Assembly passed the Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act of 1999. Among the Act's key provisions are guidelines for school boards to include in their personnel evaluations for superintendents, administrators, and teachers.

Evaluation criteria for teachers include:

- Planning and Assessment
- Instruction
- Safety and Learning Environment
- Communication and Community Relations
- Professionalism

Evaluation criteria for superintendents and administrators include:

- Planning and Assessment
- Instructional Leadership
- Safety and Organizational Management for Learning
- Communication and Community Relations
- Professionalism

For each performance criteria, a number of performance indicators are provided. Although it is evident that the MCPS performance evaluations make use of the evaluation criteria and performance indicators in their evaluation instruments, some items do not translate well and, in some cases, are missing entirely. For example, one of the performance indicators (listed under professionalism) provided in the guidelines for administrators is:

*The administrator models professional, moral, and ethical standards as well as personal integrity in all interactions.*



While MCPS does have an indicator for demonstrating personal qualities of honesty, integrity, impartiality and respect, the DOE guidelines represent a higher standard of conduct. Other examples such as this exist for the superintendent, administrators, and teachers.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-21:**

**Reorganize the performance evaluation forms for the superintendent, administrators and teachers.**

The forms should be better aligned with the criteria and performance indicators supplied in the Proposed Guidelines developed in response to Education and Accountability Quality Enhancement Act of 1999.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact for this recommendation.

## **FINDING**

Supervisors and managers are not provided with adequate training in performance evaluation.

One reason that performance evaluations are conducted on an inconsistent basis may be that supervisors and managers are not provided with training in performing effective performance evaluations. It is unreasonable to expect managers to effectively perform performance evaluation without providing them training and instruction in this activity.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-22:**

**Implement mandatory training for MCPS supervisors and managers in performance evaluation.**

The superintendent should require MCPS supervisors and managers to participate in performance evaluation training. Training can be provided by a member of the human resources department. Training should include, at minimum, the following topics:

- an introduction to the purpose and value of performance evaluation;
- a review of the performance evaluation documents;
- instruction on how to score employee reviews;
- instruction on how to include performance goals in the evaluation process; and
- information on how to use the performance evaluation process as part of a continuing improvement process.



**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no cost associated with this recommendation (also see **Recommendation 3-4**).

**3.7 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

To comply with state and federal laws and to maintain a high-quality and effective workforce, a school division must ensure the appropriate licensing of professional staff and a well-planned professional development program tied to the goals and objectives of the division.

**FINDING**

At the beginning of the 2005-06 academic year, MCPS implemented an online professional development system known as the SEA system. This software allows MCPS employees to request professional development opportunities online and then evaluate the professional development sessions online. The SEA system has a centralized database that records the professional development opportunities. The database can be queried by school, functional area, or employee type.

Since the SEA system can track professional development by cost and user evaluation, it greatly facilitates overall professional development evaluation. This system also assists MCPS employees by providing user comments concerning past professional development activities, thus allowing potential users to see which professional development opportunities are most worthwhile.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for adopting an online process for recording and tracking professional development (SEA system).**

**FINDING**

Professional development offerings are primarily condensed into the summer months.

Although the summer is an excellent time for MCPS employees to engage in professional development (since activities will not take away from class time), the concentration of professional development opportunities in the weeks prior to the commencement of classes does not provide for reinforcement of lessons learned or allow for adequate opportunities for those who may have other commitments during this time period. Of the 40 items on the 2005-06 Staff Development Calendar, 30 took place between August 1 and September 1. The remaining 10 events were all conducted on March 10.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-23:**

**Spread the MCPS-sponsored professional development opportunities over the calendar year.**



By providing professional development opportunities over the calendar year, more MCPS employees should participate in these activities. Such action should also increase the number of staff that can lead sessions since it will allow greater flexibility in scheduling.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no cost associated with this recommendation.

**FINDING**

MCPS employees are not compensated for attending professional development opportunities during the academic year. Division personnel are provided a stipend to attend summer professional development opportunities. The stipend is \$50 for half-day sessions and \$100 for all-day sessions. However, stipends are not provided for attending professional development opportunities after school. This policy discourages attendance at professional development opportunities during the academic year.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-24:**

**Provide MCPS employees with a \$50 stipend for attending after-school professional development sessions during the academic year.**

The provision of a stipend will improve attendance at professional development sessions during the academic year.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no cost associated with this recommendation. Since employees are compensated for sessions during the summer, the overall cost to the division should not be considerably different. **Recommendation 3-23** suggests that these activities be spread during the school year.

**FINDING**

Administrators, principals, and teachers are mostly satisfied with the quality of professional development opportunities afforded to teachers and principals but are less satisfied than their counterparts in peer divisions. Overall satisfaction with professional development is higher in MCPS than in peer districts.

**Exhibits 3-14 and 3-15** show the survey responses collected by Evergreen Solutions related to the quality of professional development opportunities for teachers and school administrators and the comparison of these response rates for districts in Evergreen’s survey database.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-14**, central office administrators and principals are generally satisfied with the quality of professional development opportunities afforded to teachers. Teachers



themselves are about equally divided. For each respondent category, the percentage of respondents that are satisfied with teacher professional development opportunities is below the peer average.

**Exhibit 3-14**  
**Central Office Administrators, Principals and Teachers**  
**Survey Responses for Professional Development**  
**in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.				
Central Office Administrators	22.8%	54.5%	9.3%	79.6%
Principals	33.3%	55.6%	15.8%	63.2%
Teachers	39.5%	36.3%	23.1%	60.8%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

For the survey item related to professional development for school administrators (**Exhibit 3-15**), administrators and principals provide responses that are generally favorable. For the most part, teachers have no opinion. Interestingly, principals are generally more positive than are their peers in other districts.

**Exhibit 3-15**  
**Central Office Administrators, Principals and Teachers**  
**Survey Responses for Professional Development**  
**in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.				
Central Office Administrators	13.7%	63.7%	20.4%	75.9%
Principals	33.4%	55.5%	57.9%	31.6%
Teachers	13.6%	21.9%	9.2%	31.9%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 3-16** shows overall satisfaction percentages regarding professional development. Again, the responses were provided by MCPS administrators, principals, and teachers, and are juxtaposed to the response rates of their counterparts in peer districts.

Nearly three-fourths (72.3%) of all principals rate the division’s professional development opportunities as *adequate* or *outstanding*. By comparison, only 40 percent of principals in peer districts rate these activities the same. Although overall ratings for teachers (55.8%) and administrators (45.5%) are lower than for principals, the ratings in each category is approximately 20 percentage points above peer responses.



**Exhibit 3-16  
Central Office Administrators, Principals and Teachers  
Survey Responses Concerning Professional Development**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major/ Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding	Needs Major/ Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding
Central Office Administrators	36.4%	45.5%	64.1%	26.1%
Principals	27.8%	72.3%	57.1%	40.0%
Teachers	36.7%	55.8%	53.6%	36.7%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-25:**

**Develop a professional development needs assessment survey.**

This survey should be distributed to staff on an annual basis to determine professional development needs.

Many school divisions and districts across the country conduct needs assessments surveys of employees periodically to determine what professional development opportunities are needed. Such needs assessments typically are conducted of all employees, not just teachers and administrators. Creating a democratic professional development selection process elicits buy-in from the staff and helps them feel like a crucial part of the decision-making process. Final decisions about courses should still be based on financial constraints, and the ability of the courses to contribute to meeting MCPS goals; however, suggestions from employees should receive significant consideration.

**Exhibit 3-17** provides sample teacher questions from a professional development needs assessment survey. Such questions could be used at MCPS for teachers, and similar questions could be developed that are more specific to classified positions.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no cost associated with this recommendation.

**3.8 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

Employee relations typically fall under the domain of the human resources department. The human resources office must play a central role in informing employees of proper workforce behavior and enforcing the policies put in place by the School Board to regulate that behavior.



**Exhibit 3-17**  
**Sample Professional Development Needs Assessment Survey Questions**

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements? Please use the following rating scale to determine your answer:

- (1) Strongly Agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Disagree
- (4) Strongly Disagree

**1. Professional development in which I have participated in the last 5 years has:**

- a. Been linked to other program improvement activities at my school..... 1 2 3 4
- b. Been followed by needed follow-up sessions or additional training..... 1 2 3 4
- c. Been followed by school administration support in applying what I have learned..... 1 2 3 4

**2. Currently, I feel well prepared to do the following activities:**

- a. Implement new methods of teaching..... 1 2 3 4
- b. Implement state or district curriculum and performance standards..... 1 2 3 4
- c. Integrate educational technology in the subject I teach... 1 2 3 4
- d. Use student performance assessments (e.g. methods of testing, applying results to modify instruction)..... 1 2 3 4
- e. Maintain order and discipline in the classroom..... 1 2 3 4
- f. Address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds..... 1 2 3 4
- g. Address the needs of students with limited English proficiency..... 1 2 3 4
- h. Address the needs of students with disabilities..... 1 2 3 4
- i. Meet the overall demands of my teaching assignment... 1 2 3 4

**3. Professional development in the following areas would benefit me:**

- a. Content – Subject Specific..... 1 2 3 4
- b. Effective Teaching Practices..... 1 2 3 4
- c. Discipline Management..... 1 2 3 4
- d. Assessment..... 1 2 3 4
- e. Technology Training..... 1 2 3 4
- f. Personal Professional Development (time management, stress reduction, etc.)..... 1 2 3 4
- g. Working with Diverse Populations..... 1 2 3 4
- h. Group Dynamics – Working in Teams..... 1 2 3 4
- i. Curriculum Integration..... 1 2 3 4

**4. I feel the ideal time for professional development would be:**

- a. Early morning before school..... 1 2 3 4
- b. During the school day..... 1 2 3 4
- c. After school..... 1 2 3 4
- d. Evenings..... 1 2 3 4
- e. Saturday mornings..... 1 2 3 4
- f. Online – anytime, anywhere..... 1 2 3 4

Source: Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School, 2006.



## **FINDING**

MCPS does not have a comprehensive progressive employee discipline policy in place.

Although MCPS policies identify offenses that can result in disciplinary actions, no comprehensive policy is in place regulating the administration of discipline. Most disciplinary actions are currently addressed at the site in which they take place. The decentralized nature of employee discipline, together with the lack of a comprehensive progressive discipline plan, creates the potential for the inconsistent enforcement of division rules. The inconsistent enforcement of MCPS rules exposes the division to potential charges of discrimination and litigation.

Progressive discipline is a process for dealing with job-related behavior that does not meet expected and communicated performance or behavioral standards. Discipline involves using increasingly severe steps or measures when an employee fails to correct a problem after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so. The underlying principle of sound progressive discipline is to use the least severe action that is necessary to correct the undesirable situation. The severity of the action is increased only if the condition is not corrected.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 3-26:**

**Design and implement a progressive employee discipline program and instruct managers on the proper use of progressive discipline.**

Progressive discipline policies typically include four basic levels:

- verbal warning accompanied by counseling;
- written warning;
- suspension without pay; and
- termination.

By adopting and implementing a progressive discipline policy, MCPS does not lose the right to terminate an employee immediately for the violation of serious offenses such as property theft or physical abuse. Rather, it provides a formal policy to guide disciplinary action for less serious offenses, and provides a consistent and documented process to protect the division and employees from the arbitrary application of discipline.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no cost associated with this recommendation.



**FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools does not have a consistent drug and alcohol testing policy.

Although division policy prohibits the “unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance”, testing for the use of intoxicants is currently only specified for bus drivers, mechanics, and other personnel that transport students to school-related events.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 3-27:**

**Retain the services of an attorney, who specializes in employment law, and work with that attorney on drafting an expansion to the drug and alcohol testing policy.**

The School Board should revise the current testing policy applicable to covered employees to be consistent with the Board’s blanket policy on the use of alcohol. The Board has already established a policy of “zero tolerance” for employees when they are in a work setting. However, the conditions under which employees can be tested are legally murky. The division should retain the services of an attorney to draft a policy that covers drug testing for individuals who have exhibited behavior that is suspicious and consistent with drug and alcohol abuse. Due to the expense and questionable constitutionality of random drug testing, such a policy is not advisable.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact of this recommendation depends upon the legal fees involved. Legal expenses are estimated at \$5,000.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Secure Legal Services	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0



***CHAPTER 4:  
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT***



## *Chapter 4*

# ***FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT***

This chapter addresses the business, financial, and risk management functions of Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS) and includes five major sections:

- 4.1 Planning and Budgeting
- 4.2 Financial Management
- 4.3 Activity Funds
- 4.4 Asset Management
- 4.5 Risk Management

In the current environment of scarce fiscal resources, an effective system of accountability for business operations management is imperative for a school division to meet student needs and community expectations. A credible school division's accountability system includes budgets supporting the division's goals and objectives, comprehensive and transparent financial reporting, and dependable asset management. Such an accountability system helps to ensure confidence in, and support for, the division's use of public funds.

School boards, superintendents, business managers, encumbrance clerks, treasurers, auditors and other parties with responsibilities for school budgets and the administration of school division funds must be familiar with these policies and procedures. A division's annual audited financial statements must include all necessary financial information and related disclosures as prescribed.

The Evergreen Review Team conducted interviews and surveys, a public forum, and an analysis of the business and financial functions of Mecklenburg County Public Schools. Evergreen's review included an analysis of the division's policies and procedures, audited financial statements, budgets, and financial accounting and control systems. Federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations were used in evaluating the MCPS business operation.

For comparison purposes, Mecklenburg County Public Schools selected six Virginia school divisions for this efficiency review. School divisions chosen for the comparison in this review are: Dinwiddie, Gloucester, Halifax, Isle of Wight, Pulaski, and Wythe County School Divisions. Schools divisions are compared for benchmark indicators such as the local composite indices, revenue, and expenditures.

**Exhibit 4-1** shows MCPS and its peer division local composite indices for 2004-05 and for 2006 through 2008. The local composite index is an indicator of ability to pay. In 2004-05, MCPS ranked third highest among its peer divisions for local composite index and was higher than the peer division average of .3034. In 2006-08, the composite index of local ability to pay ranks MCPS at second highest among its peer divisions and above the division average of .3037. The local composite index is capped at .8000 by Commonwealth law to ensure that no locality is required to pay more than 80 percent of Standards of Quality costs.



**Exhibit 4-1**  
**Local Composite Index**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Peers School Divisions**  
**2004-05 School Year and 2006-08 School Years**

School Division	2004-05	2006-08
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>.3093</b>	<b>.3056</b>
Dinwiddie County	.2844	.2669
Gloucester County	.3132	.3323
Halifax County	.2380	.2380
Isle of Wight County	.3695	.3753
Pulaski County	.3074	.2995
Wythe County	.3017	.3086
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>.3034</b>	<b>.3037</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

**Exhibit 4-2** shows an analysis of MCPS and its peer divisions for the capacity to pay, the index effort for funding, and state funding effort rankings. Mecklenburg's fiscal capacity ranking of 83 is fourth highest among its peer divisions, and MCPS effort index of .9366 is the lowest among all its peers.

**Exhibit 4-2**  
**Local Effort Rankings**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Peers**  
**2004-05 School Year and 2006-08 School Year**

School Division	2004-05 Fiscal Capacity	2004-05 Capacity Ranking	2004-05 Effort Index	2004-05 State Ranking
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$68,940</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>.9366</b>	<b>127</b>
Dinwiddie County	63,506	99	1.9278	15
Gloucester County	69,959	81	1.7411	29
Halifax County	76,249	68	1.1888	88
Isle of Wight County	82,348	53	1.4565	53
Pulaski County	68,646	84	1.2379	77
Wythe County	67,358	88	1.1236	101
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$71,001</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>1.3732</b>	<b>70</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2007.

**Exhibit 4-3** shows an analysis of revenue for Mecklenburg County Public Schools in relation to the peer school divisions. The revenue is shown in percentages for each division for federal funds, state funds, local funds, and other funds. As can be seen, MCPS ranks next to last in percentage of revenue from local sources when compared to other peer divisions. MCPS ranks in the middle among its peers in federal funding and third from last in state funds. MCPS ranks second among its peers in percentage of revenue from other funds.



**Exhibit 4-3  
Revenues by Fund Source by Division  
2004-05 School Year**

School Division	Percent Federal Funds	Percent State Funds	Percent Local Funds	Percent Other Funds
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Dinwiddie County	3%	22%	15%	60%
Gloucester County	6%	50%	41%	3%
Halifax County	11%	64%	22%	3%
Isle of Wight County	6%	50%	42%	2%
Pulaski County	10%	56%	30%	4%
Wythe County	10%	57%	30%	3%
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>13%</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2007.

**Exhibit 4-4** shows the total disbursements and per pupil costs by division. As can be seen, MCPS total annual disbursements of \$45,216,466 is fourth from the highest out of six peer divisions, and less than the peer division average of \$49,738,028.

**Exhibit 4-4  
Total Disbursements by Division  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Peers  
2004-05 School Year**

School Division	Total Disbursements	Per Pupil Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$45,216,466</b>	<b>\$9,247.08</b>
Dinwiddie County	41,586,267	9,264.16
Gloucester County	62,780,196	10,231.22
Halifax County	54,806,376	9,328.74
Isle of Wight County	64,307,497	12,603.33
Pulaski County	42,767,390	8,675.28
Wythe County	36,702,006	8,786.10
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$49,738,028</b>	<b>\$9,733.70</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2007.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The Financial Management functions for Mecklenburg County Public Schools are performed primarily by the finance director. The superintendent, with finance director support, has primary responsibility for preparation of the division’s budget. The payroll clerk performs functions relative to fixed assets. The director of maintenance and procurement, the director of student support, the food service director, finance director and business manager share responsibilities for risk management. The MCPS Payroll Supervisor and Payroll Clerk perform the functions necessary to process disbursements for payroll, and the head accounts payable clerk processes accounts payable disbursements. The treasurer for Mecklenburg County collects revenues for



the division and has signatory authority for all disbursements. The Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors approves the school division budget and the allotments for school division operations. Mecklenburg County Government and MCPS have established a solid working relationship. Evergreen's review of interagency functions and processes indicates a cooperative, collaborative working relationship.

In addition to a positive interagency working relationship, the division is commended for wisely managing funds to support education. Recommendations in this chapter are intended to refine certain existing division processes and practices in finance, and to provide guidance for the establishment of others.

Primary recommendations are:

- establish a budgetary process that creates a budget correlated to the adopted goals and objectives of Mecklenburg County Public Schools;
- develop a budget preparation calendar, including administrative and legislative dates presented on a timeline and coordinated with County and Commonwealth required dates for action;
- implement user-friendly financial reports;
- develop and implement a comprehensive fixed asset management system;
- initiate a coordinated School Board/County procedure for cash flow and the allocation of interest earnings;
- create a comprehensive school activity funds manual;
- strengthen internal controls; and
- develop and implement a comprehensive business and finance operating procedures manual.

#### **4.1 PLANNING AND BUDGETING**

An organization's financial planning and monitoring, as well as its budget development and management, establish the foundation for all financial management operations. Effective budget processes typically include input from all schools and departments; appropriate guidance from administrators; desired goals, objectives and outcomes from strategic planning processes; and detailed management and reporting functions throughout the budget cycle.

The budget process is generally comprised of four major phases that include planning, preparation, adoption and evaluation. These phases are described as follows:



- **Planning** - defines the goals and objectives of the school division and develops programs to attain those goals and objectives.
- **Preparation** – includes the allocating resources to support the programs developed to achieve the established goals and objectives.
- **Adoption of the Budget** - made by School Board approval after a public hearing and public opportunity for comment.
- **Evaluation of the Budget** - is performed periodically to monitor the receipt of revenue and expenditure of funds, and to ascertain the extent to which the division is meeting its goals and objectives.

## FINDING

The MCPS budget does not adequately correlate between the division's budget and the goals and objectives of the School Board and superintendent. The 2005-06 MCPS budget makes no reference to division goals outlined in the comprehensive plan, and does not correlate dollars allocated in the budget to annual priorities.

The MCPS School Board's approved annual budget is presented to the county manager for submission to the Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors. The proposed budget presented to the County includes:

- a categorical budget by fund and expenditure for functional disbursement;
- the recapitulation of current year expenditure budgets by category with current year requested changes;
- the recapitulation of disbursements by category and name with prior year budget allocations and the Board-approved requested budget for each category by function, with the budget change amount and percentage change from prior year, and an explanation in comments of the incremental changes from one year to the next.

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) has international standards for meritorious budgeting. This association recommends a clear coordination and linkage between the goals and objectives from the division's strategic plan and the allocation of resources.

As one of the goals in the division's comprehensive plan, the director of finance has recently started a draft proposed comprehensive budget document. This draft document is considered a work in progress with the objective of completion by June 30, 2007. The proposed components of the draft budget document include:

- Funding Overview: General
- Mecklenburg County School Funding: Local
- Mecklenburg County School Funding: State
- Selected Comparisons to Region VIII Schools
- Detailed Review of State Funding/ADM (average daily membership) Trends



- Division Benefits
- Categorical Budget Classifications
- Budget Description/Details by Program
- Comparative Budget Summary by Program
- Review of Non-Payroll Expenditures
- Review of Annual School Report/Required Local Effort
- Review of Miscellaneous Revenues
- Overview of Staffing Levels
- Overviews of Transportation, Maintenance, Federal Programs, and Food Service

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-1:

**Establish a budgetary process that creates a budget correlated to the adopted goals and objectives of the MCPS School Board and superintendent.**

The division is working on a more detailed all-encompassing budget manual for the coming year. Providing a resource allocation system that budgets for the goals of the division helps to ensure that the priorities outlined in a division's strategic plan are appropriately funded. A budget document clearly reflective of the division's plan and priorities elicits support essential for a proper implementation of the plan.

**Exhibit 4-5** provides an example of the linkage between goals and objectives. This exhibit shows a sample budget summary correlated to a division's strategic plan goals and objectives. Detailed information explaining the summary budget amounts is presented in supporting schedules to document the correlation between a division's strategic plan and the division's budget.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

The MCPS budgetary process is not well documented with a general timeline for completion. Board Policy DB entitled Annual Budget, in compliance with the laws of Virginia, establishes the budgetary process as follows:

*The Superintendent or his/her designee shall prepare a budget calendar identifying all deadlines for the annual budgetary process. The calendar shall include a work session for reviewing the budget and at least one public hearing on the budget. Notice of the time and place for the public hearing must be published at least ten days in advance, in a newspaper having general circulation within the school division.*



**Exhibit 4-5**  
**Sample Budget Summary**  
**Correlated to Division Plan Goals and Objectives**  
**Annual Budget**

Goal	Plan Priority	Budget Amount
Goals 4 & 6	Salary and Benefits increases	\$xx.
Goal 2	3 New Teachers	\$xx.
Goal 2	2 Reading Coaches	\$xx.
Goal 6	2 Nurses	\$xx.
Goal 2	Character Training	\$xx.
Goal 2	Extended School Day Programs	\$xx.
Goal 3	Teacher Training	\$xx.
Goals 7 & 8	8 New Computers	\$xx.
Goals 1 & 2	Summer School	\$xx.
Goal 1: Students arrive at school ready to learn. Goal 2: All students are literate. Goal 3: Curriculum is world class. Goal 4: All employees are highly qualified. Goal 5: Communications and collaborations are strong and effective. Goal 6: The culture is healthy. Goal 7: The division continues to invest in technology. Goal 8: The division's fiscal management is world-class.		

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.

Documents presented to the Evergreen Review Team and discussions with staff indicate that input from principals and department heads is requested by memorandum and gathered at administrative meetings. The division has not consistently sought input on budget development requests from senior-level staff committees or from local parent advisory committees. However, opportunities for public budget discussions are available at public School Board meetings.

MCPS offers several opportunities for public input during the budgetary process. The division conducts a public hearing and holds a School Board budget work session. Division documents identify the budget adoption process as follows:

- the Governor's version of the state education budget is put on DOE Web site;
- various administrative scenarios compared to current budget are run;
- the Board is given an indication of impact;
- a public input meeting is planned;
- the Senate's version of the State Education Budget is put on DOE Web site;
- various administrative scenarios are run and compared to current budget and Governor's proposal;
- the Board is given an indication of impact;
- the House version of the State Education Budget is put on DOE Web site;



- various administrative scenarios are compared to current budget/Governor's proposal/House proposal;
- the Board is given an indication of impact;
- public hearings are held;
- School Board work sessions are held;
- The superintendent's budget proposal is prepared;
- the comprise version of the State Education Budget is put on DOE Web site;
- School Board work sessions are held;
- the School Board adopts a budget;
- the budget review occurs with County Board of Supervisors; and
- the Board of Supervisors approves the school budget with public input.

In addition, citizens are informed throughout the budgetary process by:

- newspaper and School Board publications;
- school division public hearings;
- Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors meetings; and
- Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors public hearings.

**Exhibit 4-6** shows the survey results for MCPS administrators and teachers compared to administrators and teachers in Evergreen's survey database. As can be seen, MCPS teachers *agree* 43.8 percent compared to 33.2 percent of comparison teachers that the school division's budgeting operations needs *major* or *some improvement*. MCPS administrators were somewhat split with 72.3 percent of school administrators, compared to comparison school administrators at 31.4 percent, indicating that the division's budgeting operations *needs major* or *some improvement*. MCPS central administrators *agree* 54.6 percent to 63.0 percent for comparison central administrators that the school division's budgeting operation needs *some* or *major improvement*. Although the central administrators ranked the school division budgeting operations slightly better than its peers, 54.6 percent indicated needs for *major* or *some improvement*.

A well-communicated, inclusionary budgetary process is essential to establish confidence and support for the school division. **Exhibit 4-7** shows a sample budget development calendar which includes examples of the types of meetings MCPS may want to consider. A comprehensive timeline with pertinent administrative dates communicates an open and transparent budgeting process with employees and the community.



**Exhibit 4-6**  
**Teachers and Administrators Survey Results on Budgeting in**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database**

Survey Statement: Indicate your opinion of school division budgeting operations.	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Teachers	43.8%	24.7%	33.2%	44.2%
Central Office Administrators	54.6%	31.8%	63.0%	31.5%
School Administrators	72.3%	22.2%	31.4%	64.3%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 4-7**  
**Sample Budget Development Timeline**  
**July 1 through June 30**

October x	Introduction of budget process to principals and administrative staff
October x	Budget calendar to School Board to establish public hearing date for budget
October x	Administrative budget meeting to establish overall budget priorities
October x	Schools and departments budgets to superintendent
November x	Public reminder for public hearing on budget
November x	Advertise for public hearing
December x	Advertise for public hearing
December x	Annual School Board legislative work session
December	Administrative budget committee meeting
December x	Public hearing on proposed budget
January x	School Board work session
January x	Presentation of projected state revenues based on the Governor's proposed budget
February x	School Board work session
March x	School Board work session (if needed)
March	Administrative budget committee meeting
March x	School Board approval of budget
March x	Joint budget work session with City
April x	Approval of budget resolution by City Council
May x	School Board certification of final budget April 25-May 4
May x	Issuance of personnel contracts

Source: Created by Evergreen, 2007.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-2:

#### Develop and implement a detailed budget preparation calendar.

The participation of school and community members in the budget process helps to create division support and provides valuable input. Preparation and use of a budget calendar and timeline are critical to help communicate to staff and to the community the important activities of the budgeting process. The communication of the budget timeline creates a sense of openness and transparency to the process. The posting of the timeline and the budget documents on the Web site also helps facilitate better communication.



## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

The school and departmental employees within Mecklenburg County Public Schools are only minimally included in the budgetary process. The superintendent discusses certain budget matters with principals and department heads at administrative meetings, the finance director requests information by memorandum, and employees have opportunities for input at public meetings. Collaboration on budgetary issues among principals and department heads is not consistent or comprehensive. Clearly, there is room for improvement in the process of communications regarding budget priorities, initiatives, and potential budgetary impact of programmatic changes.

**Exhibit 4-8** shows survey results which indicate that MCPS teachers *agree* less strongly than their peers that site-based budgeting is used effectively to involve principals and teachers, and *disagree* substantially more than their peers that budgeting is used effectively to involve principals and teachers. Administrators are split as to whether site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers. Central administrators more *strongly disagree* than their peers that budgeting is used effectively. School administrators, however, more *strongly agree* that site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers. Survey findings are not consistent in that teachers and central administrators more *strongly disagree* with their peers that site-based budgeting is used effectively while school administrators more *strongly agree*. Such inconsistency indicates a need for more effective communication and involvement among all stakeholders.

**Exhibit 4-8**  
**Survey Results on Site-Based Budgeting in**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database**

Survey Statement: Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Comparison Strongly Agree/Agree	Comparison Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Teachers	42.6%	35.1%	44.5%	27.0%
Central Office Administrators	45.5%	22.8%	50.7%	17.8%
School Administrators	77.8%	5.6%	70.3%	13.5%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-3:

**Ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the budgetary process.**



The collection of employee budgetary priority information will help ensure that principals, faculty, and department heads within Mecklenburg County Public Schools are active participants in the process. Participation in the process helps to create a supportive environment for the division.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

**Exhibit 4-9** shows an analysis of instructional expenditures for MCPS and peer divisions. As the exhibit shows, MCPS spends fourth among its peers for per pupil for instructional disbursements. MCPS spends \$5,998 per pupil on instructional disbursements compared to the peer school division average of \$5,982.

**Exhibit 4-9**  
**Instructional Disbursements by Division**  
**2004-05 School Year**

School Division	Instruction	Per Pupil Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$29,330,940</b>	<b>\$5,998.38</b>
Dinwiddie County	26,124,497	5,819.74
Gloucester County	36,948,983	6,021.54
Halifax County	37,476,832	6,379.04
Isle of Wight County	31,519,873	6,177.44
Pulaski County	27,357,676	5,549.45
Wythe County	24,754,083	5,925.89
<b>School Division Average</b>	<b>\$30,501,841</b>	<b>\$5,981.64</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2007.

MCPS spends less than its peer division average on instructional disbursements and ranks fourth among its six peer divisions. Division decisions on spending for instructional and administrative disbursements indicate management's philosophy on spending priorities. Analysis of division expenditures, Evergreen survey results and discussions with staff indicate that funds are used primarily for instructional purposes. While MCPS spending is not the best in relation to its peers, the division ranks slightly higher than the average of its peers. Such spending patterns are commendable and reflect an emphasis on students. As indicated by the spread in spending from the best of its peers to MCPS' higher than average instructional spending, the division does, however, have room to move in a more positive direction in instructional spending.

**Exhibit 4-10** shows administrative expenditures for MCPS and the peer divisions. As the exhibit shows, MCPS spends fifth of six peer divisions per pupil for administrative disbursements. MCPS spends \$186 per pupil on administrative disbursements which is third best of all peers, with peer school division average of \$269.



**Exhibit 4-10  
Administrative Disbursements by Division  
2004-05 School Year**

School Division	Administration	Per Pupil Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$908,351</b>	<b>\$185.76</b>
Dinwiddie County	741,457	165.17
Gloucester County	1,307,228	213.04
Halifax County	1,911,087	257.21
Isle of Wight County	1,799,603	352.70
Pulaski County	2,885,132	585.24
Wythe County	516,501	123.65
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$1,438,480</b>	<b>268.97</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2007.

Evergreen survey results indicate that teachers and school administrators agree more strongly than their peers that the school division manages funds wisely to support education. Central administrators agree 72.7 percent to 82.5 percent for their peers that funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division; however, central administrators less strongly disagree with their peers that funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division. **Exhibit 4-11** shows survey responses which indicate substantial agreement that funds are spent to support education.

**Exhibit 4-11  
Evergreen Survey Results on Use of Division Funds in  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement: Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division.	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Comparison Strongly Agree/Agree	Comparison Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Teachers	43.4%	21.9%	40.0%	26.1%
School Administrators	77.8%	0.0%	61.4%	15.7%
Central Office Administrators	72.7%	4.6%	82.5%	7.9%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for wisely managing funds to support education in the school division.**

Disbursements show that MCPS ranks slightly above its peer average in per pupil instructional expenditures. MCPS spending above average of its peer divisions on instruction and spending fifth of its six peers on division administration indicate strong support for education. Survey results indicate substantial agreement that funds are spent wisely to support education.



## **4.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Effective financial management ensures that a school division properly accounts for all revenue from federal, state, and local sources; properly identifies and records expenditure transactions, and maintains an accurate and up-to-date statement of financial position. Proper, accurate, and timely financial information is crucial to the decision-making process necessary for the overall successful operation of a school division.

The MCPS Financial Management Section includes several aspects of financial management and accountability. The review in this section included an analysis of financial accounting and reporting, a review of activity funds, and a review of the division payroll function. The MCPS financial management system comprises the reporting and accountability functions for all funds, including the activity funds accounting system. Food service is accounted for independently of the other division funds. Financial and accounting records are maintained centrally and at the schools with disbursements controlled by purchase orders and specific authorization. Activity fund accounting reports are compiled monthly and audited annually.

### **FINDING**

Financial management and accountability in Mecklenburg County Public Schools is performed primarily by the director of finance in the central office. In addition to financial management, the finance department staff is responsible for other financial aspects such as the division budgets, disbursements, and activity funds. The financial management functions in Mecklenburg County Public Schools are supervised by the director of finance with disbursements approved and processed at the Mecklenburg County Office.

**Exhibit 4-12** shows the current organizational structure of the MCPS Finance Department.

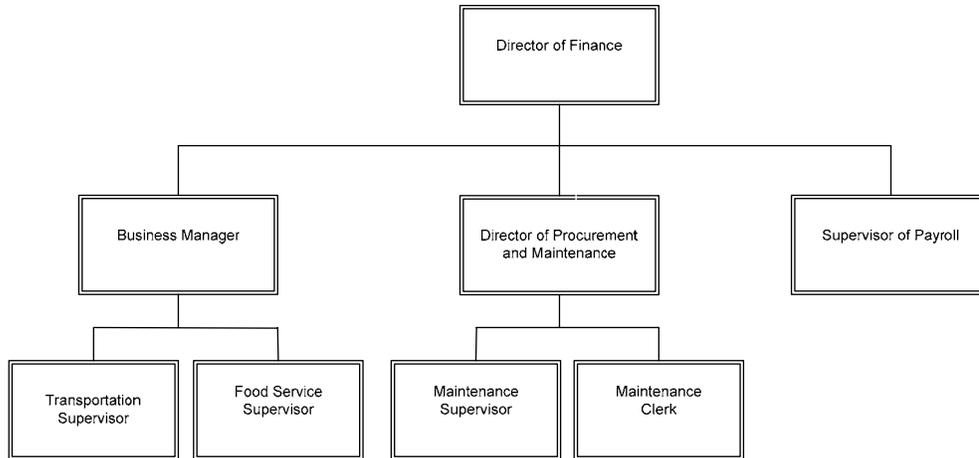
MCPS lacks a current comprehensive procedures manual that clearly sets forth the work flow of business and financial transactions. A lack of clearly defined, communicated, and implemented operating procedures can lead to uncertainty and inconsistency in the processing of financial transactions. The MCPS Finance Department provides certain written procedures in memo form, but a comprehensive operating manual has not been compiled. Most employees express a clear understanding regarding intended standard operations procedures for their respective areas but lack sufficient knowledge of the interrelationships of their functions within the division. The MCPS Board Policy Manual includes certain policies for business and financial functions.

Examples of business and financial policies in the MCPS Policy Manual are:

- Management of Funds
- Annual Budget
- Custody and Disbursement of School funds
- Financial Accounting and Reporting
- Purchasing
- Vendor/Payroll Deductions
- Payroll
- Expense Reimbursements



**Exhibit 4-12**  
**MCPS Finance Department**  
**Organizational Chart**  
**2006-07 School Year**



Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2007.

Procedures set forth, in more detail, the work flow and interrelationships of business and financial functions and provide guidance to employees to help ensure a more consistent application of Board policies. A consistent application of Board policies is essential for smooth and equitable division operations. Written documentation of procedures provides a framework in which interdepartmental and intergovernmental cooperation can thrive.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-4:

**Develop and implement a comprehensive procedures manual for the business and financial transactions within Mecklenburg County Public Schools.**

Implementing written procedures that document the financial accounting processes should provide MCPS employees with guidance to consistently apply Board policies. Compiling the division's current procedures with newly developed procedures should enhance the division's overall accountability structure and help eliminate any uncertainty about division expectations.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

Monthly financial reports are not user friendly nor sufficiently detailed to adequately inform users of financial information. The financial reports provided to the Board and superintendent do not adequately reflect the financial position of the district. The monthly reports show the revenues and expenditures to date and the percentage of the budget expended to date. The



monthly reports do not show a statement of financial position or comparison to the previous year's financial position. Financial information in the reports is not presented in a format easily understood by non-financial decision makers. One main objective of such reports is to provide timely, sufficient information for management decisions.

Such detailed information is critical for the School Board and superintendent to make timely, prudent spending decisions. **Exhibit 4-13** shows Evergreen's survey results which indicate that the district financial management needs improvement.

**Exhibit 4-13**  
**Teachers and Administrators Survey Results on Financial Management**  
**in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and School Divisions in Evergreen's Survey**  
**Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
<b>The division's financial reports are easy to understand and read</b>				
Teachers	21.5%	16.4%	25.4%	16.7%
Central Office Administrators	36.4%	18.2%	41.8%	18.3%
School Administrators	38.9%	22.3%	47.4%	15.8%
<b>Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.</b>				
Teachers	28.7%	7.2%	38.7%	4.7%
Central Office Administrators	50.0%	9.1%	83.3%	1.9%
School Administrators	44.4%	22.2%	73.7%	5.3%
<b>Financial Reports are made available to community members when asked.</b>				
Teachers	24.7%	4.0%	34.4%	3.0%
Central Office Administrators	54.6%	0.0%	70.4%	1.9%
School Administrators	33.4%	0.0%	68.4%	0.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-5:

**Develop and provide to the superintendent and MCPS School Board sufficiently detailed monthly reports that clearly set forth the financial position of the district.**

The monthly financial reports are critical for prudent financial management of the school division. Monthly financial reports should provide budget to actual comparisons for revenue, expenditures, and fund balances. The timely reporting of variances allows for investigation and actions to maintain the integrity of the division's financial position. The monthly financial report should be discussed in a public School Board meeting and made available to division principals,



staff and the community. The finance director has been working to improve the reporting capacity of the division. The finance director should work with the finance committee to continue to develop more user-friendly reporting.

## FINDING

The MCPS receives no interest earnings from the Mecklenburg County. Discussions with division staff and a review of division records indicate no interest earnings are allocated for funds budgeted. MCPS Finance Department staff do not prepare a cash flow statement nor provide the County with an estimate of expected monthly expenditures. Discussions with division staff indicate that the County allocates an amount of funding regardless of interest earnings. The County Board of Supervisors determines the amount of funds annually budgeted for the division and the rate of interest earned, positive or negative, is the County's issue.

Prudent management of taxpayers' money is the responsibility of the school division. Preparation of a statement of cash flows for planning purposes for Mecklenburg County and MCPS is a valuable tool for managing taxpayer resources. Considering the matching principle, which is based on a cause and effect relationship, and laws of the Commonwealth, other funds such as the food service and textbook funds earn interest. It is clear that the Commonwealth vests the responsibility for investments with the County.

**Exhibit 4-14** shows the investment practices of the county treasurer as set forth in the annual financial report. MCPS works with the county treasurer whose responsibility it is to invest division funds at the highest rate of return possible, while safeguarding division assets by ensuring safety and liquidity of funds. The treasurer's investment decisions are governed by Commonwealth statutes which set forth permissible investments. The treasurer takes into consideration user cash flow needs and balance with the goals of maximizing the rate of return on funds while protecting taxpayer resources.

The MCPS Finance Department is responsible for prudent management and accountability of public resources provided for educational services. Sufficient supporting documentation is important for the division to properly report revenues and disbursements.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-6:

**Develop and implement a coordinated School Board/County Board of Supervisors policy for cash flow and the allocation of interest earnings.**

Having a coordinated procedure between the County and the School Board regarding cash flow and allocation of interest earnings should allow the MCPS Finance Department to more adequately allocate and document revenues and disbursements. Providing the County with an expected cash flow will create a management tool to facilitate the County's investment strategies. The County should be made aware of this opportunity for further discussion between the MCPS Finance Department and the County.



**Exhibit 4-14  
Mecklenburg County Investment Practices  
Comprehensive Annual Financial Report  
June 30, 2006**

<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>
Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, money market funds, certificates of deposit, and investments with maturities of three months or less. The County maintains a pool of cash and investments in which each fund participates on a dollar equivalent and daily transaction basis. Interest is distributed monthly based on average monthly balances. The majority of funds in the County’s accounts are invested at all times.
<b>Deposits</b>
All cash of the County and its Component Units is maintained in accounts collateralized in accordance with the Virginia Security for Public Deposits Act, Section 2.2-4400 et seq. of the Code of Virginia or covered by federal depository insurance.
<b>Investments</b>
Statutes authorize local governments and other public bodies to invest in obligations of the United States or agencies thereof, obligations of the Commonwealth of Virginia or political subdivisions thereof, obligations of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, “prime quality” commercial paper and certain corporate notes, banker’s acceptances, repurchase agreements, and the State Treasurer’s Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). The County of Mecklenburg, Virginia only invests in certificates of Deposit on local banks. Therefore, there is no custodial risk, credit risk of debt securities, concentration of credit risk, or foreign currency risk. The only risk of interest rates is that associated with short-term rates of the local banks which are generally invested in Certificates of Deposit held less than year.

*Source: County of Mecklenburg Annual Financial Report, November 2007.*

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

MCPS lacks sufficient internal control over certain aspects of its business and financial operations. The division issues approximately 6,000 non-payroll checks, 15,000 payroll checks, and 400 purchase orders annually. An unclear accountability system for financial transactions can create ambiguity for establishing responsibility for potential errors or irregularities. A lack of internal control increases the potential for the occurrence of errors or irregularities.

Instances of a lack of internal control include:

- Purchasing – Purchases are sometimes received by employees making the purchase with the same employee recording the transaction and processing payments.
- Student Activity Funds – The same employee has the responsibility for receipting, recording, and depositing funds.
- Accounts Payable –The same employee has access to checks, access to vendor files, and accounting records.



- Payroll – The same employee adds new employees, records payroll transactions, and processes checks.
- Transportation – Inventories are not properly maintained and accounting records do not accurately reflect the cost of operations.

The MCPS Business Office staff is responsible for providing competent, reliable financial information for decision making and division accountability. A proper segregation of duties is essential to establish checks and balances, and responsibility for specific transactions. The limited number of division personnel makes the establishment of internal control measures difficult. MCPS has, however, established compensating controls to help mitigate the lack of segregation of duties by having the MCPS School Board and County Board of Supervisors review the accounts payable and payroll disbursements. These controls are positive steps, but a more adequate accountability system can be achieved with a stronger segregation of duties.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 4-7:**

#### **Strengthen internal controls over MCPS assets.**

Strengthening internal controls over division assets can be achieved by improving the segregation of duties. For example, the same person should not have access to accounting records and checks, and purchases should not be returned to the same employee with control of the transaction.

The division should continue with improvements such as their movement toward a more interactive human resource department.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

Disbursements for purchasing card transactions are not properly documented. A review of accounts payable disbursement records indicate a lack of sufficient detail to determine the purpose of the expenditure. Expenditures for meals purchased with the Platinum Plus MasterCard were not always documented adequately. Pertinent information, such as the names of the meal participants, the purpose of the expenditure, and an itemized transaction receipt were not always apparent.

The Report of Audit of School Activity Funds Year Ended June 30, 2005 also expresses concerns regarding credit card documentation. The audit finding states:



*Expenses paid with credit cards should have all invoices attached to the credit card statement. There were some credit card statements paid with no detail as to what was purchased, although the majority of them did have detailed documentation.*

Wachovia Platinum Plus for Business Purchasing Card is provided for seven senior managers with credit limits. In addition, certain stores have provided credit limits for MCPS.

All MCPS purchasing cards, not individually assigned, are kept in a locked safe in the business office. Cards are individually checked out to users as needed. The business office accounts payable personnel maintain documentation of the purchasing card use, including the date, person checking out the card, and the type of card. All cards have purchasing limits; however, specific purchasing card guidelines were not available. School Board policies DLC entitled, *Travel Expense Reimbursements*, and DLC-R entitled, *Reimbursement for Professional Conference Attendance*, refer to documentation relative to expenditures as follows:

#### **Policy DLC – Travel Expense Reimbursement**

- Request for reimbursement from School Board funds will be honored only for trips approved in advance by the superintendent or his/her designated representative and for which a statement of travel, *with supporting documents*, is submitted at the conclusion of the trip. (This does not specifically relate to purchasing card expenditures, but sets the standard of “supporting documents” for expenditures.)

#### **Policy DLC-R – Reimbursement for Professional Conference Attendance**

- (3) Meals for conference attendance per day: \$36.00 (Maximum including tax and tip). Receipts are required for reimbursement. Alcoholic beverages are disallowed expenses.
- (6) Receipts must be furnished for meals, registration fee and lodging. All reimbursements items must be recorded on the travel and expense statements. (These do not specifically relate to purchasing card expenditures but set the standard for expenditure limits and receipt requirements.)

**Exhibit 4-15** shows examples of purchasing card payments made without proper documentation of the division purpose and/or an itemized receipt showing the purchases which are allowed. An itemized receipt (Column 5) is important to document what was actually purchased, rather than just a total of the purchase. The names of participants are important to document the public purpose of the expenditure (Column 6).

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

##### **Recommendation 4-8:**

**Amend School Board policies and develop procedures that strengthen the accountability for purchasing card transactions.**



**Exhibit 4-15**  
**Example Purchasing Card Disbursements**  
**2005-06 School Year**

Date	Vendor	Amount	Purpose	Itemized Receipt	Participants
May 14, 2006	Wal-Mart Supercenter	\$299.04	Employee Door Prizes	Yes	No
May 26, 2006	Virginia State Parks	47.25	Employee Party Park Rental	Yes	No
August 21, 2006	Brian's Steak House	1,082.85	New Teachers	No	No
August 22, 2006	Brian's Steak House	442.98	New Teachers	No	No
August 23, 2006	Brian's Steak House	26.78	New Teachers	No	No
August 23, 2006	Brian's Steak House	398.62	New Teachers	No	No
August 30, 2006	Brian's Steak House	398.62	Mentor Training	No	No
August 30, 2006	Brian's Steak House	398.62	Mentor Training	No	No
August 30, 2006	Brian's Steak House	306.20	Mentor Training	No	No
October 9, 2006	Brian's Steak House	267.47	Alternative Education	No	No
October 23, 2006	Texas Steakhouse & Saloon	17.75	Exceptional Education	No	No
November 6, 2006	Pancho Villa	25.37	Safe and Drug Free	No	No
November 9, 2006	Rose's Pizza	34.60	Exceptional Education	No	No
November 13, 2006	Outback Steakhouse	27.78	Guidance	No	No
November 18, 2006	Subway	33.57	Exceptional Education	No	No
November 2, 2006	Applebee's Bar and Grill	26.93	NAGC	No	Yes
November 16, 2006	Brian's Steak House	408.13	Social Studies Training	No	No
November 21, 2006	Wilson Brother's BBQ	33.40	Not Recorded	No	No
December 6, 2006	Original Mexican Restaurant	36.75	ERCM Grant	Yes	No
December 6, 2006	Landry's Seafood House	55.11	ERCM Grant	Yes	No
December 8, 2006	Fredericksburg Brewing Co	27.82	ERCM Grant	Yes	No
December 12, 2006	Food Lion	73.93	ERCM Committee Meeting	Yes	No
November 20, 2006	Rose's Pizza	93.06	Board's Dinner	No	No
November 21, 2006	Dollar General Market	24.78	Snacks for Staff Development	Yes	No
December 13, 2006	Dollar General Store	11.34	Food for Special Ed Advisory	Yes	No
December 14, 2006	Rose's Pizza	86.76	Food for Staff Development	Yes	No
December 14, 2006	Dollar General Store	20.73	Drinks for Staff Development	Yes	No

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Disbursements Records, compiled 2007.

Strengthening policies and procedures governing accountability over purchasing card transactions should improve control over division assets and help ensure compliance with Board policy. For example, written procedures should be established that clearly set forth authorized meal expenditures, such as the amounts, limits on alcohol, the purpose of the event, and eligible participants. Enhanced Board policies and procedures will provide guidance and support MCPS Finance Department efforts towards accountability.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **4.3 ACTIVITY FUNDS**

Student activity funds are comprised primarily of funds received from extracurricular school activities, such as athletic events, entertainment, clubs and fundraisers as well as school allotments. Activity funds include such accounts as the art club, athletics, science club, textbook rental, and track. School divisions are responsible to account for student activity funds in



accordance with regulations established by the Virginia State Board of Education. Principals are responsible for managing the student activity funds and providing a system of accountability to safeguard assets.

## FINDING

MCPS does not have a comprehensive school activity fund manual. The division provides general guidance for school activity funds through Board policies. Board Policy DI, entitled *Financial Accounting and Reporting* references school-level accounting. Board DI states: “Each school is required to maintain an accurate, up-to-date accounting system of all money collected and disbursed by the school. These funds will be deposited in accounts in the name of the school”.

School Board Policy DI further states:

*A record of all receipts and disbursements will be maintained in accordance with the Principal’s Manual of Accounting Procedures for Student Activity Funds as promulgated by the Superintendent and in accordance with regulations issued by the State Board of Education.*

School Board policies are established at the governance level and do not provide adequate operating procedures. Operating procedures help ensure consistent application of school policy and provide a framework in which schools function. A comprehensive school activity fund manual with appropriate training provides the schools with a valuable tool in implementation the Board’s policies.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-9:

#### **Develop and implement a comprehensive school activity funds manual.**

Having an up-to-date school activity funds manual will document the intent of the Board and provide guidance for school activity funds. The school activity funds manual should include procedures for all funds accounted for at the school level. The division should continue with improvements, such as the summary which indicates the purpose of the fund, the expected activity and source of funding, and the individual responsible for the fund.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

Independent audits of the MCPS school activity accounts show substantially clean audits for the last several years. Each year, MCPS contracts with an independent external auditor to perform audits of the division’s school activity funds. The Public School Activity Funds Report on Audit of School Activity Funds has reported only minor, if any, audit findings since 2003.



As **Exhibit 4-16** shows, more than \$1.1 million is accounted for in the school activity accounts each year. Receipts and disbursements of such magnitude must be properly safeguarded with a strong accountability system.

**Exhibit 4-16**  
**Summary of Cash Receipts and Disbursements**  
**2002-03 Through 2005-06 Fiscal Years**

Year Ended June 30th	Beginning Balances	Receipts	Disbursements	Ending Balances
2006	\$587,464.51	\$1,158,917.10	\$1,161,898.70	\$584,482.91
2005	541,035.13	1,166,840.21	1,120,410.83	587,464.51
2004	529,380.53*	1,209,344.28	1,197,689.68	541,035.13
2003	\$471,207.74	\$1,122,440.20	\$1,064,302.41	\$529,345.53*

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from MCPS Activity Funds Audits, November 2007.

\*Audited balances flow from year to year. Evergreen presented data in accordance with MCPS audited financial statements.

**Exhibit 4-17** shows fiscal year 2006 School Activities Funds by school for MCPS.

**Exhibit 4-17**  
**School Activity Funds**  
**Summary of Cash Receipts and Disbursements**  
**Year Ended June 30, 2006**

School	July 1, 2005 Balances	Receipts	Disbursements	June 30, 2006 Balances
Bluestone Middle	\$26,405.34	\$79,885.42	\$86,935.49	\$19,355.27
Bluestone High	181,423.92	283,003.15	282,473.70	181,953.37
Bluestone High Alternative Education	17,712.91	4,788.00	7,603.14	14,897.77
Boydton Elementary	27,893.30	47,879.96	51,454.43	24,318.83
Buckhorn Elementary	15,195.56	26,295.03	29,023.71	12,466.88
Chase City Elementary	52,672.10	76,076.95	71,977.40	56,771.65
Clarksville Elementary	32,615.65	57,204.41	48,985.04	40,835.02
LaCrosse Elementary	24,268.83	31,155.47	32,762.51	22,661.79
Park View Middle	32,943.16	153,743.54	152,266.40	34,420.30
Park View High	149,788.74	346,807.86	335,769.59	160,827.01
South Hill Elementary	7,439.36	27,628.74	29,463.23	5,604.87
South Hill Primary	19,105.64	24,448.57	33,184.06	10,370.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$587,464.51</b>	<b>\$1,158,917.10</b>	<b>\$1,161,898.70</b>	<b>\$584,482.91</b>

Source: Report on Audit of School Activity Funds, Year Ended June 30, 2006.

Except for a couple of audit findings, the school activity funds audits have been substantially clean. One finding, in the June 30, 2006 audit, on deposits not being made timely can be easily corrected. The audit report indicates that school personnel assured the auditor corrective action would be taken. Another finding, in the June 30, 2005 audit, regarding a lack of documentation for credit card purchases is discussed in an earlier recommendation in this chapter and can be corrected by strengthening accountability at that particular school.

## COMMENDATION

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for positive audits of school activity funds.**



#### 4.4 ASSET MANAGEMENT

Virginia school divisions are responsible for the protection, prudent management, and accountability of public assets. Fixed assets are a major investment of school division resources. A Fixed Asset Management Program supports the accountability for division property through proper accounting control and safeguarding of assets. A Fixed Assets Management Program provides safeguarding of assets (such as land and buildings, furniture and equipment, books and vehicles). An effective fixed asset management system requires that responsibilities for the safeguarding of assets are clearly defined with policies and procedures established to protect division assets from initial acquisition through disposal.

**Exhibit 4-18** shows the June 30, 2006 schedule of assets with an undepreciated value of \$11,690,602 in furniture, equipment and vehicles.

**Exhibit 4-18**  
**Schedule of Fixed Assets**  
**Mecklenburg Annual Audit Report**  
**June 30, 2006**

Asset Category	Beginning Balance	Increases/ Decrease	Ending Balance
<b>Capital Assets, not being depreciated:</b>			
Land	\$1,865,623		\$1,865,623
<b>Total Capital Assets not Depreciated</b>	1,865,623		1,865,623
<b>Capital Assets, being depreciated:</b>			
Buildings and Systems	34,554,783		34,554,783
Furniture, Equipment and Vehicles	10,340,656	\$1,349,946	11,690,602
<b>Total Capital Assets being Depreciated</b>	44,895,439	1,349,946	46,245,385
<b>Less Accumulated Depreciation</b>	25,411,429	1,319,614	26,731,043
<b>Total Capital Assets, net</b>	<b>\$21,349,633</b>	<b>\$30,332</b>	<b>\$21,379,965</b>

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from Mecklenburg County Public Schools Records, February 2007.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools has two Board policies governing asset management. ACPS Board Policy DI, entitled *Financial Accounting and Reporting*, has a section on inventory that states: "The Superintendent or his/her designee will be responsible for the inventory of all fixed assets of the school division". In addition, School Board Policy DN, entitled *Disposal of Surplus Items*, discusses the methods of property disposal.

#### FINDING

Mecklenburg County Public Schools developed a draft Fixed Asset Inventory Policy and Procedures Plan (dated September 15, 2004). This draft document sets forth division objectives, responsibilities, definitions, capitalization policy and asset monitoring and disposition guidelines. About this same time, the division took steps with personnel assignments to accomplish the requirements set forth in the plan. The division implemented a partial bar coding system and started an inventory compilation through this system.



