

*School Efficiency Review in
Covington City Public Schools, Virginia*

FINAL REPORT



Evergreen Solutions, LLC

February 28, 2007

*School Efficiency Review in
Covington City Public Schools, Virginia*

FINAL REPORT

Submitted by:



Evergreen Solutions, LLC
2852 Remington Green Circle, Suite 101
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

February 28, 2007

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
1.1 Methodology	1-1
1.2 Comparison School Divisions.....	1-5
1.3 Overview of the Report	1-5
CHAPTER 2: DIVISION ADMINISTRATION	2-1
2.1 Governance and Board Issues	2-2
2.2 Policies and Procedures	2-7
2.3 Division Organization and Management	2-10
2.4 School Management.....	2-19
2.5 Planning and Accountability	2-22
2.6 Legal Services	2-26
CHAPTER 3: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	3-1
3.1 Organization and Management	3-2
3.2 Personnel Policies and Procedures.....	3-4
3.3 Job Descriptions and Personnel Records	3-6
3.4 Employment of Staff.....	3-11
3.5 Employee Compensation	3-24
3.6 Evaluation and Professional Development	3-26
CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.....	4-1
4.1 Planning and Budgeting.....	4-4
4.2 Financial Management.....	4-11
4.3 Activity Funds.....	4-18
4.4 Asset Management	4-20
4.5 Risk Management	4-23
CHAPTER 5: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT.....	5-1
5.1 Instructional Delivery and Student Performance.....	5-2
5.2 Special Education.....	5-11
5.3 Preschool Programs	5-20
5.4 Gifted and Talented Education	5-22
5.5 Programs for-At Risk Students	5-26
5.6 Career and Technical Education	5-31
5.7 Parent Involvement	5-32



	Page
CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT.....	6-1
6.1 Organizational Structure	6-2
6.2 Capital Planning and Facilities Use	6-5
6.3 Facilities Maintenance	6-20
6.4 Custodial Services.....	6-22
6.5 Energy Management	6-24
6.6 Community Use of Facilities	6-30
CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION.....	7-1
7.1 Organization, Planning, Policies, and Procedures	7-8
7.2 Training and Safety.....	7-13
7.3 Routing and Scheduling.....	7-15
7.4 Vehicle Maintenance and Bus Replacement Schedule.....	7-18
7.5 State Reporting.....	7-20
CHAPTER 8: TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT	8-1
8.1 Technology Planning and Management.....	8-3
8.2 Organization and Staffing.....	8-6
8.3 Infrastructure and Web Development.....	8-9
8.4 Software and Hardware.....	8-14
8.5 Staff Development	8-18
CHAPTER 9: FOOD SERVICE	9-1
9.1 Policies and Procedures	9-3
9.2 Organization and Management	9-6
9.3 Student Meal Participation.....	9-10
9.4 Financial Performance	9-19
CHAPTER 10: SHARED SERVICES.....	10-1
10.1 Shared Services with the City of Covington.....	10-4
10.2 Shared Services with Alleghany County Public Schools	10-12
CHAPTER 11: COSTS AND SAVINGS SUMMARY.....	11-1
APPENDIX: SURVEY RESULTS	



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 30, 2006, the Department of Planning and Budget of the Commonwealth of Virginia contracted with Evergreen Solutions, LLC to conduct school efficiency reviews of Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools. These reviews focused on the financial, organizational, and operational effectiveness of each division, as well as shared services between the two divisions and between each division and its respective local government.

Covington City Public Schools consists of approximately 850 students and Alleghany County Public Schools consists of approximately 3,000 students. Like many Virginia cities, the City of Covington is politically independent from the surrounding county and has its own services, schools, and elected officials. Interstate 64 passes through the central portion of Alleghany County, which shares a border with West Virginia.

This Executive Summary is for the efficiency review of Covington City Public Schools.

METHODOLOGY

Evergreen's methodology for conducting these two reviews 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 each 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 each school division.

More than 100 documents were requested from each division. 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 Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools was conducted during the week of October 3, 2006. Two Evergreen consultants interviewed central office administrators, Board members, County Commissioners, City Council members, and community leaders, concerning the management and operations of Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools.

Employee Surveys

To secure the involvement of administrators and teachers in the school efficiency reviews, two online surveys were prepared and disseminated in September 2006—one for administrators 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 each 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 CCPS and ACPS survey results were compared to administrators and teachers in Evergreen’s survey database.

Public Input

A Web site was established for public input. Over 50 respondents provided comments on the Web site. In addition, a public forum was held on November 8, 2006 at the Jackson River Technical Center (JRTC). Thirty-five (35) individuals participated in the forum.

On-Site Efficiency Review

A team of nine consultants conducted the formal on-site reviews of both divisions during the week of November 5, 2006. As part of our on-site review, we examined the following systems and operations in each division:

- Division Administration
- Human Resource Management
- Financial Management
- Educational Service Delivery and Management



- Facilities Use and Management
- Transportation
- Technology
- Food Services
- Shared Services

Prior to conducting the on-site reviews, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about ACPS and CCPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted detailed reviews of the structure and operations of each division in their assigned functional areas. All public schools in ACPS and CCPS 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. Covington City Public Schools is identified in Cluster 7 and the Virginia public school divisions chosen as part of this review for comparison to Covington City Public Schools are:

- Buena Vista City Public Schools
- Franklin City Public Schools
- Galax City Public Schools
- Norton City Public Schools
- West Point Public Schools

MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Division Administration

Overall, Covington City Public Schools is well managed. The Superintendent and his Leadership Team have focused the division on student achievement and have led staff in substantial improvements to student achievement within the past few years. The establishment of an Office of Instruction has been significant in the improvement within the school division.

CCPS is commended for several operations. There is a consistent and predictable process for developing and disseminating materials to the School Board. A new leadership position in instruction has led to increased time and resources for staff development. The teacher evaluation system is up-to-date and implemented.

Effective organizations are continuously finding ways to improve, recognizing that an organization that remains static eventually begins to decline. Primary recommendations include the following:



- revise the Board agenda so that it includes a consent agenda, Information Items, and Action Items;
- post the Board agendas and minutes on the division's Web site;
- reassign job functions within the current organizational plan;
- hire a part-time testing coordinator at the central office reporting to the Director of Instruction;
- adopt a strategic planning process and ensure that the School Board adopts the plan;
- establish more site-based management for decision making;
- institute a culture of accountability throughout the school division by ensuring that administrators and the Superintendent receive written evaluations on a yearly basis;
- administer an organizational climate surveys to all CCPS employees on a regular basis;
- develop a leadership academy for administrators and aspiring administrators;
- review and revise the format of the bi-monthly meetings with administrators to ensure there is adequate time for collegial discussion and decision making;
- develop a comprehensive administrative manual that can be used by building administrators to ensure consistency among staff; and
- examine ways to contain legal expenses, including the possibility of combining services with the City of Covington or a neighboring school division.

Human Resources Management

Several staff members perform personnel and human resources duties.

The division is commended for encouraging students to become teachers through the Shadowing Career Opportunities for Prospective Educators (SCOPE) Program, and for providing teachers salaries that exceed peer division teacher salaries.

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:

- collect personnel data in an electronic format and update regularly;
- review FLSA status of each position in the division and maintain the updated status of each position in an electronic file for easy reference;



- abolish annual contracts for classified employees;
- develop a comprehensive Employee Handbook, give the Handbook to all new employees, and provide the Handbook electronically for all employees;
- provide application forms on the CCPS Employment Opportunities Web page, more detailed descriptions of vacant positions, and salary or hiring ranges for vacant positions;
- develop a plan to coordinate professional development with Allegheny County Public Schools and the Jackson River Technical Center; and
- collect and track data related to recruiting and advertising.

Financial Management

The Financial Management functions for Covington City Public Schools are performed primarily by the Finance Director. The Superintendent, with Finance Director support, has primary responsibility for preparation of the division budget. The Director of Administrative Services and the Secretary for the Administrative Services Department perform functions relative to fixed asset and risk management. The City of Covington finance staff perform the functions necessary to process disbursements for payroll and accounts payable. The Treasurer for the City of Covington collects revenues for the division and has signatory authority for all disbursements. The Covington City Council approves the school division budget and the allotments for school division operations. The City and the school division have established a solid working relationship and speak well of each other. Our 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 so support education. Recommendations in this chapter are intended to refine certain existing division processes and practices and to provide guidance for the establishment of others. Primary recommendations included in this chapter include:

- establish a budgetary process that creates a budget correlated to the adopted goals and objectives of Covington City Public Schools (Providing a resource allocation system that budgets for the goals of the division helps to ensure that the priorities outlined in a division's plan are appropriately funded.);
- establish a budget preparation calendar, including administrative and legislative dates presented on a timeline coordinated with City and Commonwealth required dates for action;
- develop and implement a comprehensive fixed assets management system;
- develop and implement a coordinated School Board/City procedure for cash flow and the allocation of interest earnings;



- develop and implement a comprehensive school activity funds manual and monitor audit findings;
- strengthen certain internal controls, and develop and implement a comprehensive business and finance operating procedures manual; and
- explore cooperative bidding for health benefits.

Educational Service Delivery and Management

Covington City Public Schools have made tremendous strides in recent years in addressing curriculum, providing staff development on research-based instructional strategies, and providing support systems for realization of instructional goals such as well-funded media centers in all schools. These actions serve as a strong foundation for continued efforts to improve teaching and learning. Surveys conducted reflect that teachers and administrators overwhelmingly recognize that the emphasis on learning has increased in recent years. A Reading First Grant provides a firm foundation for division students in their reading abilities with percentages of students scoring at the proficient and advanced levels increasing markedly in all grades tested. An exemplary after-school program provides enrichment and remediation and strengthens daytime instruction. CCPS staff also regularly visit homes to better understand factors impeding student learning.

A concerted focus on bringing the achievement of special education students up accordingly will ensure that all of its students meet the 2013-14 national goal of having all students proficient, as the achievement of those students in CCPS lags behind peers and students with disabilities state-wide. Inclusionary practices at the high school appear to contribute to higher achievement among its special needs and, when expanded division-wide, should similarly raise achievement in other schools. Higher than average special education student enrollments indicate a need for practices to be adopted that will enable teachers to serve those students in regular classes before identification for special education.

Recommendations in this report are intended to build on existing strong practices and processes in the division and provide guidance for improvements for the benefit of students, staff and the community. Some key recommendations include:

- continue the division's focus on reading, especially the elements that specifically address reading at the elementary and early intermediate levels;
- continue to create systems at the division and school levels in Covington City Public Schools that ensure that the educational requirements of special needs students are considered in every decision;
- adapt strategies proven effective in other Virginia divisions to address student needs in regular classes before referral to special education;



- make a concerted effort to identify special and regular education teachers who are willing to co-teach to model its benefits for students to other teachers;
- combine advanced courses with similar courses in the same class period to expand enrichment opportunities for more advanced students and ensure that advanced placement teachers are trained before teaching courses;
- create a communication structure that will ensure input from daytime instructional personnel to the after-school instructors; and
- use activities in the after-school program as models for curriculum integration.

Facilities Use and Management

Facilities use and management in Covington City Public Schools is the primary responsibility of the Director of Administrative Services and the Supervisor of Maintenance. The Director reports to the Superintendent, and the Maintenance Supervisor reports to the Director. This is a best practice organization because it focuses on a life-cycle cost approach to facilities design, construction, and management. Custodians report to their respective school principals – also a best practice. The high school facility is well-maintained and clean. The elementary and middle school facilities have been found to be in need of replacement, and are maintained and cleaned as well as can be expected. A potential joint ACPS/CCPS decision must be made concerning the future of Alleghany High School. One option currently under study is the possible addition of space to the existing Covington High School in order to create a cooperatively run joint Alleghany and Covington high school facility.

In addition to the aforementioned best practices, other commendable practices have been found, including the following:

- an orderly, rational and well-documented effort to determine the best options for facility planning and development;
- a best practice ratio of 45,000 square feet per maintenance mechanic;
- a ratio of 16,316 square feet per custodian, slightly below the 18,000 - 20,000 square feet range considered a best practice;
- a positive and constructive working relationship in facilities planning with the Covington City Council; and
- a comprehensive policy on the community use of facilities.



Major recommendations include:

- Re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee and charge it with generating a definitive and firm resolution of CCPS facilities needs, including a possible combined Covington and Alleghany High School, on or before October 1, 2007.
- Seek historic preservation funding for some of the renovation and restoration of Covington High School.
- Employ life-cycle cost analysis as official procedure in the selection of equipment and materials for new schools, additions, and renovations.
- Develop and implement a systematic energy management and conservation program.

Transportation

Covington City Public Schools can be found within the City of Covington located in the western most portion of the Commonwealth of Virginia within Alleghany County. The division encompasses approximately 5.7 square miles. Population for the City is estimated at 6,303 (2000 census) and Covington is the County seat. The unemployment figures fluctuate in the five percent range making driver acquisition easier. Roads utilized by the system consist of hard surface streets and some asphalt/oil-based County road configurations.

The CCPS Transportation System provides all of the various types of transportation services needed within the division (i.e. regular education, special education, vocational, athletics/field trips, etc.). This is a relatively small operation (5.5 home-to-school bus routes—five in the morning and six in the afternoon which does not require a great deal of advanced technology to manage.

Bus routes serve from all points within the division boundary and are routed to accommodate one high and intermediate school, one elementary school as well as a vocational school located within central Alleghany County. Maintenance is achieved by utilizing the Covington City Municipal Shop facility.

The fleet is in good operating condition. The division enjoys a good safety record which can be somewhat attributed to a low driver turnover rate.

Recommendations within this chapter are meant to offer alternative methods of performance, as well as methods to measure performance. Some will lend themselves to cost efficiencies while others are targeted towards service improvements. Pupil transportation is a service and should always consider this service element in all of its planning and operational endeavors.

A summary of the transportation recommendations is provided below:

- compile an educational Drivers Handbook for all rules and procedures;
- convert from an eight-hour driver guarantee to a six-hour guarantee;



- implement a improved system for accurately tracking driver work hours;
- conduct and maintain an accurate parts and supply inventory;
- actively review current bell schedules at all schools adjusting times to create increased operating efficiencies;
- make an effort to ensure all route sheets contain a listing of the students assigned to the bus;
- implement a system for measuring overall performance within the department; and
- establish routine driver safety meetings.

Technology Management

CCPS is operating technology at a commendable level in a number of areas. It has developed a highly detailed Instructional Technology Plan that, despite its name, provides strategic direction for both instructional and administrative technology in the division from 2005 through 2009. Through the shared Educational Technology Center, the division is supporting a best practices organizational structure to obtain high-quality technical support. CCPS uses an effective process to select software titles and provides teachers with a wealth of software tools. The division also offers teachers and staff a myriad of technology training opportunities.

Evergreen's eight recommendations for improvement are:

- review and update the Instructional Technology Plan on at least an annual basis;
- increase technical staffing levels;
- improve the Web site;
- expand advanced placement offerings for students;
- adopt a paperless work order system for reporting technical problems;
- adopt a computer replacement policy;
- develop procedures to assess technology usage and satisfactions; and
- develop rigorous technology expectations for teachers and staff.

Food Service

CCPS is taking commendable steps to improve student wellness and is providing cafeteria managers and staff with important current training in food service safety topics. It is also serving reimbursable lunch meals to a higher percentage of its elementary and middle school students than the standard industry minimum.

The CCPS Food Services Program had had to rely on its fund balance to meet operating expenses for the past three years. This method of operating is ultimately not sustainable and the division should take steps to both increase food program revenues and reduce expenses.



The recommendations for improvement are:

- adopt shared purchasing with Alleghany County School Division in order to reduce overall food costs;
- charge the CCPS Food Service Fund for applicable utilities expenses;
- evaluate Food Services Program performance relative to selected indicators each year;
- verify portion control on a regular basis;
- establish goals and programs to improve student breakfast participation, particularly among free and reduced-price student populations;
- establish goals and programs to improve student lunch participation at the high school;
- invest in software to assist with nutrient analysis and menu planning that will increase variety in student meals;
- establish goals for CCPS Food Services Program financial performance;
- establish and implement a meal staffing formula for the CCPS cafeterias; and
- seek an agreement with ACPS to share a portion of the existing POS system.

Shared Services

Covington City Public Schools shares a number of services with Alleghany County Public Schools and the City of Covington. Consolidating divisions would result in combining almost all services being performed by the divisions. Short of a consolidation, sharing services are limited to those where a sharing arrangement is approved by both CCPS and ACPS. Likewise sharing services between CCPS and the City of Covington must have each entity's approval. Covington taxpayers have benefited from CCPS's cooperative relationship with ACPS and the City of Covington that has resulted in cost saving sharing of services.

CCPS is commended for sharing services with the City of Covington for vehicle maintenance, fuel distribution, secured bus parking, accounting services and the services of city police officers, and with Alleghany County Public Schools for a technology center, a school nurse program, substitute teachers and an attendance officer. Recommendations in this chapter are intended to focus attention on areas where services that are currently being shared can be improved and on other services that should be considered for sharing. Primary recommendations in this chapter include:

- develop a shared purchasing agreement for commonly acquired office, custodial and building supplies, as well as fuel and vehicle maintenance supplies;
- pursue a sharing services arrangement for health insurance for both City and CCPS employees;



- establish a joint education foundation for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools that is operated as a shared services arrangement;
- review the class times for Covington High School and Alleghany High School, and better align the bell times to reduce the impact on Covington High School students, and enable the Jackson River Technical Center to offer a fourth period;
- develop an arrangement to share the services of the ACPS Energy Manager with Covington City Public Schools;
- align the calendars for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools to improve current shared services and to enhance future shared services possibilities;
- develop a formal shared services agreement with Alleghany County Public Schools to encourage and manage additional shared service arrangements; and
- establish indirect cost rates for shared service arrangements for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools that are calculated using the same methodology.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the analyses of data obtained from interviews, surveys, community input, state and division documents, and firsthand observations in Covington City Public Schools, the Evergreen team developed about 120 recommendations in this report.

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, full implementation of the recommendations in this report would generate a net savings of about \$1.3 million over five years for improvements in CCPS operations. Costs and savings presented in this report are in 2006-07 dollars and do not reflect increases due to salary or inflation adjustments.



Exhibit 1
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings
(Without Shared Services)
Chapters 2-9

Costs/Savings	Years					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
Total Costs	(\$74,880)	(\$103,080)	(\$88,880)	(\$75,080)	(\$74,480)	(\$416,400)	
Total Savings	\$159,542	\$317,269	\$413,196	\$413,196	\$426,196	\$1,715,399	
Total Net Savings	\$84,662	\$214,189	\$324,316	\$338,116	\$351,716	\$1,298,999	
Total Five-Year Net Savings Minus One-Time (Costs)						\$1,298,999	

Exhibit 2 shows the summary of costs and savings for shared services recommendations in Chapter 10. As can be seen, a total net savings of over \$800,000 can be generated if the shared services recommendations are implemented.

Exhibit 2
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings
for Shared Services Recommendations (Chapter 10)

Costs/Savings	Years					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
Total Costs	(\$26,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$75,100)	
Total Savings	\$154,670	\$174,602	\$184,602	\$194,602	\$194,602	\$903,078	(\$14,868)
Total Net Savings	\$128,450	\$162,382	\$172,382	\$182,382	\$182,382	\$827,978	
Total Five-Year Net Savings Minus One-Time (Costs)						\$813,110*	

*Approximately \$260,000 are for shared service savings with Covington City Government; the remainder use for shared services with Alleghany County Public Schools.

Exhibits 11-3 and 11-4 in Chapter 11 show the total costs and savings for individual recommendations.



***CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION***



INTRODUCTION

On August 30, 2006, the Department of Planning and Budget of the Commonwealth of Virginia contracted with Evergreen Solutions, LLC to conduct school efficiency reviews of Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools. These reviews focused on the financial, organizational, and operational effectiveness of each division, as well as shared services between the two divisions and between each division and its respective local government.

Alleghany County Public Schools consists of approximately 3,000 students and Covington City Public Schools consists of approximately 850 students. Like many Virginia cities, the City of Covington is politically independent from the surrounding county and has its own services, schools, and elected officials. Interstate 64 passes through the central portion of Alleghany County, which shares a border with West Virginia.

Exhibit 1-1 shows an overview of Evergreen’s work plan for the two efficiency reviews.

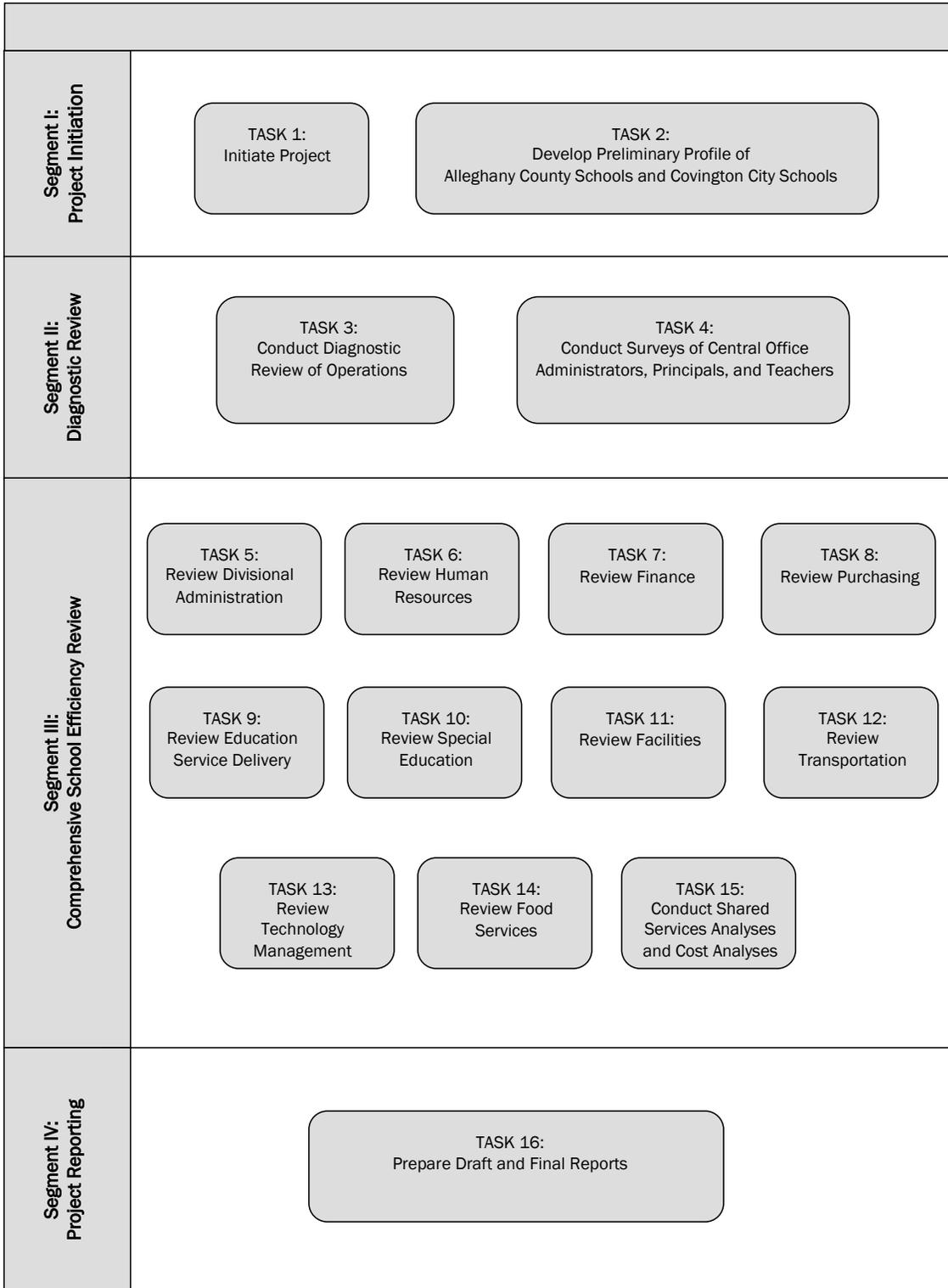
1.1 METHODOLOGY

Evergreen’s methodology for conducting these two reviews 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 each 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 Reviews of
Allegheny County Public Schools and Covington City 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 each school division.

More than 100 documents were requested from each division. 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;
- plans for curriculum and instruction plans;
- annual budget and expenditure reports;
- job descriptions;
- salary schedules; and
- employee handbooks.

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 Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools was conducted during the week of October 3, 2006. Two Evergreen consultants interviewed central office administrators, Board members, County Commissioners, City Council members, and community leaders, concerning the management and operations of Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools.

EMPLOYEE SURVEYS

To secure the involvement of administrators and teachers in the school efficiency reviews, two on-line surveys were prepared and disseminated in September 2006—one for administrators 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 each 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 ACPS and CCPS survey results were compared to administrators and teachers in Evergreen's survey database.

The response rates for the two surveys in each division are shown in **Exhibit 1-2**.



Exhibit 1-2
Evergreen Survey Response Rates
for Allegheny County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools

Group	Allegheny Number	Allegheny Responses	Allegheny Response Rate	Covington Number	Covington Responses	Covington Response Rate
Administrators	21	21	100%	9	8	89%
Teachers	251	184	73%	85	38	45%

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. Over 50 respondents provided comments on the Web site. In addition, a public forum was held on November 8, 2006 at the Jackson River Technical Center (JRTC). Thirty-five (35) individuals participated in the forum.

ON-SITE EFFICIENCY REVIEW

A team of nine consultants conducted the formal on-site reviews of Allegheny County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools during the week of November 5, 2006. 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
- Shared Services

Prior to conducting the on-site reviews, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about ACPS and CCPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted detailed reviews of the structure and operations of each division in their assigned functional areas. All public schools in ACPS and CCPS 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. Alleghany County Public Schools is identified in Cluster 4, while Covington City Public Schools is included in Cluster 7. The Virginia public school divisions chosen for comparison to Alleghany County Public Schools are:

- Dickenson County Public Schools
- Nottoway County Public Schools
- Patrick County Public Schools
- Prince Edward County Public Schools
- Southampton County Public Schools

The Virginia public school divisions cluster for comparison to Covington City Public Schools are:

- Buena Vista City Public Schools
- Franklin City Public Schools
- Galax City Public Schools
- Norton City Public Schools
- West Point Public Schools

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

The final report for this study consists of the following 11 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: Shared Services
- Chapter 11.0: 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 each division;
- 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.

Chapter 10 includes recommendations on shared services.

We conclude this report with a summary of the fiscal impact of the study recommendations in Chapter 11.

This report includes the findings, commendations, and recommendations for Covington City Public Schools. A similar report was developed for Allegheny County Public Schools and is available under separate cover.



***CHAPTER 2:
DIVISION ADMINISTRATION***



Chapter 2

DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

This chapter reviews staffing, organization, and management of Covington City Public Schools (CCPS). This chapter 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

Overall, Covington City Public Schools is well managed. The Superintendent and his Leadership Team have focused the division on student achievement and have led staff in substantial improvements within the past few years. The establishment of an Office of Instruction has been a significant variable for improvements within the division.

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. CCPS leaders stated that they were welcoming this school efficiency review to identify areas for improvement.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Overall, Covington City Public Schools is well managed. The Superintendent and his Leadership Team have focused the division on student achievement and have led staff in substantial improvements to student achievement within the past few years. The establishment of an office of instruction has been significant in the improvement within the district.

CCPS is commended for several operations. There is a consistent and predictable process for developing and disseminating materials to the School Board. A new leadership position in instruction has led to increased time and resources for staff development. The teacher evaluation system is up-to-date and implemented.

Effective organizations are continuously finding ways to improve, recognizing that an organization that remains static eventually begins to decline. The CCPS leadership welcomed the process to identify areas for improvement. Primary recommendations include the following:

- revise the Board agenda so that it includes a consent agenda, Information Items, and Action Items;
- post the Board agendas and minutes on the division's Web site;
- reassign job functions within the current organizational plan;



- hire a part-time testing coordinator at the central office reporting to the Director of Instruction;
- adopt a strategic planning process and ensure that the School Board adopts the plan;
- establish more site-based management for decision making;
- institute a culture of accountability throughout the school division by ensuring that administrators and the Superintendent receive written evaluations on a yearly basis;
- administer an organizational climate surveys to all CCPS employees on a regular basis;
- develop a leadership academy for administrators and aspiring administrators;
- review and revise the format of the bi-monthly meetings with administrators to ensure there is adequate time for collegial discussion and decision making;
- develop a comprehensive administrative manual that can be used by building administrators to ensure consistency among staff; and
- examine ways to contain legal expenses, including the possibility of combining services with the City of Covington or a neighboring school division.

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 involved a shift to smaller elected school 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 21st 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 policymaking;
- 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 the Board of Education “divide the Commonwealth into school divisions” and that school divisions in existence as of July 1, 1978, would remain school divisions in the Commonwealth until further action of the Board of Education. The City of Covington, as a school division in operation at that time, has maintained its own independent school division, which is governed by a five-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

Board members are appointed by the City Council. All five members have held positions in their community, keeping them involved with various segments of the community. The average tenure of the Board members is two years, primarily because two of the members were just recently appointed to the Board this past summer. As shown in **Exhibit 2-1**, the most senior member has served on the Board for seven years. The remaining two members have served for two years.

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

Name	Title	Term Expires	Years Served	Profession
Joyce Persinger	Chair	June 30, 2008	7	Nurse
Cynthia Bryant	Vice-Chair	June 20, 2007	2	Banker
Rebecca Rhea	Member	June 30, 2009	0	Retired Teacher
Jeremy Thomas	Member	June 30, 2009	0	Program Analyst
Thomas Warlitner	Member	June 30, 2007	2	Retired Sheriff

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Superintendent’s Office, 2006.

Regular meetings are held once a month at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of the month. Additional meetings are called for special topics, and these meetings primarily focus on personnel matters. The regular meetings last approximately three hours. The public is welcome to attend. The Board Chair recently provided time at the end of each meeting 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 pertaining and other matters. The Covington City School Board meets in closed sessions at the end of its regular meetings for one or more of these matters.



The Superintendent, in consultation with the Board Chair, develops an agenda and background information for each meeting. This information is provided to the Board members one week prior to the meeting.

During Board meetings, principals and central office administrative staff provide reports. Because of the small size of the Board, there are no standing committees of the Board. For example, the entire Board works on the proposed budget to make adjustments prior to submitting the budget to the City Council. The Board does appoint several advisory committees, such as the Title I Advisory Committee, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the School Health Advisory Committee.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools has developed a consistent and predictable process for developing and disseminating materials to the School Board in order to conduct the business of the Board.

FINDING

The Covington City School Board adopted the Code of Ethics recommended by the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA). 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.*

COMMENDATION

The Covington City School Board practices a code of ethics to guide their decision-making processes as Board members.

FINDING

The Board agenda consists of a variety of topics. Major groupings for the agenda include Old Business, New Business, Staff Reports, Committee and Joint Reports, Superintendent’s Reports, and Personnel. The Personnel report is generally approved at the end of the meeting, after the Board goes into and comes out of Executive Session. A sample agenda format is shown in **Exhibit 2-2.**

**Exhibit 2-2
Covington City Public Schools
Sample Board Agenda**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Approval and Payment of Warrants
- V. Delegations/Presentations/Recognitions
- VI. Old Business
- VII. New Business
 - A. VSBA Media Honor Roll
 - B. Covington High School Field Trip
 - C. Mental Health Initiative
 - D. VSBA Convention Delegates
- VIII. Staff Reports
- IX. Committee and Joint Board Reports
- X. Superintendent’s Reports
- XI. Personnel
 - Executive Session, Code of Va., Section 2.2-3711 (1) Personnel
 - A. Appointments/Approvals
- XII. Adjournment

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Board Agenda, August 14, 2006.

It is unclear from the agenda that is published which items are presented for School Board action versus which items are presented for information only. While many of the items under New Business are action items, not all of them are.



It would be clearer to division employees and the community at large if the Board adopted an alternative format for its agenda. A Consent Agenda at the beginning of the meeting would reduce the amount of time spent on routine matters. If the School Board were willing to have their executive session at the beginning of the meeting, Personnel could be put under the Consent Agenda. The remaining agenda items could be placed under either Information or Action items, thereby making the public more readily aware of what items are under consideration for adoption at the meeting. Two of the school divisions in the comparison group for CCPS currently use consent agendas for their Board meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-1:

Revise the Board agenda so that it includes a Consent Agenda, Information Items, and Action Items.

A proposed revised agenda is shown in **Exhibit 2-3**. As may be seen, grouping the agenda items differently provides the public with a snapshot view of the action to be taken at the Board meeting. This type of grouping also provides the Board with more time to discuss matters that are of significant importance to the division. School Board members may choose to remove any items from the Consent Agenda if that further discussion is warranted.

**Exhibit 2-3
Proposed Board Agenda for
Covington City Public Schools**

- 6:00 Executive Session, Code of Va., Section 2.2-3711 (1) to discuss Personnel
- 6:30 Regular Meeting: indicate location

- I. Call to Order
- II. Closed Session Motions
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Superintendent’s Report/Announcements
- V. Presentations/Recognitions
- VI. Consent Agenda (may also include donations, resolutions, routine contract agreements, etc.)
 - a. Approval and Payment of Warrants
 - b. Approval of Personnel
 - c. VSBA Convention Delegates
- VII. Information Items
 - a. Staff Reports (specify what)
 - b. Committee and Joint Reports (specify what)
 - c. Superintendent’s Reports
- VIII. Action Items
 - a. VSBA Media Honor Roll
 - b. Covington High School Field Trip
 - c. Mental Health Initiative
- IX. Adjournment

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.



FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Covington City School Board meets once a month on a regular basis, 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, one week prior to the meeting.

The Board agenda, without back-up materials, is published three days ahead of the meeting. There was no evidence that Board agenda packets were distributed in advance to schools, the press, or other public buildings. None of the Board agendas or minutes is included on the division's Web site. Two of the school divisions in the comparison group currently have agendas and minutes for the past three years on their division's Web site.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-2:

Post the Board agendas and minutes on the CCPS Web site.

The availability of the Board agenda and minutes on the CCPS Web site will provide ready access to employees and to the community at large. Many school divisions across the Commonwealth have already posted at least three years of Board minutes on their Web sites. These efforts ensure that staff and parents have access to information prior to Board meetings, so that public input can be maximized. Making agendas and minutes accessible also creates good will in the community.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

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 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 policymaking and 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.

Procedural guidelines 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 CCPS is managed through the Superintendent's Office. The Board Policy Manual addresses all the major provisions specified in Code. A review of the policy manual found that Covington City Public Schools uses the policy service provided by the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) to update its manual. The manual was updated substantially in 2003, using VSBA as a source.

There are eleven sections in the CCPS policy manual. The major sections include the classification system noted in **Exhibit 2-4**.

Current and former Board members reported that the revision of the CCPS Policy Manual has been a major accomplishment which took almost two years to complete. The majority of the policies have been revised since 2003, well within the five-year limit recommended by the Commonwealth. The Superintendent plans to draft the remaining sections dealing with students, personnel, and instruction during the coming year for adoption by the Board. There are additional policy sections which will be addressed in future years.



**Exhibit 2-4
School Board Policy Manual Classifications in
Covington City Public Schools**

Classification	Section Title
A	Foundations and Basic Commitments
B	School Board Governance and Operations
C	General School Administration
D	Fiscal Management
E	Support Services
F	Facilities Development
G	Personnel
H	Negotiations
I	Instruction
J	Students
K	School-Community Relations
L	Education Agency Relations

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Board Policy Manual, 2006.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for using the VSBA policy service and for maintaining an up-to-date Board Policy Manual.

FINDING

While the policy manual is up to date, it is not included on the division’s Web site. When there are only hard copies of the manual, there is an increased likelihood that newer policies are not inserted into the manuals. This happens frequently because of time constraints. Having the policy manual on the CCPS Web site would ensure that employees and community members can easily access the most current policies in the manual.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-3:

Place the Board policy manual on the Web site to ensure that there is easy access to all current policies by CCPS employees, students, and parents.

The availability of the policy manual on the CCPS Web site will provide ready access to employees and to the community at large. Many school divisions across the Commonwealth have already posted policy manuals on their Web sites. This effort ensures that staff and parents have access to up-to-date and accurate information.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



FINDING

The CCPS Policy Manual has many policies that require some consistent standards and/or guidelines for administrators to use during the implementation of the policy. Examples of these guidelines were not readily available during the review process.

A central listing of any such documents was not available. While there are some efforts to put some procedures in writing, neither staff nor Board members were aware of any Administrative Handbook which could be used as a reference guide during the course of their work.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-4:

Develop a comprehensive Administrative Procedures Manual that can be used by central office and school administrators to ensure consistency among staff.