The objectives of the 2004 plan state:

*The purpose of creating a fixed asset accounting system is to allow the proper presentation of fixed assets in the financial statements and the overall safeguarding of fixed assets. This matter is of great importance to the Mecklenburg County Board of Directors and to the Superintendent of Mecklenburg County.*

*An effective accountability and control system will:*

- *make a record of all personal property for which accountability and control is required;*
- *assign responsibility for its control, use, care, and protection;*
- *monitor each item from date of receipt to final disposal; and*
- *support the maintenance of financial records and accounts.*

*This document is intended to describe the standard policies and procedure required for recording existing assets, changes in assets, and the methodology of record keeping. The system requires periodic update and maintenance to remain current and valuable. Additional fixed assets acquisitions, transfers, sale of surplus, disposal and corrections must be entered into the systems in a timely manner. It is imperative that those responsibilities comply with this document to establish and maintain accurate fixed asset records.*

## COMMENDATION

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for taking these first steps toward establishing a comprehensive fixed asset management plan.**

## FINDING

The MCPS fixed asset management system needs to be improved. Interviews with division staff and a review of inventory documentation indicate that substantially all property and equipment purchased is to be marked with a numbered bar code, but is not consistently monitored thereafter. A bar coding system is in place, but more stringent reporting requirements are necessary to ensure a higher level of accuracy.

Purchases are recorded in inventory records dependent upon the property custodian contacting division central office personnel or central office personnel identification of purchases for bar coding. Inventories are not consistently performed annually and dispositions are not consistently approved and recorded.



Responsibility for assets, as outlined in the draft Fixed Assets Policies and Procedures, is dispersed among several staff. **Exhibit 4-19** outlines the responsibilities of division personnel.

**Exhibit 4-19**  
**Fixed Asset Responsibilities**  
**Fixed Asset Policies and Procedures**  
**September 15, 2004**

Position Responsible	Area of Responsibility
<b>Fixed Asset System Manager</b>	Effective administration and maintenance of the property accountability and control system for the Mecklenburg County School System.
	Administer, monitor, and maintain a centralized database of all related assets that are described and defined in this document.
	Coordinate with each Facility Manager (Principals and Department Heads) to ensure the establishment of a fixed asset facility coordinator for each school, office complex, warehouse, or school system related facility.
	The fixed asset facility coordinator will have current records of the property for which they are responsible.
	That joint inventories are taken on a yearly basis.
<b>Fixed Asset Facility Coordinators</b>	Establish a fixed asset procedure and protocol for all related assets for their related Mecklenburg County School System.
	Establish a fixed asset procedure and protocol for handling the flow of current and future flows of fixed assets in their related facilities.
	Administer, monitor, and record all related assets that are described in this document.
	Coordinate with facility faculty (teachers, custodians, employees, and related business partners) to ensure that personal property is given proper care and protection and is used for official purposes only for the facilities in which they are responsible.
	The Fixed Asset Facility Coordinator will have current records of the property for which they are responsible and will provide the Fixed Asset Manager with related documentation of fixed assets that are acquired, lost, destroyed, stolen or disposed of.
	Assisting in taking physical inventories.
<b>Fixed Assets Associates</b>	Ensure the proper use, care and protection of all Mecklenburg County School assets.
	Notifying the Fixed Asset Facility Coordinator whenever fixed assets are acquired, lost, destroyed, stolen or disposed.
	Assist in taking physical inventories.

Source: MCPS Fixed Asset Inventory Policies and Procedures, February 2007.

Capitalization threshold amounts are important to balance the need for a proper safeguarding of division assets with realistic administrative costs associated with asset control. The division draft Fixed Asset Inventory Policy and Procedures states, "Capitalization is the determination of the threshold value of what qualifies for recording and reporting as a fixed asset.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools will capitalize assets owned by the division, which have an expected useful life of more than one year and per-unit cost of \$200 or more. Exceptions to this include all computer equipment, office equipment, audiovisual equipment, musical instruments, and small machinery and equipment with an expected useful life of more than one year and per unit cost of \$50 or more.

Interviews with division staff, and review of division School Board policies, found that the \$200 threshold is not widely known nor Board approved. Virtually all identified purchases of



furniture and equipment is inventoried with the inventory listing maintained in the central division office.

**Exhibit 4-20** shows examples in inventories maintained by division personnel.

**Exhibit 4-20**  
**Fixed Asset Record Form**  
**Form Dated September 14, 2004**

Identification Number	Asset Acquisition Method	Facility And Department	Location	Asset Category	Asset Description	Model And Serial Number	Facility Coordinator	Date
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Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from MCPS Records, February 2007.

Computer equipment inventory is maintained by technology department staff. The technology department maintains an extensive detailed listing of computers, printers, and other technology for all schools and departments. Individual departments and the division property clerk handle the inventory of non-fleet vehicles, buses, buildings, and equipment.

Safeguarding and recording of assets is essential for proper control and accountability over division assets. A comprehensive asset management plan provides guidance and procedures for use in safeguarding division assets.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 4-10:

**Develop, implement, and ensure compliance with a comprehensive Fixed Asset Management Plan, including the establishment of a Board policy setting forth a property accountability system.**

Division staff have taken steps to improve the fixed asset management system. The development of an up-to-date Fixed Asset Management Plan will provide guidance for the proper accounting and safeguarding of division assets. A comprehensive Fixed Asset Management Plan should include the Board policy, comprehensive procedures, and samples of expectations for inventory records, establishment of disposal methods, and a clear method of communications.

Dollar values for inventory should be established, and communicated, as well as procedures for annual inventory of division assets. Certain property and equipment (such as computers, digital cameras, etc.) should be defaced and marked with a MCPS property control number. The bar coding system should be enhanced to include reporting capabilities which can be used in an ongoing inventory control accountability system.

The accountability system should require information on the purchase (such as the purchase order number, purchase date, item description including serial numbers and the physical location of the item). Recent changes in accounting standards require a schedule for depreciation, such as



those outlined in the annual financial statements. The fixed asset records should be updated by additions and deletions of property and equipment. Purchases and disposals should be maintained in accordance with Commonwealth law and Board policy. Property prepared for disposal should have inventory control numbers and division files deleted from the property items prior to sale. Disposals should be periodically approved by the School Board to ensure complete transparency and open communication.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **4.5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

An effective risk management program provides for a safeguarding of division assets by minimizing risk of loss and protecting division assets. MCPS is responsible for safeguarding division assets, including not only fixed assets, but human resources such as students and employees as well.

An effective risk management program includes:

- analyzing alternatives to traditional insurance coverages;
- analyzing deductibles, out-of-pocket and co-payment expenses; and
- identifying and protecting against potentially dangerous situations to minimize exposure for potential losses.

Divisions must provide control of risks of loss through insurance, education, and safety programs. Workers' compensation insurance protects against lost wages in the event of work-related injuries, and loss prevention plans strive to prevent injuries. Property and casualty insurance protect the division from liabilities resulting from incidents, such property damage and bodily injury. The Evergreen Review Team conducted an analysis and evaluation of all aspects of MCPS risk management functions, including workers' compensation, property casualty and liability insurances, and employee-related insurances.

MCPS functions partially within the Mecklenburg County's Risk Management Program. The County reviews disbursement for payroll and accounts payable, provides disbursement signatory, banking services procurement and monitoring, bank reconciliations, and investment services. MCPS provides insurance coverages for employee health and workers' compensation, property casualty and liability protection, and training for certain loss prevention. All such services are critical to an effective risk management program.

## **FINDING**

The MCPS School Board lacks a comprehensive and up-to-date Crisis Management Plan. Such a plan normally identifies critical emergency contact numbers (such as the law enforcement, the hospital, and community emergency management as well as emergency contact numbers for the



superintendent and senior staff). The content of such a plan, in sufficient detail, functions as an operating procedures manual and serves as a ready reference for school and department personnel to use in potentially stressful and confusing situations.

The School Board has several policies relating to crisis management and prevention. School Board Policy EB entitled, *School Crisis, Emergency Management, and Medical Emergency Response Plan*, states: “each school with develop a written school crisis, emergency management and medical emergency response plan”. Policy EB describes such a plan as:

*School crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plan means the essential procedures, operations, and assignments required to prevent, manage, and respond to a critical event or emergency.*

**Exhibit 4-21** shows examples of critical events or emergencies which the plan may consider.

**Exhibit 4-21  
Example Topics  
School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Emergency  
Response Plan**

Abduction/Kidnapping	Intruder/Hostage
After School Hours	Lock Down Procedures
Assault/Fights	Missing Child
Bomb Threats	Break Ins
Bus Accident	Oil Spills
Chemicals	Rape/Assault
Hazardous Materials	Weapons
Field Trip Incidents	Weather
Fire Emergencies	Shooting
Electrical Malfunctions	Suicide
Drug Overdose/Allergy	Terrorism
Electrical Malfunctions	Dealing with the Media
Medical Emergencies	Gang Activity

*Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from MCPS Records, February 2007.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 4-11:**

**Continue to develop a comprehensive MCPS Crisis Management Plan and a Risk/Loss Management Team.**

The continued development and implementation of a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan will provide guidance to employees in the event of emergency or crisis situations. Communication and training for the plan are essential to ensure consistent application of the procedures outlined in the plan.

The division should continue to improve the Crisis Management Plan and develop its loss management team. The implementation of this recommendation should be coordinated division-wide and include the maintenance supervisor, the director of student support services,



and the business official. MCPS should continue with the planning, evaluation, and implementation of its Management Plan through steps currently underway.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

The responsibility for the workers’ compensation function is disaggregated among several MCPS employees. The MCPS organizational chart and employee listing do not reflect the risk management function. Evergreen’s interview schedule listed an individual as the contact for risk management; however, our interviews identified that several employees are responsible for portions of the risk management function.

Examples of portions of the risk management function assigned to various employees are:

- The business manager is responsible for workers’ compensation claims management.
- The director of maintenance and procurement is responsible for facilities safety, such building inspections and fire safety.
- The director of student support services is responsible for developing and implementing components of a loss prevention program (such as the Crisis Management Plan, and safety orientation and training).
- The director of food and nutrition services is responsible for health and safety relative to cafeterias and food products.
- The director of finance is responsible for the insurance contract procurement and management for division insurance coverages.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring that school employees are properly trained and that training records are maintained.

The division lacks an established central point of responsibility to ensure overall program efficiencies and effectiveness. Such a function, responsible for the avoidance of risk and the safeguarding of division assets, must have established programmatic responsibility and authority.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 4-12:**

**Establish central responsibility and authority for risk management in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.**



Work assignments may continue to be disaggregated provided central responsibility is established. The employee charged with primary responsibility should coordinate all aspects of the risk management function, ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, and maintain comprehensive programmatic and training records.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

Mecklenburg County Public Schools has no formalized loss prevention or injury reduction plan. The division has several memos, training videos, and booklets that provide information on various loss prevention topics, but MCPS does not have a clear, comprehensive loss prevention plan that includes loss prevention, management and monitoring. The division has access to several employee training opportunities through the Virginia School Boards Association.

Opportunities offered employees by various MCPS departments include topics such as:

- asbestos awareness;
- MSDS notifications;
- hazardous chemicals;
- lifting;
- slips, trips, and falls; and
- fire safety.

The MCPS workers' compensation claims have fluctuated for the last several years. The annual claims amounts and the annual number of claims have both fluctuated. For example, the claims for 2001 amounted to \$202,528 and the 2005 claims were \$12,493. Previous years' history, however, shows the potential for claims to increase. **Exhibit 4-22** provides the workers' compensation utilization, including the number of claims and dollar value of those claims.

**Exhibit 4-22**  
**Workers' Compensation Utilization**  
**2001 through 2005 Fiscal Years**

Year Ended June 30th	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Annual Claims Amounts	\$202,528	\$250,419	\$9,868	\$7,190	\$12,493
Annual Number of Claims	46	47	67	45	46

*Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from MCPS Records, February 2007.*

The MCPS claims experience directly impacts the premiums paid for workers' compensation. MCPS workers' compensation premiums are determined by utilization reflected in an experience modifier. MCPS workers' compensation records explain the experience modifier as follows:



*The experience modifier is compiled by the insurer by analyzing the loss of history of the insured for the past three years beyond the most recent year. Better than average loss experience is reflected with a number less than one or a “credit mod” and adverse loss history is reflecting in a number greater than one, the “debit mod”. This standard premium generated through payrolls and rates is then multiplied by the experience modification to generate the final premium.*

Loss experience in MCPS was above the norm in 2003-04 at 1.27, increased further above the norm in 2004-05, and then declined to slightly above the norm. The experience modifier dropped to .75, well below the norm for 2006-07. The workers’ compensation experience modifier, which impacts the cost of workers’ compensation premiums, has fluctuated over the last several years.

**Exhibit 4-23** shows the workers’ compensation experience modifiers for the 2003-04 through the 2006-07 school years.

**Exhibit 4-23**  
**Workers’ Compensation Experience Modifiers**  
**2003-04 through 2006-07 School Years**

Workers’ Compensation Experience Modifier			
2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1.27	1.39	1.04	.75

*Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Workers’ Compensation Records, 2007.*

## COMMENDATION

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for achieving a significant reduction in workers’ compensation claims.**

## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation 4-13:**

**Develop, communicate, and implement a comprehensive loss prevention plan for injuries and work-related accidents.**

MCPS has several components of a loss prevention plan. Although the reasons are not documented, the division has experienced a decrease in its experience modifier. Documenting the steps taken to effectuate such a decrease would provide the division with positive aspects of efforts worth institutionalizing. Documenting and coordinating staff efforts and communicating the plan and training opportunities will create awareness and help create a culture of safety. Once the plan is properly implemented, documentation of the plan and participation with plan activities should prove useful in the event of a loss and/or challenges resulting from a loss. A well-documented, comprehensive loss prevention plan should help reduce loss claims and better safeguard division employees and other assets. The development and communication of a loss prevention plan will show the value that the MCPS Board places upon loss prevention.



**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

MCPS routinely monitors employee benefits costs and options. The division is currently exploring the practicality of self funding as an option for providing a group health plan for its employees. The division established a committee consisting of representatives for school administrators, elementary school teachers, secondary teachers, classified employees, insurance and business representatives, and Board members. The stated purpose of the committee is to share information, concerns, and practical experience regarding self-insurance plans. The committee is considering the advantages and disadvantages of self-funding, and has established communications and decision timelines.

Mecklenburg County Public Schools provide varying levels of employee benefits to their employees. Employee benefits include options for coverages such as a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) and Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) for health, and varying levels of dental and vision.

**Exhibit 4-24** lists the MCPS Southern Health Insurance premium and option information (e.g., dental vision). The employer rate and the employee rate show the proration of the cost of insurance for each option.

**Exhibit 4-24**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools**  
**Health, Dental and Vision Insurance Rates**  
**2006-07 School Year**

Coverage	Option	Monthly Premium Rate	Monthly Employer Rate	Monthly Employee Rate
<b>Southern Health HMO</b>	Employee	\$448.36	\$379.01	\$69.35
	Employee + One Child	627.71	459.06	168.65
	Employee + Children	896.73	521.30	375.43
	Employee + Spouse	941.56	569.13	372.43
	Employee + Family	1,300.26	667.37	632.89
<b>Southern Health PPO</b>	Employee	398.43	361.58	36.85
	Employee + One Child	557.80	434.65	123.15
	Employee + Children	796.85	527.32	269.53
	Employee + Spouse	836.70	491.53	345.17
	Employee + Family	1,155.44	616.80	538.64
<b>Ameritas Dental</b>	Employee	20.88		20.88
	Employee + One Child	40.48		40.48
	Employee + Children	40.48		40.48
	Employee + Spouse	40.52		40.52
	Employee + Family	60.12		60.12
<b>Ameritas Vision</b>	Employee	8.96		8.96
	Employee + One Dependent	17.92		17.92
	Employee + Two or More	25.20		25.20

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, Finance Department, February 2007.



Monitoring and evaluating employee benefits help ensure that employees are provided with the best possible coverages for the resources expended. Evaluating benefit utilization relative to the marketplace is essential to maintain a competitive edge in contract negotiations. Considering different options, such as self insurance, provides flexibility necessary in the everchanging employee benefit industry.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for exploring a self-insurance option for health benefits.**



***CHAPTER 5:  
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY  
AND MANAGEMENT***



*Chapter 5*

***EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY  
AND MANAGEMENT***

This chapter addresses the instructional delivery operations of the Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS) and includes the following nine sections:

- 5.1 Organization and Management of Curriculum and Instruction
- 5.2 Instructional Delivery and Student Performance
- 5.3 School Improvement
- 5.4 Special Education
- 5.5 Parent Involvement
- 5.6 Gifted and Talented Program
- 5.7 Instructional Professional Development
- 5.8 Career and Technical Education
- 5.9 Alternative Education

The educational service delivery of a school system depends on central office staff to serve as the support system, and provide leadership and coordination for the education that is provided in the division schools. The effectiveness of instructional delivery depends on factors such as organization, staffing, and procedures that have been created and monitored in order to assure consistency of instruction and student assessment across the division. The organization of the central office should be designed to support and promote progress towards higher achievement for all students.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The MCPS Instructional Department has worked diligently and successfully to effect positive change in recent years. Evidence includes:

- heightened infusion of data analysis into instructional decisions at all levels;
- all MCPS schools and the division have met state criteria for accreditation and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the *No Child Left Behind* requirement;
- two of its elementary schools have been selected for the prestigious national Blue Ribbon Schools recognition for dramatic student achievement gains; and
- the MCPS Career and Technical Education Program has developed a comprehensive approach to offering students a broad array of courses that meaningfully relate high school instruction to postgraduation career opportunities.

Recommendations contained in this chapter relate to refining and balancing school and division needs to bring about consistency at the same time school characteristics are honored. They are also intended to increase equity of educational opportunities for all students. By strengthening its



accountability and communications procedures, MCPS will enhance consistency and focus among its schools for the benefit of its entire student population.

### **5.1 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

Central office staff serves as the support system for the education that is provided in schools of any school division and—depending on factors such as organization, staffing, and processes—can either strengthen or hinder progress towards high achievement for students. A well-orchestrated, balanced relationship between school needs and central office support and coordination helps to ensure that financial and human resources are targeted toward increased student achievement for all students. Clearly articulated, measurable, and monitored goals set at the division level inform staff and the public of the division’s priorities and guide decisions and actions at all levels of the system. Consequently, effective two-way communications systems, explicit guidelines and expectations, processes that streamline and reinforce division goals, and monitoring of division priorities are essential responsibilities of the central office.

#### **FINDING**

**Exhibit 5-1** shows the current organizational structure of the MCPS Instructional Department. **Exhibit 5-1** reflects that the assistant superintendent for instruction has 14 direct reports. They include:

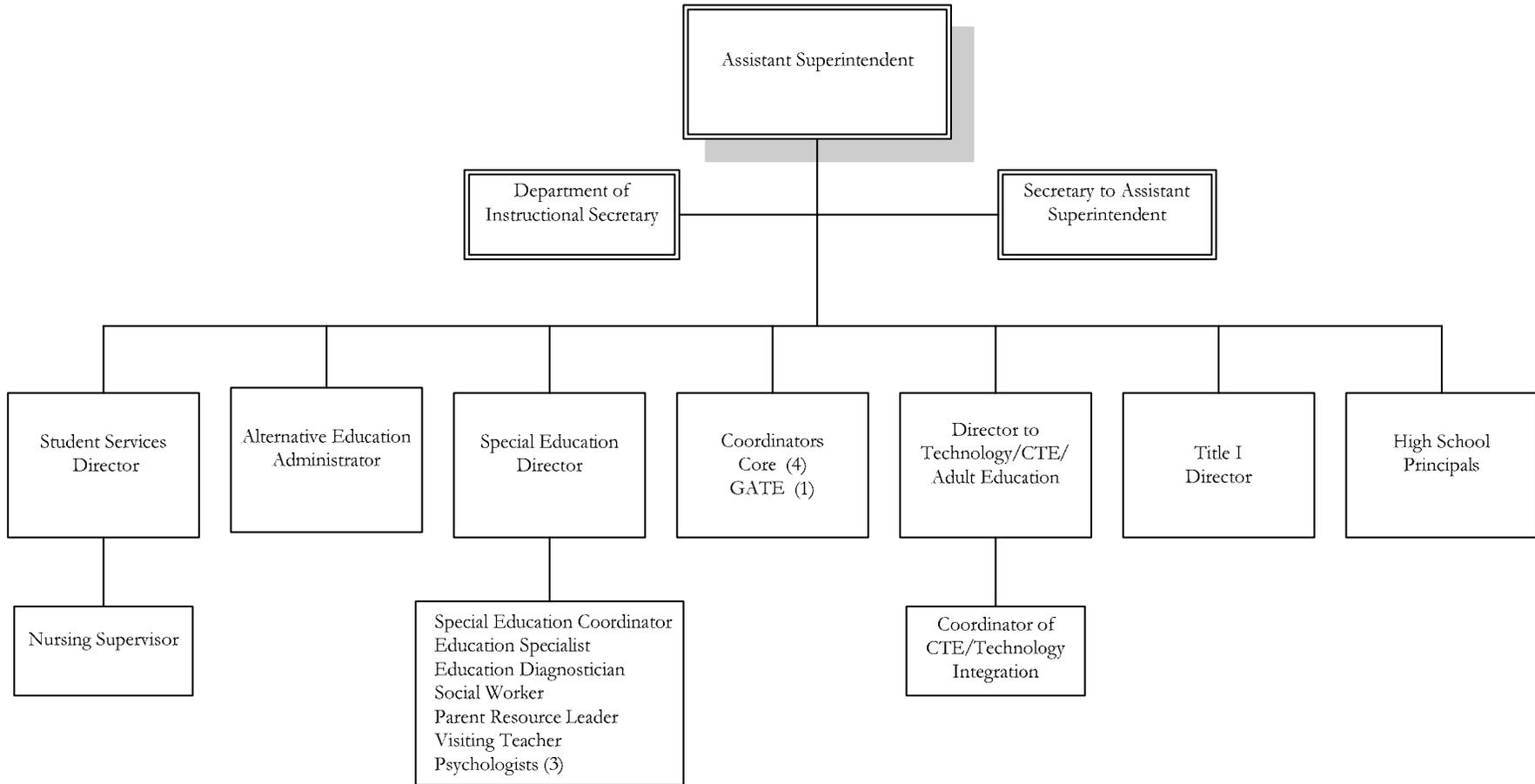
- two secretaries;
- two high school principals;
- four directors: the directors of student services, special education, Technology/CTE/Adult Education, and Title I;
- five coordinators - four core content area coordinators and one coordinator for the Gifted and Talented Education Program (GATE); and
- an alternative education administrator.

The four content coordinator positions have existed for many years with some having lengthy tenure in their positions and others being new to the jobs. A department of instruction matrix shows that the content coordinators have additional duties beyond their subject areas for which they are responsible. The matrix reflects that each has a range of five to seven additional duties such as school health, textbooks, calendar, English for Speakers of other Languages, foreign language and media.

The position of GATE coordinator has been located in several departments over the years and was recently removed from special education and placed directly under the assistant superintendent. Other responsibilities of this position include module development for alternative education curriculum, instructional support team coordination, scholarships, grants, and special projects.



**Exhibit 5-1  
Organization of the Instructional Department in  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools**



Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2007.



Supporting the student services director is the nursing supervisor who oversees eight school nurses. The student services director is responsible for:

- truancy cases that go to court;
- guidance that relates to counseling;
- discipline reporting to the state;
- the attendance and conduct manual for the division;
- Red Ribbon and Violence Weeks; and
- brokering social services for students nearing expulsion recommendations.

The special education department is comprised of 12 positions: the director, a coordinator, an education specialist, an educational diagnostician, three psychologists, one visiting teacher, one social worker, one parent resource leader, and two secretaries. The Child Count Report (12/6/2006) shows that the department serves 852 students in all disabilities identified in the Commonwealth with the exceptions of deaf-blind and orthopedic impairment.

**Exhibit 5-2** provides comparability numbers for central office instructional staffs in the divisions selected as peers for MCPS. This exhibit shows that MCPS has an average of 4.5 more instructional administrators than peer divisions with the majority being for coordinators. However, MCPS also has about one half of the supervisor positions of the average of its peers.

**Exhibit 5-2  
Central Office Positions Related to Instruction in  
Comparable School Divisions**

School Division	Total Student Population	Assistant Superintendents for Instruction/ Executive Directors	Directors	Supervisors	Coordinators/ Program Coordinators	Specialist/ Lead Teachers	Total
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>4,910</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>
Dinwiddie County	4,639	1	4	0	1	1	7
Gloucester County	6,092	1	5	4	3	2	15
Halifax County	5,907	*1	3	5	1	0	10
Isle of Wight County	5,434	1	3	0	4	**1	9
Pulaski County	5,051	1	1	1	4	0	7
Wythe County	4,279	1	5	1	1	0	9
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>.7</b>	<b>10.1</b>

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from VDOE Web Site and Phone Interviews with Division Staff, 2007.

\*Executive Director

\*\*Lead Teacher

**Exhibit 5-3** provides the positions supporting the office of special education in MCPS and comparison divisions.

These data show too many direct reports for the position of assistant superintendent. Additionally, compared to peer divisions, MCPS has too many instructional administrators. Reorganizing positions so that they are more logically located in departments more closely aligned with similar responsibilities will streamline and consolidate the administration.



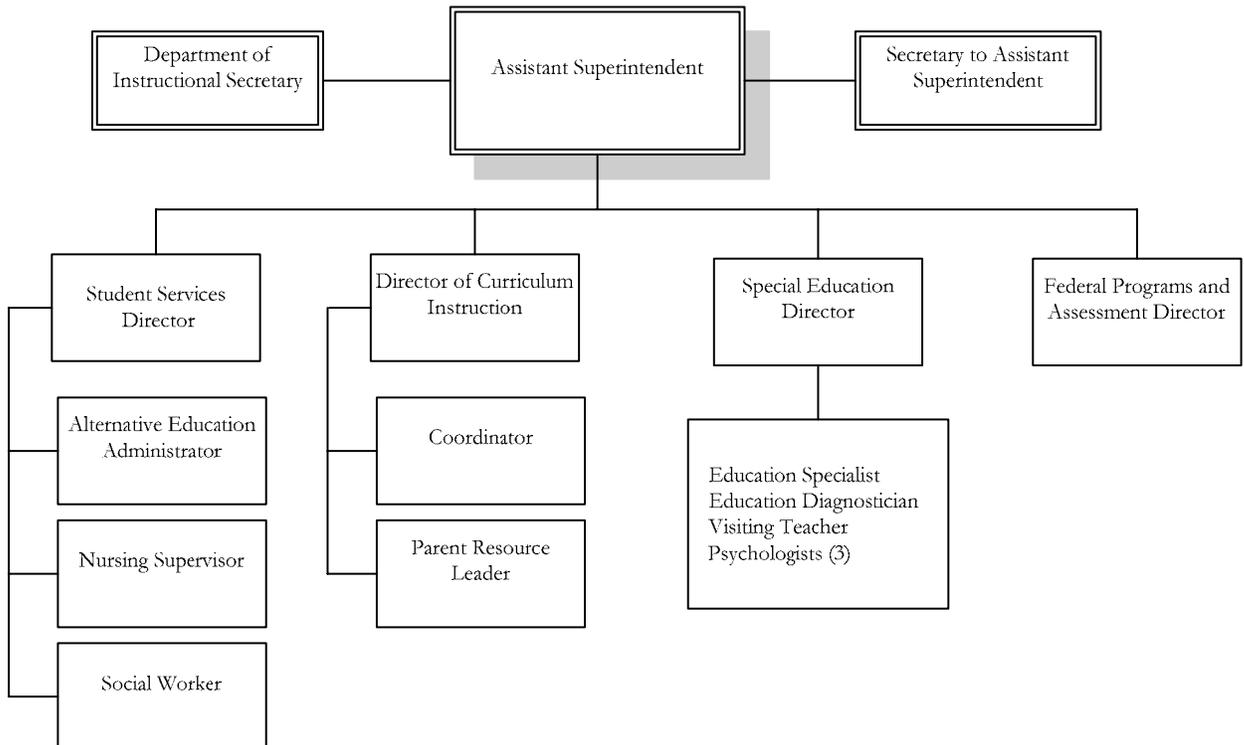
**Exhibit 5-3  
Division-Level Special Education Positions  
in Comparable School Divisions**

School Division	Total Student Population	Director	Coordinator	Educational Specialist/Supervisor	Total
Mecklenburg County	4,910	1	1	1	3
Dinwiddie County	4,639	1	0	1	2
Gloucester County	6,092	1	2	1	4
Halifax County	5,907	0	0	1	1
Isle of Wight County	5,434	1	1	0	2
Pulaski County	5,051	1	2	0	3
Wythe County	4,279	1	0	0	1
<b>Peer Average</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>.86</b>	<b>.86</b>	<b>.57</b>	<b>2.29</b>

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from VDOE Web Site, MCPS Document, and Phone Interviews with Division Staff, 2007.

Exhibit 5-4 shows Evergreen’s proposed organizational structure of the instructional department and related changes in functions.

**Exhibit 5-4  
Proposed Organization of the Instructional Department  
in Mecklenburg County Public Schools**



Source: Created by Evergreen Solution, 2007.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 5-1:**

**Reorganize the instructional and student services departments in the central office.**

Currently, responsibilities in the instructional department of the MCPS are not all logically related to the major job responsibilities of administrators and support staff. Adopting the proposed organizational structure will better align responsibilities with job titles and create a stronger focus on instruction by better aligning reporting relationships. For example, the director of Title I is responsible for assessment, so the job title should reflect those responsibilities. The director of student services performs responsibilities geared toward preventing and/or supporting student placement in alternative education, so that program should be moved there along with the social worker.

Proposed changes include:

- consider eliminating, up to three coordinator positions, to bring Mecklenburg to parity with its peer divisions (one of which is in special education);
- creating a director of curriculum and instruction position—the new director of curriculum and instruction would supervise the coordinators and the Parent Resource Leader;
- changing the director of Title I to the director of federal programs and assessment; and
- moving the Alternative Education Program to the student services department along with the social worker, so that the assistant superintendent supervises the four instructional directors and the high school principals.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The average coordinator’s position costs are \$59,687 plus benefits (28 percent) of \$16,712 for a total cost per position of \$76,399. Average director salaries are \$65,605 plus benefits of \$18,369 for a total cost of \$83,974. Total savings over five years would be \$1,108,110.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Eliminate up to Three Coordinator Positions	\$229,197	\$229,197	\$229,197	\$229,197	\$229,197
Add One Director of Curriculum and Instruction	(\$83,974)	(\$83,974)	(\$83,974)	(\$83,974)	(\$83,974)
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>\$145,223</b>	<b>\$145,223</b>	<b>\$145,223</b>	<b>\$145,223</b>	<b>\$145,223</b>

**FINDING**

One of the most common observations expressed by personnel at all levels of the MCPS is the impact that the extent of school-based autonomy has on consistency and accountability across the division. Principals voiced the fewest concerns, but still acknowledged that it does stand in the way of consistency for students and programs.



Several interviewers stated that inconsistencies are more apparent at the elementary level rather than the secondary level.

The district's commitment to school-based management has led to some inconsistencies over time. Examples cited of a need for enhanced accountability practices were offered throughout the week. They include:

- Processes are not in place to ensure that directors and coordinators are informed of all vacancies to help ensure the recruitment of highly qualified teachers.
- Inconsistencies were noted in the utilization of the Star Student Data Bank, and in procedures and deficiencies for reporting student disciplinary infractions.

There was no evidence provided to Evergreen Solutions of any documentation that monitors practices or holds administrators accountable for compliance with division directives, when they are given. One administrator gave Evergreen a proposed document that should monitor the school improvement process to some extent. In one focus group, several individuals stated that in other divisions, when a directive was issued by the central office, it was followed without question, but that in MCPS, even when directives are given, there is no assurance of compliance.

The superintendent was quoted in several discussions as having a goal of equity for students. Parameters for school-based management must be set and rigorously held to for the division to provide students equity wherever they are educated. Maintaining a balance between school autonomy and division goals and needs is a critical consideration in defining what school-based management should look like. It is essential that the division define clear parameters to maintain consistency throughout MCPS as a basis for equitable educational opportunities. At the same time, there should be a balance so that each school community has the ability to make decisions that best meet its unique needs.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-2:**

**Examine school-based management and its implications on personnel, programs, and budget to specifically define a balance between school characteristics and consideration of the need for division-wide consistency.**

Multiple instances have been provided throughout the site visit of operations where the current application of the concept of school-based management in MCPS has contributed either to inequity of educational opportunities for students or ineffective processes and practices that deter the division from achieving unified goals. There is also a likelihood that allowing school-based decisions to over-ride division-wide considerations has resulted in expenditures that could have been prevented with economy of scale achieved in purchases. As currently applied, in many respects, it nullifies the ability of division-level administrators to develop and improve programs that best meet the needs of students throughout the division. It is imperative that MCPS consider these effects of its current interpretation of the concept, and define parameters within which schools may operate. A monitoring process should be developed at the same time to ensure that all schools are complying with consistency requirements.



## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

The roles of content coordinators vary by individual without uniform parameters within which each works to serve schools. There is a job description, and each month these coordinators provide the assistant superintendent with key work activities (KWA) that detail actions they took, grades/schools they served, and meetings they attended. A matrix of part of their responsibilities shows, too, that their responsibilities are far broader than the core content area that they represent. The KWAs demonstrate that they are extremely active in a broad array of support for teachers, principals, and students throughout the division. However, no minimum expectations have been provided to ensure that they all serve teachers in their content areas in the same way. Other staff interviewed stated that the level of service they see from each varies broadly. One reportedly never leaves a school until she has seen every teacher in her content area, but others are not so visible to everyone in the subject area.

Some staff observed that perspectives differ among the coordinators. Staff interviewed stated that most coordinators make every effort to go to a school when requested. All, however, do not do so. Principals enthusiastically applauded several coordinators for their support of staff when they had not made accreditation and their diligent work to assist in improving. The differences noted above likely result not from a lack of desire to help schools, but to ambiguous understandings of job expectations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-3:**

#### **Create clear expectations for coordinators to follow in serving schools.**

When this recommendation is implemented, personnel at schools and the central office, and the coordinators themselves, will explicitly know what to expect from coordinators and under what circumstances. Expectations should include prioritizing activities when a conflict in schedule arises. The expectations should be developed in discussion with the coordinators and principals so that all issues standing in the way of maximal effectiveness are considered.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



## 5.2 INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Successful school systems have established guidelines and expectations that underlie a sound, challenging curriculum designed to foster the success of every student. They extend beyond state standards, providing enrichment and remediation opportunities for students based upon their individual needs. Regularly collected and analyzed data guide ongoing instructional and programmatic decisions. Grounded in research-based strategies, curricular documents and processes define and buttress the realization of clear learning goals.

The curriculum encompasses relationships between goals, specific learning objectives, instructional activities, and student assessments. The curriculum also identifies a scope and sequence in which information, skills, and concepts are taught and reinforced throughout the years to inculcate learning into students' knowledge base. Effective curricular guiding documents also build in assessments and periodic monitoring of both student achievement and the effectiveness of the documents themselves. Materials can then be identified and purchased that assist in teaching concepts and knowledge not otherwise addressed in division curricular resources and that provide for student remediation and enrichment.

Efficient and effective educational processes promote the highest possible levels of student achievement at the classroom level when a school division:

- is organized with procedures that are conscientiously aligned;
- systematically communicates them to employees and constituents; and
- monitors them regularly.

Personnel at the division level must have expertise in their area of responsibility. Processes that allow time to direct that knowledge towards improved student achievement must be in place. Effective divisions identify key educational elements on which to focus actions and resources, and use them as filters for decision making. Sufficient staff members are employed to ensure that time is able to be devoted to functions the division has determined essential. School and central office personnel systematically analyze available sources of data for information they can provide relating to curricular and instructional adjustments. Data analysis also informs staff about individuals and groups of students who either require additional enrichment or remediation to achieve at their highest capability. Clear and frequent communications among schools and the central office enable division leaders to ensure consistency of procedures and policies. Ongoing communications also help the division to focus on core activities it has identified as critical for high levels of student achievement.

### **FINDING**

MCPS has an exceptional history of excellence and academic achievement upon which to build for continuous progress. All MCPS schools and the division have met state criteria for accreditation and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for *No Child Left Behind* requirements. Additionally, two of its elementary schools, Buckhorn and Chase City, have been selected for the prestigious national Blue Ribbon Schools recognition for dramatic student achievement gains. Another school came close to receiving this award.



Chase City's principal was also one of five principals to receive national recognition with the Terrel Bell Award for demonstrated leadership in “overcoming extensive educational challenges to achieve dramatic increases in student outcomes.” In 2006, Buckhorn, Boydton, and South Hill Elementary Schools were named High Performing Title I schools for raising the achievement of their economically disadvantaged students and exceeding the Commonwealth's accreditation standards.

*No Child Left Behind* requires states to develop procedures for measuring the yearly progress of schools, divisions, and states relating to meeting national student performance standards. Each reporting group and subgroup must meet Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) that are approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Benchmarks are raised each year until 100 percent of students meet them in the 2013-14 school year.

**Exhibit 5-5** shows the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) of division schools that has resulted from this and other division initiatives related to student learning. **Exhibit 5-5** shows that all schools in MCPS have made AYP for the past three years with the exception of Parkview Middle School two of those three years.

**Exhibit 5-5  
Annual Yearly Progress in  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools  
2004-05 through 2006-07 School Years**

School/Division	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
	Made AYP	Did Not Make AYP	Made AYP	Did Not Make AYP	Made AYP	Did Not Make AYP
<b>Mecklenburg County Division</b>	X		X		X	
Bluestone High	X		X		X	
Bluestone Middle	X		X		X	
Boydton Elementary	X		X		X	
Buckhorn Elementary	X		X		X	
Chase City Elementary	X		X		X	
Clarksville Elementary	X		X		X	
Lacrosse Elementary	X		X		X	
Park View High	X		X		X	
Park View Middle		X	X			X
South Hill Elementary	X		X		X	

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for the strides it has made in providing exceptional opportunities for students to succeed.**

**FINDING**

Many interviewees stated that the use of data in the division is widespread, especially among principals. Teachers randomly encountered in school visits also attested to the increased use of data for daily instructional decisions within the past five years. In one classroom visit, the



teacher not only explained many ways in which she personally uses data on a daily basis, but also detailed their use in her grade-level meetings and the school as a whole. This teacher demonstrated two ways in which technology has enabled her and her peers to quickly access student performance information about skills and knowledge. The Study Island Web-based Program, which is aligned with Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL), provides individualized opportunities for students to learn skills and knowledge and remediate weak skills. This program also provides teachers information on each student's performance. Scantron computerized test scoring is also widely used at her school and others as a daily source of information about individual student's achievement. Both of those programs enable teachers to differentiate instruction for each child throughout the school day.

Coordinators affirmed that data are used as a diagnostic tool to assess areas of weakness for ongoing remediation rather than in a rush at state testing time. Coordinators stated that, where tests show student needs, principals invite them to their schools for staff development. At the middle school level, they noted that benchmark tests are being effectively used for determination of strengths and weaknesses. Subsequent to the administration of benchmark tests, each of the coordinators meets with teachers during planning time to review the results, the quality of the questions, and how they can support the students and teachers.

In school visits and interviews with principals, data were referenced as a basis for decision making in many instances. Interviewees reinforced the widespread and regular use of data for school, grade/department, and classroom decision making that was cited in other interviews. Other staff at all levels testified that school faculties work together examining SOL information from the state, using data about individual questions/skills, analyzing performance trends at grade levels, and facilitating school improvement planning. Principals stated that MCPS teachers have moved beyond giving a test for a grade to true assessment of student knowledge and as a base for instructional decisions. One practice the division formerly used was to reward the school with the highest percentage of students scoring well on a skill by letting them share with other teachers at that grade level across the school division. This was an excellent way for all teachers to learn best practices from their peers.

Virginia Effective Practices note that “in successful schools student achievement data are systematically collected, analyzed and reported as a means for making decisions about the instructional program. Teachers and administrators regularly use data in both the individual classroom and schoolwide planning process.”

## **COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for infusing data analysis into instructional decisions at all levels.**

## **FINDING**

Interviewees reported few occasions in which cross-grade or school planning takes place with respect to curriculum and instruction. Many respondents, during the diagnostic and site visits, stated a concern that the SOLs are considered the curriculum in MCPS and that, instead of being



a ceiling for student achievement, they should be a floor. Frequent references to the pacing guides as curriculum reinforce those observations. Division documents state that the division “updates curriculum and pacing guides when the state updates the *Curriculum Framework*.”

Mecklenburg County Public Schools has not identified nor communicated priorities or created procedures that provide a systematic, consistent focus on educational priorities that the division has determined critical to improve student achievement in a cohesive curriculum document that goes beyond pacing guides. Perhaps because of the academic success it has experienced, there has been no impetus to develop a comprehensive curriculum map that is used universally across the division. Some schools have their content meetings on the same day, making it impossible for content coordinators to assist in multiple locations.

Coordinators trying to develop a scope and sequence for a content area find it is isolated rather than integrated as a part of the curriculum as a whole across the division. In the past, teachers have met across grade levels to discuss unifying the curriculum, addressing key objectives, and building in re-teaching in subsequent grades. Content coordinators and principals stated that teachers had been enthusiastic about opportunities to discuss best practices and content across grade levels when given the chance. Expanding the practice will benefit teachers and students.

Best practices demonstrate that curriculum is based on clear learning goals that are correlated to specific learning objectives, instructional activities, and student assessments. In such schools, teachers conduct periodic reviews of curriculum documents. One characteristic of an effective school division is one in which periodic reviews of curriculum documents are scheduled regularly. This schedule allows teachers the opportunity to use the documents, make notes regarding their effectiveness, make changes they think will improve teaching, and meet again to revise the documents. It is critical that the division create a system that guides decisions on what to continue or eliminate, based not only on data, but on teacher experiences and knowledge at all grade levels.

A study of Virginia effective practices found that, in effective schools, teachers tended to use textbooks as an information resource for students, rather than as a curriculum guide. Teachers were often provided training in developing a “backwards design” for instructional pacing. In this process, they identified key learning concepts and skills to provide a strong foundation for mastering them.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-4:**

#### **Create vertical articulation teams in core content areas to meet and develop K-12 curriculum maps.**

The implementation of this recommendation will benefit the division in two ways:

- it will contribute to personal and professional growth of its teachers through involvement in the process and cross-grade discussions of curricular issues; and



- it will also build a strong document that formalizes aspects of curriculum at each grade level that teachers deem essential for students to master as well as including specifically identified times at which key skills will be reinforced in other grades.

This action allows the division to identify places where cross-curricular themes can be developed to address key SOL objectives. It also forms a basis for strengthening benchmark tests currently in use for use as instructional tools. The process will give teachers at each grade level an organized means to discuss curriculum, key concepts and skills to be achieved at each grade, and work together to build in remediation, enrichment, and hands-on learning experiences for students. This practice also gives teachers across the division a vested interest in the documents, makes them “salespeople” for their use, and creates resident experts at their schools.

For budgeting purposes, the division could begin with one content area the first summer, involving one teacher representative from each grade level in a week’s curriculum mapping project. Representatives from each school could participate for different grades allowing all schools to be represented in the process. This schedule could be expanded to other curricular areas through the following year or the next summer.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Estimating a stipend of \$500 for each of 13 teachers in grades K-12 at \$100 per day for five days, the stipend costs for the first year would be \$6,500. Fine-tuning that content area the following year could be conducted in meetings after school. Adding one content area each summer would keep costs the same in subsequent years.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Pay Summer Stipends for Teachers	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)

**FINDING**

When asked about instructional monitoring procedures and accountability for student learning in the division, respondents noted use of pacing guides or activities that took place at individual schools or with individual content coordinators. No one detailed a comprehensive, division-wide process that assures the same degree of fidelity to instructional goals and programs.

A document regarding program evaluation provided Evergreen Solutions equated SOL tests and state accreditation with progress evaluation. Teachers at various schools are reportedly allowed to follow the pacing guide as they determine is appropriate in their classrooms. This practice does not provide assurance that students who transfer from one school to another, despite the MCPS pacing guides, will be prepared for success in their new school. Teachers in one group stated that consistency for students is touted, but that teachers, too, needed it. One comment reflected the views of many in that “MCPS has allowed principals a comfort level to do things on their own without prior approval—things that go against what we want to do from a system-wide perspective.” Instruction is the most critical area to be protected from this practice.



Some principals require that lesson plans be turned in while others expect them to be available during classroom observations. Examples of how principals know teachers are following the pacing guides included benchmark testing, classroom visits, checking that the SOL objectives are posted or in lesson plan books, occasional administrator attendance at grade-level meetings, and individual processes used in each school. Additionally, interviewees from different employee groups stated that there is no regular schedule of school visitations by central office administrators, leaving instructional monitoring at that level unstructured.

While administrators at all levels have a clear vision for student success, the vision of the individuals involved does not filter down into written goals and objectives with timelines and benchmarks for achievement for individual units in the department. Thus, there is no overarching plan that ties curricular and instructional operations to agreed upon goals and objectives, nor units of the department with related responsibilities, together. Furthermore, there is no concrete correlation between administrative evaluations and division goals. Interviewees remarked that the focus needs to broaden beyond SOLs to present students with a body of knowledge beyond them, to encourage higher-order thinking, hands-on learning, and to integrate SOLs into career and technical education courses. This action would better prepare students to compete in today's global society.

Although achievement across the division demonstrates that practices have contributed to student success on state tests, it is incumbent on the division to ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students. This can only be done through a structured instructional monitoring process. Reality is that students transfer from one school to another, underscoring a need for there to be some uniformity of instructional goals, monitoring, and procedures.

In successful schools, the curriculum is based on clear learning goals. There is clear documentation of the relationship of the goals to specific instructional learning objectives.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-5:**

#### **Establish a clear system of instructional monitoring and accountability relating to student achievement at all levels.**

Setting clear instructional goals with procedures that will ensure their achievement is a first step in this recommendation. Creating uniformity of instructional programs at schools throughout the division by identifying parameters for decision making, division-level expectations, and reporting systems from the division to the classroom level should ensure the equity the superintendent espouses. In order for that to take place, there must be a communications structure, detailed expectations, and a means of monitoring instruction at every level. Division-level instructional administrators need to set time on their calendars on a regular basis to be in schools discussing and observing expectations. Meeting times should also be scheduled so that they do not conflict with key curricular activities.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



## FINDING

Instances of gaps in communications between schools and the central office were given during the site visit. Central administrators should know of serious incidents immediately so that they can provide needed support and resources, and so that they are informed when concerned parents, public, or media call with questions. For example, the director of student support services is invited to principal meetings, but they are often scheduled on days he is in court, minimizing communications between that essential position and school leaders. Other examples relating to communications regarding special education and having implications for the division's obligation to provide services to identified students are detailed in Section 5.4 of this chapter.

Conversely, school-based personnel noted times when central office administration has developed plans for programs that impact their schools without having each school's input solicited. Minutes of department of instruction meetings show some discussion of topics of concern, but a sense of involvement was evidently not created in those conversations. Minutes of other related meetings do not reflect principal attendance. Reminder notices of meetings show that agenda items are open to addition by principals, so perhaps they should take a more active role in including topics they consider important when they hear of division plans being developed without them.

A schedule of meetings is supposed to be set and adhered to each year. Committee members are to take issues of concern from schools to division administrators for resolution and then to report back to their peers. Only two TAC meetings have occurred so far this year. A primary challenge to the effectiveness of this well-intentioned group is that division administrators expected to attend do not always attend the meetings despite the schedule. Consequently, decisions are deferred until the assistant superintendent can get an answer and notify the Teacher Advisory Committee (TAC).

To ensure effective program implementation, it is imperative that those who are going to be expected to make decisions for schools be involved in discussions about needs and potential changes. This heightens commitment and leads to higher quality execution. Virginia's Effective Practices make a statement about school leadership that also applies to division leadership:

*...leadership was identified separately as an effective practice...Principals...established a vision for the school. While the principal set the stage for leadership, he or she was not alone in the leadership role. Specifically, the principal empowered teachers as leaders to work together to improve student achievement. It was often explained that the principal provides leadership in getting teachers to work together. This resulted in school leadership that provided focus, established ownership, and developed a collaborative system for monitoring progress toward increased student achievement.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 5-6:

**Establish clear expectations for two-way communication between the schools and the central office.**



When clear expectations are set and certain consequences result when they are not met, administrators at both the school and division level will feel valued and develop a greater commitment to the division's goals and image. This action will build a deeper sense of teamwork among all parties and lead to improved outcomes. Meetings, such as the Teacher Advisory Committee, should be attended by all parties so that timely decisions can be made. Minutes of meetings should include decisions that have been made, who is responsible for implementation, and an anticipated timeline for completion.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

One visible example of variances among schools is in the area of student behavior. Interviewees stated that MCPS has no division-wide bullying prevention program. Another visible area is in reporting of student infractions. The director of student support services has developed a guide for interpretation of infraction classifications to create more uniformity of reporting among MCPS schools. However, is not yet in use in the code of student conduct.

In response to concern about possible differences in reporting, the director has initiated an attendance improvement award this year with schools developing improvement plans and tracking data. Besides attendance reporting issues, the number of student infractions that are being reported raises questions about policies and reporting being implemented uniformly in all schools. Differences are enormous among schools at the same grade level without student demographics being vastly different. Part of the reason for inconsistent reporting may lie in the fact that different individuals at each school are responsible for determining which infraction to enter for a student behavioral incident. One school was reportedly awarded a grant for a nationally acclaimed bullying prevention program and, only after being directed to accept it by division leaders, did so.

Summary infraction reports from last year shown in **Exhibit 5-6** graphically display variances. Without deeper investigation of practices and individuals responsible for determining type of infraction to report for specific behaviors, it is difficult to identify root causes of the disparities. However, the numbers speak for themselves in the disproportionality of infractions and students reported in schools of the same type.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 5-7:**

**Assign and monitor accountability for reporting attendance and disciplinary incidents at each school.**

MCPS should investigate reasons for disparities currently being reported and develop a plan of action with specific goals, strategies, assigned responsibilities, and interim and final benchmarks for success.



**Exhibit 5-6**  
**Incidents and Students**  
**From the Infraction Summary List by School**  
**2005-06 School Year**

School	Number of Codes Reported	Total Incidents Reported	Total Students Reported	Incidents of Most Frequently Reported Infractions	Category	Attendance Reported as an Issue Incidents/Students
Bluestone High	31	841	232	123	Classroom/Campus Disruption	277/108
Park View High	33	2,456	467	394	Classroom/Campus Disruption	940/298
Bluestone Middle	31	1,660	273	923	Classroom/Campus Disruption	131/65
Park View Middle	34	2,034	277	523	Classroom/Campus Disruption	448/144
Buckhorn Elementary	9	56	35	24	Classroom/Campus Disruption	0
Clarksville Elementary	12	57	26	18	Defiance/Refusing Requests	0
South Hill Elementary	5	410	129	390	Classroom/Campus Disruption	129
Boydton Elementary	10	32	19	17	Disruptive Demonstrations	0
Chase City Elementary	16	269	108	80	Classroom/Campus Disruption	0
LaCrosse Elementary	6	184	65	60	Disruptive Demonstrations	0

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from STAR Student Infraction Reports, 2005.

Student disruptions and time out of class detract from the learning of others. Records cannot be determined to be accurate without clear reporting guidelines, training in procedures to ensure uniformity, and assignment of responsibility for compliance and monitoring. The broad differences in number of students and incidents at various schools indicate either a reporting problem or a serious need for adoption of a uniform, division-wide behavioral management program, such as the research-based CHAMPS student behavior program. Further investigation will also inform MCPS of the need for additional staff development for some teachers in classroom management.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **5.3 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

With the enactment of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), the role of school improvement plans has become even more integral to ongoing instructional and process improvement. Nonetheless, a national study found that directives do not effectively guide schools in focusing actions on factors that are fundamental to teaching and learning. In successful schools, administrators and teachers provide a clear focus on expectations for achievement. School improvement plans are key instruments in that focus. A strong school improvement plan clearly delineates goals and specific strategies intended to achieve them, assigns specific responsibility for their accomplishment, and details timelines for ongoing evaluation of progress as well as final success.

### **FINDING**

An examination of sample school improvement plans provided Evergreen Solutions showed that the format and content of plans in MCPS varies by schools. Excellent elements that should be a



part of quality school improvement plans are contained in many, but not all, of the sample plans provided. Examples include:

- **La Crosse Elementary School's** goals are clear, specific, and measurable, providing information on the baseline against which progress will be measured as well as the target for improvement. The school has set improvement goals in each subject area for each student subgroup tested. Targets are lofty including "improve a minimum of 12 percent"... for specific subgroups based on their SOL performance data. Each goal then states the current percentage along with the projected target (e.g., improve from 80 percent to 90 percent), so that the goal is clearly measurable.
- **Clarksville Elementary School** has projected time frames that include interim progress checks such as bi-weekly throughout year, periodically as a strand is taught according to the pacing guide, or frequency of assessments administered. Individuals designated responsible for strategy implementation are specifically named, leaving no doubt as to who is accountable for their achievement.
- The evaluation information at **Park View Middle School** specifies logs, six-week tests, and data organized in a chart as the basis to identify students at risk and in need of remediation. This specification ensures that evaluative information is clear, frequent, and user-friendly. Timelines, too, are specific, stating start dates or timelines and frequency. Actions, resources, and strategies are also specific.

Teachers and school leaders reported that the division allows schools the flexibility to tailor actions to their communities. This, though, prevents all students from benefiting from systematic strategies focused on learning for all. The division needs to take steps to ensure that the specific, quality components contained in effective school improvement plans are disseminated to others. This action would enable educators to measure progress and monitor the success of students in all NCLB subgroups. Because of the widespread use of data that exist in MCPS, moving data usage to the consistent analysis and use of information specific to student groups should be effective.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 5-8:

#### **Formalize the school improvement process to ensure consistency and focus among schools.**

Adding specific goals for each student subgroup in all school improvement plans will increase accountability at the teacher and school levels for the improved learning of all students, to better enable schools to move toward the 100 percent proficiency expected by *No Child Left Behind* by 2013-14. Some items to consider include:

- setting interim benchmark dates, such as at the end of each semester for schools to measure progress and report to the Board on progress towards goal achievement;



- including target measurable improvements based on disaggregated student performance data for all subgroups as a fundamental element in all plans;
- creating a template to standardize the school improvement plan format (This facilitates viewing and examination of school improvement plans at the central office for monitoring and accountability purposes.);
- targeting percentage improvement goals with specific baseline and end goals;
- identifying specific individuals or groups by name or job title who are responsible for completion of strategies; and
- more specifically identifying evaluative resources (as in the Park View Middle School’s School Improvement Plan); and
- including start dates for strategy implementation as well as intermediate timelines and frequency of evaluations.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **5.4 SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special education provides supplemental or extended support for students and their families, and enhances student performance and academic achievement. Special education is provided to supplement, accommodate, or modify the general academic course of study, and is intended to provide adequate support to ensure the academic success of students with disabilities. The student support role is to provide supplemental or extended support for students and their families that contribute to enhanced student performance and academic achievement.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997) mandates that special education services be provided to students with disabilities in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible. NCLB reinforces that goal with its express expectation that all students will be proficient by 2013-14. Towards that end, for years many districts have provided training and encouragement to help regular classroom teachers know how to accommodate the needs of special education students in their classes.

## **FINDING**

A pattern of students who are seen as requiring special placement, whether because they are special education students or alternative education, being considered undervalued was apparent in school visits and in testimony by staff at various levels within MCPS. Discussions with groups of teachers brought out the perception among students at one school that children who are housed in trailers are special education. To their credit, school administrators have taken steps to remedy that perception by moving a class for gifted children into trailers, too.



Evergreen team observations during school visits revealed that frequently special education classes are housed in smaller rooms than students in regular classes. Those observations were confirmed in volunteered statements in interviews. The alternative education program is housed on one high school campus in an area that is fenced, surrounded by barbed wire, and where yard equipment, a school truck, and an agriculture program’s greenhouse are located.

A recent federal review of the special education program cited the MCPS for overrepresentation of black students in Emotionally Disabled (ED) and Mentally Retarded (MR) classes. This review also noted overidentification of special education students in MCPS.

**Exhibit 5-7** shows the percent of MCPS students who are in special education compared to peer divisions. As a consequence, the special education department has been retesting students in those programs.

**Exhibit 5-7  
Special Needs Students  
2004-05 School Year**

School Division	Total Student Population	Percent Special Education Students*
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>4,910</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
Dinwiddie County	4,639	14.7%
Gloucester County	6,092	12.6%
Halifax County	5,907	20.1%
Isle of Wight County	5,434	13.8%
Pulaski County	5,051	17.3%
Wythe County	4,279	12.9%
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>15.5%</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

\*December 2004 count.

The division has instructional support teams (IST) in place in its elementary schools to provide instructional support to teachers who have students identified as needing additional assistance prior to referral for testing for special education. IST teachers at each school have received training on differentiating instruction and working with teachers to provide accommodations in a regular classroom setting. No ISTs are in place at the secondary level.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 5-9:**

**Develop procedures that ensure equitable treatment of all students in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.**

Whether disparities are intentional or inadvertent, perception has a strong effect on the community and student beliefs in their ability to succeed. Much research documents the influence that school facilities have on student learning. When programs are housed in comparatively inadequate facilities, students in the program as well as others lower their expectations for success. Additionally, it is imperative that procedures ensure equitable treatment of students in all schools when they have been identified as needing additional support



services in the regular classroom. After interventions have not proven effective, practices for referral and placement should be uniform throughout the division. The assignment of IST responsibilities to the administrative assistants recently hired at the secondary level could support the implementation of this recommendation.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

Testimonies conflicted regarding the extent to which central office special education personnel are involved in decision making at schools. Although not universal in MCPS, several statements related that, in some cases, principal autonomy extends to decisions about students in special education at their schools that may be contrary to federal regulations. Programmatic decisions, such as determination of a reading program for special education students, apparently must be made based on a principal's permission. Another example given of principal autonomy relating to special education decisions includes an inability to conduct screenings for students referred for consideration for placement.

Reports from staff interviewed varied on the extent to which MCPS special education personnel are involved in decisions about school programs serving students with special needs. Documents seem to reinforce the extent of decision making that is made about special programs at the school level.

Evergreen requested documents regarding programs and the extent of inclusion of special education students in other activities by school. These documents reflect that similar programs in different schools vary in whether students are included in other activities such as music, library, computer, and art. For example, developmentally delayed students in all elementary schools (with the exception of South Hill and Buckhorn) are allowed to participate in library, art, PE, music, and/or computer. At South Hill, there is no collaboration at that level and students are not included in any activities outside their classroom. At Buckhorn, developmentally-delayed students are served in either a resource or collaboration model with no apparent inclusion in other activities. Only at Chase City are special education students included in computer activities. At Boynton, they participate in library, art, PE, and music.

Bluestone Middle School offers some collaboration in reading and math, but also serves students with the same disabilities in self-contained and resource models. At Park View Middle School, collaboration is available in all academic classes. Students there with the same disabilities are also served in self-contained and resource settings. It appears from the document that self-contained and resource models are still the primary means of serving middle school special education students.

Such dramatic variances in service to students with the same disability from school to school raise questions about:

- the amount of programmatic equity that exists in the division for special education students; and



- the extent to which decisions that should be made at the central office level to provide maximum equity are made at the school level.

The special education department has developed excellent checklists to be used in consideration of eligibility, but they can only be effective when used appropriately in all schools. At the present time, there seems to be no means of ensuring consistent use.

A comparison of the achievement of special education students at the high schools may indicate a correlation between the amount of collaboration and student achievement. Knowledgeable staff estimated that Park View’s level of collaboration was close to 100 percent while Bluestone’s was approximately 20 percent. **Exhibit 5-8** shows the performance at both schools of all students and of students with disabilities for the 2003-04 through 2005-06 school years. The performance of students with disabilities at Park View in both English and math was close to that of regular education students.

**Exhibit 5-8**  
**Percentage of All Students and Students With Disabilities at MCPS High Schools**  
**2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Percentage of Students Passing				
School	Student Subgroup	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
<b>English Performance</b>				
Bluestone High	All Students	68%	85%	86%
	Students With Disabilities	6%	39%	29%
Park View High	All Students	84%	84%	97%
	Students With Disabilities	60%	83%	88%
<b>Math Performance</b>				
Bluestone High	All Students	64%	88%	89%
	Students With Disabilities	6%	39%	29%
Park View High	All Students	79%	94%	92%
	Students With Disabilities	50%	89%	81%

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

**Exhibit 5-9** shows a comparison of MCPS staff and peer divisions regarding their opinion of the quality of special education programs, reflecting a belief in the ability of the department to ensure equity when authorized to do so.

**Exhibit 5-9**  
**Evergreen Survey Results**  
**Effectiveness of Special Education Programs**  
**MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The division has effective programs for Special Education.				
Central Office Administrators	81.9%	9.1%	70.2%	13.8%
Principals	55.6%	33.4%	70.3%	10.8%
Teachers	67.4%	22.7%	64.6%	27.5%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.



## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 5-10:

**Authorize and empower the director of special education to determine programmatic decisions that ensure equitable educational opportunities for students with special needs.**

Federal legislation about least restrictive environment is explicit in expectations for placement and service for every student, regardless of the school they attend. Divisions hire administrators with backgrounds and knowledge of compliance with federal laws and regulations to ensure equity and to keep the division and its schools in compliance with related requirements. The MCPS Director of Special Education should have the ability and authority to make decisions at the division level that support those ends.

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## FINDING

Similar achievement differences are evident between the performance of all students and students with disabilities at MCPS's two middle schools. **Exhibit 5-10** shows comparative student performances at both schools.

The performance data lead one to believe that Bluestone Middle School is doing a better job of preparing its special education students for success on the SOLs. However, examining student performance with respect to the number of students who participated in the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) test at each school raises questions about performance being a factor of only instruction at Bluestone. Instead, it appears to be a factor of the number of students at each school who were identified as eligible for testing with the VGLA.

**Exhibit 5-10**  
**Percentage of All Students and Students With Disabilities at MCPS Middle Schools**  
**2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Percentage of Students Passing				
School	Student Subgroup	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
<b>English Performance</b>				
Bluestone Middle	All Students	65%	79%	90%
	Students With Disabilities	13%	41%	89%
Park View Middle	All Students	60%	73%	77%
	Students With Disabilities	29%	48%	46%
<b>Math Performance</b>				
Bluestone Middle	All Students	58%	92%	71%
	Students With Disabilities	43%	69%	73%
Park View Middle	All Students	80%	80%	50%
	Students With Disabilities	56%	45%	14%

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.



The number of students at each middle school who took the VGLA last year were, respectively, 107 at Bluestone Middle School and six at Park View Middle School. Total enrollments at each school were: Bluestone 570 and Park View 615. Thus, 19 percent of Bluestone’s total student body took the VGLA and one percent of Park View’s did. Bluestone’s special education enrollment for the year was 99 and Park View’s was 100. Some students likely took the VGLA in more than one subject, but the percentage of Bluestone students taking the VGLA far exceeded that at Park View. Thus, only a small percentage of Park View’s special education students took the VGLA, while nearly 100 percent of Bluestone’s did.

VGLA requirements are that students are studying SOL content, but are unable to demonstrate their learning on a standard SOL test even with accommodations. In total, 210 of MCPS’s 869 (24 percent) special education students last year had 504 plans which made them eligible for consideration for the VGLA. If students have been successful in demonstrating their learning on a multiple-choice SOL test in prior years, they should not typically be eligible for the VGLA. Interviewees reported that, in some cases, students had demonstrated the ability to take multiple choice exams in the previous year’s tests, but they were nonetheless identified as eligible for the VGLA.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 5-11:**

**Develop uniform procedures to be used by all schools in determining eligibility of students for participation in the VGLA and consequences for non-compliance.**

Using the VGLA as a means of moving special education students out of the body of students whose scores count toward accreditation and AYP is a practice that does not meet either the letter nor the intent of the law. This practice also prevents students from being challenged to perform at their highest potential when students are eligible for taking the same test as other students and are prevented from doing so.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**FINDING**

Collaboration between regular education and special education teachers has been encouraged in the division for several years. Again, it has been the prerogative of the principal as to the extent of collaboration in his/her school. Reports varied of levels of collaboration in schools with estimates ranging from 20 percent in some schools to 100 percent in others. The above-referenced document substantiates those estimates.

The federal government is explicit in its goal of 100 percent proficiency for all students by 2013-14. In other divisions, where IST teams are fully utilized and where inclusion is practiced universally, percentages of students in special education programs have declined. Students are, thus, served in regular classrooms without the stigma of identification as “special” and with the



benefit of interaction with their peers without disabilities. Evidence abounds that collaborative teaching benefits all students and not just those with special needs. Collaborative teaching further provides all students the opportunity to learn from teachers who have different teaching styles with one often more likely to reach a child's learning style than another.

One specific Virginia example of the positive impact on students is in Clarke County which has practiced inclusion since 1999. Dinwiddie County has also created a task force on collaboration that has examined needed resources, paraprofessional training, roles and responsibilities, and sites to visit where it is being practiced effectively. They have very purposefully set forth goals and identified key issues that will influence success.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-12:**

#### **Develop practices that will ensure effective collaboration between regular and special education teachers in all MCPS schools.**

Making inclusion an expectation for the education of special education students should strengthen the skills and knowledge that regular classroom teachers can apply to teaching all children. To effectively support expansion of collaboration, considerations should include:

- joint time for co-planning;
- principals and division leaders monitoring and supporting teachers as they incorporate staff development and IST strategies into instruction; and
- expanding opportunities for teachers to share and mentor each other.

Using teachers who are already effectively collaborating to provide training and coaching to others would benefit both special needs and regular education students. This action should also create a sense of efficacy among teachers selected for the initiative.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

Contrary to practices in most divisions, there are no set procedures that are monitored to ensure that the MCPS Special Education Department is apprised of changes in student or staff numbers in schools. One specific example given several times was that special education teacher vacancies and student transfers occur without the central office being notified. When students change schools, transportation services need to change, IEPs may need to be re-addressed, and services must be moved from one school to another. Both parents and staff stated that such moves had occurred with student services being interrupted for extended periods of time, even



for a year in one instance. One-page transfer forms are expected to be completed to inform the central office of changes in student placement, but are not uniformly completed and submitted.

The influx of teachers from the Phillipines this year is one example of a lack of communications regarding the need for collaboration and information between departments at the division level. Although principals and the assistant superintendent for human resources were involved in teleconferenced interviews with the potential teachers, the director of special education was not. Additionally, the assistant superintendent is placed in the untenable position of being expected to provide support for those teachers even though all but one of them are teaching special education classes. The special education department, with staff with backgrounds in instructional strategies for those students and knowledge of what it takes to make a special education teacher highly qualified, should be integrally involved in identifying support, professional development, and mentoring for those teachers.

Similar data show enormous differences in percentages of special education students at individual schools who participated in the VGLA.

Excluding leaders in the department of special education from involvement and information relating to student transfers and teacher vacancies undermines the effectiveness of the division's programs for those students. This exclusion further potentially places the division in a precarious legal position when special education administrators are not notified when students identified for services move into MCPS or transfer to schools within the division.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-13:**

**Include, in conjunction with Recommendation 5-6, specific expectations for communications with the special education department regarding student transfers, teacher vacancies, involvement in interviews, and support for new special education teachers.**

The implementation of this recommendation should include a timeline by which the special education department is notified of the transfer of students within and into MCPS. This documentation should include a clear expectation for transfer packets to be completed and submitted to the central office. The documentation should also include immediate notification of special education vacancies so that special education administrators are involved in interviews for vacancies and support of teachers hired.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

MCPS staff stated that transition for special education students occurs between some schools, but is not uniform across the division. A cross-section of elementary teachers reported variances in



planned transitions between elementary schools and middle schools. Representatives of one high school stated that transitional meetings do take place with middle school representatives. Teachers also noted that they often confer at their own schools about students being promoted. However, all interviewees commented that creating a procedure that ensures consistency among all schools would be beneficial for both teachers and students.

Research documents the importance of school environments, structures, and practices to the success of students without special needs. Similarly, creating effective structures and practices for transitioning students with special needs contributes to their academic success and emotional health. Procedures of this type also better inform teachers of effective instructional strategies for individual students and effective classroom management techniques. Information about family, health, and other factors affecting learning can also be shared during transition meetings to provide a firm foundation for student success in the next grade.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-14:**

**Establish uniform transition procedures between schools to ensure that special education student needs are clearly communicated.**

Setting a schedule for discussion of students changing schools or being promoted, and uniform procedures among all MCPS schools, should ensure that receiving teachers fully understand each child's strengths and needs when students change schools. This practice should prevent a teacher from having to re-learn specific information former teachers already know about specific students. Effective transition procedures should also place the child in the position of having his/her needs met the first day of school.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

MCPS is not yet fully taking advantage of Medicaid reimbursement that entitles divisions to funds for medical services and specified educational services to eligible children. The division began billing in 2006 and is only billing for reimbursement for administrative costs of operating its special education program currently. Revenue for the first three quarters was \$43,979. Specific services to students who are eligible for Medicaid are also eligible for billing and provide many divisions ancillary funds that can be used to enhance programs. A division committee has been meeting regularly to lay the groundwork to begin fee for service billing in the 2007-08 school year.

An important focus of the Medicaid Program is to improve the delivery and accessibility of health care systems and resources. School systems and numerous public agencies provide an important link in improving child health because of the regular contact with the child and the parent or guardian. Staff has consulted with the Medicaid contact person from VDOE in the past



to discuss maximizing potential revenues, but the director is waiting for purchase of the IEP online system that will facilitate record-keeping for documentation of services. The purchase has been approved, but funds have not yet been released.

Medicaid revenues from peer divisions show the potential increase in revenues that billing for all Medicaid-eligible services will provide for MCPS. Two of Mecklenburg’s peers (Dinwiddie and Halifax) plan to implement Medicaid billing within the next year. Two others reported that they currently bill—Gloucester for both administrative and other services and Wythe for administrative. Gloucester received a total of \$114,922 during the 2005-06 school year. Of those revenues, \$33,308, or 29 percent were for administrative reimbursement. Wythe County Public Schools did not have a breakdown available, but received total revenues for the year of \$224,608.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-15:**

#### **Expedite efforts to expand billing to all eligible for Medicaid services.**

Medicaid revenues provide a source of unrestricted funds. The funds can be used to enhance existing programs or purchase programs for which funds are not otherwise available. Had the division billed for Medicaid previously, those funds could have been used to buy the IEP online program. Funds should be included in revenues for the MCPS Special Education Program.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should generate cost savings which can not be estimated at this time.

## **5.5 PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Research shows that as much as 50-85 percent of variance in achievement scores, IQ, or verbal ability, can be attributed to parent, family, and home environment variables. Furthermore, it finds that children with high achievement scores have parents with high expectations, who respond to and interact with their children frequently, and who see themselves as children’s teachers. Parent education programs, especially those that train low-income parents to work with their children, improve how well children use language skills, perform on tests, and behave in school. Most effective parent involvement programs emphasize the importance of the parent, and the need for a close relationship between the home and the school. These programs also provide structured, concrete tasks for parents, and take a long-term approach to parent involvement.

Studies have shown that teachers involving parents in learning activities at home have a positive and significant influence on improved student reading achievement. Programs of teacher-initiated parent involvement activities has been demonstrated to have as positive an effect on reading achievement among low-income parents as those with higher educational backgrounds who traditionally help their children.



## **FINDING**

In response to Title I requirements for parental involvement, MCPS has created a parent liaison position that could be better used to increase parent involvement. The position has been in existence for four and a half years. The program is housed at Boydton Elementary School, but serves the entire division. The division provides the program a copier service contract, two sets of ink for the printer, white paper, a phone, and electricity. Contrary to Board policy on the use of school facilities for school-related functions, one school has required payment for parent involvement activities to cover custodial costs. In some districts, parental links are included on their Web site for ease of access to information for parents about parent involvement activities and resources. The program does not yet have a link in MCPS. One comment made during the diagnostic visit was that PTA participation at the middle and high schools is very low for the parents. This is an area where specifically designed outreach strategies are needed in school districts/divisions across the nation.

Documents available at the public forum during the site visit demonstrate the liaison's capitalizing on opportunities for public outreach. The parent liaison holds competitions to reward students with the highest parent attendance at events. In order to fund the competitions and programs held for parents two nights a week, the parent liaison solicits donations from local businesses (such as Home Depot and Walmart, and from the Mecklenburg Business Partnership). Sometimes Boydton Elementary and its PTA match donations. The program sponsors parent educational seminars on topics such as occupational therapy and the liaison summarizes program content and sends it to all staff in MCPS. The liaison also disseminates between 3,000 and 5,000 flyers via courier churches, day care centers, preschools, doctors' offices and hospitals. A loan library provides materials to schools to assist parents in educating their children.

Beyond the key positive impact that parent involvement has been demonstrated to have on student academic achievement, Title I regulations (Section 1118) specifically require that districts provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist schools in planning effective parent involvement to raise student achievement and school performance. This law further directs school divisions to monitor implementation of parent involvement policy annually.

Changing demographics in today's society necessitate re-thinking existing methods of parental involvement and considering the needs of parents from all backgrounds and educational levels. Much research documents that developing a long-range approach of outreach to parents and parent education reaps benefits in terms of student achievement, parent opinions of teacher and school efficacy, and community support.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-16:**

#### **Develop a comprehensive parent involvement plan for Mecklenburg County Public Schools.**

Many studies have found that when parents become involved in school activities, not only their attitudes improve, but those of their children and student achievement increase as well. In order



for parent involvement to have a significant effect on achievement, activities must be meaningful so that parents can see:

- a direct benefit to their children;
- a commitment from teachers and administrators that parents are important; and
- that what they, as parents, are doing makes a difference.

Demonstrated benefits of carefully designed parent involvement plans include:

- students perform better in schools;
- teachers have fewer problems with students and report greater satisfaction with their work;
- parents have more positive feelings about the school;
- parents are more likely to support school programs; and
- the community is more apt to offer financial and moral support for school-based efforts.

Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University has developed a multi-pronged approach to involving even the most reticent parents in their children’s education. This approach can serve the division as a template for developing a robust program that enlists parents as partners in their children’s education. In school districts/divisions across the country that have done this, student achievement and public support for the schools have risen. This practice provides a potent means, too, of ensuring that children from all walks of life have a supportive educational climate in their homes.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### **5.6 GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM**

Virginia’s “Regulations Governing the Educational Program for Gifted Students” mandate differentiated instructional opportunities for gifted students. The Commonwealth requires divisions to create uniform procedures that have common criteria for screening and identification. Referral must be open to school staff, parents, peers, students, and others. Virginia Administrative Code identifies eight criteria. Each division is required to address at least four criteria.

The Virginia Governor’s School Program is one aspect of the Commonwealth’s comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of gifted students. Governor’s Schools take various forms that offer unique opportunities within regions of the state. They include academic-year, summer residential, and summer regional programs. Divisions are also expected to offer options for gifted students who choose not to attend Governor’s Schools. The Governor’s Schools offer students and teachers opportunities to expand and enrich learning repertoires.



**FINDING**

MCPS has only recently focused attention on the quality and variety of its program for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). Although grounded in sincere intent to generate positive change, the approach has generated dissension. In the past several years, the program has been under the auspices of several departments. A new GATE coordinator in MCPS was hired this year and reports directly to the assistant superintendent. With the new focus on the GATE Program and expanded opportunities for students with high academic abilities, a comprehensive plan has been developed. Challenging the status quo has, expectedly, engendered concern and even reported opposition.

One indication of the need for a change is that, in contrast to normal referral patterns for determining eligibility for GATE programs, 86 percent of MCPS referrals are from parents, not teachers (13 percent). Also, in observations of general classroom instruction in MCPS schools by Evergreen consultants, the majority of instruction viewed did not reflect active, engaged activities for students. Extending plans for professional development intended to enrich instruction for high achieving students to teachers of all students will enhance learning for all MCPS students.

The proposed plan responds to loss of instructional time for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students due to schedule conflicts at present and proposes to introduce the international baccalaureate program at the middle school level. The plan also responds to the current pattern of GATE students having to make up work missed during GATE time with plans to replace make-up work with more meaningful, real-world assignments. The plan envisions a central location for the GATE Program without the addition of personnel.

Proposed changes address the needs of gifted and talented students. The plan proposes visionary opportunities to develop the potential of MCPS high ability students with hands-on, real-world applied learning, and academic challenges from elementary through high school.

MCPS high school students are currently offered chances for learning beyond traditional high school courses through the Early College Scholars Program which allows students to earn college credit in high school through, among other ways, dual enrollment or advanced placement (AP) as well as CATE certification training and Tech Prep courses. One advanced placement course and six dual enrollment courses are offered. MCPS also has many students involved in the Governor's School. One student is also enrolled in virtual AP biology. The rigor of some of the dual enrollment credit opportunities, however, is even questionable considering the lack of required academic preparation of instructors teaching those classes.

Proposed changes, and the way they have been generated, have prompted some principals to express concern that they had not been consulted in the development of the GATE Plan. Additionally, the GATE Coordinator is evaluating teachers in the gifted program, a commendable practice meant to monitor quality and ensure consistency for students. However, no clear parameters for the job or communication with principals regarding the purpose, make this novel initiative, as with any change, a possible source of dissension among administrators.



## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-17:**

**Continue plans to expand enrichment opportunities for MCPS students, but involve principals more concertedly in the discussions and decisions.**

The comprehensiveness and long-range plan for enriching learning experiences for MCPS students is commendable. However, without the involvement and consequent commitment of school administrators who are critical to the success of any programmatic change, effective implementation will be difficult at best. Also, giving all teachers the opportunity to learn strategies for hands-on, enriched learning experiences will contribute to improved achievement among all student groups.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

The MCPS provides six to eight dual enrollment courses at its high schools, depending on the location, during the school day with teachers who do not necessarily meet community college qualifications for instruction. These teachers are paid stipends for teaching during the regular school hours. The extracurricular contracts (FY 2007) show that ten teachers receive stipends of \$1,138 each for teaching dual enrollment classes in MCPS high schools during the regular school day. This amounts to a total cost of \$11,380 per year paid to teachers teaching a college course.

Only four of the ten teachers receiving the supplement at present have the 18 hours required by the community college system to teach dual enrollment courses. Teachers of dual enrollment classes are expected to have the same credentials that those teaching at the community college must.

A canvass of state colleges regarding their policies on acceptance of dual enrollment and/or advanced placement credits from state high schools conducted by division personnel reveals that they accept dual enrollment credits taught on college campuses without reservation as well as advanced placement credits for students passing advanced placement exams, but not necessarily for courses taught on high school campuses. This finding adds impetus to the need for MCPS personnel teaching dual enrollment courses to have the requisite academic preparation to ensure rigor in the courses offered on MCPS campuses.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-18:**

**Eliminate stipends for teaching dual enrollment classes during the school day, and ensure that all dual enrollment teachers are qualified to do so.**



Paying stipends for teachers to have the additional responsibility of creating a syllabus that can be re-used with minor adjustments and assigning grades on a different grading scale is wasteful of division resources. All teachers are expected to comply with requests by their principals for duties related to instruction. These additional responsibilities are within those bounds. The intent of dual enrollment courses offered high school students is for them to earn college-level credit with instructors who are qualified according to community college requirements. The division will more assuredly provide such rigorous courses when its teachers meet the community college standards. Additionally, the division should expand canvassing colleges to ensure that courses offered on high school campuses will earn college credit for MCPS graduates.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

At \$1,138 each, eliminating ten supplements would save the division \$11,380 annually.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Eliminate Stipends for Dual Enrollment Teachers	\$11,380	\$11,380	\$11,380	\$11,380	\$11,380

**5.7 INSTRUCTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Teacher preparation and the ability to apply lessons learned during professional development experiences are essential to effective instruction. The ability of teachers to differentiate instruction for all students, and not just those who are identified in need of special support, is also the foundation for a school division’s ability to reach the lofty goals of 100 percent proficiency for all students envisioned in *No Child Left Behind*.

**FINDING**

An examination of the school calendar for the MCPS shows that the vast majority of planned time allocated for professional development occurs at the beginning of the school year. People interviewed stated that staff development also takes place after school, with no supplement, and sometimes during days scheduled for teacher work days. Using teacher work days for professional development and meetings prevents them from conducting the work for which the days were originally scheduled, such as completing report cards. This practice also possibly indicates the division’s awareness of the need for additional professional development days throughout the school year. No one reported a structure within MCPS that provides any feedback on the effective application of professional development in classrooms, but again, staff noted student SOL scores as evidence of application. This finding does not demonstrate a clear relationship between the expenditure of funds for training and a return on that investment.

Research shows that, when five components are scientifically incorporated into a comprehensive professional development process, up to 95 percent of the participants transferred the skill into classroom practice. Those five components are:



- imparting knowledge;
- demonstrating or modeling the new strategy or skill;
- practicing in a protected or simulated setting;
- promptly providing structured and open-ended feedback about performance of the practice; and
- coaching—providing follow up attention to help with the at-home implementation.

All five are essential for transfer of skills or new behaviors into classroom practice.

The Teacher Expectation Student Performance (TESA) approach to professional development offers a model where teachers are given release time and paired with partners to observe the implementation of specific components of professional development. This approach is research-based and has a proven track record of effectiveness for more than a decade. The division should consider modeling its staff development coaching after TESA.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 5-19:**

**Change the staff development calendar to stagger training opportunities throughout the school year, and consider embedding elements of TESA coaching into MCPS professional development activities as one means of monitoring application.**

Coaching entails support and feedback for teachers as they apply the learning in classrooms. Research by Bush (1984) examined the effect that individual components contributed toward transfer of skills or new behaviors into classroom practice. He found that, when teachers were provided the first four of the components identified, only 16-19 percent of teachers transferred the knowledge into practice. It was the fifth element, coaching, that resulted in 95 percent of teachers incorporating the skills and knowledge into their classroom practice. Thus, in order for division funds spent on professional development to reap their intended purpose and be cost-effective expenditures, the school calendar should be changed to offer opportunities throughout the year for teachers to receive feedback, and practice and discuss what works and barriers to effective application. Including monitoring of application of professional development from the classroom to the central office should also be included in conjunction with **Recommendation 5-6**.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



## 5.8 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

A November 2006 *Chicago Times* article notes:

*In the past, vocational education was seen as a second-class education, the path for students who planned to skip college and head directly into the workforce. But a national focus on academic accountability and a high-tech economy that demands more highly skilled workers has forced a change: Vocational education is now for college-bound students.*

Formerly perceived lax standards for “vocational” courses have been replaced with rigor and reinforced relevance. In infusing career and technical education (CTE) programs with rigor and relevance, districts around the country are integrating standards from academic programs into activities and expectations for CTE courses. It is even more imperative that districts offering CTE programs look at labor-market trends to identify growth areas to match applicants for jobs with qualified high school candidates. They must also prepare CTE graduates for success in related programs at postsecondary institutions. Many districts form partnerships with external entities to reinvigorate their vocational programs. By reaching out to businesses, which have the vacancies and understand the preparatory needs, schools are using corporate knowledge and tapping into their resources to strengthen their programs. In many instances, businesses are investing in CTE programs with materials, equipment, and work experiences and internships. Such partnerships serve the needs of both the schools and the business community.

### FINDING

The MCPS Career and Technical Education (CATE) Program offers a broad diversity of learning experiences to its students. Success stories related during the site visit reflected the ability of MCPS CATE graduates to apply their learning to real-world applications after graduation. One example of a local graduate with a successful landscaping business provided testament to the program. A review of the high school program of studies reveals that students are offered opportunities for certification training by the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) in 12 areas including A+ computer repair technician, nurse aide, greenhouse operator, real estate sales, and emergency medical technician.

Student can receive NOCTI credential training in numerous courses in agriculture and natural resources, business and information technology, trade and industrial, and family and consumer sciences. The program of studies shows a strong partnership with the Southside Virginia Community College in tech-prep courses offered students in health and medical sciences, business and information technology, marketing, trade and industrial education, and criminal justice.

Current plans for expansion include a robotics program at the secondary level with hopes of expanding it to the elementary level for GATE students and a class on starting a business. Some CATE teachers have begun working with students in the Alternative Education Program. The program has adopted aggressive approaches to recruiting students to courses, including a CATE Web site on the MCPS Web site. Instruction observed in classroom visits by Evergreen consultants showed that the majority of integration of technology into teaching took place in CATE classes.



## COMMENDATION

**The Career and Technical Education Program is commended for its comprehensive approach to offering students a broad array of courses that meaningfully relate high school instruction to postgraduation career opportunities.**

### **5.9 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

Dropouts incur personal costs in the form of reduced earnings, higher chances of being unemployed, and higher likelihood of involvement with crime. Social costs appear in the form of lower total productivity of the labor force, lower tax collections, and higher needs for public services such as welfare, health, and employment services. The following findings are reported:

- graduates show higher earnings than dropouts;
- dropouts show higher unemployment rates than graduates;
- dropouts are three times more likely than graduates to live in poverty;
- dropouts are overrepresented in the populations served by public services;
- dropouts report higher public assistance subsidies than do graduates; and
- a higher proportion of dropouts than graduates reported serious trouble with the law.

Alternative education programs are frequently targeted for students who are at risk of dropping out of school, usually because of behavior, but sometimes because the traditional school learning environment does not fit students' learning styles.

## FINDING

Secondary students from the entire division are served in the alternative program located at Blue Stone High School. Those riding buses from the eastern end of the division routinely arrive late and leave early, reportedly losing between 35 and 40 minutes of instruction at both ends of the day. Interviewees reported that class periods in the program range between 45 and 55 minutes. Consequently, students from the east side of the county lose almost two full periods of instruction each day. In a year's time, this amounts to a loss of 211 hours (a minimum of 70 minutes x 180 days=12,600 minutes/60=210 hours or 38 instructional days at a minimum of the 5.5 hours the state requires for each instructional day and 990 hours required in grades 1-12. This situation creates an enormous disparity between the education provided students from different geographic parts of Mecklenburg County.

Many staff interviewed stated that the division leadership is committed to equity of educational opportunity for all students. This finding contrasts dramatically with that philosophy and practice. Citing statistics that, in the 2004-05 school year, 1,861 students in grades 6-12 were suspended 4,277 academic days, division documents exhibit an awareness of the need to change the program instructionally and structurally. Documentation notes the need for individualization, support structures, engaging instruction and integrated curriculum.

Additionally, the facility in which the program is located does not convey a sense of esteem for the staff and students in the program. As noted earlier, it is enclosed in a fence with barbed wire at the top along with storage of outdoor equipment and vehicles. The location does, however,



offer students the opportunity to be involved with some career and technology programs through the volunteerism of those teachers. MCPS has recognized the need for an alternative location for the program in its proposal to move the program to the vacant South Hill Primary School.

Exhibit 5-11 shows Evergreen survey results.

**Exhibit 5-11**  
**Evergreen Survey Results**  
**Effectiveness of Alternative Education Programs**  
**MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The division has effective programs for Alternative Education.				
<b>Central Office Administrators</b>	31.8%	54.5%	63.6%	11.6%
<b>Principals</b>	27.8%	50.0%	59.5%	18.9%
<b>Teachers</b>	40.3%	29.1%	52.8%	23.3%

*Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 5-20:**

**Relocate the alternative education program to a site where all students have the opportunity for the same instructional time.**

The program is not currently housed in a central location, preventing all students from receiving the same instructional time. By moving the program to a central site, students from throughout Mecklenburg County will have the opportunity for equivalent learning experiences.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The division has already anticipated estimated costs of \$15,000 for facilities upgrades for moving the program in its proposal for alternative education.

**FINDING**

The alternative education program is staffed by one administrator, four teachers, two instructional aides (with one serving also as a bus monitor), one counselor/social worker, and one receptionist/office assistant, and serves a reported maximum of 30 students. Obtaining an accurate current enrollment for the program during the site visit was challenging, but the current enrollment at report writing was 18 students. The number of students in this program does not justify the need for the high number of current staff.

Comparison staffing levels of alternative education programs in peer divisions in **Exhibit 5-12** shows that the majority of their programs serves more students than the MCPS program, but



have far fewer staff, even when they are not located on a high school campus as the MCPS program.

**Exhibit 5-12  
Current Alternative Education Staffing Levels  
In Mecklenburg and Peer Divisions  
2006-07 School Year**

School Division	Full-time Administrator	Students Currently Served	Full-time Teachers	Student to Teacher Ratio	Part-time Teachers	Instructional Aides	Full-time Guidance/Social Worker
Mecklenburg County	1	18	4	4.5:1	0	3+ 1 receptionist/ office assistant	1
Dinwiddie County	0	41	*4	10.25:1	0	0	Home schools
Gloucester County	Joint program with King William	-	-	-	-	-	-
Halifax County	1	35	6	5.8:1	0	2	Part-time
Isle of Wight County	1	27	3	9:1	0	0	Adjacent school's
Pulaski County	*1	22	2		0	1	0
Wythe County	Also CTE principal and Director	20	1	11.4:1	***1.5	1	Board Social Worker
<b>Division Average</b>	<b>.75</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6.1:1</b>	<b>**</b>	<b>.8</b>	<b>No full-time in peers</b>

Source: Evergreen Phone Interviews with staff in Peer Divisions, 2007.

\*Program administrator is a teacher on assignment.

\*\* Performs counseling.

\*\*\*Not sure how many periods they teach.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 5-21:**

**Reduce the staff of the MCPS Alternative Program to parallel peer divisions.**

With the lowest number of students served, the lowest student: teacher ratio, and the highest number of support staff, MCPS should be able to provide the same level of services as peer divisions with fewer staff. Some of the other programs are on high school campuses and others are in separate facilities.

Evergreen consultants recommend a reduction in staff of:

- two teachers;
- three teacher assistants; and
- one guidance counselor.



**FISCAL IMPACT**

The average ten-month teaching salary is \$36,272 plus benefits of \$10,156 for a total cost of \$46,428 per position.

The average teacher aide costs are calculated on an average of six- and seven-hour positions of \$13,717, plus benefits of \$3,841 for a total cost of \$17,558 per position.

The average guidance counselor cost is calculated at a ten-month position plus 20 days with a master’s degree for a cost of \$42,392 plus benefits of \$11,870 for a total of \$54,262.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Eliminate Two Teachers	\$92,856	\$92,856	\$92,856	\$92,856	\$92,856
Eliminate Three Teaching Assistants	\$52,674	\$52,674	\$52,674	\$52,674	\$52,674
Eliminate One Guidance Counselor	\$54,262	\$54,262	\$54,262	\$54,262	\$54,262
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>\$199,792</b>	<b>\$199,792</b>	<b>\$199,792</b>	<b>\$199,792</b>	<b>\$199,792</b>



**CHAPTER 6:**  
***FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT***



## *Chapter 6*

# ***FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT***

This chapter presents Evergreen Solutions review of facilities use and management in Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS). The five sections in this chapter are:

- 6.1 Capital Planning and Facilities Use
- 6.2 Facilities Maintenance
- 6.3 Custodial Services
- 6.4 Energy Management
- 6.5 Community Use of Facilities

Well-planned facilities are based on the educational program and on accurate student enrollment projections. The design process should have input from all stakeholders, including administrators, principals, teachers, security specialists, parents, students, taxpayers, and the maintenance and operations staff.

The selection of building materials, interior finishes, hardware, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and of other major building components, should be made according to life-cycle cost analyses for an optimum total cost of construction, operations, and maintenance. The maintenance and operation of the facilities must be accomplished in an efficient and effective manner in order to provide a safe and secure environment that supports the educational program, and efficiently utilizes the school district's resources. Efficiencies and economies of maintenance and operation are critical to ensuring that resources for direct instruction are maximized. On the other hand, extreme actions to reduce the cost of maintenance and operations can result in higher than acceptable costs of repair and replacement in the years to come. Consequently, a balance must be achieved between reasonable economies and unreasonable cost slashing.

A fair and enforceable policy of community use of facilities is essential to an elimination of a cost burden on the school division, while maximizing the availability of facilities after hours to all legitimate community organizations and functions.

### **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Facilities use and management for Mecklenburg County Public Schools is the primary responsibility of the director of procurement and maintenance, who reports to the superintendent. School buildings and ancillary facilities are acceptably maintained and cleaned, but no all-encompassing preventive maintenance program appears to be in place. No neglect or significant deferred maintenance are in evidence on any of the permanent facilities. However, the inventory of mobile classroom units is, for the most part, in serious disrepair.

A new elementary school has been completed within the past year. A need exists to close two elementary schools because of declining population. These schools can be re-used as a new MCPS administration complex and as the MCPS Alternative Education Center. Some minor



improvements have been made to existing schools in the areas of safety and security, electrical service, and HVAC.

Most prominent among the recommendations are:

- develop and implement a Facilities Master Plan process and strategy;
- eliminate mobile classrooms in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan;
- replace the current administrative complex with a more suitable facility, in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan;
- prepare and implement a strategy for the achievement of full adequacy and equity of all school facilities in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan;
- review all policies concerning facilities in the MCPS School Board Policy Manual and incorporate all policy requirements in the preparation of the proposed Facilities Master Plan strategy;
- develop and implement a systematic energy management and conservation program for Mecklenburg County Public Schools, as part of the overall Facility Master Plan implementation; and
- develop a preventive maintenance schedule based on recommendations from a respected facilities maintenance organization, as part of the Facilities Master Plan.

## **6.1 CAPITAL PLANNING AND FACILITIES USE**

Engaging in planning for facilities is one of the most important activities of a school board and administration. The essential activities of a facilities planning process include:

- the development of facilities plans that are responsive to the educational needs of the students and of related educational programs;
- the optimum utilization of existing facilities to ensure that overbuilding does not occur;
- accurate student demographic information that ensures new facilities are located in appropriate geographic areas of the school district, are designed to the optimum capacity, and are expandable if necessary; and
- a clear understanding of the safety and security needs of the contemporary educational setting.

### **FINDING**

MCPS has recently completed its first major new school building in several decades—South Hill Elementary School. The last major building additions were completed in 1980. This new



building was the direct result of recommendations made in the “Facility Study for Mecklenburg County Public Schools,” dated May 15, 2000. The architectural, engineering and planning firm of Moseley, Harris and McClintock authored the study and produced the design and construction documents for the school.

The new K-5 building has a generous total floor area of 96,106 square feet, including a state-of-the-art elementary school gymnasium and media center. The final cost is estimated to be approximately \$14 million, or \$145 per square foot. It was designed and constructed with foresight and an understanding of current dollar cost-savings versus future inflated costs. The school will have sufficient room to grow for the foreseeable future. In addition, the floor plan and the building core are designed for possible expansion. The total school membership as of January 2007 is 583, with a total current capacity of approximately 800.

The choice of materials for optimum life-cycle cost includes terrazzo in the circulation areas, masonry on all major corridor walls, and standing seam metal roofing.

A major and persistent roof leak in the area of a non-rectangular geometry of the building has been a source of frustration, and the genesis of litigation between the owner, the architect, and the contractor. However, the overall success of the new building is not markedly diminished by this roof leak.

## COMMENDATION

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for commissioning a state-of-the-art elementary school to provide better facilities for educating its K-5 population in the eastern area of Mecklenburg County.**

## FINDING

Mecklenburg County Public Schools is not currently engaged in the perpetual facilities planning effort prescribed by its own policies. The MCPS Policy Manual requires the division to conduct an ongoing facility planning effort for new schools and/or the upgrading, renovation or expansion of existing facilities.

**Exhibit 6-1** displays the text of the policy manual. Specifically at issue is the sentence in the excerpt of **Exhibit 6-1**:

*The Superintendent shall present to the Board annually a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program which will include recommendations regarding timing, location, costs and savings associated, with:*

- *new building requirements; and*
- *restoration and renewal of existing school facilities.*



**Exhibit 6-1  
Excerpt on Facilities from MCPS Policy Manual**

File: FB
<b>FACILITIES PLANNING</b>
<p>The School Board is responsible for the regular operation and orderly development of all school facilities. The Board will concern itself with both short and long-range planning.</p> <p>The superintendent shall present to the School Board annually a five-year Capital Improvement Program which will include recommendations regarding timing, location, costs and savings associated with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New building requirements</li> <li>2. Restoration and renewal of existing school facilities</li> </ol> <p>Decisions pertaining to educational specifications for new buildings and renovations may be developed after input from a broad based committee representing the staff and community. The committee will present, to the superintendent its recommendations for facilities utilization, development and closure.</p> <p>Recommendations to the School Board will be supported by researched facts and figures that support the feasibility and need for construction and/or renovation.</p> <p>Five-year enrollment projections will be prepared under the direction of the superintendent and will be reviewed and brought up-to-date annually.</p> <p>Adopted: January 21, 1997 Revised: September 17, 2001</p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Legal Ref.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, sections 22.1-78, 22.1-79(3).</p>

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools Policy Manual, 2007.

While the aforementioned May 2000 Moseley, Harris & McClintock Facilities Study may have satisfied the policy requirement in 2000 or 2001, no follow-up to the study is evident. The only study recommendation fulfilled is the design and construction of South Hill Elementary School. Thereafter, only a minor effort related to upgrading in existing buildings has been carried out in the areas of:

- safety and security;
- electrical service; and
- HVAC.

Several recommendations for new construction and renovations remain in the 2000 Moseley Study, but they have not been updated and are, therefore, no longer able to be implemented as then written.



## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 6-1:**

#### **Develop and implement a Facilities Master Plan process and strategy.**

A strong effort should be made by the MCPS School Board to develop and implement a perpetual Facilities Master Plan as the tool that will govern future annual funding of facilities-related needs. The Facilities Master Plan should include a committee structure that involves community experts, school district staff, and community members. An over-arching committee – the Facilities Master Plan team – should be responsible for formulating each annual funding request on the basis of the first five years of a Long-Range Facilities Plan. This team should include members of the School Board, facilities and real estate experts, demographers, educators, and the superintendent. Extensive divisionwide and area public meetings for input and discussion should be held, and repeated annually.

Focus committees should be considered in the following areas:

- Educational Process
- Facilities and Real Estate
- Financing of School Facilities

The first annual funding request using the Facilities Master Plan’s process and strategies should be planned for the 2008-09 school year. Once this annual funding request has been made and approved, the planning cycle should automatically begin again—an additional year is added to make the time horizon five years once again, and a new cycle of planning begins, reflecting the funding that has been approved, and the funding in need to be considered.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Facilities Master Plan as recommended above is not ready for implementation prior to this year’s deadline for budget requests. The committee structure, public meetings and other procedures of the Facilities Master Plan should be ready for use in formulating the 2008-09 facilities funding request.

The requirement to provide detailed annual funding requests, and forecasts of future funding requests, is intended to build gradually an atmosphere of steady trust and cooperation between the School Board, the administration, and the Mecklenburg County Commission. The fiscal impact of this recommendation is therefore one of a perpetual facilities planning effort, with a time horizon of five years that allows for better and more streamlined fiscal and physical planning. Actual costs will depend on the amount of funding sought each year, and the method of financing.

Sufficient in-house expertise to implement this recommendation may not exist within MCPS. Consulting assistance may cost from \$50,000 to \$100,000 depending upon internal capacity.



## FINDING

Many mobile classrooms in the MCPS inventory are in a state of disrepair and should be eliminated. In addition, as new and renovated facilities are planned, using the facilities master planning process, the number of mobile classrooms can and should be reduced.

As significant numbers of mobile units can be eliminated, the opportunity exists to accomplish one or more of the following:

- scrap the oldest, least serviceable mobile units in the MCPS inventory;
- include some of the best units remaining in the stock used for temporary relocation of students during construction projects; and
- sell any surplus units to other schools systems or to wholesalers.

**Exhibit 6-2** lists the mobile units currently in the MCPS inventory.

**Exhibit 6-2**  
**Mobile Units in the MCPS Inventory**  
**2006-07 School Year**

School	Mobile Units
Boydton Elementary	3
Buckhorn Elementary	2
Chase City Elementary	7
Clarksville Elementary	5
LaCrosse Elementary	5
New South Hill Elementary	0
Blue Stone Middle	4
Park View Middle	8
Blue Stone High	2
Park View High	1
<b>Total Mobile Units</b>	<b>37*</b>

*Source: Prepared by Evergreen from data supplied by MCPS*

\*Note: an additional grouping of mobile units comprises the MCPS Administrative Complex in Boydton.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 6-2:

**Develop and implement a strategy for the elimination of mobile classrooms in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan (Recommendation 6-1).**

Two principles should govern this strategy:

- By 2012, all mobile units in MCPS' inventory should be used solely as interim shelter during a time when students are displaced due to renovations, additions, or other construction.



- The Facilities Master Plan should result in no further mobile units being required due to a miscalculation of student populations and demographics at MCPS school buildings, or due to procrastination and indecision.

The following strategic elements should be pursued:

- remove immediately those mobile units that are not needed at the present time and store them if they are salvageable or surplus them if they are not worth keeping; and
- remove gradually all other mobile units from schools as the Facility Master Plan is implemented, and store them if they are salvageable or surplus them if they are not worth keeping.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Potential savings realized from the removal of mobile units include:

- electricity and other utility costs (mobile units are extraordinarily energy-inefficient); and
- maintenance and cleaning costs (mobile units are costly to maintain and clean).

Evergreen estimates conservatively an annual energy savings of \$500 per eliminated mobile unit. Savings in maintenance and cleaning costs are similarly estimated at \$500 per year. Assuming that ten of the 37 mobile units now used will remain ready for use during construction, the savings timeline reflects the elimination of 27 units gradually, beginning in 2008-09. This fiscal impact does not include the disposition of the mobile units that now comprise the MCPS administrative complex. These calculations are part of **Recommendation 6-3**.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Reduce Number of Mobile Classrooms	\$0	\$7,000	\$12,000	\$17,000	\$27,000

**FINDING**

MCPS operates from a collection of mobile units that represent an inadequate and inefficient administrative headquarters, casting a negative reflection on Mecklenburg County Public Schools.

The MCPS administrative complex is striking to most first-time visitors because of its dilapidation, unpretentiousness, and poor image portrayal. While it is common for some schools to maintain an administrative building that may be nearly too palatial and ornate, the MCPS facility has long ago outlived its serviceability and usefulness. According to various accounts by MCPS officials, the current configuration of mobile units was placed in its current location a little over 30 years ago as a temporary measure until a nearby historic school building could be converted from educational uses to the new MCPS headquarters. The collection of mobile units remains, while the historic school has not been converted. The historic building has over the past three decades been allowed to deteriorate unused to a point where its restorability at a reasonable



cost is now questionable. In addition, poor drainage from the adjacent gravel parking lot steers water run-off directly under the mobile units, adding further aggravation to the task of working in these buildings.

Maintenance and custodial efforts at the MCPS administrative complex have been successful in keeping the facility's cleanliness barely acceptable, and its marginal utility intact. However, recent decisions to place new exterior sheathing to cover deteriorated, mold-infested siding are no longer acceptable maintenance measures.

It remains unclear how or why the original intention to move into the historic school was deferred and postponed for over three decades. It is clear, however, that action must be taken now to move the administrative staff into a facility that is both safe and serviceable.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 6-3:**

#### **Replace the current administrative complex with a more suitable facility and in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan.**

All reasonable options should be considered as part of the Facilities Master Plan strategy, but lengthy postponements and deferrals should not be tolerated. At the present time, the following three options have been identified:

- Close Boydton Elementary School due to its shrinking projected enrollment and convert it to the new MCPS Administration Building.
  - The location is in Boydton and a short distance from the current administrative complex and can be easily reached.
  - The existing Boydton Elementary School has ample facilities for offices, conference rooms, and storage facilities, but bathrooms will require major upgrades.
  - The cafeteria, with a table and chair capacity of 160 and a chair capacity of almost 500, can be easily converted to the regular meeting room of the School Board.
  - The parking lot is paved.
  - The building has had HVAC, electrical, and safety upgrades.
- Close Buckhorn Elementary School, due to its shrinking projected enrollment, and convert it to the new MCPS administration building. This option appears less attractive due to the remote location of the school.
- As intended originally, restore the historic school building located near the current administrative complex for re-use as the new MCPS administration building. This building may be in need of extensive and costly work before it is safe for occupancy and re-use. In addition, the building may not be large enough to accommodate all



administrative space needs, and thus require an addition to be built. Finally, as a two-story building, an elevator will be required for full accessibility. According to MCPS administrators, the building is not owned by the school division, but by the county.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This fiscal impact analysis assumes that the first option is chosen, as it is the most likely one to be selected at this point.

- The conservatively estimated cost to renovate Boydton Elementary School as the new MCPS administration facility is \$1 million. This includes all furnishings, fixtures, and equipment.
- The demolition and removal cost for the mobile units of the former administrative complex is \$200,000.
- The energy and other savings from no longer operating the former administrative complex is estimated at \$25,000 annually. Telephone and other communications costs are not included as they are expected to continue. The energy costs for Boydton Elementary School have not been added or subtracted as they are expected to continue.

The timeline below assumes the major costs of this recommendation to occur in the 2008-09 school year, with the savings activated in the subsequent year. Instead of having the construction and demolition costs occur in one school year, these costs could be amortized.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Relocate Central Office	\$0	(\$1,200,000)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000

**FINDING**

Over the years, some MCPS schools have become overcrowded, while other schools have declined in student population. This has been true especially at the elementary school level. Unfortunately, this shift in school membership has not been addressed except to add temporary classrooms to overcrowded environments.

**Exhibit 6-3** shows central office administrator, principal, and teacher survey results in response to the statement “Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.” Results illustrate the dire need for improvement in this area. Less than five percent of administrators *agree* or *strongly* agree with this statement. Among principals and teachers, the same response is 11.2 percent and 19.5 percent, respectively.



**Exhibit 6-3**  
**Central Office Administrators, Principals and Teachers Survey Results on**  
**Space and Facilities Issues in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and**  
**Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Respondent Group	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Central Office Administrators	4.6%	90.9%	55.4%	38.0%
Principals	11.2%	83.3%	54.3%	41.4%
Teachers	19.5%	73.7%	43.0%	47.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 6-4** compares current student population with core capacities in cafeterias, media centers, and, where applicable, gymnasiums, in all of the MCPS facilities.

**Exhibit 6-4**  
**Current School Membership Compared to Core Capacities**  
**2006-07 School Year**

School	January 2007 Membership	Cafeteria Table & Chair Capacity	Cafeteria Chair Capacity	Media Center Capacity	Gymnasium Bleacher Capacity
Boydton	143	160	493	<b>47</b>	--
Buckhorn	242	198	569	<b>49</b>	--
Chase City	505	<b>198</b>	553	<b>49</b>	--
Clarksville	368	<b>214</b>	651	<b>49</b>	--
LaCrosse	309	<b>198</b>	569	<b>49</b>	--
Blue Stone	528	<b>189</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>503</b>
Park View	716	<b>189</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>503</b>
Blue Stone	717	<b>186</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>170</b>	1,342
Park View	716	<b>186</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>170</b>	1,342

Source: Prepared by Evergreen Solutions from data supplied by Mecklenburg County Public School, 2007. **Bold** figures indicate overcapacity situations.

These inequities due to overcapacity and undercapacity became even more pronounced when South Hill Elementary School was programmed, designed and constructed in response to recommendations in the facility study by Moseley, Harris and McClintock, completed in May 2000. This elementary school has sufficient capacity to accommodate up to 800 students with a fully ample media center, cafeteria, and gymnasium.

In addition, the school allowed two other outdated schools to be closed: South Hill Primary School and South Hill Elementary School. However, no other major actions, options or recommendations generated by that report have been implemented. This lack of action has left MCPS with two underpopulated elementary schools, one with extreme overcrowding problems, and two with serious and worsening crowding conditions. In nearly all cases, insufficient core capacities exist for the cafeterias, the media centers, and the gymnasiums.



## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 6-4:**

#### **Prepare and implement a strategy for the achievement of full adequacy and equity of all school facilities in conjunction with the Facilities Master Plan.**

The following premises should be observed as part of an adequacy/equity strategy:

- According to several MCPS officials, political power distribution is not equal across Mecklenburg County. However, political power disparities should not be allowed to let school facility inequities fester. All students in Mecklenburg County should have access to adequate and equitable facilities.
- Adequacy is defined as a sufficient quantity and quality of learning and teaching resources; equity is an evenhandedness of resource distribution.

The following types of actions should be carefully considered and evaluated as part of an adequacy and equity strategy:

- a new elementary school on Mecklenburg County's west side, similar in size and configuration as the new South Hill Elementary School (such a school should permit the closing of the underpopulated Boydton and Buckhorn Elementary Schools);
- the adaptive re-use of Boydton Elementary School as the MCPS administration building;
- the adaptive re-use of Buckhorn Elementary School as the MCPS alternative education facility;
- additions to all remaining elementary, middle and high schools to reach an acceptable core capacity and state-of-the-art status in the kitchen, cafeteria, and media center areas;
- additions of gymnasiums at all remaining elementary schools; and
- any other reasonable ideas for advancing the capital programs of MCPS.

According to evaluations by the Evergreen team, there appears to be no need or justification at this time for new construction of any facility, except for an elementary school on the county's west side. In the opinion of Evergreen, all other inequities or deficiencies in the current facilities inventory MCPS can be remedied with additions to existing school facilities. This includes the two existing high schools.

A significant number of persons have raised the following issue: Could savings be achieved by operating one high school versus two? It is assumed that this idea would require the construction of a new high school in a central location (i.e. near the MCPS population center). It is assumed further that the two existing high schools would be sold for other uses, including possible private educational functions. There appears to be no need to use the



existing high schools for other purposes by the school division. A brief estimate follows in **Exhibit 6-5**. This is a preliminary estimate. It should be used only as a rough guideline.

It appears that a one-time savings of \$10,000,000, and an annual net savings of \$175,000 will in part offset the estimated \$20,000,000 construction cost for a new single high school. However, it will take up to 20 years before a true net savings is realized from the construction of one central high school.

**Exhibit 6-5  
Estimated Costs of Operating One High School Versus Two**

Cost Category	Estimated Cost (Savings)
Projected construction cost for new high school of 1,500 student population	\$20,000,000
Sale of existing high schools to private user(s)	(\$10,000,000)
Staffing cost: small annual savings due to a slightly smaller number and lower rank of administrators; no expectation of savings in number of teaching staff	(\$150,000) annually
Utility cost of new school (savings due to improved energy efficiency)	(\$100,000) Annually
Projected transportation costs for new high school of 1,500 student population	\$75,000 annually

*Source: Prepared by Evergreen Solutions in part from data supplied by Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2007.*

Evergreen does not recommend the construction of a new high school to replace the two existing high schools at this time. The delayed savings of such a move does not appear to have a sufficiently significant impact, while the added debt service would initially be a significant burden on the already financially challenged school division.

In addition to the delayed savings, the reduction from two high schools to one must not only be viewed from a cost perspective. Social factors are also an important consideration. Unless a careful public relations effort is conducted, the merging of two high schools into one central high school may be viewed by the politically less powerful western half of the county as the elimination of its high school, along with its traditions and history. In a county where many families have traditionally remained for many generations, existing high school rivalries, traditions, and legacies are tangible, and a serious part of life.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is tied closely to the progress of the Facilities Master Plan. In the timeline below, the annual cost of debt service of \$3,455,000 on a principal of \$32,000,000 is shown, reflecting the following preliminary estimated costs:

- A new elementary school on the county’s west side, similar in size and configuration as the new South Hill Elementary School - \$15,000,000.



- The adaptive re-use of Boydton Elementary School as the MCPS administration building - \$1,350,000.
- The adaptive re-use of Buckhorn Elementary School as the MCPS alternative education facility - \$100,000. Only minor adjustments appear to be required for this conversion.
- Additions to all remaining three elementary, two middle, and two high schools to reach an acceptable core capacity and state-of-the-art status in the kitchen, cafeteria and media center areas - \$7,000,000.
- Additions of gymnasiums at all three remaining elementary schools - \$9,000,000.