The Administrative Procedures Manual should include information that reflects various Board policies and appropriate departmental procedures to implement them. The Administrative Procedures Manual should be an important reference tool that would be readily accessible to administrators. Sample sections should include:

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

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, a set of standards is usually 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

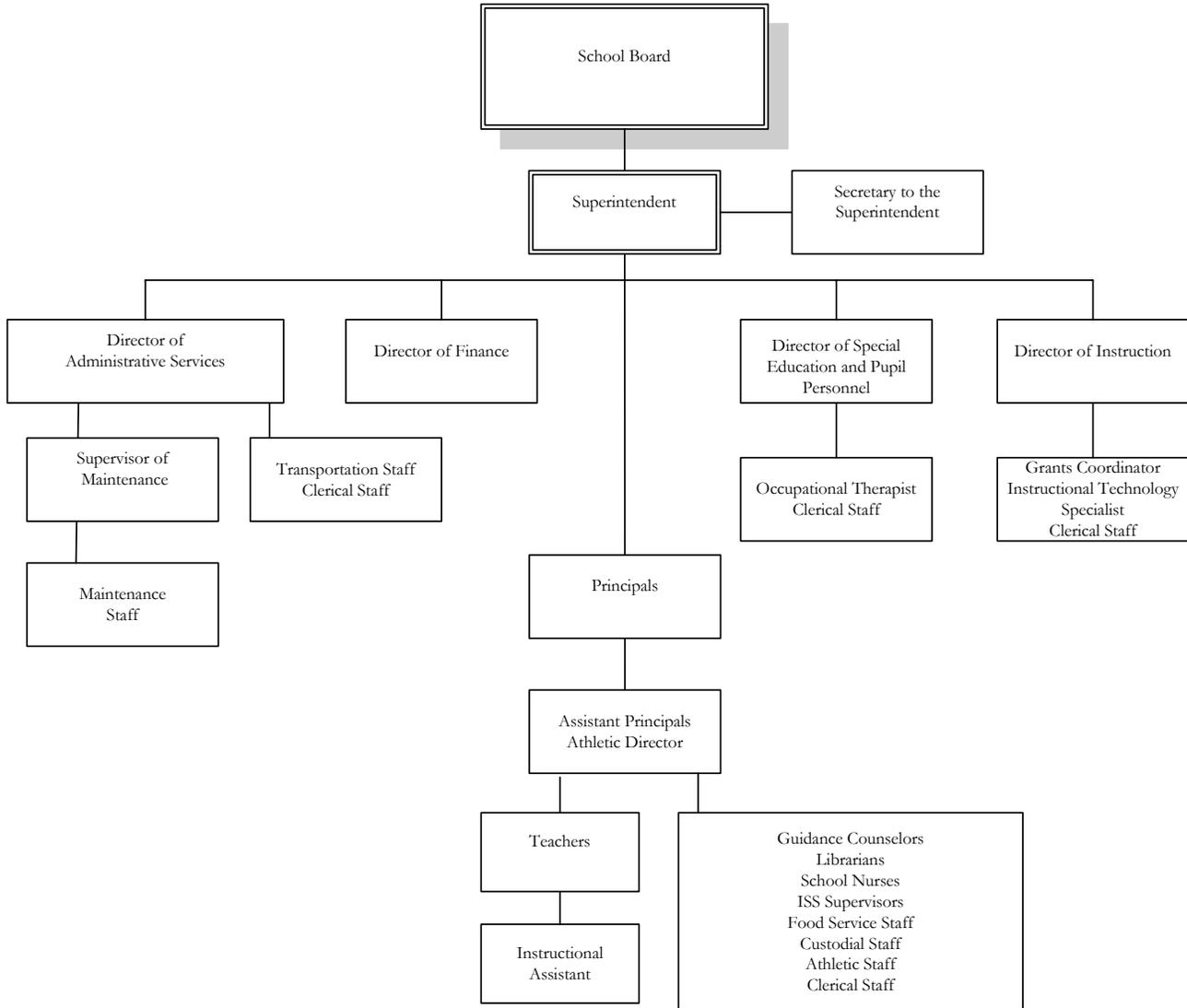
Exhibit 2-5 shows the current organizational staff of Covington City Public Schools. As can be seen, there are:

- three principals and four directors who report directly to the Superintendent;
- one supervisor who reports directly to the Director of Administrative Services;
- one Instructional Coordinator who reports directly to the Director of Instruction; and
- no administrative positions reporting directly to the Directors of Finance or Student Services.

Job functions assigned within the current organization require that the Director of Instruction oversee many human resource functions, including the Teacher Cadet Program (called SCOPE), prospective teacher interviews for both regular and special education, prospective substitutes teacher interviews, the new teacher inservice program, and a career/job fair. On the other hand, the Director of Administrative Services is responsible for all testing. Typically, personnel functions are housed in an administrative services office, not instruction. Similarly, those functions associated with testing are usually housed in an instructional office. The division has operated with a fairly lean administrative structure.



**Exhibit 2-5
Covington City Public Schools
Current Organizational Structure
2006-07 School Year**



Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

Evergreen has conducted extensive surveys of division and school-level personnel on a variety to topics related to central office management. When teachers were asked to respond to the statement that the school division has too many layers of administrators, 48.7 percent of teachers *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with this statement, and only 15.4 percent *agree* or *strongly agree*. Seventy-five (75) percent of administrators *disagree* with this same statement. Teachers in comparison districts in Evergreen’s survey database responded with 41.1 percent *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The general perception among teachers and administrators in Covington City Public Schools is that there are not excessive layers of administration.



Exhibit 2-6 compares CCPS to its peers for disbursements for administration. As **Exhibit 2-6** indicates, the peer division average expenditure is \$391 per pupil, while CCPS expenditures are \$31 less per pupil at \$360 per pupil. CCPS is actually spending less per pupil on administration than the average of its peers.

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

School Division	Administration	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$313,194	\$360
Buena Vista City	\$337,225	\$300
Franklin City	\$693,277	\$524
Galax City	\$470,239	\$354
Norton City	\$308,462	\$423
West Point	\$284,084	\$354
Peer Division Average	\$418,657	\$391

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

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-5:

Reassign job functions within the CCPS organizational structure.

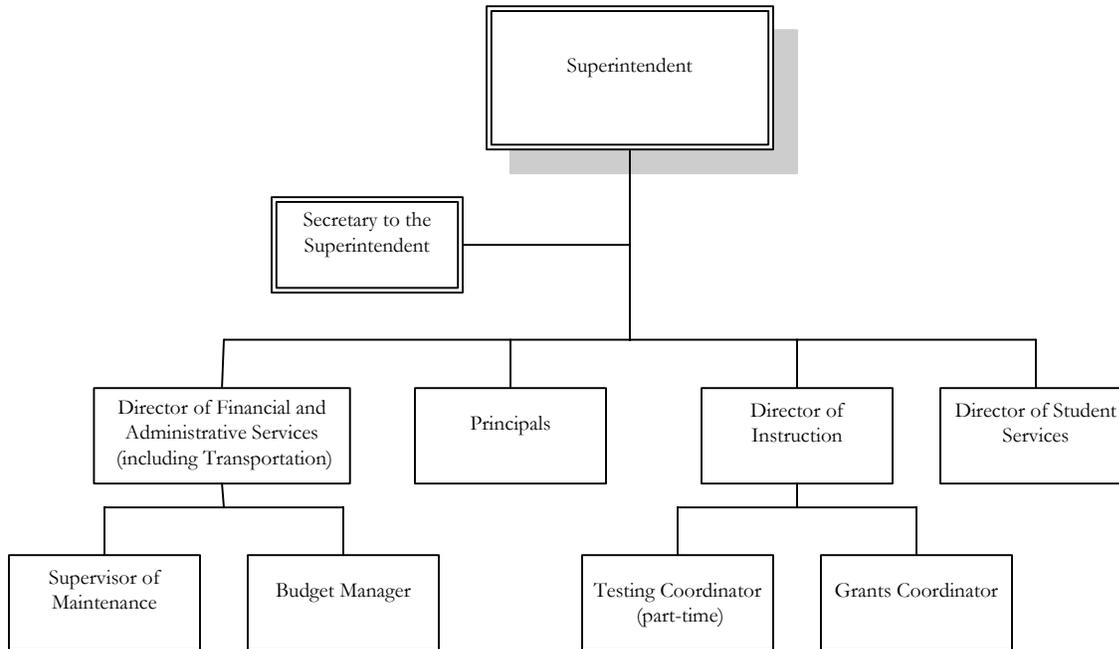
Exhibit 2-7 presents a proposed organizational chart with an realignment of some job functions. The following actions are recommended:

- renaming the Director of Administrative Services to the Director of Financial and Administrative Services;
- reclassifying the Director of Financial Services to a budget manager, reporting directly to the Director of Financial and Administrative Services;
- renaming the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel to the Director of Student Services;
- reassigning the Teacher Cadet Program (called SCOPE), prospective teacher interviews for both regular and special education, prospective substitutes teacher interviews, the new teacher in-service, and the career/job fair to the Director of Financial and Administrative Services; and
- reassigning testing to the Director of Instruction.

Realigning these functions keeps the Instructional Office focused primarily on instructional issues, including testing. The Administrative Services Office would assume those responsibilities typically associated with a Human Resources Department.



**Exhibit 2-7
Covington City Public Schools
Proposed Organizational Chart**



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.

FISCAL IMPACT

Reorganizing the central office functions in the manner shown in **Exhibit 2-7** will result in the reclassification of one position. It will not result in any cost savings, primarily because the salary of this position is already \$20,000 lower than other director salaries and more in line with a budget manager’s salary.

FINDING

CCPS student enrollment has declined slightly during the past five years as shown in **Exhibit 2-8**. This declining enrollment is found at all three schools over this period and suggests that CCPS may continue to face the challenges of declining enrollments over the next few years.

Yet the increased demands for accountability in school divisions across the state have grown, resulting in more responsibilities placed on existing school division employees. While many school divisions have had to add additional personnel to meet these demands, the declining enrollment in CCPS suggests that the division may not need another full-time employee. The use of a teacher leader could address the need for additional personnel.



**Exhibit 2-8
Covington City Public Schools
September 30 Student Enrollment**

School Level	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Elementary	291	273	273	243	271
Middle	287	266	240	246	252
High	367	359	375	352	347
Total	945	898	888	841	870

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-6:

Hire a part-time Testing Coordinator at the central office reporting to the Director of Instruction.

Currently, the responsibility for testing administration falls under the Director of Administrative Services, while training for testing falls under the Director of Instruction. These functions need to occur within one office. With the increased accountability from national and local initiatives, it is imperative that reports are generated and explained in a timely and meaningful manner to the Board, employees, and community at large.

The proposed Testing Coordinator’s position is shown in **Exhibit 2-7**, and could be filled by a teacher who is .50 teacher and .50 testing coordinator. Using a teacher also provides an additional opportunity for career movement within the division.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of a part-time position is based on an average teacher salary of \$46,000 with a fringe benefits rate of \$15,180, for an annual total of \$61,180. One-half this salary is \$30,590.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Hire a Testing Coordinator	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)

FINDING

Having an open communication style and a decision-making process that is inclusive are 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.

CCPS is led by Superintendent Eddie Graham. The Superintendent carries out his responsibilities through three of his four directors and three building principals. These



individuals meet twice a month to discuss a variety of topics that are pertinent to administration and instruction within the division.

The Superintendent meets twice a month with his Leadership Team, once focusing on administrative issues, and the second time focusing on instructional issues. An examination of the minutes from these meetings indicate that members of the administrative team take turns presenting various topics and issues to the entire group.

From the minutes, it appears that a variety of topics are discussed. The number of topics that were covered, in the five meetings analyzed by Evergreen consultants, ranged from 15 to 32 topics, with an average of 24 topics per meeting. A review of the minutes from the meetings suggest that much of the content of these meetings could be shared by other means, thereby creating more time for discussion on fewer topics.

Interviews with personnel, as well as survey results, reveal that staff members do not feel involved in decision-making process. When teachers were surveyed regarding administrative practices and procedures, the following was revealed:

- Fewer than 13 percent of teachers *agree* that authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level, while 27 percent of comparison district teachers *agree* with this statement.
- Fewer than 39 percent of teachers *agree* that school-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect their schools, while 53 percent of comparison teachers *agree* with this statement.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-7:

Review and revise the format of the bi-monthly meetings with administrators to ensure there is adequate time for collegial discussion and decision making.

Meetings with agendas distributed beforehand can ensure that there is adequate time for discussion as needed. If the Superintendent and his staff review the topics they are to present, they may find that many of the topics could be distributed in a memo, brief report, or email, thereby shortening the number of items on any one agenda. By shortening the agenda, there may be an opportunity to obtain input into important issues and topics facing the school division.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Four years ago, a leadership position in instruction was created by the Superintendent and School Board. The position was created primarily because there was recognition by the leadership that



the division needed a stronger instructional focus. During the past three years, Standards of Learning test results have shown significant improvement in English and science.

The Director of Instruction provides professional development to building administrators. During the past three years, this office has provided training in the area of instructional strategies, differentiation, and meeting the needs of low-income students. Additional topics have included leadership styles and legal issues. Educators are expected to attend staff development. Often, the building administrators are present with their teachers during staff development. Time is allocated for this staff development during the school year, as well as in the summer.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for establishing a leadership position in instruction, and for effectively allocating time and resources for professional development to its building administrators.

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.

To underscore this point, 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 administration. Reports continually stress the need to identify and prepare employees with leadership potential.

CCPS offers a variety of professional development opportunities to its staff, although it does not offer formal leadership training for administrators and/or aspiring administrators.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-8:

Develop a Leadership Academy for administrators and aspiring administrators.

Leadership Academy topics should include 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. This Leadership Academy could be done in collaboration with other local school divisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing professional development resources.

FINDING

Best practices indicate that the periodic assessment of employees is essential to ensure that an organization operates in a continuous improvement mode. How employees feel about their jobs, their peers, and the management can affect their individual productivity and the ability of the organization to achieve its objectives.

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

Covington City Public Schools does not administer an organizational climate survey on a regular basis to its employees. Without this employee information, management relies primarily on an informal network to ascertain issues or concerns within the school community.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-9:

Administer an organizational climate survey to all CCPS 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 on-line 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 the fees. The estimated cost of administering a survey is approximately \$2.00 per employee, or a total of \$400 for 200 employees. If implemented every three years, the five-year total cost would be \$800.



Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Administer Organizational Climate Survey	(\$400)	\$0	\$0	(\$400)	\$0

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.

One of the emerging management and organizational models in both the public and private sectors is one that is labeled 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 this 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

Although the materials provided to the Evergreen Team did not indicate that CCPS uses staffing standards to determine the number of administrative positions, it appears that they use the Virginia Standards of Quality (SOQ) as guidelines. The Virginia Standards of Quality provide for 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 School: one full-time principal employed on a 12-month basis; and one full-time assistant principal for each 600 students.

In CCPS, each school is assigned a full-time principal. In addition, the high school is assigned a full-time assistant principal. **Exhibit 2-9** shows the current placement of these positions. Covington City Public Schools has been able to staff building administrative positions above the SOQ level.

Exhibit 2-9
CCPS Schools, Student Enrollment, and Principal Positions
2005-06 School Year

School	Level	Student Population	Principals	Assistant Principals	VA SOQ Standard
Edgemont Primary	K-3	271	1	0	.5 Principal/299 students; 1.0 at 300 students
Jeter-Watson Intermediate	4-7	262	1	0	1.0 Principal
Covington High	8-12	343	1	1	1.0 Principal 1.0 AP/600 students

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site. and Covington City Public Schools Web site, 2006.

Information in **Exhibit 2-10** reinforces the higher staffing ratio maintained for CCPS when compared to peer school divisions. CCPS is close to the state average for staffing principal and assistant principal positions.

Exhibit 2-10
Principals and Assistant Principals
Per 1,000 Students
Fiscal Year 2005

School Division	Total Principals and Assistant Principals Per 1,000 Students
Covington City	4.85
Buena Vista City	5.92
Franklin City	5.45
Galax City	4.63
Norton City	5.45
West Point	6.34
Peer Division Average	5.56
State Average	3.90

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



COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for establishing building administrative staffing levels above the SOQ levels.

FINDING

Sited-based management in Covington City Public Schools could be improved. During interviews, some administrators indicated that they do not have input into the budget process, but receive a copy of the budget after it is adopted. Some administrators also indicated that there was no standard process for decision-making. Most decisions go directly to the Superintendent. Some administrators expressed a concern that there was very little flexibility for making decisions in areas that affect their operation.

A review of the meetings held with key administrative staff supports this finding. There was only minimal evidence that decisions are made collaboratively at these meetings, and that building administrators were involved to a great extent in making decisions. The teacher survey results suggested that decisions are often made at the central office with little input from the schools.

- Fifty-four (54) percent of teachers *disagree* with the statement that “authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level, compared with 17.1 percent of teachers in Evergreen’s survey database.
- Fewer than 39 percent *agree* that “school-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the division, compared with over 53 percent in the comparison group.
- A little over 46 percent of teachers *agree* with the statement that “major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays”, compared with 25.8 percent in the comparison group of teachers.
- Only 15.4 percent of teachers *agree* that “site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers”, compared with 38.5 percent of teachers in the comparison group.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-10:

Augment site-based management for decision making in Covington City Public Schools.

Site-based management is a way to structure internal relationships so that more authority and accountability is placed at each school. Site-based management 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 an emerging 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.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.5 PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic planning is an important management tool that is used for several reasons:

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

Effective strategic planning:

- 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;
- accepts 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 the organization 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 21st 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

Covington City Public Schools has developed a six-year planning document for 2005-2011. The plan has 19 objectives covering broad areas in instruction, food service, transportation, safety, student services, personnel, technology, facilities and special education. The objectives are varied and include such items as:

- developing a self-sustaining reading program that is structured around best practices and research-based instructional strategies proven to be successful with students at all grade levels;
- developing a Web-based assessment to monitor student progress;
- implementing a universal pre-kindergarten program; and
- providing a school food service program with nutritious meals to all students.

While the plan covers a six-year period with specific objectives and activities to help meet the objectives, many members of the school community are uncertain what the objectives are and the progress made.

Survey results found that 51 percent of the division's teachers *agree* with the statement that "the division's strategic plan guides daily decision making", compared to 63 percent in the comparison group of teachers. Similarly, 48.7 percent of teachers *agree* with the statement that "I know how my work activities and objectives ties to the division's strategic plan, compared to 73.9 percent of teachers in comparison districts.

Conversations with employees and Board members supported the fact that the plan is not widely known throughout the school community.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-11:

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.

A comprehensive strategic planning process brings students, staff, and community 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. A good 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.



FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Covington City 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. An essential part of an accountability system is the public reporting of these data.

CCPS has not publicly reported results of the goals in the six-year plan to the School Board nor its school community. This perhaps accounts for the lower response rate on the Evergreen surveys. This lack of reporting also accounts for why Board members and employees had difficulty articulating the goals in the Six-Year Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-12:

Develop and implement a plan for informing staff and board members of the status of the Six-Year Plan.

Covington City Public Schools should periodically discuss the progress of the Six-Year Plan at staff meetings and report on the progress of the Strategic 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, including:

- 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 these goals.

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. Personnel evaluation can be a powerful tool for communicating the expectations of the division and for ensuring employees continue to grow.

The evaluation of employees is one of the most important responsibilities that an administrator has. Recognizing this responsibility, the administration in Covington City Public Schools has recently engaged in a systematic effort to improve the teacher evaluation system. Staff members participated in a staff development workshop with Alleghany County Public Schools to learn more about teacher evaluation and current models. As a result, the teacher evaluation system has been revised twice within the past few years.

Teachers in Covington City Public Schools generally report that they are evaluated and held accountable for students learning. Slightly over 87 percent of teachers *agree* to the statement that “teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn” (compared to 79.5 percent of teachers in the comparison group). Additionally, 94.9 percent of teachers *agree* with the statement that “division employees receive annual personnel evaluations” (compared to 91.3 percent of teachers in the comparison group). These two statements show some of the highest ratings on the survey. This high response rate may also be correlated to the high rating that teachers give personnel evaluation overall, with 70.6 percent of teachers agreeing that it was *adequate or outstanding*.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for ensuring that the teacher evaluation system is up-to-date and implemented.

FINDING

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.

Full implementation of the administrative evaluation system was achieved with the 2005-06 evaluation cycle. Many administrators were appreciative of receiving this evaluation, but expressed a desire to receive more regular feedback through annual evaluations. While a new administrative evaluation system was developed, it has apparently not been used on a yearly basis.

The School Board has evaluated the Superintendent on a yearly basis, but Board members indicated that this was done on an informal basis. No written evaluation has been conducted, nor is it clear how the informal evaluation is tied to CCPS goals.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-13:

Implement a culture of accountability throughout the school division by ensuring that administrators and the Superintendent receive annual written evaluations, and consider a yearly self-evaluation for the School Board.

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 goals.

A Board self-evaluation 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 the Board would exemplify the concept of accountability.

A sample self-evaluation which the Board could use is shown in **Exhibit 2-11**.

**Exhibit 2-11
Sample Board Self-Assessment Instrument**

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

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.

2.6 LEGAL SERVICES

School divisions nationwide 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 the Covington City Public Schools by Timberlake, Smith, Thomas and Moses, which is based in Staunton, Virginia. This firm offers has a wide range of specialized services. These services have been used to advise senior management on special education issues, teacher evaluation, personnel matters, and land acquisition.

Exhibit 2-12 shows the division’s legal expenses for the past three years.

**Exhibit 2-12
Covington City Public Schools
Legal Expenses
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Firm	Years		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Timberlake, Smith, Thomas and Moses	\$8,574	\$2,220	\$12,888*

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Finance Office, November 2006.

*due to unusual expenses related to personnel and land acquisition.

When comparing legal expenses of CCPS with those of other school divisions in the peer group, average costs are double that of the comparison group average in two of three years. In both of these years, the costs of legal expenses are more than any other division in the comparison group. The cost for legal expenses in the most recent year, 2005-06, is more than 50 percent per student higher than it was in the 2003-04 school year.

Exhibit 2-13 shows per student legal expenses in peer school divisions for the past three years.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-14:

Examine ways to contain legal expenses.

While legal expenses have risen dramatically over the past few years, it would be worthwhile to determine how the division can reduce legal expenditures. One option is through consolidated bidding. The containment of legal services will assist the division as it moves forward with the many fiscal issues it faces in the next few years.



**Exhibit 2-13
Comparison Legal Expenses Per Student in
Covington City Public Schools and Peer School Divisions
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

School Division	Legal Expenses Per Student		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Covington City	\$9.66	\$2.64	\$14.81
Buena Vista City	n/a	\$2.25	\$11.43
Franklin City	\$2.17	\$1.42	\$4.82
Galax City	\$3.06	\$2.63	\$2.78
Norton City	\$4.76	\$3.01	\$1.55
Average	\$4.91	\$2.39	\$7.08

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Finance Office, and Peer Divisions, November 2006.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. However, a goal should be set by the Superintendent and Board to reduce legal expenditures by at least 20 percent annually. Using \$9.04 as the average per pupil costs for legal expenses over the three years shown in **Exhibit 2-13**, a 20 percent reduction would be \$1,584 annually.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Reduce Legal Expenses	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584



CHAPTER 3:
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



Chapter 3

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the personnel and human resources management functions of Covington City Public Schools (CCPS) in the following six sections:

- 3.1 Organization and Management
- 3.2 Personnel Policies and Procedures
- 3.3 Job Descriptions and Personnel Records
- 3.4 Employment of Staff
- 3.5 Employee Compensation
- 3.6 Evaluation and Professional Development

CHAPTER SUMMARY

CCPS is a small city school division with approximately 167 employees and three schools serving slightly more than 900 students. Several staff members perform personnel and human resources duties.

The division is commended for encouraging students to become teachers through the Shadowing Career Opportunities for Prospective Educators (SCOPE) Program, and for providing teachers salaries that exceed peer division teacher salaries.

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:

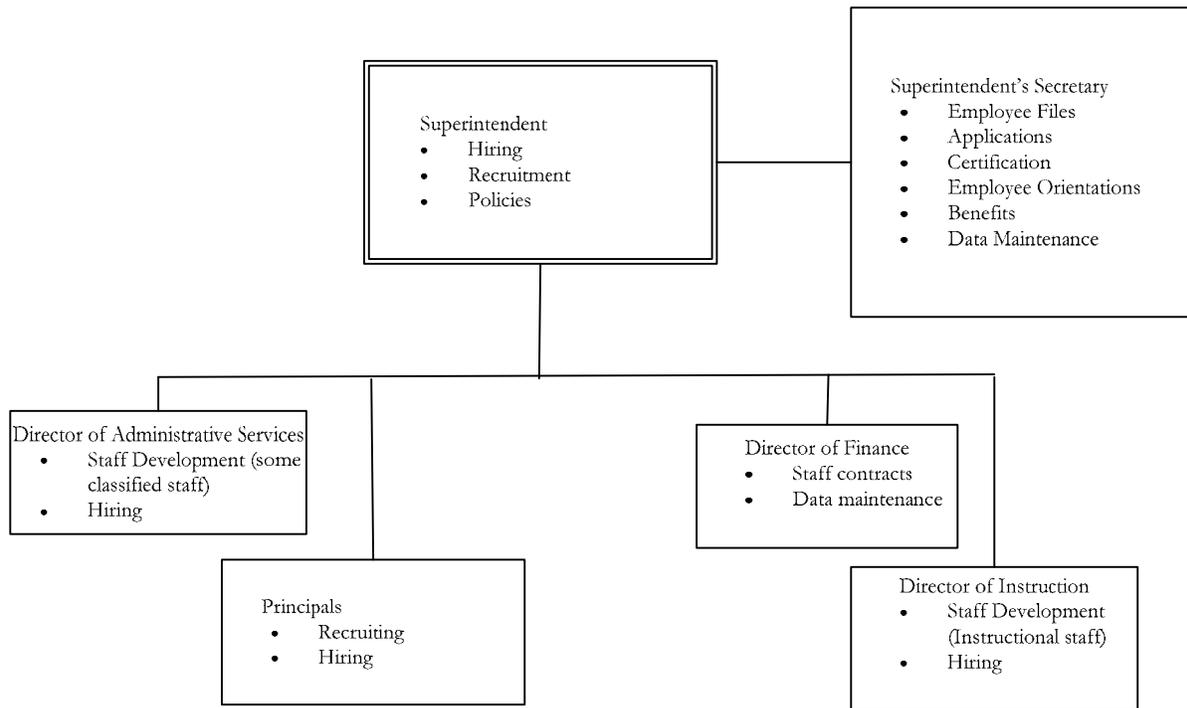
- collect personnel data in an electronic format and update regularly;
- review FLSA status of each position in the division and maintain the updated status of each position in an electronic file for easy reference;
- abolish annual contracts for classified employees;
- develop a comprehensive Employee Handbook, give the Handbook to all new employees, and provide the Handbook electronically for all employees;
- provide application forms on the CCPS Employment Opportunities Web page, more detailed descriptions of vacant positions, and salary or hiring ranges for vacant positions;
- develop a plan to coordinate professional development with Allegheny County Public Schools and the Jackson River Technical Center; and
- collect and track data related to recruiting and advertising.



3.1 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The division does not have a human resources department or dedicated human resources staff member(s), so human resources-related duties are spread among several staff members. The organizational chart depicted in **Exhibit 3-1** includes those job titles of division positions that perform human resources-related duties, along with a small sample of those duties by position.

**Exhibit 3-1
Organization of CCPS Positions
Performing Human Resources-related Duties
2006-07 School Year**



Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools maintains personnel data in both the Finance Office and the Superintendent’s Office.

The Director of Finance maintains crucial personnel data related to staff employment contracts and salaries, and the Superintendent’s Secretary maintains most other personnel data. Some of these data are kept in separate electronic files and systems with no shared access, while other data are kept in paper format.

There are multiple pieces of data that both the Director of Finance on the payroll side and the Superintendent’s Secretary on the personnel side need consistent access to, including employee leave and salary records. At present, this information is not shared electronically between



appropriate staff members to allow for indirect communication of the material. Rather, information is exchanged via hard copy or other direct communication method.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-1:

Provide shared, password-protected network access to personnel-related files for Director of Finance and Superintendent’s Secretary.

By providing shared, password-protected access to appropriate personnel-related files for both the Director of Finance and the Superintendent’s Secretary, CCPS can more quickly handle employee questions and requests, personnel changes, and other human resources similar issues.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools maintains most personnel data in paper format and does not track trends related to personnel.

Within the Superintendent’s Office, only some human resources data are collected and maintained in Microsoft Excel files. CCPS lacks a comprehensive human resources information system (HRIS) for the collection and maintenance of personnel data in a single location. It is not uncommon for similarly sized school divisions not to have an HRIS for cost and capacity reasons; however, personnel data should be maintained in an easily accessible electronic format.

Some data requested of CCPS by Evergreen Solutions were provided in paper format. For example, the division did not have a list of resignations, terminations, or retirements for the past three years in an electronic format. Rather, Evergreen Solutions consultants were provided with copies of resignation or retirement letters presented to the School Board. By also maintaining this type of information in aggregate format, CCPS staff can have accurate data available and can provide clear, concise, and summarized information to the School Board or other requestors.

While the division maintains a majority of the necessary personnel data in various formats and locations, it would be beneficial to collect the data in an electronic format and in a centralized location.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-2:

Collect personnel data in an electronic format and update regularly.



The Secretary to the Superintendent should work with the Director of Finance to begin capturing personnel data electronically. These data should include items such as the number of resignations, retirements, and terminations; reasons for separation from CCPS; employee hire dates; employee professional development/certification data; hours worked; and leave time/vacation data.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division, but will require time from the Secretary to the Superintendent and the Director of Finance to enter and format the data.

3.2 PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

An organization may be measured by the clear mission, strategic plan, and policies that are in place. The effectiveness of the organization's management of resources and the accountability it assumes for the delivery of services and outcomes are grounded in the policies and procedures of that organization. Personnel policies and procedures must be up to date and clearly articulated.

FINDING

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provides exemptions from overtime pay for employees who perform executive, administrative, professional, or computer job duties. These employees must meet certain minimum requirements related to their essential job functions and must be specific salary requirements to be considered exempt. Revisions to FLSA regulations went into effect in 2004, requiring organizations in most cases to conduct a review of the FLSA status of positions related to the new regulations.¹

FLSA outlines the requirements a position must meet to be considered exempt under the administrative exemption. An employee meeting the minimum requirements for an administrative exemption is one:

- whose salary is at least \$455 per week;
- whose primary duty is the performance of office or non-manual work directly related to the management or general business operations of the employer or the employer's customers; and
- whose primary duty includes the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance.

There are positions in the CCPS that might be considered exempt by these requirements. By maintaining an updated and comprehensive list of positions and their associated FLSA determinations, division leaders can ensure they are correctly adhering to federal labor laws.

¹ *Federal Register, Part II, "Defining and Delimiting the Exemptions for Executive, Administrative, Professional, Outside Sales and Computer Employees; Final Rule," April 23, 2004, 29 CFR Part 541.*



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-3:

Review FLSA status of each position in the division and maintain the updated status of each position in an electronic file for easy reference.

CCPS should review the FLSA status of each position using the new Department of Labor guidelines, revised in 2004. Should the division need assistance in conducting the review, the cost to hire an expert would be minimal considering the relatively small number of positions in the division. Additionally, if the division is paying overtime to staff who should be classified as “exempt”, a cost savings could be realized.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division. It can be assumed that the cost for hiring an expert could be negated by future overtime pay that would have been incorrectly paid by the division.

FINDING

CCPS does not have a formal, standard School Board policy for addressing additional time worked by employees classified as “non-exempt” according to the FLSA

The FLSA dictates that compensable work includes the time that an employee must be on duty, on the employer’s premises, or at any other prescribed place of work (e.g., off-site but performing requested work). As per these requirements, employees in the school division performing extra-duty assignments (such as additional bus trips, conferences, and opening the building before normal work hours) can be considered compensable time for non-exempt employees.

FLSA regulations further state that an employer must offer overtime pay at one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for compensable work performed after the first 40 hours of work, as described in the preceding paragraph. Some employers, including political subdivisions of the state (e.g., schools), may legally offer compensatory time to employees in lieu of overtime pay. However, compensatory time received by an employee for overtime work must also be at a rate no less than one and one-half hours for each hour of overtime worked. The regulations require that employers and employees must have an agreement or understanding of the compensatory time prior to an employee working overtime hours.

Finally, the regulations require that employees may legally accrue not more than 240 hours of compensatory time. Any overtime work performed above and beyond the 240 hours must be paid at the overtime rate. Employers have discretion as to when employees may use their



compensatory time and can create limits on how long compensatory time is good for; however, employers must let employees use their compensatory time within a reasonable period of time.²

CCPS may have issues related to its handling of FLSA determinations, overtime pay, and compensatory time. The perception of problems by employees appears to be creating some morale issues in the division. The perception of unfair treatment by supervisors or the division on a whole can have a significant negative impact on employee morale. Even if the division primarily adheres to FLSA regulations, by clearly communicating a comprehensive policy to staff, as well as the recommendations made for their specific positions and enforcing standard application of the policy, the division can help address these morale issues.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-4:

Create a standard School Board policy related to FLSA and overtime and communicate to each employee the revised policy and their individual FLSA status; conduct meetings with supervisors to ensure they clearly understand and enforce the policy.

Exhibit 3-2 on the following page provides a sample portion of a Board policy related to FLSA and overtime. There should be multiple sections captured in such a Board policy; this sample represents but two sections.

Covington City Public Schools should develop and ensure adherence to a legally sound overtime policy the appropriateness and legality of the current Board policy related to FLSA. Once the policy is revised and approved by the Board, the Superintendent should send a communication to each current employee that includes the language in the revised policy and their individual FLSA status. This information additionally should be provided to each new employee during the new employee orientation.

To ensure the policy is fairly enforced across the entire division, the Superintendent or his designee should conduct informational meetings with supervisory staff related to the new policy.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

3.3 **JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Most organizations use job descriptions to help communicate expectations, requirements, and standards to employees. A lack of job descriptions can leave employees without a clear understanding of what is expected of them. In fact, the lack of job descriptions that are comprehensive and updated may communicate incorrect information to employees.

² “Guide to the Fair Labor Standards Act for West Virginia School Districts,” West Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Finance, March 1, 2005.



Exhibit 3-2

Sample School Board Policy Related to Overtime

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Sample School Board, hereinafter referred to as the Board, complies with the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, and all applicable Commonwealth statutes and regulations related to the compensation of full-time and part-time employees.

1. GENERAL:

- 1.1 All employees of the Board are expected to work a forty-hour workweek each week.
- 1.2 Board employees may regularly and routinely be scheduled to work less than a 40-hour workweek, however, the Board retains the right to request an employee to perform additional duties up to 40 hours during a workweek without additional compensation.
- 1.3 The length of the school day for licensed and professional staff will be a minimum of seven and one-half hours and will continue until professional responsibilities to students are completed. Administrative meetings, curriculum development, pupil supervision, assigned duties, parent conferences, group or individual planning and extra-curricular activities may require hours beyond the stated minimum.
- 1.4 Work schedules for all other employees will be defined by the superintendent or, his/her designee, and will be consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act, West Virginia statutes, and provisions of this policy.
- 1.5 Non-exempt employees are not permitted to volunteer to perform services for or on behalf of the school system if the volunteer duties involve the same types of duties that the employees normally perform as a part of their regular duties for the school district.

2. WORKWEEK:

- 2.1 For purposes of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the workweek for all employees of the Board is defined as beginning at 12:00 a.m. Monday and ending at 11:59 p.m. Sunday.
- 2.2 Working hours for all non-exempt employees of the Board under the Fair Labor Standards Act, including paraprofessionals, aides, secretaries, bus operators, and cafeteria, janitorial and maintenance personnel, will conform to federal and state regulations. The classification of all employee positions of the Board, as to whether they are exempt or non-exempt for the provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, are shown in Subsection C.3 of this policy.

Source: "Guide to the Fair Labor Standards Act for West Virginia School Districts," West Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Finance, March 1, 2005.



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

Copies of the job descriptions provided to Evergreen consultants appeared to be very outdated. While there were no revision dates on the job descriptions, the format and content indicate they likely have not been updated for some time. One exception to this is a few custodial positions for which the division had attempted within the past few years to create position-specific descriptions in a newer format.

Evergreen consultants were told that job descriptions are not used to develop advertisements for positions, they are not provided to new employees during new employee orientation, and they are not used assist with performance evaluations.

Of the job descriptions available, a majority of the descriptions included the following categories:

- Title
- Primary Function
- Qualifications
- Reports to
- Performance Responsibilities
- Terms of Employment
- Evaluation

Noticeably absent from the categories 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.³

Most education organizations use “classification” descriptions that apply to all employees who share a job title, rather than “position” descriptions that apply individually to each employee in the organization. Classification descriptions generally are broad and flexible enough to encompass a variety of duties performed by employees in the same job title. For example, a classification description for a teacher may include duties that would be performed by teachers at any level, such as:

³ “Americans with Disabilities Act: Questions and Answers,” U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, February 2001.



- meets and instructs at the times designated;
- plans a program of instruction that meets the individual needs, interests, and abilities of the students; and
- creates a classroom environment that is conducive to learning and to the maturity and interests of the students.

A sample of categories to include in a classification description is included in **Exhibit 3-3**. These categories were generated by the Virginia School Boards Association, which provides sample classification descriptions for nearly 50 K-12 education job titles. In addition, there are numerous cost-effective job description software programs that use templates to help organizations create legally sound and effective job descriptions.

Exhibit 3-3
Sample Job Description Categories

SAMPLE SCHOOL DIVISION JOB DESCRIPTION	
Job Title: Pay Grade/Step: FLSA Status: Approved By:	Division: Reports to: Prepared/Revised Date: Approved Date:
General Statement of Job:	
Essential Duties and Responsibilities: <i>(Other duties may be assigned)</i>	
Supervisory Responsibilities:	
<u>Qualifications</u>	
Education and/or Experience: Language Skills: Mathematical Skills: Reasoning Ability: Certificates, Licenses, Registrations Physical Demands Work Environment	
Terms of Employment	
Evaluation Criteria	

Source: Virginia School Boards Association, 2006.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-5:

Create and revise classification descriptions to accurately reflect job duties being performed by division staff, and create a schedule for updating job descriptions every three years on a rotating basis.

The Superintendent should name an employee to be responsible for coordinating the creation and revision of job descriptions in the division. The end result should be an updated and legally sound job description for every classification title in the division. CCPS could use the sample Virginia School Boards Association job descriptions as templates at no cost, or the division could purchase a low-cost job description development software package.

The responsible person would work with staff members and supervisors to formulate and edit the job descriptions. For multi-incumbent classifications, such as teacher or custodian, the division could convene small focus groups to ensure the job descriptions are comprehensive. This action will provide an adequate baseline for comparison of jobs and will help ensure the division is maintaining fair and equitable pay for jobs in the division.

The appointed employee should devise a schedule by which staff can update the job descriptions every three years on a rotating basis. For example, after the initial acceptance of all job descriptions, jobs with titles that begin with A through I will be reviewed in year one, jobs with titles that begin with J through Q will be reviewed in year two, and jobs that begin with R through Z will be reviewed in year three. This schedule allows all job descriptions to be updated every three years, and distributes the work across all three years. Finally, by maintaining the job descriptions electronically, staff can update the descriptions in a relatively quick manner.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division. Should the division decide to purchase job description software, the cost for this recommendation would be approximately \$200.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools does not have record retention or 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.⁴

⁴ "Chapter 3: Records Retention and Disposition Schedules," *Virginia Public Records Management Manual, The Library of Virginia*.