The above estimates are preliminary, based on available cost data from the Virginia Department of Education for FY 2005-06. Because of their preliminary nature, the figures have been rounded. See <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Finance/Facilities/cost2006.pdf> for details of these data. Approximate new construction costs per square foot, including site and site improvements, for FY 2005-06 are \$ 171 for elementary, \$169 for middle, and \$184 for high schools. Additions and renovations are approximately \$96 per square foot. Future costs may be higher or the same; it is unlikely that they will be lower. No attempt has been made in this chapter to forecast and account for inflation.

A total estimated debt service on a principal of \$32,000,000 at nine percent over 20 years requires an annual payment of approximately \$3,455,000.

**Note:** If a new high school is constructed, the total estimated principal increases to \$49,000,000 due to \$3,000,000 saved on additions to the two existing high schools, and a \$20,000,000 construction cost for the new high school. Once the two existing high schools have been sold, that principal may be reduced by the estimated \$10,000,000 sale price. This increase in the amount financed initially is \$1,835,000 per year, for a total of \$5,290,000. Once the existing high schools are sold, the principal drops by \$10,000,000, and to an annual payment of \$4,373,000. There is, however, no guarantee that the two existing schools can be sold within that time period, and for the estimated amount of \$5,000,000 each. This cost estimate is not included below since it is not being recommended by Evergreen consultants.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Support New Construction and Renovation	\$0	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)

**FINDING**

The recent project to plan, program, design, and construct the new South Hill Elementary School was the first major effort to acquire a new school building by MCPS since 1980, when several major school additions were completed. Consequently, little or no institutional memory has remained with respect to the conduct of major capital programs or projects. In addition, the MCPS policy requiring an annual capital program funding request was frequently left unmet



since 1980. Therefore, a fundamental lack of knowledge and experience existed, and still exists, among MCPS facilities staff.

Although a clerk of the works was hired to conform with School Board Policy (see **Exhibit 6-6**), there may have been insufficient formal oversight to best protect the interests of the school division during the construction of South Hill Elementary School. As the exhibit shows, the supervisory requirement is intense, requires daily on-site presence, the keeping of detailed records, and negotiations on behalf of the owner with the contractor. Any observed irregularities or non-conformances between the construction and the drawings and specifications must be reported. Therefore, any project representative, clerk of the works or project inspector, as described in the policy manual, should be hired full-time, and be fully qualified to serve on a peer-to-peer basis with the architect and the contractor.

**Exhibit 6-6**  
**School Board Policy on Supervision of Construction**

File: FEG

**SUPERVISION OF CONSTRUCTION**

The School Board shall require from personnel employed by and directly responsible to the school division, cooperating with the appropriate engineering personnel, a review of the architect's activities in his/her supervision of building construction.

This person is to be known as construction representative, project inspector, or clerk of the works, with duties to be commensurate with the magnitude of the project.

Duties include:

1. Daily project surveillance;
2. The preparation of a daily construction diary outlining the various disciplines of work being accomplished, weather conditions, numbers and types of mechanics on the job, materials delivered and delaying factors if any, and estimated weekly percent of completion, interpretation of plans and specifications and interface with the architect/engineer and the project contractor;
3. Reports any and all matters requiring contract action to the purchasing agent;
4. Reviews all partial payments received from the architect engineer and signs for payment; and
5. Upon substantial completion, coordinates punch list with architect/engineer for transmittal to contractor; approves final completion payment.

Assurance of this supervision will be furnished by the Board to the state supervisor of school buildings prior to approval of plans and specifications for construction.  
Adopted: January 21, 1997

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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, sections 22.1-138; 22.1-139; 22.1-140 Virginia State Department of Education, School Building Manual

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools Board Policy Manual, 2007



## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 6-5:**

**Review all policies concerning facilities in the MCPS School Board Policy Manual and incorporate all policy requirements in the preparation of the proposed Facilities Master Plan strategy.**

The School Board's Policy Manual is available online at <http://www.meck.k12.va.us/policy/>. Under facilities, the following policies are listed:

- facilities development;
- facilities planning;
- playground equipment;
- educational facilities specifications;
- energy-conserving construction
- accommodation for the disabled;
- supervision of construction;
- public dedication of new facilities; and
- retirement of facilities.

All policies on facilities development should be implemented as written, or the Mecklenburg County School Board should discuss, debate and amend the policies in accordance with the applicable rules.

In addition, the School Board should consider the following policy updates and revisions:

- The use of professional architectural and/or engineering consultants should be required on all major projects and whenever the law mandates the hiring of such professional design services. This includes persons hired for construction supervision on behalf of the School Board, and for the preparation of educational specifications.
- Accommodations for the disabled must be designed for all new and renovated facilities in accordance with the most current requirements of the Commonwealth, the Virginia and National School Boards Associations, and the most current version of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented without added cost as part of the day-to-day activities of the Mecklenburg County School Board, and MCPS administrative staff.



## 6.2 FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

Maintenance protects the investment made in facilities. If the facilities were constructed with materials and systems that are easy and inexpensive to maintain, then true life-cycle costing was practiced. If a sufficient maintenance workforce has been hired to complete all work orders in a timely manner and without a backlog, then the buildings can last and perform satisfactorily for decades, even centuries, to come.

**Exhibit 6-7** shows the responses of ACPS administrators, principals, and teachers compared to responses from peers in Evergreen’s survey database.

**Exhibit 6-7**  
**Central Office Administrators, Principals and Teachers Survey Results**  
**on Maintenance Issues in Mecklenburg County Public Schools**  
**and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Central Office Administrators	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
Survey Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Schools are well-maintained.	54.6%	31.9%	83.3%	11.1%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	31.9%	50%	61.6%	30.0%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	81.9%	4.6%	78.3%	11.8%
Principals	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
Survey Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Schools are well-maintained.	44.4%	44.4%	68.4%	31.6%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	38.9%	61.2%	67.6%	27.0%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	66.7%	22.3%	67.6%	16.2%
Teachers	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
Survey Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Schools are well-maintained.	57.4%	33.1%	58.9%	33.6%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	40.3%	47.0%	49.1%	41.7%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	65.0%	12.8%	67.9%	14.9%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007

As can be seen, Mecklenburg central office administrators, principals, and teachers *agree* or *strongly agree* that emergency maintenance tasks are handled promptly, while peer results for that same category are similar.

Administrators and principals *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the statement that repairs are made in a timely manner. Peers in comparison school divisions tend to believe the opposite.

Principals appear split on the question of schools being well-maintained, while administrators and teachers responded 54 percent and 57 percent *agree* or *strongly agree*.

These survey results are mixed—emergency repairs score highest, the remainder of maintenance performance appears mediocre based on the response of those surveyed.



## **FINDING**

Currently, nine maintenance mechanics (including the maintenance supervisor) are assigned to facilities with a gross square footage of 748,791, a ratio of one mechanic per 83,200 square feet. This indicates that MCPS relies on the APPA standard of 85,000 square feet per mechanic. This ratio applies generally to new, easily-maintained buildings, such as the recently constructed South Hill Elementary School, but not to the remainder of the MCPS facilities inventory. According to the survey results, the high ratio maintained by MCPS may result in a positive response rate to emergency repair needs, while regular maintenance activities must necessarily lag.

In addition, a current practice of assigning new maintenance tasks in the morning may be creating some inefficiencies and time delays. Maintenance mechanics must report to the maintenance facility in Boynton, receive their assignments, and then disburse to the schools and other facilities to which they have been assigned. This procedure has the potential of losing valuable work time for some or all of the mechanics.

A best practice ratio of 45,000 square feet per mechanic is advanced by the Florida Center for Community Design and Research in its Report 77 for the Florida Department of Education. By hiring helpers who can eventually advance to being mechanics, an opportunity for succession can be developed, and the current ratio lowered. Such mechanics can also serve as substitute custodians when needed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 6-6:**

#### **Implement greater efficiency and hire additional maintenance helpers as may be required.**

As a more efficient way to assign maintenance tasks on a day-to-day basis, the director of facilities and the maintenance supervisor should meet with the maintenance mechanics as they clock out at the end of the day. At that time, maintenance tickets should be issued to each mechanic. This action will allow the mechanics to drive directly to their first assignments the next morning. In addition, care should be exercised to assign tasks in such a manner that driving time is minimized.

At least three mechanics helpers should be hired as needs arise and budgets permit. Helpers are especially needed in the electrical, plumbing and HVAC. These three areas are most in need of having two persons assigned to a job.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The efficiency measures may allow a noticeable increase in the productivity of the MCPS maintenance unit, but its fiscal impact will be hard to quantify. Since the salaries of the mechanics are a given as well as a constant, no savings can be computed; instead future survey rating of maintenance should show an improvement in the non-emergency repairs area. The hiring of mechanics' helpers should be done gradually to avoid an abrupt increase in the maintenance budget.



The following hiring sequence is suggested:

- FY 2007-08: Hire additional HVAC helper at \$19,000 plus 28 percent benefits, equaling \$24,320.
- FY 2008-09: Hire additional plumbing helper at \$19,000 plus 28 percent benefits, equaling \$24,320 (shown in 2007-08 dollars).
- FY 2009-10: Hire additional electrical helper at \$19,000 plus 28 percent benefits, equaling \$24,320 (shown in 2007-08 dollars).

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Hire Additional Mechanics Helpers	(\$24,320)	(\$48,640)	(\$72,960)	(\$72,960)	(\$72,960)

**FINDING**

MCPS has recently developed and installed its own online work order processing system and is in the process of implementation. Maintenance forms and procedures are now well-developed and users are getting accustomed to the new system.

The use of automated work order software is appropriate for the following and other reasons:

- superior record-keeping for the scheduling of personnel for maintenance calls, the timely ordering of required parts and tools, and the coordination with outside maintenance contractors, as may be required (Other items that can be monitored include work order cost, and the speed of work order fulfillment.);
- analysis of work order history, to determine the nature of the most frequent work orders, and the identification, and possible removal, of “weak spots” in the school facilities; and
- analysis of work order history, to forecast the types of maintenance jobs likely to arise. (Note: This information can be used to pre-order parts, or to develop a preventive maintenance schedule).

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for its commitment to implement a state-of-the-art work order processing and monitoring system.**

**FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools does not currently appear to have a preventive maintenance schedule for major building elements (such as roofs, boilers, chillers, interior finishes, and similar items). Unless an inventory of major items exists, and a maintenance schedule is attached, maintenance work will eventually become mostly reactive instead of proactive.



## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 6-7:

#### **Develop a preventive maintenance schedule based on recommendations from a respected facilities maintenance organization.**

MCPS should develop a maintenance schedule for its facilities to assure that major building components are serviced at proper intervals in a preventive maintenance mode. While the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) is one of the most respected sources for preventive maintenance guidelines and standards, criteria from other organizations may be used as well.

Among these are:

- The Building Standards Institute <http://www.buildingstandardsinstitute.org/>;
- National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities <http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/maintenance.cfm>; and
- American School and Hospital Facility Management <http://www.facilitymanagement.com/>

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation is intended to be implemented as part of the Facilities Master Plan (**Recommendation 6-1**). The full fiscal impact of the requirements of a preventive maintenance program, and of possibly a short-term deferred maintenance elimination program, will not be fully known until the work has been done to ascertain the full dimensions of this aspect of MCPS facilities management. An outside consultant may be needed to assist in this work. The cost of such a consultant has been included in the fiscal impact assessment for **Recommendation 6-1**.

## FINDING

Although it is properly organized for life-cycle costing, MCPS does not always appear to complete regular life-cycle cost analyses in its facilities management. Moreover, life-cycle cost analyses do not seem to be a matter of official policy when the district is contemplating major selections of building materials and components during the design of new buildings, building additions, or renovations. Although some prominent and beneficial life cycle cost decisions were made on the new South Hill Elementary School (e.g. terrazzo, masonry walls in high wear-and-tear areas, standing seam metal roofs), it is not clear that an official MCPS life-cycle costing policy was the cause. This is because the installation on some schools of individual window air conditioners as part of a recent HVAC upgrade is also in evidence.

Life-cycle cost analyses are typically performed by the architects and engineers hired to design new facilities. In addition, some life-cycle cost analyses are performed to reach decisions on future new and replacement floor finishes, especially for school corridors and other common circulation areas. For example, although porcelain tile and terrazzo are significantly higher in



initial cost than vinyl composition tile (VCT), they both have a significantly longer life span than VCT.

In addition, VCT requires constant multiple-layer waxing in order to keep it serviceable, whereas porcelain tile and terrazzo require significantly less upkeep. For example, porcelain tile is cleaned typically with soap and water and a squeegee. As a result, VCT begins to lose ground against terrazzo and porcelain tile in a life-cycle cost analysis when the constant expenses of labor and materials for VCT waxing are added. Moreover, VCT is generally replaced on a seven-year cycle, while the lifespan of terrazzo or porcelain tile floors can be up to hundreds of years. See the condition of the terrazzo floors in several of the older schools at MCPS.

According to the Wikipedia:

*A life cycle cost analysis calculates the cost of a system or product over its entire life span. The analysis of a typical system could include costs for planning, design, development, production, maintenance, disposal or salvage. This cost analysis depends on values calculated from other reliability analyses like failure rate, cost of spares, repair times, and component costs.<sup>1</sup>*

The only cost item that should be added to this definition is operation.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 6-8:**

#### **Employ life-cycle cost analysis as an official MCPS policy in the selection of equipment and materials for new schools and renovations.**

Equipment and materials that favor long-term savings in energy use, maintenance labor and materials, and custodial labor and materials should be selected.

The organization of all facilities-related decision making under one director is an example of a best practice. To take advantage of this best practice organization, a formal commitment to life-cycle costing should be made immediately. Careful life-cycle cost studies should then be conducted of such major items as the following:

- roofing systems - sloped, standing seam metal versus architectural asphalt shingles, versus low slope multiple ply;
- two pipe versus four pipe heating and cooling systems;
- flooring – terrazzo versus porcelain or ceramic tile, versus vinyl composition tile, versus integral color or stained concrete; and
- any other system or product such as flush valves (manual versus automatic), light fixtures, occupancy sensors, boilers, chillers, etc.

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life\\_cycle\\_cost\\_analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_cycle_cost_analysis)



**FISCAL IMPACT**

In school districts where no life-cycle cost analysis is practiced, potential maintenance and operating cost savings, along with energy savings, can amount to more than 10 percent of maintenance and custodial labor and materials, as well as 10 percent or more of energy cost. Since MCPS does not have a significant energy management program, and only an informal life cycle cost analysis program, Evergreen expects the likely savings to be about 10 percent of future operations and maintenance expenses, such as utilities, insurance, materials and supplies, fuels, equipment, etc.

This is a highly conservative figure. Evidence in the related literature points to much higher potential life cycle cost net savings from well-designed and implemented life cycle costing systems. For an exhaustive bibliography of books and journal articles, see the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities Resource List: Life Cycle Cost Estimating for School Facilities. It advises serious consideration of life cycle costs when planning school construction and renovation, advocating tolerance of higher construction costs when life cycle cost savings justify it. Go to <http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/lifecycle.cfm>.

The 2005-06 annual expenditures for operations and maintenance were, based on the Division Summary issued at the Board Meeting of June 30, 2006, approximately \$2,600,000, of which 10 percent is \$260,000. This figure does not include maintenance or custodial labor. It will take time for such savings to be realized as the new facilities master plan of MCPS is implemented. Savings are thus not shown until 2009-10.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Implement Life-Cycle Costing	\$0	\$0	\$130,000	\$260,000	\$260,000

**6.3 CUSTODIAL SERVICES**

Safe, clean, and sanitary facilities are essential elements in today’s educational environment. School districts vary in how these functions are delivered. Typically, school boards either outsource custodial and other services, or organize a comprehensive in-house system of services. Personnel may be employed by either the Board or the outsource company. Management responsibility, if the program is totally in-house, may reside either partially or wholly with the central office or the individual school or cost center. The decision to determine the desired structure is usually based on a number of criteria, including minimizing costs to the school district, improving services to schools, and reducing the span of control of district or school administrators.

Although no officially accepted standard exists, the following definition from the *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* (Association of School Business Officials, February 2003) is pertinent:



## **ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS FOR CUSTODIAL EFFORTS**

*Planners, administrators, and community members must agree on what constitutes “cleanliness.” While there is not a nationwide standard for describing standards of cleanliness, a five-tiered system of expectations is emerging to help guide decision-making:*

***Level 1** cleaning results in a “spotless” building, as might normally be found in a hospital environment or corporate suite. At this level, a custodian with proper supplies and tools can clean approximately 10,000 to 11,000 square feet in an 8-hour period.*

***Level 2** cleaning is the uppermost standard for most school cleaning, and is generally reserved for restrooms, special education areas, kindergarten areas, or food service areas. A custodian can clean approximately 18,000 to 20,000 square feet in an 8-hour shift.*

***Level 3** cleaning is the norm for most school facilities. It is acceptable to most stakeholders and does not pose any health issues. A custodian can clean approximately 28,000 to 31,000 square feet in 8 hours.*

***Level 4** cleaning is not normally acceptable in a school environment. Classrooms would be cleaned every other day, carpets would be vacuumed every third day, and dusting would occur once a month. At this level, a custodian can clean 45,000 to 50,000 square feet in 8 hours.*

***Level 5** cleaning can very rapidly lead to an unhealthy situation. Trash cans might be emptied and carpets vacuumed on a weekly basis. One custodian can clean 85,000 to 90,000 square feet in an 8-hour period.*

*The figures above are estimates. The actual number of square feet per shift a custodian can clean will depend on additional variables, including the type and age of flooring, wall coverings, and the type of structure (mobile units are inherently less efficient to clean than standard school facilities.),*

## **FINDING**

A total of 29 custodians serve a gross square foot area of 748,791, for a ratio of 25,820 square feet per custodian. This ratio is well within acceptable standards as previously discussed. One custodian is assigned to the administrative complex.

MCPS custodial staff appear to be adequate in number, but custodians are not assigned uniformly to schools. **Exhibit 6-8** shows this discrepancy. The exhibit also shows 27 full-time and five part-time custodians (five hours), for a total of approximately 30 FTE custodians. This number does not agree fully with the 29 full-time custodians shown on the MCPS payroll, and may be due to the fact that one or perhaps two positions are currently unfilled.



**Exhibit 6-8**  
**Existing Cleaning Requirements Summary**  
**2006-07 School Year**

School	Square Feet to Be Cleaned	Number of Full-time Staff Assigned	Number of Part-time Staff Assigned	Approximate Square Feet Per FTE
Boydton Elementary	26,208	1	1	17,472
Buckhorn Elementary	32,000	2	1	12,800
Chase City Elementary	42,545	2	1	17,018
Clarksville Elementary	46,600	2	1	18,640
LaCrosse Elementary	37,900	2	0	18,950
South Hill Elementary	96,106	4	0	24,026
Bluestone Middle	75,816	3	0	25,272
Park View Middle	68,190	3	0	22,730
Bluestone High	130,007	4	0	32,501
Park View High	126,693	4	1	28,154
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>682,065</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5</b>	

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools Maintenance Office, 2007.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 6-9:

#### Reallocate custodians in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.

**Exhibit 6-9** shows one possible reallocation of custodial positions for a more even distribution. Other reallocations are also feasible. This reallocation adds two part-time custodians, and creates the following ranges of square feet per FTE custodian:

- elementary schools                    17,000 – 19,000
- middle schools                        21,000 – 22,000
- high schools                            28,000 – 29,000

Custodians are also responsible for lawn care of their assigned schools, with the exception of athletic fields. Volunteers have traditionally cared for athletic fields. These lawn care duties are intensive over the growing season (late spring, summer, and early fall). However, in light of the recommended reallocation of current staff, the extra lawn care duties should not cause the acceptable range of square feet per custodian for Level 3 cleaning to be compromised.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The additional custodial staff position appears to be already allocated, but not filled. Consequently, this recommendation can be fulfilled with existing resources, unless an additional part-time position is desired for Park View Middle School.



**Exhibit 6-9**  
**Possible Reallocation of Custodial Staff**  
**2006-07 School Year**

School	Square Feet to Be Cleaned	Number of Full-time Staff Assigned	Number of Part-time Staff Assigned	Approximate Square Feet Per FTE
Boydton Elementary	26,208	1	1	17,472
Buckhorn Elementary	32,000	1	1	21,333
Chase City Elementary	42,545	2	1	17,018
Clarksville Elementary	46,600	2	1	18,640
LaCrosse Elementary	37,900	2	0	18,950
South Hill Elementary	96,106	5	0	19,221
Bluestone Middle	75,816	3	1	21,661
Park View Middle	68,190	3	0*	22,730
Bluestone High	130,007	4	1	28,890
Park View High	126,693	4	1	28,154
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>682,065</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>7</b>	

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from Information Provided by the MCPS Maintenance Office, 2007.

\* If necessary, an additional part-time custodian could be added to Parkview Middle School, as this school has the most mobile units of any secondary school in the division. Such units are especially time-consuming to clean.

## FINDING

MCPS has no substitute custodians at this time. **Recommendation 6-6** provides for the hiring of three maintenance helpers, who are expected to be available as needed to substitute for custodians who are unable to come to work.

This addition improves upon the current situation where there are neither maintenance helpers nor substitute custodians. As the Facility Master Plan is implemented, more custodians may be needed, and the budget may then have to accommodate two or three substitute custodians who do not also serve as maintenance helpers.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 6-10:

**Use the maintenance helpers hired under Recommendation 6-6 as substitute custodians when necessary, and plan for hiring stand-alone substitute custodians when the budget permits.**

The assignment of maintenance helpers to substitute custodian duty will require close coordination among all maintenance and custodial staff. This arrangement should be viewed as an improvement over current conditions, but nevertheless as a temporary one. As soon as possible, but probably not within the next five years, stand-alone substitute custodians should be hired. An opportunity should always be given, however, for maintenance helpers to learn rudimentary custodial work, on the possibility that they might wish to take up building cleaning as a career.



**FINDING**

MCPS custodians report directly to the principals of the schools to which they are assigned. This is a best practice.

As a positive example of site-based management, MCPS principals have control over custodial services at their respective facilities. Each principal has his or her own view of cleanliness and appearances, and is able to obtain the desired results by working directly with the school’s head custodian and the custodial staff. Site visits to all MCPS facilities demonstrated an overall satisfaction of principals with the performance of custodial teams. This is reflected in the survey results displayed in **Exhibit 6-10**. Mecklenburg data are exceptionally high for principals and teachers. These data reflect the effectiveness of custodians reporting to the principals, who rate their performance the highest.

**Exhibit 6-10  
Principals and Teachers Survey Results  
on School Cleanliness in Mecklenburg County Public Schools  
and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Question	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	SA+ A	D + SD	SA+ A	D + SD
Schools are clean - Principals	83.3%	11.2%	76.1%	19.3%
Schools are clean - Teachers	71.7%	22.3%	60.8%	30.1%

*Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for its best practice organization of having custodians report directly to school principals.**

**FINDING**

Although MCPS custodians report directly to the principals of the schools to which they are assigned, they have a weak secondary reporting link to the director of facilities. Training programs are inconsistently conducted. Central purchasing of custodial tools and supplies is done, but without clear formal policies, procedures and rules.

An important element of site-based management with respect to custodians is a secondary reporting provision to the director of facilities. The purpose of this secondary reporting line is for uniformity and consistency of custodial standards and performance across the school division. Principals can expect more from their custodial staff if they are trained in the highest and best standards of cleanliness and performance. A secondary reporting line also serves to control the use and procurement of cleaning chemicals and tools across the division. Consequently, the custodians should also report to the director of facilities who should provide staff training, coordinate the distribution of custodial supplies and equipment, and arrange for the assignment of substitute custodians as necessary. This latter reporting function appears to be underemphasized at the present time in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.



**RECOMMENDATION**

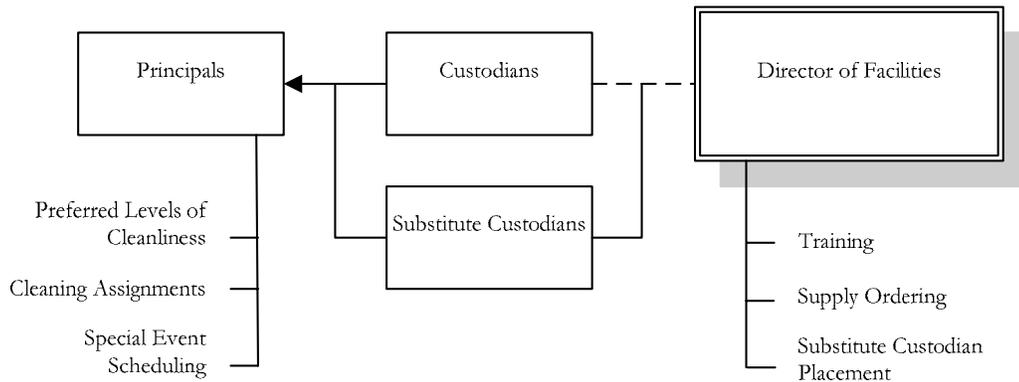
**Recommendation 6-11:**

**Establish a second central reporting line of authority for the custodians to the director of facilities.**

**Exhibit 6-11** shows how the custodial staff could also report to the director of facilities. While some aspects of this reporting relationship exist informally, the organization in **Exhibit 6-11** will make it a formal arrangement. As part of this formality, the director of facilities should establish, as a minimum, the following:

- an eight-hour per year training program in standards of cleanliness, efficiency of job performance, teamwork, and the like;
- a formal procedure for ordering tools and chemicals as needed; and
- procedures for the scheduling and placement of substitute custodians.

**Exhibit 6-11**  
**Modified Organizational Structure for Facilities in**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools**



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This organizational realignment can be accomplished with existing resources. Training materials may require some initial expenses for courses, DVDs or other audio-visuals. Some training programs are formal and university-based (see <http://www.facilities.uiowa.edu/staffdev/custodialtechtrng.htm>) and others are training modules on tape or disk recommended by the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (see [http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/custodial\\_staffing.cfm](http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/custodial_staffing.cfm)). Training materials promoting a special product or piece of equipment should be used with caution as they may place a company’s self-interest over objectivity.



Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Purchase Training Materials	(\$1,000)	(\$350)	(\$350)	(\$350)	(\$350)

**6.4 ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

The school buildings and other facilities of a school division consume significant amounts of energy that often appear to be an ever-growing and sometimes unpredictable component of the overall annual budget. With the advent of increased costs for energy to provide fuels for HVAC systems, transportation, food service operations, and other related activities, school systems have established numerous and varied policies, procedures, and methods for increasing efficiencies in energy consumption and reducing operating costs. Policies typically describe a School Board’s specific desire to ensure that maximum resources are available for instructional purposes and charge the administration with developing related procedures.

Procedures generally prescribe a range of measures and activities to be implemented and a specific means for computing the results. Some school boards develop incentive systems to reward employees for actions or recommendations that have resulted in substantial savings or improvements in the performance of energy consuming equipment.

Energy management methods range from sophisticated, centralized, computer controls over HVAC systems and other energy consumption devices to simple manual procedures for turning thermostats down and lights off during periods of minimal building or room utilization.

Exhibit 6-12 shows the responses of MCPS central office administrators, principals, and teachers compared to responses from respondents in Evergreen’s survey database.

**Exhibit 6-12  
Central Office Administrators, Principals and  
Teachers Survey Results on Energy Management in  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Central Office Administrators	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Survey Question				
The division has an effective energy management program.	13.7%	45.4%	63.0%	18.5%
Principals	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Survey Question				
The division has an effective energy management program.	33.4%	11.1%	63.2%	15.8%
Teachers	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Survey Question				
The division has an effective energy management program.	29.9%	16.4%	51.7%	18.5%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.



Survey responses by MCPS central office administrators, principals and teachers show that a majority is either unaware of such a program, or disagree that such a program exists. This perception is echoed by the members of the Evergreen Team who examined facilities use and management as part of this school efficiency review.

## **FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools does not appear to have a well-defined and concerted energy management program. While energy consumption data were provided in response to Evergreen Solutions' original data request, no information was provided concerning any formal programs to conserve energy. The newly completed South Hill Elementary School has a state-of-the-art energy monitoring system, and complies with all energy code requirements at the time of its construction.

However, recent decisions to install HVAC systems in existing schools seem to have been made contrary to the best available knowledge and wisdom concerning energy efficiency. For example, individual window air conditioners were installed in classrooms and offices of some schools. While this is arguably the least costly way to install cooling in existing schools, it is an egregiously wasteful system to operate.

Much more can and should be done to effect energy savings across the school division, and to plan for the timely achievement of energy savings in a deliberate manner.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 6-12:**

**Develop and implement a systematic energy management and conservation program for Mecklenburg County Public Schools, as part of the overall Facility Master Plan implementation.**

An overall energy management and conservation program can be developed by obtaining information from peer organizations (i.e. school divisions of similar size and circumstance in Virginia and elsewhere). In addition, large energy controls manufacturers, such as Honeywell and Johnson Controls, provide advisors who can assist in analyzing energy consumption and provide forecasts of potential savings.

Any future energy management and conservation program must contain at least these important elements:

- energy standards for new construction, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria;
- energy management system;
- building commissioning; and
- lighting controls.



Separate recommendations are therefore provided for these items as an overall energy management and conservation program is developed by MCPS. The director of facilities should be responsible for its implementation, under the auspices of the Facilities Master Plan.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The positive fiscal impact of an energy management and conservation program can be significant in making available monies for instructional and other purposes. **Recommendations 6-13, 6-14, 6-15, and 6-16** show estimated cost impact analyses.

## FINDING

MCPS expects to construct new school facilities in the foreseeable future, and perform renovations to existing facilities. This expected construction process presents an excellent opportunity to build some important energy-saving provisions into new schools and renovations.

The LEED Green Building Rating System<sup>®</sup> is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Members of the U.S. Green Building Council, representing all segments of the building industry, developed LEED and continue to contribute to its evolution.

LEED standards are currently available or under development for:

- new construction and major renovation projects (LEED-NC);
- existing building operations (LEED-EB);
- commercial interiors projects (LEED-CI);
- core and shell projects (LEED-CS);
- homes (LEED-H); and
- neighborhood development (LEED-ND).

Of the available standards, LEED-NC and LEED-EB appear to be the most applicable for MCPS. Major building owners, including educational institutions, have made commitments to construct all future buildings under the LEED Green Building Rating System. For example, the University of Florida's Office of Facilities Design and Construction will build all of its future facilities under the LEED Green Building Rating System. Three LEED-rated buildings have already been constructed on the campus, and five more are now in design.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 6-13:

**Use the LEED Green Building Rating System in all future new construction, major renovations, and existing building operations.**

The LEED system is the next step to the creation of state-of-the-art energy-conscious and sustainable buildings. MCPS should study this option carefully, and assess how it can affect substantial savings in operating and maintenance costs than more conventional design and construction approaches.



**FISCAL IMPACT**

If existing facilities were to be retrofitted using LEED NC, the annual energy savings could average 20 percent of the 2006 energy consumption - about \$12,000 for natural gas, and \$100,000 for electricity, \$40,000 for fuel oil, or \$152,000 total. The full 20 percent savings of \$152,000 annually is shown beginning in the 2009-10 fiscal year.

The 20 percent savings estimate is a conservative figure based on data of the U.S. Green Building Council from experience with the implementation of its LEED Criteria. In new construction, savings of up to 60 percent have been demonstrated in school buildings. Go to <http://www.usgbc.org> for further information on actual savings from case studies of schools and other building types.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Implement LEED	\$0	\$0	\$152,000	\$152,000	\$152,000

**FINDING**

MCPS operates a limited energy management system in its new South Hill Elementary School. When new schools are built in the future, and existing ones are renovated, this presents an excellent opportunity to install an energy management system on a division-wide basis. MCPS can install one system capable of monitoring and controlling energy use in all of its buildings.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 6-14:**

**Purchase and install one single energy management system for all MCPS facilities, as part of the implementation of the Facility Master Plan.**

MCPS should install a division-wide energy management system, in order to monitor and control energy use more carefully and specifically. Schools will be used after hours. This extended use requires certain areas and spaces to be heated or cooled by overriding the automatic energy controls. It is a best practice to have a well-functioning central energy management system that can be controlled from key computer stations. This system may include some home computers or laptops of persons directly in charge, such as the director of facilities and the maintenance supervisor. In addition, such systems also serve to alert persons in charge of any malfunctions in mechanical equipment (such as variable air volume boxes, air handlers, blowers, chillers and boilers).

**FISCAL IMPACT**

An additional 10 percent annual savings in energy consumption above and beyond previous recommendations in this section is likely in the range of \$75,000. As before, this savings is shown beginning in 2009-10.



The 10 percent estimate is a conservative figure based on experience with the implementation of energy management systems in existing facilities. Many energy management systems installations have had a greater record of savings, and a payback in one year or less. In addition, ancillary savings are not usually included in such calculations. They include greater occupant comfort (and reduced absenteeism), and a prolonged service life of mechanical systems components. For details, see

- US DOE Federal Energy Management Program  
<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/about/index.html>
- USDOE Energy Information Administration  
[http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/efficiency/energy\\_savings.htm](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/efficiency/energy_savings.htm)
- USDOE Energy Savings Calculators and Software  
<http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/calculators/buildings.cfm>

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Implement Energy Management System	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000

**FINDING**

According to the Building Commissioning Association, building commissioning is defined as follows:

*The basic purpose of building commissioning is to provide documented confirmation that building systems function in compliance with criteria set forth in the Project Documents to satisfy the owner's operational needs. Commissioning of existing systems may require the development of new functional criteria in order to address the owner's current systems performance requirements (<http://www.bcxa.org/about/index.shtm>).*

This definition is based on the critical understanding that the owner must have some means of verifying that the functional needs are rigorously addressed during design, construction, and acceptance.

Building commissioning promises significant savings in the long-term operating and maintenance costs of buildings. It must therefore become an essential element of all future building design and construction activity in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 6-15:**

**Integrate building commissioning in the energy management and conservation plan, and in all future new building construction and major renovations.**



The director of facilities should be responsible for the use of building commissioning in an appropriate and judicious manner.

## FISCAL IMPACT

According to Energy Design Resources:

*Commissioning a new building typically costs about 30 to 90 cents per square foot. Usually this is offset by reduced energy costs, improved occupant comfort and productivity, and reduced rework costs. On average, the simple payback for building commissioning is about three to four years (<http://www.energydesignresources.com/resource/17/>)*

For example, in a new 40,000 square foot building, the commissioning cost could be as high as \$24,000. Energy cost savings due to commissioning may be as high as \$600 per month, or \$7,200 per year, resulting in a payback of just over three years. Further quantification can not be made at this time.

## FINDING

At MCPS, as in other districts with an inventory of older schools, the opportunity exists for a significant savings by means of the installation of lighting controls. As buildings are renovated, enlarged, or newly constructed, the incorporation of lighting controls should be given careful consideration. Dimmers, timers, photocells, and infrared sensors are known, effective energy saving tools for electric lighting. Energy savings are not only realized from a reduction in electric lighting use, but secondary savings come from lower summer heat loads and reduced HVAC use.

Dimmers are especially effective at extending electric lamp life. One common rule-of-thumb is that lamps operated at 90 percent of their rated voltage will have a doubled service life. Similar stunning life-extensions are possible for dimmed fluorescent and HID lamps. It is recommended that dimmers should be installed in areas where teachers and students are not expected to exercise control and should be designed for keyed manipulation by maintenance and custodial staff only.

Timers are useful in areas where the need for lighting can be predicted (e.g. school schedule) and thus regulated by a timer device. However, preferable alternatives to timers are often photocells and infrared sensors.

Photocells sense available daylight. They are designed to turn off supplemental electric light when sufficient daylight is available, and to turn electric lights on when needed. These devices are useful not only in outdoor installations, but also at the periphery of building interiors. Some interior lights can often be turned off during the presence of daylight to save energy and money. Photocells can also be combined with a dimmer, thus allowing electric light to fade out/fade in as needed to work with available daylight.

Infrared and other types of heat sensors are commonly installed to pick up the presence of people. When conference rooms, classrooms, and similar spaces are unoccupied, these sensors



will turn off the lights. As soon as people enter the space, the sensor will activate the lights and keep them on.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 6-16:**

**Install special lighting control devices in all new, renovated, and existing school facilities to save on electric utility costs.**

Special lighting control devices can save a minimum of 10 percent, and up to 50 percent or more of the electricity cost for electric lighting. MCPS should enlist the help of its local electric utility company, and a LEED Accredited Professional Electrical Engineer, to prepare a plan for adding lighting control devices in appropriate locations to all school facilities. For a broad overview of essential concepts and possible strategies and energy savings potentials, see <http://www.wbdg.org/design/resource.php?cn=0&rp=12>.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The initial cost for engineering fees and installation of the devices is estimated as seven percent of the installation cost for engineering services and 20 cents per square foot. Assuming a retrofitted building inventory of 200,000 square feet, the installation cost is \$40,000 plus a design fee of \$2,800, or \$42,800. This upfront cost is subtracted from the \$50,000 savings in 2009-10, yielding a reduced savings figure of \$7,800.

Based on a total projected annual electrical use expenditure of \$500,000 (obtained from MCPS utility bills) in 2005-06, a minimal 10 percent annual savings would realize \$50,000. A more likely 20 percent savings would yield \$100,000. Savings from lower HVAC use and longer electric bulb life have not been factored into this fiscal impact analysis.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Install Lighting Control Devices	\$0	\$0	\$7,800	\$100,000	\$100,000

**6.5 COMMUNITY USE OF FACILITIES**

School districts typically have arrangements that permit community use of facilities to ensure that taxpayers and student support organizations are able to effectively and efficiently provide services. Schools typically adopt policies governing the use of facilities and approve fee schedules designed to recover direct costs such as custodial services and utilities.

Administrators responding to the statement “Division facilities are open for community use” show 87.5 percent *agree* and 12.5 percent *disagree*. Similarly, 89.7 percent of teachers *agree* or *strongly agree*, 7.7 percent had no opinion, and 2.6 percent *disagree*.



Exhibit 6-13 shows the responses of MCPS central office administrators, principals, and teachers compared to responses from peers.

**Exhibit 6-13  
Central Office Administrators, Principals and Teachers Survey Results  
on Community Use of Facilities in Mecklenburg County Public Schools  
and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Central Office Administrators	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
Survey Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Division facilities are open for community use.	81.8%	4.6%	77.8%	4.0%
Principals	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
Survey Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Division facilities are open for community use.	77.8%	5.6%	89.2%	0.0%
Teachers	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
Survey Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Division facilities are open for community use.	60.6%	5.2%	65.8%	7.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**FINDING**

Although an active community use of facilities is acknowledged by MCPS central office administrators, principals, and teachers, MCPS officials did not acknowledge any specific procedures to be followed when facilities are used after hours. When asking about community use of school facilities, the most frequent response was “We just make sure they pay the custodian to clean up.” Not one person referred to existing policies.

Nonetheless, the Mecklenburg County School Board Policy Manual provides, in considerable detail, the obligations of MCPS and community agencies, including, but not limited to:

- non-profit community organizations and agencies, and for profit organizations;
- custodial services and fees;
- rental fee schedule and exemptions;
- daily usage hours; and
- principals and superintendent’s responsibilities.

Full details of this policy can be found at <http://www.meck.k12.va.us/policy/MCPS%20Policy%20Documents/Section%20K/KG-R/KG-R.pdf> .

The MCPS contract for facilities use by outside organizations provides for a clear legal relationship and cites applicable Virginia laws. The main portions of the contract are:



- nature of the building use request;
- insurance information;
- rules governing the use of facilities; and
- formal agreement by principal and organization representative.

The full text of this agreement can be found at the contract for facilities used by outside organizations which is located at <http://www.meck.k12.va.us/policy/MCPS%20Policy%20Documents/Section%20K/KG-E/KG-E.pdf> .

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 6-17:**

**Implement the existing policy and contract for the use of school facilities by public and private outside organizations.**

The superintendent should issue a directive to all principals that the procedure contained in the School Board’s Policy Manual shall govern all future community use arrangements of schools in Mecklenburg County. This action will assure that

- an income is derived as per policy for all chargeable uses;
- custodians are compensated;
- rules for conduct and behavior are enforceable; and
- damage to property can be fixed and costs recovered.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Based on a conservative estimate of an average of \$100 per month in fees derived from each of the ten schools, revenues of \$12,000 annually may be collected.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Enforce Facility Use Policies	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000



**CHAPTER 7:  
TRANSPORTATION**



## Chapter 7

# TRANSPORTATION

Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS), under Virginia code, provides free of charge home-to-school transportation to all eligible students within the student's attendance area. Transportation is also provided between schools and other sponsored events as per division policy.

This chapter assesses the MCPS transportation operation, and is divided into the following five sections:

- 7.1 Organization, Planning, Policies, and Procedures
- 7.2 Training and Safety
- 7.3 Routing and Scheduling
- 7.4 Vehicle Maintenance and Bus Replacement Schedule
- 7.5 State Reporting

Within this chapter, transportation in MCPS is compared to six other peer school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, namely: Dinwiddie County, Gloucester County, Halifax County, Isle of Wight County, Pulaski County and Wythe County.

Comparing transportation statistics among divisions must be done cautiously. Within the transportation operation, divisions rarely if ever operate exactly the same types of systems with the same types of programs and policies. The Commonwealth does not dictate that transportation take place, which leaves the divisions with a higher degree of latitude. The lack of standardization can create differences among division causing transportation operating statistics and costs to widely vary.

**Exhibits 7-1** through **7-6** provide an overview which will be used in the peer transportation analysis. Comparative data presented below were supplied by the Virginia Department of Education and represent the latest available data which are for either the 2004-05 or 2005-06 school years.

**Exhibit 7-1** shows that MCPS has the average number of schools within the peer group. Generally more schools create higher transportation costs as the opportunity to consolidate runs is diminished.

As revealed in **Exhibit 7-2**, MCPS has 2.1 percentage points more special education students than the peer division average. Special needs students must be accommodated for and result in a higher than average cost of transportation. Having a slightly higher percentage may result in slightly higher comparative costs.



**Exhibit 7-1  
Peer School Division Overview  
2005-06 School Year**

School Division	Total Student Population	Total Number of Schools*	Total Instructional Staff Per 1,000 Students**
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>4,910</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>108.73</b>
Dinwiddie County	4,639	7	95.87
Gloucester County	6,092	9	96.81
Halifax County	5,907	14	126.20
Isle of Wight County	5,434	9	89.61
Pulaski County	5,051	9	110.06
Wythe County	4,279	12	110.51
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>105.4</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

\*Includes Alternative Schools.

\*\*Fiscal Year 2005

**Exhibit 7-2  
Special Needs Students  
2004-05 School Year**

School Division	Percent Limited English Proficient (LEP)	Percent Special Education Students*	Percent Eligible Free/Reduced Lunch**	Percent Minority Students
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>57.0%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Dinwiddie County	1%	14.7%	38.4%	43%
Gloucester County	0%	12.6%	27.9%	15%
Halifax County	1%	20.1%	56.9%	50%
Isle of Wight County	1%	13.8%	27.5%	38%
Pulaski County	1%	17.3%	40.1%	10%
Wythe County	0%	12.9%	40.3%	6%
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>.7%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

\*As of December 1, 2004 count.

\*\*As of September 30, 2006 count.

As can be seen in **Exhibit 7-3**, MCPS has the fourth lowest transportation cost per pupil among its peers and is 4 percent below the peer average. However, the cost is 48 percent higher than the lowest in the peer group.

**Exhibit 7-4** compares the cost per mile among the peer group. MCPS ranks as the third least expensive and some 31 percent below the average. This ranking would indicate that the division enjoys a relatively low labor rate.



**Exhibit 7-3  
Pupil Transportation Disbursements  
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Pupil Transportation Services	Per Pupil Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$2,645,311</b>	\$540.98
Dinwiddie County	\$2,931,146	\$652.97
Gloucester County	\$4,266,774	\$695.35
Halifax County	\$4,100,970	\$698.04
Isle of Wight County	\$2,611,433	\$511.80
Pulaski County	\$1,792,623	\$363.63
Wythe County	\$1,800,027	\$430.91
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$2,878,326</b>	<b>\$556.24</b>

*Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.*

**Exhibit 7-4  
Transportation Cost Per Mile  
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Pupil Transportation Costs	Per Mile Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	\$2,645,311	\$1.51
Dinwiddie County	\$2,931,145	\$.7
Gloucester County	\$4,266,774	\$2.25
Halifax County	\$4,100,970	\$2.05
Isle of Wight County	\$2,611,433	\$1.36
Pulaski County	\$1,792,622	\$2.04
Wythe County	\$1,800,026	\$1.86
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$2,878,326</b>	<b>\$1.68</b>

*Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.*

**Exhibit 7-5** depicts the number of pupils per bus served within the peer group. This is an indicator of routing efficiency and scheduling. In particular, pupils per bus will indicate if multiple runs per bus are being made. The entire peer group averages less than the capacity of a standard school bus (64 passengers). This finding indicates that the majority of the buses conduct only one run in the morning and afternoon. MCPS averages 43 which is 14 percent below the peer average. Only one division in the peer group averages less.

**Exhibit 7-6** shows the miles operated per bus annually within the peer route. As can be seen, MCPS is below the average for the peer group indicating that division size does not create unusually high miles to be driven. This finding also indicates that buses do not perform multiple runs per day.



**Exhibit 7-5**  
**Total Route Buses Operated**  
**Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Route Buses	Pupils per Day	Pupils per Bus
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	108	4,658	43
Dinwiddie County	113	4,273	38
Gloucester County	99	6,152	62
Halifax County	127	5,466	43
Isle of Wight County	80	5,101	64
Pulaski County	63	3,608	57
Wythe County	63	3,176	50
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>4,633</b>	<b>51</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site 2006.

**Exhibit 7-6**  
**Total Miles Operated**  
**Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Total Miles Operated	Miles Per Bus
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	1,460,121	13,520
Dinwiddie County	1,282,658	11,351
Gloucester County	1,457,422	14,721
Halifax County	1,701,807	13,400
Isle of Wight County	1,707,059	21,338
Pulaski County	778,999	12,365
Wythe County	777,303	12,338
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>1,309,338</b>	<b>14,035</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

In addition to the peer division comparisons, a survey of MCPS administrators, principals, and teachers was conducted by Evergreen Solutions. Seven questions related directly to transportation. These were answered by scoring in five categories ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. One additional question asked respondents to rate various parts and functions of the school division, including transportation, and to determine whether the function was needed at all, or needed *major improvement*, *needs some improvement*, *is adequate*, or is *outstanding*.

The Evergreen survey results for transportation are shown in **Exhibits 7-7** through **7-13**.

**Exhibit 7-7** reflects MCPS central office administrator responses. Administrative responses reflect what these staff members perceive transportation to be from their vantage point. In most instances, these staff members do not have a day-to-day direct exposure to the transportation service, but will receive calls and inquires concerning the transportation services.



**Exhibit 7-7  
MCPS Central Office Administrator Survey Results**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0%	0%	18.2%	63.6%	18.2%
There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	4.6%	50%	13.6%	22.7%	9.1%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	13.6%	68.2%	18.2%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	9.1%	72.7%	13.6%	4.6%	0%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	4.6%	36.4%	31.8%	27.3%	0%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	0%	31.8%	50%	18.2%
Bus ride times are too long.	0%	9.1%	40.9%	36.4%	13.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 7-8** summarizes the responses of building administrators. This staff is directly impacted by service shortfalls. It would be expected that the most accurate assessment of this system would be made by this response group.

**Exhibit 7-8  
MCPS Principal Survey Results**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	5.6%	0%	0%	50%	44.4%
There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	5.6%	38.9%	16.7%	22.2%	16.7%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	5.6%	55.6%	38.9%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	27.8%	66.7%	0%	5.6%	0%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	5.6%	55.6%	16.7%	22.2%	0%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	0%	5.6%	44.4%	50%
Bus ride times are too long.	0%	16.7%	22.2%	50%	11.1%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.



**Exhibit 7-9** summarizes the results of the teacher survey. To the degree service disrupts the classroom environment, teacher respondents reflect chronic service challenges.

**Exhibit 7-9  
MCPS Teacher Survey Results**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	1.2%	6.8%	4.4%	64.1%	23.5%
There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	4.4%	49.8%	23.5%	18.3%	4%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.8%	4.4%	25.1%	56.6%	13.2%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	5.6%	55.8%	28.7%	8.8%	1.2%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	5.2%	52.6%	30.7%	8.4%	3.2%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0.8%	8.8%	27.9%	48.6%	13.9%
Bus ride times are too long.	2%	17.9%	46.6%	29.1%	4.4%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

The timeliness of buses does not appear to be a major factor. In fact, the surveys are very consistent that transportation is being run on time. In general, administrators are more concerned than the teachers by the effectiveness of the driver handling student discipline.

**Exhibit 7-10**, a compilation of all responses, reflects the general satisfaction level with transportation.

**Exhibit 7-10  
Compilation of All Survey Responses in  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools**

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding	Don't Know
Transportation-Central Office Administrators	0%	0%	22.2%	66.7%	11.1%	0%
Transportation-Principals	0%	0%	18.2%	59.1%	4.6%	18.2%
Transportation-Teachers	0%	2.4%	13.9%	58.6%	13.9%	11.2%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibits 7-11, 7-12, 7-13** provide a comparison of the survey responses to peer districts in Evergreen’s database. The categories are grouped into two major categories of agreement (*strongly agree* and *agree*) and disagreement (*disagree* and *strongly disagree*). The surveys are of central office administrators, principals, and teachers, respectively.



**Exhibit 7-11  
Central Office Administrator Survey Results  
in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0%	81.8%	10.5%	57.9%
There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	54.6%	31.8%	64.8%	24.1%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	86.4%	5.6%	85.2%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	81.8%	4.6%	87.0%	5.6%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	41%	27.3%	53.9%	26.3%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	68.2%	3.7%	85.2%
Bus ride times are too long.	9.1%	50.0%	NA	NA

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 7-12  
Principal Survey Results  
in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Questions	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	5.6%	94.4%	10.0%	58.6%
There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	44.5%	38.9%	36.8%	57.9%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.0%	94.5%	15.8%	57.9%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	94.5%	5.6%	63.2%	21.1%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	61.2%	22.2%	31.6%	52.6%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0.0%	94.4%	15.8%	57.9%
Bus ride times are too long.	16.7%	61.1%	NA	NA

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.



**Exhibit 7-13  
Teacher Survey Results  
in MCPS and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Questions	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	8.0%	87.6%	12.1%	66.9%
There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	54.2%	22.3%	41.5%	34.0%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	5.2%	69.8%	7.6%	61.8%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	61.4%	10.0%	57.0%	18.3%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	57.8%	11.6%	24.5%	20.4%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	9.6%	62.5%	11.5%	48.3%
Bus ride times are too long.	19.9%	33.5%	NA	NA

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

The comparisons are quite favorable for MCPS. In nearly every category the administration and teachers view the transportation more favorably than those in peer districts. Only in the category of driver handling student discipline does the MCPS transportation department fall to below the positive response levels of the peer group.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The MCPS transportation system provides the transportation services needed within the division (i.e. regular education, special education, vocational, athletics/field trips). Maintenance is performed at a centralized facility near the City of Boynton. Driver supply is adequate. The management of the system is performed by the transportation supervisor and a small staff.

No chronic service issues were found. Most complaints are handled via the transportation office along with budget and cost control items. The fleet is in good operating condition for its age. The division enjoys an enviable safety record which can be somewhat attributed to a low driver turnover rate and high experience level.

Some recommendations within this chapter provide cost efficiencies while others are targeted towards service improvements. A summary of recommendations include:

- Stagger bell times to reduce the number of buses utilized; thereby, reducing costs and capital outlay.
- Implement the Edulog routing system to consolidate routes and improve the division’s ability to plan.



- Organize the transportation department to proactively dispatch buses.
- Conduct and maintain an accurate parts and supply inventory.
- Implement proper accounting procedures for outside vehicle maintenance repair.
- Increase the repair billing rate to more accurately reflect costs.
- Implement a system for measuring overall performance within the transportation department.
- Reduce the number of cars assigned to administration.

### **7.1 ORGANIZATION, PLANNING, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**

The organization structure, as shown in **Exhibit 7-14**, includes the following employees:

- Transportation Supervisor
- Transportation Clerk
- Full-time Drivers (118) – four are driver trainers
- Substitute Drivers (35)
- Shop Foreman
- Mechanics (3)
- Service Men (2)
- Secretary (Shop Clerk)

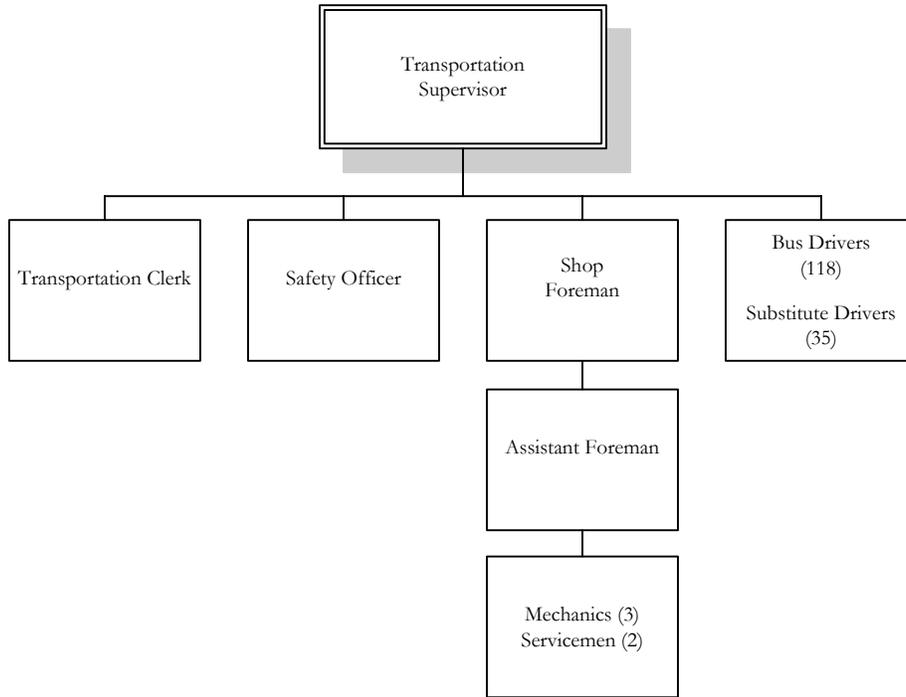
Nearly every bus is parked at the driver's home. Some buses are parked at the nearest school to the driver's home. Drivers who anticipate being absent are expected to arrange for their substitute from an approved substitute list. The transportation office may or may not be informed of an absence. Additionally, drivers are expected to develop and maintain their route sheets. All drivers are paid a set daily rate for their regular routes; every driver is paid the same regardless of seniority. A small adjustment is made for drivers whose route exceeds 70 miles.

**Exhibit 7-15** shows the distribution of drivers by hire year date. The average experience level is 17.4 years with one driver having been employed since 1944. The graph indicates relative low turnover, and the average length of service is exceptionally high.

The transportation clerk is the most experienced person within the department's non-driving staff. This position prepares and helps to keep routes current, answers general complaints and questions, manages vehicle assignments and trip requests, and generally is the primary operational support for the transportation function for drivers and the public. This position prepares the billing for outside maintenance services, performs payroll compilations, and processes payables.

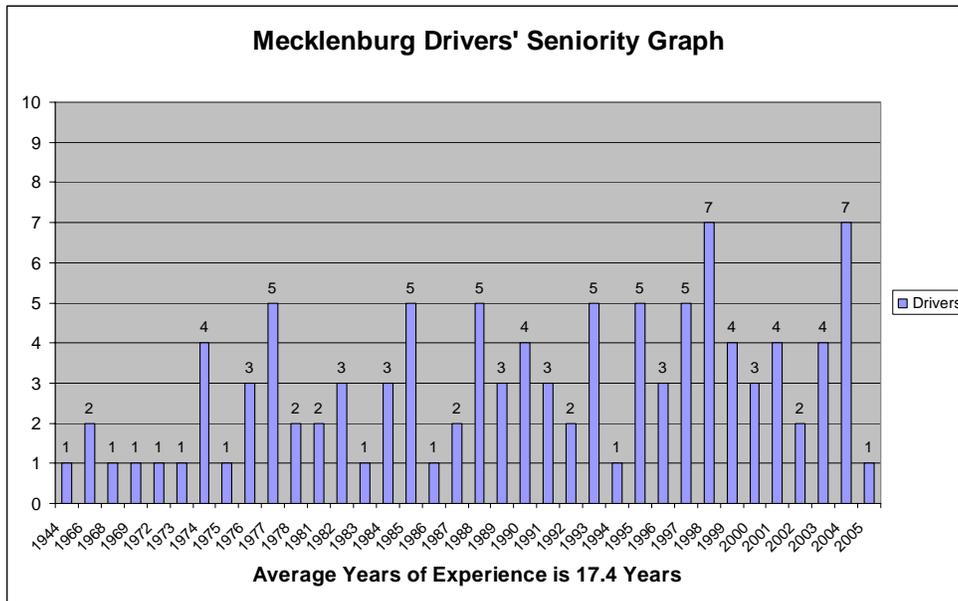


**Exhibit 7-14**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation Department**  
**Current Organization Chart**



Source: MCPS Transportation Department, 2007.

**Exhibit 7-15**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation Department**  
**Driver Seniority**



Source: MCPS Transportation Department, 2007.



The transportation supervisor is responsible for the daily performance of the system. The transportation supervisor responds to the concerns of principals, parents, and drivers that require higher authority than the transportation clerk. This position is responsible for developing the monthly schedule for the 30-day vehicle inspections. Payment of invoices is approved at this level. The supervisor also determines how the reimbursement of maintenance services to outside agencies will be paid.

The shop foreman at the bus garage directs the efforts of five persons performing maintenance, in accordance with the monthly schedule, responding to drivers' write-ups and the demands of outside agencies. There is no automated system for recording maintenance or tracking inventories. The person currently assigned is scheduled to retire at the end of March 2007.

The safety officer is primarily responsible for the training of new drivers. Training is accomplished by following state regulations and guidelines. Classes are scheduled when enough applicants are available. This position responds to accidents and performs the administrative tasks related to accidents. The safety officers is also the driver education instructor at the high school.

**FINDING**

Bus driver turnover is a national problem. MCPS has averaged a rate of 5.8 percent over the last three years, while the national average is above 18 percent. This statistic translates into increased safety for all concerned as experienced drivers are being retained in MCPS.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for its overall low driver turnover.**

**FINDING**

No specific percentage of daily on-time performance was available; however, according to Evergreen's surveys, most staff concur that buses do run on time and are seldom late barring any natural or uncontrolled circumstances. Having a positive start and finish to the normal school day is important.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for the high on-time performance of its buses.**

**FINDING**

Building personnel, as evidenced in Evergreen's surveys, expressed above average satisfaction with the manner in which drivers work cooperatively. Conversely, MCPS bus drivers generally expressed that building staff (principals, teachers, etc.) is easy to work with and all seem to have a team spirit.



**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended on the excellent cooperation between bus drivers and school staff, and the ability of its driving staff to cooperate and accommodate the needs of building staff.**

**FINDING**

The current organization has no formal dispatch function. Primarily, the transportation office becomes aware of a late or no show bus from either by radio from the driver or a phone from the principal. This exception based approach delays notification time until after the bus is very late.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 7-1:**

**Organize a more proactive dispatch process.**

Drivers should contact the transportation office via radio as they commence their routes in the morning and depart parking in the afternoon. The transportation office would follow a driver checklist in time order to confirm buses are commencing their routes on time. This action would increase response time available to limit disruption of service and would also provide the office with a real time record of substitute drivers. Staff hours would have to be adjusted to accommodate this process.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

No additional expense would result from implementing this recommendation. In addition, the responsiveness of the transportation management team would be improved.

**FINDING**

In attempting to determine if the MCPS transportation department is delivering adequate levels of service, the factors of on-time performance and other performance measurements could not be defined. If any operation is to improve and seek efficiencies, it must establish benchmarks from which to operate on a day-to-day basis. The Commonwealth, on an annualized basis, supplies a great deal of transportation data so that any operation will be able to gauge success against its peers. The state-level information, by itself, is not sufficient to sustain proper planning and procedural changes that may be required.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 7-2:**

**Implement a system for measuring overall performance in the MCPS transportation department.**



Based on information provided by building and administrative staff, as well as driver and community input, the existing transportation service appears to be adequate. The lack of concentrated complaints and concerns points to a system that is working at least reasonably well. Driver turnover is tracked and is low, but the only other measurement of success appears to be overall decline in lack of complaints received. It is good practice to establish and measure performance benchmarks and then measure performance allowing the division to make any needed corrections.

Suggested transportation industry benchmarks should include, but not limited to:

- 99.5 percent on-time percentage;
- no more than one preventable accident per 100,000 miles; and
- <3 percent driver absenteeism.

These benchmarks can be easily measured as a result of implementing **Recommendation 7-2**. Monthly comparisons can be made. Each month, statistics should be shared with staff and drivers with appropriate commendation or improvement action plans implemented.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation will improve the effectiveness of service by measuring performance objectively. No increase in costs should result.

### **FINDING**

Several years ago, MCPS invested in Edulog, a school bus planning and routing software. This product is widely used throughout the nation, not only for transportation but attendance boundary planning as well. Edulog is best utilized when it is properly linked with the division's student data information system and the underlying electronic map is kept current.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Recommendation 7-3:**

**Assign to the transportation department a person with a technological background to implement and maintain the computerized routing system—Edulog.**

No one in the transportation department currently has the time or the aptitude to effectively perform this function. Extensive training in the software is required as well as a familiarity with how databases interact with one another. However, once implemented, the division could expect that 50 percent of the time of the position could be devoted to other tasks.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Assuming the division cannot assign a current employee to these responsibilities, the estimated compensation, including benefits, is \$50,000. As noted above, the system does not require a great deal of support throughout the year allowing for non-transportation responsibilities to be



assigned as well. The division should expect this position to be fully devoted to transportation in the two months leading up to the start of school and one month thereafter.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Assign Router	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)

**7.2 TRAINING AND SAFETY**

As defined above, the MCPS transportation department enjoys a very low driver turnover rate, which drastically reduces the overall time and expense for initial training requirements. Training is guided by and accomplished via state requirements and training manuals. Training requires 24 classroom hours and 24 behind the wheel hours, along with the standard CDL requirements (MVR, CRC, Drug, Physical, etc.). Inservice training occurs twice per year by having an orientation at the start of the year and one other session within the second semester. The division uses a number of videos as part of its training presentations. Safety incentive programs had been used in the past, but are currently not in place for driving staff.

The MCPS safety record is very good. Accidents are rare both in terms of vehicular as well as workers’ compensation injuries. The longevity and experience level of the driving force pays dividends in the area of safety. Because drivers do not have any specific work area assigned to them (some at school buildings, some at garage, some at home, etc.), safety posters and safety promotion devises were not prominent on site. It was apparent, through interviews, that drivers have a positive attitude towards safety and the overall requirements related to maintaining a safe program. This finding is also exemplified by the drivers’ higher than normal attendance levels. Student discipline issues were identified as an area where drivers felt they had gotten better training as well as support.

**FINDING**

The industry standard on school bus accidents is one preventable accident per 100,000 miles. MCPS has achieved a ratio of .4 preventable accidents per 100,000 miles. This ratio shows excellent achievement on the part of MCPS drivers and staff.

**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for its overall bus accident prevention record.**

**7.3 ROUTING AND SCHEDULING**

The routing/scheduling function is second only to the safety area in determining the effectiveness of a transportation system. Routing determines the total number of routes, which in combination with scheduling of bell times for the various schools, dictates the total number of buses required. This total route bus count drives nearly every expense associated with transportation. The better



the division routes and schedules the system, the more efficient it becomes. To this end, **Exhibit 7-21** (RouteYield™), at the end of this chapter, displays the overall utilization rates for the current MCPS routing system.

Routing in MCPS is manually completed by each driver. Drivers update the routing and stop identification during and at the close of the year. Routes for the new year are based on what is in effect at the end of the proceeding year.

MCPS has 623 square miles with two high schools, two middle schools, and regional elementary schools. The routes are arranged geographically and have seen few changes over the years (i.e. they are historical transport areas and change very little). Some routes are quite lengthy and operate longer than 90 minutes, while others are much shorter (some are less than 30 minutes in length).

According to the transportation supervisor, the parameters are:

- **Walk to stop distance:** ½ mile (all grade levels)
- **Walk boundary distance:** Not Applicable
- **Percent of capacity for Secondary:** 3.0 per seat
- **Percent of capacity for Elementary:** 3.0 per seat
- **Ride time limitations:** 60 minutes

## FINDING

Current routes have been in place for some time with little or review for efficiency. Drivers have every incentive to keep their run as short as possible with as few students as possible. Moreover, the drivers do not have wide perspective as to consolidation opportunities.

The results of our RouteYield™ analysis (**Exhibit 7-21**) shows that 106 route buses and cars transport approximately 3,124 students with an 80 percent use of available time and a 60 percent use of total available capacity.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 7-4:

#### **Implement the Edulog routing system to consolidate runs.**

The software Edulog is already purchased, but is not being utilized. This process normally will take from one to two years to become reliable, but once it is properly linked with student enrollment, the ability to route quickly and concisely should be ongoing. The accuracy of the map, along with the proper communication of the student data maintained within the division, will be the two biggest challenges.

It is estimated that three runs may be eliminated. (Note: the savings of this recommendation more than offsets the expense of **Recommendation 7-3**).



**FISCAL IMPACT**

In reviewing operational expenses, it was estimated that the direct costs for performing a run is \$20,850. This is a very conservative estimate involving only variable costs such as wages, fuel and parts. No reduction in capital expenses or overhead was assumed. A three-run reduction would result in annual savings of at least \$62,550 (\$20,850 x 3).

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Implement Routing Software	\$62,550	\$62,550	\$62,550	\$62,500	\$62,550

**FINDING**

Current school opening times are essentially the same throughout the division with a small variance to allow for combining (sharing) high and middle school routes. High schools open at 8:15 a.m. with middle and elementary opening at 8:30 a.m. There is a 40-minute difference in length of school day between secondary and elementary schools. This bell schedule does not allow for the most efficient use of the buses.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 7-5:**

**Adjust school opening and closing times to eliminate buses and improve efficiency.**

As shown in **Exhibit 7-16**, the average length of route run times are 45 minutes with a standard deviation of +/- 14 minutes. This suggests that at least an hour between secondary and elementary bell times in the afternoon would allow the majority of the buses to perform two runs. By so doing, we estimate that at least 20 buses would be eliminated.

**Exhibit 7-16  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation Department  
Run Times in Minutes**

School	Type	Average Time in Minutes	Maximum Time	Number of Runs	Standard Deviation of Run Times
Bluestone High	HS	45	63	10	13.1
Bluestone Middle	MS	49	55	2	6.5
Bluestone MS- HS	COM	55	80	23	12.8
Boydton Elementary	ES	51	64	6	11.5
Buckhorn Elementary	ES	46	62	7	11.6
Chase City Elementary	ES	44	61	10	11.3
Clarksville Elementary	ES	52	105	11	21.0
Lacrosse Elementary	ES	47	58	6	8.1
Park View High	HS	52	70	4	11.0
Park View Middle	MS	22	38	4	14.4
Park View MS – HS	COM	50	81	18	16.7
Rivermont Special Needs	SE	45	61	4	18.6
South Hill Elementary	ES	48	80	9	18.1
South Hill Elementary	COM	35	35	1	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>15.9</b>

Source: MCPS Transportation Department, 2007.



**FISCAL IMPACT**

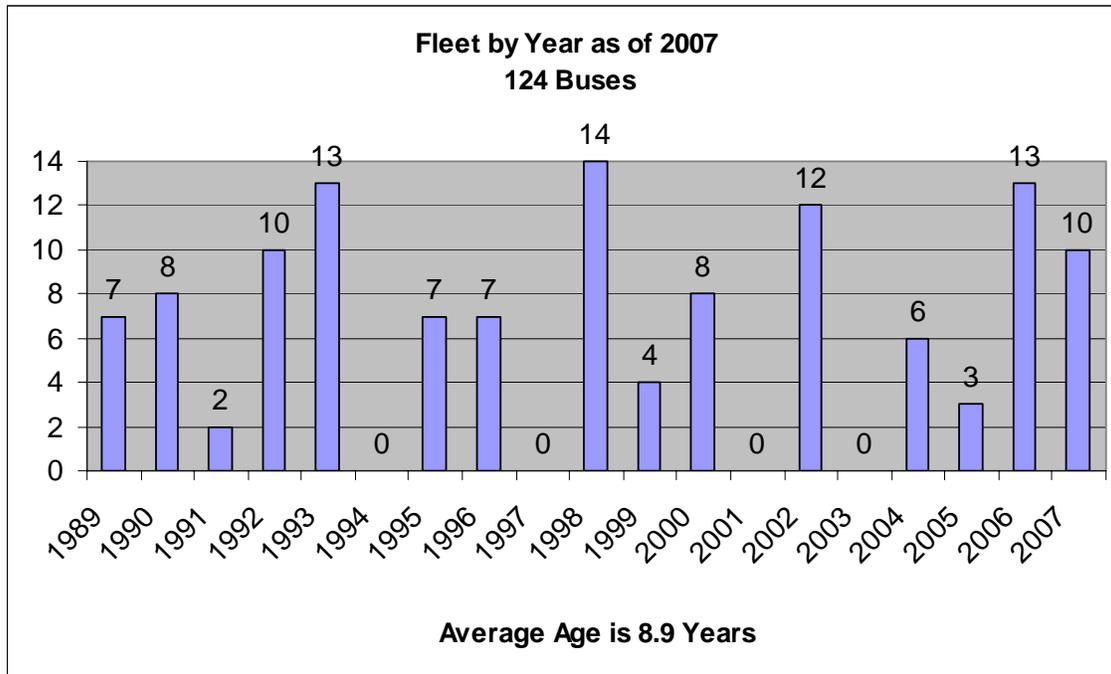
For the purposes of this recommendation, the operating cost per bus was estimated using various costs (drivers’ wages, fuel, parts, etc.) and a small allocation for non-variable costs. The resultant estimate was \$21,621 per bus. This estimate was then reduced 25 percent or \$5,405 per bus to allow for the increased compensation for drivers that would be performing two runs. The resultant rate for each bus reduced was \$16,216 annually (\$21,621 – 5,405 = \$16,216). The adjusted bell times would eliminate at least 20 buses, but payroll for the remaining drivers increased for an annual savings of \$324,320 (\$16,216 x 20).

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Alter Bell Times	\$324,320	\$324,320	\$324,320	\$324,320	\$324,320

**7.4 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND BUS REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE**

The age of the fleet and its distribution by model year may be found in **Exhibit 7-17**. The average age is 8.9 years and the oldest buses are 18 years.

**Exhibit 7-17  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation Department  
Fleet by Year**



Source: MCPS Transportation Department, 2007.



**FINDING**

Buses have not been consistently replaced resulting in a fleet that is older than average and a number of excessively old buses. The generally accepted practice is to replace school buses as they reach 15 years of age or 200,000 miles, whichever comes first. Currently, 34 buses exceed these parameters as shown in **Exhibit 7-18**, fleet replacement schedule. This cycle improves reliability, avoids the expense of major component replacement, and provides for the division to enjoy the benefit of safety-related technology upgrades.

**Exhibit 7-18  
Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation Department  
Fleet Replacement Schedule**

	Year Expired					
	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>*Year 1 FY 2007</b>	1989			***4	****3	
	1990		**2	***3	****3	
	1991			***2		
<b>**Year 2 FY 2008</b>	1992	*4	**5		***1	
	1993	*5	**2			*****6
	1995				***1	
<b>***Year 3 FY 2009</b>	1996					*****3
	1998					
	1999					
<b>****Year 4 FY 2010</b>	2000					
	2002				***1	
	2004					
<b>*****Year 5 FY 2011</b>	2005					
	2006					
	2007					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>*9</b>	<b>**9</b>	<b>***9</b>	<b>****9</b>	<b>*****9</b>

Source: MCPS Transportation Department, 2007.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 7-6:**

**Commit to purchasing nine buses per year.**

The targeted number of buses purchased assumes that bell times are adjusted in accordance with **Recommendation 7-5**. The first year, MCPS will be able to dispose of about 20 excess buses. In subsequent years, buses purchased and disposed should be equal. The fiscal impact cited below assumes that historical fleet replacement should have been 10 buses per year; therefore, capital outlay should be reduced compared to historical data.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

It is assumed that MCPS should have been replacing its fleet at a rate of 10 units per year. Bell time alteration would reduce the fleet size by 20 and the replacement rate to nine per year. This would reduce capital outlay \$50,000 per year.



Current market price for a 64-passenger bus is approximately \$60,000. Smaller lift buses are in a range of \$35,000 - \$50,000 based upon capacity and equipment. At current prices, the division should have been purchasing nine large buses (\$540,000) and one lift bus (\$42,500) for a total annual expenditure of \$582,500. Consistent with the recommendation, the annual purchase should be reduced by one large bus resulting in a maximum annual savings of \$60,000. However, because the price of the special equipment will vary according to need, the annual savings estimate was reduced to \$50,000.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Reduce Capital Outlay for Buses	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000

**FINDING**

The maintenance of the fleet is performed at a centralized garage located near Boydton. The garage stores fuel, parts, and supplies necessary for the upkeep of the division fleet. There is additional fuel located at various school buildings throughout the division. The purchase of parts and supplies is accomplished at the garage, but is approved by the transportation supervisor.

Downtime is at a minimum. All buses are placed onto a maintenance schedule that ensures they are inspected at least once per month, and buses have a 180-day inspection as per state requirements. Non-bus equipment must be individually scheduled for maintenance by the user agency as they are not on a schedule. Oil and lubes are completed every other inspection period or as required (generally at 6,000 miles).

Warranty recovery is done locally for the cost of returned parts, only if the warranty is a small item. If not small, the units must be returned to the dealer for bigger repairs whereas all costs will be warranty. All maintenance records are manually kept; no computerized maintenance system is used.

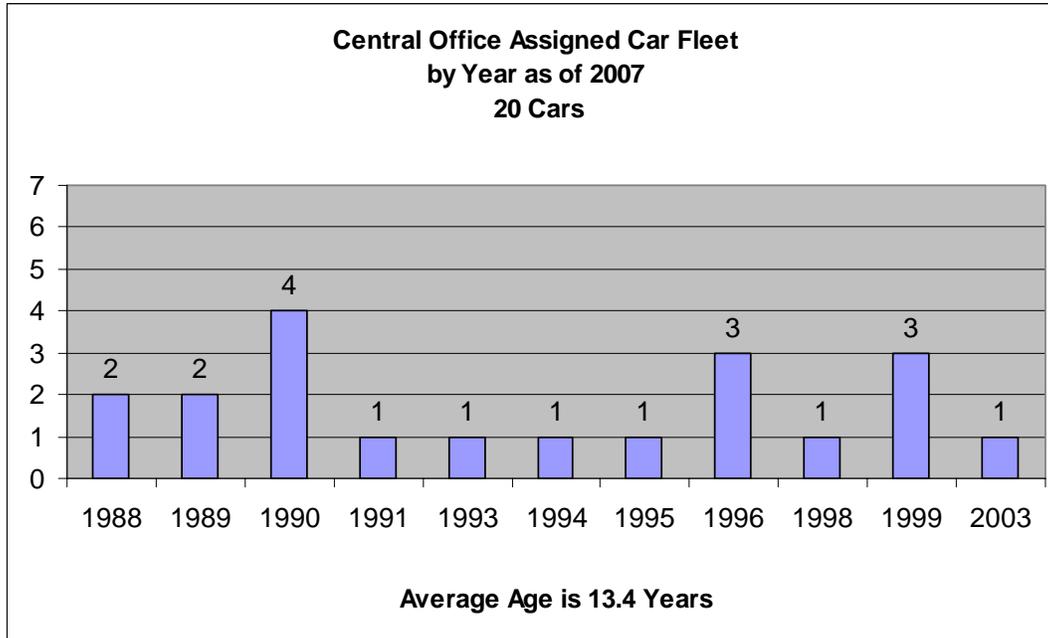
The garage is managed by the shop foreman and assistant. Based on the six (five plus assistant) mechanic positions, the bus to mechanic ratio is 20:1, which is well within acceptable standards. However, an extensive amount of work is performed on the school non-bus fleet county agencies.

A safety climate analysis was conducted on the shop area (which measured the overall use of safety items, MSDS, fuel island, EPA, etc.). While no safety concerns were noted, the shop was found to be cluttered and not well-maintained.

In addition to the school buses, the maintenance department supports an additional 209 vehicles for various departments and county agencies. As shown in **Exhibits 7-19** and **7-20**, there are 20 cars assigned to the central office and 39 cars and trucks assigned to schools. The average age of these fleets is 13.4 years and 11.2 years, respectively. The primary source for cars is the sheriff's department. While there is no transfer cost, the cars are received in various states of disrepair and high mileage. There is no compilation of the expense involved in rendering these cars serviceable; however, we inspected two cars in a service bay, recently arrived, that were receiving in excess of \$2,000 worth of body and mechanical repairs.

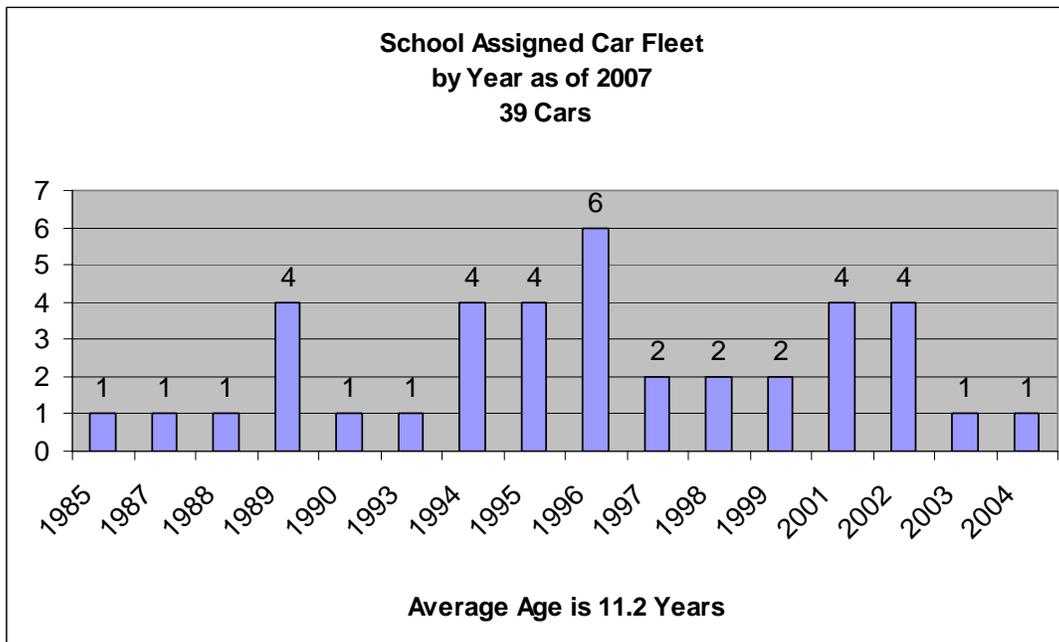


**Exhibit 7-19**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation Department**  
**Central Office Assigned Car Fleet by Year**



Source: MCPS Transportation Department, 2007.

**Exhibit 7-20**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools Transportation Department**  
**School Assigned Car Fleet by Year**



Source: MCPS Transportation Department, 2007.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 7-7:**

**Eliminate half of the administration’s car fleet.**

The number of vehicles utilized by the division is excessive. Moreover, vehicle age and high mileage causes maintenance to be expensive. The car fleet should be reduced by half. Service-related vehicles and cars used for pupil transportation should be retained.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The age and large number of cars drives this expense. The assumptions made are a vehicle operates 12,000 miles per year at a cost of \$0.25 per mile. Consistent with the recommendation, 30 vehicles are estimated to be eliminated. The assumptions made are a vehicle operates 12,000 miles per year at a cost of \$0.25 per mile. Therefore the annual savings estimated to be \$90,000 (30 vehicles x 12,000 miles per year @ \$.25 per mile).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Eliminate Half Administration Fleet	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000

**FINDING**

The shop does a large amount of work servicing the non-school bus fleet and outside agencies. Most of the repairs are unscheduled and can create uneven demand. The amount of time spent on this service is not formally tracked making staffing levels difficult to determine. Moreover, the labor rate is low to outside agencies at \$18.00 per hour. This service rate does not sufficiently capture the attendant expenses of shop supervision and scheduling, inventory costs, equipment purchases, and repairs. Standard industry practice is to increase the actual labor expense by a factor of three.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 7-8:**

**Immediately raise the labor rate to \$33 per hour and begin to formally account for labor hours.**

Performing services for outside agencies at understated labor rates can distort the evaluation of shop performance. Maintenance labor charges should capture not only the direct cost of wages, but benefits, insurance, utilities, and equipment. Standard industry practice is three times the base labor rate of, in the division’s case, \$11.00 per hour.



**FISCAL IMPACT**

Based upon Evergreen’s review of invoices, it is estimated that 2,000 hours of work per year is performed for outside agencies.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Raise Labor Rate	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000

**FINDING**

Consistent with the findings of the Creedle Jones Report of July 25, 2006, there is no method in place to maintain the value of the current parts inventory as it relates to buses. The value of the inventory is not known. The targeted inventory amount (that which is on hand at the garage) should be less than \$200 per bus.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 7-9:**

**Set aside a two-day period and conduct a full inventory of all parts and supplies to include part name, number, and value.**

MCPS should implement and maintain the Datasynch inventory and service software system that will help control parts and prepare bills for outside agencies.

This inventory should be maintained on an ongoing basis with parts being tracked as they are consumed and purchased. Small nuts, bolts, and fasteners need not be inventoried, but all other consumables should be included with items found to be obsolete being returned for credits.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The implementation of this recommendation will improve control and fulfill financial accountability with regard to the parts inventory. Because the software is purchased, no additional expense to the division is anticipated for implementation.

**FINDING**

Upon completion of services for outside agencies, an invoice is prepared for parts and labor. In a memo attached to the invoice, the agency is directed to make its check out to one of the division’s suppliers, and not to the division. The transportation supervisor selects the vendor to be paid based upon the outstanding amount the division owes that supplier. This situation can serve to complicate many parts of the process: tracking the receivables, creating a credit at the vendor, and understanding the manpower necessary to serve the agencies.



## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 7-10:

**Cease instructing agencies to pay division vendors and develop procedures in finance to properly account for these activities.**

The current system is burdensome for all participants and results in poor management information. Accountability for performing this service is best served when the pricing and accounting is straightforward and reflects the activity directly.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The process for properly accounting for transactions is straight forward and will not adversely impact the division. The improved accounting will reduce time and confusion regarding reconciliations of these items, but no position will be eliminated. As a result accountability and expense tracking will be enhanced. No additional costs to the division are anticipated

## 7.5 STATE REPORTING

Mecklenburg County Public Schools uses the required daily driver report sheet that contains the number of students transported along with mileage figures. These daily recordings are kept on monthly reports and are given to the appropriate principal who tabulates and forwards to the administrative secretary. The secretary then combines them onto a monthly spreadsheet for the submission to the Virginia Department of Education at the close of the year. The department relies on the finance staff to record the appropriate costs into the Web-based Pupil Transportation Verification Report.

A review of the past three year-end reports shows overall transportation effort was generally static in terms of services offered (i.e. miles and students remained essentially the same). No reported corrections to the state have had to occur in recent years. Reporting is not complicated. The only automated portion of the system is the Web-based document on the DOE Web site. Since this system has not re-routed itself in some time, the linear density formula is only changed based on change of enrollments from year to year– the same roads seem to be used each year.

## FINDING

MCPS ranks the fourth lowest in its peer classification as to its cost per student. This is two percent below the peer average and 29 percent below the highest in the peer group. The costs have remained stable despite the impact of fuel expense. This statistic indicates that efforts are being made to control costs. This is further evidenced by the relatively low cost increases shown on the last three Verification Reports during periods of higher than average transportation cost index increases.



**COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for its lower cost per pupil (\$541) when compared to peer school divisions.**



## EXPLANATION FOR EXHIBIT 7-21

### RouteYield™ Assessment

#### General:

- RouteYield™ measures the utilization of ‘*time and capacity*’ for each bus route.
- Drivers record ‘actual’ riders and times for each of their routes on a form provided.
- Data are entered into RouteYield™ assessment software.
- Findings aid routers to identify opportunities for run consolidation.
- The target is to use at least 80 percent utilization of time or capacity.

#### Time:

- Divisions establish a ride time policy ( This policy was not recorded for MCPS but verbally we know that no one is to be on a bus longer than 60 minutes).
- Software adjusts the amount of time available based on bell time gaps (i.e. if only 45 minutes exist between assigned schools, then the time available is 45 minutes, not 60 minutes).
- If a bus runs out of time before it reaches capacity, that route is “time restricted”.

#### Capacity:

- Capacity parameters are established by the bus manufacturer’s rating or the school’s policy or practice. In this case it is two (2) per seat secondary school and three (3) per seat elementary school.
- When a bus fills to capacity but still has time remaining, the route becomes “capacity restricted.”

#### Efficiency:

- In order for a system to be perfectly efficient every route would fill all available seats and reach school at or under the allotted time limit.
- An eighty (80) percent or better utilization ratio (time or capacity) is the practical target.
- The report produces utilization ratios for every bus serving every school.

#### Interpretation of Data:

- The first page of RouteYield™ is a summary listing comparison of current routes against a mathematical forecast number of routes (i.e. the perfect 100 percent model).
- The graphs for each school show the runs serving it.
- The gray line at the top of graph, with the square dot connectors, is the ride time policy or the bell time gap time available ( whichever is less), and the black line with triangle indicators is the actual amount of time being utilized by each bus- **time utilization**.
- The closer these two lines are to one another the more efficient the route - if the actual amount of time (darker line) is above the gray line this means the route is not adhering to the allotted ride time policy and or may be arriving late to school.
- The lighter area at the upper part of the vertical bars represents the empty seats for each bus while the shaded area represents the number of seats filled- **capacity utilization**.
- The manufacturer rated capacity of the bus has been altered within the formulas to reflect the capacity parameters desired.



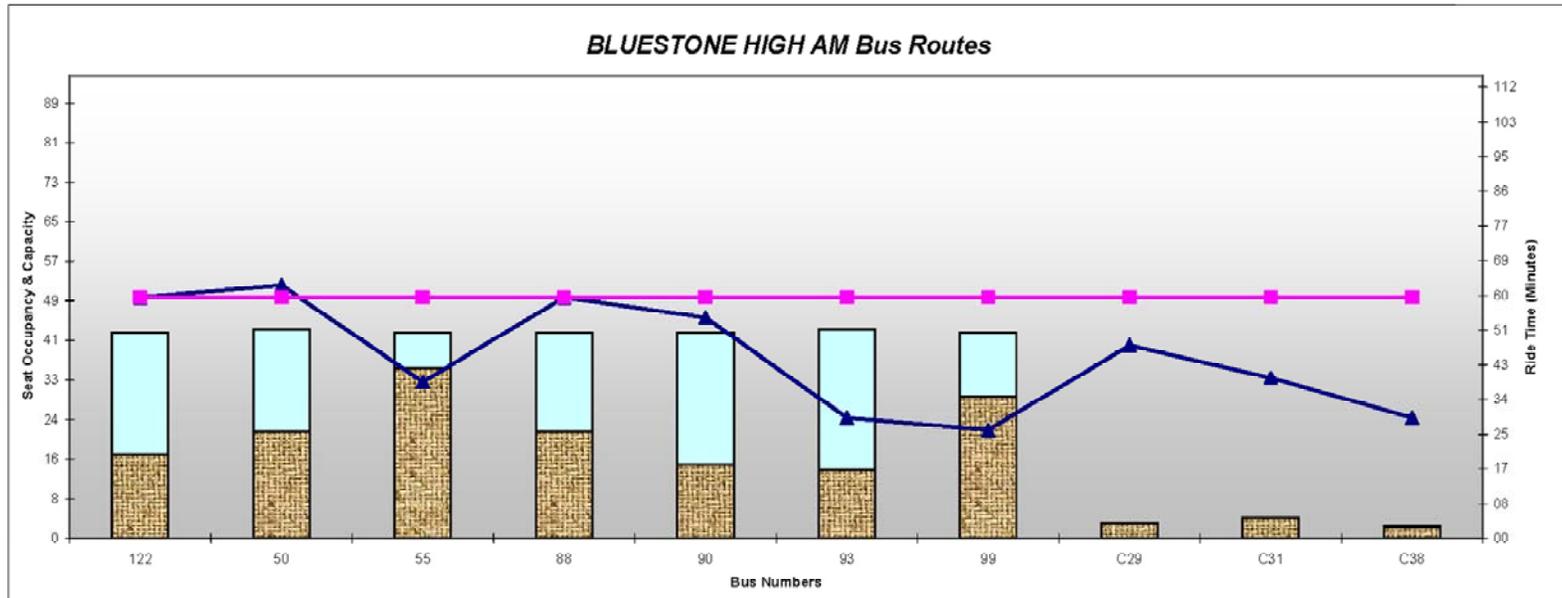
**Exhibit 7-21  
RouteYield™  
Routing Efficiency Analysis**

MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS - AM Routes

School	School Type	Data									Forecast Based on Bus Capacity	Forecast Based On Service Minutes	Max Forecast to Actual
		Service Time	Ride Time Avail	Ride Policy	Riders	Empty Seats	Seating Capacity	Average Capacity	Forecast Routes	Actual Routes			
BLUESTONE HIGH	HS	452	600	60	163	142	305	30	7.04	10	8	8	-2
BLUESTONE MIDDLE	MS	97	120	60	45	39	84	42	1.07	2	2	2	0
BLUESTONE MS - HS	COM	1261	1380	60	621	313	934	41	15.73	23	16	22	-1
BOYDTON ELEMENTARY	ES	306	360	60	144	144	288	48	2.93	6	3	6	0
BUCKHORN ELEMENTARY	ES	320	420	60	172	276	448	64	2.69	7	3	6	-1
CHASE CITY ELEMENTARY	ES	441	600	60	332	264	596	60	5.43	10	6	8	-2
CLARKSVILLE ELEMENTARY	ES	575	620	60	287	305	592	54	4.89	11	5	10	-1
LACROSSE ELEMENTARY	ES	282	360	60	226	132	358	60	3.74	6	4	5	-1
PARK VIEW HIGH	HS	206	240	60	124	45	169	42	2.94	4	3	4	0
PARK VIEW MIDDLE	MS	89	240	60	44	46	90	22	1.50	4	2	2	-2
PARK VIEW MS - HS	COM	900	1080	60	598	165	763	42	14.11	18	15	15	-3
RIVERMONT SPECIAL NEEDS	SE	179	240	60	18	-7	11	3	6.52	4	7	3	3
SOUTH HILL ELEMENTARY	ES	434	540	60	348	169	517	57	5.89	9	6	8	-1
SOUTH HILL ES - PVIEW HS	COM	35	60	60	2	20	22	22	0.09	1	1	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>5577</b>	<b>6860</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3124</b>	<b>2054</b>	<b>5178</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>74.56</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-11</b>



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics											
Bus #	122	50	55	88	90	93	99	C29	C31	C38	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	17	22	35	22	15	14	29	3	4	2	163
Empty Seats	25	21	7	20	27	29	13	0	-1	1	142
Total Seat Capacity	42	43	42	42	42	43	42	3	3	3	305
Ride Time	60	63	39	60	55	30	27	48	40	30	452
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	600

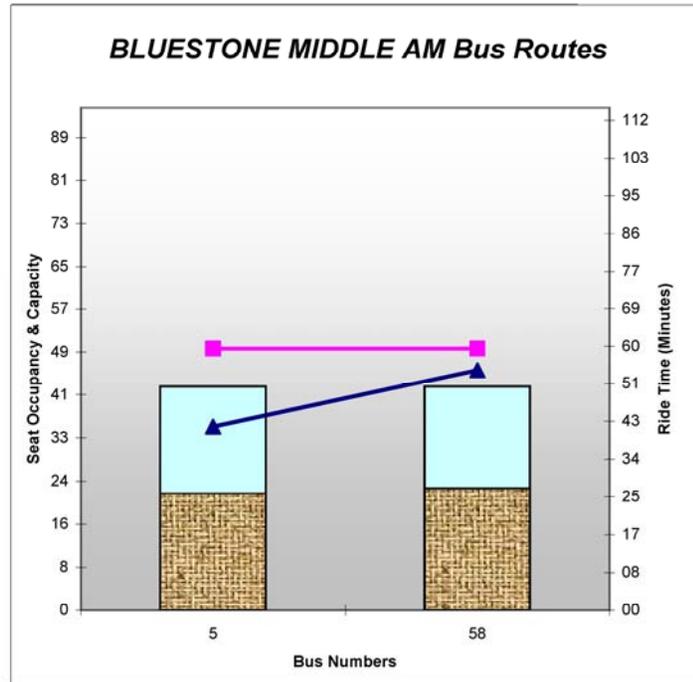
Current Utilization	100%	105%	83%	100%	92%	50%	69%	114%	152%	76%	75%
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Target Utilization: 90%

Time Utilization	100%	105%	65%	100%	92%	50%	45%	80%	67%	50%	75%
Capacity Utilization	40%	51%	83%	52%	36%	33%	69%	114%	152%	76%	53%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics			
Bus #	5	58	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	22	23	45
Empty Seats	20	19	39
Total Seat Capacity	42	42	84
Ride Time	42	55	97
Ride Time Available	60	60	120

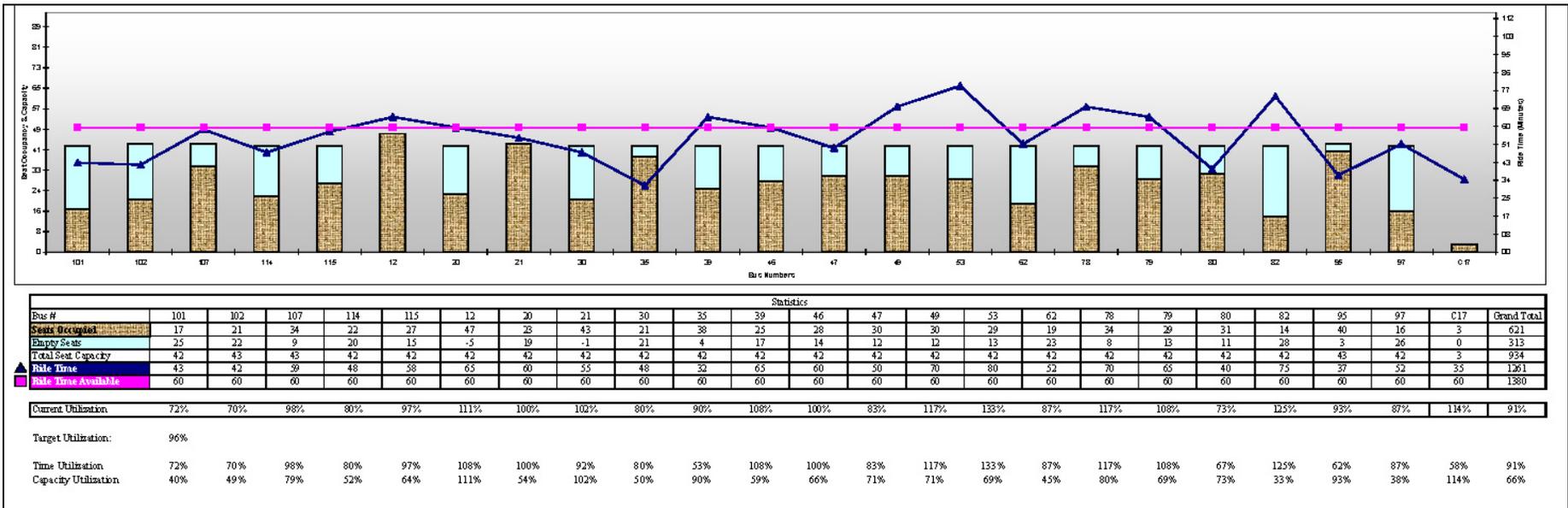
Current Utilization	70%	92%	81%
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Target Utilization:	50%		
Time Utilization	70%	92%	81%
Capacity Utilization	52%	54%	53%

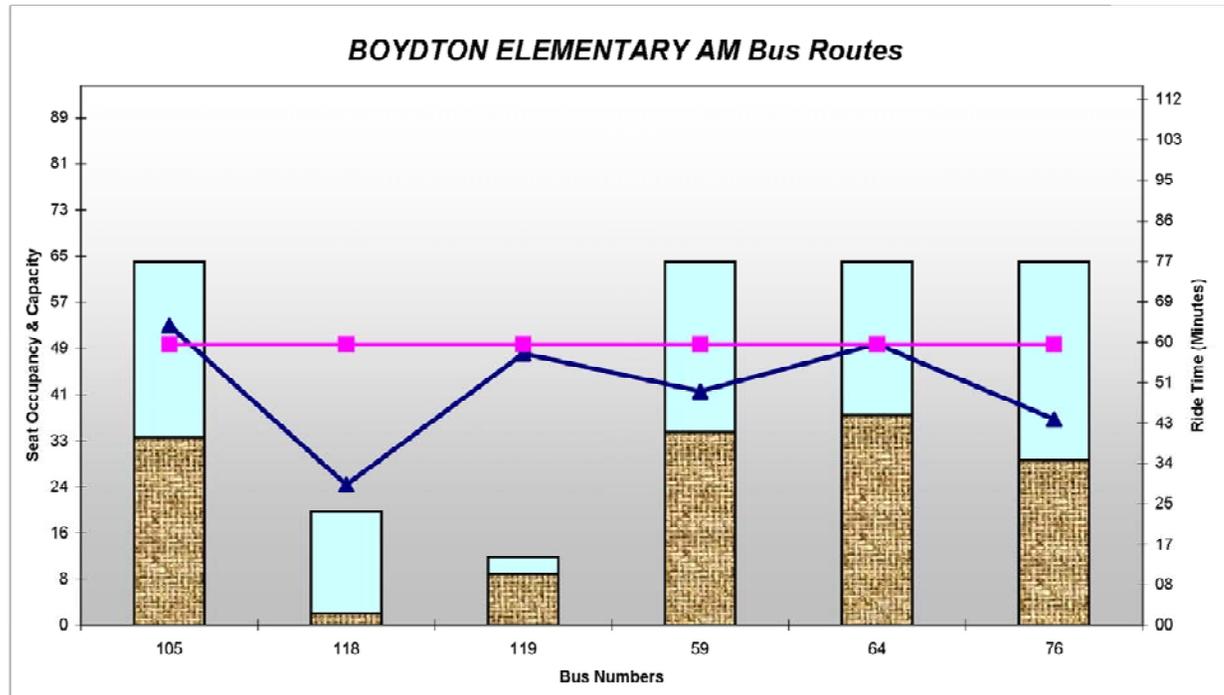


MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BLUESTONE MS – HS AM/Bus Routes



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics							
Bus #	105	118	119	59	64	76	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	33	2	9	34	37	29	144
Empty Seats	31	18	3	30	27	35	144
Total Seat Capacity	64	20	12	64	64	64	288
Ride Time	64	30	58	50	60	44	306
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	360

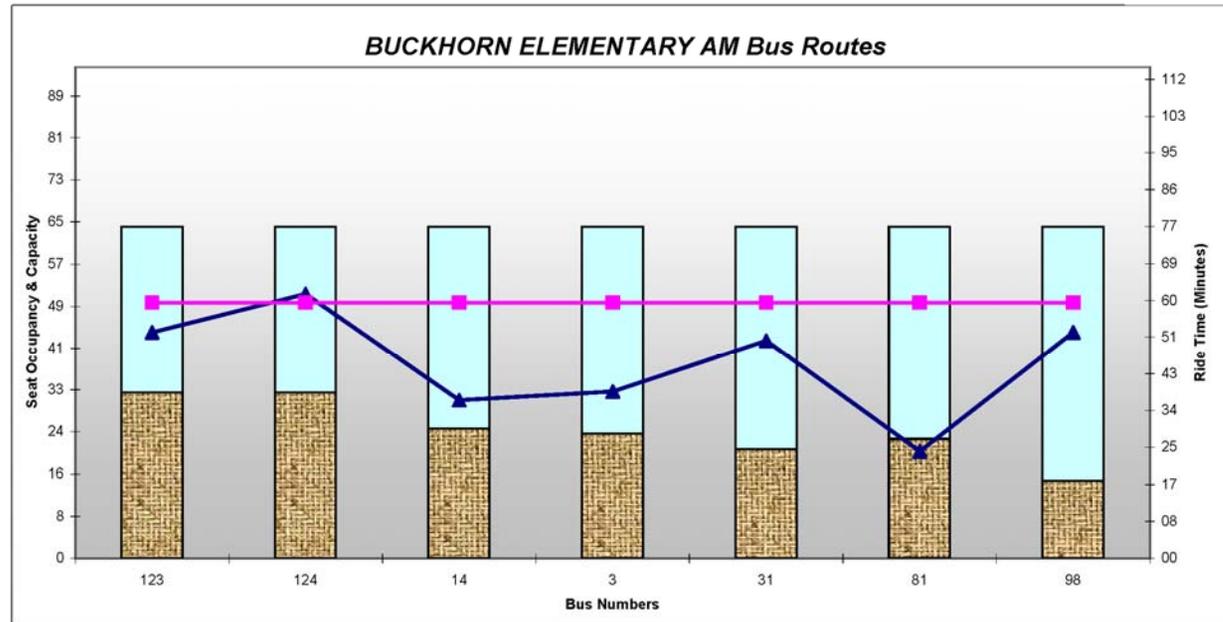
Current Utilization	107%	50%	97%	83%	100%	73%	85%
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Target Utilization: 83%

Time Utilization	107%	50%	97%	83%	100%	73%	85%
Capacity Utilization	52%	10%	75%	53%	58%	45%	50%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics								
Bus #	123	124	14	3	31	81	98	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	32	32	25	24	21	23	15	172
Empty Seats	32	32	39	40	43	41	49	276
Total Seat Capacity	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	448
Ride Time	53	62	37	39	51	25	53	320
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	420

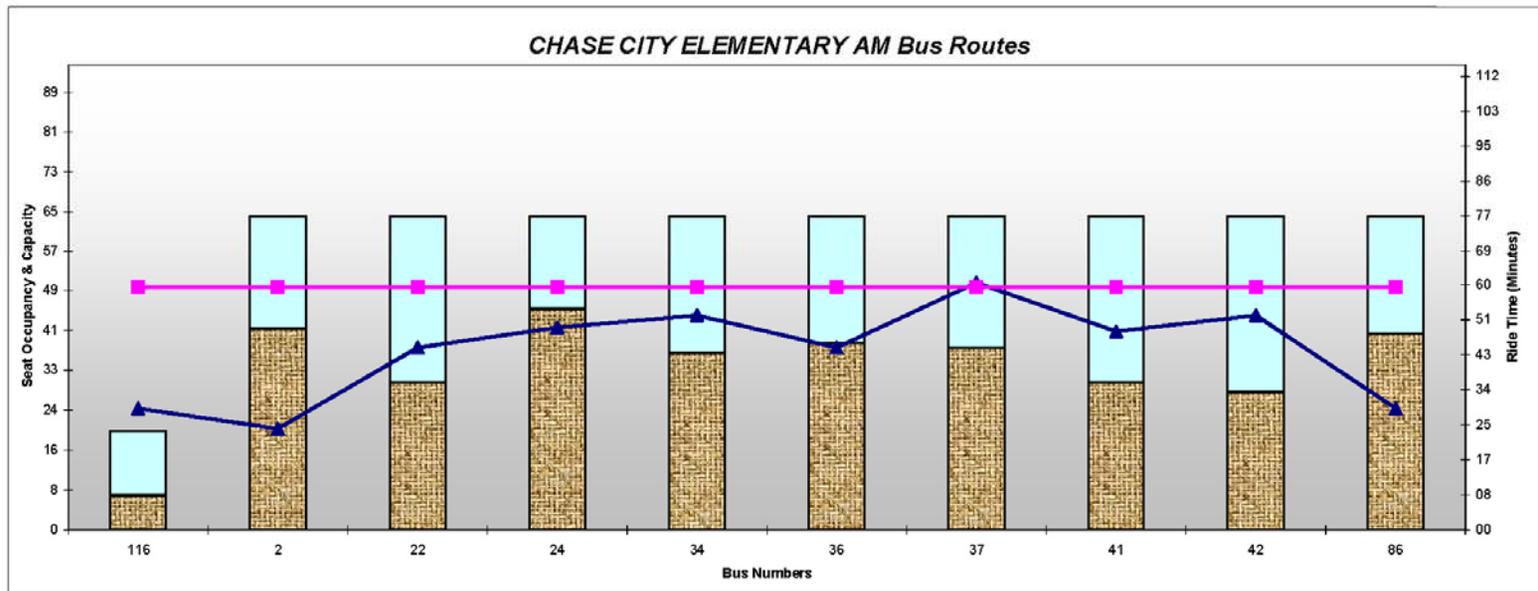
Current Utilization	88%	103%	62%	65%	85%	42%	88%	76%
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Target Utilization: 86%

Time Utilization	88%	103%	62%	65%	85%	42%	88%	76%
Capacity Utilization	50%	50%	39%	38%	33%	36%	23%	38%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics											
Bus #	116	2	22	24	34	36	37	41	42	86	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	7	41	30	45	36	38	37	30	28	40	332
Empty Seats	13	23	34	19	28	26	27	34	36	24	264
Total Seat Capacity	20	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	64	596
Ride Time	30	25	45	50	53	45	61	49	53	30	441
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	600

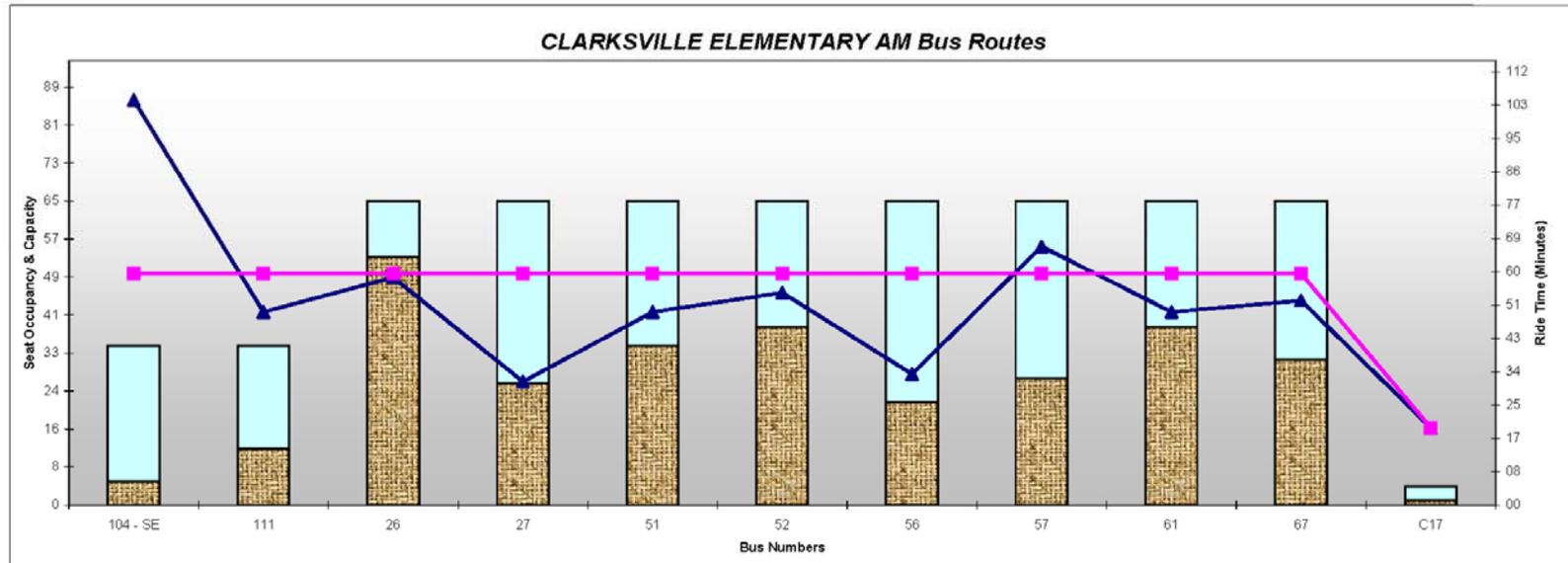
Current Utilization	50%	64%	75%	83%	88%	75%	102%	82%	88%	63%	74%
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Target Utilization: 90%

Time Utilization	50%	42%	75%	83%	88%	75%	102%	82%	88%	50%	74%
Capacity Utilization	35%	64%	47%	70%	56%	59%	58%	47%	44%	63%	56%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics												
Bus #	104 - SE	111	26	27	51	52	56	57	61	67	C17	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	5	12	53	26	34	38	22	27	38	31	1	287
Empty Seats	29	22	12	39	31	27	43	38	27	34	3	305
Total Seat Capacity	34	34	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	4	592
Ride Time	105	50	59	32	50	55	34	67	50	53	20	575
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	20	620

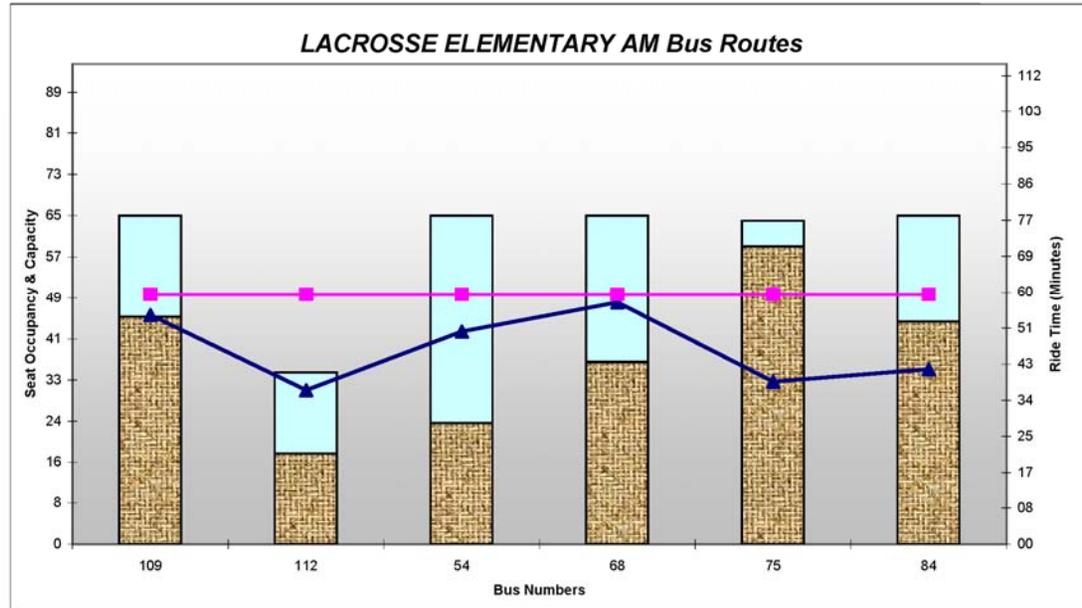
Current Utilization	175%	83%	98%	53%	83%	92%	57%	112%	83%	88%	100%	93%
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Target Utilization: 91%