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, then destroy.

The majority of CCPS personnel records impacted by records retention schedules are kept in the Superintendent’s Office and maintained by the Secretary to the Superintendent.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-6:

Develop and adhere to a records retention and destruction policy related to personnel records.

The Superintendent, with assistance from the Secretary to the Superintendent, should draft a Board policy related to personnel records retention and disposition. The policy should be flexible and clear, and presented to the Board for adoption. Further, the Superintendent should direct the Secretary to the Superintendent to develop a plan to implement the Board policy and maintain responsibility for adhering to the plan. To provide accountability for personnel records management, the Secretary should maintain responsibility for the retention and destruction of records according to the prescribed schedule.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

3.4 EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF

In a survey of CCPS administrators conducted by Evergreen Solutions, approximately 87.5 percent of division administrators state that the division has an effective employee recruitment program, and 100 percent of respondents said the division has a good orientation program for new employees.



FINDING

CCPS secured a grant for the Shadowing Career Opportunities for Prospective Educators (SCOPE) Program, which is designed to encourage students to become teachers and provide hands-on training for educators-to-be.

The program began four years ago, and enrollments have increased significantly since its inception, from four students in the first year, six in the second, 10 in the third, to 20 in the fourth year.

Students join SCOPE as juniors and participate throughout their junior and senior years. Year one consists of lessons about child development, research-based instructional strategies, beginning teacher effectiveness strategies, and 12 weeks of time spent in schools. During the 12 week in-school period, program participants have one day for SCOPE instruction, and they mentor and grade papers.

The program includes a rubric scale used by teachers to rate participants on aspects of their work. At the end of the program, the division takes participants to the Teach-In recruitment fair.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for encouraging students to become teachers through the Shadowing Career Opportunities for Prospective Educators (SCOPE) Program.

FINDING

All classified employees in the division are on contract with the CCPS; the School Board annually approves contracts, contract changes, and adjustments for all classified employees.

The process of creating, updating, and maintaining contracts for the 78 classified employees in the division is a time-consuming process for the Superintendent's Office, the Superintendent, and the School Board. In addition to the main contractual agreements for each employee, any supplements they might be receiving are based on contracts that must be approved by the School Board. This process requires a significant amount of paperwork on an annual basis.

The CCPS has 32 official Board salary schedules, as well as a supplements schedule. Employee salaries are set according to the published schedules.

The school division's "Employment Notification for Classified Employees" is the contractual agreement between classified employees and the division. The contract includes seven primary items and several additional special covenants. The contractual language is included in **Exhibit 3-4**.



**Exhibit 3-4
Employment Notification for Classified Employees
in Covington City Public Schools**

Name:
Location:
Position/Title:

1. The services to be performed hereunder shall begin on the first working day of the school calendar as established by the Covington City School Board for the applicable school year as noted above for a term as specified by the Covington City School Board. The calendar may be amended by the Covington City School Board from time to time. The number of hours worked per day may be increased or decreased upon the needs of the school system.
2. The employee shall report for work each day of the school year in accordance with the time schedule established for the school or facility to which he/she is assigned.
3. The employee shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Superintendent or his designee.
4. The employee is subject to and agrees to comply with all policies and regulations of the Covington City School Board now in existence or hereafter enacted during this employment.
5. This employment shall be null, void, unenforceable, and terminable should the Covington City School Board fail to receive or continue to receive funds which in its sole opinion are sufficient to fulfill its obligations hereunder.
6. The employee may request release from the terms of this contract for any reason or no reason by giving two (2) weeks written notice to the Covington City School Board. In like manner, the Covington City School Board reserves the right to terminate this agreement for any reason or for no reason by giving two (2) weeks written notice to the employee. The School Board reserves the right to suspend, place on probation, or terminate the employee for violation of Covington City School Board policies, rules or regulations, or violations of law, and is not required to give two (2) weeks notice in such instances.
7. Special covenants: See attached sheet

Special Covenants:

1. The said employee agrees to complete all pre-employment requirements including but not limited to a criminal background check, Social Services/Child Protective Services Central Registry check, and tuberculin evaluation.
2. The working days included in this agreement shall include: 200 days (School Calendar).
3. The working hours included in this agreement shall be no more than forty hours per week unless prior approval is granted by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee. This position is designated non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
4. This position is designated as a full-time position eligible for fringe benefits as stipulated by Covington City School Board policy. These fringe benefits include but are not limited to: sick leave, personal leave, health insurance participation, group life insurance, and Virginia Retirement System membership.
5. The employee shall be paid the total sum of \$XX,XXX.
Said salary shall be paid in twelve equal installments beginning September 29, 2006.

The parties agree to the terms of this employment notification effective _____
Date

Employee

Chairman, Covington City School Board

Clerk, Covington City School Board

This contract shall be void and unenforceable should the School Board fail to receive or continue to receive funds which, in the sole discretion of the School Board, are sufficient to fulfill its obligations hereunder.

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.



Current CCPS Board policies related to personnel (Chapter 8) do not specify that classified employees operate under contract with the division. These policies do, however, specify that certified personnel operate under contract. Notifying classified employees of salary changes annually is a positive move on the part of the school division; however, requiring that the School Board chair, the School Board clerk, and the employee to sign contractual agreements annually is unnecessary.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-7:

Abolish annual contracts for classified employees.

The Superintendent and the Board should abolish annual contractual agreements for classified employees. However, contracts should remain in place for the Superintendent, central office and school-based Administrators (Directors, Principals, and Assistant Principals), and teachers. This action will result in a reduction of approximately 78 annual contracts, leaving only 89 contracts. **Recommendation 3-7** addresses how teacher contracts should be handled.

The division should have classified employees sign a general initial contract upon employment that indicates all classified employees in the division are at-will employees and they agree to abide by specified requirements of all employees in the division, as outlined in items 1 through 6 of the current classified contract. On an annual basis, the division should continue to notify employees of the recommended salary for their positions, as well as the remaining “Special Covenants” in the current contract.

This recommendation will reduce time spent on administering contractual agreements by the Superintendent’s Office and classified employees. Further, removing this time-consuming task will allow the Superintendent and the Board to focus on more pressing issues.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

FINDING

All teachers in the division are on contract with Covington City Public Schools; the School Board annually approves contracts, contract changes, and adjustments for instructional employees.

The process of creating, updating, and maintaining contracts for the 82 teachers in the division is a time-consuming process for the Superintendent’s Office, the Superintendent, and the School Board. In addition to the main contractual agreements for each employee, all supplements are based on contracts that must be approved by the Board. This process generates a significant amount of paperwork on an annual basis.



CCPS has an official Board salary schedule for teachers, as well as a supplements schedule. Employee salaries are set according to the published schedules.

Virginia Code Section 22.1-303A provides, in part: “A probationary term of service for three years in the same school division shall be required before a teacher is issued a continuing contract. ...” Evaluations for teachers on continuing contracts in Virginia are further discussed in Section 22.1-295C: “Instructional personnel employed by local school boards who have achieved continuing contract status shall be evaluated not less than once every three years.”⁵

Once a teacher has taught three consecutive years in any school division in Virginia (the probationary period), he or she is entitled to a continuing service contract. In practice, continuing contracts are renewed automatically each year unless otherwise requested by the employee or School Board.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-8:

Revise the timing of teacher employment contracts.

For the probationary period (first three years), annual contracts should be maintained and increased to three years for continuing service contracts.

Once a teacher has completed the requisite probationary period (first three consecutive years of teaching in a Virginia school division), and achieves a continuing service contract, Virginia law requires evaluation every three years. To reduce the amount of paperwork required for the current annual schedule for teacher employment contracts, the division should increase the contractual period for continuing service contracts to three years. This coincides with Commonwealth codes while reducing the time required by the School Board and Superintendent to handle individual contracts.

Supplemental contracts for coaching and other similar duties may still be handled annually. The Superintendent’s Office should continue to provide annual notice to teachers of their proposed salary for the school year; however, the notice can be an informal communication, rather than a formal Board notification. The proposed extended schedule for continuing employment contracts does not preclude the division or the employee from breaking a contract for reasons identified in the Virginia codes, such as dismissal, suspension, termination, retirement, or resignation.

This recommendation will reduce time spent on administering contractual agreements by the Superintendent’s Office and teachers. Furthermore, removing this time-consuming task will allow the Superintendent and the Board to focus on more pressing issues.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

⁵ Chapter 373 of the Code of Virginia, Virginia Legislative Information System, 2006.



FINDING

Covington City Public Schools does not have an Employee Handbook. While new hires are provided with documents and forms regarding some division policies and procedures, there is not a single reference point for employees.

At present, all questions regarding policies and procedures are directed to an employee's immediate supervisor or to the Secretary to the Superintendent. This process may be resulting in different interpretations of policies, enforcement that is not uniform, and an information bottleneck in the Superintendent's Office.

Employee handbooks should be designed as a resource for division 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:

- welcome from the Superintendent;
- the division's mission;
- a staff directory;
- addresses and locations of division offices and schools;
- general statistics about the division (e.g., enrollment for the past five years, number of employees); and
- annual goals.

An example of an Employee Handbook Table of Contents for a school district is included in **Exhibit 3-5**.

As depicted in **Exhibit 3-5**:

- **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, shown in **Exhibit 3-5**, may contain more information than the CCPS Employee Handbook would need to. However, the categories included in the sample are important to include in any school district employee handbook.

Many school divisions in Virginia and school districts across the country post their employee handbooks online. By creating the handbook in an electronic format (either in PDF, Microsoft Word, or html), a school division can quickly disseminate handbooks and/or provide an easy reference to employees via the division's Web site.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-9:

Develop a comprehensive Employee Handbook, give the Handbook to all new employees, and provide the Handbook electronically for all employees.

The Secretary to the Superintendent 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).

The CCPS Employee Handbook should be developed in an electronic format, such as PDF or Microsoft Word, and should be published on the CCPS Web site. If placing the handbook on the Web site is not feasible, it should be distributed to all current employees via e-mail, or in hard copy for staff who do not have e-mail addresses. All new employees should receive a copy of the handbook during the new employee orientation.

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 CCPS staff to use as templates.

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

Covington City Public Schools does not allow for electronic submission of employment applications.

The division is taking steps to update and streamline the application process, including revising applications. For example, the application for certified personnel was last updated in January 2006. However, the application and the process for applying are still paper-driven.



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

SECTION 1-- WELCOME TO LEON COUNTY SCHOOLS	SECTION 3--POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
<p>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 Maintenance Department Staff Development Department Transportation Department Planning & Policy Department Employee Relations Teaching & Learning Finance Department Purchasing Risk Management Minority Business Enterprise Office</p>	<p>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</p>
SECTION 2--DEPARTMENTS AND SERVICES	SECTION 4--PAYROLL SERVICES
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>
	SECTION 5--EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SUMMARY
	<p>General Notice General Information Flexible Benefits Plan Non-Flexible Benefits Enrollment COBRA General Notice General Information Flexible Benefits Plan</p>

Source: Leon County Public Schools (Florida), 2006.



Exhibit 3-6 depicts the results of a review of peer school division Web pages related to personnel/employment. Of the five peer divisions, 100 percent of the divisions provide electronic, job applications online. Moreover, of the three peer divisions with current job openings, 100 percent of the divisions provide additional descriptions of the vacant jobs. Currently, CCPS provides only the job titles for vacant positions with no additional description of requirements or duties.

Exhibit 3-6
Review of Peer Personnel/Employment Web Page Characteristics

Division	Personnel/Employment Web Page Characteristics				
	Downloadable Application	Downloadable Reference Forms	Job Posting (Title Only)	Job Posting (Title & Description)	Salary Schedule
Covington	No	No	Yes	No	No
Buena Vista	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Franklin	Yes	No	n/a*	n/a *	No
Galax	Yes	Yes	n/a *	n/a *	Yes
Norton	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
West Point	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

Source: Web site for each school division, 2006.

* At the time this exhibit was created, there were no current job openings in the division.

While only two peer divisions provide a copy of the salary schedule on the personnel/employment Web page, it is especially helpful to provide at least a hiring range for positions, as one would in a newspaper advertisement.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-10:

Provide application forms on the CCPS Employment Opportunities Web page, more detailed descriptions of vacant positions, and salary or hiring ranges for vacant positions.

The Secretary to the Superintendent should work with the administrator of the CCPS Web site to add downloadable PDF and/or Microsoft Word employment applications. In the immediate future, when job vacancies are posted, a short description of the essential functions and educational/experience requirements of the job should be included in the announcement. Once accurate and comprehensive job descriptions are developed for all classification titles in the division, per **Recommendation 3-4**, a summary of the job description or the job description itself could be linked to the announcement.

CCPS should provide pay ranges or hiring ranges associated with announced vacancies, as well, either by posting the full salary schedule on the Employment Opportunities Web page or by denoting the pay or hiring range in the description of the position. Providing this information to potential applicants will help prevent calls to the Secretary to the Superintendent with such questions.



FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming the Web page is maintained internally, this recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division. If the Web site is maintained externally, the cost for adding the links would be very minimal and would be outweighed by a decrease in costs associated with application copies distributed to potential applicants and staff time required to assist walk-ins requesting applications.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools does not use standard interview guides for interviewing potential hires.

CCPS principals are empowered to make the initial selection of an individual to fill a job within their schools; directors are similarly empowered to select individuals for their functional areas. Once an individual has been selected to fill a position, the recommendation is forwarded to the Superintendent, who is ultimately responsible for approving the hire.

Given that there are no standard questions to be asked in interviews, it is unclear whether questions asked during interviews have remained within legal boundaries. Additionally, it is unclear whether interview formats are standard across the division. Questions related to the following issues should not be addressed during interviews, because to not hire a candidate based on their membership in one of these federally protected classes is discriminatory:

- Race
- Color
- Sex
- Religion
- National origin
- Birthplace
- Age
- Disability
- Marital/family status

While simply asking a question related to these protected classes is not illegal, if an applicant feels he or she has been discriminated against based on membership in a protected class, a claim can be filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. To avoid even the appearance of discrimination, a standard interview guide can be used.

Many organizations have a basic interview guide, consisting of questions that can be asked of any applicant, regardless of the position applied for, as well as questions more specific to the job applied for.

Examples of general questions for a base interview guide include:

- What are your greatest strengths?



- What is your biggest weakness?
- What can you bring to our school division that another applicant will not?
- How would you deal with a fellow employee that did not agree with you on how to accomplish a task, but you had to work together to complete the task?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?

Examples of job-specific questions for non-teaching staff include:

- What experience or knowledge do you have with air brake systems, anti lock, and heavy-duty truck suspensions?
- How would you describe your computer literacy?
 - Very Literate (use computers all the time at work and personally);
 - Somewhat Literate (only use my computer at home); or
 - Not Literate (do not use a computer at work or personally)?
- There are many occasions when it is necessary to prepare a written report, letter, or memo. Thinking back on your previous experience, what are the elements of a clear and concise written document?

Examples of job-specific questions for teachers include:

- What opportunities would you take to present students with extra help?
- How do you maintain student discipline?
- Could you describe your teaching style?
- How do you communicate to a parent how a student is performing?
- If you disagree with how the principal dealt with a situation, what would you do?

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-11:

Develop a basic interview guide for use during interviews and job-specific interview questions as vacancies arise.

The Superintendent's Leadership Team, which includes all directors, principals, and the Superintendent, should develop a standard, basic interview guide for use during interviews. Since members of the Leadership Team are the only individuals in the division conducting interviews, this would be the best group to determine the content of a guide.

The guide should be basic and include questions that would be applicable to any job in the division. Additional job-specific questions can be addressed as job vacancies arise, but should be



determined by the Leadership Team. Once job-specific questions have been created for a particular job, they can be utilized again in the future as additional vacancies occur.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

FINDING

Within the past few years, CCPS has begun recruitment activities—primarily attending job fairs in the Western Virginia/West Virginia region.

Exhibit 3-7 provides recruitment statistics for Spring 2006, as compiled by the Grants Coordinator, who is primarily responsible for coordinating recruiting trips. As depicted in the exhibit, the division received 123 total applications as a result of attendance at regional job fairs. Each interviewee received an informational CD about CCPS and the area, as well as a bag, pencil, cup, and brochure with the CCPS logo. It is unclear from recruitment reports how many of these individuals were actually hired by the division.

Exhibit 3-7
CCPS Recruitment Statistics
2005-06 School Year

Job Fair	Location	Date	Distance from Covington	Applications Received
West Virginia Public Education Consortium	Salem, VA	February 3-4	61 miles	85
St. Paul's College	Lawrenceville, VA	February 23	249 miles	10
Great Virginia Teach-In	Richmond, VA	March 18	176 miles	14
West Virginia University	Morgantown, WV	March 23	207 miles	8
Concord University	Athens, WV	April 3	109 miles	6
Total Applications Received				123

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Grants Coordinator, 2006.

Evergreen consultants were told that the division hires between eight and 10 employees each year, some of whom are teachers. There is not a dedicated recruitment budget. Rather, the funding for recruiting functions is housed in the Superintendent's Office budget. It is unclear how much is spent on recruiting events, including overnight stays for the job fairs that are more than 150 miles from Covington.

All CCPS administrators participate in the recruitment process, and each administrator participated this year in at least one job fair. The division's recruitment report additionally notes that "schools of minority students, including St. Paul's and Hampton University, are on alternating years."

Information not captured by the division in any recruiting-related reports includes the number of new hires resulting from recruiting trips, characteristics of the new hires, and cost to the division of the recruiting trips. The Secretary to the Superintendent is responsible for advertising for



vacant positions in local and regional newspapers. No data are collected related to the cost benefit of advertising in particular newspapers or on particular Web sites.

CCPS staff were very positive in the Evergreen's survey of administrators and teachers about the recruitment program and its perceived successes. But, without appropriate data to support the perceptions, the division cannot truly call the recruitment program a success.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-12:

Collect and track data related to recruiting and advertising.

Without knowing how much money the division has spent on recruiting, Evergreen Solutions cannot determine whether the recruiting practices are cost efficient. Additionally, without knowing how many new teachers were hired as a result of recruiting trips, it is not possible to judge the cost benefit of the trips. CCPS has indicated that at least one of the recruiting trips each year is designed to recruit minority teachers. However, it is not possible to tell whether the division has in fact been able to recruit minority teachers as a result of these trips.

The Grants Coordinator should collect additional data related to recruiting trips in the division, including:

- the number of new hires resulting from each recruiting trips;
- characteristics of teachers hired as a result of a recruiting trip (e.g., race, gender); and
- cost to the division of the recruiting trips.

The Secretary to the Superintendent should collect additional data related to advertising for vacant positions, including the:

- quarterly and annual cost of advertising by newspaper/Web site;
- number of responses and new hires generated by newspaper/Web site; and
- overall cost benefit of each form of advertising used by the division.

Collecting the data will require staff time. However, the data could show the cost of advertising in particular newspapers or a particular recruiting trip may outweigh the benefit. In other words, if the dollars spent per new hire are significant, the division may achieve a cost savings by revising the recruitment strategy to utilize more cost-effective methods.

FISCAL IMPACT

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



3.5 EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

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

Covington City Public Schools provides teacher salaries that exceed those of its peers. **Exhibit 3-8** depicts the 2006-07 CCPS teacher salary schedule.

Exhibit 3-8
CCPS Teacher Salary Schedule
2006-07 School Year

Step	Value	Percent Increase
0	\$35,021.00	
1	\$35,546.00	1.5%
2	\$36,072.00	1.5%
3	\$36,597.00	1.5%
4	\$37,122.00	1.4%
5	\$37,648.00	1.4%
6	\$38,173.00	1.4%
7	\$38,698.00	1.4%
8	\$39,224.00	1.4%
9	\$39,749.00	1.3%
10	\$40,274.00	1.3%
11	\$40,799.00	1.3%
12	\$41,325.00	1.3%
13	\$41,850.00	1.3%
14	\$42,375.00	1.3%
15	\$42,901.00	1.2%
16	\$43,426.00	1.2%
17	\$43,951.00	1.2%
18	\$44,477.00	1.2%
19	\$45,002.00	1.2%
20	\$45,527.00	1.2%
21+	\$54,348.00	19.4%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

The schedule is approximately 55 percent wide from minimum to maximum with relatively even spacing between pay grades, with the exception of Step 21+, which has a 19 percent jump.

Exhibit 3-9 shows the CCPS average teacher salaries in fiscal years 2005 and 2006 compared to peer division average actual salaries.



Exhibit 3-9
Annual Average Teacher Salaries
Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006

School Division	FY 2005 Actual Average Teacher Salary	FY 2006 Actual Average Teacher Salary	Percent Difference, FY 2005 to FY 2006
Covington City	\$45,912.56	\$47,464.75	3.38%
Buena Vista City	\$39,832.84	\$42,425.15	6.51%
Franklin City	\$41,868.39	\$43,176.38	3.12%
Galax City	\$39,019.75	\$41,000.75	5.08%
Norton City	\$41,158.07	\$41,517.69	0.87%
West Point	\$38,707.62	\$40,797.40	5.40%
Peer Division Average	\$40,117.33	\$41,783.47	4.20%

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

As shown in the exhibit, the CCPS average teacher salary was approximately 13 percent greater than the peer average in fiscal year 2005, and 12 percent greater in fiscal year 2006. While the division is providing teacher salaries that are significantly greater than its peers on average, a majority of peer districts (3 of 5) provided larger increases in this period than CCPS did.

The 2003 average actual salaries for CCPS teachers and peer divisions are shown in **Exhibit 3-10**, as well as city per capita incomes and city median household incomes. On average, peer division teacher salaries are approximately 119 percent greater than the city per capita income and 22 percent greater than the city median household income. In comparison, the CCPS average teacher salary is 174 percent greater than the city per capita income and 51 percent greater than the city median household income.

Exhibit 3-10
Annual Average Teacher Salaries
2004-05 School Year

School Division	2003 Actual Average Teacher Salary*	City Per Capita Income*	City Median Household Income*
Covington City	\$45,913	\$16,758	\$30,325
Buena Vista City	\$39,833	\$16,377	\$32,410
Franklin City	\$41,868	\$18,573	\$31,687
Galax City	\$39,014	\$17,447	\$28,236
Norton City	\$41,158	\$16,024	\$22,788
West Point	\$38,708	\$23,232	\$49,655
Peer Division Average	\$40,116	\$18,331	\$32,955

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

*Note: US Census Data of 2000 used with cost of living adjustments for 2001 through 2003 based on the United States Social Security Office figures.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for providing teachers salaries that exceed peer division teacher salaries.



3.6 EVALUATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To comply with state and federal laws and to maintain a high-quality and effective workforce, Covington City Public Schools must ensure the appropriate licensing of professional staff; and a fair, equitable, and accountable performance evaluation system. The division must also implement a well-planned professional development program tied to the goals and objectives of the district.

FINDING

The performance evaluation process in CCPS is not being administered in a routine and regular manner.

In general, employees were relatively positive about performance evaluation documents, both in person during interviews with Evergreen Solutions consultants. In a survey of administrators in the division, Evergreen Solutions consultants found that 87.5 percent of administrators who responded to the survey *agree* or *strongly agree* that “Division employees receive annual personnel evaluations.” However, another 12.5 percent of administrator respondents indicated they *strongly disagree* with this statement. In the same survey of teachers in the division, 94.9 percent of respondents *agree* or *strongly agree* with the statement, with 5.1 percent disagreement. This would indicate that on a whole, performance evaluations are being conducted on a regular basis, but that pockets of employees likely are not receiving evaluations annually.

Conducting performance evaluations on an annual basis provides formal opportunities for supervisors to commend and critique employee work, and for employees to clearly understand what is expected of them and how well they are meeting those expectations. Supervisors are the key component to the evaluation process; without regular adherence to the annual schedule, the evaluation process is less meaningful to employees.

The division does not collect data about performance evaluations, including:

- when they are completed;
- whether or not they are completed annually for individuals;
- the outcomes by school and department; or
- division-wide.

This information is crucial to maintaining accountability for completing the forms and completing them accurately.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-13:

Review the performance evaluation process, and establish data collection and tracking methods.

In addition, CCPS should monitor the frequency of evaluations being completed, provide leadership and guidance to supervisors to ensure regular completion of evaluations, and provide



supervisory training if necessary to ensure they are being completed correctly (also see **Recommendation 2-13 in Chapter 2**).

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, the division 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 division leaders to identify areas in which employees are performing above average and areas in which improvements can be made.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools currently uses individual staff members, predominantly the Director of Instruction, to determine staff development needs for the division. In some cases, the Director of Administration determines staff development needs for classified employees.

In a survey of CCPS teachers by Evergreen Solutions, more than 30 percent of teacher respondents indicated they *agree* or *strongly agree* that “*There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.*” Further, 18 percent of respondents said the professional development program in the division needs major improvement, and an additional 21 percent state professional development needs some improvement. While these numbers are not indicative of serious problems related to professional development, they are indicative of some shortcomings in the course offerings or communication of course offerings.

Many school divisions and districts across the country conduct needs assessments surveys of employees periodically to determine what professional development opportunities are needed and wanted. Such needs assessments typically are conducted of all employees, and 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 division goals; however, recommendations from employees should receive significant consideration.

Exhibit 3-11 provides sample teacher questions from a professional development needs assessment survey. Such questions could be used at CCPS for teachers, and similar questions could be developed that are more specific to classified positions.



**Exhibit 3-11
Sample Professional Development Needs Assessment Survey**

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, Bridgewater-Raynham School District, MA, 2006.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-14:

Develop a professional development needs assessment survey, and the distribute the survey to staff on an annual basis to determine professional development needs.

The CCPS Director of Instruction should develop a professional development needs assessment survey, with assistance from the Director of Administration for questions specific to classified employees. The survey should be distributed on an annual basis to all employees in the division. The Director of Instruction and Director of Administration should compile and review the results to determine the professional development needs of the division. Professional development offerings should be geared toward the needs of employees, in addition to any requisite offerings determined by the directors and/or Superintendent.

Further, by having designated points of contact (the Director of Instruction for teachers/administrators and the Director of Administration for all classified employees), supervisors can submit requests during the year to provide specific staff development/training opportunities.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools does not use an anonymous evaluation form to gauge employee satisfaction with professional development events.

Evergreen Solutions consultants were told that employees attending a professional development activity in the division were asked at the conclusion of the event to complete an evaluation form, which asked their opinions about the quality and content of the session. Employees were asked to include their names at the bottom of the form. While most employees provided their names, some employees did not, because they felt the evaluation should be anonymous. Evergreen Solutions consultants also were told that division staff coordinating the professional development session determined who did not sign their name by process of elimination and contacted the individuals to sign their forms.

By requiring an evaluation form to be signed by attendees, CCPS may not be getting an accurate assessment about professional development sessions. It is less important to know who completed an evaluation form than to know how the sessions can be improved. The division will be able to better respond to employee needs and ensure that training activities are interesting, appropriate, and beneficial if employees provide honest feedback. The division can expect the most accurate feedback from employees who are protected by anonymity on an evaluation form.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-15:

Develop an anonymous evaluation form for use during professional development events.

The CCPS Director of Instruction should develop an anonymous evaluation form for gauging employee satisfaction with professional development activities or revise the current form to remove the employee's name. The Director of Instruction should collect the completed evaluation forms, analyze the results, and recommend adjustments to training sessions based on employee feedback.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

ALSO SEE RECOMMENDATION 10-8 IN CHAPTER 10



***CHAPTER 4:
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT***



Chapter 4

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter addresses the business, financial, and risk management functions of Covington City Public Schools 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 Covington City 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 CCPS business operation.

For comparison purposes, Covington City Public Schools selected five Virginia school divisions for this efficiency review. School divisions chosen for the comparison in this review are: Buena Vista, Franklin City, Galax, Norton, and West Point. Schools divisions are compared for benchmark indicators such as the local composite indices, revenue and expenditures.

Exhibit 4-1 shows CCPS 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, CCPS ranked third from the highest of the peer divisions for local composite index and is higher than the peer division average of .2975. 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
Covington City Public Schools and Peers
2004-05 School Year and 2006-08 School Year

School Division	2004-05	2006-08
Covington City	.3221	.2918
Buena Vista City	.2322	.2172
Franklin City	.3033	.2728
Galax City	.3239	.2944
Norton City	.3411	.3299
West Point	.2622	.2683
Peer Division Average	.2975	.2791

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

Exhibit 4-2 shows an analysis of revenue for Covington City 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, CCPS has the least revenue from state sources than any other peer division. CCPS has the third and second highest revenue percentages for federal and local funds, respectively. CCPS ranks next last of its peers in revenue from other funds.

Exhibit 4-2
Revenues by Fund Source by Division
2004-05 School Year

School Division	Percent Federal Funds	Percent State Funds	Percent Local Funds	Percent Other Funds
Covington City	12.6%	41.1%	38.6%	7.7%
Buena Vista City	6.4	56.2	27.9	9.6
Franklin City	15.1	47.4	29.7	7.8
Galax City	12.0	51.1	28.5	8.5
Norton City	15.7	51.4	22.8	10.2
West Point	4.2	45.3	44.0	6.5
Peer Division Average	10.7%	50.3%	30.6%	8.5%

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

Exhibit 4-3 shows the total disbursements and per pupil costs by division. As can be seen, CCPS total annual disbursements of \$9,834,861 rank fourth from the highest out of six peer divisions and rank less than the peer division average of \$10,486,411.



Exhibit 4-3
Total Disbursements by Division
Covington City Public Schools and Peers
2004-05 School Year

School Division	Total Disbursements	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	9,834,861	11,304
Buena Vista City	9,913,700	8,812
Franklin City	17,198,807	12,990
Galax City	11,106,928	8,357
Norton City	6,382,647	8,743
West Point	7,829,974	9,763
Peer Division Average	10,486,411	9,733

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

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Financial Management functions for Covington City Public Schools are performed primarily by the Finance Director. The Superintendent, with Finance Director support, has primary responsibility for preparation of the division budget. The Director of Administrative Services and the Secretary for the Administrative Services Department perform functions relative to fixed assets and risk management. The City of Covington finance staff perform the functions necessary to process disbursements for payroll and accounts payable. The Treasurer for the City of Covington collects revenues for the division and has signatory authority for all disbursements. The Covington City Council approves the school division budget and the allotments for school division operations. The City and the school division have established a solid working relationship and speak well of each other. Our 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 and to provide guidance for the establishment of others. Primary recommendations included in this chapter include:

- establish a budgetary process that creates a budget correlated to the adopted goals and objectives of Covington City Public Schools (Providing a resource allocation system that budgets for the goals of the division helps to ensure that the priorities outlined in a division's plan are appropriately funded.);
- establish a budget preparation calendar, including administrative and legislative dates presented on a timeline coordinated with City and Commonwealth required dates for action;
- develop and implement a comprehensive fixed assets management system;
- develop and implement a coordinated School Board/City procedure for cash flow and the allocation of interest earnings;



- develop and implement a comprehensive school activity funds manual and monitor audit findings;
- strengthen certain internal controls, and develop and implement a comprehensive business and finance operating procedures manual; and
- explore cooperative bidding for health benefits.

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:

- **Planning** - defines the goals and objectives of the school district 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 CCPS budget does not adequately document the correlation between the division's budget and the goals and objectives of the School Board and Superintendent. The 2005-06 CCPS budget document makes no reference to division goals outlined in the comprehensive plan, and does not correlate dollars allocated in the budget for annual priorities.

The division states that the budgeting process over the last five years has been very challenging primarily because the operating budget in 2006-07 is \$215,108 less than the City of Covington's local contribution in 2001-02. The division states that "most increases in state and federal revenue during this period have been devoted to the attempt to keep pace with inflation in salaries and fringe benefits. While not documented, other major expenditure changes have been tied to major priorities and goals established by the Board".



The CCPS School Board's approved annual budget is presented in April to the City Manager for submission to the Covington City Council. The proposed budget presented to the City includes:

- A line-item budget by fund and by source of revenue and functional disbursement;
- the recapitulation of revenues by category with prior year allocations and the Board-approved 2006-07 requested budget;
- the recapitulation of disbursements by code and name with prior year allocations and the Board-approved 2006-07 requested budget for each function (such as administration, instruction or attendance, and each grant, such as the Reading First Grant, Federal Program Grants, and the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant).

CCPS goals and objectives are not linked to the allocation of budgetary resources. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-1:

Document a budgetary process that shows that the budget is correlated to the goals and objectives of the CCPS School Board and Superintendent.

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 4-4 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 CCPS budgetary process is 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:



Exhibit 4-4
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, 2006.

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.

Documents presented to the Evergreen Review Team and discussions with staff indicate that input from principals and department heads is gathered at administrative meetings. The division does not routinely seek input on budget development requests from senior-level staff committees or from local parent advisory committees. Discussions of budget requests also take place at public school board meetings.

CCPS offers several opportunities for input during the budgetary process. The division conducts a public hearing in November or December, then all public input from the hearing is evaluated by the Board at its budget work session. Division documents state that:

The City of Covington advertises in the local newspaper the proposed budget seven days before the public hearing is held and also the dates of first and second reading are advertised in the same article. At the public hearing, individuals have the opportunity to address the City Council on any funding item included in the budget document. Comments may be positive or negative. The first reading of the proposed budget ordinance is usually held the same night after the public hearing is closed. The Mayor announces to the public and press the date and time of the meeting for the second reading of the proposed budget ordinance, which was previously advertised in the local newspaper. At the meeting of the second reading of the proposed budget ordinance, the public has the opportunity again to address City Council on any funding item in the



proposed budget document. If Council does not change any funding item in the proposed budget appropriation ordinance on the second reading, the budget is approved and adopted. If Council does change any funding item in the proposed budget appropriation ordinance, an advertisement must be placed in the local newspaper and there must be two readings of the proposed budget ordinance before the budget is approved and adopted. There must be three days between first and second readings.

To summarize, citizens are informed throughout the budgetary process by:

- newspaper and school board publications;
- school division public hearings;
- Covington City Council Meetings; and
- Covington City Council Public Hearings.

Exhibit 4-5 shows the survey results for CCPS administrators and teachers compared to administrators and teachers in Evergreen’s survey database. CCPS administrators *agree* by 75 percent compared to 62 percent of comparison administrators that the school division’s budgeting operations is *adequate* or *outstanding*. CCPS teachers were split with 41 percent, compared to comparison teachers at 49.5 percent, indicating that the division’s budgeting operations is *adequate* or *outstanding*. CCPS teachers *agree* 20.5 percent to 33.3 percent for comparison teachers that the school division’s budgeting operation needs *some* or *major improvement*.

**Exhibit 4-5
Teachers and Administrators Survey Results on Budgeting in
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement: Indicate your opinion of school division budgeting operations.	Covington City Public Schools		Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Teachers	20.5%	41.0%	33.3%	49.5%
Administrators	25.0%	75.0%	35.4%	62.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

A well-communicated, inclusionary budgetary process is essential to establish confidence and support for the school division. **Exhibit 4-6** shows a sample Budget Development Calendar which includes examples of the types of meetings CCPS may want to consider. A comprehensive timeline with pertinent administrative dates communicates an open and transparent budgeting process with employees and the community.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-2:

Develop and implement a detailed budget preparation calendar.



Exhibit 4-6
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: Allegheny County Public Schools, Finance Department, 2006.

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 Covington City Public Schools are minimally included in the budgetary process. The Superintendent gathers input from principals and department heads at administrative meetings and employees have opportunities for input at public meetings. Evergreen's survey results, review of division records, and discussions with staff indicate that most principals and some teachers agree that the budgeting process is used effectively to involve principals and teachers. Yet, clearly, there is room for improvement in the process of communications regarding budget priorities, initiatives, and potential budgetary impact of programmatic changes.



Exhibit 4-7 shows survey results which indicate that administrators feel the schools and departments are involved in the budget process. As can be seen, CCPS teachers *agree* less strongly than their peers that site-based budgeting is used effectively to involve principals and teachers, but also *disagree* less strongly than their peers that budgeting is used effectively to involve principals and teachers. Administrators consistently *strongly agree* that site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.

Exhibit 4-7
Survey Results on Site-Based Budgeting in
Covington City 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.	Covington City Public Schools		Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Comparison Strongly Agree/Agree	Comparison Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Teachers	15.4%	33.3%	38.5%	35.6%
Administrators	62.5%	12.5%	48.1%	19.3%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

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 Covington City 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

CCPS spends more than its peer division on instructional disbursements. 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 concurrence that funds are managed wisely.

Exhibit 4-8 shows an analysis of instructional expenditures for CCPS and peer divisions. As the exhibit shows, CCPS spends more per pupil for instructional disbursements than all of the peer divisions. CCPS spends \$8,311 per pupil on instructional disbursements which is more than those in its peer group which averages \$6,749.



Exhibit 4-8
Instructional Disbursements by Division
2004-05 School Year

School Division	Instruction	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$7,230,929	\$8,311
Buena Vista City	7,248,334	6,443
Franklin City	10,629,398	8,028
Galax City	7,660,287	5,764
Norton City	4,625,550	6,336
West Point	5,753,977	7,175
School Division Average	\$7,183,509	\$6,749

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

Exhibit 4-9 shows an analysis of administrative expenditures for CCPS and the peer divisions. As the exhibit shows, CCPS spends third of the six divisions in per pupil for administrative disbursements. CCPS spends \$360 per pupil on administrative disbursements which is third among the peer divisions which average \$391.

Exhibit 4-9
Administrative Disbursements by Division
2004-05 School Year

School Division	Administration	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$313,194	\$360
Buena Vista City	337,225	300
Franklin City	693,277	524
Galax City	470,239	354
Norton City	308,462	423
West Point	284,084	354
Peer Division Average	\$418,657	\$391

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

Evergreen survey results indicate that teachers and administrators are split on whether the school division manages funds wisely to support education. Administrators all *agree* that funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division. Teachers *disagree* or *strongly disagree* at 43.6 percent compared to comparison survey respondents at 32 percent. **Exhibit 4-10** shows a split as to whether survey respondents agree that funds are spent to support education.

Exhibit 4-10
Evergreen Survey Results on Use of Division Funds in
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Survey Statement: Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division.	Covington City Public Schools		Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Comparison Strongly Agree/Agree	Comparison Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Teachers	18.0%	43.6%	34.2%	32.0%
Administrators	100.0%	0.0%	77.2%	11.9%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.



COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for wisely managing funds to support education in the school division.

Disbursements clearly show that CCPS ranks the highest of the comparison divisions in per pupil instructional expenditures. CCPS spending more than peer divisions on instruction and spending third among the peer divisions on division administration; thus indicates a strong support for education. Perceptions among teachers are not consistent with the survey and statistical findings; thus, it is important to monitor and evaluate potential reasons for the difference in perceptions.

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 CCPS 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 CCPS 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 with disbursements controlled by purchase orders and specific authorization. Activity fund accounting reports are compiled monthly and audited annually.

FINDING

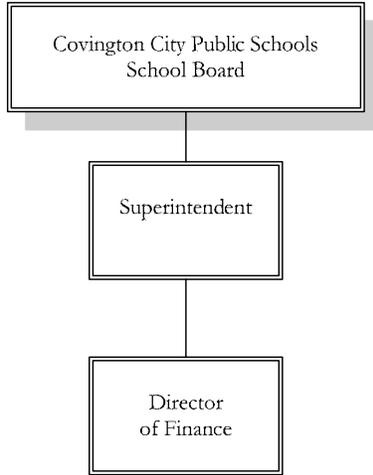
Financial management and accountability in Covington City Public Schools is performed primarily by the Director of Finance in the central office. In addition to financial management, the Finance Department staff is responsible for other financial aspects such as the division budgets, disbursements, and activity funds. The financial management functions in Covington City Public Schools are supervised by the Director of Finance with disbursements approved and processed at the City.

Exhibit 4-11 shows the organizational structure of the CCPS Finance Department.

Exhibit 4-12 shows Evergreen's survey results relative to financial management. The results indicate that teachers and administrators agree that financial management is *adequate* or *outstanding*. CCPS teachers rate the school division financial management as *adequate* or *outstanding* at 51.3 percent, compared to districts in Evergreen's survey database at 36.7 percent. Administrators rate CCPS financial management as *adequate* or *outstanding* at 87.5 percent, compared to 63.3 percent for survey database respondents.



**Exhibit 4-11
Organizational Chart
CCPS Finance Department
2006-07 School Year**



Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

**Exhibit 4-12
Teachers and Administrators Survey Results on Financial Management in
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement: Indicate your opinion of school division financial management.	Covington City Public Schools		Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Teachers	15.4%	51.3%	40.9%	36.7%
Administrators	12.5%	87.5%	31.6%	63.3%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Surveys Results 2006.

COMMENDATION

The CCPS Finance Department is commended for its outstanding survey results when compared to Evergreen’s survey database respondents.

FINDING

The CCPS Finance Department and the City of Covington are on different accounting systems. The CCPS Finance Department has no capabilities to input data or view information on the City’s accounting system. Currently, hard copy reports are generated at the City and taken to the Finance Department or generated at the school division and taken to the City. In some cases,



such as for disbursements, finance staff have to re-enter the data from schools and departments into the finance system before being sent forward.

As data changes occur during a disbursements period, especially a payroll cycle, the changes have to be entered at the division level then faxed or taken to the City for entry into the City's system. Such a fragmented system is cumbersome for City staff as well as the school division finance staff. Although finance staffs at both the City and the division have developed a cooperative work environment, which helps minimize errors and irregularities, the increased potential exists for errors to occur given the flow of data.

Independent discussions with various employees, and reviews in similar financial data processing situations, indicate that limited access to transmit select data to certain files and limited access to view division files reduce the potential for errors and minimizes the redundancy of data entry. Financial functions that could be accessed online through an integrated system, include reports and financial information such as:

- monthly payroll reports and check registers;
- monthly accounts payable disbursements reports;
- monthly revenue and expense;
- monthly trial balance reports; and
- year-end closing and reconciliation reports.

RECOMMENDATION

Note: This recommendation is primarily intended for the City of Covington.

Recommendation 4-4:

Investigate the integration of the City and CCPS financial data processing systems.

Providing online access between the City and CCPS Finance Departments should improve efficiencies between the two entities. Security should be established to a level conducive to a protection of City systems and information while providing a means of electronic communications. Connecting the financial accounting systems should help eliminate redundancy of processing operations and potentially reduce staff time over the long term. Although this recommendation will require collaboration between the City and CCPS, creating a connected system will provide a streamlined accounting process for CCPS and the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

CCPS 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 CCPS Finance Department provides certain written procedures in memo form supporting Board policy. Employees are clear and concise regarding the standard operations procedures. The CCPS Board Policy Manual includes certain policies for business and financial functions.

Examples of business and financial policies are:

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

Procedures set forth, in more detail, the work flow and interrelationships of business and financial functions provide guidance to employees and 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 intergovernmental cooperation can thrive.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-5:

Develop and implement a comprehensive procedures manual for the business and financial transactions within Covington City Public Schools.

Implementing written procedures that document the financial accounting processes should provide CCPS 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

The CCPS receives no interest earnings from the City. Discussions with City officials and division staff and records indicate no interest earnings are allocated for funds budgeted for CCPS. Finance Department staff do not prepare a cash flow statement nor provide the City with an estimate of expected monthly expenditures. The general consensus of those interviewed is that it is the City's money and that any interest earned is the property of the City. The City



Council determines the amount of funds annually budgeted for the division and the rate of interest earned, positive or negative, is the City’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 the City and CCPS 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 City.

Exhibit 4-13 shows the purpose and scope of the investment policy of the City of Covington Treasurer.

**Exhibit 4-13
City of Covington Investment Policy
Purpose and Scope**

Purpose and Scope
The purpose of this statement of investment policy is to establish guidelines for the safeguarding and efficient management of City funds and for the purpose and sale of investment instruments. The goal is to minimize risk and to ensure the availability of cash to meet the City’s expenditures, while generating revenue from the use of funds which might otherwise remain idle. This investment policy applies to all financial assets under the authority of the Treasurer.
Objectives
The primary objectives of the Treasurer’s investment activities, in priority order, are: safety, liquidity, and yield. Safety of principal is the foremost objective of the investment of public funds. Investments shall be undertaken in a manner that seeks to ensure the preservation of capital in the overall portfolio. The investment portfolio will remain sufficiently liquid to enable the Treasurer to meet all operating requirements of the City which might be reasonably anticipated. The investment portfolio shall be designed with the objective of attaining a market rate of return throughout budgetary and economic cycles. This objective shall take into account constraints as to acceptable risk and the characteristics of the City’s cash flow.

Source: City of Covington Treasurer, November 2006.

CCPS works with the City Treasurer whose responsibility 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 users’ cash flow needs and balance with the goals of maximizing the rate of return on funds while protecting taxpayer resources.

The 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/City Council policy for cash flow and the allocation of interest earnings.

Having a coordinated procedure between the City Council and the School Board regarding cash flow and allocation of interest earnings should allow the CCPS Finance Department to more adequately allocate and document revenues and disbursements. Providing the City with an expected cash flow will facilitate the City's investment strategies.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

CCPS lacks sufficient internal control over certain aspects of its business and financial operations. The division issues approximately 1,500 purchase orders and processes for documentation for more than 12,000 payroll and accounts payable disbursements 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. Board Policy DJA states: “The Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall establish appropriate procedures for internal accounting controls.”
- Purchasing – Purchases are sometimes made prior to approval of a valid purchase order. Board Policy DJA states: “All personnel in the division who desire to purchase equipment and supplies shall follow the established procurement procedures within their departments or schools for the issuance of a requisition or purchase order”. CCPS Chapter 4-30 entitled Requisitions and Use of Purchase Order states: “No item may be purchased in the name of the Covington City School Board without prior approval of the Superintendent and the issuance of a purchase order on the standard form.”
- Student Activity Funds – The same employee has the responsibility for receipting, recording, and depositing funds. Board Policy DI states: “A record of all receipts and disbursements will be maintained in accordance with the regulations and procedures as promulgated by the Superintendent and in accordance with regulations issued by the State Board of Education.”



The CCPS 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. CCPS has, however, established compensating controls to help mitigate the lack of segregation of duties by having the CCPS School Board and City Council approve and process 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 CCPS assets.

Strengthening internal controls over division assets can be achieved by improving the segregation of duties. For example, properly authorized purchase orders should be obtained prior to purchases, and purchases should not be returned to the same employee with control of the transaction.

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.

All CCPS purchasing cards are kept in a locked safe in the Instructional Services Department. Cards are individually checked out to users by the Instructional Secretary. The Instructional Secretary maintains documentation of the purchasing card use, including the date, person checking out the card, and the type of card. All cards have purchasing limits. An explanation of purchasing card guidelines include the following:

All credit cards are available for use by employees, and it is expected that the employee follow Division purchasing guidelines and use the card responsibly. Credit cards are kept in the office of the Supervisor of Instruction and are checked out by employees as needed for travel expenses. Expenses charged to the card that are non-travel related must be approved by the Superintendent. Credit cards cannot be used to purchase services. Employees using the card are responsible for obtaining the proper documentation for Division records. Original itemized receipts are required for all credit card transactions.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-8:

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

Strengthening policies and procedures governing accountability over purchasing card transactions will 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, and eligible participants. Even though the purchasing card transactions have been audited by a private accounting firm with no deficiencies noted, enhanced Board policies and procedures will provide guidance and support CCPS Finance Department efforts toward 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. 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

CCPS does not have a current, comprehensive School Activity Fund Manual. The division provides general guidance for school activity funds through its 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". Chapter 4-16, entitled Funds -Generally, states that:

All funds handled by employees of the board, regardless of source, are considered funds of the board, and as such, shall be handled in accordance with regulations of the superintendent, the regulations of the State Board of Education and State law. This definition of funds includes all student activity funds raised by a school or by organizations connected with a school except the parent-teacher associations.

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.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The independent audit of the CCPS school activity accounts shows several comments regarding audit findings and recommendations. Each year, CCPS contracts with an independent external auditor to perform audits of the division’s school activity funds. The Public School Activity Funds Cash Basis Financial Statement (Year Ended June 30, 2006) Audit Report discusses three comments for the three schools audited. Most comments are minor, and show a decrease in the number of comments from the June 30, 2003 audit report.

Exhibit 4-14 shows examples of recent comments.

**Exhibit 4-14
School Activity Funds
Year Ended June 30
Independent Audit Comments
2005-06 Fiscal Years**

June 30th	Audit Comment
2005	Money collected at athletic events should be remitted to the bookkeeper and posted to the books the following business day after the event. The deposit should be made at the bank 2-3 business days following the event.
2005	Purchase orders dated after the invoice.
2006	Money collected at athletic events should be remitted to the bookkeeper and posted to the books the following business day after the event. The deposit should be made at the bank 2-3 business days following the event.
2006	Athletic money received for a varsity football game was booked at \$17,442 however the documentation from ticket sales of that game indicate that sales were \$17,772. The audit recommends that ticket sheets be reviewed and compared against the money collected and deposited for discrepancies.
2006	Check is the amount of \$2,448 did not have supporting documentation. The audit recommends that all purchases have documentation to support the payment. Purchase orders dated after the invoice.

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Audited Financial Statements, 2005 and 2006.



It is evident from the examples, that CCPS schools have repeated comments for the same issue, such as the timely deposit on school funds. A strong system of internal control and accountability would preclude such instances of repeat comments. As **Exhibit 4-15** shows, more than \$250,000 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 4-15
Activity Funds Year-End Balances
2002-03 Through 2005-06 Fiscal Years

Year Ended June 30th	Beginning Balances	Receipts	Disbursements	Ending Balances
2006	\$105,850	\$251,842	\$232,292	\$125,400
2005	* 135,110	185,855	215,116	105,850
2004	*155,088	216,343	228,005	*143,426
2003	155,086	202,857	202,854	*155,088

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from CCPS Activity Funds Audits, Nov. 2006.

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

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-10:

Monitor audit findings to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local rules, regulations, and sound financial practices.

Division finance staff are auditing accounts and providing technical assistance as needed. An emphasis on sound accountability at the school level should be encouraged by senior management. Public School Activity Funds Audit Reports should be reviewed by the principal and division management, and reported to the Board. Discrepancies in the audit reports should be brought to the attention of the City auditors.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

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 Assets 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 assets 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 4-16 shows the June 30, 2005 schedule of assets with a value of close to \$650,000 in machinery and equipment.

**Exhibit 4-16
Schedule of Fixed Assets
June 30, 2005**

Asset Category	Beginning Balance	Increases/ Decrease	Ending Balance
Capital Assets, not being depreciated:			
Land	\$101,124		\$101,124
Construction in Progress		\$4,693	4,693
Total Capital Assets not Depreciated	101,124	4,693	105,817
Capital Assets, being depreciated:			
Buildings	1,481,617		1,481,617
Machinery and Equipment	626,411	16,328	642,739
Total Capital Assets being Depreciated	2,108,028	16,328	2,124,356
Less Accumulated Depreciation for:			
Buildings	(1,136,255)	(10,896)	(1,147,151)
Machinery and Equipment	(308,642)	(50,136)	(358,778)
Total Accumulated Depreciation	(1,444,897)	(61,032)	(1,505,929)
Total Capital Assets being Depreciated, net	663,131	(44,704)	618,427
Total Capital Assets, net	764,255	(40,011)	724,244

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from Covington City Public Schools Records, November 2006.

Covington City Public Schools have 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

Covington City Public Schools have not maintained a comprehensive Fixed Assets Management Plan. Responsibility for assets is spread among staff, primarily the Technology Coordinator at the Technical Center who handles the division's technology, and the Director of Administration who handles other property. The Technology Department maintains an extensive detailed listing of computers, printers, and other technology for all schools and departments. The Administrative Services Department handles the inventory of non-fleet vehicles, buses, buildings, and equipment.

Exhibit 4-17 shows examples in inventories maintained by division personnel.



Exhibit 4-17
Examples of Inventories Maintained by Division Personnel
June 30, 2005

Asset Category	Documentation Provided						
	Maintenance vehicles, staff vehicles, buses	Vin Number	Bus Number	Year	Make	Model	License Number
Computers	Description	Room	IP Address	Operating System	Serial Number	Manufacturer	Device Type

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from CCPS Records, November 2006.

Exhibit 4-18 shows Evergreen's survey results which indicate that the asset management in CCPS is *adequate* or *outstanding*. Teachers and administrators rate CCPS asset management as *adequate* or *outstanding* with a higher percentage than teachers and administrators in Evergreen's survey database of divisions.

Exhibit 4-18
Teachers and Administrators Survey Results on Asset Management
in Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Survey Statement: Indicate your opinion of school division asset management.	Covington City Public Schools		Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Teachers	7.7%	51.3%	58.8%	25.1%
Administrators	12.5%	87.5%	14.6%	82.9%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

Evergreen's survey results are not consistent with discussions with CCPS employees and Evergreen's review of division property controls policies and procedures. The inconsistency reportedly is a difference in evaluating asset management for managerial purposes, rather than for financial purposes. Survey results indicate that 87.5 percent of administrators and 51.3 percent of the teachers believe the asset management is *adequate* or *outstanding*.

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 4-11:

Develop and implement a comprehensive Fixed Asset Management Plan.

Developing a Fixed Assets Management Plan will provide guidance for the proper accounting and safeguarding of division assets. A comprehensive Fixed Asset Management Plan should



include a comprehensive Board policy, comprehensive procedures, samples of expectations for inventory records, and a clear method of communications.

Dollar values for inventory should be established 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 CCPS property control number. A bar coding system should be implemented and become a part of the 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 assets 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.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4.5 RISK MANAGEMENT

Virginia school divisions are responsible for the protection, prudent management, and safeguarding of division assets. An effective risk management program provides for a safeguarding of division assets by minimizing risk of loss and protecting division assets. CCPS 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 CCPS risk management functions, including workers' compensation, property casualty and liability insurances, and employee-related insurances.

CCPS functions partially within the Covington City's Risk Management Program. The City provides disbursement for payroll and accounts payable, disbursement signatory, banking services procurement and monitoring, bank reconciliations, and investment services. CCPS 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.

Exhibit 4-19 shows survey results which indicate that 51.3 percent of teachers, higher than Evergreen’s survey database respondents of 19.5 percent, rate CCPS risk management as *adequate* or *outstanding*. CCPS school administrators (75.0 percent) rate the division’s risk management program *adequate* or *outstanding* compared to 64.6 percent of Evergreen’s survey database respondents. Of the CCPS school administrators, however, 25.0 percent rate the division’s risk management program in need of *some* or *major improvement* compared to 19.0 percent of Evergreen’s survey database respondents.

Exhibit 4-19
Teachers and Administrators Survey Results on Risk Management in Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database

Survey Statement: Indicate your opinion of school division risk management.	Covington City Public Schools		Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Teachers	15.4%	51.3%	48.8%	19.5%
Administrators	25.0%	75.0%	19.0%	64.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

FINDING

CCPS lacks an updated comprehensive 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. Although not specifically set forth in a comprehensive crisis management plan, division staff indicate that they work closely with local law enforcement and emergency services agencies in school safety, security, and emergency assessment, planning, and coordination.

School administrators are provided flip charts as a reference guide for various incidents. Each school within the school division is currently updating its crisis management plan. School administrators are customizing the crisis management handbooks, in the form of flip charts, for each school’s individual use. The individual school handbooks comprise one aspect of a crisis management plan and provide a resource for student-related incidents.

Exhibit 4-20 shows examples of topics included in the CCPS flip charts.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-12:

Update the division-wide Crisis Management Plan.



Exhibit 4-20
Example Topics
Training Flip Charts

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

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from CCPS Records, November 2006.

The development and implementation of the comprehensive Crisis Management Plan for Covington City Public Schools 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.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The responsibility for the workers' compensation function is disaggregated among CCPS several employees. The CCPS 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. 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.

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

- The Director of Finance is responsible for workers' compensation claims management. She notifies the workers' compensation carrier and processes the first report of injury. She follows up on claims as needed.
- The Secretary for the Department of Administration provides back up in the event the Director of Finance is unavailable. She processes claims and forwards them to the Director of Finance or the workers' compensation carrier as is appropriate.



- The Director of Administration is responsible for developing and implementing components of a loss prevention program, such as the Crisis Management Plan, and safety orientation and training. He is also responsible for the 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-13:

Establish central responsibility and authority for risk management.

Work assignments can 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

Covington City 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 CCPS 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 Board's Association.

Opportunities offered employees through the CCPS Department of Administrative Services include topics such as:

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

The CCPS 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 \$34,775, and the 2005 claims were \$450. Previous years' history,



however, shows the potential for claims to increase. **Exhibit 4-21** shows the workers' compensation utilization including the number of claims and dollar value of those claims.

Exhibit 4-21
Workers' Compensation Utilization
2001 through 2005 Fiscal Years

Year Ended June 30th	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Annual Claims Amounts	\$34,775	\$1,813	\$30,438	\$3,963	\$450	\$8,463
Annual Number of Claims	10	5	8	10	6	9

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from CCPS Records, November 2006.

The CCPS claims experience directly impacts the premiums paid for workers' compensation. CCPS workers' compensation premiums are determined by utilization reflected in an experience modifier. CCPS 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 CCPS was slightly below the norm in 2003-04, then increased above the norm, and then declined to slightly below the norm. The workers' compensation experience modifier, which impacts the cost of workers' compensation premiums, has fluctuated over the last several years.

Exhibit 4-22 shows the workers' compensation experience modifiers for the 2003-04 through the 2006-07 school years.

Exhibit 4-22
Workers' Compensation Experience Modifiers
2003-04 through 2006-07 School Years

Workers' Compensation Experience Modifier			
2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
.997	1.15	1.01	.97

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Workers' Compensation Records, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-14:

Develop, communicate, and implement a comprehensive loss prevention plan for injuries and work-related accidents.

CCPS has several components of a loss prevention plan. Coordinating staff efforts and communicating the plan and training opportunities will create an 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 CCPS Board places upon loss prevention.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

ALSO SEE RECOMMENDATION 10-19 IN CHAPTER 10



**CHAPTER 5:
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
AND MANAGEMENT**



Chapter 5

***EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY
AND MANAGEMENT***

This chapter addresses the instructional delivery operations of the Covington City Public Schools (CCPS) and includes the following seven sections:

- 5.1 Instructional Delivery and Student Performance
- 5.2 Special Education
- 5.3 Preschool Programs
- 5.4 Gifted and Talented Program
- 5.5 Programs for At-Risk Students
- 5.6 Career and Technical Education
- 5.7 Parent Involvement

The educational service delivery of a school division depends on central office staff to serve as the support system, and provide leadership and coordination for the education that is provided in 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 way in which these central office factors are designed can either support or prevent progress towards high achievement for students.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Covington City Public Schools have made tremendous strides in recent years in addressing curriculum, providing staff development on research-based instructional strategies, and providing support systems for realization of instructional goals such as well-funded media centers in all schools. These actions serve as a strong foundation for continued efforts to improve teaching and learning. Surveys conducted reflect that teachers and administrators overwhelmingly recognize that the emphasis on learning has increased in recent years. A Reading First Grant provides a firm foundation for division students in their reading abilities with percentages of students scoring at the proficient and advanced levels increasing markedly in all grades tested. An exemplary after-school program provides enrichment and remediation and strengthens daytime instruction. CCPS staff also regularly visit homes to better understand factors impeding student learning.

A concerted focus on raising the achievement of special education students as well ensuring all of its students meet the 2013-14 national goal of having all students proficient, as the achievement of those students in CCPS lags behind peers and students with disabilities state-wide. Inclusionary practices at the high school appear to contribute to higher achievement among its special needs students and, when expanded division-wide, should similarly raise achievement in other schools. Higher than average special education student enrollments indicate a need for



practices to be adopted that will enable teachers to serve those students in regular classes before identification for special education.

Recommendations in this report are intended to build on existing strong practices and processes in the division and provide guidance for improvements for the benefit of students, staff and the community. Some key recommendations include:

- continue the division's focus on reading, especially the elements that specifically address reading at the elementary and early intermediate levels;
- continue to create systems at the division and school levels in Covington City Public Schools that ensure that the educational requirements of special needs students are considered in every decision;
- adapt strategies proven effective in other Virginia divisions to address student needs in regular classes before referral to special education;
- make a concerted effort to identify special and regular education teachers who are willing to co-teach to model its benefits for students to other teachers;
- combine advanced courses with similar courses in the same class period to expand enrichment opportunities for more advanced students and ensure that advanced placement teachers are trained before teaching courses;
- create a communication structure that will ensure participation from daytime instructional personnel to the after-school instructors; and
- use activities in the after-school program as models for curriculum integration.

5.1 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 clear learning goals. The curriculum encompasses relationships among 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 goals to employees and constituents; and
- monitors them regularly.

Personnel at the division level must have expertise in their area of responsibility. Processes that allow staff time to direct 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 them about individuals and groups of students who either require additional enrichment or remediation to achieve at their highest capability. Clear and frequent communications between 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

When the current Superintendent took over the Covington City Schools, he issued an invitation to all employees to meet with him to discuss division, staff, and student needs. Approximately 80 percent of employees accepted the invitation. The clarion call he heard was the need for an instructional focus for the division. Within two months after those meetings, the division began working with Virginia Best Practices Centers to address long-standing curricular needs. Staff began working to develop an instructional improvement plan and to provide related staff development for the division's educators. A Supervisor of Instruction came on board to lead the charge.

The division has held "Finding the Gaps" meetings between K-12 teachers to discuss foundational curricula and instructional gaps at each grade level. Teachers took neon sticky labels and marked their textbooks as they developed the CCPS Pacing Guide. The sticky labels were used to indicate which Standards of Learning (SOLs) were met teaching that particular lesson in the textbook. All additional resources were labeled in the CCPS Curriculum Guide so that teachers would have a complete list of resources in order to teach key concepts and skills. Used in conjunction with textbook adoption, this visually lets teachers see which objectives each book addresses, which is the most comprehensive for a particular subject area, and also lets teachers better identify additional resources to teach key concepts and skills.

Curricular and instructional improvement efforts continue today. The Superintendent has also demonstrated his awareness of the integral role that well-equipped, updated media centers play in the effectiveness of a school's instructional program. Within the past year, he has committed \$400,000 in funds to two of the media centers, and plans to spend an equivalent amount at the division's high school next year.



Surveys conducted by Evergreen prior to the site visit reflect that the division has placed a greater emphasis on learning in recent years. **Exhibit 5-1** reveals responses of CCPS teachers and administrators compared to other district respondents surveyed relating to the focus on education. Respondents from both CCPS groups indicate an overwhelming belief that the division has increased its focus on learning in recent years.

Exhibit 5-1
Teachers and Administrators Survey Results on Emphasis on Learning
in Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database

Survey Statement	Covington City Public Schools		Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The emphasis on learning in the school division has increased in recent years.				
Administrators	100%	0%	91.1%	3.8%
Teachers	82%	7.7%	79.6%	8.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

Exhibit 5-2 shows SOL scores in eighth grade that reflect the success of division’s efforts and shows higher percentages of CCPS students meeting or exceeding state standards than either the state or peer divisions in all subjects.

Exhibit 5-2
Standards of Learning (SOL) Results
Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standard
Grade 8
2005-06 School Year

School Division	English	Mathematics	Science
Covington City	89%	79%	89%
Buena Vista City	81%	76%	87%
Franklin City	49%	61%	70%
Galax City	77%	61%	77%
Norton City	67%	75%	82%
West Point	96%	87%	97%
Peer Division Average	74%	72%	83%
State Average	78%	79%	87%

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

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for the strides the division has made in bringing curriculum to the forefront of division activities.



FINDING

Covington City Public Schools states that the division uses the basic framework from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for curriculum guides. Others interviewed in past efficiency studies in the Commonwealth have stated that they view the state's framework as an essential floor rather than a ceiling in terms of curricular guidance. CCPS has refined it, listing resources that the division has available to satisfy each standard. Teachers continue to add to those lists throughout the year. Core curriculum and pacing guides are updated per the VDOE cycle. For non-core curricula, VDOE curriculum guides are used.

Documents provided Evergreen show an extensive structure of core curriculum committees that should operate as one vehicle for expanding curricular improvement efforts. Committees have representatives from each school which meet when revisions are indicated. The documents indicate that in the Summer of 2003, English and Math Alignment/Pacing Teams met and the following summer, Social Studies and Science Teams met. The committees work together to ensure that teachers have needed resources to teach content Standards of Learning (SOL). A team for data analysis has also been formed. Many documents were provided that demonstrate a thoughtful process of walking teachers and administrators through examination of multiple sources of data for examination of factors and trends affecting student performance.

Exhibits 5-3 and **5-4** show that student performance compared to peer divisions and the State at the third grade is close to peer and state averages, but that in fifth grade, CCPS students fall behind peers and the state.

Exhibit 5-3
Standards of Learning (SOL) Results
Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standard
Grade 3
2005-06 School Year

School Division	English	Mathematics	History and Social Science	Science
Covington City	80%	85%	89%	84%
Buena Vista City	88%	91%	92%	96%
Franklin City	69%	71%	78%	72%
Galax City	84%	97%	92%	91%
Norton City	87%	91%	96%	96%
West Point	96%	98%	94%	98%
Peer Division Average	85%	90%	90%	91%
State Average	84%	92%	91%	90%

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



Exhibit 5-4
Standards of Learning (SOL) Results
Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standard
Grade 5
2005-06 School Year

School Division	English	Mathematics	History and Social Science	Science
Covington City	74%	51%	72%	70%
Buena Vista City	82%	90%	81%	85%
Franklin City	83%	89%	84%	80%
Galax City	75%	70%	80%	70%
Norton City	84%	96%	83%	93%
West Point	96%	94%	96%	87%
Peer Division Average	84%	88%	85%	83%
State Average	87%	83%	85%	85%

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

Research in effective schools reflects that staff focus on identifying critical elements to be taught at each grade level to increase the probability of student success. Activities on effective practices associated with curriculum mapping and pacing were:

- instruction being SOL-driven rather than textbook driven;
- outlining an instructional sequence with appropriate timelines;
- clear descriptions of the scope of content and skills;
- pacing guides that help teachers use instructional time more effectively; and
- teachers constantly reviewing their maps and pacing guides, in addition to the principal monitoring the pacing of instruction.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-1:

Build on the CCPS curricular foundation by moving beyond the state's documents to develop local resources.

Involving teachers and principals more integrally in annual examinations of the curriculum, its sequence, related instructional materials, and places where key concepts should be reinforced in several grades would strengthen and customize the strong foundation that the Commonwealth has created to meet local CCPS needs.

These activities reflect best practices where administrators serve as instructional leaders basing instruction on sound curricular and instructional practices. In such school divisions, teachers and principals are involved in the decision-making process. Other characteristics of effective



divisions are the clear relationship between learning goals and specific objectives for students and teachers. When those elements are present, student achievement continuously improves. The implementation of this recommendation should help to address the SOL performance of students in fifth grade compared to other grades, and help to build a foundation of success that improves as students progress.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources by revising the current committees to include multiple grade levels instead of single grade representation. Thus, two grades could meet in a specific content area each summer with the process expanding over time.

FINDING

During walk-throughs of schools in the site visit, Evergreen consultants informally discussed needs and strengths of the division with instructional staff as well as in formal, scheduled interviews. One of the immediate issues mentioned in several conversations was the need for principals to be on campus more often than they are currently. Some teachers reported that division meetings involving principals often take several hours, keeping them away from their schools. In two schools, this leaves no administrator on campus during those absences.

Research shows that strong school leaders understand instruction, know their students and staff, and are cheerleaders for the school’s vision. When they exhibit those characteristics, they empower teachers as leaders to work together to improve student achievement. Thus, they provide focus, establish ownership, and create a collaborative approach to monitoring progress towards continuous improvement. They must be present to build that kind of school culture.

Virginia effective practices note that, “the high expectations of and support for a strong instructional program by both the division and school-level administrators is crucial to improving student achievement. The central administration provides the school with resources targeted at improving student achievement.” One of these resources is effective school leadership.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-2:

Protect principal time so they spend the majority of their time on campus.

Much research points out the critical role that principals play as instructional leaders at their schools. Principals are best able to provide such instructional leadership when they have the time and opportunity to drop into classes; observe instruction; provide feedback; note needed resources, including coaching and staff development; and discuss curriculum and instruction regularly with their teachers.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



FINDING

Principals note that they conduct regular visits to classrooms in their schools and that some division-level staff visit their schools regularly. When principals and other division leaders were asked how they observed the use of instructional priorities, accommodations in classes, and inclusionary strategies, responses reflected the personal actions each principal took. One principal who accompanied the Evergreen consultant dropped into most classes during the school visit. It was apparent that he does so frequently enough that he knows all students, and teachers are accustomed to his visits. Together interviewee responses did not display a division-wide system for ensuring that, in classroom observations, administrators uniformly and specifically observe the implementation of training elements or utilization of accommodations.

Walk-throughs are a quick method of focusing administrative observations on key instructional activities and interrelationships between teachers and students. They also serve as a useful communications tool and for documentation and collection of best practices to share or areas to target for improvement and additional staff development. They can also be adapted to serve as a means of communications between schools and the central office regarding instructional monitoring and the needs it raises.

Two of the division's schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2006-07 based on 2005-06 data, but neither the division nor Jeter-Watson Intermediate School made AYP. An Academic Review Technical Assistance Report for Edgemont Elementary School, which was Accredited with Warning in English for the 2004-05 school year, noted as strengths:

- ample curriculum resources provided by the division that were frequently used by teachers;
- the use of research-based strategies, specifically Reading First;
- school administration amending the schedule to support improvement;
- ample training regarding data analysis and other topics by the division; and
- regular assessment of student progress under a division-wide initiative.

Several of the key 'Areas for Improvement' have implications for strategies that need to be bolstered at the division level. One of those noted was the need to create a system to monitor instruction.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-3:

Formalize monitoring of instruction within schools and by administrators in Covington County Public Schools.

Best practices reflect the maxim that "what gets measured gets done." When educators throughout the division know that they will be held accountable for the clear expectations set by division leaders, they will deliver. By moving beyond the expectation that teachers will



implement the core curriculum that staff has worked on to establishing a procedure by which regular feedback and discussions of observations of classroom instruction occur, adherence to expectations will be assured. Developing such procedures and monitoring instruments that are uniform will also embed training into instructional practices.

Walk-through forms could have areas for noting evidence of best practices related to faculty discussions, accommodations for special needs students, and differentiated instruction. The forms could also provide information to identify staff development needs and lead to discussions in administrative and faculty meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In recognition of the reading needs of CCPS elementary students, representatives wrote and were awarded a highly competitive Reading First Grant of about \$200,000 for training, application of scientifically-based reading research, and proven instructional and assessment tools in Reading First classes at Edgemont Primary School. The grant goal, congruent with the division's overall goal, is improvement of reading achievement of all students in grades K-3, particularly NCLB subgroups so that all students will be able to read on grade level by the end of third grade.

The grant funds provide for training for all K-3 teachers, any special education teachers K-12, the central office LEA representative and elementary school principal. The grant also includes support funds for a reading coach to serve Edgemont students.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for seeking and implementing a Reading First Grant to create a sound foundation for student learning in all content areas.

FINDING

The division has developed broad-based plans to address a division-wide need to improve reading among students. In order to do that, CCPS has extensively and creatively used available resources, including a reading coach for division training, reading-specific training by textbook representatives, materials for professional libraries related to reading, and reading cards that follow students from year to year.

Exhibit 5-5 shows the reading performance of CCPS students in grades three, five, eight and high school for the 2003-04 through 2005-06 school years. This exhibit reveals that:

- the percent of CCPS high school students performing at the proficient/advanced proficient (A/AP) level was equal to or above statewide percentages in all three years;
- at all grades, the percent of students scoring at those levels has increased since 2003-04;



- in grade eight and at the high school, the percent of students scoring at those levels exceeded state percentages in 2005-06; and
- in grades three and five, the percent of students scoring at those levels, remained below the state in 2005-06.

Staff interviewed noted that the elementary and middle schools have adopted the same reading series to strengthen student reading proficiency in a concerted manner between the two schools. An eighth grade reading class was offered last year, but numbers of students were not sufficient to justify it this year.

**Exhibit 5-5
Percentages of Covington City School Students and State Students
Performing at Proficient and Advanced Proficient Levels in Reading
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

English: Reading Language Research (RLR) All Students	2003-04 Percentage of Students at Proficient and Advanced Proficient	2004-05 Percentage of Students at Proficient and Advanced Proficient	2005-06 Percentage of Students at Proficient and Advanced Proficient
Grade 3			
Covington	47	88	80
State	71	77	84
Grade 5			
Covington	57	56	74
State	85	85	87
Grade 8			
Covington	62	64	89
State	72	76	79
High School			
Covington	89	92	95
State	89	88	92

Source: Covington City Public Schools Report Card, Virginia Department of Education, Website www.doe.virginia.gov, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-4:

Continue the division’s focus on reading, especially the elements that specifically address reading at the elementary and early intermediate levels.

The division’s approach has been successful in improving student performance in reading since 2003-04. With continued implementation and extension of current practices, student scores should continue to improve. An additional focus on data disaggregation of reading tests should yield information for teachers and administrators that will enable them to refine instruction related to areas of student weaknesses.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



5.2 SPECIAL EDUCATION

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 school divisions have provided training and encouragement to help regular classroom teachers know how to accommodate the needs of special education students in their classes.

FINDING

Data in the Virginia Report Card for CCPS show that the performance of special education students at all grade levels remains below that of other special education students in the state. **Exhibit 5-6** shows the percent of CCPS students who performed at or above the proficient level between the 2003-04 and 2005-06 school years. At the high school level, CCPS had too few students to report.

Exhibit 5-6
Percentages of Covington City School Special Education Students
and State Special Education Students
Performing at Proficient and Advanced Proficient Levels in Reading
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years

English:RLR All Students	2003-04 Percentage of Students at Proficient and Advanced Proficient	2004-05 Percentage of Students at Proficient And Advanced Proficient	2005-06 Percentage of Students at Proficient and Advanced Proficient
Grade 3			
Covington	36	*	36
State	47	53	71
Grade 5			
Covington	8	21	44
State	62	65	72
Grade 8			
Covington	36	42	48
State	55	63	86

Source: Covington City Public Schools Report Card, Virginia Department of Education website www.doe.virginia.gov, 2006.

* < too few students to report

The exhibit shows:

- no increase in the percent of CCPS third grade special education students performing at the P/AP level (36%) during those years, while the state percent of students increased from 47 percent to 71 percent;
- an increase in the percent of fifth grade students performing P/AP from eight percent in 2003-04 to 44 percent in 2005-06—that is in contrast to fifth grade percentages for the state those same years being 62 percent and 72 percent, respectively—a resultant disparity between the percent of CCPS and special education students statewide of 28 percent in 2005-06; and



- an increase in the percent of eighth grade students performing P/AP from 36 percent in 2003-04 to 48 percent in 2005-06—that is in contrast to state percentages for those same years being 55 percent and 86 percent respectively—a resultant disparity between the percent of CCPS and state special education students of 38 percent in 2005-06.

Similar disparities exist in other content areas. The division has practiced inclusion for four years at the high school and three at other schools. Variances between student performance by grade suggest the effectiveness of the high school’s inclusionary practices.

Exhibit 5-7 shows the comparative performance of special education and regular education students in CCPS and the state in other content areas in grades three, five, eight, and the high school. The data show:

- the percentages of students performing at P/AP at the high school exceeded or were within two percent of the state averages with the exception of History/Social Studies;
- in math, CCPS percentages of students performing at those levels fell below state averages by 15 percent, 34 percent, and 12 percent in grades three, five, and eight, respectively;
- in science, CCPS percentages of students performing at those levels fell below state averages by 32 percent and 22 percent in grades three and five—however, in science CCPS percentages of students in eighth grade performing at those levels exceeded state averages by 25 percent; and
- in history/social studies, CCPS percentages of students performing at P/AP fell below state averages by 23 percent and 37 percent in grades three and five.