Time Utilization	175%	83%	98%	53%	83%	92%	57%	112%	83%	88%	100%	93%
Capacity Utilization	15%	35%	82%	40%	52%	58%	34%	42%	58%	48%	25%	48%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics							
Bus #	109	112	54	68	75	84	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	45	18	24	36	59	44	226
Empty Seats	20	16	41	29	5	21	132
Total Seat Capacity	65	34	65	65	64	65	358
Ride Time	55	37	51	58	39	42	282
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	360

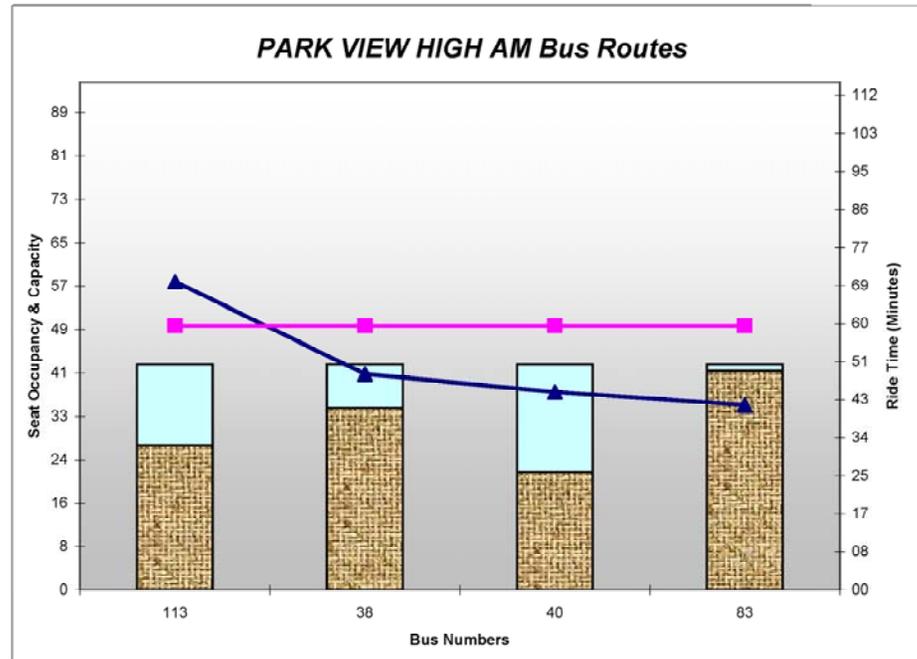
Current Utilization	92%	62%	85%	97%	92%	70%	78%
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Target Utilization: 83%

Time Utilization	92%	62%	85%	97%	65%	70%	78%
Capacity Utilization	69%	53%	37%	55%	92%	68%	63%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics					
Bus #	113	38	40	83	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	27	34	22	41	124
Empty Seats	15	8	20	1	45
Total Seat Capacity	42	42	42	42	169
Ride Time	70	49	45	42	206
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	240

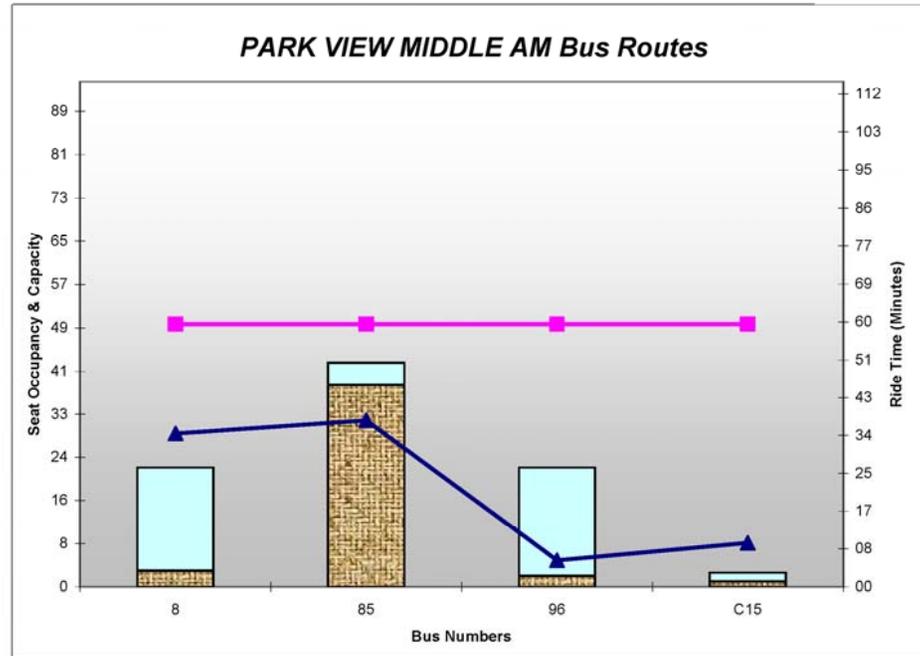
Current Utilization	117%	82%	75%	97%	86%
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Target Utilization: 75%

Time Utilization	117%	82%	75%	70%	86%
Capacity Utilization	64%	80%	52%	97%	73%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics					
Bus #	8	85	96	C15	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	3	38	2	1	44
Empty Seats	19	4	20	2	46
Total Seat Capacity	22	42	22	3	90
Ride Time	35	38	06	10	89
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	240

Current Utilization	58%	90%	10%	38%	49%
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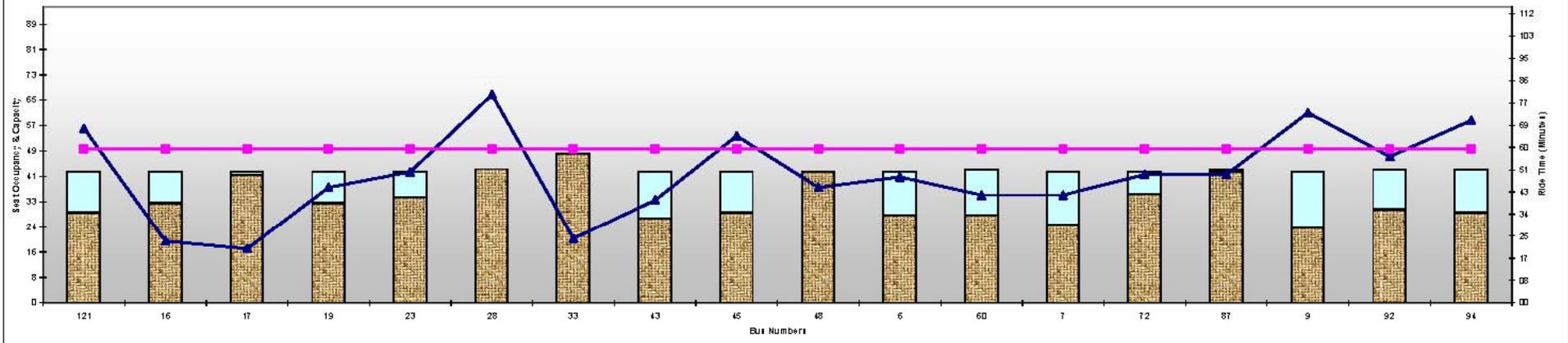
Target Utilization: 75%

Time Utilization	58%	63%	10%	17%	37%
Capacity Utilization	13%	90%	9%	38%	49%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

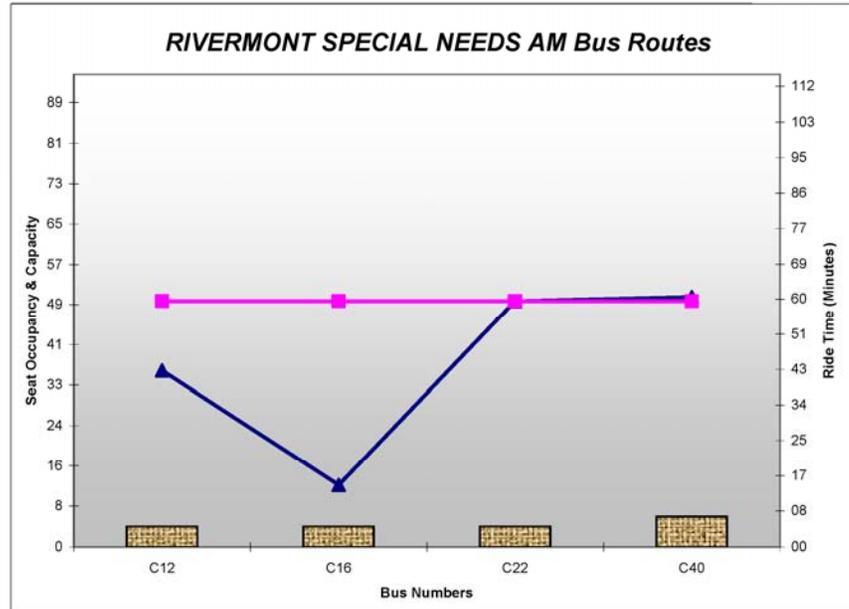
PARK VIEW MS - HS AM Bus Routes



		Statistics																		
Bus #		121	16	17	19	23	28	33	43	45	48	6	60	7	72	87	9	92	94	Grand Total
Seats Occupied		29	32	41	32	34	43	48	27	29	42	28	28	25	35	42	24	30	29	598
Empty Seats		13	10	1	10	8	-1	-6	15	13	0	14	15	17	7	1	18	13	14	165
Total Seat Capacity		42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	43	42	42	43	42	43	43	763
Ride Time		68	24	21	45	51	81	25	40	65	45	49	42	42	50	50	74	57	71	900
Ride Time Available		60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	1080
Current Utilization		113%	76%	97%	76%	85%	135%	114%	67%	108%	99%	82%	70%	70%	83%	98%	123%	95%	118%	83%
Target Utilization		94%																		
Time Utilization		113%	40%	35%	75%	85%	135%	42%	67%	108%	75%	82%	70%	70%	83%	83%	123%	95%	118%	83%
Capacity Utilization		69%	76%	97%	76%	80%	102%	114%	64%	69%	99%	66%	65%	59%	83%	98%	57%	70%	68%	78%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics					
Bus #	C12	C16	C22	C40	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	4	4	4	6	18
Empty Seats	-1	-1	-1	-3	-7
Total Seat Capacity	3	3	3	3	11
Ride Time	43	15	60	61	179
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	240

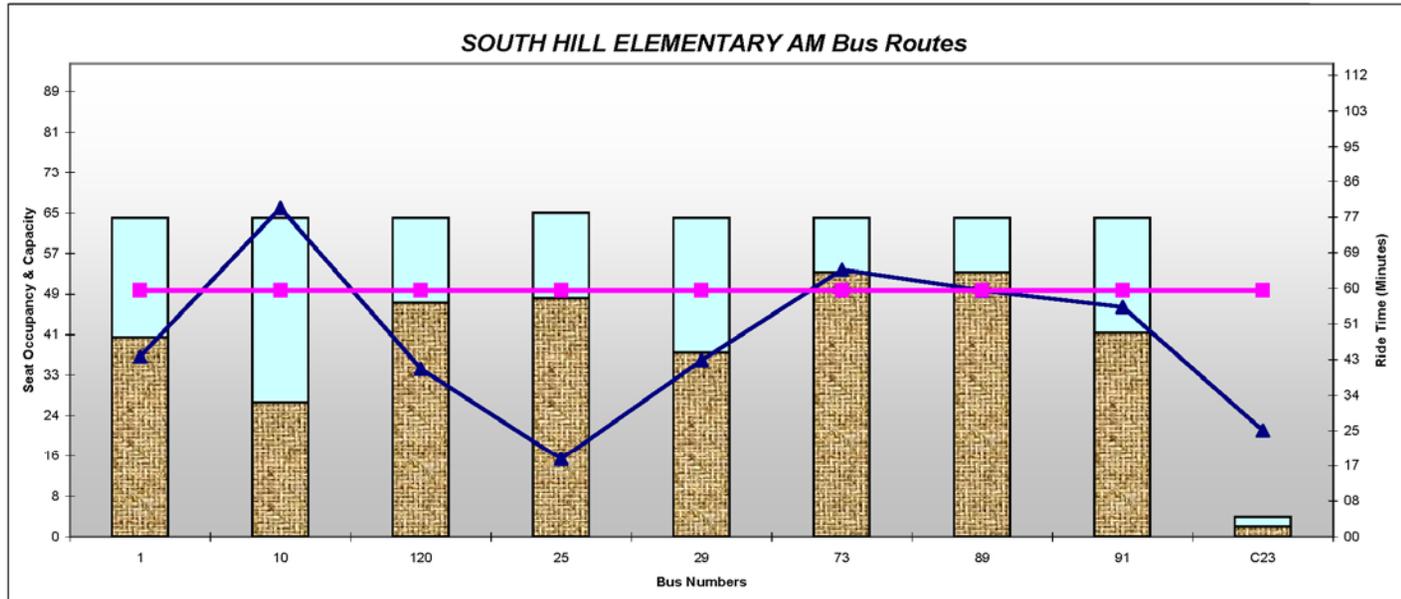
Current Utilization	152%	121%	152%	227%	160%
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Target Utilization: 75%

Time Utilization	72%	25%	100%	102%	75%
Capacity Utilization	152%	121%	152%	227%	160%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



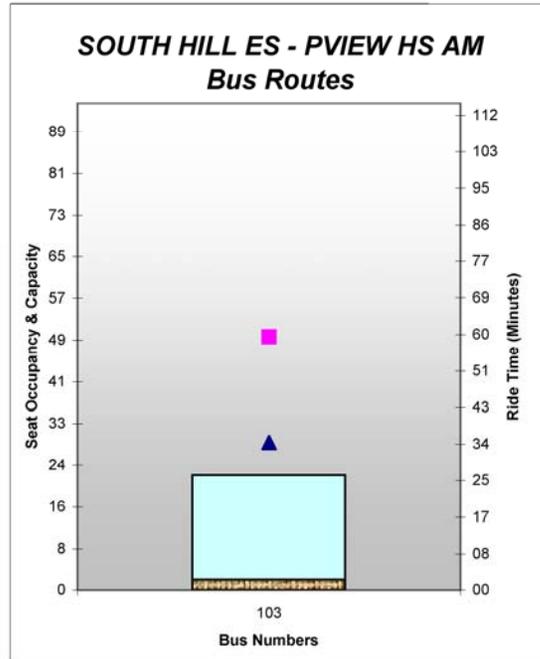
Statistics										
Bus #	1	10	120	25	29	73	89	91	C23	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	40	27	47	48	37	53	53	41	2	348
Empty Seats	24	37	17	17	27	11	11	23	2	169
Total Seat Capacity	64	64	64	65	64	64	64	64	4	517
Ride Time	44	80	41	19	43	65	60	56	26	434
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	540
Current Utilization	73%	133%	73%	74%	72%	108%	100%	93%	50%	80%

Target Utilization: 89%

Time Utilization	73%	133%	68%	32%	72%	108%	100%	93%	43%	80%
Capacity Utilization	63%	42%	73%	74%	58%	83%	83%	64%	50%	67%



MECKLENBURG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Statistics		
Bus #	103	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	2	2
Empty Seats	20	20
Total Seat Capacity	22	22
Ride Time	35	35
Ride Time Available	60	60
Current Utilization	58%	58%

Target Utilization: 0%

Time Utilization 58% 58%

Capacity Utilization 9% 9%



**CHAPTER 8:**  
**TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT**



Chapter 8

**TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT**

This chapter reviews staffing and organization related to administrative and instructional technology in Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS) and includes four major sections:

- 8.1 Organization and Staffing
- 8.2 Technology Planning and Management
- 8.3 Classroom Technology
- 8.4 Staff Development

A little over a decade ago, technology was seen as an add-on in a school division, indeed in many organizations, including private businesses. Now, technology is a foundational aspect of almost every organization. Technology drives efficiencies and analysis in school divisions. The requirements of *No Child Left Behind* include that divisions make data-driven decisions, that students achieve technological literacy before 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and that teachers effectively integrate technology into the classroom. Meeting these mandates depends heavily on a district’s technology implementation. *Education Week’s* annual Technology Counts survey for 2006 recently graded Virginia with an A- on its state technology report card. Although Virginia overall earned an A in access to technology and an A- in use of technology, it received a B in capacity to use technology. **Exhibit 8-1** compares the Virginia school technology environment with national averages.

**Exhibit 8-1**  
**Overall Virginia School Technology Environment Compared Nationally**

Technology Environment	Virginia Average	National Average
<b>Access to Technology</b>		
Number of students per instructional computer	3.1	3.8
Number of students per instructional computer in a classroom	6.3	7.6
Number of students per high-speed Internet-connected computer	3.0	3.9
Number of students per Internet-connected computer in a classroom	6.5	8.0
<b>Use of Technology</b>		
Student standards include technology	Yes	48 states
State tests students on technology	No	4 states
State has established a virtual school	Yes	22 states
State offers computer-based assessments	Yes	22 states
<b>Capacity to Use Technology</b>		
State includes technology in its teacher standards	Yes	40 states
State includes technology in its administrator standards	Yes	33 states
State includes technology in its initial teacher license requirements	Yes	21 states
State includes technology in its initial administrator license requirements	Yes	9 states
State includes technology in its teacher recertification requirements	No	9 states
State includes technology in its administrator recertification requirements	No	6 states

Source: *Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, www.edweek.org, 2006.*



Evergreen’s survey included several questions related to the division’s technology. Asked of MCPS administrators and teachers, the results for several questions are shown in **Exhibits 8-2** and **8-3**. MCPS responses are compared to responses provided by administrators and teachers in other school districts where Evergreen has collected data. Both MCPS administrators and teachers were generally more positive regarding administrative and instructional technology in comparison to peer groups. Conversely, all MCPS groups were generally less positive than peers regarding online administrative processes.

**Exhibit 8-2**  
**Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses Related to Technology in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The division Web site is a useful tool.				
Central Office Administrators	100%	0%	87.0%	7.4%
Principals	100%	0%	100%	0%
Teachers	90.0%	3.2%	81.5%	7.1%
The school division provides adequate instructional technology.				
Central Office Administrators	90.9%	4.6%	87.0%	5.4%
Principals	83.4%	11.1%	90.0%	10.0%
Teachers	79.7%	10.0%	76.1%	19.8%
The school division provides adequate administrative technology.				
Central Office Administrators	81.8%	13.6%	89.1%	8.7%
Principals	77.7%	16.7%	91.4%	8.6%
Teachers	60.6%	4.0%	60.6%	11.0%
Most administrative processes (purchasing, payroll, etc.) are done online.				
Central Office Administrators	63.7%	4.6%	46.3%	33.3%
Principals	38.9%	33.4%	73.7%	5.3%
Teachers	22.7%	10.8%	29.1%	9.5%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 8-3**  
**Teachers and Administrative Survey Results on Technology in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and School Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

	Mecklenburg County Teachers and Administrators		Teachers and Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Instructional Technology				
Central Office Administrators	18.2%	77.3%	59.8%	23.9%
Principals	22.3%	77.7%	51.4%	47.1%
Teachers	20.3%	66.1%	53.5%	36.9%
Administrative Technology				
Central Office Administrators	27.3%	63.6%	64.1%	23.9%
Principals	22.3%	77.8%	50.0%	47.1%
Teachers	14.4%	51.8%	45.1%	25.2%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.



## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

MCPS is operating technology at a highly commendable level in a number of areas. The division has developed a highly detailed technology plan that provides strategic direction for both instructional and administrative technology. The division is supporting a best practices organizational structure to obtain high-quality technical support. MCPS has an excellent trouble ticket staff and highly skilled, dedicated staff to provide technical support. The division has achieved a high level of technology integration in many of its classrooms and its Career and Technology Education offerings are superb in their use of technology.

Overall, Evergreen found far more that was commendable regarding MCPS technology than in need of improvement. Evergreen's seven recommendations for improvement are intended to assist a highly functioning area within the division achieve even greater levels of excellence. Evergreen's recommendations are:

- organize the technology department to report directly to the superintendent;
- add an additional part-time data administrator position;
- increase the number of technology resource teachers;
- increase technical staffing levels;
- find alternative space for technology storage and improve the facilities housing installed technology;
- offer instruction in keyboarding to students in elementary schools;
- develop procedures to assess technology use and satisfaction; and
- develop rigorous technology expectations for teachers and staff.

### **8.1 ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING**

Ideally, technology is one area of a school division that supports all administrative and instructional personnel in a positive manner. Organizing technology resources to effectively achieve this outcome can be challenging.

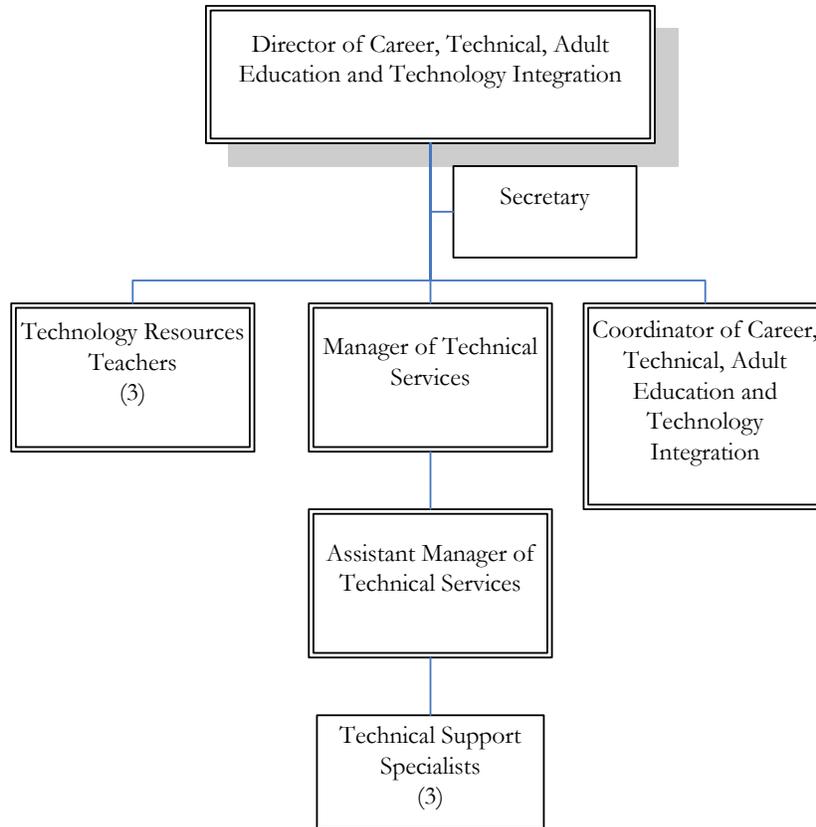
The organization structure for supporting technology is shown in **Exhibit 8-4**. The director of career, technical, adult education and technology integration reports to the division's assistant superintendent for instruction.

## **FINDING**

The current organizational structure of the MCPS technology department is organized along best practices recommendations.



**Exhibit 8-4**  
**MCPS Technology Organization**  
**2006-07 School Year**



*Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2007.*

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), an internationally recognized non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the effective use of technology in K-12 education, has developed a Technology Support Index rubric to assist school districts in determining their needs in a variety of technology support areas. In the most recent release of the Index (Version 2.4), school districts are ranked into one of four categories for various aspects of technology usage and support.

These categories are:

- low efficiency — a strategy or domain that needs attention and improvement;
- moderate efficiency — these strategies address major technical support issues, but with incomplete implementation or inadequate resources;
- satisfactory efficiency — these strategies are generally effective in sustaining the technology infrastructure and promoting the integration of technology in teaching and learning; and



- high efficiency — these strategies make the most of available technology support resources, emergent problems are rapidly detected, solutions are quickly implemented, and problem sources are identified and corrected.

The complete Index can be found at <http://tsi.iste.org/techsupport/> and provides expectations for four areas of technology support: equipment standards, staffing and processes, professional development, and enterprise management. The ISTE Technology Support Index identifies divisions functioning at high efficiency as those with an organizational structure where all of the technology functions report through the same unit in the organization, providing for a logical chain of command and communication structures. This is the current organizational structure of the MCPS technology department.

### COMMENDATION

**The MCPS technology department has a best practices organization structure to provide high-quality technical support.**

### FINDING

The division could best ensure that its administrative and academic technology needs are equally addressed by having the director of technology report directly to the superintendent.

The current organizational structure, while at a best practices level from the director of technology down, has the director reporting to the assistant superintendent for instruction. Thus, under the current structure, the technology department is housed in an academic area of the division's central office. While it has been a highly effective organization in many respects, and has been cognizant of the need to support both administrative and instructional technology needs, its current reporting relationship does not reflect the equal importance of administrative and instructional technology.

In interviews, Evergreen found that some areas of administrative technology, including transportation automation, the finance information system, the implementation of the food services point-of-sale system, and the training of central office support personnel in software applications, have been less fully supported than other, more instructional technology areas.

While some functional areas of a division may be highly effective operating in relative isolation from other areas (such as food service functions), the pervasive nature of technology, as well as its comparatively high cost per unit, dictate that all technology assets be leveraged cohesively from one central direction.

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Recommendation 8-1:**

**Organize the MCPS technology department to report directly to the superintendent.**



Placing technology directly under the superintendent ensures that neither administrative nor academic concerns dominate technology support. Likewise, this placement ensures that neither administrative nor academic technology needs are neglected.

Once this structural change has been implemented, the division may find it a natural change to remove Career and Technology Education (CTE) responsibilities from within the technology department and retain them within the department of instruction.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **FINDING**

MCPS recognizes the importance of high-quality student information, as this is the primary source of state reporting and thus state funding. However, it could be doing more to ensure solid student information.

The division has one full-time position devoted to database administration. In order to avoid having family members supervise one another, this position is outside the structure of the technology department, but works closely with it. The database administrator is responsible for supporting all of the division's schools in implementing Star\_Student. In place in MCPS since 2000-01, the Star\_Base Suite is primarily a student information system. Star\_Base has available five modules:

- Star\_Student – includes functionality for student contact information, attendance, class schedule, special education needs, discipline referrals, data aggregation and disaggregation, and state reporting.
- Star\_Portal – provides access to Star\_Student application via the Internet and can be customized to allow access for parents, teachers, administrators, staff, and students.
- Star\_Mobile – provides hand-held computer, two-way access to the Star\_Student application.
- Star\_Finance – is a Web-based, division-level financial and human resource management system.
- Star\_Insight – provided data mining capabilities of the Star\_Student database.

MCPS is primarily only using the Star\_Student and Star\_Portal modules, and not even all of their components, due to a lack of staff to support deeper implementation. For example, although Star\_Portal provides an easy method for teachers to complete online attendance by period, most MCPS schools still do attendance once per day on paper. In many high schools that have implemented online attendance by period, administrators have found a reduction in the number of students skipping individual classes.



At the school level, the secretaries are primarily responsible for the data entry into Star\_Student. The database administrator has created and distributed an outstanding manual to assist in this task. She also provides several training sessions throughout the year, but finds that cleaning data entry errors remains a major concern.

The database administrator is also the primary point of contact for division-level data pulls from Star\_Student. She provides the data to answer such questions as:

- How many students does each teacher have?
- When do teachers have a free period?
- By period, where are the empty classrooms in MCPS schools?
- What are the recent school-by-school attendance rates?

The requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation include that divisions make data-driven decisions. In order to do so, the division must first ensure that is starting with high-quality data.

Data in the division's student information system support a number of important functions, including state reporting on a variety of issues, division transportation coordination, and new student eligibility verification. The importance of highly accurate and timely data in this system cannot be overstated. Without accurate data, MCPS cannot effectively analyze its operations for areas in need of improvement, nor can it efficiently provide services to students.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 8-2:

#### Create an additional part-time data administrator position.

Given the geographic dispersion of the division's schools and the need for frequent on-site, hands-on training, as well as the critical need for continuing high-quality student data, the division should at a minimum create an additional half-time position to support the current database administrator position. This should free the current full-time database administrator to tackle the deeper implementation of additional modules within Star\_Student and Star\_Portal.

## FISCAL IMPACT

Evergreen estimates that adding a half-time database administrator position will require \$20,480 per year, including benefits (\$16,000 in salary x 1.28).

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Add Database Administrator	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)



**FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools is not providing sufficient technology resource teachers to serve teachers in the schools. In comparison to Commonwealth requirements, division staffing in this area is too low.

The Virginia Standards of Quality (SOQ) Technology Staffing Standards for the 2004-2006 Biennium implemented policy changes recommended by the Virginia Board of Education. One of the provisions of the SOQ is that, by July 1, 2006, divisions must have one instructional technology FTE position per 1,000 students. From the Virginia Superintendent's memo #1 (January 14, 2005), these teacher positions "are intended to serve as resources to classroom teachers, but are not intended to serve as classroom teachers."

Currently, MCPS has three full-time technology resource teachers. All were hired in the 2005-06 school year to meet Commonwealth requirements. However, with nearly 5,000 students, the division is short of meeting those requirements by at least two full-time positions.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 8-3:**

**Increase the number of technology resource teachers by two, for a total of five.**

In order to meet the Virginia SOQ, MCPS should increase its staffing of technology resource teachers by two.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Evergreen estimates that adding an additional technology resource teacher will require will require \$42,800 per year, including benefits (\$33,500 in salary x 1.28). For two positions, this would require \$85,760.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Add Technology Resource Teachers	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)

**FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools is not sufficiently supporting technology through adequate technical support staffing. In comparison to best practices, division technology staffing is low in this area.

The dedicated MCPS technical support staff includes a manager, assistant manager, and three technicians. Considering other responsibilities for installing and maintaining the technology infrastructure, these five positions provide approximately 4.0 full-time equivalents (FTE) to



provide end-user technical support. At the high schools, two teachers and some students provide an extra layer of end-user support; Evergreen estimates this to be equivalent to one additional FTE.

**Exhibit 8-5** provides a breakdown of the school-level computer deployment as of December 2006. This reflects more than 2,000 machines at the school level, not including other technologies such as Smart Boards. In total, the five FTEs support more than 2,000 devices spread among the schools and central offices, for a support ratio of one FTE per 400 devices.

### Exhibit 8-5 Summary of MCPS Computer Deployment

MCPS Computer - Student and Staff Ratios:								
School	Students	Student Computers	Staff	Staff Computers	Total Machines	Desktops	Laptops	Tablets
Boydton Elementary	142	53	35	24	77	77	0	0
Buckhorn Elementary	243	45	36	22	67	67	0	0
Chase City Elementary	512	120	67	40	160	130	30	0
Clarksville Elementary	355	119	57	40	159	129	30	0
LaCrosse Elementary	324	81	51	32	113	88	25	0
South Hill Elementary	575	142	85	68	210	185	25	0
Park View High School	722	276	93	114	390	280	109	1
Bluestone High School	715	251	92	113	364	254	109	1
Park View Middle School	607	207	67	36	243	153	85	5
Bluestone Middle School	534	187	65	26	213	108	100	5
Alternative Education	23	18	8	8	26	26	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4752</b>	<b>1499</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: MCPS Technology Department, 2007.

The ISTE Technology Support Index includes a rubric for determining staffing needs for information technology technicians. **Exhibit 8-6** shows the ISTE Index for two areas in staffing. Based on its current staffing ratio of 400 computers per technician, MCPS falls into the “low” category. It also falls into the “low” category based on its lack of staffing formulas for computer technicians.

The technology department has done an admirable job of using technology tools to increase the effective capacity of technical support specialists. However, even with these tools, it is difficult for the organization to support all technical needs at a high level.

Adequate, on-site, and readily available technical support for all of the division’s technology will ultimately support better integrated instruction in the classroom. Teachers are more likely to use technology in the classroom if they know they can get immediate support if something goes wrong.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 8-4:

#### Increase the number of technical support specialists.

Mecklenburg County City Public Schools should add at least one additional technician. This would produce a support ratio of one technician per 333 computers.



**Exhibit 8-6  
ISTE Technology Support Index Rubric for Staffing**

Index Area	Efficiency of Technology			
	Low	Moderate	Satisfactory	High
Technician Staffing to Computer Ratio (# of computers : technician)	250:1	150:1 to 250:1	75:1 to 150:1	Less than 75:1
Formula-Driven Technology Staffing (e.g., $W \text{ computers} + X \text{ network drops} + Y \text{ applications}$ divided by $Z = \# \text{ of required technicians}$ )	Staffing formulas aren't used or considered.	Formulas for staffing are considered but are limited in scope and aren't used to drive staffing.	Comprehensive formulas have been developed, considering multiple dimensions of the environment, but are only used as a guide and don't drive staffing.	Comprehensive formulas have been developed and drive staffing as a normal part of operations. Formulas include multiple dimensions of the environment.

Source: [www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org), 2006.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Evergreen estimates that adding one additional technical support specialist will require \$39,680 per year, including benefits (\$31,000 in salary x 1.28).

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Increase Technical Staff	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)

**8.2 TECHNOLOGY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

Successful technology planning is the foundation for successful technology implementation and development. School division technology is not just a standalone program; it is a long-term ongoing effort that affects every aspect of school division operations. The technology planning process is complicated. There are many factors to consider, including instructional integration, legislated data reporting, funding, training, and staffing for support.

Technology plans should cover between three to five years. By analyzing current trends in division demographics and available technology, planners can predict what the needs of the division will be and what technology will be available to fill those needs. Technology, however, is the fastest changing segment of our society, so frequent updates and revisions of any technology plan are required. The Virginia Department of Education has made technology planning a requirement of every school division.



## FINDING

The division has developed an outstanding technology plan that is aligned with the Commonwealth's *Educational Technology Plan for Virginia (2003-2009)* and national best practices. Perhaps even more importantly, it is being used to guide day-to-day technology management and decisions.

As outlined in its technology plan for 2003-09, the division's vision for technology is:

*Mecklenburg County Public Schools envisions a learning environment that integrates technology to enhance teaching and learning in the most productive manner. We believe that teachers, administrators, and support personnel utilizing current and future technologies as a tool will assist the school community in achieving personal, educational, and workplace goals.*

The MCPS instructional technology plan is quite detailed and includes in-depth needs assessments that reflect significant committee research and review. The plan also includes detailed goals by element area, which are shown in **Exhibit 8-7**. Each goal then has specific objectives, each with strategies for achievement, approximate costs, a timeline, and the person responsible.

### Exhibit 8-7 MCPS Instructional Technology Plan 2005-2009

Element	Goals
<i>Integration</i> refers to the appropriate use of specific technologies as highly effective tools in facilitating learning across all levels of cognitive inquiry and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve teaching and learning through the appropriate use of technology</li> <li>• Maintain and continually expand Mecklenburg County Public Schools' implementation of technology-enhanced teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
<i>Professional Development</i> covers both preservices and in-service training with a specific focus on the Virginia Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish partnerships for identifying and delivering effective technology training to assist educators as they help students achieve high academic standards.</li> <li>• Administer grant programs and financial assistance initiatives that support implementation of educational technology integration.</li> <li>• Establish and maintain technologist positions (including site-based technology resource teachers in school divisions).</li> </ul>
<i>Connectivity</i> includes such concerns as the development of state and school division electronic infrastructures and the supporting software and hardware that would allow all users to have equitable technical access to local, state, and worldwide educational resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all public schools have access to integrated instructional and administrative services across interoperable high-speed networks.</li> <li>• Ensure support for ongoing, reliable network operations.</li> <li>• Provide leadership and resources to promote efficient procurement of infrastructure including the identification and procurement of emerging technologies.</li> <li>• Ensure that school divisions have in place network security, filtering, and disaster recovery plans.</li> </ul>
<i>Educational Applications</i> relate to the instructional and administrative applications that will run over the infrastructure "highway" referenced in the Connectivity element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve teaching and learning through the appropriate use of network-accessible educational applications.</li> </ul>

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, *Technology Plan, 2003-2009*.



The Virginia Department of Education notified the division in June 2004 that its technology plan was fully aligned with the Commonwealth's.

In interviews and documents, it was evident that the MCPS technology plan is used to guide day-to-day management decisions, as well as budgeting requests. The plan is used, reviewed, updated, and referred to in many areas. The technology department is held accountable to the plan through annual updates to the Board.

The National Center for Educational Statistics released the *National Education Technology Plan* in January 2005. This plan outlines seven action steps school districts should take to prepare today's students for the technology challenges of tomorrow. These action steps are:

1. Strengthen Leadership
2. Consider Innovative Budgeting
3. Improve Teacher Training
4. Support E-Learning and Virtual Schools
5. Encourage Broadband Access
6. Move Toward Digital Content
7. Integrate Data Systems

All of these steps are supported and informed by a technology plan that is long-range, realistic, and strategic in nature. In divisions operating at a best practices level, the division technology plan is integrally tied to the division's overall strategic plan.

## COMMENDATION

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools has adopted a commendable technology plan and is using it to guide technology development in the division.**

## FINDING

The MCPS technology department and its director have received statewide recognition for their efforts in education technology planning and implementation.

The Education Technology Leadership Award, presented annually by the Virginia Department of Education, acknowledges outstanding school division leadership in education technology planning and implementation. Division superintendents in each of the Commonwealth's eight study regions select individuals for the award. Recipients are chosen because of their success in helping school divisions improve teaching and learning through the use of instructional media and technology.

In December 2006, the MCPS technology director was one of eight statewide awarded the Education Technology Leadership Award. In accepting the award, the technology director emphasized the strong support of his team in making possible the level of technology implementation in Mecklenburg County Public Schools.



**COMMENDATION**

**The MCPS technology director and his supporting staff are commended for their outstanding leadership in education technology planning and implementation.**

**FINDING**

The MCPS technology department has implemented a highly functional online system to provide technology assistance and troubleshooting. However, as with most areas in the technology, department staff is seeking to continue to improve.

The division’s current trouble ticket system has been in place for two years and was a replacement for an older system. With the current system, any full-time (and some part-time) division staff can input a work request. Trouble tickets are automatically routed to the technician from the technology department assigned to that school or department. The system allows users to communicate back and forth with technology staff. Once a ticket is closed, users have the option to reopen the ticket if they feel that the problem is not fixed.

The trouble ticket system provides the technology department with numerous tools for assessing its responsiveness. **Exhibit 8-8** shows one screen technology staff can access to review open work orders for assistance.

**Exhibit 8-8  
Sample Screen from Trouble Ticket System**



Source: MCPS Technology Department, 2007.



**Exhibit 8-9** provides another sample screen, this one showing the kind of information that technical supervisors can obtain from the trouble ticket system. Supervisors can see the number of new tickets by type, for example, and how many tickets are open because they are waiting on parts.

**Exhibit 8-9**  
**Sample Technician Management Screen from Trouble Ticket System**

**Mecklenburg County Technology Support**

Support | My Profile | Logoff

Home | Advanced | Knowledgebase | Reports | Configuration

Create New Ticket

Hello Chad Wollenberg [Update Profile](#)  
You are logged in to Mecklenburg County Technology Support

**New Message**

Ticket Status	Total	New As Tech	New As User
Open	5	4	0
Closed	593	96	1
On Hold	0	0	0
Parts On Order	0	0	0

**Tickets In Queue(s)**

BS Queue has 4 Ticket(s)  
Chase City Queue has 0 Ticket(s)  
Printer Cartridge Request Queue has 4 Ticket(s)  
PV Queue has 7 Ticket(s)  
Star Portal Lockout Queue has 0 Ticket(s)  
TRT Queue has 0 Ticket(s)

Source: MCPS Technology Department, 2007.

In 2005-06, the technology department responded to 2,673 trouble tickets. However, given the nature of providing technical assistance, MCPS technical support specialists report that anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of their time is spent troubleshooting issues that are not reported in the trouble ticket system. The majority of the time, these non-recorded service calls occur because, while at a location to assist with one trouble ticket, technicians are asked by school staff to look at several other problems while there. Evergreen has found this to often be the case in providing technical troubleshooting and generally an indication of a highly responsive system when technicians are allowed to provide 'undocumented' assistance. Thus, the actual level of troubleshooting services provided by the MCPS technical support specialists is likely much higher. For 2006-07 (as of October 17, 2006), the technology department had responded to 1,122 trouble tickets.



**Exhibit 8-10** compares the survey responses of Mecklenburg County administrators and teachers regarding technical support. As can be seen, all MCPS respondent groups indicated high satisfaction with the speed of technical support provided to them. In the case of MCPS teachers, they were significantly more satisfied with technical support speed than teachers in comparison districts.

**Exhibit 8-10**  
**Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses Related to Technical Assistance in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.				
<b>Central Office Administrators</b>	91.0%	9.1%	90.7%	5.6%
<b>Principals</b>	88.8%	5.6%	100%	0%
<b>Teachers</b>	81.7%	7.6%	67.8%	26.7%

*Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.*

At the time of Evergreen’s on-site visit, technology department staff was exploring other potential trouble ticket systems, leaning toward an open source system that the division could host itself. Staff was also working to improve ease of use by making the system more readily available on the division’s Web site.

The ISTE Technology Support Index rates organizations with “highly efficient” trouble ticket systems as those where, all technical issues are recorded and delegated to appropriate resources through an electronic system. All technical issues are subsequently tracked and evaluated through this system.

## COMMENDATION

**The MCPS technology department has implemented a highly functional trouble ticket system to provide schools and departments with high-quality technical support.**

## FINDING

The MCPS technical support team is efficient and effective. As a result, the division is maximizing the time technical support specialists spend in schools directly supporting end users.

Each of the division’s three technical support specialists is assigned to a cluster of schools based on geography. Both Park View High School and South Hill Elementary School provide dedicated office space to the specialists.

Each specialist has a laptop computer so they can be mobile. Rather than having the specialists report into a specific location every morning and then dispersing to support sites, the specialists and their supervisors have a conference call at 8:00 a.m. each morning. Because they can only



use the division phone system to participate in the conference call, this assures that they are at one of the schools or the central office each morning.

As the specialists complete their workday, they can instantly pull new trouble tickets as they close out resolved tickets. Because of their organization, deployment, management, and technology tools, the specialists can spend as much as 85 percent of their time focused on responding to trouble tickets. Their remaining time is spent on technology initiatives, such as new computer rollouts.

## **COMMENDATION**

**The MCPS technical support team is well-managed.**

## **FINDING**

The current facility housing the division's critical infrastructure equipment is inadequate. In addition, the division's storage area for technical consumables could be physically dangerous.

The brick building to the northeast of the MCPS administrative complex has begun to be used by the technology department for short-term computer storage and long-term technology consumables. As new computers and associated hardware are ordered, they are delivered and stored in this old school building while they await installation in schools. The division also buys technology consumables, such as printer cartridges in bulk, and stores them in the same building. After reviewing this facility, Evergreen consultants developed strong concerns as to whether using this facility was safe, both structurally and health-wise. Evergreen found that:

- the building appears to be a wood structure covered by brick veneer;
- the wood structure appears to be damaged and weakened below the first floor from persistent exposure to water that collects there;
- the remainder of the wood structure may be in part infested with termites or carpenter ants, or have been weakened in other ways over time, as portions of the upper and lower floor exhibit excessive deflection when walked upon;
- heavy computer shipments are stacked on these building floors;
- pigeon carcasses and guano are visible in some rooms; and
- since the brick veneer does not help to bear any live or dead loads, the wood structure must bear all of these loads.

The technology department began using this facility because of a lack of storage space in the administrative complex. However, Evergreen found the provisions for technical equipment within the administrative complex to be troubling as well. Currently, one of the division's key equipment components for its Internet backbone is inadequately housed within one of the



administrative buildings. As shown in the photograph in **Exhibit 8-11**, the component is located directly under an air conditioning unit. Division maintenance staff has attempted to reduce the potential danger to the component by fashioning a metal runoff tray for condensation, but this is a patchwork attempt that could fail and lead to the loss of expensive equipment due to poor choice of space.

**Exhibit 8-11**  
**Inadequate Equipment Housing Within the MCPS Administrative Facility**



Source: MCPS Technology Department, 2007.

In a recent similar situation, one of the division's servers was housed in an area near an air conditioning unit. When the air conditioning unit leaked, this moisture seeped into and destroyed the server.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 8-5:

**Find alternative space for technology storage and improve the facilities housing installed technology.**

The division should abandon use of the old school immediately. Depending on the division's plan for the MCPS central office complex overall, improving the facilities housing its technology may be addressed in that manner.



## FISCAL IMPACT

The exact fiscal impact will depend on the methods selected by the technology department and the division's decision regarding the MCPS central office complex in general. As a no-cost immediate choice, the division could move its technology storage to available space in a nearby elementary school.

## 8.3 CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

While all of the 'back office' technology within a school division is critical to its efficient operation, often the most visible technology is that employed in the classrooms. The requirements of *No Child Left Behind* include that students achieve technological literacy before 9<sup>th</sup> grade and that teachers effectively integrate technology into the classroom. Moreover, few would dispute the pervasive nature of technology in society and the need to adequately prepare students to be productive members that environment.

## FINDING

In many MCPS classrooms, the use of technology to enhance learning is deeply embedded. This is particularly true in the CTE classrooms.

In school visits, Evergreen observed a simply outstanding level of technology integration in many classrooms, such as those shown in the photographs in **Exhibit 8-12**. The left photograph shows a Smart Board technology application; the right shows one of the division's distance learning classrooms. While on-site, Evergreen observed Smart Boards, document cameras, Internet access, and student desktop computer all in routine use.

### Exhibit 8-12 Demonstrations of Classroom Technology



Source: MCPS Technology Department, 2007.



Some of the most outstanding applications of technology Evergreen found in CTE classrooms. In a class on personal finance, Evergreen observed a high degree of technology integration using the Moodle application. Students entering that class each day can log onto the Moodle site to complete self-study units and practice concepts immediately after the teacher has introduced them. **Exhibit 8-13** provides a sample screen from this class.

### Exhibit 8-13 Sample Screen from an MCPS Personal Finance Class

The screenshot displays a Moodle course interface. The browser title is "Course: Mrs. Carter's Personal Finance - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The page content includes:

- Monday, 01/29/2007**
- Welcome to Personal Finance/Office Administration!!!**
- Tasks:**
  - Go over classroom policies and procedures.
  - Learn to log-in and log-out of computers.
  - Review the computer user policy.
  - Introduce students to Moodle.
  - Begin Chapter 3 in Managing Your Personal Finances.
    - Begin Preparing an Employment Portfolio
      - Letter of Application
      - Resume
      - Application form
      - Thank-you Letter
  - End of Class:** Go to the "Application Letter" website below, read the sections: *Individualizing Your Letter* and *Catching Your Reader's Attention*. List at least 3 ways you can stand out in your letter of application and at least two ways you can catch the reader's attention. (Please turn in before the end of class)
- Tuesday, 01/30/2007**

Other visible elements include a calendar, search forums, a list of courses (Mrs. Carter's Design Class, Mrs. Carter's Keyboarding Class, Mrs. Carter's Personal Finance), recent activity (Activity since Thursday, 22 March 2007, 08:57 AM), and online users (Crystal Carnish, Mrs. Carter, Aimee Wootton).

Source: [www.mcpsweb.net](http://www.mcpsweb.net), 2007.

In the AutoCAD class, Evergreen observed what is daily use of the division's distance learning infrastructure. This class is taught simultaneously in both MCPS high schools. At one end, the certified teacher instructs live, while being projected to the distance education site. At the other end, a classroom assistant ensures that the technology is operating and maintains order. The teacher rotates between the sites on a schedule to provide an on-site presence.

In the more traditional instructional areas, Evergreen also found pockets of technology excellence. In one high school art classroom, students utilized a digital camera and Microsoft PowerPoint to develop stop-action claymation mini-movies. They also routinely use the computer to research art images to study and imitate.



One additional recent implementation within MCPS has been classroom response devices. The system includes individual “clickers” that resemble television remote controls and a main box for teachers to receive individual responses from students. These “clickers” can be used for various purposes such as taking lunch counts, prompting discussions, and assessing understanding. Used as both instructional devices and management tools, they allow teachers and students to interact through the technology. Though not all schools use this technology to the same degree, more classrooms are embracing its usefulness, and more teachers are receiving training on its deployment.

## COMMENDATION

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools has achieved a high level of technology integration in many of its classrooms.**

## FINDING

The MCPS course offerings through its CTE Department are outstanding, grounded in modern technology, and responsive to the needs of local businesses.

The vision of the MCPS CTE Department is:

*The Mecklenburg County Public Schools CTE Department envisions a department consisting of up-to-date industry based certifications, on-the-job training, student organizations opportunities, and leadership experiences. These opportunities along with modern classroom curriculum will provide students with the tools, training, and skills that are necessary to obtain a successful career in the future. We believe that by following Virginia Department of Education course competencies, adhering to Mecklenburg County Public Schools standards and guidelines, and providing students with valuable employability skills; we will enhance students’ SOL learning experience, prepare students for their futures, and assist the schools in achieving educational and workplace goals.*

The CTE Advisory Committee meets quarterly and includes representatives from the local industries. The CTE Coordinator reports that these representatives are supportive of the division’s program and also vocal regarding their needs. They typically do not need large numbers of college graduates, but rather students highly skilled and certified in the latest technology.

Consequently, through CTE, students can obtain the following certifications:

- Emergency Medical Technician
- AutoCAD 2002
- Internet Webmaster
- Fire Fighter I



- Microsoft Office Specialist
- Nurse Aide (CNA)
- Internet Computing and Core (IC3)
- Several areas recognized through the VA DOE National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)
- Customer Service Certifications
- A+ Computer Repair

The vocational department at each high school provides highly technically literate instructors in these areas. In interviews, staff indicated that most of the distance education currently occurring in the division is in vocational/technical classrooms.

The division's first virtual online class will be launched next year and it is within the CTE arena. Entitled "Make It Your Business," the class will have an entrepreneurial focus. Students will complete work online and will meet live with their instructor four times throughout the year.

### **COMMENDATION**

**The CTE Department is providing students with valuable educational opportunities and local businesses with competent and trained workers.**

In the future, the CTE Department may wish to develop a more formalized process for assessing the needs of local businesses in modifying and improving its course offerings. It could perhaps consider implementing a post-employment survey of employers and student graduates to identify any technical areas in need of future emphasis.

### **FINDING**

MCPS high school students are required to take keyboarding instruction prior to graduation. Staff reports that most opt to take the class in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Both middle schools also offer keyboarding as an elective in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. One MCPS high school keyboarding instructor reports that by that time students have had so much exposure to computers that they have developed poor habits. As a result, they have to break bad habits before they can learn proper keyboarding skills.

Research studies have shown that students in Grades 3-6 and, in some circumstances, at earlier grades, are capable of learning keyboarding skills. It would be beneficial to MCPS students for them to be taught keyboarding skills earlier than 9<sup>th</sup> Grade so that they learn correct techniques instead of developing inappropriate habits.



## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 8-6:

**Offer instruction in keyboarding to students in elementary grades, before poor typing skills develop.**

Labs are available for students at earlier grades. Staff estimated that at least 50 percent of students have computers at home. By teaching students proper keyboarding skills at the elementary level, MCPS will enable students to learn more sophisticated technology at the middle school. It will also prevent the development of poor habits that have to be untaught at that point.

### FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

### FINDING

Currently, MCPS has no structured procedures in place to assess satisfaction with, and usage of, technology already in the division. As a result, it is not ensuring it is maximizing its technology expenditures.

**Exhibit 8-14** compares per pupil technology expenditures for 2003-04 (the last year in which Virginia collected expenditures in this manner; subsequent years do not provide a breakout for technology expenditures). These figures include expenditures incurred for all technology-related activities, including instruction, administration, and technical development and support, as well as software, hardware, and infrastructure purchases. As the exhibit shows, while MCPS was below the state average of \$372 per student in technology spending, it did manage to surpass its peers.

**Exhibit 8-14  
Technology Disbursements by Division  
Fiscal Year 2004**

School Division	Total Technology Disbursements	Per Pupil Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	\$1,617,041	\$339.14
Dinwiddie County	\$1,307,167	\$293.86
Gloucester County	\$1,415,341	\$230.80
Halifax County	\$1,263,028	\$214.92
Isle of Wight County	\$966,860	\$192.99
Pulaski County	\$1,633,623	\$334.95
Wythe County	\$853,419	\$201.03
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	\$1,239,906	\$244.76
<b>State Total</b>	<b>\$433,958,314</b>	<b>\$372.07</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.



Since 2003-04, MCPS has made a number of technology investments—in personnel, infrastructure, hardware, and software—and continues to invest in technology.

However, it is not yet systematically assessing the use of its technology, nor it is assessing user satisfaction with technology deployed. Anecdotally, staff reports that some technologies are in high demand in the division and nearly always in use, but these observations should be quantified and analyzed on a regular basis. For example, some technical staff reports that one school ordered and received classroom response devices for every class but that, thus far, only two teachers are using them. In school visits, Evergreen observed a number of technology items, such as Smart Boards and laptop carts, available for checkout but not in use.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 8-7:**

#### **Develop procedures to assess technology usage and satisfaction.**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools should track and analyze technology use by department or school site, grade level, and subject area in order to ensure it has used its technology funds wisely, to identify areas needing additional technology, and to determine whether additional support, such as training or further infrastructure, is needed for full technology implementation. Such a system should not impede teachers from selecting and using technology, so it should be relatively passive and low-key in nature. The division could also implement a method to assess student and community satisfaction with classroom tools and its Web site, as it already has online surveying capabilities.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

## **8.4 STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Training in the use of technology is the most critical factor in determining whether that technology is used effectively or even used at all. Administrative and instructional staff must be able to use effectively the technology available to them. Training must be ongoing; the technology environment is continuously evolving, and divisions must keep pace with the evolution.

The ISTE Technology Support Index identifies exemplary divisions as having these staff development practices:

- A comprehensive staff development program is in place that impacts all staff. The program is progressive in nature and balances incentive, accountability, and diverse learning opportunities.
- Online training opportunities are provided for staff both on-site and remotely, and represent a diversity of skill sets.



- Expectations for all staff are clearly articulated and are broad in scope. Performance expectations are built into work functions and are part of the organizational culture.
- Technical staff receives ample training as a normal part of their employment, including training towards certification.
- Basic troubleshooting is built into the professional development program, and is used as a first line of defense in conjunction with technical support.

## **FINDING**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools holds its technical support specialists to high standards in certification and training. As a result, it is deploying a technical support staff better able to provide assistance than in many school divisions.

All technical support specialists are required to maintain Dell certification, as this is the standard hardware platform in the division. In addition, they attend intradepartmental training and have access to a variety of online training resources. As training needs are identified, the director of technology finds the resources to ensure they have the opportunity to attend training sessions in Richmond, South Boston, or Danville.

In reviewing the technical support arm of the technology department, Evergreen found it to be one of the most knowledgeable support teams it has ever seen in a school division. This knowledge is the result of an ongoing commitment to adequate staff development.

## **COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is commended for supporting the ongoing staff development needs of its technical staff.**

## **FINDING**

Although the division makes a variety of technology training available to teachers and staff, MCPS could go further in developing overall competency levels by developing explicit technology proficiency expectations for administrators, teachers, and staff.

**Exhibit 8-15** compares the survey responses related to technical training. Across the board, MCPS administrators and teachers believe that MCPS teachers receive training in technology integration, are expected to integrate technology, and know how to use computers to a higher degree than teachers in comparison divisions.

Overall, Evergreen found a fairly high level of technical ability among MCPS teachers. Most are using e-mail on a regular basis and many are integrating technology into the classroom at a high level. However, Evergreen and MCPS staff still note a variance in the abilities of administrators, teachers, and staff in effectively using technology, both inside the classroom and out. Staff noted that, while some teachers are highly proficient, others are only rarely using technology. Staff also noted that while some technology resources are in high demand, such as SmartBoards, others,



such as United Streaming, are used infrequently. In school visits, Evergreen found in one high school that a line drawn dividing the CTE portions of the building from the more traditional academic subject areas (English, history, etc.) would also effectively delineate the use technology in the classroom. The CTE classes had technology use deeply embedded; traditional subject areas were being taught in the same manner as 50 years ago—students at desks in rows with a book open.