Exhibit 5-7
Percentages of Covington City School Special Education Students
and State Special Education Students
Performing at Proficient and Advanced Proficient Levels in Other Content Areas
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years

Division/ State	Math			Science			History/Social Studies			History/Social Studies Content Specific**		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Grade 3												
Covington	70	*	60	50	*	45	40	*	55			
State	74	73	75	73	76	77	72	76	78			
Grade 5												
Covington	36	21	19	57	50	44	43	36	31			
State	52	55	53	66	62	66	69	66	68			
Grade 8												
Covington	19	28	36	*	*	79	*	-	*			
State	45	52	48	56	65	54	63	-	78			
High School												
Covington	14	*	77	35	63	57	57	62	65	42	25	32
State	53	62	55	53	57	59	73	71	66	44	49	52

Source: Covington City Public Schools Report Card, Virginia Department of Education website www.doe.virginia.gov, 2006.

* too few students to report

** High school only



RECOMMENDATION**Recommendation 5-5:**

Continue to create systems at the division and school levels in Covington City Public Schools that ensure that the educational requirements of special needs students are considered in every decision.

By purposefully involving the Director of Special Education in overall instructional planning and in decisions about staff development in the division, her knowledge of student and teacher needs regarding special education would strengthen the division's current research-based staff development required of all teachers. Providing specific training for principals to equip them to be fully familiar with how to observe for accommodations in the regular education classroom will reinforce to principals and teachers the division's commitment to equity of educational opportunity for all students.

The federal government is unequivocal in its goal of all students performing at 100 percent proficiency by the 2013-14 school year. Considering and accommodating for the needs of special education students in instructional, staff development, curricular, planning and instructional monitoring decisions are essential for CCPS students with disabilities to meet that goal.

Suggested actions for improvement include, but are not limited to:

- consider creating a task force on inclusion as Dinwiddie County Public Schools (DCPS) has to raise awareness among school and community members of factors and resources affecting their learning. Issues DCPS discusses include:
 - roles and responsibilities of those involved,
 - identification of materials and resources available,
 - paraprofessional staff development, and
 - visitation to other sites;
- regularly review the performance of students with disabilities in comparison to other students to identify gaps and their contributing dynamics and make needed adjustments;
- solicit input from the Directors of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services in curriculum planning and decisions beyond staff instructional meetings (While their input is valued in those meeting by division leadership, each of these areas has very specific needs that extend beyond general instructional discussions);
- create color-coded flipcharts for regular education teachers that suggest accommodations for specific student learning needs and can be used as references in instructional planning, and provide related training to help them understand when and how to implement specific accommodations for students with specific learning needs;
- use administrators who have experienced success and teachers effectively using inclusion for the benefit of regular and special education students to make presentations to others and direct support for other teachers;



- develop procedures that create time for co-planning;
- monitor and support teachers as they learn and apply new skills;
- encourage sharing among teachers who are more reticent in trying new practices with those who have embraced them skillfully;
- provide training for teachers in strategies to differentiate instruction for all students and in characteristics of special education criteria for eligibility and placement;
- provide training for child study teams relative to student eligibility procedures;
- examine exemplary models;
- visit exemplary sites; and
- research essential components contributing to the success of effective programs.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The percentage of students identified for special education programs in CCPS support the above findings. **Exhibit 5-8** shows that 23.6 percent of CCPS students are in special education programs while the average percent of peer divisions is 14.4 percent. Using the 12/1/04 child count of special education students and the Fall 2005 student membership numbers, an estimated 14 percent of the population in Virginia's schools is enrolled in special education.

Exhibit 5-8
Covington City and Peer Public Schools
Special Needs Students
2005-06 School Year

School Division	Total Student Population	Percent Special Education Students
Covington City	870	23.6%
Buena Vista City	1,125	15.0%
Franklin City	1,324	20.0%
Galax City	1,329	10.5%
Norton City	730	14.8%
West Point	802	11.6%
Peer Division Average	1,062	14.4%

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



One possible reason cited in discussions in the division for higher percentages of students in the CCPS special education program are the relatively low socio-economic demographics in the community. Although it does not contain the city’s low income housing, the percentage of ACPS students in the same county is only 17.0 percent.

A December 2004 letter from the Virginia Department of Education noted a concern about disproportionality based on race relating to:

- the percentage of black special education students compared to the general population (176/887=19.8%);
- the percentage of black students in the special education population (51/208=24.5%);
- the percentage of black Mentally Retarded (MR) students (9/23=39%) in the special education population;
- the percentage of black Emotionally Disturbed (ED) students (1/8=12.5%) in the special education population; and
- the percentage of time spent in special education comparing black and white ED and MR students.

Responses to the Evergreen survey reflect concerns related to support provided CCPS special education students in their regular classes. **Exhibit 5-9** shows responses of CCPS teachers and administrators compared to other district respondents relating to their perceptions of the effectiveness of the special education program. Responses of administrators indicate concerns regarding the special education program’s effectiveness compared to respondents from other places. However, in contrast to teachers in other districts, CCPS teachers believe its special education program is effective. One reason may be because of the amount of time that teachers see the Supervisor of Special Education out in the schools. Her frequent visits to schools and support of teachers were reported during interviews as well as being substantiated during site visits to schools by an Evergreen representative.

Exhibit 5-9
Survey Results
Effectiveness of Special Education Program
Covington City Public Schools and Comparison Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database

Survey Statement	Covington City 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 special programs for Special Education.				
Administrators	50.0%	0%	70.8%	14.2%
Teachers	61.5%	30.8%	58.7%	28.9%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.



Other divisions, such as Clarke County, Virginia, have aggressively worked to address student needs within regular classrooms before initiating referral procedures for testing for placement in special education classes. Although demographics between the two communities differ, some of Clarke's preventive methods could be adapted for use in Covington City Public Schools.

Strategies that Clarke County Public Schools has used successfully to reduce the percentages of identified special education students include:

- Communications and guidelines from the Office of Pupil Personnel constantly keep the question of whether the disability is what negatively impacts the student's educational performance and promote alternative strategies within the student's classroom.
- All pupil personnel staff provide service to non-identified students who need interventions for success.
- Reading specialists in schools enhance and intensify success in reading for all students.
- All teachers and paraprofessionals participate annually in training regarding differentiating instruction within the regular classroom prior to referral for testing.
- The content of Child Study Committee discussions is focused on instructional, staffing, staff development, and classroom strategies that might be employed rather than student "disabilities"; thus, around a child's needs rather than deficiencies.
- Teaching candidate interviews probe for congruence with the division's philosophy of accommodating each student's various learning needs.
- Team teaching is extensive in the division, allowing all students to benefit from the strengths of regular and special education students and teachers to share and learn from each other.
- Individualization and differentiation of instruction address student differences and learning styles.
- Regular education teachers receive a copy of accommodations required for students in their classes, and sign and return them to the school's special education lead teacher.
- Students are taught how to advocate for themselves and, at the high school level, taught study skills with a special educator to reinforce those skills.
- Support is provided students after dismissal from special education services.
- Instructional Support Teams at two schools devise approaches using programming and intervention within regular education classes.

The Instructional Support Teams (ISTs) pro-actively identify individual student learning needs and styles and devise strategies within the school as a whole and the regular classroom to support



student success outside a special education environment. This collaborative approach to meeting student needs helps educators focus on curriculum and teaching styles, rather than purported student deficiencies. IST teachers match classroom teacher strengths with student needs and monitor the success of IST strategies implemented. As teams continue to meet and problem-solve together, additional personnel and strategies are employed as attempts are made to develop a process that provides appropriate support for student learning throughout the year. Only when IST actions have not proven effective in meeting student needs are students then referred to Child Study Teams for consideration of special education interventions.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-6:

Adapt strategies proven effective in other Virginia divisions to address student needs in regular classes before referral to special education.

Implementing this recommendation would, along with other recommendations, strengthen the ability of special needs students to be served in regular classes and likely prevent a number of them from being referred for special education. The implementation of this recommendation should also address the issue of disproportionality. A CCPS special education teacher at each school or a guidance counselor could be trained to serve as the IST leader. The program could begin with a pilot in one school and be expanded to the other two schools the following year. A team of interested teachers at the pilot school should visit Clarke County or other school divisions effectively using ISTs to talk to teachers about program strengths and implementation hurdles.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Although personnel interviewed stated that the majority of CCPS special education students are in inclusive settings with support offered by special education teachers, co-teaching was seldom cited as a strategy for meeting student needs within the setting of a regular classroom. Few students spend more than 50 percent of their time in self-contained environments, again with the most inclusion taking place at the high school. One example was given of high school science and special education teachers who co-teach regularly. The majority of other examples described teachers and aides providing additional support rather than co-teaching in regular classes. One interviewee noted that they are seen as an extra set of hands, so their skills are not being fully capitalized on. Much of the collaboration that takes place between regular education and special education teachers is informal in nature, occurring in the halls or before or after school.

Co-teaching is an effective strategy to develop a strong base for the use of educational practices that support the effective integration of special education students into regular classes. The January 2005 issue of *Teacher Magazine* describes teacher collaboration in the following way:



*Perhaps the most well-developed model of teacher collaboration is the “lesson study” process, described by James Stigler and James Hiebert in *The Teaching Gap*. Used in Japan as a primary means of professional development, lesson-study groups are organized by grade level or subject area. These teams meet regularly to discuss the learning challenges of their students and to collaboratively develop lessons that more effectively meet the kids’ needs. Teachers take turns conducting these model lessons and critiquing one another’s work until they feel it’s polished enough to share with colleagues. Stigler and Hiebert believe this process goes a long way toward explaining why the level of instruction in most Japanese classrooms appears to be consistently higher than that of other countries.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-7:

Make a concerted effort to identify special and regular education teachers who are willing to co-teach to model its benefits for students to other teachers.

Research demonstrates that both regular and special education students benefit from co-teaching as do all students in classes where co-teaching is practiced. Using the CCPS teachers who effectively co-teach as models and coaches would more broadly extend the practice with increased numbers of regular and special needs students benefiting. Additionally, teachers will expand their repertoires of instructional skills and heighten their sense of efficacy. The division should identify specific roles for both regular and special education teachers to implement best instructional practices in an inclusive classroom to further benefit regular and special education students.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Medicaid is a federal entitlement program that finances medical services and specified educational services to eligible children. Eligible services for Medicaid reimbursement in Virginia currently include physical and occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, and psychological and skilled nursing services, as well as administrative costs. Only three of the five eligible services are being billed, however, in Covington City Public Schools.

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. The division reportedly uses the funds to supplement the programs that generate them, although no documentation was available that reflected that the Supervisor of Special Education is routinely informed of available revenues for program planning.



The Nursing Coordinator, who is employed jointly by the Covington City Public Schools and the Alleghany County Public Schools, is responsible for filing for reimbursement of funds for students who are eligible for Medicaid and who receive services. At the beginning of the year, the Nursing Coordinator identifies Medicaid eligible students who are receiving speech, occupational therapy and skilled nursing services. Therapists then write a plan of care and submit therapy notes every four to six weeks for billing.

Exhibit 5-10 shows that the division has been increasing its revenues for the past three years for services for which it is billing. The division currently bills for three of the five eligible student services. A document provided showed revenues for administrative costs of \$14,800.71 in the 2005-06 school year. CCPS personnel state that they have not met with the Medicaid contact person from VDOE to discuss maximizing potential revenues.

**Exhibit 5-10
Medicaid Revenues
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Therapy	Amount Received		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Speech	\$18,277.65	\$29,133.25	\$36,896.72
Occupational Therapy	\$5,565.20	-	\$10,251.28
Nursing	\$822.46	\$2,082.49	\$2,854.86
Total	\$24,665.31	\$31,215.74	\$50,002.86

Source: Office of the Nursing Coordinator, Alleghany County High School, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-8:

Expand billing to include all eligible services to Medicaid eligible students, and develop procedures to ensure that the Supervisor of Special Education receives monthly accountings of receipts.

CCPS has demonstrated both its commitment to filing for eligible services and for committing funds received to special education needs. The Nursing Coordinator knows how to document billings for all services. Clearly, expanding the services would provide additional funds for supplemental services, equipment, and other resources. By creating procedures that keep the Supervisor of Special Education informed of potential revenues, she can better plan the special education budget to leverage all available funds for the benefit of students.

FISCAL IMPACT

Using the percentages of revenues generated by psychological services (6%) and physical therapy (31%) in Alleghany County Public Schools because they are in the same community, additional revenues expected to be received would be \$18,501 the first year (37 percent x \$50,003). Revenues are likely to continue to increase in subsequent years, as they have in the past three years.



Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Bill for Psychological Services and Physical Therapy	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501

5.3 PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Research demonstrates that a child's environment before he/she enters school has either positive or negative effects on school success. Quality preschool programs can overcome possible family influences that are a part of their social and economic circumstances and stand in the way of school readiness. Findings show that programs that address both child and family needs are most effective. When they include components that ensure that children are healthy, confident, curious young learners and also provide support to parents, they strengthen the abilities of families to positively influence their children's lives and education.

The Case for Including Babies and Toddlers as we Expand Preschool Opportunities (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2003) notes that when poor children receive enriched early experiences in high quality child care centers, they experience better linguistic, cognitive, and pre-academic outcomes as well as fewer behavioral problems. Many studies recognize parents as active ingredients of environmental influence in early childhood.

When children are given positive interactions with adults in their early years, they are more likely to develop a solid emotional foundation for success and confidence in themselves as learners. When that does not occur, they demonstrate emotional and behavioral problems that increase their risk of early school failure, poor school outcomes, and difficulties at work as adults. Basic language and communication skills are also essential components of a strong preschool program. Research shows that students from poverty hear an average of 62,000 words per week compared to a child from a working class family who hears 125,000 and one from a professional family who hears 215,000. Thus, increasing language experiences in a quality preschool program provides children a strong literacy base for school success.

Studies have also been conducted that relate the quality of a comprehensive early childhood educational experience with sound long-term economic investment. In *The New Economics of Preschool*, Dana Friedman concludes:

...The research is clearly showing that investing in quality early care programs is the absolute best way to use funds. The benefit is seen both immediately and in the long-term, and the pay-off is seen by everyone. Crime rates are lowered, graduation rates are raised, businesses benefit from educated and committed workers, and the city sees a huge return in tax revenue from the increase in the workforce. The phrase, "invest in kids" is thrown around a lot, but when taken literally, it can be the smartest investment a city has ever made.



FINDING

CCPS uses Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) monies to fund education for eligible students, but goes beyond that to offer preschool educational experiences to students who are ineligible for the VPI program. The division uses local funds to provide a program for those four-year-old students. By leveraging local and state funds, CCPS currently serves all four-year olds in the division. This year, the division has one all-day program funded with VPI dollars. The other two half-day programs have a few VPI students in each classroom. Due to the uniqueness of the program, earlier this year representatives of the VDOE contacted the division to inquire as to how they were able to fund a Pre-K program with local dollars.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for its recognition of the critical impact that early childhood education has on student’s academic success with its locally funded Pre-Kindergarten classes.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools is committed to inclusion and practices it throughout the system. However, the two classes for pre-school students with special needs are currently housed in the basement of Jeter-Watson Intermediate School. This location is several miles from Edgemont Primary School, precluding the integration of students who are not at risk with those with special needs at the preschool level. The preschool classes for students with disabilities were moved from the elementary school to Jeter-Watson Intermediate School due to a lack of space at Edgemont with student growth.

Best practices demonstrate that, where special education and regular education teachers collaborate, instructional repertoires for both teachers are expanded to the benefit of all students. When collaboration moves to co-teaching between regular and special education students, benefits such as total integration of special education students into regular education classes even result in the inability to discern special education students from regular education students. This inability to discriminate between regular and special education students was reported in one of the mock federal review documents. The division’s approach to serving students in the mainstream is not only more effective at helping students to develop socially, emotionally, and academically, but also far more cost effective than special education classes per se.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-9:

Integrate non-disabled, pre-school students into CCPS pre-school disabled classes once the new elementary school is opened.

The division’s early integration of special needs and other students would epitomize the intent of federal legislation with its emphasis on inclusion. Extending it to the preschool level would create an early understanding among all students of individual strengths and needs, rather than



abilities and disabilities. This action would also involve parents of students with and without disabilities in inclusive activities early in their children's educational experiences.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5.4 GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Regulations Governing the Educational Program for Gifted Students mandates differentiated instructional opportunities for gifted students in Virginia's K-12 educational programs. Divisions are required to establish uniform procedures with common criteria for screening and identification that permit referral from school staff, parents, peers, students, and others. Eight criteria are identified in Virginia Administrative Code of which each division must include four or more.

One component of the Commonwealth's comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of gifted students is the Virginia Governor's School Program. Although the various forms of Governor's Schools (Academic-Year, Summer Residential, and Summer Regional) provide unique opportunities tailored within regions of the state, divisions are also expected to offer options for gifted students who choose not to attend Governor's School Programs. Governor's Schools offer both students and teachers opportunities to enrich and broaden their educational experiences.

FINDING

Until this year, the CCPS Gifted and Talented Program was nominal. The timeline over the next five years in the division's Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted shows a progression from current identification based on general intellectual aptitude to special giftedness in 2007-08, then specific content academic aptitude in 2008-09 with all continuing into future years.

The division's new Revolving Door Plan provides access to higher level content for gifted students and other high achieving students who will participate as they are pulled from a pool of candidates. Classroom teachers will still be expected to differentiate. At the secondary level, the gifted teacher will become the facilitator of programs that will include guest speakers and promotion of Governor's School opportunities.

Data show that 33 gifted students have been identified in CCPS. A quarter-time teacher provides pull-out services to students in grades 3-7. **Exhibit 5-11** shows current numbers of identified gifted students being served.

Classroom teachers at all levels have historically been expected to provide enrichment activities for advanced students. The division has required that both principals and teachers attend training in instructional strategies. The noteworthy intent of having principals attend is two-fold:

- so that principals know the practices their teachers have learned; and
- they can observe and support teachers in classrooms.



Exhibit 5-11
Numbers of Students Served in the CCPS Pull-Out Program
for Gifted Students
2006-07 School Year

School	Grade Groups	Total Number of Gifted Students
Edgemont Primary School	Grade 3	2
Jeter-Watson Intermediate School	Grades 4-5	8
Covington High School	Grades 6-7	23

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Office of the Supervisor of Instruction, 2006.

However, many staff noted that observations of teacher instruction would reveal little true differentiation for those and other students. Furthermore, interviews reflected that differentiation of assessment is not readily visible in CCPS classrooms. In order to meet the instructional needs of all students, particularly those with strong academic abilities, at a minimum, processes should be in place to ensure differentiation of instruction and assessment for these students. Additional enrichment experiences beyond those readily available in regular classrooms would help to ensure that student unique abilities are nurtured so that they can move more assuredly toward attainment of their potential.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-10:

Continue plans to strengthen the CCPS Gifted and Talented Program.

The recognition of the need to more concertedly provide for the unique learning needs of gifted students has set the stage for CCPS high ability students to begin to thrive. The division is small enough that instructors can track and evaluate the performance of individual students in the gifted program and use that and parent and teacher survey data, to build continuous improvement into the program.

These improvements should include:

- staff development for regular and gifted teachers and principals;
- joint planning time for gifted teachers;
- collaborative planning time for gifted and regular teachers whose students are being served in the gifted program;
- inclusion of gifted teachers in division-level curriculum review and revision; and
- at least an annual refinement of program objectives and strategies.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



FINDING

At the high school level, the only enrichment opportunities cited for gifted students were Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment (DE). The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted reflects that advanced/honors classes are offered students in grades 8-12, but data from the CCPS Virginia School Report Card reflect that too few CCPS students are currently enrolled in dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, or Governor’s School courses to be reported.

Exhibit 5-12 shows that CCPS students are not taking advantage of the Governor’s School and that attendance of CCPS students has never been high.

**Exhibit 5-12
Covington City Public Schools
Enrollment Jackson River Governor’s School
2000-01 through 2006-07 School Year**

2000-01		2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
Juniors	Seniors	Seniors	Seniors	Seniors	Seniors								
1	2	0	1	3	0	3	3	2	2	2	5	0	0

Source: JRGS October 2006 Report.

During the 2005-06 school year, two Advanced Placement (AP) classes with total enrollments of 16 were offered CHS students. Thirty-two (32) students are currently enrolled in four Advanced Placement courses. Two are offered on the Internet in US Government and Senior English. Technological challenges plagued instructional delivery at first, but are reported to have been minimized. Additionally, two courses in US History and English 11 are being taught on campus by Covington High School (CHS) teachers. Only one of the teachers has taken training in AP. Other teachers who plan to teach AP courses in the future are the facilitators for the on-line AP courses to familiarize them with content and procedures. Although three students participated in dual enrollment courses at Dabney Lancaster Community College last year, none are taking dual enrollment courses this year.

The division is hampered by its small size, especially at the high school, in offering a variety of courses because of low enrollment. Interviewees reported that other CHS teachers are qualified to teach dual enrollment courses, but that because of small class sizes, they do not.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-11:

Combine advanced courses with similar courses in the same class period to expand enrichment opportunities for more advanced students and ensure that AP teachers are trained before teaching courses.

Students are currently being denied the opportunity for advanced coursework with their own teachers because of the small size of Covington High School. Teachers, too, are being prevented from teaching more challenging courses because of current practices that do not combining DE or AP classes with others. In order to offer more advanced coursework for able students, many schools combine advanced courses with other related courses in one class period. This practice



not only offers advanced students opportunities to benefit from courses that strengthen their preparation for college, but also stimulates other students to higher levels of learning. Taking the recommendation one step further and co-offering AP and DE courses with Alleghany County Public Schools would further enrich advanced academic opportunities for CHS students.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

It is not clear how CCPS teachers are made aware that gifted students are in their classes in the early grades. Nor is it evident how division leaders are certain that classroom teachers are providing the enriching experiences that the division's plan states it expects through differentiation of content, pacing, product, process, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving techniques.

All teachers, administrators, and aides were trained for two years in instructional strategies as one means of enabling them to enhance instruction for gifted students in their classes. Training on differentiated instruction has also been provided. Principals are required to attend such trainings; however, principals and central office administrators also need to monitor the use of such knowledge and skills in classes. Although no procedures were available during the site visit that indicate a means of monitoring the use of skills learned in training sessions, additional information noted that principal evaluations include schoolwide objectives emphasizing differentiated instruction and instructional strategies. Some principals use observation checklists and some narrative forms for faculty monitoring. The Director of Instruction also monitors classrooms and consults with principals on her observations.

The division has, in the past few years, begun the process of aligning curriculum which, as it progresses, should form a strong foundation for curricular acceleration that will benefit both gifted students in regular classes and students who have high abilities but do not meet gifted/talented criteria for program eligibility. As the division continues to meet and revise its curriculum documents, a continuing focus for consideration should be the compacting of curricular objectives to allow advancement for higher proficiency students and higher expectations for others. Some Virginia divisions have begun curricular acceleration in primary grades with all students exposed to kindergarten and some first grade standards. As the division continues to evaluate its curriculum, acceleration is then phased into higher grades over time.

Academically diverse learners are found in all classes. School divisions need to know that their teachers have the ability to make curriculum choices that complement student interests, strengths and needs. Helping students to link what they are learning to daily living experiences keeps them engaged and motivated in the learning process. Research shows that, in effective schools, teachers carefully plan lessons to provide experiences that meet the varied skill levels and learning styles of students. They use effective questioning techniques to develop basic and higher-level thinking skills for all students. The division's identification of differentiating instruction for students reflects an awareness of the research. Processes have not yet been put in place, however, to ensure that all CCPS teachers are held accountable for their ability to do so.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-12:

Expand current processes to create consistency that will provide uniform enrichment opportunities for CCPS students.

Just as slower students have unique learning needs, so do those who are more advanced in their academic abilities. Teachers, too, need support and assistance in teaching to their strengths. In order for that to occur, CCPS should:

- create procedures to encourage and support regular classroom teachers in differentiating instruction for gifted students;
- include in administrator and faculty meetings discussion of best practices in differentiation and other topics that would benefit gifted students;
- conduct book studies on giftedness using books such as Ruby Payne's *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty*;
- train principals and teachers in characteristics of giftedness;
- in beginning of the year meetings, introduce teachers to awareness of the need to look out for talented students, and inform them of the referral process and enrichment opportunities;
- include information regarding enrichment opportunities in school newsletters;
- provide principals with checklists of key instructional competencies to specifically observe; and
- promote opportunities for talent development.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5.5 PROGRAMS FOR-AT RISK STUDENTS

Both the federal and state governments recognize and provide funds for students who are at risk of failing in school and need additional resources to bolster their opportunity for academic success.

5.5.1 After-School Program

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools is in the third year of implementation of a 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Grant at Edgemont Primary and Jeter-Watson Intermediate



Schools for remediation for targeted students. Although interviewees reported that the program needed a clearer direction after the first year, it has since become well-coordinated and focuses on providing varied student experiences in fun and meaningful ways. The program has multiple partnerships with community organizations that are using local resources to offer students true enrichment experiences in which they apply academic learning to real-world activities. Beyond student experiences, one grant goal is the provision of parenting classes.

Many aspects of the program can serve as foundations for activities to generalize to the broader school population. The targeted areas identified for program activities are:

- education (remediation and enrichment);
- character development (including leadership);
- visual and performing arts (developing artistic and musical talent); and
- recreation (physical fitness).

Coordination between program planning and school needs has the potential to more substantially strengthen daytime instructional opportunities. Curricular software has been purchased with grant funds to specifically address the needs of at-risk reading and math students. Funds have also supported a wireless lab for the primary school, Smart Boards for both schools, and phonemic awareness software for the lab computers.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for the strong after-school program that the division has developed with 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant funds.

FINDING

Communications between daytime teachers and those teaching in the after-school program are informal and sporadic. Last year, the Director of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) used a form to ask for information from teachers to address student needs as a somewhat more formal means of communicating between teachers in both programs.

After re-evaluating test scores at the end of the year last year, 21st CCLC staff identified student weaknesses to purchase and implement programs that address those needs. This took place, though, without the benefit of an organized method of soliciting additional information.

Staff interviewed acknowledged a need to work more concertedly on communications with teachers. The goal is for teaching and learning that take place in the afternoon to coordinate with school experiences and vice versa. Additionally, there should be a flow of information regarding student needs and successes between the two programs. One additional impediment to ongoing communications is that an estimated half of the after-school teachers are current CCPS teachers with others either being from other divisions, retired, or even instructional assistants serving as teachers.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-13:

Create a communication structure that will ensure input from daytime instructional personnel to the after-school instructors.

The informal efforts that the Director of the 21st Century Community Learning Center has made to solicit input from daytime teachers regarding the instructional needs of students in the 21st CCLC Program have been a solid first step. However, the division should formalize that solicitation with a scheduled feedback system that continually informs both daytime and after-school teachers of student needs and progress. In this way, teachers in both venues can continually contribute to ongoing student improvement. Communications should also include best practices and instructional strategies used effectively at both times of the day.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Director of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Grant has consulted the Supervisor of Instruction in decisions about software and instructional programs to purchase to meet student academic needs. However, other staff noted that they are not routinely consulted in decisions that affect operations, instruction, and personnel at the school level, such as programs purchased with 21st CCLC funds.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-14:

Ensure involvement of a cross-section of school-based and central office staff in software and curriculum purchases made with 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant funds.

Consultation does occur between the CCLC Program Director and the Supervisor of Instruction before programs and equipment are purchased. Those decisions would be strengthened by the systematic inclusion of principals and teachers who are in the positions of offering perspectives on the integration of after-school instruction with daytime teaching and learning.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools has developed a strong academic component of its after-school program funded with 21st Century Community Learning Grant funds that could be extended to practices used during daytime instruction. Software and programs that are intended to enhance



daytime instruction are used in the after-school program. Even more importantly, after-school academics have focused on SOL success while integrating instruction into hands-on activities.

One example is the model of the popular television show, CSI (Crime Scene Investigation), in which students study fibers, blood types, lift fingerprints, and type DNA. The learning activities have been developed in partnership with Dabney Lancaster Community College. At Jeter-Watson, teachers and the director find activities students can relate to. Students there receive remediation and homework help during the first hour. In the program's second hour, they are involved in enrichment and a weekly club day that includes sports, art, leadership, and a program provided by the health department called 'Girl Power' to build self-esteem. All students in daytime programs could benefit from these hands-on applications of fundamental academic skills and knowledge.

An effective school is characterized by a culture that supports teamwork, collaboration, ownership, and shared responsibility for student achievement. CCPS schools would be more effective if they extended their current activities focused on improving student performance to thoughtful alignment of programs during and after school.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-15:

Use activities in the after-school program as models for curriculum integration.

The after-school program has been effective in developing non-traditional learning activities targeted to the needs of at-risk students. Partnerships with community organizations and postsecondary institutions have enhanced these activities. Similarly, partnership activities could be extended to school-day learning experiences. Other students would benefit from those same types of learning experiences during the school day. Covington City Public Schools should include in its summer curricular revision activities discussion and integration of such activities within daytime instruction.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5.5.2 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.



FINDING

The Virginia School Report Card shows that the graduation rate in CCPS has declined dramatically in the past two years and more specifically, between the 2004-05 and the 2005-06 school years. **Exhibit 5-13** shows CCPS graduation rates compared to the State’s graduation rate between the 2003-04 and 2005-06 school year.

**Exhibit 5-13
Graduation Rates
Covington City Public Schools and the State of Virginia
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Graduation Rate for All Students			
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Covington City	82	92	70
State	82	80	79

Source: Covington City Public Schools Report Card, Virginia Department of Education website www.doe.virginia.gov, 2006.

Despite being at or above the state’s graduation rate in 2003-04 and 2004-05, the CCPS graduation rate fell considerably from 2004-05 to 2005-06 and dropped below the state’s graduation rate for the first time in three years.

Exhibit 5-14 shows the responses of CCPS teachers and administrators compared to other district respondents relating to the quality of the division’s dropout prevention program. Respondents from both groups reflect at least ambivalence toward its effectiveness. Compared to the responses from other districts, far fewer teachers and administrators from CCPS believe that the alternative education program is effective.

**Exhibit 5-14
Survey Results
Effectiveness of Dropout Prevention and Alternative Education Programs
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	Covington City 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 special programs for Dropout Prevention.				
Administrators	50.0%	0%	41.0%	25.5%
Teachers	23.1%	28.2%	37.1%	23.6%
The division has effective special programs for Alternative Education.				
Administrators	37.5%	12.5%	65.6%	11.8%
Teachers	33.3%	25.6%	53.6%	19.3%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-16:

Identify factors contributing to the CCPS dropout rate upon which a plan can be created to address these factors early in each student's educational program.

Making it a practice to evaluate graduation and dropout rates, and conduct exit interviews of students who leave, should enable the division to develop strategies in early grades before students become age-eligible to drop out of school. With *No Child Left Behind* graduation expectations, it is imperative that CCPS be pro-active in developing effective dropout prevention processes and programs at all levels.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5.6 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 (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 are forming partnerships with external entities to reinvigorate their vocational programs.

By reaching out to businesses which have the vacancies and understand the preparatory needs, school districts 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, work experiences, and internships. Such partnerships serve the needs of both the schools and the business community.



5.7 PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Research shows that as much as 50 to 85 percent of variance in achievement scores, IQ or verbal ability, can be attributed to parent, family, and home environment variables. Furthermore, research shows that children with high achievement scores have parents with high expectations for them, who respond to and interact with them frequently, and who see themselves as their 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. They also provide structured, concrete tasks for parents, and take a long-term approach to parent involvement. Many studies have found that when parents become involved in school activities, not only do their attitudes improve, but also that of their children.

Studies have shown that teachers involving parents in learning activities at home have a positive and significant influence on improved student reading achievement. Developing 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

CCPS principals noted in conversations with Evergreen staff that they conduct visits to student homes on a regular basis. They stated that such visits give them insight into student needs that go beyond academic challenges. When they understand the circumstances of children's home lives, they can better leverage resources to holistically support student learning.

COMMENDATION

CCPS principals are commended for their concerted efforts to understand factors affecting student learning by making regular home visits.

**ALSO SEE RECOMMENDATIONS 10-6, 10-10, 10-11, AND 10-12
IN CHAPTER 10**



***CHAPTER 6:
FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT***



Chapter 6

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter presents Evergreen Solutions review of facilities use and management in Covington City Public Schools (CCPS). The six sections in this chapter are:

- 6.1 Organizational Structure
- 6.2 Capital Planning and Facilities Use
- 6.3 Facilities Maintenance
- 6.4 Custodial Services
- 6.5 Energy Management
- 6.6 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, 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.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Facilities use and management in Covington City Public Schools is the primary responsibility of the Director of Administrative Services and the Supervisor of Maintenance. The Director reports to the Superintendent, and the Maintenance Supervisor reports to the Director. This is a best practice organization because it focuses on a life-cycle cost approach to facilities design, construction, and management. The high school facility is well-maintained and clean. The elementary and middle school facilities have been found to be in need of replacement, and are maintained and cleaned as well as can be expected. A potential joint ACPS/CCPS decision must be made concerning the future of Alleghany High School. One option currently under study is the possible addition of space to the existing Covington High School in order to create a cooperatively run joint Alleghany and Covington high school facility.

In addition to the aforementioned best practices, other commendable practices have been found, including the following:



- an orderly, rational and well-documented effort to determine the best options for facility planning and development;
- a best practice ratio of 45,000 square feet per maintenance mechanic;
- a ratio of 16,316 square feet per custodian, slightly below the 18,000 - 20,000 square feet range considered a best practice;
- a positive and constructive working relationship in facilities planning with the Covington City Council; and
- a comprehensive policy on the community use of facilities.

Major recommendations include:

- Re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee and charge it with generating a definitive and firm resolution of CCPS facilities needs, including a possible combined Covington and Alleghany High School, on or before October 1, 2007.
- Seek historic preservation funding for some of the renovation and restoration of Covington High School.
- Employ life-cycle cost analysis as official procedure in the selection of equipment and materials for new schools, additions, and renovations.
- Develop and implement a systematic energy management and conservation program.

6.1 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

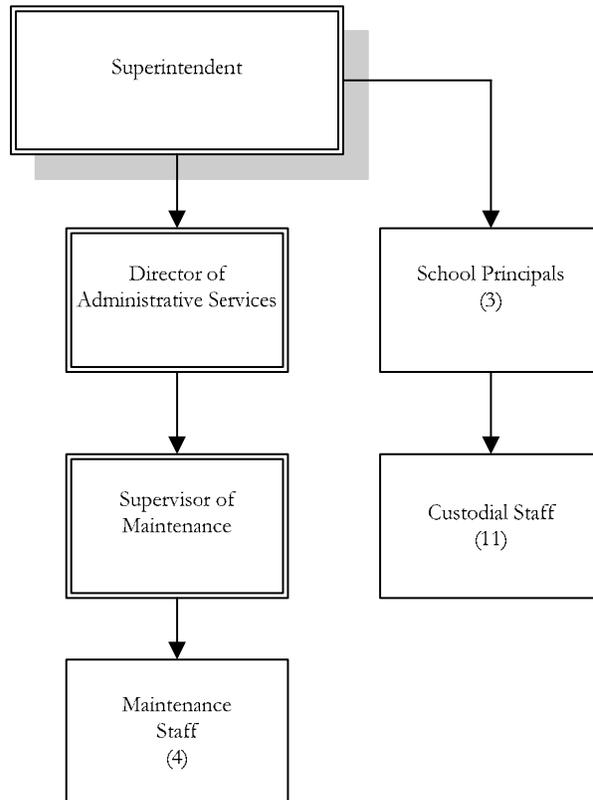
A comprehensive facilities management program includes all the physical resources of a school district to ensure the most efficient and economical operation. The administration of the program effectively integrates facilities planning with the other aspects of institutional planning, including identified institutional priorities. To be effective, facility planners and managers should be involved in the school district's overall strategic planning activities.

As a best practice, all aspects of facilities planning, design, construction, maintenance and custodial activities should be under one single supervisory position. **Exhibit 6-1** shows this supervisory position to be the Director of Administrative Services, who reports directly to the Superintendent.

The CCPS Facilities Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of three schools, one central office, one maintenance shop, and one building used primarily for maintenance and supply storage. The total gross square footage is 179,477.



**Exhibit 6-1
Facilities Organization for Facilities in
Covington City Public Schools**



Source: Prepared by Evergreen Solutions from information provided by Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

The Director of Administrative Services is responsible for the overall supervision of maintenance and transportation. Custodial and food service staff reports directly to the principals. He is also responsible for hiring professional design and construction services, facilities planning, and design and construction.

The Maintenance Supervisor provides daily, hands-on supervision for facilities maintenance.

FINDING

The current organizational structure for facilities within CCPS shows a best practice organization. All of the following facilities-related functions are organizationally directly under the Director of Administrative Services:

- capital projects planning;
- capital projects design;
- construction of new buildings, major additions, and renovations; and
- facilities maintenance.



Under this arrangement, there are no conflicting goals. The entire unit's goal is the achievement of the lowest overall total cost of construction, utilities, and maintenance, over the life of all facilities owned and operated by the Covington City Public Schools. This life-cycle cost orientation benefits the overall fiscal health of the division. When life-cycle costing is not observed, operating and maintenance costs are usually and persistently higher than they should be, depriving instructional and other important uses from needed financial support. Frequently, a small increase in upfront costs will result in significant savings over decades.

The simultaneous and careful attention to short- and long-term costs is not only important to CCPS, but also to the taxpayers who receive good value for their tax dollars. This is public agency stewardship at its best.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for its organization of facilities functions under a single, prominent school district administrator aimed at the achievement of optimum ownership and operational costs.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools lacks a best practice organization for its custodial staff.

Although it is a best practice to have the custodians assigned to specific schools and report directly to their respective principals, a second aspect is lacking. The custodians should also report to the Maintenance Supervisor who should provide staff training, coordinate the distribution of custodial supplies and equipment, and arrange for the assignment of substitute custodians. This latter reporting function does not appear to exist in Covington City Public Schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-1:

Establish a second central reporting line of authority for the custodians to the Maintenance Supervisor.

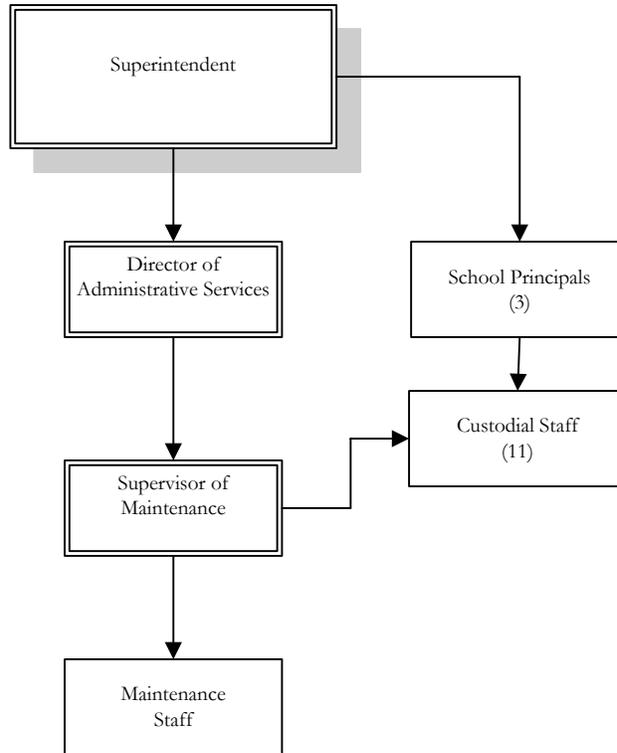
Exhibit 6-2 shows a modification of **Exhibit 6-1** whereby the custodians also report to the Maintenance Supervisor. Once this organizational change has been implemented, CCPS will have a best practice organization for its custodial staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

This organizational realignment can be accomplished with existing resources.



Exhibit 6-2
Modified Organizational Structure for Facilities in
Covington City Public Schools



Source: Prepared by Evergreen Solutions from information provided by Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

6.2 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;
- plans for 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 as necessary; and
- a clear understanding of the safety and security needs of the contemporary educational setting.



Exhibit 6-3 shows facilities disbursements at CCPS and peer school divisions in FY 2005. This information will vary drastically from year to year because capital programs do not have the same intensity each year. In CCPS, these most recent disbursements are mainly for routine facilities improvements as necessary.

**Exhibit 6-3
Facilities Disbursements
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Facilities	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$409,305	\$470
Buena Vista City	\$0	\$0
Franklin City	\$2,051,977	\$1,550
Galax City	\$95,922	\$70
Norton City	\$0	\$0
West Point	\$376,437	\$469
Peer Division Average	\$504,867	\$418

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

FINDING

The Virginia Association of School Superintendents completed a Program and Facilities Study for the Covington City Public Schools in March 2005. This study examined the one primary school and one intermediate school in CCPS only. The study recommended the replacement of the existing Edgemont Primary School (PreK-3) and the Jeter-Watson Intermediate School (4-7) with new facilities. Edgemont received a mean score of 1.33, and Jeter-Watson a score of 1.57. These scores are from a scoring scale of

- 3 above average;
- 2 average; and
- 1 below average.

The report also noted that many of the deficiencies found in both schools already existed when earlier building condition surveys were done in 2001 and 2004. These persistent deficiencies include the following:

- **Edgemont Primary School**
 - does not meet current requirements for new sites in the Virginia Department of Education Regulations for Public School Building Construction;
 - does not meet current requirements of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code;
 - does not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act;



- classrooms in the oldest section of the building are smaller than in newer sections of the building;
 - storage space is practically non-existent in all classrooms and administrative areas;
 - available space and electrical outlets for computers are located against the walls – this means computer screens must face windows causing disabling glare for students using them;
 - lighting is average in some classrooms, but many classrooms still have lights mounted on high ceilings that do not provide sufficient light at desk level;
 - the building does not have central air conditioning and humidity control – temperatures vary widely from the human comfort zone of 68 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and 20 to 80 percent relative humidity;
 - there is no central communication system in the building for use in routine, emergency or critical times;
 - the library can only accommodate one class at a time;
 - noise levels in the modular classrooms are high;
 - there is no interior space for physical education other than the cafeteria;
 - the cafeteria does not meet minimum requirements for elementary school gymnasiums in the Virginia Department of Education Guidelines;
 - outdoor PE space is limited and too close to parking and delivery areas;
 - mechanical and electrical systems need major overhaul to accommodate new technology – two window air conditioners, the only cooling in the building, cannot be operated simultaneously without overloading the circuits;
 - asbestos abatement is required;
 - there is no computer lab;
 - clinic and administrative spaces are undersized; and
 - there is no space for art and music programs.
- **Jeter-Watson Intermediate School**
 - does not meet current requirements for new sites in the Virginia Department of Education Regulations for Public School Building Construction;



- does not meet current requirements of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code;
- does not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act – an elevator is needed for compliance;
- classrooms retain their original incandescent lighting which is both inefficient and insufficient to provide an optimum environment for multiple task use including computer use;
- there are no thermal controls, so temperatures vary widely across the building and the human comfort zone;
- storage space is practically non-existent;
- mechanical and electrical systems need overhaul to accommodate computer and other technology;
- asbestos abatement is required;
- the cafeteria has adequate space, but cannot accommodate a needed second serving line;
- administrative offices are very small;
- computer lab and clinic need to be expanded;
- art and technology education facilities need additional space; and
- parking and bus loading space is seriously deficient.

The 2005 study did not examine Covington High School; the high school is considered average to above average, and capable of being renovated and upgraded.

Exhibit 6-4 shows estimates prepared by the design professionals hired by CCPS. These estimates compare options of renovating all three schools plus the central office, and new construction options for a Primary School, a PreK-7 school, along with new construction of a combination of the two schools with shared services.

In 2005, Covington City Public Schools, in conjunction with the City Government, reached the decision to build the last option in **Exhibit 6-4**: a new facility containing separate PreK-3 and 4-7 schools, with shared services. This is a similar scheme to the new Mountain View Elementary School/Clifton Middle School combination in Alleghany County Public Schools. Preliminary design concepts are being developed currently by the CCPS architects, for a 60-acre site, purchased by CCPS after a site evaluation study, in the southwestern part of Covington. The Director of Administrative Services expects that all stakeholders will be given full opportunities to participate in design reviews as plans are solidified.



Exhibit 6-4
Estimated Costs of Renovation or New Construction
Assuming July 2007 Bid Date

Construction Option	Estimated Renovation Cost	Estimated New Construction Cost	Estimated Professional Fees
Additions/Renovations to Edgemont	\$6,500,000		\$520,000
Additions/Renovations to Jeter-Watson	\$5,500,000		\$440,000
Additions/Renovations to Covington High	\$4,900,000		\$392,000
School Board Office Renovations	\$448,000		\$36,000
New PreK-3 School (350 students)		\$8,150,000	\$510,000
New Pre-K-7 School		\$16,560,000	\$993,000
New PreK-3 and New 4-7 w/shared facilities		\$14,850,000	\$891,000

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Office of Director of Administrative Services, 2006.

According to Evergreen's survey results of CCPS administrators, 100 percent of respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* with the statement “Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.” The teacher responses to the same question are 46.2 percent *agree*, 18.0 percent had no opinion, 33.3 percent *disagree*, and 2.6 percent *strongly disagree*. This perceptible difference between administrators and teachers may point out that participation is not as intensive as the administrators might believe. It is clear that stakeholder consultation in facility planning is important and must be practiced actively. **Exhibit 6-5** shows the responses of CCPS administrators and teachers compared to responses from districts in Evergreen’s survey database.

Exhibit 6-5
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results on Input to Facility Planning in the
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	100%	0%	62.7%	15.6%	46.2%	35.9%	41.6%	29.1%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

Another survey statement, “ Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs,” reflects the poor condition of Edgemont and Jeter-Watson Schools. Only 25 percent of administrators *agree*, while 25 percent *disagree*, and 50 percent *strongly disagree*. Teacher responses to that same statement were 33.3 percent *agree*, 5.1 percent had no opinion, 33.3 percent *disagree*, and 28.2 percent *strongly disagree*. The strongly negative responses are no doubt primarily a reflection on Edgemont and Jeter-Watson. **Exhibit 6-6** shows the responses of CCPS administrators and teachers compared to responses from peers administrators and teachers.



**Exhibit 6-6
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results on Sufficiency of Space in the
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	25.0%	75.0%	58.2%	38.0%	33.3%	61.5%	43.2%	45.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

At the Evergreen public forum in Covington City Public Schools, agreement was evident with the needs for new and better primary and intermediary schools. However, sentiment was also strong for exploring further the possibility of shared services between or combining the two school divisions. Here are excerpts written by forum participants under the topic of “Facilities:”

- *There should not be any construction until city and county leaders seriously discuss the future, including consolidation. Put aside personal agendas and the “turf wars.” Cooperation is the only logical conclusion.*
- *Facilities need to be upgraded all around and made better.*
- *Facilities should accommodate appropriate ages together. If facilities are not sufficient, we should consider consolidation for children’s education purposes, not pride in maintaining City schools for the purpose of keeping City schools.*
- *There should be one school system, thus utilizing new buildings and renovated schools. A new high school must be built – all would benefit from it.*

One reason why people see a need for cooperation between the two school divisions, or perhaps some form of joint activity, is that ACPS needs to find a viable solution to its need for an upgraded or new high school. Two options for ACPS do not involve a joint activity with CCPS:

- renovating the existing Alleghany High School and flood-mitigating the site; or
- building a new stand-alone Alleghany High School.

The remaining options require joint study between the two school divisions:

- expand the existing Covington High School to accommodate a jointly operated Covington High School and Alleghany High School;
- build a new high school jointly between CCPS and ACPS, and run it cooperatively as a combined County-City High School.



Currently, one study of these options is underway. This study is examining the feasibility of a combined high school in the location of the current Covington High School. The firm of Oliver, Webb, Pappas and Rhudy, Inc., Architects and Engineers (OWPR) has been hired with funds from the Alleghany Foundation on behalf of the CCPS and ACPS to pursue this study.

The two school boards agreed on November 29, 2006 to proceed with a joint architectural study of Covington High School. The Alleghany Foundation approved the re-allocation of funds to support the study, and OWPR, Inc., has been authorized to proceed. The task will be to determine what renovations and expansion would be necessary in order to have Covington High School serve as a 21st Century comprehensive Group AA high school for all students in the City and County in grades 9-12. This study will also include a projected cost for such a project. Educational program development meetings will be conducted with department chairs from both high schools on January 3, 2007. A forum for parent representatives from all K-12 City and County PTAs, PTOs, and booster clubs will be conducted on January 18, 2007. The goal of the process is to have the architect present his report and proposed design during the same February joint meeting of the two school boards at which Evergreen Solution, LLC will present our recommendations for this efficiency review.

Because of the possibility that a joint ACPS/CCPS high school will not be acceptable, the Alleghany County School Board approved a resolution on December 11, 2006 that maintained its commitment to studying merger options, but which also directed the Superintendent to bring forth recommendations associated with the possible construction of a new (county-only) high school. This resolution requires the Superintendent, by October 1, 2007, to bring forth recommendations:

- for an option to purchase property;
- to employ an architect; and
- for a financial plan to support a possible new high school.

It is clear from these developments that CCPS, ACPS, and the City and County Governments are stakeholders in future facility development. The Ad Hoc Committee, comprised of representatives of both school divisions and both governments, is evidence that the fact of being in this together has been recognized and formalized. While it is feasible to have a jointly operated high school without a consolidated school division, it is unclear whether or not consolidation is viewed by some as a prerequisite to a combined high school, and yet by others as a non-acceptable condition. For some citizens, talk of consolidation appears to be a genuine taboo. Proponents of consolidation automatically assume that such a move will save administrative costs. Proponents of a jointly operated school division assume the same. It is not clear whether or not sufficient information exists to corroborate the extent, or even the reality, of such savings.

Unfortunately, the Ad Hoc Committee was discontinued in early November 2006. The two school divisions have instead agreed to meet jointly in open session from this time forward as they work to complete the current facility planning process. Much work yet remains to be done. The facilities development process conducted by the Ad Hoc Committee is moving rapidly from the idea generation stage to the careful study and weighing of these ideas. Even though it will take time to study and discuss the hard and soft science aspects of the facilities ideas being



proposed, a decision-making deadline needs to be established. Hard work lies ahead, but it cannot be allowed to go on indefinitely.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-2:

Re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee and charge it with generating a definitive resolution of the CCPS and ACPS facilities needs on or before October 1, 2007.

To this end, the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-constituted immediately. The Committee should pursue a diligent and deliberate course to study all major ideas carefully, impartially, and professionally, leading to informed decision making about the future of Alleghany High School and other County and City school facilities.

It is recommended that the Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of representatives from both school divisions and from both governments, be designated by the City and County governments to serve as the official leadership group to move the process of study and analysis forward. It is further recommended that the Ad Hoc Committee use a structured problem-solving process, such as the flow chart originally developed for this purpose. This chart should be embellished to contain all aspects the Committee wants to pursue. Once the chart is satisfactory to all concerned, it should be adopted as the official, formal process.

Several key rules and principles should be observed:

- Ideas are important and valuable, but they are not potential solutions until they have been studied carefully, and important facts are fully developed and understood.
- It is a virtue to champion an idea, but not on the basis of mere conjecture and assumptions – facts are the tools of true idea champions.
- Emotions are acceptable in debate and discussion, but they are not useful when informed decisions must be reached.
- Ideas should be implemented with deliberate speed once incontrovertible facts have been developed to justify such action.
- As long as the research scope and protocol are pursued professionally, competently, and efficiently; it is unlikely that an idea can be “studied to death.”
- It is acceptable to declare one or two ideas as taboo, provided all stakeholders agree not to debate or consider the idea as part of the process.
- Studies of each idea chosen for further scrutiny should seek the information needed for decision making, and be objective, impartial, and professional.



- Attempts to advance an idea, by means of a deliberately skewed or faulty investigation with predetermined results corrupt the process seriously, and perpetrators should be removed permanently from further participation.
- It is hard to un-build: when a structure has been built in a specific location and to a particular configuration, it generates a nearly irreversible commitment to that decision – hence, that decision should have the strongest possible foundation.

Examples of the types of studies that should be done of the selected options are:

- educational specifications prepared by a school architect for the most likely of the scenarios: a new high school (County only, or combined City and County), a renovated and perhaps expanded existing high school, and an addition to the existing Covington High School;
- more detailed preliminary facility construction and renovation cost estimates based on reliable cost data performed by an established cost consultant;
- updates of demographic and geographic analysis of population patterns and trends influencing school and redistricting options;
- updates of analyses of potential savings in administrative costs to determine the amount of savings that would be realized from a consolidated or joint operation; and
- if deemed advisable, any appropriate sociopolitical and socioeconomic analyses related to selected options.

FISCAL IMPACT

This fiscal impact can not be determined at this time.

FINDING

CCPS has pursued an orderly and rational effort to determine the best strategy for facilities planning and development. Studies completed in 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2005 have led to the well-substantiated conclusion that replacements for Edgemont Primary School and Jeter-Watson Intermediate School appear to be in the best interests of the public and the future of the City. These studies include:

- School Facilities Report, 2001-2010, VPI and State University, May 2001;
- City of Covington Public Schools Facilities Study, Oliver, Webb, Pappas and Rhudy, Inc., Architects and Engineers, June 2003;
- Site Evaluation Study, Oliver, Webb, Pappas and Rhudy, Inc., Architects and Engineers, November 2004; and



- Program and Facilities Study, Covington City Schools, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, March 2005.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for pursuing an orderly, rational and well-documented effort to determine the best options for facility planning and development for the division.

FINDING

CCPS has worked in a positive and constructive manner with the Covington City Council on planning for its facilities. By keeping Council members informed and seeking their input, and by conducting carefully documented studies, CCPS has assured itself of the support of City Council for its current plans and strategies.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for working in a positive and constructive manner with the City Council on facilities planning and development issues.

FINDING

After having decided to commission two new schools, plus a renovation of its high school, CCPS has a major non-recurring opportunity to incorporate low operating and maintenance costs into these facilities. This should be done by emphasizing to the architects and engineers that CCPS intends to establish and pursue a firm policy to use life-cycle costing in all new construction, additions, and renovations.

Currently, life-cycle cost analyses are not a matter of official policy within CCPS when the division is contemplating major selections of building materials and components during the design of new buildings, building additions, or renovations. Nor do architects automatically perform life-cycle costing in their work. This opens up the possibility that only the lowest first cost might be used as the selection criterion. In that case, the division faces an increased risk of unacceptably high maintenance and operating costs. Architects and their team of consultants should therefore be instructed to perform life-cycle cost analyses for all major building components and materials.

Life-cycle cost analyses are typically performed by the architects and engineers to design new facilities. Specially trained cost consultants are also qualified to perform such work. 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, a lower cost but longer life floor finish is colored concrete with epoxy sealant.



In addition, VCT requires constant multiple-layer waxing in order to keep it serviceable, whereas porcelain tile, terrazzo and sealed concrete require significantly less upkeep. For example, terrazzo and porcelain tile are 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 and stripping 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. Old school buildings provide evidence of this situation.

A definition of life-cycle cost analysis includes:

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 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_cycle_cost_analysis).

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-3:

Employ life-cycle cost analysis as an official procedure in the selection of equipment and materials for new schools, additions, and renovations.

CCPS should select equipment and materials that favor long-term savings in energy use, maintenance labor and materials, and custodial labor and materials.

As was noted in the commendation on the overall organization favoring life-cycle costing, the functions headed by the Director of Administrative Services are 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.

FISCAL IMPACT

In school districts where life-cycle cost analysis has not been practiced to any significant extent, maintenance and operating cost savings from the implementation of life-cycle costing, along



with energy savings, can amount to more than 20 percent of maintenance and custodial labor and materials, as well as 20 percent or more of energy cost.

The annual budget for operations and maintenance at CCPS is approximately \$960,000 of which 20 percent is an annual net savings of about \$191,854. The cost of conducting the life-cycle cost analyses will be included in the design professional fees, and are not subtracted from the projected net savings shown. Savings are shown beginning in the second half of 2008-09, consistent with the likely schedule of new and renovated building occupancy.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Implement Formal Life-Cycle Costing	\$0	\$95,927	\$191,854	\$191,854	\$191,854

FINDING

While Edgemont Primary and Jeter-Watson Intermediate Schools will be replaced, Covington High School is expected to undergo a major renovation and upgrade. Built in 1939 as part of efforts by the U.S. Government to stimulate local economies, Covington High School is a historic structure that may be qualified to receive funds from the Secretary of the Interior’s Historic Resources Programs, as well as from state programs. In the possible event that ACPS and CCPS agree to establish a jointly-operated high school at the site of the existing Covington High School, efforts to preserve the historic structure with any new addition should be studied.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-4:

Seek historic preservation funding for some of the renovation and restoration of Covington High School.

While such funding is not automatic, if approved, it can supplement other local and state funds. The typical procedure is to work through the state offices in applying for state as well as federal funding. Frequently, only federal buildings of historic value are funded by the Department of the Interior, but since Covington High School was built with WPA (Works Progress Administration) monies, it may qualify for federal funds. See www.achp.gov/fpo.html for U. S. Government programs, and www.vapreservation.org/ for Virginia historic resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost implication can not be determined until the involvement of the federal agency.

FINDING

When Edgemont Primary School is replaced by a new facility, an important community resource will be available for alternative re-use. The original Edgemont School building is a historic structure that can and should be salvaged for use as a neighborhood community center. Ample



land is available for playgrounds, playing fields, and picnic grounds. The building itself can serve many purposes, including the housing of community outreach and social service programs. A well-defined urban neighborhood surrounds the facility.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-5:

Convert Edgemont Primary School to a community center if it is no longer used as a school.

CCPS should transfer ownership of this facility to the City of Covington. The City should convert Edgemont Primary School to a neighborhood community center once it is no longer used as a school. An architect should be hired to study ways of salvaging and rehabilitating the original school structure, and of removing all additions and major alterations. Existing playing fields and playgrounds should be salvaged, if possible, and picnic facilities added. Although it is historically inaccurate, consideration should be given to adding a sloped, standing seam metal roof to the original structure. This will reduce the likelihood of leaks, and virtually eliminate the need for roof maintenance. The building’s plumbing and electrical systems should be upgraded to meet the current level of service and code requirements. The building should be equipped with a central heating and cooling system. As a stand-alone small structure, the building may lack sufficient historic significance to be considered for a historic preservation grant (see **Recommendation 6-4** for details). Nevertheless, such a grant should be pursued.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of converting Edgemont School to a community facility may range from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 or more, depending on the extent of the architectural program adopted. It is assumed that the City of Covington will take over the operation of this facility as part of its parks and recreation program, and that it will fund the redevelopment costs and the eventual costs of operation and maintenance. Federal and state funding should be sought for all or part of this conversion. Private sector donations should also be solicited.

FINDING

When Jeter-Watson Intermediate School is replaced by a new facility, another important community resource will be available for alternative re-use. Like Covington High School, this school facility is a historic structure built during the Great Depression under the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) Program. As the former school for black students, Jeter-Watson has a rich history of African-American culture. Consequently, the building can and should not only be salvaged for use as a neighborhood community center. Consideration should also be given for its use as an African-American history museum and archive.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-6:

Convert Jeter-Watson Intermediate School to a community center or black history museum after it is no longer used as a school.



CCPS should transfer ownership of this facility to the City of Covington. The City should convert Jeter-Watson Intermediate School to a community center and/or black history museum after it is no longer used as a school. An architect should be hired to study ways of salvaging and rehabilitating the original school structure. Existing playing fields and playgrounds should be salvaged, if possible, and picnic facilities added. The maintenance shed should be removed and relocated. The building's plumbing and electrical systems should be upgraded to meet current level of service and code requirements. The building should be equipped with a new central heating and cooling system. As a major historic structure, the building appears to have sufficient historic significance to be considered for a historic preservation grant (see **Recommendation 6-4** for details). Other public and private sector grants may be available for the black history programs, museum, and archives functions.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of converting Jeter-Watson School to a community facility may range from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 or more, depending on the extent of the architectural program adopted. It is assumed that the City of Covington will take over the operation of this facility, as part of its parks and recreation program, and that it will fund the redevelopment costs and the eventual costs of operation and maintenance. Federal and state funding should be sought for all or part of this conversion. Private sector donations should also be considered, especially from sources supporting black history initiatives.

FINDING

By commissioning two new schools, plus a renovation of its high school, CCPS has yet another major non-recurring opportunity: to limit the number, types and variety of major building components. Currently, CCPS, like many older school divisions, has a variety of buildings constructed at different times in its inventory. Typically, these buildings contain many different types of interior finish materials and equipment. This situation requires keeping on hand numerous different repair or replacement items, including, but not limited to:

- floor and ceiling tiles;
- light fixtures, light bulbs and fluorescent tubes;
- plumbing fixtures; and
- mechanical equipment.

In addition to the requirement for a variegated inventory, two other factors influence cost: mechanics and custodians must spend extra time to learn to work with many different items, and the school division cannot save money by buying many items in bulk.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-7:

Limit the variety of equipment and materials during future new construction, additions, and renovations.



As new buildings are constructed and existing ones are renovated, CCPS should strive to ask its architects to create a narrow array of equipment and materials. This should be done especially in the following areas:

- Interior finish materials should be limited to a small number of types, patterns and colors. Included are floor, wall and ceiling finishes, and perhaps door hardware and keying systems. This simplifies repairs, and keeps the number of replacement parts under control. In addition, it reduces the number of tools and chemicals needed to clean them.
- Light fixtures should be standardized to not more than four different types. This reduction makes it easier for electricians to know the various fixtures, requiring fewer replacement lamp or bulb types to be kept on hand. In addition, preventive maintenance schedules can be simplified.
- Plumbing fixtures should be standardized as much a possible, preferably to one flush valve, and one or two sets of faucets. This makes it easier for plumbers to know the various fixtures, and requires fewer types of replacement parts. In addition, preventive maintenance schedules can be simplified.
- Boilers, chillers, and other HVAC equipment should be standardized so that maintenance mechanics can know the equipment more easily, and preventive maintenance schedules can be simplified.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation will not have a major fiscal impact. Rather, it will streamline operations and thus improve productivity in maintenance and custodial operations. The saving below is small, but can generate one percent of the maintenance and operating budget of \$960,000, or \$9,600. In addition to productivity improvement, savings from pre-purchasing in larger, more uniform quantities will also accrue.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Limit Variety of Equipment/Materials	\$0	\$9,600	\$9,600	\$9,600	\$9,600

FINDING

The electrical capacity at Edgemont Primary and Jeter-Watson Intermediate Schools is insufficient to support air conditioning and newly acquired computer hardware and peripherals.

Since both schools are scheduled to be replaced, no funds should be spent at this time for major electrical upgrades. However, every effort must be made to monitor electrical safety issues deliberately and carefully in case any hazards should develop.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-8:

Monitor electrical safety issues carefully at Edgemont Primary and Jeter-Watson Intermediate Schools.

This activity should be implemented as an intensified safety monitoring action as long as these two schools are serving students.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

6.3 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.

When responding to the following statement, “Schools are well-maintained,” 87.5 percent of administrators *agree* or *strongly agree*, while only 12.5 percent *disagree*. Teachers responding to the same question had 53.8 percent *agree* or *strongly agree*, while 38.4 percent *disagree* or *strongly disagree*; and 7.8 percent had no opinion.

Administrators responding to “Repairs are made in a timely manner,” *agree* or *strongly agree* at 75 percent, and *disagree* at 25 percent. For teachers, the response was 38.5 percent *agree* or *agree strongly*, 46.1 percent *disagree* or *disagree strongly*, while 15.4 percent had no opinion.

“Emergency maintenance is handled promptly,” received a 100 percent *agree* from administrators. Teachers responding to the same statement had 61.5 percent *agree* or *strongly agree*, 18 percent *disagree*, and 20.5 percent no opinion.

Exhibit 6-7 shows the responses of CCPS administrators and teachers compared to responses from districts in Evergreen’s survey database.

Exhibit 6-8 shows a comparison of operating and maintenance expenses between CCPS and peer divisions. As can be seen, CCPS is below the peer division average, and third lowest among the peers.



**Exhibit 6-7
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results on Maintenance Issues in the
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Schools are well-maintained.	87.5%	12.5%	80.5%	17.1%	53.8%	38.4%	53.9%	37.7%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	75.0%	25.0%	62.1%	30.0%	38.5%	46.1%	44.5%	46.6%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	100%	0%	78.4%	12.1%	61.5%	18%	65.6%	16.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

**Exhibit 6-8
Operation and Maintenance Services
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Operation and Maintenance Services	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$753,911	\$867
Buena Vista City	\$947,470	\$842
Franklin City	\$1,297,375	\$980
Galax City	\$923,594	\$695
Norton City	\$947,008	\$1,297
West Point	\$844,280	\$1,053
Peer Division Average	\$991,945	\$973

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

FINDING

Currently, four maintenance mechanics are assigned to CCPS facilities with a gross square footage of 179,477, a ratio of one mechanic per just below 45,000 square feet. This is a best practice ratio.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for maintaining a staff of maintenance mechanics at the best practice ratio of 45,000 square feet per mechanic.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools has found it increasingly difficult to replace mechanics who retire with equally competent and dedicated individuals. A major reason cited is that young people seek employment elsewhere where wages are higher and economic opportunities appear brighter than in Covington. One proven way to counter this exodus of young persons is to create



opportunities for apprenticeships and training locally. The Jackson River Technical Center is able to fill this role.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-9:

Create a strong and direct link between programs at the Jackson River Technical Center and maintenance staffing needs at Covington City Public Schools .

Covington City Public Schools should develop a link between maintenance training programs at the JRTC and apprentice opportunities at CCPS. Maintenance helpers could be hired from men and women in appropriate JRTC programs. If current JRTC programs do not meet the needs for maintenance training, CCPS should take steps to implement or strengthen such programs. Although the needs of school facilities should be emphasized, the maintenance training programs should be structured to suit the needs of all types of facilities in the public and private sectors. Evergreen Solutions is making an identical recommendation for the Alleghany County Public Schools. This creates an opportunity for cooperative implementation by the two school divisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing CCPS resources.

6.4 CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Safe, clean, and sanitary facilities are essential elements in today's educational environment. School systems 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's 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 central office or school administrators.

In response to the survey statement "Schools are clean," 100 percent of administrators responded as strongly *agree* or *agree*. On the teacher survey, responses to the same question were 49 percent *agree* or *strongly agree*, 10.3 percent no opinion, and 30.7 percent *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. **Exhibit 6-9** shows the responses of CCPS administrators and teachers compared to responses from peers.

Exhibit 6-10 shows the ratio of square footage to custodians at CCPS and peer districts. The accepted best practice range is 18,000 to 20,000 square feet per custodian.



Exhibit 6-9
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results on Facilities Cleanliness in the Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Schools are clean.	100%	0%	87.2%	9.2%	49%	30.7%	58.9%	31.1%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

Exhibit 6-10
Square Footage per Custodian

School Division	Square Feet per Custodian
Covington City	16,316
Buena Vista City	24,303
Franklin City	23,805
Galax City	25,012
Norton City	22,198
West Point	21,971
Peer Division Average	23,458

Source: Prepared by Evergreen Solutions from information supplied by peer districts, 2006.

FINDING

A total of 11 custodians serve a gross square foot area of 179,477, for a ratio of 16,316 square feet per custodian. This ratio is below the 18,000 – 20,000 accepted as a best practice. It should be noted, however, that Edgemont Primary and Jeter-Watson Intermediate Schools are challenging cleaning environments due to their poor state of maintenance.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for maintaining a staff of custodians slightly below the best practice ratio of 18,000 – 20,000 square feet per custodian.

FINDING

CCPS has a maintenance helper who also serves as a substitute custodian on an as-needed basis. The principals are given the option of utilizing that individual or restructuring duties of the other custodians to include the essential duties of the custodian who is absent.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for its best practice substitute custodian policy.



6.5 ENERGY MANAGEMENT

The school buildings and other facilities of a school division consume significant amounts of energy that often appear to be an evergrowing and sometimes unpredictable component of the overall annual budget. With the advent of increased costs for energy to provide fuels for HVAC systems, transportation vehicles, 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 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 6-11 shows the responses of CCPS administrators and teachers compared to responses from peers. As can be seen, 37.5 percent of administrators *agree* that “The division has an effective energy management program.” In contrast, 25 percent *disagree*, while 37.5 percent have no opinion. Among teachers, 15.4 percent agree, 46.2 percent have no opinion, and 38.5 percent *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

**Exhibit 6-11
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results on Energy Management in the
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
The division has an effective energy management program.	37.5%	25.0%	70.7%	17.1%	15.4%	38.5%	52.6%	21.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

FINDING

CCPS does not appear to have a well-defined and concerted energy management program. A Technical Analyst’s Report on energy saving potential in the Covington City Public Schools, dated January 2, 2002 was provided to the Evergreen Team. This report was issued after a visit to three CCPS school facilities by representatives from Rebuild America’s Blacksburg, Virginia Office. It is unclear to what extent the recommendations of that report have been implemented,



in whole or in part, as there is no documentation of such implementation. Energy consumption, both increases and decreases, are being documented. However, increases or decreases in energy use are not related to any specific energy management actions.

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 6-10:

Develop and implement a systematic energy management and conservation program for Covington City Public Schools.

An overall energy management and conservation program can be developed at this time 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 Covington City Public Schools.

The Director of Facilities Services should be responsible for the CCPS implementation of an energy management and conservation plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

The positive fiscal impact of energy management and conservation plans can be significant in making available monies for instructional and other purposes. **Recommendations 6-11, 6-12, 6-13, and 6-14** show estimated impact analyses.



FINDING

CCPS expects to construct two new school facilities in the near future, and perform renovations on Covington High School. This construction presents an excellent opportunity to build some important energy-saving provisions into the new schools and into the renovations.

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System[®] 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 CCPS. 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 6-11:

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. CCPS should study this option carefully, and assess how it can effect substantial savings in operating and maintenance costs than more conventional design and construction approaches.

FISCAL IMPACT

If the existing Covington High School were to be retrofitted using LEED NC, the annual energy savings could average 20 percent of the average consumption over the past four years, about \$40,000 for natural gas, and \$36,000 for electricity, or \$76,000 total. The 20 percent savings of \$15,200 annually is shown beginning in the 2008-09 Fiscal Year.

The second row shows estimated energy savings from the combined primary and intermediate schools. As a surrogate, current energy consumption by Edgemont and Jeter-Watson is used, and



it is assumed that this energy use can be cut in half. Average electrical consumption is \$30,000 per year, while average natural gas consumed is \$42,000 annually, for a total of \$72,000. Half of this amount is \$36,000.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Retrofit Covington High School with LEED	\$0	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$15,200
Construct New Schools with LEED	\$0	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000
Total Savings	\$0	\$51,200	\$51,200	\$51,200	\$51,200

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools does not operate an energy management system. CCPS expects to construct two new school facilities in the near future, and perform major renovations on Covington High School. This presents an excellent opportunity to install an energy management system. CCPS must install one system capable of monitoring and controlling energy use in all of its buildings.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-12:

Purchase and install one single energy management system for all CCPS facilities, as part of the renovation of Covington High School renovation and the new construction of a primary and intermediate school.

CCPS should install a division-wide energy management system, in order to monitor and control energy use more carefully and specifically. CCPS 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 may include some home computers or laptops of persons directly in charge, such as the Director of Administrative Services 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 \$5,000.



Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Implement Energy Management System	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

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 Covington City Public Schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-13:

Integrate building commissioning in the energy management and conservation plan, and in all future new building construction and major renovations.

The Director of Administrative Services 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/>)



FINDING

As the high school is renovated and two new schools are 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 6-14:

Install special lighting control devices in all new, renovated or 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. CCPS 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. With the old primary and intermediate schools excluded, and new primary and intermediate schools added, the total square footage in the CCPS inventory is estimated to be approximately 200,000 square feet. Thus the total cost of installation is estimated to be \$40,000, plus the seven percent engineering fee of \$2,800, for a total of \$42,800.

Based on a total projected annual electrical use expenditure of \$71,000 (obtained from CCPS utility bills) in FY 2005-06, a minimal 10 percent annual savings would realize \$7,100, or a payback in six years using 2006 electric energy prices. A more likely 20 percent savings would yield \$14,200, and a three-year payback. Savings from lower HVAC use and longer electric bulb life have not been factored into this fiscal impact analysis.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Install Lighting Control Devices	\$0	(\$28,600)	(\$14,400)	(\$200)	\$14,000

6.6 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 6-12 shows the responses of CCPS administrators and teachers compared to responses from peers.

**Exhibit 6-12
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results on Community Use of Facilities in the
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Division facilities are open for community use.	87.5%	12.5%	78.3%	3.3%	89.7%	2.6%	61.5%	8.5%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.



FINDING

CCPS has a clearly stated and well-documented policy governing the community use of its facilities. The Board policy was adopted originally on October 18, 1982, and most recently amended on October 9, 2000.

The policy covers:

- Application and Approval Procedures
 - Application Form
- Rules and Conditions for Permit to Use Facilities
 - User responsibilities
 - Liability
 - Fees – Fee Schedule

COMMENDATION

The Covington City School Board is commended for developing and a maintaining a comprehensive policy on the community use of its facilities.

ALSO SEE RECOMMENDATION 10-9 IN CHAPTER 10



**CHAPTER 7:
TRANSPORTATION**



Chapter 7

TRANSPORTATION

Covington City Public Schools (CCPS), 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 CCPS transportation operation and includes 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 CCPS is compared to five other peer school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, namely: Buena Vista City Schools, Franklin City Schools, Galax City Schools, Norton City Schools, and West Point Schools.

Comparing transportation statistics among divisions must be done cautiously. Transportation operations rarely if ever operate exactly the same types of systems with the same types of programs and policies. This flexibility creates differences that can drastically affect any of the transportation operating statistics and costs. Unlike standardized tests where all questions are the same for all test takers, transportation programs can differ greatly and thus must be viewed and compared with this knowledge.

Comparative data presented below were supplied by the Virginia Department of Education and represent the newest available data which are for either for the 2004-05 or 2005-06 school years. **Exhibits 7-1** through **7-6** provide an overview which will be used in the peer transportation analysis.

Exhibit 7-1 shows that Covington City has the lowest student density (138/1,000), which equates to 30 percent below its peer average. This density can affect transportation routing and overall costs.

As can be seen in **Exhibit 7-2**, the percent of students classified as special education students is extremely high (23.6 percent) which is 9.2 percentage points greater than the peer division average. Special needs students can often times negatively impact the overall cost of transportation if not properly managed.

As can be seen in **Exhibit 7-3**, Covington City ranks third in its transportation cost per pupil. This is 12 percent below the peer average. Interestingly, it also ranks fourth in the total disbursements, which is 29 percent below the peer average. This would indicate that the higher than average special needs requirements have been controlled, and CCPS is transporting more students per bus than their peers.



**Exhibit 7-1
Peer School Division Overview
2005-06 School Year**

School Division	Cluster Identification	Total Student Population	Student Population Per 1,000 General Population	Total Number of Schools ¹	Total Instructional Staff Per 1,000 Students
Covington City	7	870	138.0	3	134.69
Buena Vista City	7	1,125	177.2	4	108.70
Franklin City	7	1,324	158.6	3	115.09
Galax City	7	1,329	194.4	3	101.65
Norton City	7	730	187.0	2	109.21
West Point	7	802	279.8	3	114.08
Peer Division Average		1,062	199.0	3	109.75

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2006 and United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census Data.

¹Includes Alternative Schools.