**Exhibit 8-15  
Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses Related to Technical Training in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology in the classroom.				
Central Office Administrators	95.4%	4.6%	83.3%	5.6%
Principals	100%	0%	84.2%	5.3%
Teachers	90.0%	6.0%	83.4%	11.4%
Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.				
Central Office Administrators	95.4%	4.6%	88.9%	1.9%
Principals	100%	0%	100%	0%
Teachers	94.8%	2.0%	91.8%	2.7%
Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.				
Central Office Administrators	90.9%	4.6%	81.3%	6.2%
Principals	94.4%	5.6%	73.0%	18.9%
Teachers	90.0%	5.6%	73.9%	9.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

In recent years, MCPS has paid for summer training for any teachers who wish to attend. However, this training is voluntary and has led to predictable results. Teachers who already embrace technology have sought additional training; teachers who have not embraced it have simply not attended training.

The Virginia Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel (VA TSIP) provide a foundation for developing technical literacy standards within all Virginia school divisions. The VA TSIPs are shown in **Exhibit 8-16**. These standards provide broad expectations for teachers in implementing technology, but do not establish specifics for divisions to implement. For example, while one standard speaks to the use of technology in the classroom to meet the needs of diverse learners, there are no specifics provided as to how the specific technologies available in a division can be used to differentiate instruction within the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom on a daily basis.

Several tools exist for assessing the level of teacher technical literacy. One such tool is Dr. Moersch’s Levels of Technology Implementation (LoTI) Framework. The LoTI Framework, in use in a number of districts across the country, focuses on the use of technology “as a tool within the context of student based instructions with a constant emphasis on higher order thinking.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> www.loticonnection.com



**Exhibit 8-16  
Virginia Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel**

Standard	Sample Enablers	Justification
<p><b>Demonstrate effective use of a computer system and utilize computer software.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a variety of computer system input/output devices and peripherals</li> <li>• Store, organize, and retrieve software programs and data files on a variety of storage devices</li> <li>• Use different types of software programs including instructional, productivity, application tools, and courseware</li> <li>• Troubleshoot general hardware and software problems</li> </ul>	<p>It is expected that by the year 2000, all classrooms in Virginia schools will have computers for teacher and student use. In the "information age," the need to operate a computer and utilize basic software should be as much a part of the daily routine for instructional personnel as it is for most of the business world.</p>
<p><b>Apply knowledge of terms associated with educational computing and technology.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply functional knowledge of basic computer components, e.g., operating, application, and utility software; permanent and removable storage (main memory, hard drive, and optical or magnetic disc); monitor; scanner and digital camera; matrix, inkjet, and laser printers</li> <li>• Apply functional knowledge of various technology tools, e.g., video records and players, optical disc players, computer presentation devices, multimedia computer work station</li> </ul>	<p>Educators need a common vocabulary and a functional understanding of educational technologies.</p>
<p><b>Apply computer productivity tools for professional use.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use software tools to assist with classroom administrative tasks; use software tools to design, customize, or individualize instructional materials</li> <li>• Use software to enhance communication with students, parents, and community</li> <li>• Use telecommunications software to collaborate and find resource materials</li> </ul>	<p>The use of basic productivity software to aid with student records, correspondence, management, and instructional materials development can be effective and time efficient. Educators should be able to model how technology can be used to enhance learning and job performance.</p>
<p><b>Use electronic technologies to access and exchange information.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use local and worldwide telecommunications</li> <li>• Use search strategies to retrieve electronic information</li> </ul>	<p>An understanding of how to search for, organize, and present information using modem media is becoming a common workplace and learning skill. State and national technology initiatives are moving toward local area networks for all schools. These networks are connected to state, national, and international networks. Educators must know how to access networks and to exchange and/or retrieve information for both teaching and professional development.</p>



**Exhibit 8-16 (Continued)  
Virginia Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel**

Standard	Sample Enablers	Justification
<b>Identify, locate, evaluate, and use appropriate instructional technology-based resources (hardware and software) to support Virginia's Standards of Learning and other instructional objectives.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand types, characteristics, sources, and use of effective instructional software and other technology-based learning resources</li> <li>• Use tools of technology including, but not limited to, computers, modems, networks, printers, large group presentation devices, scanners, digital cameras, camcorders, video cassette recorders, optical disc players, etc.</li> </ul>	Educators need to utilize effectively all available resources, both traditional and technology-based, and be able to use these resources to assist students in achieving the Standards of Learning.
<b>Use educational technologies for data collection, information management, problem solving, decision making, communications, and presentation within the curriculum.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate word processing, spreadsheet, or database software in instruction</li> <li>• Incorporate telecommunications as a component of instruction; and use a presentation and/or authoring program to present a lesson or develop instructional materials</li> </ul>	Many modern jobs require the skills that are mentioned in this standard. Students will need learning experiences that help them become life-long learners with the ability to function in these areas, regardless of their eventual work or educational environment. Therefore, teachers must develop and model skills in the use of technology in order to offer students appropriate learning experiences.
<b>Plan and implement lessons and strategies that integrate technology to meet the diverse needs of learners in a variety of educational settings.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize technology to facilitate assessment and student-centered instruction as determined by the discipline and/or grade level taught</li> <li>• Use multimedia, hypermedia, and telecommunications software to support individual and/or small group instruction; as teaching assignments dictate, utilize and/or understand resources available concerning adaptive technology</li> <li>• Use technology effectively in various educational settings, e.g., one computer in a classroom, class-size computer lab, computers in classroom clusters or mini labs, multimedia computer work stations, integrated learning systems (ELS)</li> <li>• Effectively utilize an automated library media center</li> </ul>	Educators strive to be responsive to the individual needs and learning styles of a diverse group of students. Technology-based resources can be used to meet these diverse needs in a variety of classroom and laboratory settings.
<b>Demonstrate knowledge of ethical and legal issues relating to the use of technology.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abide by copyright laws</li> <li>• Practice responsible uses of technology</li> </ul>	Educators using instructional technology serve as models for students. They must have a basic understanding of the complex issues regarding the legal and ethical uses of technology.

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia House Bill 1848, 2006.



The LoTI Framework provides district administrators with an analysis of the current professional development needs of their teachers. Outlined in **Exhibit 8-17**, the framework has been validated and is aligned with several state frameworks, as well as the national framework from ISTE.

**Exhibit 8-17**  
**LoTI Framework for Assessing Teacher Technical Proficiency**

Level	Description
<b>Level 0 Non-use</b>	A perceived lack of access to technology-based tools or a lack of time to pursue electronic technology implementation. Existing technology is predominately text-based.
<b>Level 1 Awareness</b>	The use of computers is generally one step removed from the classroom teacher (e.g., integrated learning system labs, special computer-based pull-out programs, computer literacy classes). Computer-based applications have little or no relevance to the individual teacher's operational curriculum.
<b>Level 2 Exploration</b>	Technology-based tools generally serve as a supplement to the existing instructional program. The electronic technology is employed either as extension activities or as enrichment exercises to the instructional program and generally reinforce lower cognitive skill development (e.g., knowledge, comprehension, application).
<b>Level 3 Infusion</b>	Technology-based tools including databases, spreadsheet, and graphing packages, multimedia and desktop publishing applications, and Internet use augment selected instructional events (e.g., science kit experiment using spreadsheets/graphs to analyze results, telecommunications activity involving data sharing among schools). Emphasis is placed on higher levels of cognitive processing (e.g., analysis, synthesis, evaluation).
<b>Level 4a Integration (Mechanical)</b>	Technology-based tools are integrated in a mechanical manner that provides rich context for students' understanding of the pertinent concepts, themes, and processes. Heavy reliance is placed on prepackaged materials and outside interventions that aid the teacher in the daily operation of their instructional curriculum. Technology is perceived as a tool to identify and solve authentic problems perceived by the students as relating to an overall theme/concept. Emphasis is placed on student action and issues resolution that require higher levels of student cognitive processing.
<b>Level 4b Integration (Routine)</b>	Teachers can readily create Level 4 (Integrated Units) with little intervention from outside resources. Technology-based tools are easily integrated in a routine manner that provides rich context for students' understanding of the pertinent concepts, themes, and processes. Technology is perceived as a tool to identify and solve authentic problems relating to an overall theme/concept.
<b>Level 5 Expansion</b>	Technology access is extended beyond the classroom. Classroom teachers actively elicit technology applications and networking from business enterprises, governmental agencies (e.g., contacting NASA to establish a link to an orbiting space shuttle via Internet), research institutions, and universities to expand student experiences directed at problem-solving, issues resolution, and student involvement surrounding a major theme/concept.
<b>Level 6 Refinement</b>	Technology is perceived as a process, product, and tool toward students solving authentic problems related to an identified "real-world" problem or issue. Technology, in this context, provides a seamless medium for information queries, problem-solving, and/or product development. Students have ready access to and a complete understanding of a vast array of technology-based tools to accomplish any particular task.

Source: [www.loticonnection.com](http://www.loticonnection.com), 2006.



The developers of LoTI conducted a nationwide survey of a sample of nearly 45,000 teachers in 2005-06, assessing their classroom technical proficiency with the framework. They found this distribution:

- Level 0 - eight percent
- Level 1 - 18 percent
- Level 2 - 22 percent
- Level 3 - 23 percent
- Level 4a - 18 percent
- Level 4b - nine percent
- Level 5 - one percent
- Level 6 - less than one percent

The developers recommend a target technology level of at least Level 4b.

Some states, including Virginia, now require teachers to prove technological literacy by completing a number of professional development courses or developing a technology portfolio that demonstrates their ability to integrate technology into instruction. While these efforts are still relatively new, Evergreen's observations thus far in several school division indicate that such top-down, state-level efforts are not as successful as hoped. Instead, divisions where teachers are highly literate with technology and seamlessly integrate technology into instruction for enrichment, remediation, and differentiation often have one common characteristic—they are led by administrators who embrace technology and expect teachers to use it. For that reason, the technological competency of administrators and staff is also important, beyond the obvious efficiencies that can be gained from highly automated, online administrative processes in a school division central office.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 8-8:**

#### **Develop rigorous technology expectations for MCPS teachers and staff.**

Mecklenburg County Public Schools has a wealth of training and technology resources at its disposal. Developing more explicit rigorous expectations for technical expertise will ensure that all teachers are maximizing the division's technology resources. Moreover, expectations for technical expertise should extend to all staff, including administrative clerical and support personnel.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



***CHAPTER 9:  
FOOD SERVICE***



Chapter 9

**FOOD SERVICE**

This chapter reviews staffing and organization related to food services in Mecklenburg County Public Schools (MCPS) and includes four major sections:

- 9.1 Policies and Procedures
- 9.2 Organization and Management
- 9.3 Student Meal Participation
- 9.4 Financial Performance

School meal programs began when the Child Nutrition Act of 1946 authorized the National School Lunch Program to “safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children.” The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is open to all public and nonprofit private schools and all residential childcare institutions. MCPS participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), created by Congress in 1975, and the Child Nutrition Commodity Program. School divisions that participate in these federal programs receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each eligible meal they serve. In return, the division must serve its students meals that meet federal guidelines for nutritional value and offer free or reduced-price meals to eligible students.

MCPS, like other divisions participating in the federal feeding programs, receives federal support in the form of a cash reimbursement for each meal served, depending on the economic status of the student. The poorest students qualify for free lunches, while others qualify for reduced price lunches. All meals served according to federal guidelines receive some level of reimbursement, including those served to students who pay ‘full price.’

The 2005-06 and 2006-07 basic federal reimbursement rates for breakfast and lunch are shown in **Exhibit 9-1**.

**Exhibit 9-1**  
**National School Breakfast and Lunch Reimbursement Rates**  
**2005-06 and 2006-07 School Years**

Program	Severe Need Breakfast		Breakfast		Lunch	
	2005-06	2006-07	2005-06	2006-07	2005-06	2006-07
Free Meal	\$1.51	\$1.56	\$1.27	\$1.31	\$2.32	\$2.40
Reduced Price Meal	\$1.21	\$1.26	\$0.97	\$1.01	\$1.92	\$2.00
Paid Meal	\$0.23	\$0.24	\$0.23	\$0.24	\$0.22	\$0.23

Source: <http://www.fns.usda.gov>, 2006.

On the *School Foods Report Card*, published in June 2006 by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, the Commonwealth of Virginia received a grade of “D” for its policies on school foods and beverages sold through vending machines, school stores, and ala carte in schools.



Evergreen’s survey included several questions related to the food services operation. Asked of MCPS administrators (both central office and school-based) and teachers, the results for some of these questions are shown in **Exhibits 9-2** and **9-3**. The MCPS responses are compared to responses provided by administrators and teachers in other school districts where Evergreen has collected data. MCPS administrators were generally more positive regarding food services operations, both in comparison to MCPS teachers and administrators in other school districts.

**Exhibit 9-2**  
**Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses Related to Food Services in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.				
Central Office Administrators	68.2%	22.8%	57.6%	14.0%
Principals	55.6%	33.3%	51.4%	18.6%
Teachers	43.0%	47.8%	39.8%	34.8%
Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.				
Central Office Administrators	68.2%	13.6%	NA	NA
Principals	88.9%	11.1%	NA	NA
Teachers	77.7%	11.6%	NA	NA
Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.				
Central Office Administrators	54.5%	18.2%	60.5%	18.4%
Principals	88.9%	5.6%	89.2%	8.1%
Teachers	55.0%	33.5%	35.6%	39.9%
Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunches.				
Central Office Administrators	22.8%	45.5%	NA	NA
Principals	22.3%	72.3%	NA	NA
Teachers	38.3%	49.8%	NA	NA
Many students bring their lunch from home every day.				
Central Office Administrators	27.3%	22.8%	NA	NA
Principals	33.3%	61.2%	NA	NA
Teachers	34.7%	38.7%	NA	NA

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.

**Exhibit 9-3**  
**Teachers and Administrative Survey Results on Food Services in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and School Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Budgeting Operations	MCPS Teachers and Administrators		Teachers and Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Central Office Administrators	22.8%	63.7%	56.5%	18.5%
Principals	38.9%	61.2%	32.9%	42.9%
Teachers	41.0%	52.6%	46.7%	40.1%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007.



**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The MCPS food services department is running a commendable program in many areas, including:

- improving student wellness through its adopted Wellness Policy;
- encouraging adult meal participation, providing students with greater supervision during the lunch period, as well as positive role models for healthy eating habits;
- providing adult role models through its Lunch Buddies Program;
- providing cafeteria managers and staff with important training on food services safety topics;
- regularly assessing its own productivity;
- seeking to improve its operations through the implementation of a state-of-the-art POS system;
- serving lunch meals that appeal to students, as shown in its high participation rates; and
- operating in a fiscally prudent manner, in most respects.

Evergreen's recommendations for further improvement of this efficient and effective program were:

- establish procedures to document extra and overtime work and compensate cafeteria workers as appropriate;
- evaluate the MCPS food services program performance relative to selected indicators each month and year;
- establish and implement a meal staffing formula for the MCPS cafeterias;
- seek to terminate the contract for uniforms and uniform cleaning;
- establish goals and programs to improve student breakfast participation, particularly among free and reduced-price students;
- establish goals and programs to improve student lunch participation at the high schools; and
- establish a minimum annual investment threshold for facilities and equipment.



## 9.1 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The development of policies and procedures constitutes the means by which a division and subordinate departments communicate expectations and ensure consistent operations across a number of locations. Effective policies and procedures that are widely understood are critical in a food services operation. Individual cafeteria workers are responsible for making daily decisions that directly affect the quality of food served, as well as the profitability of their cafeteria.

### FINDING

Federal law required each school food program to establish a local school wellness policy no later than July 1, 2006. The minimum requirements for this policy are shown in **Exhibit 9-4**. The MCPS food services program supports the wellness policy and is taking steps to support healthy student habits.

#### **Exhibit 9-4 Federal Requirements for a Local Wellness Policy**

<b>At a minimum, the policy must:</b>
(1) Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines is appropriate.
(2) Include nutrition guidelines selected by the local educational agency for all foods available on each school campus under the local educational agency during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;
(3) Provide an assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
(4) Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons within the local educational agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy.
(5) Involve parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy.

Source: Public Law 108-265, Section 2004.

In its Wellness Policy, the MCPS Board, “recognizes the link between student health and learning and desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting healthy eating and physical activity in division students.” The policy then establishes numerous goals in the areas of:

- Nutrition Education
- Physical Activity
- Other School-Based Activities
- Nutrition Guidelines

The specific Nutrition Guidelines include:

- provide only low-fat and non-fat salad dressings;



- provide only 2 percent, 1 percent, and skim milk in breakfast and lunch programs;
- limit the number of high-fat, high-sugar items available as a la carte items to one per student; and
- encourage students to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

One outcome from implementing the Wellness Policy has been changes in the types of food offered to students through the cafeterias. For example, chocolate chip cookies used to be a popular a la carte offering, but has been phased out. Now, all items offered by the food services department through its cafeterias follow healthier guidelines.

### COMMENDATION

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is taking steps to improve student wellness through its adopted Wellness Policy.**

### FINDING

The MCPS food services department encourages and welcomes adults into the cafeterias as guests. As a result, the dining experience for students is more pleasant and the department earns significant adult participation.

In all of the cafeterias visited, Evergreen observed that the cafeteria staffs provided reserved space for teachers and staff to use during the lunch period. They also provided flatware and iced tea to further encourage adults to eat in the dining facility.

Because the adult tables provided are located in the main student dining area, students receive the benefit of additional adult supervision, as well as positive role models for healthy eating habits. The food services department benefits from adult participation, as adults pay \$2.50 per meal.

**Exhibit 9-5** provides the number of adult meals served by school for 2005-06. For the year, the department served more than 38,000 adult meals.

### COMMENDATION

**The MCPS food services department is encouraging adult meal participation, providing students with greater supervision during the lunch period, as well as positive role models for healthy eating habits.**



**Exhibit 9-5**  
**Adult Meals Served by School**  
**2005-06 School Year**

School	Adult Meals Served
Boydton Elementary	4,101
Buckhorn Elementary	4,026
Chase City Elementary	5,210
Clarksville Elementary	4,738
LaCrosse Elementary	3,266
South Hill Primary	1,002
South Hill Elementary	3,302
Bluestone Middle	3,179
Bluestone High	3,336
Park View Middle	3,575
Park View High	2,584
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,319</b>

*Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.*

## FINDING

Cafeteria staff reports that some cafeteria workers routinely work overtime but are not compensated for it. This is contrary to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

In focus groups with Evergreen, cafeteria workers noted that they may work between one and 2.5 hours of overtime in an average week, without additional compensation. When questioned how long the policy of ‘no overtime pay’ had been in existence, workers stated that it had always been this way.

Given that cafeteria assistant managers and cafeteria workers are paid on an hourly basis, overtime pay would be appropriate once the number of hours worked in a given week exceeds 40, per FLSA standards. Assistant managers are scheduled to work 27.5 hours per week, while cafeteria workers are scheduled to work 25 hours. In such a situation, workers would be eligible for additional hourly pay up to the 40-hour threshold and then overtime pay beyond the threshold.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 9-1:

**Establish procedures to document extra and overtime work and compensate cafeteria workers as appropriate.**

Workers currently complete weekly time sheets. Requiring cafeteria managers to document any additional time worked on the time sheets would provide the division with a mechanism for fairly compensating cafeteria workers.



**FISCAL IMPACT**

This recommendation will have some fiscal impact, depending on the extent of the extra or overtime hours being worked but not claimed. Evergreen estimates conservatively that at least one additional hour per week is being worked in each cafeteria. At an estimated rate of \$11 per hour, this would translate into an additional weekly cost of \$110, with an annualized cost of \$3,960.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Compensate All Hours Worked	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)

**FINDING**

The Lunch Buddies Program at South Hill Elementary School provides students with positive adult role models.

Begun in 2001, the Lunch Buddies Program pairs volunteers from the business community with designated classes in the South Hill Elementary School. Each Thursday these volunteers lunch with students in the school cafeteria. This provides students with positive adult role models. Volunteers have the opportunity to provide mentoring.

For 2006-07, the Lunch Buddies Program had more than a dozen adult volunteers. It is currently organized by a sitting School Board member.

**COMMENDATION**

**The Lunch Buddy Program at South Hill Elementary School is commendable.**

The food services department should seek to replicate this program in all of its elementary schools.

**9.2 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

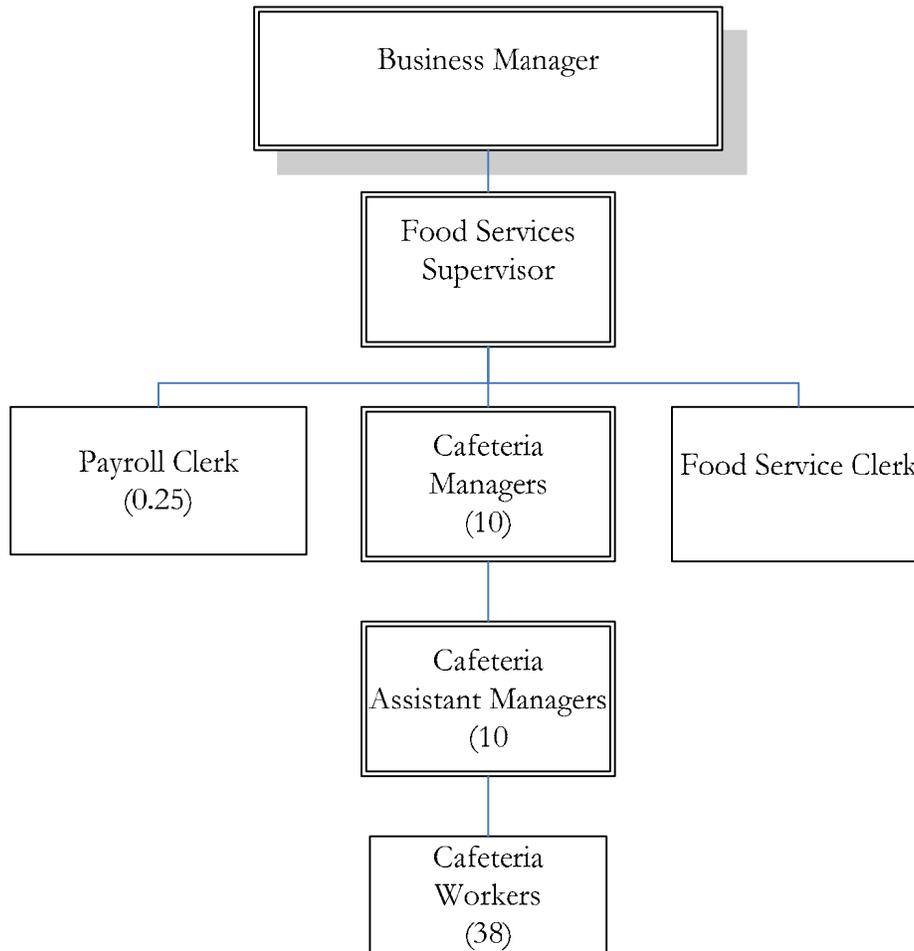
Sound organizational structure serves as the foundation for efficient and effective operations. A streamlined organizational structure is particularly important for school food services operations, whose largest expenses are labor and food costs.

The current organization of the MCPS food services department is shown in **Exhibit 9-6**. The food services supervisor handles most of the menu planning, purchasing, and required reporting, as well as day-to-day administration. The food services clerk handles the free and reduced applications and eligibility determinations in addition to assisting in day-to-day management. The payroll clerk is a full-time position. The school food fund pays 25 percent of her salary for the time she spends completing payroll functions for the department. Cafeteria managers have



generally been with the district a long time. They report that turnover among their staffs is typically only due to retirements or relocations.

**Exhibit 9-6  
MCPS Food Services Organization  
2006-07 School Year**



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.

**FINDING**

MCPS is providing all cafeteria staff with training opportunities in ServSafe.

The ServSafe Food Safety Program was developed by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF). It is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-Conference for Food Protection (CFP). Requirements vary by state, but most require that the on-site manager in a food preparation facility be ServSafe certified. Some of the elements taught in the ServSafe program are shown in **Exhibit 9-7**.



**Exhibit 9-7  
Instructional Modules of the ServSafe Certification Course**

<p><b>Unit 1 The Sanitation Challenge</b></p> <p><b>Section 1 Providing Safe Food</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Dangers of Foodborne Illness</li> <li>Preventing Foodborne Illness</li> <li>How Food Becomes Unsafe</li> <li>The Keys to Food Safety</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 2 The Microworld</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Microbial Contaminants</li> <li>Classifying Foodborne Illnesses</li> <li>Bacteria, Viruses, Parasites, Fungi</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 3 Contamination, Food Allergens, and Foodborne Illness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biological Contamination</li> <li>Chemical Contamination</li> <li>Physical Contamination</li> <li>The Deliberate Contamination of Food</li> <li>Food Allergens</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 4 The Safe Food Handler</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Foodhandlers Can Contaminate Food</li> <li>Diseases Not Transmitted through Food</li> <li>Components of a Good Personal Hygiene Program</li> <li>Management's Role in a Personal Hygiene Program</li> </ul> <p><b>Unit 2 The Flow of Food through the Operation</b></p> <p><b>Section 5 The Flow of Food: An Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preventing Cross-Contamination</li> <li>Time and Temperature Control</li> <li>Monitoring Time and Temperature</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 6 The Flow of Food: Purchasing and Receiving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Purchasing &amp; Receiving Principles</li> <li>Receiving and Inspecting Food</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 7 The Flow of Food: Storage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Storage Guidelines</li> <li>Refrigerated Storage</li> <li>Frozen Storage</li> <li>Dry Storage</li> <li>Storing Specific Food</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 8 The Flow of Food: Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thawing Food Properly</li> <li>Preparing Specific Food</li> <li>Cooking Food</li> <li>Storing Cooked Food</li> <li>Reheating Food</li> </ul>	<p><b>Section 9 The Flow of Food: Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Rules for Holding Food</li> <li>Serving Food Safely</li> <li>Off-Site Service</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 10 Food Safety Management Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prerequisite Food Safety Programs</li> <li>Active Managerial Control</li> <li>Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)</li> <li>Crisis Management</li> </ul> <p><b>Unit 3 Sanitary Facilities and Pest Management</b></p> <p><b>Section 11 Sanitary Facilities and Pest Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanitary Facilities and Equipment</li> <li>Designing a Sanitary Establishment</li> <li>Materials for Interior Construction</li> <li>Considerations for Specific Areas of Facility</li> <li>Sanitation Standards for Equipment</li> <li>Installing &amp; Maintaining Kitchen Equipment</li> <li>Utilities</li> <li>Cleaning and Sanitizing</li> <li>Cleaning Agents</li> <li>Sanitizing</li> <li>Machine Dishwashing</li> <li>Cleaning and Sanitizing Equipment</li> <li>Cleaning and Sanitizing the Premises</li> <li>Tools for Cleaning</li> <li>Storing Utensils, Tableware, and Equipment</li> <li>Using Hazardous Materials</li> <li>Developing a Cleaning Program</li> <li>Integrated Pest Management (IPM)</li> <li>Denying Pests Access to the Establishment</li> <li>Denying Pests Food and Shelter</li> <li>Identifying Pests</li> <li>Working with a Pest Control Operator</li> <li>Using and Storing Pesticides</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 12 Food Safety Regulation and Standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government Regulatory System for Food</li> <li>The FDA Food Code</li> <li>The Inspection Process</li> <li>Self Inspection</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 13 Employee Food Safety Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial and Ongoing Employee Training</li> <li>Delivering Training</li> <li>Training Follow Up</li> <li>Food Safety Certification</li> </ul>
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Source: [www.servsafe.com](http://www.servsafe.com), 2007.



As part of ServSafe, instruction is also provided in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, or HACCP. HACCP is a new program through the USDA and provides guidance for juice, meat, poultry, and seafood processing in order to prevent foodborne illness. All school food providers had to implement programs that complied with HACCP in 2005-06.

The key elements of a HACCP program relate to sanitation, temperature, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and are shown in **Exhibit 9-8**.

### **Exhibit 9-8 Key Elements of a HACCP Program**

**Sanitation** — Be sure that all of your food preparation areas are clean and sanitary, such as workers' hands, utensils, and food contact surfaces. Avoid cross contamination.

**Temperature** — Temperature control means keeping cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Cook to proper temperatures and hold at proper temperatures, and be sure to record those temperatures. A basic, properly calibrated food thermometer (digital or dial) is all you need to check for proper temperatures.

**SOPs** — SOPs can be used both for sanitation and to verify that proper temperatures are being observed, as well as other aspects of a foodservice operation.

*Source: Guidance for School Food Authorities: Developing a School Food Safety Program Based on the Process Approach to HACCP Principles, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, June 2005.*

All MCPS cafeteria managers and assistant managers have been certified in ServSafe. Last summer, the division made ServSafe training available to any cafeteria worker who wished to attend. Although workers who opted to attend were not paid, the division did pay for the direct costs of the class.

## **COMMENDATION**

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools is providing cafeteria managers and staff with important training on food services safety topics.**

## **FINDING**

The MCPS food services department is routinely examining some productivity factors and assessing its own performance.

On a monthly basis, the food services supervisor and clerk develop productivity reports based on the commonly used measure of Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH). They use the Virginia standard for developing a MPLH figure for each cafeteria and then review it with the division's business manager. As necessary, they will share it with the cafeteria managers to highlight areas in need of improvement.

While not yet part of a purchasing cooperative, the food services supervisor has begun exploring this option as a way to reduce food costs. The division is seeking to enter into some form of joint



purchasing with the local hospital for food items that both entities currently buy from the same vendor.

Also as part of its efforts to continue to improve, all cafeteria managers have attended e-mail training and obtained a division e-mail address. While not all managers yet have a computer with Internet access, this need is being addressed where possible.

**COMMENDATION**

**The MCPS food services department regularly assesses its own productivity, seeking to improve.**

In the future, the food services supervisor may want to develop a monthly report that is distributed to all cafeteria managers. This monthly report could include the MPLH statistics and provide further impetus for cafeteria managers to find ways to improve within their own operations.

**FINDING**

The MCPS food services department is routinely examining some measures of cafeteria efficiency, but could be doing more.

While the department is already examining MPLH efficiency on a monthly basis, there are a number of additional measures commonly used in school food services operations. These are shown in **Exhibit 9-9**.

**Exhibit 9-9  
Common Food Services Performance Indicators**

Performance Area	Performance Indicator
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchen accidents per number of meals served</li> <li>• Workers' compensation claims</li> </ul>
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing based on internally or externally established MPLH rates</li> <li>• Hours of training provided to cafeteria workers and managers</li> <li>• Labor costs as percentage of total costs</li> <li>• Administrative staffing costs as percentage of total costs</li> </ul>
Cost Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food costs as percentage of total costs</li> <li>• Per meal costs</li> </ul>
Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures of student satisfaction with menu items</li> <li>• Number of new food items introduced</li> <li>• Cafeteria worker absentee rate</li> <li>• Annual turnover rate of cafeteria staff</li> <li>• Average student line wait time in minutes</li> <li>• Average student eating period (from tray receipt to end of allotted lunch time)</li> <li>• A la carte revenues</li> </ul>

*Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.*

Developing internal productivity indicators and regularly assessing operations against those indicators can provide valuable information for improving operations. Highly efficient school divisions allocate cafeteria staffing on the basis of the meal equivalents they expect to serve. They regularly assess cafeteria productivity compared to established staffing guidelines and



adjust staffing as necessary. They assess the acceptance of menu items among students and seek to introduce new items on a regular basis. They continually work to improve line wait times and the overall dining experience for school division staff and students.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 9-2:

**Evaluate the MCPS food services program performance relative to selected indicators each month and year.**

Evergreen recommends that MCPS establish performance measures in meals per labor hour (MPLH), profit/loss, menu variety, and line wait times at a minimum. Then, the division should regularly assess performance against those indicators on at least a monthly basis for some measures. Such a regular review of its operations should provide the division with assurances that operations are up to standards, and will serve to highlight solid performance and areas in need of improvement.

Given the strength of the current operation, Evergreen also recommends that the department consider pursuing recognition as a District of Excellence through the School Nutrition Association, either in 2007-08 or 2008-09. This program would provide guidance in benchmarking the MCPS food services operation and could lead to national recognition as a District of Excellence. Further details can be found at [www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org).

## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should serve to support continuing fiscal stability and high student participation in the program.

## FINDING

The food services department is implementing a point-of-sale (POS) system in its cafeterias.

Currently, some of the MCPS cafeterias are operating without even a cash register—they maintain student accounts on spiral notebooks. In such an environment, many management tasks must also be manually completed. **Exhibit 9-10** provides a summary of POS benefits Evergreen has found in other school districts/divisions.

In reviewing the division's process for identifying its needs and ultimately selecting a POS vendor, Evergreen found it to be well-structured and reasoned. WinSNAP was the vendor selected; they provide a product that has been well-received in many divisions throughout the country. **Exhibit 9-11** provides the planned costs for Phase I with just South Hill Elementary School being brought on-line.



**Exhibit 9-10  
Benefits of a Point-of-Sale System**

<b>Related to the Integration with the Benefits Issuance System:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The eligibility application component integrates with the point of sale, which will allow for maximum eligibility tracking efficiency and accountability.</li> <li>• Allows for timely updating of eligibility changes and is immediately reflected on the roster (benefit issuance document). Currently meal tickets are issued twice a year to the needy. If a student leaves the district, another student could potentially use the tickets for a number of months.</li> </ul>
<b>Related to Speeding Up Meal Service Lines:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computerized point of sales will allow the students to move through the lunch lines quicker (which results in less time standing in line).</li> </ul>
<b>Related to the Better Utilization of Staff Time:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The computer will summarize the daily meal counts, complete the daily meal count edit check process, and serve as an internal control for monitoring cash sales. The site staff will still need to enter some information manually (cash received, adults served). However, they will no longer need to transfer data to the reporting forms or perform the edit check process manually.</li> <li>• The daily reports are transmitted at the end of each day to the administrative office through the use of modems. The computer generates the daily reports and consolidates the meal count information used for the monthly claim for reimbursement. Staff no longer needs to do data entry of meal counts. Their labor can be better utilized for the timely review of the daily cash sales reports (for excessive overages and shortages) and for evaluating financial trends.</li> </ul>
<b>Related to Tracking of A La Carte Sales</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The computer can be set-up to tabulate the number of a la carte items sold by category to increase the efficiency of food ordering and also serve as an internal control for monitoring cash sales.</li> </ul>
<b>Related to Tracking Student Meal Accounts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student meal accounts can be set-up for the pre-payments and each time the student receives a meal the account is automatically debited. This minimizes the amount of cash received on the meal service line, which allows the student to move through the line quicker.</li> </ul>
<b>Related to Increasing Participation in the “Paid” Category</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computerized point of sale minimizes overt identification and eliminates the manual tracking of the “paid” meal.</li> </ul>

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.



**Exhibit 9-11  
Phase I POS Rollout**

Description	Unit Costs	COST FOR PHASE 1	
		Quantity	Line Item Total Costs
Centralized Software			
WinSNAP Base Module	\$225.00	1	\$225.00
WinSNAP POS & Accountability	\$225.00	1	\$225.00
WinSNAP Free/Reduced App Processing	\$225.00	1	\$225.00
Centralized Software Costs Totals		% 10 Discount	\$607.50
1st School (South Hill) Software Costs			
WinSNAP Base Module	\$1,975.50	1	\$1,975.50
WinSNAP POS & Accountability	\$445.50	1	\$445.50
School Software Costs		% 10 Discount	\$2,178.90
<b>Total Software Costs</b>			<b>\$2,786.40</b>
Training & Support Costs			
Staff Training / Install	\$750.00	4	\$3,000.00
Est. Traveling Expense	\$300.00	1	\$300.00
<b>Total Training Costs</b>			<b>\$3,300.00</b>
1st School (South Hill) Hardware Costs			
ADARA 15" Thin Client -Xpe	\$1,895.00	2	\$3,790.00
SL-T Bar Code Scanner (USB) & Stand	\$345.00	2	\$690.00
<b>Total Hardware Costs</b>			<b>\$4,480.00</b>
Central Office			
Technical Support - Base Module	\$37.50	1	\$37.50
POS & Accountability	\$37.50	1	\$37.50
F/R	\$37.50	1	\$37.50
School Site			
Technical Support - Base Module	\$299.25	1	\$299.25
POS & Accountability	\$74.25	1	\$74.25
USB SL-T Bar Code Scanner	\$30.00	2	\$60.00
<b>Total Support Costs</b>			<b>\$299.25</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS FOR YEAR 1 (not including support costs)</b>			<b>\$10,566.40</b>

Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.

Phase I of the WinSnap implementation is paid being for from general funds and includes South Hill Elementary School and then potentially both high schools. If Phase I is a success, the school food fund will pay for the remaining implementation costs. The current plan is that a second elementary school and both middle schools would be completed in the second year, with all remaining schools completed in the third year.



**COMMENDATION**

**The MCPS food services department is seeking to improve its operations through the implementation of a state-of-the-art POS system.**

Once Phase I is completed successfully, the division may wish to consider revamping its implementation schedule to accommodate complete rollout by the end of the second year. In Evergreen’s experience, once the first few schools embrace a new POS system, implementation in successive schools is dramatically easier.

**FINDING**

The productivity in some division cafeterias is lower than expected.

Cafeteria staffing is typically determined based on meal equivalents served. The Commonwealth of Virginia uses this conversion formula to determine meal equivalents:

- count each lunch as one;
- count each two breakfasts as one; and
- count each \$2.54 in a la carte sales as one.

**Exhibit 9-12** provides an industry standard for evaluating cafeteria productivity. A conventional system would include kitchens that prepare nearly all meals from raw ingredients, using some bakery bread and prepared pizza, and washing dishes. MCPS utilizes a conventional system. As the exhibit shows, a cafeteria serving less than 100 meal equivalents per day would be within industry standards at eight to 10 MPLH. Generally, the MCPS cafeteria fall within the 201-600 meal equivalents per day bands, or rows italicized in the exhibit, depending on the school. Documentation provided through the Commonwealth establishes state goals of 14 to 20 MPLH.

**Exhibit 9-12  
Industry Staffing Guidelines for On-Site Meal Production**

Number of Meal Equivalents	Conventional System	
	Low Productivity	High Productivity
Up to 100	8	10
101-150	9	11
151-200	10-11	12
<i>201-250</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>251-300</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>301-400</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>401-500</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>501-600</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>17</i>
601-700	16	18
701-800	17	19
801-900	18	20
901 and up	19	21

Source: Pannell-Martin, Dorothy, *Cost Control for School Food Services*, Third Edition, July 2000.



All MCPS cafeterias follow the same staffing pattern. Cafeteria managers work six hours per school day. Per industry-accepted norms, two hours out of each work day for the cafeteria managers are taken from the potential labor hours because they are instead spent on paperwork, reporting, and supervisory duties. All cafeteria assistant managers work 5.5 hours per school day. Then each cafeteria has between two and five school nutrition employees, all of whom work 5-hour days.

**Exhibit 9-13** provides a breakdown of the number of the total daily hours cafeteria staff worked on an average day in 2005-06 (after the closure of South Hill Primary School). The totals shown for each school show the number of average daily labor hours available to prepare and serve student meals before the reduction of two hours for cafeteria management responsibilities.

**Exhibit 9-13**  
**MCPS Cafeteria Staffing**  
**2005-06 School Year**

School	Daily Hours Worked
Boydton Elementary	16.5
Buckhorn Elementary	21.5
Chase City Elementary	36.5
Clarksville Elementary	36.5
LaCrosse Elementary	21.5
South Hill Elementary	36.5
Bluestone Middle	36.5
Bluestone High	31.5
Park View Middle	36.5
Park View High	31.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>305.0</b>

*Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.*

**Exhibit 9-14** provides a sample calculation of MPLH for June 2006. It shows the monthly meals served, the labor hours expended, and the final MPLH calculation for each school. As the exhibit shows, the food service program averaged 13.8 MPLH for the final month of 2006-07. Schools ranged from 11.9 to 18.1 MPLH.

**Exhibit 9-15** provides a MPLH review for the full 2005-06 school year. Highlighted boxes show months where individual cafeteria productivity fell below the Virginia standard of at least 14 MPLH. Only three schools fell below this guideline for the entire year.

Highly efficient school divisions allocate cafeteria staffing on the basis of the meal equivalents they expect to serve. Further, they regularly assess cafeteria productivity compared to established staffing guidelines and adjust staffing as necessary. The MCPS food services supervisor has begun doing these kinds of assessments. For 2006-07, she adjusted the allocated cafeteria hours at Clarksville Elementary School downward by five per day. This should result in increased MPLH productivity for that school.



**Exhibit 9-14**  
**MCPS School Cafeteria Productivity**  
**June 2006**

School	Days Served	Lunch Served	Breakfast Served	Head Start Lunch Served	Head Start Breakfast Served	Rivermont Meals Served	Lunch ADP	Breakfast ADP	Adult Meals Served	Adult ADP	A La Carte Sales	A La Carte Meal Equivalents	Daily Hours Worked	Total Meal Equivalents	MPLH
Boydton Elementary	10	1,229	828	16	16	0	125	84	206	21	\$1,73.25	7	16.5	194.1	13.4
Buckhorn Elementary	10	1,853	681	0	0	0	185	68	268	27	\$1,89.35	7	21.5	253.6	13.0
Chase City Elementary	10	3,913	1,309	113	124	157	418	143	259	26	\$1,823.95	72	36.5	587.7	17.0
Clarksville Elementary	10	2,916	1,236	0	0	0	292	124	325	33	\$1,654.65	65	36.5	451.0	13.1
LaCrosse Elementary	10	2,469	1,018	10	12	0	248	103	147	15	\$976.20	38	21.5	352.5	18.1
South Hill Elementary	10	4,123	1,576	0	0	0	412	158	228	23	\$802.40	32	36.5	545.5	15.8
Bluestone Middle	10	3,308	602	0	0	0	331	60	166	17	\$1,374.60	54	36.5	431.6	12.5
Bluestone High	10	2,644	773	0	0	0	264	77	147	15	\$856.00	34	31.5	351.5	11.9
Park View Middle	10	4,066	1,143	0	0	0	407	114	188	19	\$1,916.10	75	36.5	558.0	16.2
Park View High	10	3196	670	0	0	0	320	67	109	11	\$2,084.15	82	31.5	446.1	15.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29,717</b>	<b>9,836</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>3001.3</b>	<b>998.8</b>	<b>2043</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>\$ 11,850.65</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>305.0</b>	<b>4,171.6</b>	<b>13.8</b>

Source: Calculated by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.



**Exhibit 9-15**  
**MCPS Cafeteria Productivity**  
**2005-06 School Year**

School	September 2005	October 2005	November 2005	December 2005	January 2006	February 2006	March 2006	April 2006	May 2006	June 2006	AVE
Boydton Elementary	15.0	16.5	16.9	16.0	15.5	15.8	16.0	16.4	16.2	13.4	15.8
Buckhorn Elementary	12.4	13.7	13.0	13.0	13.2	13.3	13.5	14.5	14.4	13.0	13.4
Chase City Elementary	16.7	18.1	18.0	18.0	17.1	17.2	17.5	17.3	18.4	17.0	17.5
Clarksville Elementary	12.4	12.7	13.0	12.2	12.0	12.8	12.7	11.4	13.1	13.1	12.5
LaCrosse Elementary	18.4	20.3	19.2	18.9	19.0	19.1	19.0	19.0	20.1	18.1	19.1
South Hill Primary	14.5	16.1	15.9	12.9							14.9
South Hill Elementary	19.4	20.1	19.9	16.0	14.9	16.1	16.4	15.8	17.0	15.8	17.1
Bluestone Middle	13.9	14.2	14.0	13.9	13.6	13.6	13.9	14.0	13.7	12.5	13.7
Bluestone High	15.4	17.0	17.0	15.3	15.3	16.4	16.5	16.5	17.0	11.9	15.8
Park View Middle	17.8	18.9	18.5	17.7	17.9	18.4	18.2	18.4	18.5	16.2	18.0
Park View High	18.2	19.7	19.2	18.9	16.9	18.5	18.7	18.4	19.1	15.1	18.3

Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 9-3:

#### Establish and implement a meal staffing formula for the MCPS cafeterias.

The food service program should establish goals for productivity based on established best practices and Commonwealth guidance and adjust staffing accordingly. The MCPS food services supervisor is already making these kinds of adjustments to improve productivity, but has not yet established a performance standard for the division. Based on the Commonwealth expectations and the high level of scratch cooking done in MCPS cafeterias, Evergreen recommends that a minimum threshold of 14.0 MPLH be established.

## FISCAL IMPACT

Establishing a meal staffing formula can be completed with existing resources. As the formula is used to determine staffing, the division would see some reduced labor costs. However, because



Evergreen is recommending several efforts to improve participation elsewhere in this chapter, the division may find that its current staffing is adequate (once daily meal equivalents increase) and that no staffing reductions are necessary. For this reason, no cost savings are estimated.

## FINDING

The food services department is currently providing uniforms to its cafeteria workers. However, few in the division are satisfied with the service provided.

The division's contract with an outside vendor is supposed to provide cafeteria workers with cleaned white uniforms on a regular schedule. On a weekly basis, each employee receives three cleaned uniforms, each with a name and company emblem. In all of the focus groups, cafeteria workers expressed great dissatisfaction with both the color of the uniforms and their cleanliness, as provided by the contractor. In fact, most workers indicated that they no longer used the cleaning service portion of the contract and instead now wash their own uniforms. When they have used the contractor's service, they have been returned either still dirty or insufficiently clean.

Regarding the color, the original contract provided for only white uniforms. For use in a cafeteria environment, this is not generally a good choice. White is quick to show stains. In interviews and focus groups, nearly all food services employees expressed a desire for uniforms in colors other than white, such as school colors. The food services supervisor has requested other colors, but the current contractor has been unable to provide them.

As written, the contract for uniforms and their cleaning is unusual in length. The original agreement, signed in June 2005, is noted as being effective for 60 months. Evergreen has found few such long-term contracts in other divisions, particularly since this contract does not appear to have a 'hold blameless' termination option for either party. However, it does provide for early termination, at rather substantial penalty to the division. In order to terminate the agreement, the division would have to pay either:

*...the greater of 50 percent of the average weekly invoice total multiplied by the number of weeks remaining in the unexpired term, or buy back all garments and other products allocated to [MCPS] at the then current replacement values.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### **Recommendation 9-4:**

#### **Seek to terminate the contract for uniforms and cleaning.**

Given the wide dissatisfaction with the cleanliness of the uniforms provided, the division should seek to terminate the contract. One avenue for the division is to seek, per the contract, resolution for an apparent lack of quality of service in cleaning. Per the contract, should the contractor fail to resolve the complaint in a reasonable period of time, the division can terminate the contract. The division should also seek uniforms of another color as part of its complaint.



## FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The food services department will likely enter into another contract for cafeteria worker uniforms, so no savings are estimated.

### 9.3 STUDENT MEAL PARTICIPATION

Student meal participation is measured based on the number of students who select a full meal for either breakfast or lunch. A full meal is governed by USDA regulations and must meet requirements in portion size, selection, and number. Because low-income students may qualify for a free or reduced-price meal, participation figures are typically measured for three groups of students: free, reduced-price, and full pay.

**Exhibit 9-16** compares the percentages of free/reduced-price qualifying students in Mecklenburg County Public Schools and the peer divisions. MCPS, at 57.0 percent free/reduced, is well above the peer average of 41.1 percent.

**Exhibit 9-16**  
**Student Demographics**  
**2006-07 School Year**

School Division	Total Student Population	Percent Eligible Free/Reduced Lunch*
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>4,910</b>	<b>57.0%</b>
Dinwiddie County	4,639	38.4%
Gloucester County	6,092	27.9%
Halifax County	5,907	56.9%
Isle of Wight County	5,434	27.5%
Pulaski County	5,051	40.1%
Wythe County	4,279	40.3%
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>41.1%</b>

*Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.*

\*As of September 30, 2006.

In 2005-06, MCPS served 606,492 student lunches and 193,749 student breakfasts, including Head Start meals.

## FINDING

MCPS typically exceeds national standards for lunch participation. In most months, at least two-thirds of district students select a reimbursable lunch meal.

Because participation rates are highly variable across the nation, depending greatly on local circumstances and management, only a few rules of thumb exist for assessing student lunch meal participation. In 2000, one of the most widely used food services management manuals published industry standards for student lunch participation. These are compared to MCPS rates in **Exhibit 9-17** for the months of September through December 2006. As can be seen, Mecklenburg County Schools exceeds these rates at every school level. In comparing these



recent rates with those for the 2005-06 school year, Evergreen found the figures to be similar; MCPS is managing sustained high participation rates.

**Exhibit 9-17**  
**Industry Standard and MCPS Lunch Participation Rates**  
**September through December 2006**

School	Industry Standard	September 2006	October 2006	November 2006	December 2006
Boydton Elementary	70%	81%	87%	86%	85%
Buckhorn Elementary	70%	81%	81%	85%	81%
Chase City Elementary	70%	73%	75%	75%	76%
Clarksville Elementary	70%	72%	74%	75%	77%
LaCrosse Elementary	70%	72%	71%	69%	73%
South Hill Elementary	70%	75%	69%	68%	68%
Bluestone Middle	60%	70%	68%	68%	66%
Park View Middle	60%	74%	75%	75%	73%
Bluestone High	50%	51%	53%	53%	50%
Park View High	50%	61%	61%	59%	59%

Source: Pannell-Martin, *School Foodservice Management, 4th Edition, 2000* and *MCPS Food Services, 2007*.

Some of the potential reasons behind these higher than standard participation rates are shown in Evergreen's Diagnostic Survey. As shown in **Exhibit 9-18**, higher percentages of MCPS administrators and teachers than those in comparison districts feel that their food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals. Likewise, only approximately one-third of each group feels that students bring their lunches from home every day.

**Exhibit 9-18**  
**Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses Related to Food Services in**  
**Mecklenburg County Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Mecklenburg County Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.				
<b>Central Office Administrators</b>	68.2%	22.8%	57.6%	14.0%
<b>Principals</b>	55.6%	33.3%	51.4%	18.6%
<b>Teachers</b>	43.0%	47.8%	39.8%	34.8%
Many students bring their lunch from home every day.				
<b>Central Office Administrators</b>	27.3%	22.8%	NA	NA
<b>Principals</b>	33.3%	61.2%	NA	NA
<b>Teachers</b>	34.7%	38.7%	NA	NA

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2007*.

## COMMENDATION

The MCPS food services department is serving lunch meals that appeal to students, as shown in its high participation rates.



## FINDING

Breakfast participation is lower than expected in MCPS schools. In some cases, this may be due to late-arriving buses or to the length of the breakfast period.

For 2005-06, overall monthly breakfast participation was never more than 22 percent. Because of the wide variety of factors influencing breakfast participation, even more so than lunch participation, no national standards currently exist against which programs can measure themselves. However, given that the percentage of free and reduced-price eligible students is approximately 57 percent, the division is not serving breakfast to a significant portion of its poorer students.

**Exhibit 9-19** shows the monthly breakfast participation for September through December 2006. As shown, participation was best in the elementary schools, declining through the middle schools, and worst in the high schools. Only one school, Boydton Elementary School, managed to achieve a participation rate higher than 50 percent.

**Exhibit 9-19**  
**MCPS Breakfast Participation Rates**  
**September through December 2006**

School	September 2006	October 2006	November 2006	December 2006
Boydton Elementary	50%	50%	51%	51%
Buckhorn Elementary	37%	41%	41%	37%
Chase City Elementary	33%	30%	30%	29%
Clarksville Elementary	35%	37%	35%	34%
LaCrosse Elementary	29%	31%	34%	28%
South Hill Elementary	31%	36%	35%	33%
Bluestone Middle	10%	10%	10%	10%
Park View Middle	16%	19%	20%	20%
Bluestone High	10%	11%	12%	12%
Park View High	7%	10%	11%	11%

*Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.*

**Exhibit 9-20** provides the total daily number of free and reduced-price students each month, the number of free/reduced students who eat breakfast on a daily basis, and the “gap” between these figures for each MCPS school. The gap is calculated as the difference between the number of free and reduced students and the number of those students actually eating breakfast. As can be seen, each month at least 1,500 free/reduced students were not eating breakfast on a daily basis.

**Exhibit 9-21** provides the breakfast serving periods for each MCPS school. Industry guidelines typically recommend a minimum of 15 minutes for students to consume breakfast—this time would begin from when the student sits down with her tray. As some breakfast periods are only 15 minutes total, this may not be sufficient time. Cafeteria workers noted that students are often rushed out of the cafeteria by teachers. Some noted cases where they regularly see students standing by the trash cans, trying to finish eating before they are forced to throw away their trays.



**Exhibit 9-20**  
**MCPS Free and Reduce-Price Student Breakfast Participation**  
**September through December 2006**

School	September 2006			October 2006			November 2006			December 2006		
	Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Gap	Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Gap	Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Gap	Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R Meals	Gap
Boydton Elementary	113	72	41	108	72	36	109	75	34	109	73	36
Buckhorn Elementary	150	78	72	152	90	62	157	94	63	157	84	73
Chase City Elementary	367	168	199	319	154	165	330	152	178	330	147	183
Clarksville Elementary	258	115	143	258	132	126	258	124	134	258	121	137
LaCrosse Elementary	164	78	86	176	90	86	171	101	70	167	83	84
South Hill Elementary	398	189	209	300	215	85	366	211	155	366	194	172
Bluestone Middle	331	48	283	292	48	244	292	49	243	292	51	241
Bluestone High	344	64	280	312	75	237	324	81	243	336	79	257
Park View Middle	364	84	280	316	99	217	312	102	210	312	101	211
Park View High	342	48	294	340	65	275	344	72	272	343	74	269
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,831</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>1,887</b>	<b>2573</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>1,533</b>	<b>2,663</b>	<b>1,061</b>	<b>1,602</b>	<b>2,670</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>1,663</b>

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2007.



**Exhibit 9-21**  
**Comparison of Breakfast Serving Times<sup>1</sup>**

School	Breakfast Start/ End Times	Length of Breakfast Period
Boydton Elementary	8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.	20 minutes
Buckhorn Elementary	8:05 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.	15 minutes
Chase City Elementary	8:05 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	40 minutes
Clarksville Elementary	8:05 a.m. to 8:35 a.m.	30 minutes
LaCrosse Elementary	8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.	20 minutes
South Hill Elementary	8:05 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.	25 minutes
Bluestone Middle	8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.	20 minutes
Park View Middle	8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.	15 minutes
Bluestone High	8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.	15 minutes
Park View High	8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.	15 minutes

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, 2007.

<sup>1</sup> Not considering Head Start, ECSE, or pre-K serving times.

Moreover, if a bus arrives midway through the breakfast period, students are left with little time to select, purchase, and consume a school breakfast. This may be another possible contributing factor to the division's low breakfast participation. As part of on-site observations, Evergreen noted at least a few buses that arrived in the middle or at the end of the breakfast serving periods for some schools. In such situations, students may opt to skip breakfast in order to get to their first period class on time.

The Food and Nutrition Service Division of the USDA reports that research proves that students who eat breakfast at school have increased standardized achievement test scores, improved attendance, and reduced tardiness. Other research shows that students who eat breakfast have improved academic, behavioral, and emotional functioning. A 2004 national study completed by the Education Research Service entitled *Evaluating the Impact of School Nutrition Programs* found that children who have a school breakfast available consume a better overall diet, consume a lower percentage of calories from fat, are less likely to have a low intake of magnesium, and are less like to have low serum levels of Vitamin C and folate.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Recommendation 9-5:

**Establish goals and programs to improve student breakfast participation, particularly among free and reduced-price students.**

MCPS is not currently serving breakfast to a significant portion of the free and reduced-price student population, particularly among the older students. The MCPS food services program should establish monthly goals to increase participation among all students (because overt identification of free and reduced-price students would violate USDA policy). MCPS should then identify root causes for less than optimal student participation, including transportation timing, alternatives to the current menus, and breakfast period timing.