**Exhibit 7-2
Special Needs Students
2005-06 School Year**

School Division	Total Student Population	Percent Limited English Proficient (LEP)	Percent Special Education Students
Covington City	870	0.1%	23.6%
Buena Vista City	1,125	0.3%	15.0%
Franklin City	1,324	0.6%	20.0%
Galax City	1,329	17.2%	10.5%
Norton City	730	0.0%	14.8%
West Point	802	0.7%	11.6%
Peer Division Average	1,062	3.8%	14.4%

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

**Exhibit 7-3
Pupil Transportation Disbursements
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Pupil Transportation Services	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$235,102	\$270
Buena Vista City	\$448,542	\$399
Franklin City	\$478,345	\$361
Galax City	\$323,492	\$243
Norton City	\$179,465	\$246
West Point	\$228,428	\$285
Peer Division Average	\$331,654	\$307

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



As can be seen in **Exhibit 7-4**, the cost per mile places CCPS at 2.6 percent above the peer average. Because the division is smaller and buses operate fewer miles, costs must be spread over fewer miles. The cost per mile figure in light of the cost per student figure is understandable.

**Exhibit 7-4
Transportation Cost Per Mile
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Pupil Transportation Services	Per Mile Cost
Covington City	\$235,102	\$3.20
Buena Vista City	\$448,542	\$4.15
Franklin City	\$478,345	\$3.53
Galax City	\$323,492	\$3.11
Norton City	\$179,465	\$1.94
West Point	\$228,428	\$2.78
Peer Division Average	\$331,654	\$3.12

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

CCPS has the second smallest fleet within its peer group as shown in **Exhibit 7-5**.

**Exhibit 7-5
Total Route Buses Operated
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Route Buses
Covington City	6
Buena Vista City	13
Franklin City	15
Galax City	7
Norton City	4
West Point	8
Peer Division Average	9

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

Exhibit 7-6 illustrates that CCPS is averaging 11,280 miles per year per route bus. CCPS ranks third in the total miles driven among comparison divisions, but is 12 percent less than the peer average. The division is comprised of a geographical small area.

**Exhibit 7-6
Total Miles Operated
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Total Miles
Covington City	67,684
Buena Vista City	74,141
Franklin City	130,911
Galax City	86,159
Norton City	40,273
West Point	61,142
Peer Division Average	76,718

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



In addition to the peer division comparisons, a survey of CCPS administrators, principals, and teachers, was conducted as part of this efficiency review. Six 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 **7-10**.

Exhibit 7-7 reflects CCPS administrator responses. Administrator 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
Evergreen Administrator Survey Responses**

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because buses do not arrive to school on time.	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	0%	75%	12.5%	12.5%	0%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
Transportation	0%	0%	0%	87.5%	12.5%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.*

Exhibit 7-8 provides CCPS teacher responses to the same questions. Teacher responses reflect what these staff members perceive transportation to be from their vantage point. In most instances these staff members have a more direct day-to-day exposure to the transportation service and will be more directly influenced by operational deviations, student discipline issues, inclement weather, etc.



**Exhibit 7-8
Evergreen Teacher Survey Responses**

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because buses do not arrive to school on time.	5.1%	2.6%	7.7%	56.4%	28.2%
There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	7.7%	35.9%	18.0%	23.1%	15.4%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	12.8%	66.7%	20.5%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	0%	28.2%	23.1%	28.2%	20.5%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	2.6%	46.2%	46.2%	0%	5.1%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	2.6%	5.1%	35.9%	28.2%	28.2%

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
Transportation	0%	10.3%	38.5%	51.3%	0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

Exhibit 7-9 reflects the disparity between the two groups. The disparity (nearly 50%) is not uncommon. At the building level, there are traditionally three main areas of concern:

- timeliness of arriving and departing buses which cause teachers to have to deal with tardiness of students or buses;
- field or extracurricular trips that are either hard to schedule or develop issues for them; and
- drivers handling of student discipline that gets inherited within the building.

**Exhibit 7-9
Comparison of Administrator and Teachers Overall Responses**

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
Transportation-Teachers	0%	10.3%	38.5%	51.3%	0%
Transportation-Administrators	0%	0%	0%	87.5%	12.5%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

Exhibit 7-10 shows administrator and teacher survey results compared to peer school districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database. The peer group answers are the sum of all of the peer group respondents and thus will represent a larger number of respondents overall than those found within Covington City Public Schools.



**Exhibit 7-10
CCPS Administrator and Teacher Survey Results Compared to Peer Districts
in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Comparison Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Comparison Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because buses do not arrive to school on time.	0%	100%	11.9%	57.4%	7.7%	84.6%	8.0%	69.3%
There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	100%	0%	70.7%	22.0%	43.6%	38.5%	48.8%	25.6%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	100%	4.9%	95.1%	0%	87.2%	7.0%	69.0%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	100%	0%	92.7%	7.3%	28.2%	48.7%	65.2%	12.9%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	75.0%	12.5%	49.2%	30.2%	48.8%	5.1%	24.7%	20.5%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	100%	12.2%	85.4%	7.7%	56.4%	10.0%	52.8%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

As can be seen, CCPS administrators have a far more favorable overall opinion of how the transportation system is working than do their peers. Interviews indicate that CCPS administrators do not receive many calls of inquiry or complaints concerning transportation and thus the responses tend to be more favorable overall compared to peers. The largest disparities appear to be within the ‘timeliness’ (43%), sufficient buses for trips (29%), and student management (25%) areas. In the case of CCPS, these areas are not directly associated with the day-to-day operating regime of central office administrators, and are felt more at the teacher and principal levels. The peer administrators appear to have a more direct day-to-day reaction to these areas.

Compared to their peers, CCPS teachers believe that their buses are more timely (+15.3%), buses are less available for trips (-10.3%), have less buses breaking down (+7%), their method of requesting a field trip is not nearly as effective (-37%), their drivers handle student discipline issues better (+24.1%), and the student body feels safer on the buses by (+2.3%). Of the serviceability categories, CCPS teachers generally rank their systems more favorably.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Covington City Public Schools can be found within the City of Covington located in the western most portion of the Commonwealth of Virginia within Alleghany County. The division encompasses approximately 5.7 square miles. Population for the City is estimated at 6,303 (2000 census) and Covington is the County seat. The unemployment figures fluctuate in the five



percent range making driver acquisition easier. Roads utilized by the system consist of hard surface streets and some asphalt/oil-based County road configurations.

The CCPS Transportation System provides all of the various types of transportation services needed within the division (i.e. regular education, special education, vocational, athletics/field trips, etc.). This is a relatively small operation (5.5 home-to-school bus routes—five in the morning and six in the afternoon which does not require a great deal of advanced technology to manage.

Bus routes serve from all points within the division boundary and are routed to accommodate one high and intermediate school, one elementary school as well as a vocational school located within central Allegheny County. Maintenance is achieved by utilizing the Covington City Municipal Shop facility. The driver supply is adequate for this operating year. Management of the system is accomplished through the Director of Administrative Services with his Secretary providing additional clerical and phone support.

No service issues were found. Routing, trip and vehicle use planning and operating data, and most complaints are handled by the Administrative Services Office along with budget and cost control items. The fleet is in good operating condition. The division enjoys a good safety record which can be somewhat attributed to a low driver turnover rate.

Recommendations within this chapter are meant to offer alternative methods of performance, as well as methods to measure performance. Some will lend themselves to cost efficiencies while others are targeted towards service improvements. Pupil transportation is a service and should always consider this service element in all of its planning and operational endeavors.

A summary of the transportation recommendations is provided below:

- compile an educational Drivers Handbook for all rules and procedures;
- convert from an eight-hour driver guarantee to a six-hour guarantee;
- implement a improved system for accurately tracking driver work hours;
- conduct and maintain an accurate parts and supply inventory;
- actively review current bell schedules at all schools adjusting times to create increased operating efficiencies;
- make an effort to ensure all route sheets contain a listing of the students assigned to the bus;
- implement a system for measuring overall performance within the department; and
- establish routine driver safety meetings.

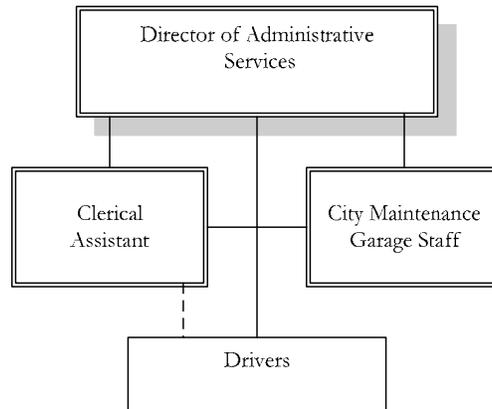


7.1 ORGANIZATION, PLANNING, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Covington City Public Schools has a very small and compact transportation operation. The organizational structure, as shown in **Exhibit 7-11**, includes the following staff:

- Administrative Director (new to the position)
- Clerical Assistant
- Five full-time drivers (one is a driver trainer)
- Full-time aide for special education route
- Afternoon only drivers
- Five substitute driver
- Lead mechanic (works for the City of Covington garage)

Exhibit 7-11
Covington City Public Schools
Current Organization Chart for Transportation



Source: Covington City Public Schools, Director of Administrative Services, 2006.

Full-time drivers are guaranteed eight (8) hours each day and receive full benefits. Substitutes and part-time drivers do not receive benefits. Drivers are dedicated to their work and are seldom absent. The Clerical Assistant is the most transportation knowledgeable person within the system. The Clerical Assistant prepares and keeps routes current, processes payroll, answers complaints and questions, and generally is the contact person for the public on transportation issues. The Director is new to CCPS and to the position. The Director has not had sufficient time to acclimate and understandably relies heavily on the Clerk and drivers for day-to-day operating issues. The lead mechanic and the system that supports his work will be discussed in the Maintenance Section of this chapter.

The system serves a small area (less than 6 square miles). The transportation operation has not changed appreciably in a number of years (although student enrollment has been declining), and the system operates safely with little or no major concerns. The division does not have many transportation policies and procedures. The Administrative Director and the Clerical Assistant work with the Finance Department in budget development. Budgets are based on historical past expenses and adjusted from year to year for any known changes.



FINDING

Bus drivers overwhelmingly concurred that building staff (e.g. principals, teachers, and support staff) support them in the areas of student conduct, and bus routing issues. For a group of drivers, no matter how large or small, to express this universal support in such a totally positive manner is rare.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for its overall support of school bus drivers at the school level.

FINDING

The CCPS Transportation Department has not seen any driver turnover in the last three years. The department has hired new drivers during this period, but only to help fortify the overall spare driver cadre and not for replacement of full-time driving staff.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for its driver retention and lack of driver turnover.

FINDING

Among its peer group, CCPS has the highest percent (23.6%) of special needs students which is 64 percent greater than its closest peer, yet the division ranks only third in the cost per student category while maintaining a positive 29 percent advantage on the average cost per student for the peer group (see **Exhibits 7-2 and 7-3**). These statistics show that efforts have been made to control the increased costs associated with the transport of these special needs students.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for its cost control (cost per student) in light of the higher than average number of special education students.

FINDING

Transportation employees are not directly involved with any policy, procedural, or financial planning; this is all done with little or no input by Transportation staff. Drivers do not have a handbook to gain insight as to expectations, policies, and procedures. The Board has a total of three policies dealing with transportation. The driver trainer verbally shares these policies with new hires. Not having an operating handbook places the division susceptible to liability charges. Further discipline of employees is difficult unless a written record of performance expectations exists.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-1:

Create a CCPS Drivers Operating Handbook.

Currently, any procedural guidelines, instructions, operating policies, and safety procedures exist only in historical form, and are verbally passed on during training classes. A void exists in both accepted as well as expected practices. Communications should be greatly enhanced with the creation of a driver’s manual that codifies policies and procedures. The development process should be collaborative involving drivers, supervisors, and human resources.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Drivers keep track of all hours worked on their own individual timesheets. They are guaranteed eight (8) hours per day, but do not always work these full eight hours. The hours paid, but not worked, become an issue. The time keeping system used is supposed to accommodate for any extra hours (potential overtime) that are worked by not paying drivers for any extra actual hours until they exceed the guaranteed hours. This is cumbersome and relies heavily on individual driver tracking. A quick review of paid hours shows that the system is not fail proof and tends to overpay hours.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-2:

Implement a driver time keeping record system which fully and accurately tracks all driver hours actually worked.

The current CCPS system leaves no clear audit trail, relies exclusively on driver input, and fails to justify the differences between actual hours worked and hours guaranteed. The equity of hours worked among drivers, accuracy of record keeping, and control of overtime paid (recent comparison of overtime from prior year shows overtime is up from prior year) should be the main objectives for the new system. The assigned routes along with their times will be the base actual hours tracked. Any additional hours above those that are actually worked must be pre-approved and should be tracked via a ‘work completed’ document of some type such as a ‘trip ticket’, etc. which is signed off on by a teacher, coach, or other sponsor.

FISCAL IMPACT

As of October 2006, CCPS had paid \$2,222 more in overtime pay to all drivers as compared to the same period for the prior year. This represents one-third of the operating year with the historically heavier overtime months yet to come. At this current rate of expense (+61%), the



division will close out the year paying out a total of \$10,148 more in overtime pay compared to prior year, for a total expense of \$26,785 compared to \$16,637. Setting these controls will at a minimum control the current rate of overtime inflation, and with proper administration, should assist in reducing the overall rate of overtime. Estimated minimum savings would be \$11,000 annually.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Improve Driver Time Record System	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000

FINDING

As stated in the above finding drivers are guaranteed eight hours per day if they are full time (i.e. drive both in the morning and the afternoon). The actual hours of driving do not always equal this eight-hour guarantee even with the extra work that is accomplished during mid-day. This situation can result in labor waste and added overtime paid, as well as contribute to a confusing method of time keeping that is hard to understand and control.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-3:

Establish a new guaranteed hours requirement for all drivers or phase this in for new hires.

Although the driver turnover rate is minimal under today’s market, the guaranteed eight hours is excessive. Six (6) hours will guarantee benefits which will help ensure that drivers can be hired and retained. The extra hours that are available to be worked above the six-hour guarantee can be tracked and audited (see above recommendations), helping to insure drivers can remain relatively secure with similar number of hours as current. This change will also help to reduce the total potential overtime hours. Moving to this new format will, over time, alleviate much of the confusion as to how many hours each driver is paid versus actually worked as discussed above. This change will assist the division in cost control it will need in order to maintain a balance of cost and reimbursement calculations.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the lowest paid driver hourly rate of \$10.29, a six (6) hour guarantee will save \$20.58 per day in wages and with 33 percent benefit costs, adjusts to \$27.37 per day savings per driver over the current eight-hour person at same rate. Annualized this equals to \$4,982 per driver difference, while the potential for overtime is also reduced by approximately 20 percent. Based on the current overtime rate, if only half of the 20 percent avoidance of overtime is experienced this would equate to \$26,785 x 10 percent = \$2,678. This would be an estimated savings of \$7,660 per driver times five drivers = \$38,300. The chart below reflects the assumption that this recommendation would be implemented for all drivers going to the same guaranteed six (6)



hours per day. If the division were to phase this system in, then the savings would occur on a per driver basis each year.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Change Guaranteed Hours from Eight to Six Hours per Day	\$38,300	\$38,300	\$38,300	\$38,300	\$38,300

FINDING

In attempting to determine if the CCPS Transportation Department is delivering adequate levels of service, factors of on-time performance, accident ratios, and other performance measurements could not be defined. If any operation is to improve and seek additional 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 data so that any operation will be able to gauge its success against its peers. The state-level information is not sufficient by itself to sustain proper planning and procedural changes that may be required.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-4:

Implement a system for measuring overall performance within the CCPS Transportation Department.

Based on information provided by building and staff, as well as driver and community input, the existing transportation service appears to be adequate, even in light of the later arriving buses at Edgemont, but the only measurement of success that was identified to the Evergreen Team is whether the phone rings or not.

Suggested transportation benchmarks should include, but are not limited to:

- 99.5 percent on-time percentage;
- no more than one preventable accident per 100,000 miles;
- <3 percent overtime pay to payroll ceiling; and
- <3 percent driver absenteeism.

These benchmarks can be easily measured. Weekly and monthly comparisons can be made. Once tracked and benchmarked, this information can be shared with staff, drivers, etc. so all parties are aware of service levels. Action plans should be developed for those areas not reaching the benchmarks.

FISCAL IMPACT

As these benchmarks are set and monitored, the only variable that offers any true fiscal impact is in the area of overtime control which has already been addressed in this chapter.



7.2 TRAINING AND SAFETY

As defined above, the CCPS Transportation Department enjoys a very low driver turnover rate which, for new hires, drastically reduces the initial training requirements and their costs. There is one main driver trainer within the system who conducts the initial training. Trainers must renew their certificates every five years. Training is guided by and accomplished via the state requirements and training manuals. Training requires 24 classroom hours and 24 “behind the wheel” hours along with all of 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. CCPS uses the services of insurance carrier consultants to gain safety knowledge through presentations. No safety incentive programs are in place for driving staff.

The 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 driving force pays dividends in the area of safety. Because drivers do not have any specific work area assigned to them, safety posters and safety promotion devices were not present 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 is also exemplified by the higher than normal attendance levels for bus drivers. Drivers are rarely absent from work which goes a long way in helping to ensure a safe program.

FINDING

The driver work force has not had a workers’ compensation claim in the last five years. This statistic is well above the norm for this classification of employee and shows diligence and the tendency to create a safe work environment on the part of both driving staff as well as administrative staff.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for having no workers’ compensation claims by bus drivers in the last five years.

FINDING

The industry accident rate standard is to remain at or below one preventable accident per 100,000 miles. Over the last 12 months, CCPS has had one preventable accident (valued at \$1,300) which places it at a ratio of 1 preventable accident per 100,000 miles, thus meeting the industry standard.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended on controlling its overall accident ratio.



FINDING

Although the division could not produce any set daily attendance figures for drivers, both the drivers themselves, the administration, and staff confirmed that driver attendance was among the highest of any category of employee. Drivers come to work when not feeling well and, as a group, they display a very positive attitude towards their job responsibilities. This attendance helps in making each route as safe as it can be (**Note: Recommendation 7-4** above will assist in easily tracking driver absenteeism).

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended on controlling the driver absentee rate.

FINDING

Even though the CCPS Transportation Department has an above average safety record, there is a general lack of safety and inservice training information being shared with the driver cadre. Retraining of existing drivers does not occur as a result of accidents. Having one orientation meeting at start of the school year followed by only one additional class creates too much of a gap between inservice training periods. Safety and training meetings offer opportunities for discussions about operating issues and allow drivers to voice concerns, offer their input, and generally assist in keeping a better line of communications open between themselves and staff. The current system lacks continuity for training and safety, and needs to be augmented.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-5:

Implement additional bus driver safety meetings.

The safety record for the department is within industry standards; however, only a minimum of safety-related communications takes place annually through two meetings. At a minimum, quarterly safety meetings should be scheduled to include inservice training appropriate for time of year (i.e., student discipline and defensive driving in the fall, cold weather driving in the winter, etc). These meetings should be mandatory for all drivers and aides, including all substitute drivers. Appropriate guest speakers should be invited and these may include building principals as well as local police or other City and State agency personnel that have specific areas of expertise. The meetings can be set for one to one and a half hours and can take place on those days when teachers are doing inservice, so as not to disrupt the normal work day.

FISCAL IMPACT

Quarterly meetings would add two more meeting days and approximately twelve (12) hours of potential paid time per meeting. No meaningful fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation provided the time spent in meetings uses hours that drivers have already been paid for within their guarantee hours requirement.



FINDING

Accurate and timely information must be communicated when drivers experience some type of emergency. The organizational structure of the Transportation Department is uncomplicated and very direct, but it does not lend itself to assuring drivers who they should contact during an emergency situation. Doing the right thing at the right time during an emergency can help the division avoid potential liability.

The Evergreen Review Team found that the buses did not contain any formal instructions as to how to proceed during emergency situations. Drivers know to use radios to report accidents or incidents, bus breakdowns, etc., but little or no formal information was present describing the process if this occurs after hours or over weekends. A more formal process is needed.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-6:

Prepare emergency information sheets.

Ensure each bus is supplied with two important communication items:

- an emergency call sheet listing in priority order by name and phone number (to include home and cell numbers) of contacts drivers should notify after hours or on weekends; and
- a simple one-page accident instruction sheet in the event of a collision.

Some buses have a small insurance carrier accident handling card available while others do not. Taking the proper steps during an emergency situation is vital and it is always helpful to have consistent easily understood instructions available for drivers to use. Drivers, no matter how experienced, can become disoriented during an emergency situation. Having a readily available instruction sheet gives the driver something to refer to, and helps them react properly and watch over the interests of students.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with this recommendation.

7.3 ROUTING AND SCHEDULING

The routing/scheduling function is second only to the safety area in determining just how responsible the transportation system is. Routing determines the total number of routes which in combination with scheduling of bell times for the various schools dictate the total number of buses required. This total route bus count drives nearly every expense associated with transportation. The better you route and schedule the system the more efficient it becomes.

To this end **Exhibit 7-12** (RouteYield™) displays the overall efficiency ratings for the current CCPS routing system. Due to its length, **Exhibit 7-12** is at the end of this chapter. This



information can be studied to help the system become more efficient as it measures both the utilization of time available as well as available capacity. This can be a very valuable tool in determining potential route consolidations.

The routing for CCPS is done manually. Drivers complete the routing which is based on the routes in affect at the end of the year adjusted for students moving up in grade to the various schools for the coming year. This information is passed to the clerical assistant who types up the routes. The routes are purely geographical in nature and have seen very few changes over the years.

The routing parameters used are:

Walk to stop distance: None specified, try and use common sense.

Walk boundary distance: None specified, boundary is City wide for all schools.

Percent of capacity for Secondary: 2.5 per seat, (80 %+)

Percent of capacity for Elementary: 3 per seat, (100%)

Ride time limitations: None specified.

Eligibility: Not defined as to distance but is historical by geographical area. Drivers know what streets are qualified to ride and what streets do not ride - is not published.

The assignment of students to bus stops is also historical and is generally the nearest corner stop. Stops are also affixed by the drivers using distance, number of students, and potential hazards as tools for helping to determine where stops should be placed. These stops are traditional and have not changed over the last several years. The CCPS Administrative Director is involved with determining whether a situation is hazardous or not.

The current system has buses serving the three separate schools in the morning portion of the service, but combining the ridership for the high school and intermediate school in the afternoon. This results in having a three-route system in the morning and a two-route system in the afternoon.

The bell times are:

- high school--- 7:41 a.m. to 2:44 p.m.;
- intermediate school--- 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; and
- elementary school--- 8:50 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.

The differences in bells between the high school and the intermediate school allows for routes to be comfortably combined in the afternoon without creating any extra wait time for any students. The time in the morning is harder to achieve, but is functional with buses arriving early to the high school with enough time to deliver the intermediate school students. The system has a higher than average number of mid-day routes that serves the various programs, including the area vocational school. Every driver performs some type of mid-day or extra daily service.

The results of the RouteYield™ (**Exhibit 7-12**) show a total time utilization percentage of 68 percent and a capacity utilization percentage of 67 percent. The system transports approximately 429 total actual riders on six afternoon buses. One bus is a special education bus which is a full-



size bus. The overall system does need to be studied in more depth using the attached RouteYield™ analysis as a base. Changes can be implemented that could create a savings of one bus route, which in this instance would mean approximately 18-20 percent reduction of operating costs.

FINDING

The current system is workable, but may not be as efficient as it could be. Overall, there is available time and capacity within the system to reduce the number of buses required by one bus. However, at the high school and intermediate school, in the afternoon portion of the service, the use of time exceeds the time available; thus, if changes are to be made the bell times must be adjusted in order for efficiencies to occur.

The routing of buses has historically not been a priority consideration for increased efficiencies. Drivers do the routing, and pass information on for publication. The service rendered is adequate and thus few complaints are received concerning the routing. This creates a sense of adequacy, thus reducing the need to investigate for possibilities of increased efficiencies. Based on our RouteYield™ analysis, however, the use of time and capacity can be levered in order to do some consolidating of routes provided certain variables get adjusted.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-7:

Review the current bell schedules at all schools and adjust times to create increased operating time, especially in the afternoon service period.

During the afternoon service half of the buses are arriving late into Edgemont Primary School by approximately 6-10 minutes. A broader review of bell schedules should target and create increased operating time between bells allowing for potential route consolidations. This review should include the uncoupling of the high school and intermediate school in the afternoon to see if doing so will allow a bus to be reduced at each of the schools. The current combined effort reduces the overall service time of the buses in the afternoon, but it also creates the tightest periods of time and capacity utilization. Adding a completely separate tier in the afternoon could save one bus, or at a minimum half a bus. The amount of time adjustment would be approximately 15 to 20 minutes maximum to allow at least 30 to 35 minutes between bells. Actual times would be a local decision.

FISCAL IMPACT

A reduction of .5 buses (eliminate the one extra bus in the afternoon) equates to approximately \$21,446 in operating costs. This represents the prorated share of cost as per the 2005-06 Pupil Transportation Verification reporting of expenses. In addition to dropping the cost of wages, benefits, fuels, and parts, there will be a reduction in the total required route buses that must meet the state replacement guidelines, and thus a reduction in the long-term capital expense for maintaining this cycle. Using the last known cost of bus (\$54,158) adjusted for inflation would



be approximately \$60,000 per bus, which, if depreciated over the ten-year life cycle would cause and extra savings of \$6,000 annually. Thus, total estimated annual savings would be \$27,446.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Adjust Bells and Reduce Fleet	\$27,446	\$27,446	\$27,446	\$27,446	\$27,446

FINDING

The current route sheets that are produced consist primarily of bus stops and times. For the regular driver and for the parents involved, this is sufficient for running the transportation system on time and in an appropriate manner; however, in the interest of increased safety and security, it is best to have each route sheet contain a roster of the students who ride each route.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-8:

Improve the routing system to ensure all route sheets contain a list of the students assigned to each bus.

The current routes do not contain any student rosters. Each principal and bus driver should make an effort to print and keep current a list of students assigned to each bus. Safety and security issues, along with emergency situations, make this necessary, and the roster will assist the driver in communication, creating seating charts, and other important functions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

7.4 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND BUS REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE

The CCPS school bus fleet is up-to-date and appears to be well-maintained. The division has been diligent in meeting the guidelines for fleet replacement keeping within the ten-year maximum age for all route buses. The fleet has a total of nine school bus units, six of which are assigned to routes leaving three spare buses—a spare ratio of 1: 2. The spare ratio is high; however, considering athletic events and other trips, the spare ratio is not out of line and is high only because the number of route buses is so low. In addition to the school bus fleet, the division owns nine other non-bus vehicles (i.e. sedans, trucks, trailers, and vans).

The division does not have its own maintenance facility. The City garage stores all fuels, parts, and supplies. necessary for the upkeep of the division fleet. The division supplies monthly blanket purchase orders to the City so they may conduct the necessary purchases. All fuel is recorded and signed off on by each driver with monthly invoicing for fuel sent to the division by



the City. The purchase of parts and supplies is also billed monthly and signed off on by the Administrative Director.

Based on driver and staff input, the maintenance of the fleet is not an area of concern. Buses are written up, the City is notified via phone, they pick the unit up or drivers deliver it, and the repairs are made. Downtime is at a minimum with buses receiving a higher priority within the shop. All buses are placed onto a maintenance schedule that ensures they are inspected at least once per month and have a 180-day (annual) inspection as per state requirements. Non-bus equipment must be individually scheduled for maintenance by the division as they are not on a state schedule. Oil and lubes are done generally every other inspection period. Tires, oil, lubes, and fuel are purchased via a bid process through the City. Other items are obtained locally or through the bus manufacturers. The buses are purchased through the state purchasing program.

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. All maintenance records are manually kept with no computerized system being used, except for excel spreadsheets for tracking purposes.

Because CCPS does not own any tools nor have its own maintenance and fueling facility, it must work closely with the City. Cooperation levels appear high and of the services/functions associated with the Transportation Department, fleet maintenance is possibly the best operation. It appears to be operating efficiently and effectively; fleet safety is maintained.

FINDING

The CCPS bus fleet is well-maintained by the City staff with good communications between the departments. The fleet meets the State guidelines for replacement and buses are purchased at state pricing to help control costs. The City bids most of the consumable items helping to ensure preferred pricing. Thus, school buses offer students a safe and clean ride-time environment while helping to ensure long-term efficiency.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools and the City are commended on the overall fleet maintenance and replacement programs.

FINDING

Most shops that have been in existence for any length of time can develop concerns with regard to parts and inventory control. In the case of the City, no formal inventory control is in place. The city shop is not a large operation, and the volume of parts and materials is not great; however it is always wise to maintain inventory control. Doing so ensures that items are not overstocked, items do not become obsolete, and the value of the inventory is controlled. Although the division does not do any cost accounting for inventory, having a system in place helps manage the overall purchasing and inventory.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-9:

Obtain a bi-annual inventory of parts and supplies from the City Garage staff.

There is no method in place to maintain the value of the current parts inventory as it relates to buses. An estimated amount of inventory was quoted at about \$10,000 which is high. The targeted inventory amount should be less than \$200 per bus. CCPS will be better served if these records were available. In order to expedite this process, drivers who have hours paid that are owed to the division (balance of their guaranteed hours) can conduct the initial inventory. The result of the inventory should identify some obsolete parts being returned to vendors with the division receiving credit for these past expenses.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation of the inventory has no long-term fiscal savings. Although parts will be purchased more wisely, they will nonetheless still be purchased.

7.5 STATE REPORTING

CCPS uses the required driver daily report sheet that contains number of students transported along with mileage figures. The Clerical Assistant tabulates these figures for the submission to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) at the close of the year. The Department relies on the Finance Department to record the appropriate costs into the Web-based Pupil Transportation Verification Report.

A review of the past three year-end reports shows a decline in the overall transportation effort and its associated costs since 2003-04 with the last two years showing little change in students or miles. This is consistent with the overall enrollment within the Division for these time periods. No reported corrections have had to occur in recent years.

Reporting is very straight forward and is fairly easy to accomplish with a system of this size. The only automated portion of the system is the Web-based report document on the VDOE Web site; the division does all data collection manually. Because CCPS is a compact operation with a historical service area, little can be done (other than the recommendations within the routing sections of this chapter) to increase their overall linear density. If enrollments continue to decline or experience small functions of growth, it is unlikely, barring any significant routing changes, that the division will be able to increase any of its funding for transportation based on improved density.

FINDING

The Administrative Clerical Assistant must take each driver's daily operating report sheet and tabulate the totals for use at the end of each operating year. The form is manually completed daily, and submitted monthly by each driver. These forms are then filed for future use. This



effort is tedious and time consuming at the end of the year and the potential loss of data is possible.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-10:

Develop a simple Excel spreadsheet tracking form for monthly driver reports and use this form for data compilation.

This part of the process should call for the monthly total for each operator to be entered into a simple spreadsheet for miles and students. This data recording can be done either by the Clerk or by each driver individually provided drivers are allowed access to the electronic format within the Clerk's office. At the close of the year, deadlines will not be an issue for tabulations as entries will have already been accomplished. Any corrections can be easily made. Data should be verified monthly, as opposed to doing so on an annual basis.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact for this recommendation. The monthly electronic tracking will, however, help to ensure that state reporting is accurate.

ALSO SEE RECOMMENDATIONS 10-15, 10-16, AND 10-17 IN CHAPTER 10



EXPLANATION FOR EXHIBIT 7-12

RouteYield™ Assessment - What Is It and How Does it Help??

General:

- RouteYield™ measures the efficient use of ‘*Time and Capacity*’ for each bus route.
- Drivers record ‘actual’ riders and times for each of their routes on form provided.
- Data are entered into RouteYield™ assessment software which produces easily understood charts and graphs depicting efficiency.
- Findings become the tools by which routers can adjust for improvements.
- The object is to use at least 80 percent of Time available or Capacity- hopefully both.

Time:

- Divisions establish a ride time policy stating maximum amount of time they want their students to ride.
- Software adjusts the amount of time available based on bell time gaps (i.e. if only 45 minutes exists between assigned schools, then the time available is 45 minutes, not 75 minutes).
- For routing of buses in the afternoon, time available is what generally restricts routers.
- If a bus runs out of time before it reaches capacity, that route is time restricted.
- If time is left unused with buses not being productive, they are inefficient.

Capacity:

- Capacity parameters are used and in this case it is two (2) per seat secondary and three (3) per seat elementary—CCPS routers try and adhere to these load restrictions, but use common sense as well to help with capacity issues.
- When a bus fills to capacity but still has time remaining, the route becomes “Capacity restricted.”
- For routing purposes, one must know what the typical ‘actual’ ridership is and avoid lightly loaded buses.

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 -- (this never occurs).
- Eighty (80) percent or better efficiency ratios are considered to be acceptable.
- Due to varying factors (weather, driving safety, growth, etc.), every system should contain some ‘slack’ in their routes.
- Efficiency ratings for Time and Capacity exist for each route and for each school and ultimately for the whole system.

Interpretation of Data:

- The first page of RouteYield™ is a summary listing comparison of current routes, and a mathematical forecast number of routes that the RouteYield™ system indicates should be used (i.e. the perfect 100% model).



- These figures result from the Route Summary (chart at top of the second page) which calculates the amount of time and number of seats available in the morning and afternoon for each bus and school.
- The system forecasts 10 less routes would be needed versus current if route perfection existed.
- Remember actual route operating times in the afternoon will be 8-10 minutes less due to loading process--time available in the morning is generally longer since students are dropped at schools 15 minutes prior to the first bell -- these loading/drop time figures are accounted for within the morning and afternoon graphs within this report.
- The following graphs are for each school showing the number of routes serving it represented by the vertical bars.
- 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 and the black line with triangle indicators is the actual amount of time being utilized by each bus.
- 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 is most likely arriving late to school.
- The lighter area at the upper part of the graphs represents the empty seats while the shaded area represents the number of seats filled- at a glance you can quickly determine the efficiency of each bus relative to Capacity and the Time remaining.
- The manufacturer rated capacity of the bus has been altered within the formulas to reflect the required capacity parameters desired (students per seat rule).

What Do I Do With This Information?:

- Give copy to routers and they must look at each route at each school to determine cause of any inefficiency, seek consolidations and reduce routes, gain time and/or seats, etc.— not every inefficient route can be fixed due to existing circumstances.
- Things change so a division should re-route the entire system at least every three years and for those with computerized routing systems you should re-route every year.
- Study your parameters (i.e. ride times and capacity limits). Are they acceptable or do you need to look at something different to help increase efficiencies?
- Always collect data that show the ‘actual’ number of students who are riding the buses versus those that were assigned (this is done daily on the drivers reports) and develop a ridership history of what the shrink is and route to that student count.
- Smart routers will accommodate for this shrink and increase their actual overall ridership counts without creating any overload conditions- this is to be done on a route by route basis.
- Routers should indicate if any modification of the bell times will affect their ability to become efficient (i.e. if 10 more minutes were available between schools A and B buses could be reduced- if different bus sizes will help they should also recommend changes).
- Routers should not use anything greater than 90 to 95 percent of the available time – leave slack in the routes to help insure against any route delays and increase the safety factor.



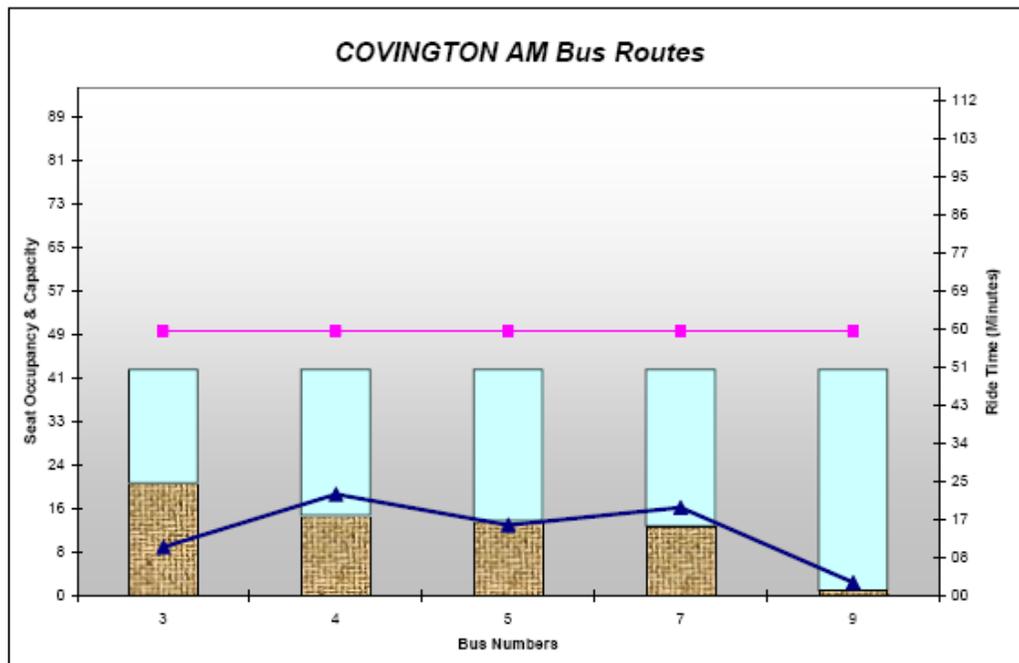
- RouteYield data are a tool to help lead to increased knowledge, and thus efficiencies, but only if it is used in a positive manner to help guide routers to increased success—a change in routing philosophy may have to occur.