## FISCAL IMPACT

In December 2006, Mecklenburg County Public Schools had an average of 2,124 students qualifying for free and 546 students qualifying for reduced-price meals. Assuming a five



percent increase in breakfast participation among these students, the division will realize increased annual revenues of \$31,725, based on these calculations:

- 2,124 free students x 5 percent increase in participation x \$1.31 (federal reimbursement) x 180 school days = \$25,042; and
- 546 reduced-price students x 5 percent increase in participation x \$1.36 (federal reimbursement of \$1.01 + student average pay of \$0.35) x 180 school days = \$6,683.

These increased revenues would accrue to the school food fund and would better enable the program to support the increased costs created by other recommendations in this chapter.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Improve Breakfast Participation	\$31,725	\$31,725	\$31,725	\$31,725	\$31,725

**FINDING**

While lunch participation overall is quite high in the elementary schools, it tapers off in the division’s two high schools. High school students are typically difficult customers to serve in a cafeteria environment, but MCPS could improve its participation rates among its older students.

The average monthly lunch participation in MCPS high schools was 52 percent for 2005-06. **Exhibit 9-22** shows the monthly participation figures among free and reduced-price high school students for the first four months of 2006-07. Among free high school students, participation was never more than 73.42 percent in any month for the two high schools. Likewise, participation among reduced-price students never exceeded 70.74 percent.

**Exhibit 9-22  
High School Student Lunch Participation by Category  
September through December 2006**

Month		Bluestone High School	Park View High School	Average
September 2006	Percent Participation Among Free Students	66.67%	76.31%	<b>71.49%</b>
	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	58.75%	58.06%	<b>58.41%</b>
October 2006	Percent Participation Among Free Students	73.25%	73.58%	<b>73.42%</b>
	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	69.57%	70.67%	<b>70.12%</b>
November 2006	Percent Participation Among Free Students	69.47%	72.01%	<b>70.74%</b>
	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	77.42%	69.74%	<b>73.58%</b>
December 2006	Percent Participation Among Free Students	64.89%	70.79%	<b>67.84%</b>
	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	60.81%	63.16%	<b>61.99%</b>

Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.



**Exhibit 9-23** provides the total daily number of free and reduced-price high school students each month, the number of free/reduced students who eat a reimbursable lunch on a daily basis, and the “gap” between these figures for each MCPS high school. The gap is calculated as the difference between the number of free and reduced students and the number of those students actually eating lunch. As can be seen, each month approximately 200 free/reduced high students were not eating lunch on a daily basis.

**Exhibit 9-24** provides similar participation data for the division’s full-pay high school students. In the months shown, approximately 450 full-pay high school students each day are not selecting a reimbursable meal.

**Exhibit 9-25** provides the a la carte sales for 2005-06 in the division’s high schools. High school students have the option of purchasing a variety of a la carte items. In 2005-06, the high schools sold an average of \$408 per day in a la carte items. While these revenues have a positive impact on the food services program (provided they are priced appropriately), they may indicate that students are receiving less than optimal nutrition. The components of a reimbursable meal are required to meet USDA levels for nutrition; a la carte items sold in MCPS cafeterias must now also meet health guidelines in accordance with the division’s Wellness Policy. However, with a la carte items, students can, and do make choices that are less healthy than the reimbursable meal, such as selecting three bags of chips for a ‘meal.’

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Recommendation 9-6:**

#### **Establish goals and programs to improve student lunch participation at the high schools.**

While its overall high school lunch participation is higher than industry standards, the department should always seek ways to continue to improve participation. In particular, it should focus on identifying and eliminating any contributing factors that may be depressing participation among free and reduced-price high students who are most in need of high-quality nutrition options.

The division could seek to improve participation among high school students by implementing greater meal delivery variety, such as salad bars, grab-and-go sandwich packs, alternate hot entrees, etc., to encourage a higher selection of reimbursable meals among full-pay students.



**Exhibit 9-23  
MCPS Free and Reduce-Price Student Lunch Participation  
September through December 2006**

School	September 2006			October 2006			November 2006			December 2006		
	Students Eligible for F/R	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R	Gap	Students Eligible for F/R	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R	Gap	Students Eligible for F/R	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R	Gap	Students Eligible for F/R	Participation of Students Eligible for F/R	Gap
Bluestone	344	223	121	312	226	86	324	230	94	336	215	121
Park View	342	244	98	340	248	92	344	246	98	343	237	106
Total	686	467	219	652	474	178	668	476	192	679	452	227

Source: MCPS Services Department, 2007.

**Exhibit 9-24  
MCPS Full-Pay High School Student Lunch Participation  
September through December 2006**

School	September 2006			October 2006			November 2006			December 2006		
	Full-Pay Students	Participation of Full-Pay Students	Gap	Full-Pay Students	Participation of Full-Pay Students	Gap	Full-Pay Students	Participation of Full-Pay Students	Gap	Full-Pay Students	Participation of Full-Pay Students	Gap
Bluestone	374	153	221	381	155	226	380	152	228	379	140	239
Park View	442	198	244	440	192	248	423	177	246	428	189	239
Total	816	351	465	821	347	474	803	329	474	807	329	478

Source: MCPS Services Department, 2007.



**Exhibit 9-25  
High School Student A La Carte Sales  
2005-06 School Year**

Month	Bluestone	Park View
September	\$2,868.50	\$4,827.80
October	\$3,350.95	\$5,789.75
November	\$3,402.75	\$5,054.00
December	\$1,920.70	\$3,306.55
January	\$2,774.15	\$4,257.85
February	\$2,817.90	\$5,039.40
March	\$3,268.15	\$5,477.30
April	\$2,774.15	\$4,257.85
May	\$3,677.60	\$5,683.45
June	\$856.00	\$2,084.15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$27,710.85</b>	<b>\$45,778.10</b>

Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Given the division’s already fairly high participation rate, Evergreen has calculated the fiscal impact of a modest two percent participation increase among high school students. Assuming this increase, the division will realize increased annual revenues of \$10,676, based on this calculation:

- 807 full-pay students<sup>1</sup> x 2 percent increase in participation x \$1.73 (\$1.50 student pay + \$0.23 federal reimbursement) x 180 school days = \$5,026.
- 150 reduced-price high school students x 2 percent increase in participation x \$2.40 (\$0.40 student pay + \$2.00 federal reimbursement) x 180 school days = \$1,080.
- 529 free high school students x 2 percent increase in participation x \$2.40 (federal reimbursement) x 180 school days = \$4,570.

These increased revenues would accrue to the school food fund.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Improve High School Lunch Participation	\$10,676	\$10,676	\$10,676	\$10,676	\$10,676

**9.4 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

School food programs earn revenues through meal prices charged to students and adults, reimbursements from the federal government for each meal served that meets specifications, and, in some cases, through catering operations. The programs reduce their costs by participating in the Child Nutrition Commodity Program, whereby they receive food products for free.

<sup>1</sup> Using December 2006 figures.



The majority of school food revenues derive from student meal participation. Students who are financially able pay for their meals. All students who select a “full meal,” whether paying full price, a reduced price, or receiving a free meal, generate reimbursement funds.

In most divisions, food services programs are expected to support all of the operating expenditures through these revenue sources. In some divisions, food services programs also support all of their capital (non-building) and overhead expenditures as well. Food services funds may maintain a balance of up to three months of their operating expenses, with some exceptions.

**Exhibit 9-26** compares the division meal prices for full-pay students and adults. As the exhibit shows, MCPS charges prices less than most of the peer divisions for breakfast and mid-range prices for lunch meals. MCPS did not change its prices for the 2006-07 school year.

**Exhibit 9-26**  
**Division Meal Prices (full-pay students)**  
**2005-06 School Year**

	Mecklenburg County	Dinwiddie County	Gloucester County	Halifax County	Prince Edward County	Pulaski County	Wythe County	Peer Division Average
<b>Breakfast</b>								
Elementary	\$0.70	\$0.85	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.60	\$0.85	\$0.85	\$0.84
Middle	\$0.70	\$0.85	\$1.05	\$1.00	\$0.75	\$0.85	\$1.05	\$0.89
High School	\$0.70	\$0.85	\$1.25	\$1.00	\$0.75	\$0.85	\$1.05	\$0.92
Adult	\$1.25	\$1.10	\$1.50	\$1.40	\$1.25	\$1.10	\$1.30	\$1.27
<b>Lunch</b>								
Elementary	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.40	\$1.50	\$1.38	\$1.75	\$1.50
Middle	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.60	\$1.40	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.85	\$1.55
High School	\$1.50	\$1.50	NA	\$1.40	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$1.85	\$1.54
Adult	\$2.50	\$2.50	NA	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$2.42

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.

**Exhibit 9-27** compares the food services distributions for Mecklenburg County Public Schools and the peer divisions. As shown, the division, at \$350.88 per student, was slightly below the peer average of \$354.52.

**Exhibit 9-27**  
**Food Services Distributions**  
**Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Food Services	Per Pupil Cost
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	<b>\$1,715,738</b>	\$350.88
Dinwiddie County	\$1,431,227	\$318.83
Gloucester County	\$1,822,524	\$297.01
Halifax County	\$2,698,889	\$459.39
Isle of Wight County	\$1,566,948	\$307.10
Pulaski County	\$1,933,176	\$392.14
Wythe County	\$1,472,991	\$352.62
<b>Peer Division Average</b>	<b>\$1,820,959</b>	<b>\$354.52</b>

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006.



**FINDING**

The MCPS food services program is adhering to best practices in financial control. Its revenues typical exceed its expenditures, but not excessively so.

**Exhibit 9-28** compares the revenues and expenditures for the past three years, as well as 2006-07 as of January 12, 2007. The other charges expenditures includes expenditures for utilities. As the exhibit shows, in the three years from 2003-04 through 2005-06, total revenues have increased by 8.4 percent, while total expenditures have increased by only 3.4 percent.

**Exhibit 9-28**  
**MCPS Food Services Financial Performance**  
**2003-04 through 2006-07 (partial)**

Category	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	Percent Change, 2003-04 to 2005-06
<b>Revenues</b>					
School Lunch, Breakfast, Special Milk, and Summer School Lunch/Breakfast Program Sales	\$120,002.90	\$342,733.30	\$327,084.40	\$339,929.60	0.8%
A La Carte and Adult Meal Sales	\$92,676.34	\$262,348.77	\$267,351.03	\$272,607.56	-3.8%
Rebates	\$2,467.78	\$971.36	\$752.50	\$4,424.32	-78.0%
Interest Earned	\$3,146.85	\$4,603.37	\$1,767.63	\$1,187.54	287.6%
Other Revenues – Catering	\$0.00	\$4,738.70	\$36,567.48	\$0.00	NA
Other Revenues - A La Carte (only) Schools	\$0.00	\$3,158.83	\$0.00	\$0.00	NA
Other Revenues - Miscellaneous	\$9,975.02	\$35,464.07	\$2,813.28	\$40,101.68	-11.6%
Program Reimbursements (Federal Funds)	\$250,886.63	\$1,205,253.39	\$1,153,568.81	\$1,054,638.85	14.3%
State Funds	\$62,226.41	\$28,720.26	\$30,125.71	\$30,338.00	-5.3%
Grants	\$3,019.33	\$2,419.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	NA
Cash in Lieu of USDA Commodities	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	NA
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$544,401.26</b>	<b>\$1,890,411.05</b>	<b>\$1,820,030.84</b>	<b>\$1,743,227.55</b>	<b>8.4%</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Personal Services	\$201,731.83	\$763,988.53	\$770,142.90	\$822,659.95	-7.1%
Employee Benefits	\$87,778.28	\$289,007.77	\$269,332.64	\$277,834.67	4.0%
Purchased Services	\$12,362.99	\$26,678.27	\$15,314.54	\$20,827.90	28.1%
Other Charges	\$6,956.69	\$26,647.32	\$24,615.54	\$21,439.99	24.3%
Materials and Supplies	\$37,954.50	\$72,722.40	\$59,532.67	\$37,487.95	94.0%
Food Products	\$155,618.36	\$630,389.92	\$558,310.66	\$565,361.18	11.5%
Capital Outlay	\$6,612.69	\$11,259.47	\$15,922.59	\$15,468.23	-27.2%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$509,015.34</b>	<b>\$1,820,693.68</b>	<b>\$1,713,171.54</b>	<b>\$1,761,079.87</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
<b>Revenues - Expenditures</b>	<b>\$35,385.92</b>	<b>\$69,717.37</b>	<b>\$106,859.30</b>	<b>-\$17,852.32</b>	<b>490.5%</b>

Source: Mecklenburg County Public Schools, SNP-14, Financial Report – School Nutrition Programs, 2007.



One widely used source of cafeteria operational standards may be found in the 2000 edition of *Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition*. **Exhibit 9-29** shows some of the financial standards provided in that text. Based on these standards, a division’s cafeteria labor costs, including fringe benefits, should not exceed 40 percent of total revenues; likewise its food costs. Its administrative costs should not exceed seven percent.

**Exhibit 9-30** shows calculations based on **Exhibit 9-28**, and compares them with the operational standards of the previous exhibit. As can be seen, the division’s administrative costs are generally below the industry standard of seven percent. Likewise, the division’s food costs are generally under the industry standard of 40 percent. The division’s labor costs are somewhat higher than the industry standard of 40 percent. This deviation is almost certainly not due to the salaries paid to cafeteria workers, but rather to the benefits paid to them. All MCPS cafeteria workers are considered full-time and receive benefits, although some work just five hours per day. Given that the result of this policy has been an extremely stable workforce in comparison to other divisions, this has likely been a sound management decision.

**Exhibit 9-29**  
**Food Services Financial Performance Standards**  
**2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Category	Percent of Revenue Standard
School Labor, Including Fringe Benefits	40%
Food Cost as Percent of Revenue	40%
Administrative Cost (Central Office Salaries w/Fringe)	7%

*Source: Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition, 2000.*

**Exhibit 9-30**  
**Comparison of MCPS Food Services Financial Performance to Standards**  
**2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Category	Percent of Revenue Standard	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
School Labor, Including Fringe Benefits	40%	52%	53%	59%
Food Cost as Percent of Revenue	40%	33%	31%	33%
Administrative Cost (Central Office Salaries w/Fringe)	7%	4%	4%	4%

*Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2007.*

Food services operations within school divisions are generally expected to operate at a profit level that covers all of their costs, including both school-based and central office costs. An accepted industry standard is for food services operations to maintain a profit margin equal to three or four percent of revenues. For smaller school divisions, such as MCPS, maintaining a profit margin of one to two percent would be a realistic goal. Highly effective divisions achieve this level in part by encouraging creativity among cafeteria managers and holding them accountable for cafeteria financial performance.



## COMMENDATION

**The MCPS food services program is operating in a fiscally prudent manner, in most respects.**

The only exception to this commendation is in the area of facilities and equipment capital improvements. This is reviewed in the next finding.

## FINDING

An important component of future fiscal health in a food services program relies on continuous reinvestment in facilities and equipment. Historically and currently, the MCPS food services program is underfunding its capital facilities and equipment needs.

Reinvestment into the school food services program is important to the long-term health of the program. The United States Department of Agriculture has not officially established expenditure requirements for facilities and equipment, but a generally accepted minimum standard is one percent of revenues. **Exhibit 9-31** compares revenues and equipment expenditures for the last several years. As shown, MCPS is failing to meet this minimum standard.

**Exhibit 9-31**  
**Current Capital Expenditures**  
**2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Category	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,743,227.55</b>	<b>\$1,820,030.84</b>	<b>\$1,890,411.05</b>
One Percent of Total Revenues	\$17,432.28	\$18,200.31	\$18,904.11
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Capital Outlay	\$15,468.23	\$15,922.59	\$11,259.47
Current Percent of Revenues	0.89%	0.87%	0.60%

*Source: MCPS Food Services Department, 2007.*

In interviews and on-site observations, Evergreen found a high level of antiquated equipment in many schools. Further, staff noted that some equipment could no longer achieve adequate performance, such as dishwashers not being able to reach the minimum temperature considered safe for thoroughly washing student trays and storage rooms unable to achieve cooler temperatures any longer. Some equipment is estimated to be more than 30 years old, well beyond the useful expected life span. One school is using a cracked bread mixer because it has no alternative. Many cafeterias did not have seemingly basic equipment, such as a simple cash register.

Staff also noted a need for new equipment to handle the new menu plans. With fried foods mostly leaving the menus, more foods now require oven preparation. However, many schools lack sufficient oven space to prepare multiple menu items that require oven preparation, such as breads and meats.



**RECOMMENDATION**

**Recommendation 9-7:**

**Establish a minimum annual investment threshold for facilities and equipment.**

Given the apparent history of non-investment, Evergreen recommends that the division budget at least two percent of food services revenues per year for at least the next five years. These funds could also be used for aesthetic upgrades in cafeteria areas.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Establishing the policy can be done with existing resources. Evergreen recommends that, for the next five years, the division budget a minimum of two percent each year to address capital facility and equipment needs. This would be slightly more than double its current expenditures in this category, or an additional \$18,000.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
Address Capital Needs	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)



**CHAPTER 10:  
COSTS AND SAVINGS SUMMARY**



Chapter 10

**COSTS AND SAVINGS SUMMARY**

The Evergreen Team has developed 118 recommendations in this report. Thirty-four (34) of the recommendations have fiscal implications. **Exhibit 10-1** shows the total costs and savings for study recommendations that have a fiscal impact. As can be seen, the total net savings is over \$5.1 million over five years for operational efficiencies in MCPS. We also estimate a need for approximately \$15 million in capital expenditures over five years. It is important to keep in mind that the identified savings and costs are incremental and cumulative.

**Exhibit 10-1**  
**Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year**  
**Over Five Years Recommendations**

Costs/Savings	Years					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
Total Costs	(\$287,420)	(\$305,690)	(\$330,010)	(\$331,410)	(\$330,010)	(\$1,584,540)	
Total Savings	\$1,026,854	\$1,033,854	\$1,403,654	\$1,630,804	\$1,640,854	\$6,736,020	
Total Net Savings	\$739,434	\$728,164	\$1,073,644	\$1,299,394	\$1,310,844	\$5,151,480	(\$5,500)
Total Five-Year Net Savings Minus One-Time (Costs)							\$5,145,980

**Exhibit 10-2** shows costs and savings by chapter for recommendations in Chapters 2 through 9.

About 84 additional recommendations in this report do not have a fiscal impact. These recommendations are included in Chapters 2 through 9 of the full report.

**Exhibit 10-3** provides the proposed capital outlay expenditures as contained in Chapter 6. As can be seen, a total of \$15 million in costs over five years is recommended by the Evergreen Solutions Team.



**Exhibit 10-2  
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year**

Chapter	Recommendation	Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
<b>CHAPTER 2: DIVISION ADMINISTRATION</b>								
2-9	Administer Organizational Climate Survey	(\$1,400)	\$0	\$0	(\$1,400)	\$0	(\$2,800)	
2-11	Eliminate One Assistant Principal	\$59,188	\$59,188	\$59,188	\$59,188	\$59,188	\$295,940	
<b>Chapter 2 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>\$57,788</b>	<b>\$59,188</b>	<b>\$59,188</b>	<b>\$57,788</b>	<b>\$59,188</b>	<b>\$293,140</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 3: PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT</b>								
3-3	Hire Human Resources Specialist	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)	(\$56,320)	(\$281,600)	
3-4	Provide Human Resources Training	(\$5,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$9,000)	
3-12	Purchase a Scanner and Appropriate Software	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$500)
3-27	Secure Legal Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$5,000)
<b>Chapter 3 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>(\$61,320)</b>	<b>(\$57,320)</b>	<b>(\$57,320)</b>	<b>(\$57,320)</b>	<b>(\$57,320)</b>	<b>(\$290,600)</b>	<b>(\$5,500)</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT</b>								
<b>Chapter 4 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 5: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT</b>								
5-1	Eliminate up to Three Coordinator Positions and Add One Director of Curriculum and Instruction	\$145,223	\$145,223	\$145,223	\$145,223	\$145,223	\$726,115	
5-4	Pay Summer Stipends for Teachers	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$6,500)	(\$32,500)	
5-18	Eliminate Stipends for Dual Enrollment Teachers	\$11,380	\$11,380	\$11,380	\$11,380	\$11,380	\$56,900	
5-21	Eliminate Two Teachers, Three Teaching Assistants, and One Guidance Counselor	\$199,792	\$199,792	\$199,792	\$199,792	\$199,792	\$998,960	
<b>Chapter 5 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>\$349,895</b>	<b>\$349,895</b>	<b>\$349,895</b>	<b>\$349,895</b>	<b>\$349,895</b>	<b>\$1,749,475</b>	



**Exhibit 10-2 (Continued)  
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year**

Chapter	Recommendation	Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
<b>CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT</b>								
6-2	Reduce Mobile Classrooms	\$0	\$7,000	\$12,000	\$17,000	\$27,000	\$63,000	
6-6	Hire Additional Mechanics Helpers	(\$24,320)	(\$48,640)	(\$72,960)	(\$72,960)	(\$72,960)	(\$291,840)	
6-8	Implement Life-Cycle Costing	\$0	\$0	\$130,000	\$260,000	\$260,000	\$650,000	
6-11	Purchase Training Materials	(\$1,000)	(\$350)	(\$350)	(\$350)	(\$350)	(\$2,400)	
6-13	Implement LEED	\$0	\$0	\$152,000	\$152,000	\$152,000	\$456,000	
6-14	Implement Energy Management System	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$225,000	
6-16	Install Lighting Control Devices	\$0	\$0	\$7,800	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$207,800	
6-17	Enforce Facility Use Policies	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$60,000	
<b>Chapter 6 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>(\$13,320)</b>	<b>(\$29,990)</b>	<b>\$315,490</b>	<b>\$542,690</b>	<b>\$552,690</b>	<b>\$1,367,560</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION</b>								
7-3	Assign Router	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$125,000)	
7-4	Implement Routing Software	\$62,550	\$62,550	\$62,550	\$62,500	\$62,550	\$312,700	
7-5	Alter Bell Times	\$324,320	\$324,320	\$324,320	\$324,320	\$324,320	\$1,621,600	
7-6	Reduce Capital Outlay for Buses	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$250,000	
7-7	Eliminate Half Administration Fleet	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$450,000	
7-8	Raise Labor Rate	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$150,000	
<b>Chapter 7 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>\$531,870</b>	<b>\$531,870</b>	<b>\$531,870</b>	<b>\$531,820</b>	<b>\$531,870</b>	<b>\$2,659,300</b>	



**Exhibit 10-2 (Continued)  
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year**

Chapter	Recommendation	Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
<b>CHAPTER 8: TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT</b>								
8-2	Add Database Administrator	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)	(\$20,480)	(\$102,400)	
8-3	Add Technology Resource Teachers	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)	(\$85,760)	(\$428,800)	
8-4	Increase Technical Staff	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)	(\$39,680)	(\$198,400)	
<b>Chapter 8 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>(\$145,920)</b>	<b>(\$145,920)</b>	<b>(\$145,920)</b>	<b>(\$145,920)</b>	<b>(\$145,920)</b>	<b>(\$729,600)</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 9: FOOD SERVICE</b>								
9-1	Compensate All Hours Worked	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)	(\$3,960)	(\$19,800)	
9-5	Improve Breakfast Participation	\$31,725	\$31,725	\$31,725	\$31,725	\$31,725	\$158,625	
9-6	Improve High School Lunch Participation	\$10,676	\$10,676	\$10,676	\$10,676	\$10,676	\$53,380	
9-7	Address Capital Needs	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)	(\$18,000)	(\$90,000)	
<b>Chapter 9 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		<b>\$20,441</b>	<b>\$20,441</b>	<b>\$20,441</b>	<b>\$20,441</b>	<b>\$20,441</b>	<b>\$102,205</b>	
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>		<b>(\$287,420)</b>	<b>(\$305,690)</b>	<b>(\$330,010)</b>	<b>(\$331,410)</b>	<b>(\$330,010)</b>	<b>(\$1,584,540)</b>	
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b>		<b>\$1,026,854</b>	<b>\$1,033,854</b>	<b>\$1,403,654</b>	<b>\$1,630,804</b>	<b>\$1,640,854</b>	<b>\$6,736,020</b>	<b>(\$5,500)</b>
<b>TOTAL NET SAVINGS</b>		<b>\$739,434</b>	<b>\$728,164</b>	<b>\$1,073,644</b>	<b>\$1,299,394</b>	<b>\$1,310,844</b>	<b>\$5,151,480</b>	
<b>TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS MINUS ONE-TIME (COSTS)</b>								<b>\$5,145,980</b>



**Exhibit 10-3  
Summary for Capital Outlay Costs (Chapter 6)**

Chapter	Recommendation	Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
<b>CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT (Capital Outlay)</b>								
6-3	Relocate Central Office	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$75,000	(\$1,200,000)
6-4	Support New Construction and Renovation	\$0	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$13,820,000)	
<b>Chapter 6 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings</b>		\$0	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,430,000)	(\$3,430,000)	(\$3,430,000)	(\$13,745,000)	
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>		\$0	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$3,455,000)	(\$13,820,000)	
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b>		\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$75,000	<b>(\$1,200,000)</b>
<b>TOTAL NET SAVINGS</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$3,455,000)</b>	<b>(\$3,430,000)</b>	<b>(\$3,430,000)</b>	<b>(\$3,430,000)</b>	<b>(\$13,745,000)</b>	
<b>TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS MINUS ONE-TIME (COSTS)</b>								<b>(\$14,945,000)</b>



***APPENDIX:  
SURVEY RESULTS***



# Mecklenburg County Public Schools Efficiency Review Survey Central Office Administrators

## A. DEMOGRAPHICS

	Central Office Administrator	School Administrator	Teacher			
1. What is your current position category?	100%	0%	0%			
	<b>1-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 years</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16-20 years</b>	<b>20+ years</b>	
2. How long have you been in your current position in the school division?	81.8%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	0%	
3. How long have you worked in the school division?	54.6%	18.2%	4.6%	13.6%	9.1%	

## B. DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. The division's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	4.6%	31.8%	27.3%	31.8%	4.6%
4. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the division's strategic plan.	4.6%	40.9%	13.6%	36.4%	4.6%
5. School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division.	0%	18.2%	13.6%	45.4%	22.7%
6. School board members know and understand the operations of the school division.	0%	59.1%	9.1%	9.1%	22.7%
7. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	22.7%	50%	13.6%	13.6%	0%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	13.6%	63.6%	13.6%	9.1%	0%
9. The division administration is efficient.	18.2%	63.6%	9.1%	9.1%	0%
10. The division administration supports the educational process.	40.9%	50%	9.1%	0%	0%
11. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the division.	27.3%	50%	9.1%	13.6%	0%
12. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	13.6%	81.8%	0%	4.6%	0%
13. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	13.6%	86.4%	0%	0%	0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. Most administrative practices in the school division are highly efficient and effective.	13.6%	45.4%	27.3%	13.6%	0%
15. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	4.6%	40.9%	31.8%	18.2%	4.6%
16. School division administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	27.3%	59.1%	9.1%	4.6%	0%
17. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	9.1%	27.3%	31.8%	31.8%	0%
18. Bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	9.1%	45.4%	31.8%	13.6%	0%
19. The school division has too many layers of administrators.	0%	0%	22.7%	63.6%	13.6%
20. Division administrators provide quality service to schools.	27.3%	59.1%	13.6%	0%	0%

**C. EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. The division uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	18.2%	59.1%	13.6%	9.1%	0%
22. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	4.6%	45.4%	27.3%	22.7%	0%
23. The division has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0%	40.9%	9.1%	50%	0%
b. Special Education	4.6%	77.3%	9.1%	9.1%	0%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	0%	59.1%	36.4%	4.6%	0%
d. Advanced Placement	9.1%	13.6%	27.3%	40.9%	9.1%
e. Alternative Education	0%	31.8%	13.6%	40.9%	13.6%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	0%	18.2%	54.6%	27.3%	0%
g. Career and Vocational	13.6%	54.6%	9.1%	13.6%	9.1%
h. Dropout Prevention	0%	22.7%	40.9%	27.3%	9.1%
24. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	22.7%	59.1%	18.2%	0%	0%
25. Teacher turnover is low.	0%	45.4%	18.2%	27.3%	9.1%
26. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	9.1%	45.4%	18.2%	27.3%	0%
27. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	0%	50%	27.3%	18.2%	4.6%
28. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	22.7%	50%	13.6%	13.6%	0%
29. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	31.8%	40.9%	13.6%	13.6%	0%
30. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	4.6%	40.9%	22.7%	27.3%	4.6%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	4.6%	45.4%	31.8%	18.2%	0%
32. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	13.6%	40.9%	4.6%	36.4%	4.6%
33. Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	22.7%	68.2%	4.6%	0%	4.6%
34. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school division.	31.8%	45.4%	18.2%	4.6%	0%

**D. HUMAN RESOURCES**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35. Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	0%	27.3%	4.6%	54.6%	13.6%
36. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	0%	31.8%	9.1%	36.4%	22.7%
37. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	18.2%	36.4%	40.9%	4.6%
38. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	22.7%	27.3%	45.4%	4.6%
39. The division has a good orientation program for new employees.	0%	68.2%	9.1%	13.6%	9.1%
40. The division accurately projects future staffing needs.	0%	72.7%	18.2%	4.6%	4.6%
41. The division has an effective employee recruitment program.	0%	45.4%	27.3%	18.2%	9.1%
42. Division employees receive annual performance evaluations.	9.1%	40.9%	9.1%	36.4%	4.6%
43. The division rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	0%	31.8%	22.7%	31.8%	13.6%
44. I am satisfied with my job in the school division.	18.2%	77.3%	4.6%	0%	0%
45. I am actively looking for a job outside the school division.	0%	9.1%	13.6%	45.4%	31.8%
46. The division has a fair and timely grievance process.	0%	45.4%	50%	4.6%	0%
47. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	4.6%	18.2%	22.7%	45.4%	9.1%
48. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	4.6%	9.1%	22.7%	54.6%	9.1%



**E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49. The division regularly communicates with parents.	22.7%	59.1%	9.1%	9.1%	0%
50. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	9.1%	50%	22.7%	18.2%	0%
51. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	18.2%	40.9%	27.3%	9.1%	4.6%
52. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	4.6%	59.1%	22.7%	13.6%	0%
53. The school division explains test results to parents.	0%	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%	0%
54. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0%	45.4%	27.3%	27.3%	0%
55. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	40.9%	54.6%	4.6%	0%	0%

**F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	4.6%	68.2%	9.1%	13.6%	4.6%
57. Schools are clean.	9.1%	72.7%	0%	18.2%	0%
58. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	0%	4.6%	4.6%	59.1%	31.8%
59. Schools are well-maintained.	4.6%	50%	13.6%	27.3%	4.6%
60. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	4.6%	27.3%	18.2%	50%	0%
61. Division facilities are open for community use.	9.1%	72.7%	13.6%	4.6%	0%
62. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	4.6%	77.3%	13.6%	4.6%	0%
63. The division has an effective energy management program.	4.6%	9.1%	40.9%	45.4%	0%

**G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
64. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	4.6%	40.9%	31.8%	18.2%	4.6%
65. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	4.6%	31.8%	31.8%	27.3%	4.6%
66. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division.	0%	72.7%	22.7%	4.6%	0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67. The division's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	4.6%	31.8%	45.4%	13.6%	4.6%
68. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	0%	50%	40.9%	9.1%	0%
69. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	4.6%	50%	45.4%	0%	0%

**H. PURCHASING**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	13.6%	54.6%	31.8%	0%	0%
71. The school division purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest possible cost.	18.2%	68.2%	13.6%	0%	0%
72. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	13.6%	54.6%	9.1%	22.7%	0%
73. The division provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	4.6%	18.2%	36.4%	40.9%	0%

**I. TRANSPORTATION**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
74. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0%	0%	18.2%	63.6%	18.2%
75. There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	4.6%	50%	13.6%	22.7%	9.1%
76. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	13.6%	68.2%	18.2%
77. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	9.1%	72.7%	13.6%	4.6%	0%
78. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	4.6%	36.4%	31.8%	27.3%	0%
79. Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	0%	31.8%	50%	18.2%
80. Bus ride times are too long.	0%	9.1%	40.9%	36.4%	13.6%



**J. FOOD SERVICES**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
81. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	9.1%	59.1%	9.1%	18.2%	4.6%
82. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	9.1%	54.6%	27.3%	9.1%	0%
83. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	0%	22.7%	36.4%	40.9%	0%
84. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	4.6%	63.6%	18.2%	13.6%	0%
85. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	13.6%	40.9%	27.3%	13.6%	4.6%
86. Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunches.	4.6%	18.2%	31.8%	40.9%	4.6%
87. Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	0%	27.3%	50%	18.2%	4.6%

**K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
88. Students regularly use computers.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
89. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	31.8%	63.6%	0%	4.6%	0%
90. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	31.8%	63.6%	0%	4.6%	0%
91. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	22.7%	68.2%	4.6%	4.6%	0%
92. The division Web site is a useful tool.	36.4%	63.6%	0%	0%	0%
93. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	36.4%	54.6%	0%	9.1%	0%
94. The school division provides adequate instructional technology.	27.3%	63.6%	4.6%	4.6%	0%
95. The school division provides adequate administrative technology.	18.2%	63.6%	4.6%	13.6%	0%
96. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	27.3%	59.1%	0%	13.6%	0%
97. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	45.4%	50%	0%	0%	4.6%
98. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	27.3%	36.4%	31.8%	4.6%	0%



**L. OVERALL OPERATIONS**

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding	Don't Know
a. Strategic Planning	0%	27.3%	45.4%	9.1%	0%	18.2%
b. Curriculum Planning	0%	0%	22.7%	45.4%	13.6%	18.2%
c. Facilities Planning	0%	45.4%	36.4%	13.6%	0%	4.6%
d. Budgeting	0%	18.2%	36.4%	31.8%	0%	13.6%
e. Financial Management	0%	4.6%	27.3%	36.4%	9.1%	22.7%
f. Asset Management	0%	4.6%	27.3%	27.3%	9.1%	31.8%
g. Risk Management	0%	4.6%	31.8%	22.7%	9.1%	31.8%
h. Community Relations	0%	0%	22.7%	31.8%	27.3%	18.2%
i. Program Evaluation	0%	0%	22.7%	40.9%	4.6%	31.8%
j. Instructional Coordination	0%	0%	31.8%	18.2%	31.8%	18.2%
k. Student Support Services	0%	4.6%	22.7%	36.4%	13.6%	22.7%
l. Federal Programs (e.g., NCLB) Coordination	0%	9.1%	13.6%	31.8%	18.2%	27.3%
m. Instructional Technology	0%	0%	18.2%	36.4%	40.9%	4.6%
n. Administrative Technology	0%	4.6%	22.7%	40.9%	22.7%	9.1%
o. Grants Administration	0%	13.6%	4.6%	36.4%	4.6%	40.9%
p. Personnel Recruitment	0%	9.1%	31.8%	27.3%	4.6%	27.3%
q. Personnel Selection	0%	4.6%	27.3%	40.9%	4.6%	22.7%
r. Personnel Evaluation	0%	9.1%	40.9%	27.3%	4.6%	18.2%
s. Personnel Retention	0%	4.6%	50%	22.7%	0%	22.7%
t. Professional Development	0%	4.6%	31.8%	36.4%	9.1%	18.2%
u. Safety And Security	0%	4.6%	40.9%	31.8%	0%	22.7%
v. Facilities Maintenance	0%	18.2%	45.4%	22.7%	0%	13.6%
w. Custodial Services	0%	13.6%	36.4%	36.4%	4.6%	9.1%
x. Food Services	0%	4.6%	18.2%	50%	9.1%	18.2%
y. Transportation	0%	0%	18.2%	59.1%	4.6%	18.2%



# Mecklenburg County Public Schools Efficiency Review Survey School Administrators

## A. DEMOGRAPHICS

	Central Office Administrator	School Administrator	Teacher			
1. What is your current position category?	0%	100%	0%			
	<b>1-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 years</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16-20 years</b>	<b>20+ years</b>	
2. How long have you been in your current position in the school division?	77.8%	11.1%	5.6%	0%	5.6%	
3. How long have you worked in the school division?	27.8%	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	27.8%	

## B. DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. The division's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	22.2%	61.1%	5.6%	11.1%	0%
4. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the division's strategic plan.	22.2%	61.1%	16.7%	0%	0%
5. School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division.	0%	27.8%	11.1%	44.4%	16.7%
6. School board members know and understand the operations of the school division.	0%	38.9%	16.7%	27.8%	16.7%
7. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	33.3%	50%	5.6%	11.1%	0%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	33.3%	55.6%	5.6%	5.6%	0%
9. The division administration is efficient.	27.8%	55.6%	5.6%	11.1%	0%
10. The division administration supports the educational process.	27.8%	55.6%	11.1%	5.6%	0%
11. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the division.	16.7%	55.6%	11.1%	16.7%	0%
12. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
13. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. Most administrative practices in the school division are highly efficient and effective.	38.9%	50%	11.1%	0%	0%
15. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	16.7%	50%	16.7%	16.7%	0%
16. School division administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	38.9%	44.4%	11.1%	5.6%	0%
17. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	16.7%	44.4%	33.3%	5.6%	0%
18. Bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	0%	33.3%	38.9%	22.2%	5.6%
19. The school division has too many layers of administrators.	0%	0%	16.7%	44.4%	38.9%
20. Division administrators provide quality service to schools.	33.3%	44.4%	16.7%	5.6%	0%

**C. EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. The division uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	27.8%	55.6%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%
22. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	22.2%	66.7%	5.6%	5.6%	0%
23. The division has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	5.6%	50%	11.1%	27.8%	5.6%
b. Special Education	11.1%	61.1%	5.6%	22.2%	0%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	0%	22.2%	50%	27.8%	0%
d. Advanced Placement	27.8%	38.9%	22.2%	11.1%	0%
e. Alternative Education	0%	27.8%	22.2%	44.4%	5.6%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	0%	16.7%	33.3%	44.4%	5.6%
g. Career and Vocational	11.1%	61.1%	16.7%	11.1%	0%
h. Dropout Prevention	0%	11.1%	38.9%	44.4%	5.6%
24. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	50%	44.4%	5.6%	0%	0%
25. Teacher turnover is low.	11.1%	38.9%	16.7%	33.3%	0%
26. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	22.2%	50%	5.6%	22.2%	0%
27. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	11.1%	38.9%	11.1%	38.9%	0%
28. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	33.3%	66.7%	0%	0%	0%
29. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	44.4%	55.6%	0%	0%	0%
30. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	22.2%	55.6%	0%	16.7%	5.6%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	27.8%	66.7%	0%	5.6%	0%
32. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	22.2%	27.8%	11.1%	27.8%	11.1%
33. Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	50%	44.4%	5.6%	0%	0%
34. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school division.	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%	0%	0%

**D. HUMAN RESOURCES**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35. Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	5.6%	11.1%	11.1%	61.1%	11.1%
36. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	5.6%	5.6%	0%	66.7%	22.2%
37. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	61.1%	27.8%	11.1%	0%
38. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	61.1%	38.9%	0%	0%
39. The division has a good orientation program for new employees.	16.7%	55.6%	11.1%	16.7%	0%
40. The division accurately projects future staffing needs.	11.1%	44.4%	27.8%	16.7%	0%
41. The division has an effective employee recruitment program.	5.6%	16.7%	50%	22.2%	5.6%
42. Division employees receive annual performance evaluations.	11.1%	66.7%	0%	22.2%	0%
43. The division rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	16.7%	27.8%	27.8%	16.7%	11.1%
44. I am satisfied with my job in the school division.	27.8%	66.7%	5.6%	0%	0%
45. I am actively looking for a job outside the school division.	0%	0%	16.7%	38.9%	44.4%
46. The division has a fair and timely grievance process.	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%	0%	0%
47. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	0%	33.3%	11.1%	38.9%	16.7%
48. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	5.6%	27.8%	11.1%	44.4%	11.1%



**E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49. The division regularly communicates with parents.	22.2%	55.6%	16.7%	5.6%	0%
50. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	0%	55.6%	11.1%	33.3%	0%
51. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	16.7%	66.7%	5.6%	11.1%	0%
52. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	5.6%	61.1%	5.6%	27.8%	0%
53. The school division explains test results to parents.	5.6%	50%	22.2%	22.2%	0%
54. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	5.6%	27.8%	16.7%	50%	0%
55. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

**F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	11.1%	72.2%	0%	16.7%	0%
57. Schools are clean.	33.3%	50%	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%
58. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	5.6%	5.6%	5.6%	44.4%	38.9%
59. Schools are well-maintained.	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%
60. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0%	38.9%	0%	55.6%	5.6%
61. Division facilities are open for community use.	16.7%	61.1%	16.7%	5.6%	0%
62. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	11.1%	55.6%	11.1%	16.7%	5.6%
63. The division has an effective energy management program.	5.6%	27.8%	55.6%	11.1%	0%

**G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
64. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	16.7%	61.1%	16.7%	5.6%	0%
65. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	11.1%	50%	16.7%	22.2%	0%
66. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division.	16.7%	61.1%	22.2%	0%	0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67. The division's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	11.1%	27.8%	38.9%	16.7%	5.6%
68. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	0%	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%	0%
69. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	5.6%	27.8%	66.7%	0%	0%

## H. PURCHASING

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	11.1%	55.6%	11.1%	22.2%	0%
71. The school division purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest possible cost.	5.6%	50%	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%
72. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	5.6%	61.1%	16.7%	16.7%	0%
73. The division provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	5.6%	27.8%	11.1%	50%	5.6%

## I. TRANSPORTATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
74. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	5.6%	0%	0%	50%	44.4%
75. There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	5.6%	38.9%	16.7%	22.2%	16.7%
76. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	5.6%	55.6%	38.9%
77. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	27.8%	66.7%	0%	5.6%	0%
78. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	5.6%	55.6%	16.7%	22.2%	0%
79. Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	0%	5.6%	44.4%	50%
80. Bus ride times are too long.	0%	16.7%	22.2%	50%	11.1%



**J. FOOD SERVICES**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
81. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	5.6%	50%	11.1%	22.2%	11.1%
82. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	50%	44.4%	0%	5.6%	0%
83. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	11.1%	27.8%	33.3%	16.7%	11.1%
84. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	33.3%	55.6%	0%	11.1%	0%
85. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	27.8%	61.1%	5.6%	5.6%	0%
86. Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunches.	5.6%	16.7%	5.6%	55.6%	16.7%
87. Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	0%	33.3%	5.6%	55.6%	5.6%

**K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
88. Students regularly use computers.	61.1%	27.8%	0%	11.1%	0%
89. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
90. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	55.6%	44.4%	0%	0%	0%
91. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	50%	44.4%	0%	5.6%	0%
92. The division Web site is a useful tool.	44.4%	55.6%	0%	0%	0%
93. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	44.4%	44.4%	5.6%	5.6%	0%
94. The school division provides adequate instructional technology.	27.8%	55.6%	5.6%	11.1%	0%
95. The school division provides adequate administrative technology.	33.3%	44.4%	5.6%	16.7%	0%
96. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	33.3%	55.6%	0%	11.1%	0%
97. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	44.4%	50%	0%	5.6%	0%
98. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	5.6%	33.3%	27.8%	27.8%	5.6%



**L. OVERALL OPERATIONS**

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding	Don't Know
a. Strategic Planning	0%	22.2%	38.9%	27.8%	5.6%	5.6%
b. Curriculum Planning	0%	5.6%	11.1%	33.3%	50%	0%
c. Facilities Planning	0%	50%	33.3%	11.1%	5.6%	0%
d. Budgeting	0%	16.7%	55.6%	22.2%	0%	5.6%
e. Financial Management	0%	11.1%	38.9%	38.9%	0%	11.1%
f. Asset Management	0%	0%	11.1%	61.1%	0%	27.8%
g. Community Relations	0%	16.7%	22.2%	33.3%	27.8%	0%
h. Program Evaluation	0%	5.6%	38.9%	50%	5.6%	0%
i. Instructional Coordination	0%	5.6%	33.3%	38.9%	22.2%	0%
j. Student Support Services	0%	11.1%	33.3%	44.4%	11.1%	0%
k. Federal Programs (e.g., NCLB) Coordination	5.6%	0%	16.7%	55.6%	22.2%	0%
l. Instructional Technology	0%	5.6%	16.7%	44.4%	33.3%	0%
m. Administrative Technology	0%	5.6%	16.7%	50%	27.8%	0%
n. Grants Administration	5.6%	16.7%	22.2%	44.4%	0%	11.1%
o. Personnel Recruitment	0%	33.3%	22.2%	33.3%	5.6%	5.6%
p. Personnel Selection	0%	11.1%	33.3%	44.4%	5.6%	5.6%
q. Personnel Evaluation	0%	5.6%	44.4%	44.4%	5.6%	0%
r. Personnel Retention	0%	11.1%	33.3%	50%	0%	5.6%
s. Professional Development	0%	11.1%	16.7%	55.6%	16.7%	0%
t. Safety And Security	5.6%	22.2%	27.8%	33.3%	11.1%	0%
u. Facilities Maintenance	5.6%	33.3%	27.8%	27.8%	5.6%	0%
v. Custodial Services	5.6%	16.7%	22.2%	44.4%	11.1%	0%
w. Food Services	0%	16.7%	22.2%	55.6%	5.6%	0%
x. Transportation	0%	0%	22.2%	66.7%	11.1%	0%



# Mecklenburg County Public Schools Efficiency Review Survey Teachers/Guidance Counselors

## A. DEMOGRAPHICS

	Central Office Administrator	School Administrator	Teacher		
1. What is your current position category?	0%	0%	100%		
	<b>1-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 years</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16-20 years</b>	<b>20+ years</b>
2. How long have you been in your current position in the school division?	53.0%	13.6%	7.6%	6.0%	19.9%
3. How long have you worked in the school division?	45.4%	16.3%	8.8%	6.4%	23.1%

## B. DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. The division's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	9.2%	54.6%	27.9%	6.8%	1.6%
4. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the division's strategic plan.	14.7%	59.8%	14.7%	9.2%	1.6%
5. School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division.	3.2%	31.5%	16.7%	37.4%	11.2%
6. School board members know and understand the operations of the school division.	4%	41%	18.7%	27.9%	8.4%
7. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	19.1%	53.8%	15.5%	9.6%	2%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	17.9%	54.2%	17.1%	8.8%	2%
9. The division administration is efficient.	10%	54.2%	15.9%	16.3%	3.6%
10. The division administration supports the educational process.	15.5%	63%	11.6%	7.2%	2.8%
11. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the division.	10%	45%	15.5%	25.5%	4%
12. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	38.6%	51.8%	3.6%	4.4%	1.6%
13. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	41.4%	47.4%	3.2%	7.2%	0.8%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. Most administrative practices in the school division are highly efficient and effective.	13.9%	53.8%	12%	17.9%	2.4%
15. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	10%	44.2%	17.5%	24.7%	3.6%
16. School division administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	10.4%	46.2%	19.5%	20.3%	3.6%
17. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	2.4%	23.5%	43.8%	26.7%	3.6%
18. Bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	6.4%	34.3%	39.4%	17.9%	2%
19. The school division has too many layers of administrators.	7.6%	20.7%	35.5%	35.1%	1.2%
20. Division administrators provide quality service to schools.	7.2%	58.2%	20.7%	12%	1.6%

**C. EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. The division uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	11.6%	47.8%	21.1%	17.5%	1.6%
22. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	10.4%	57%	16.7%	13.9%	1.6%
23. The division has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	7.2%	42.2%	18.3%	23.1%	8.8%
b. Special Education	9.6%	57.8%	9.6%	17.9%	4.8%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	8%	38.2%	41.8%	10%	1.6%
d. Advanced Placement	6.4%	37.8%	37%	14.3%	4%
e. Alternative Education	4.8%	35.5%	30.3%	21.1%	8%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	2.4%	25.9%	39.8%	24.3%	7.2%
g. Career and Vocational	7.6%	37%	31.1%	18.7%	5.2%
h. Dropout Prevention	2.4%	17.1%	52.6%	22.3%	5.2%
24. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	26.7%	51%	13.9%	6.4%	1.6%
25. Teacher turnover is low.	3.2%	27.5%	29.1%	29.9%	10%
26. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	9.2%	55%	19.5%	14.3%	1.6%
27. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	2.8%	36.6%	28.3%	23.1%	8.8%
28. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	26.7%	64.1%	6.8%	1.6%	0.4%
29. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	21.9%	58.2%	10.8%	7.2%	1.6%
30. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	13.2%	61%	7.2%	15.5%	2.8%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	15.9%	62.2%	10.8%	8%	2.8%
32. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	6.4%	35.1%	12%	33.9%	12.4%
33. Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	21.1%	64.1%	9.2%	4%	1.2%
34. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school division.	17.1%	45.4%	28.7%	5.6%	2.8%

**D. HUMAN RESOURCES**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35. Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	1.2%	10.8%	9.6%	44.6%	33.5%
36. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	2%	15.1%	5.2%	48.6%	28.7%
37. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	3.2%	35.1%	31.9%	24.3%	5.2%
38. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	2.4%	32.3%	35.1%	23.5%	6.4%
39. The division has a good orientation program for new employees.	12.4%	49.8%	20.3%	13.6%	3.6%
40. The division accurately projects future staffing needs.	3.6%	32.7%	45%	15.9%	2.4%
41. The division has an effective employee recruitment program.	1.6%	18.7%	48.6%	23.5%	7.2%
42. Division employees receive annual performance evaluations.	10.4%	62.2%	19.9%	5.2%	2%
43. The division rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	4%	23.1%	26.3%	31.5%	14.7%
44. I am satisfied with my job in the school division.	20.7%	57%	12.4%	8%	1.6%
45. I am actively looking for a job outside the school division.	0.8%	7.2%	27.5%	34.3%	29.9%
46. The division has a fair and timely grievance process.	1.6%	25.5%	61%	9.6%	2%
47. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	6.4%	33.1%	23.9%	32.7%	3.6%
48. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	1.2%	12.4%	64.1%	18.7%	3.2%



**E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49. The division regularly communicates with parents.	10%	60.6%	13.6%	13.9%	1.6%
50. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	5.6%	39.8%	16.7%	33.9%	3.6%
51. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	20.7%	66.1%	5.2%	6.8%	0.8%
52. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	8%	45.8%	10.8%	29.5%	5.6%
53. The school division explains test results to parents.	8%	50.2%	19.9%	19.5%	2%
54. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	3.2%	25.5%	14.3%	42.6%	13.9%
55. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	26.3%	67.3%	4.8%	0.8%	0.4%

**F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	2.8%	45%	16.7%	29.1%	6%
57. Schools are clean.	17.5%	54.2%	5.6%	16.7%	5.6%
58. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	4%	15.5%	6.4%	43.4%	30.3%
59. Schools are well-maintained.	8.4%	49%	9.2%	26.3%	6.8%
60. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	4.8%	35.5%	12.4%	36.2%	10.8%
61. Division facilities are open for community use.	4.8%	55.8%	33.9%	3.2%	2%
62. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	6.8%	58.2%	21.9%	10.8%	2%
63. The division has an effective energy management program.	3.6%	26.3%	53.4%	12.4%	4%

**G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
64. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	4.8%	37.8%	40.6%	13.9%	2.8%
65. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	6.4%	37.4%	46.6%	8.4%	1.2%
66. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division.	4.4%	39%	34.7%	17.5%	4.4%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67. The division's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	1.6%	19.9%	62.2%	12.8%	3.6%
68. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	2.4%	26.3%	64.1%	6.4%	0.8%
69. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	2%	22.7%	71.3%	2.8%	1.2%

## H. PURCHASING

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
70. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	2.4%	56.6%	21.5%	17.1%	2.4%
71. The school division purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest possible cost.	2%	37.8%	36.2%	19.5%	4.4%
72. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	4%	52.2%	23.1%	15.9%	4.8%
73. The division provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	3.2%	34.7%	29.1%	25.9%	7.2%

## I. TRANSPORTATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
74. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	1.2%	6.8%	4.4%	64.1%	23.5%
75. There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	4.4%	49.8%	23.5%	18.3%	4%
76. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.8%	4.4%	25.1%	56.6%	13.2%
77. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	5.6%	55.8%	28.7%	8.8%	1.2%
78. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	5.2%	52.6%	30.7%	8.4%	3.2%
79. Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0.8%	8.8%	27.9%	48.6%	13.9%
80. Bus ride times are too long.	2%	17.9%	46.6%	29.1%	4.4%



**J. FOOD SERVICES**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
81. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	4.4%	38.6%	9.2%	33.5%	14.3%
82. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	27.1%	54.6%	10.4%	6.4%	1.6%
83. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	4.4%	21.1%	30.3%	32.7%	11.6%
84. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	11.2%	66.5%	10.8%	9.2%	2.4%
85. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	4%	51%	11.6%	24.7%	8.8%
86. Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunches.	9.6%	28.7%	12%	45%	4.8%
87. Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	4.4%	30.3%	26.7%	34.3%	4.4%

**K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT**

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
88. Students regularly use computers.	27.9%	59.4%	2.8%	7.6%	2.4%
89. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	24.3%	65.7%	4%	4.8%	1.2%
90. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	25.1%	69.7%	3.2%	1.6%	0.4%
91. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	21.5%	68.5%	4.4%	4.8%	0.8%
92. The division Web site is a useful tool.	22.7%	67.3%	6.8%	2.8%	0.4%
93. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	22.7%	59%	10.8%	6.4%	1.2%
94. The school division provides adequate instructional technology.	17.5%	62.2%	10.4%	8.8%	1.2%
95. The school division provides adequate administrative technology.	13.2%	47.4%	35.5%	2.8%	1.2%
96. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	15.5%	53%	7.6%	19.1%	4.8%
97. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	22.3%	64.1%	4%	6.4%	3.2%
98. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	5.6%	17.1%	66.5%	8%	2.8%



**L. OVERALL OPERATIONS**

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding	Don't Know
a. Strategic Planning	0%	5.2%	23.1%	29.1%	4.8%	37.8%
b. Curriculum Planning	0.4%	5.6%	25.1%	44.2%	13.9%	10.8%
c. Facilities Planning	0%	21.9%	27.1%	28.3%	3.6%	19.1%
d. Budgeting	0%	15.5%	28.3%	22.3%	2.4%	31.5%
e. Financial Management	0%	10%	22.7%	23.1%	2.4%	41.8%
f. Asset Management	0%	6.8%	12.8%	21.5%	2.8%	56.2%
g. Risk Management	0%	6.4%	13.9%	27.1%	4%	48.6%
h. Community Relations	0%	8%	27.9%	36.6%	13.9%	13.6%
i. Program Evaluation	0%	4.4%	21.9%	37.8%	8.4%	27.5%
j. Instructional Coordination	0.4%	4%	22.3%	45%	12.8%	15.5%
k. Student Support Services	0%	5.2%	26.3%	42.2%	10.4%	15.9%
l. Federal Programs (e.g., NCLB) Coordination	2%	4.8%	15.5%	37.4%	10%	30.3%
m. Instructional Technology	0%	2.8%	17.5%	48.2%	17.9%	13.6%
n. Administrative Technology	0%	2%	12.4%	39.4%	12.4%	33.9%
o. Grants Administration	0%	6%	12.4%	32.3%	8.4%	41%
p. Personnel Recruitment	0.4%	17.1%	22.7%	23.9%	4%	31.9%
q. Personnel Selection	0%	13.6%	21.1%	30.3%	6%	29.1%
r. Personnel Evaluation	0%	4.8%	15.5%	51%	8.4%	20.3%
s. Personnel Retention	0.4%	14.3%	23.5%	32.3%	5.6%	23.9%
t. Professional Development	0%	8.4%	28.3%	46.2%	9.6%	7.6%
u. Safety And Security	0.4%	12%	26.7%	45.4%	8%	7.6%
v. Facilities Maintenance	0.4%	19.1%	25.9%	37.8%	9.6%	7.2%
w. Custodial Services	0%	11.6%	20.7%	45%	17.1%	5.6%
x. Food Services	0.4%	17.9%	23.1%	44.2%	8.4%	6%
y. Transportation	0%	2.4%	13.9%	58.6%	13.9%	11.2%