Exhibit 7-12 (Continued) RouteYield™ Routing Efficiency Analysis

COVINGTON CITY 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 Rts	Actual Routes				
COVINGTON	HS	73	300	60	64	147	211	42	1.52	5	2	2	-3	
EDGEMONT	ES	155	234	60	195	61	256	64	3.05	4	4	3	0	
JETTER_WATSON	INTM	102	188	60	140	72	212	53	2.64	4	3	2	-1	
JETTER_WATSON_EDGEMONT	COM	50	34	60	15	38	53	53	0.28	1	1	1	0	
Grand Total		380	756	60	414	319	733	52	7.48	14	10	8	-4	



Statistics						
Bus #	3	4	5	7	9	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	21	15	14	13	1	64
Empty Seats	21	27	28	29	41	147
Total Seat Capacity	42	42	42	42	42	211
Ride Time	11	23	16	20	03	73
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	300

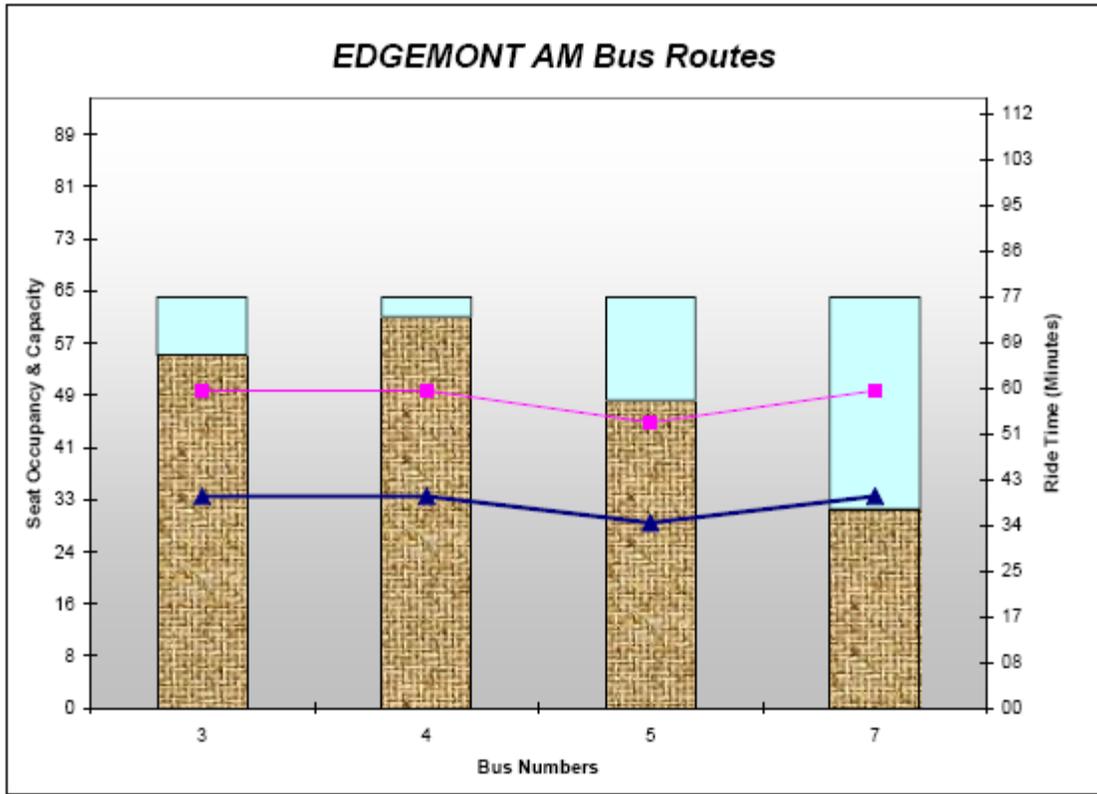
Current Utilization	50%	38%	33%	33%	5%	30%
---------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	----	-----

Target Utilization: 80%

Time Utilization	18%	38%	27%	33%	5%	24%
Capacity Utilization	50%	36%	33%	31%	2%	30%



**Exhibit 7-12 (Continued)
RouteYield™
Routing Efficiency Analysis**



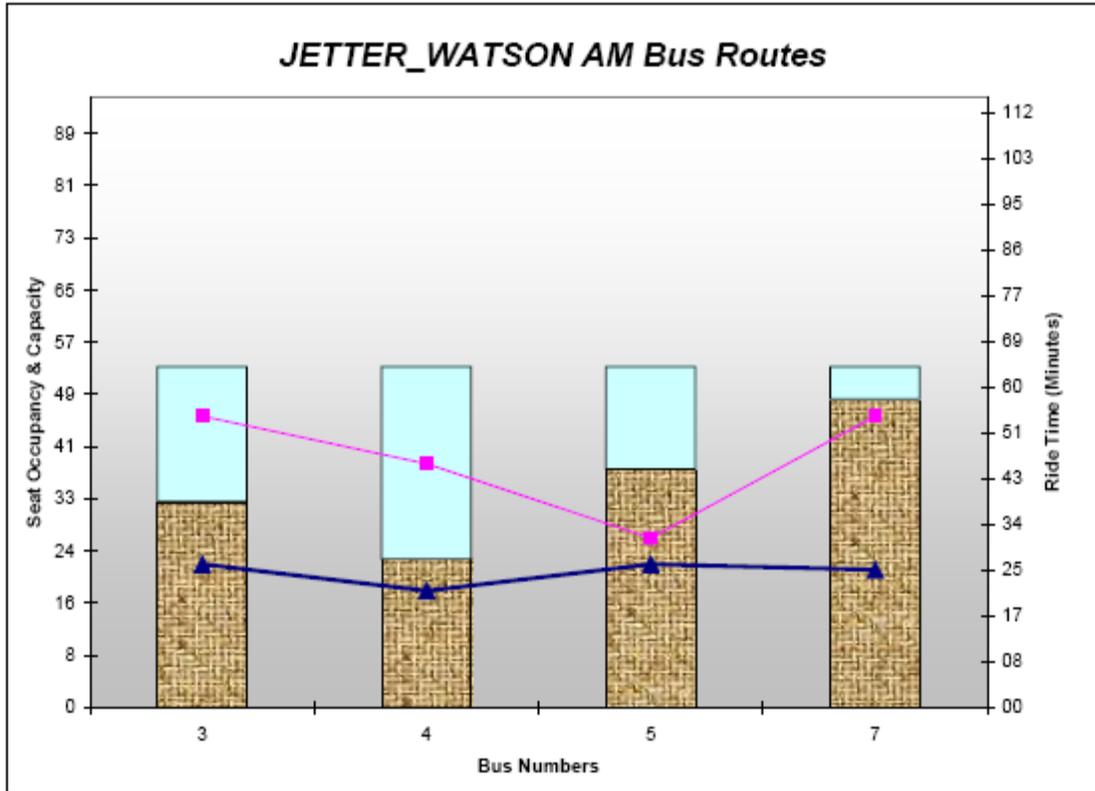
Statistics					
Bus #	3	4	5	7	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	55	61	48	31	195
Empty Seats	9	3	16	33	61
Total Seat Capacity	64	64	64	64	256
Ride Time	40	40	35	40	155
Ride Time Available	60	60	54	60	234
Current Utilization	86%	95%	75%	67%	76%

Target Utilization: 75%

Time Utilization	67%	67%	65%	67%	66%
Capacity Utilization	86%	95%	75%	48%	76%



Exhibit 7-12 (Continued)
RouteYield™
Routing Efficiency Analysis



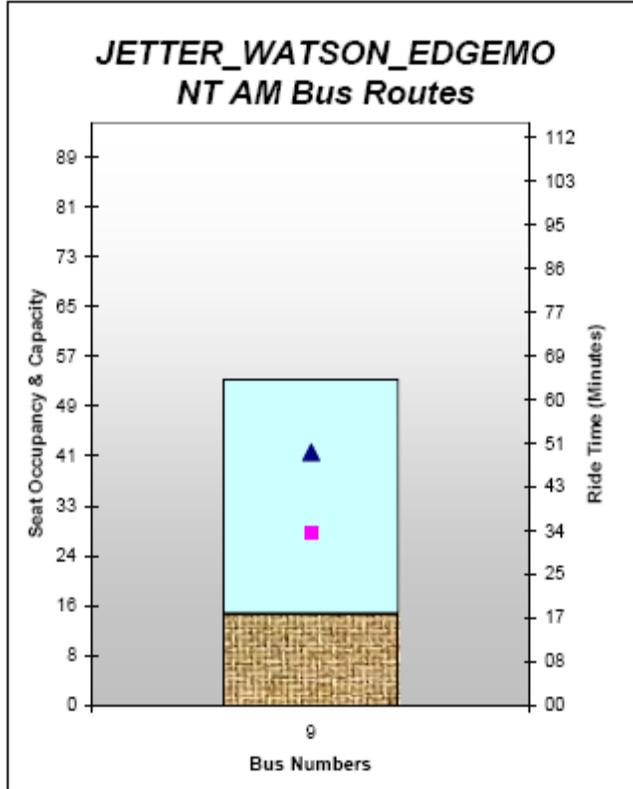
Statistics					
Bus #	3	4	5	7	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	32	23	37	48	140
Empty Seats	21	30	16	5	72
Total Seat Capacity	53	53	53	53	212
Ride Time	27	22	27	26	102
Ride Time Available	55	46	32	55	188
Current Utilization	60%	48%	84%	90%	66%

Target Utilization: 75%

Time Utilization	49%	48%	84%	47%	54%
Capacity Utilization	60%	43%	70%	90%	66%



Exhibit 7-12 (Continued)
RouteYield™
Routing Efficiency Analysis



Statistics		
Bus #	9	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	15	15
Empty Seats	38	38
Total Seat Capacity	53	53
Ride Time	50	50
Ride Time Available	34	34

Current Utilization	147%	147%
---------------------	------	------

Target Utilization: 0%

Time Utilization 147% 147%

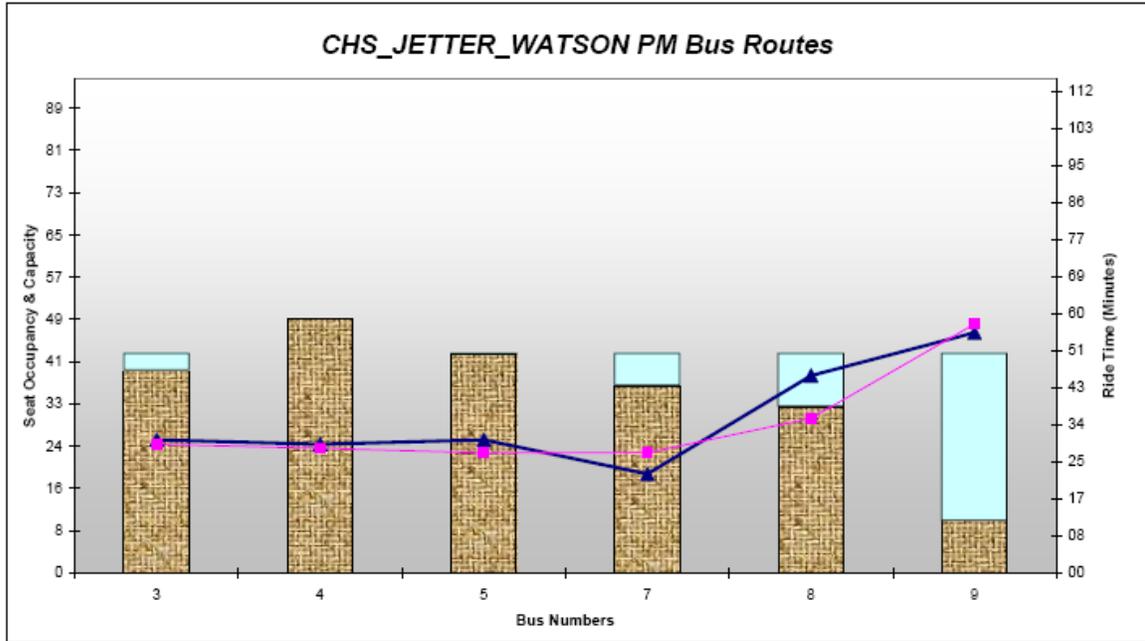
Capacity Utilization 28% 28%



Exhibit 7-12 (Continued) RouteYield™ Routing Efficiency Analysis

COVINGTON CITY SCHOOLS - PM Routes

		Data												
School	School Type	Service Time	Ride Time Avail	Ride Policy	Riders	Empty Seats	Seating Capacity	Average Capacity	Forecast Rts	Actual Routes	Forecast Based on Bus Capacity	Forecast Based On Service Minutes	Max Forecast to Actual	
CHS_JETTER_WATSON	COM	217	209	60	208	45	253	42	4.92	6	5	4	-1	
EDGEMONT	ES	173	360	60	221	163	384	64	3.45	6	4	3	-2	
Grand Total		390	569	60	429	208	637	53	8.38	12	9	7	-3	

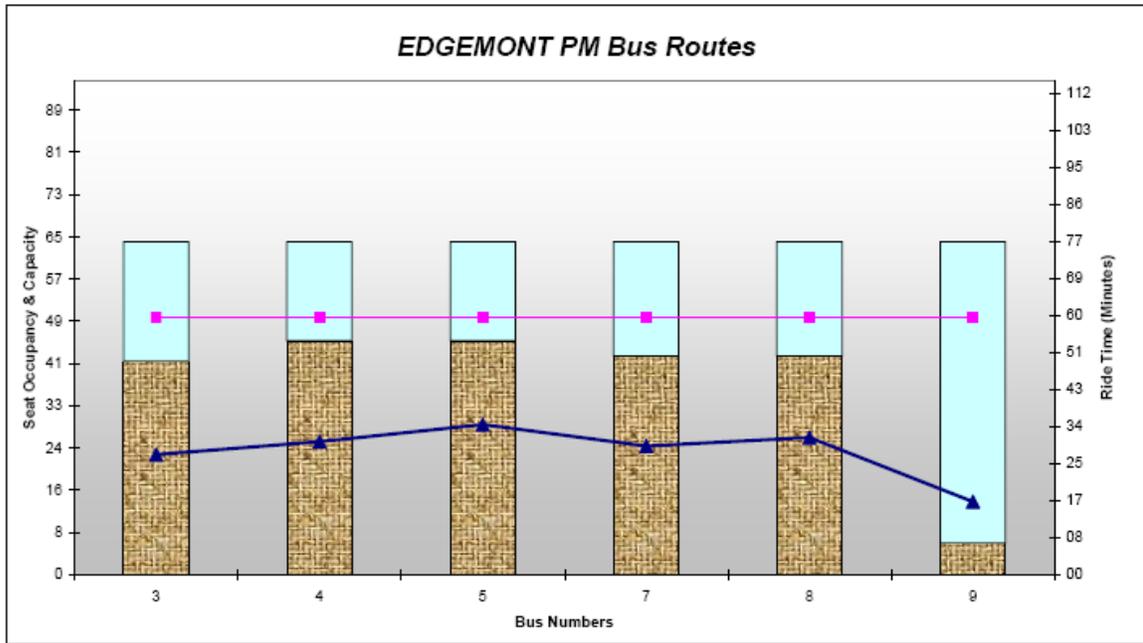


Statistics							
Bus #	3	4	5	7	8	9	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	39	49	42	36	32	10	208
Empty Seats	3	-7	0	6	10	32	45
Total Seat Capacity	42	42	42	42	42	42	253
Ride Time	31	30	31	23	46	56	217
Ride Time Available	30	29	28	28	36	58	209
Current Utilization	103%	116%	111%	85%	128%	97%	104%

Target Utilization:	83%						
Time Utilization	103%	103%	111%	82%	128%	97%	104%
Capacity Utilization	92%	116%	99%	85%	76%	24%	82%



**Exhibit 7-12 (Continued)
RouteYield™
Routing Efficiency Analysis**



Statistics							
Bus #	3	4	5	7	8	9	Grand Total
Seats Occupied	41	45	45	42	42	6	221
Empty Seats	23	19	19	22	22	58	163
Total Seat Capacity	64	64	64	64	64	64	384
Ride Time	28	31	35	30	32	17	173
Ride Time Available	60	60	60	60	60	60	360

Current Utilization	64%	70%	70%	66%	66%	28%	58%
---------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Target Utilization: 83%

Time Utilization	47%	52%	58%	50%	53%	28%	48%
Capacity Utilization	64%	70%	70%	66%	66%	9%	58%



**CHAPTER 8:
TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT**



Chapter 8

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews staffing and organization related to administrative and instructional technology in Covington City Public Schools (CCPS) and includes five major sections:

- 8.1 Technology Planning and Management
- 8.2 Organization and Staffing
- 8.3 Infrastructure and Web Development
- 8.4 Software and Hardware
- 8.5 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 the *No Child Left Behind* Act include that divisions make data-driven decisions, that students achieve technological literacy before 9th 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
Access to Technology		
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
Use of Technology		
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
Capacity to Use Technology		
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 CCPS administrators and teachers, the results for two questions are shown in **Exhibit 8-2**. The CCPS responses are compared to responses provided by administrators and teachers in other school districts where Evergreen has collected data. Both CCPS administrators and teachers were less positive regarding instructional technology in comparison to peer groups. In both cases, less than a majority of CCPS respondents rated instructional technology as *adequate* or *outstanding*. Conversely, both groups were more positive than peers regarding administrative technology. A majority of both CCPS administrators and teachers rated administrative technology as *adequate* or *outstanding*.

Exhibit 8-2
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results on District Technology in the
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen's Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding
Instructional Technology	62.5%	37.5%	22.8%	72.2%	20.5%	41.0%	38.5%	61.6%
Administrative Technology	12.5%	87.5%	21.5%	72.2%	12.8%	53.8%	51.3%	51.3%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.*

CHAPTER SUMMARY

CCPS is operating technology at a commendable level in a number of areas. It has developed a highly detailed Instructional Technology Plan that, despite its name, provides strategic direction for both instructional and administrative technology in the division from 2005 through 2009. Through the shared Educational Technology Center, the division is supporting a best practices organizational structure to obtain high-quality technical support. CCPS uses an effective process to select software titles and provides teachers with a wealth of software tools. The division also offers teachers and staff a myriad of technology training opportunities.

Evergreen's eight recommendations for improvement are:

- review and update the Instructional Technology Plan on at least an annual basis;
- increase technical staffing levels;
- improve the Web site;
- expand advanced placement offerings for students;
- adopt a paperless work order system for reporting technical problems;
- adopt a computer replacement policy;
- develop procedures to assess technology usage and satisfactions; and
- develop rigorous technology expectations for teachers and staff.



8.1 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 Covington City Public Schools Instructional Technology Plan for 2005-09 was reviewed by the Commonwealth in 2004. It was found to be in full alignment with the *Educational Technology Plan for Virginia (2003-2009)*.

The CCPS Instructional Technology Plan is quite detailed and includes an in-depth needs assessment that reflects significant committee research and review. The plan also includes detailed goals by area, which are shown in **Exhibit 8-3**. Although titled “instructional technology”, the plan includes a number of administrative technology needs and goals.

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

Covington City Public Schools has adopted a commendable Instructional Technology Plan to guide technology development from 2005 through 2009.



Exhibit 8-3
CCPS Instructional Technology Plan
2005-2009

Curriculum Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will use technological devices and applications to enhance instruction in all subject areas.
Educational Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current applications will be evaluated for their instructional value. Future application selection will be based upon deliberative review procedure.
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a component of professional development, 20 recertification points must be related to technology. The division will participate in competitive grant activities in the Blue Ridge Technology Consortium. All secretarial staff will achieve a minimum competency within the first year of employment. All secretarial staff will participate in NCLB development activities as provided by the Educational Technology Center. The Educational Technology Center's staff will stay current with emerging technologies.
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through various electronic mediums, parental and community involvement will be enhanced.
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classrooms will be connected to the WAN via high-speed networks. Internet access will be available via LAN/WAN high-speed networks for instructional and administrative purposes. Full-featured databases will be developed to allow data driven decisions. A five-year replacement cycle for all technology equipment will be implemented. Technical support requests will be completed in a timely fashion. All eligible E-rate services will be requested on an annual basis.
Funding and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All eligible E-rate services will be requested. Alternative funding sources will be reviewed in order to supplement the division's annual technology budget. A hardware/software replacement cycle will be developed to facilitate the creation of a long-term technology budget. Technology funding will be a priority during the annual budget process. The need for technology commitment will be stressed to school board members and local government leaders.
Stakeholders Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders provide ongoing participation in the technology planning process. Educate the community at-large in their responsibility as technology plan stakeholder. Distribute the technology plan in a variety of formats to the community at-large.

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Instructional Technology Plan, 2005-2009.

FINDING

Despite a commendable Instructional Technology Plan, the division is not using that plan as a living document to guide decisions and provide vision. As a result, some of the goals contained in the plan may possibly not be met by 2009.

In reviewing the CCPS Instructional Technology Plan, Evergreen consultants found a number of goals and objectives that have been met in accordance with planned implementation dates. However, a number of goals and objectives outlined in the 2005-2009 plan included implementation dates in 2004 through 2006 that, to date, have not yet been achieved. These include:

- *Technology training opportunities will be offered to the community.*
- *A database will be developed to allow the community to provide input to teachers and administrators.*



- *The school division will provide an inventory data warehousing system.*
- *A five-year replacement strategy will be developed and followed for all technology equipment.*
- *A hardware/software replacement cycle will be developed to facilitate the creation of a long-term technology budget.*
- *The technology plan (and subsequent revisions) will be posted on the division's Web site.*

It may be that the division has chosen to modify or abandon these goals. However, CCPS has not undertaken an annual review of the plan in order to develop and communicate appropriate plan changes, so it is unknown whether these items have not been completed by choice, due to a lack of funding, or for some other reason.

As part of this review, Evergreen solicited public input through the division's Web site. Evergreen received more than 60 separate messages in this manner, related to the CCPS and the companion study for Alleghany County Public Schools. Given the smaller size of the community, this level of technical sophistication and willingness to interact with the division in this manner is quite high. Future methods to increase opportunities for public input, such as those not yet completed in the Technology Plan, would likely be well-received and should become a valuable tool for the division.

A further concern related to the CCPS Technology Plan also stems from an apparent adherence to the plan despite changing division circumstances. For example, the division is currently spending approximately \$40,000 to install computer wiring in Edgemont Primary School, but is also planning shortly to build a facility to replace that school. Similarly, it has purchased computers for installation at Edgemont well in advance of the completion of the wiring. As a result, at the time of the on-site visit, computers were being stored unopened in the basement of Jeter-Watson Intermediate School.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-1:

Review and update the Instructional Technology Plan on at least an annual basis.

An annual update of the technology plan will communicate the importance of the planning process. CCPS should also tie its technology plan with its budgeting process in a transparent way. A well-established link between the plan and the budgeting process is essential for sound financial management, as well as the ultimate achievement of all plan goals.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

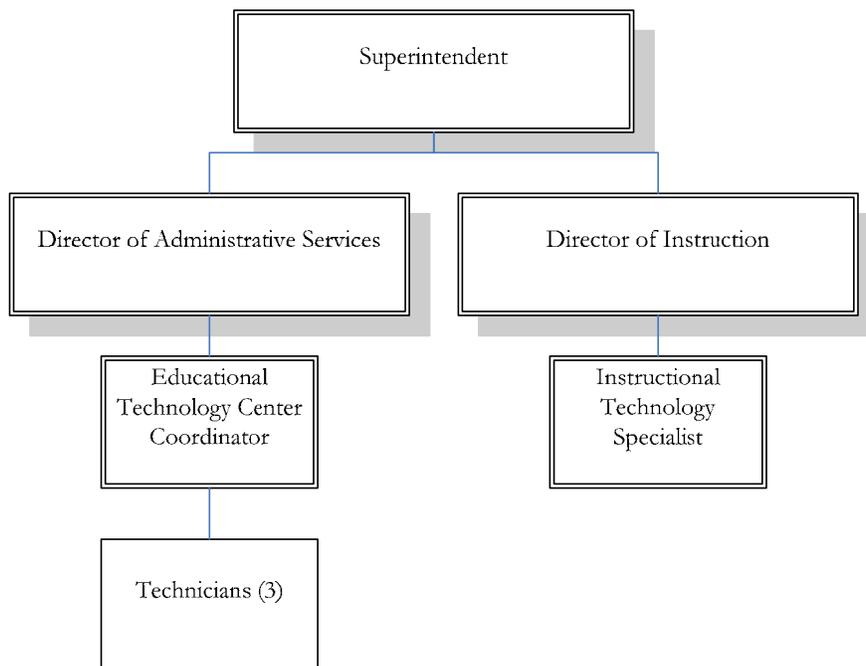


8.2 ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

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**. CCPS currently receives the majority of its technical support from the Educational Technical Center (ETC), a joint endeavor among CCPS, Allegheny County Public Schools (ACPS), and the Jackson River Technical Center. The Jackson River Technical Center is the jointly-run vocational-technical center for students from both divisions. The CCPS Instructional Technology Specialist is housed in the division central office, but divides her week among the three division schools on a rotating schedule.

Exhibit 8-4
CCPS Technology Organization
2006-07 School Year



Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

FINDING

By jointly supporting the ETC, Covington City Public Schools receives higher quality technical services than it likely could for the same dollar expenditure.

The ETC was created in 1998, with original funding through the Allegheny Foundation. Initially, the funding purchased vans and basic tools for a staff of two technicians. Today, the ETC is comprised of a coordinator and a staff of three. It is jointly funded, with CCPS paying 20 percent of total costs, Allegheny County Public Schools paying 63 percent, and the JRTC paying the



remaining 17 percent. The ETC Coordinator reports to the CCPS Director of Administrative Services for matters specific to the division and works closely with the CCPS Instructional Technology Specialist on a regular basis. All three funding entities have representatives on the ETC Committee, which works to coordinate overarching technology concerns and projects.

By participating in a joint organization like the ETC, CCPS is able to reap the benefits of four staff with varying areas of expertise at a cost of less than one full-time staff position. Moreover, the ETC can leverage purchases among the three entities it supports.

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. The ETC organizational structure meets this definition.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is participating in and supporting a best practices organization structure to obtain high-quality technical support.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools should provide its proportional share of fundings to ETC to add at least one additional technician. In comparison to best practices, division technology staffing is low.



The CCPS-specific technology staff consists of one Instructional Technology Specialist and three teachers designated to provide front-line troubleshooting, one at each school

Exhibit 8-5 compares the CCPS ratio of technology instructors per 1,000 students to those of its peers. As the exhibit shows, CCPS is below the peer average, but above the state average.

Exhibit 8-5
Technology Instructors Per 1,000 Students
Fiscal Year 2005

School Division	Total Technology Instructors Per 1,000 Students
Covington City	1.21
Buena Vista City	4.48
Franklin City	0.00
Galax City	2.45
Norton City	0.00
West Point	0.00
Peer Division Average	1.39
State Average	0.75

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

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." CCPS, with one position dedicated to Instructional Technology Support, meets this requirement.

The ETC is primarily tasked with infrastructure and hardware installation and support. In total, the staff of four support approximately 2,000 devices spread among CCPS, ACPS, and the JRTC. Since CCPS funds 20 percent of the ETC, which has a staff of four, this translates into 0.8 FTE devoted to the division.

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 500 school computers per on-site technician across the three funding entities, the ETC falls into the "low" category. It also falls into the "low" category based on its lack of staffing formulas for computer technicians.

The ETC Coordinator has done an admirable job of using technology tools to increase the effective capacity of his technicians. 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.



**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 computers + X network drops + Y applications divided by Z = # 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, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-2:

Increase technical staff in Covington City Public Schools.

Covington City Public Schools should increase its funding to the ETC to add at least one additional technician. It should also identify a designated teacher troubleshooter at the primary school.

FISCAL IMPACT

Evergreen estimates that adding an additional technician to the ETC staff will require \$43,890 per year, including benefits (\$33,000 in salary x 1.33).

Identifying the primary school designated teacher can be done at no cost to the division.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Increase Technical Staff	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)

8.3 INFRASTRUCTURE AND WEB DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure is the underlying system of cabling, phone lines, hubs, switches, and routers that connects the various parts of a computer network. It is similar in nature to a human skeleton or a country's road network—it accomplishes no work on its own, but rather enables other systems to perform their functions.

Of all technology resources, infrastructure is probably the most important. If a sound infrastructure is in place, most users will have a means of accessing people and information throughout their organization and beyond, greatly facilitating their ability to accomplish the responsibilities of their job. Increased efficiency and effectiveness will be the result.



The current CCPS system architecture includes four local area networks (LANs), one at each school and a fourth at the central office. Much of the LAN infrastructure was installed in the last three years. The division’s wide area network (WAN) infrastructure became operable in September 2006. Its Internet pipeline is now 3 Mbps.

The staff of the ETC manages the CCPS networks. Network devices are monitored in real time and ETC staff can remotely access any computer or network device from their offices at JRTC.

FINDING

Although well-designed, the CCPS Web site could be improved and expanded. The CCPS Web site is maintained by the division’s Instructional Technology Specialist. Each school Web site is maintained by a staff member of the school.

CCPS staff members estimate that as many as half of student families have access to the Internet from home. Recent statistics on the Web site show that it is used frequently by community members. For October 2006, the CCPS Web site had 24,481 hits and 4,069 visits. On average for that month, the Web site was visited 150 times per day and as much as 218 times on some days.

On Evergreen’s survey, CCPS administrators and teachers did not differ significantly from their peers regarding the utility of the division’s Web site. **Exhibit 8-7** shows the responses.

**Exhibit 8-7
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results Related to the Web Site in the
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
The division Web site is a useful tool.	75.0%	12.5%	73.2%	17.1%	66.6%	23.1%	64.2%	17.3%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

Exhibit 8-8 compares the features of the CCPS Web site with those of its peer divisions. All divisions have active site that were updated in the month reviewed. In comparing the Web sites, Evergreen found that Covington City’s Web site is somewhat less robust and less current than its peers. In particular, the better peer sites included contact information for all division staff, current events calendars, Board Policy manuals, and numerous photos showcasing students at recent events.

A school division Web site should serve as a public relations tool, an educational resource for students, and a communications forum for all district stakeholders.



Exhibit 8-8
Comparison of Division Web Sites
As of November 2006

Division	Major Features
Covington City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Calendar • Lunch menu • Employment vacancies • Individual school Web sites • Some division staff contact information
Buena Vista City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Calendar • Lunch menu • Employment vacancies • Policy Manual • Board minutes • Individual school Web sites • Most division staff contact information
Franklin City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Calendar • Lunch menu • Employment vacancies • Policy Manual • Board minutes • Individual school Web sites • Comprehensive plan • Picture gallery by school • Most division staff contact information
Galax City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School calendar • Events calendar • Lunch menu • Employment vacancies • Sports schedules and scores • Limited division staff contact information
Norton City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School calendar • Lunch menu • Employment vacancies • Area photos • Individual school Web sites • Limited division staff contact information
West Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School calendar • Events calendar • Employment vacancies • Policy Manual • Most division staff contact information

Source: Evergreen Review of Peer Division Web sites, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-3:

Improve the CCPS Web site.

As a communications tool, the division should improve the current Web site by adding information on policies, Board meetings, and staff contact information. In line with one of the objectives in its Technology Plan, CCPS should also provide the community an avenue to give input on division matters through the Web site.



FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

CCPS currently offers students the opportunity to use distance learning but only in a limited fashion. The Commonwealth makes a number of advanced placement classes available.

The Virginia Department of Education Virtual Advanced Placement School provides a program for Covington High School students to complete AP English. Students use both e-mail and streaming media to meet course requirements. Currently, this is the only distance learning-based course offered at the high school. The Virtual Advanced Placement School offers more than a dozen courses, including Latin, biology, geography, physics, and art history. While CCPS offers traditionally organized AP classes in Calculus and government, it does not offer AP classes in any science, foreign language, or art history.

Providing online coursework is a proven method for smaller or more geographically-isolated divisions to enrich their curriculum offerings.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-4:

Expand advanced placement offerings for students.

CCPS has the capability to offer more varied coursework through distance learning opportunities, but is currently only offering AP English. The division should review its AP offerings and student interests to identify additional AP offerings that can be delivered through distance learning.

FISCAL IMPACT

The division already has the technological capacity to provide additional distance learning opportunities to high school students. It may incur some additional costs depending on the courses it selects to offer.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools could improve its implementation of technical work order processing. While the end portion of the request process is online, the initiation is paper-based.

If a CCPS teacher has a problem with a piece of technology, he/she is supposed to first report the problem to the designated technology troubleshooter at the school, who is also a teacher. If the troubleshooter cannot resolve the problem, the teacher will complete a paper form that must



travel to the school principal for approval and then on to the central office for review and approval. Once it reaches the ETC, it is processed into a work order in an online system.

Exhibit 8-9 provides the statistics for ETC-processed work orders for CCPS. These figures would in addition to other types of technical support provided by the ETC, such as coordinating new wiring installation.

**Exhibit 8-9
ETC-Processed Work Orders
for Covington City Public Schools**

Time Period	Total Work Orders
6/13/05 - 6/5/06	132
7/1/04 - 6/13/05	92
7/1/03 - 4/27/04	216
6/30/02 - 5/6/03	249
7/1/01 - 6/30/02	294
Total	983

Source: Educational Technology Center, 2006.

Exhibit 8-10 compares the survey responses of Covington City administrators and teachers regarding technical support and online processes. While Covington City employees are not significantly different from others in Evergreen’s survey database, less than half of CCPS teachers *agree* or *strongly agree* that they get quick assistance for computer problems. Only a small percentage of CCPS staff indicated that most administrative processes are completed online.

**Exhibit 8-10
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results Related to Technology Support
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	87.5%	12.5%	87.8%	7.3%	48.7%	48.7%	50.7%	41.2%
Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done online.	12.5%	62.5%	41.5%	34.1%	12.5%	62.5%	41.5%	34.1%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

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.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-5:

Adopt a paperless work order system for reporting technical problems.

The ETC already possesses such a capability and should work with CCPS to modify the division's procedures to begin with an online work order request, rather than a paper one.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

8.4 SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE

School divisions must select and employ software and hardware to meet both instructional and administrative objectives. While computers in the classroom are primarily an instructional resource, they serve an administrative function also, as most divisions now use computerized attendance and grading programs. Moreover, adequate administrative technology must be present to support schools in meeting instructional goals. One of the primary tenets of *No Child Left Behind* is that school divisions will make data-driven decisions. The data to make those decisions can only come from sufficient administrative software and hardware.

In software, one of the most important aspects of the technology revolution is the advent of e-mail. E-mail allows division personnel to communicate quickly with another individual, or with the entire division. Central office administrators can use e-mail to communicate important news across the division. Principals can use e-mail to communicate with their entire school in an instant. Teachers can use e-mail to share information with other teachers across the building, across the division, or across the world.

In hardware, costs have been declining over the past decade, due to greater mass production of computers and peripherals. While the price of hardware is generally declining, so is the effective lifespan of many types of hardware. Each year, new hardware is released that is orders of magnitude more powerful than that released last year. As well, each year reveals completely new forms of hardware, many of which may be useful in the classroom or in streamlining administrative tasks.

FINDING

Covington City Public Schools uses a teacher-driven process to select software titles that includes appropriate administrator reviews. The division also provides teachers with a variety of up-to-date software tools.

Before any software is purchased in CCPS, teachers and administrators review student needs based on standardized tests and SOL scores. Teachers and the Instructional Technology Specialist research and review potentially suitable software titles. Department chairs and building principals then review teacher recommendations and forward their recommendations to the central office for budgeting and purchase.



As of October 2006, the division provided teachers with a wealth of software tools to assist in student instruction. **Exhibit 8-11** lists the currently available titles by school.

**Exhibit 8-11
Currently Available Software Titles by School in
Covington City Public Schools**

Edgemont Primary School	Jeter-Watson Intermediate School	Covington High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QuickReads • The Graph Club • SuperPrint Deluze • Neighborhood Math Machine • Diorama Designer • Teacher Print • Kidspiration • Reading for Meaning II & III • SOLAR • Stories & More 1 & 2 • Time & Graph • Write Along • Phonics Super Star Reading System • Exploring Math Concepts with Manipulatives I & II • Exploring Measurement, Time and Money I & II • Reading for Information III & IV • Exploring Math Concepts I & II • Fizz and Martina’s Math Adventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kurzweil • Math Blaster • Reading Blaster (Vocabulary) • Reading Blaster (9-12) • Renaissance Math • Teacher Print • SuperPrinet • National Inspirer • Diorama Designer • Scholastic Read 180 • Renaissance Learning (Accelerated Reading) • Renaissance Learning (Accelerated Math) • Math Facts in a Flash • Fizz and Martina’s Math Adventures • Harcourt (History-Social Studies; GeoSkills) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLATO Pathways • Geometer’s Sketchpad • SOLAR • MathType • VA GR8 Writing PAT • VA GR8 Reading PAT • VA Algebra PAT • VA Geometry PAT • PhotoStudio • Microsoft Office Suite • Microsoft FrontPage • Kurzweil • ResumeWriter • Green Globes • Graph Master • MicroType • PageMake • PhotoShop

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools uses an effective process to select software titles and provides teachers with a wealth of software tools.

FINDING

CCPS lacks a computer replacement policy.

A current computer inventory shows that the division had a total of 400 computers in its inventory, with this distribution:

- Central Office – 11 computers;
- Edgemont Primary School – 69 computers;
- Jeter-Watson Intermediate School – 143 computers; and
- Covington High School – 177 computers.



Many of these computers and attendant printers are recently purchased and installed. Given the recent investments in technology, CCPS and ETC administrators have reached the point where they believe that the bulk of their future computer purchases will be largely to maintain currency in technology, so they will be replacing computers rather than adding. Most of the computers in use now are less than three years old. However, this belief is not currently supported by a formally-adopted policy that would then assist in determining annual budget needs.

As it relates to the cycling of computer equipment, ISTE rates organizations in this manner:

- Emergent - no replacement cycle has been defined;
- Islands - equipment is placed on a replacement cycle greater than five years;
- Integrated - equipment is placed on a four- to five-year replacement cycle; and
- Exemplary - equipment is placed on a three-year replacement cycle.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-6:

Adopt a computer replacement policy.

Although most of the computers in use are less than three years old, the division does not have a formally adopted replacement cycle. A replacement plan will assist division leaders in the annual budget development and ensure that division technology remains relatively current. CCPS should develop and adopt a formal computer replacement policy to support its current momentum in embracing technology. By adopting a formal policy, the division's budget priorities will be clearer.

FISCAL IMPACT

Adopting a policy can be done at no cost to the division. However, it is likely that whatever policy is adopted will have a fiscal impact.

FINDING

Currently, CCPS has no 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 8-12 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 all 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, Covington City spent the least per pupil and was more than \$100 per pupil below the peer average and \$70 below the state average.



Exhibit 8-12
Technology Disbursements by Division
Fiscal Year 2004

School Division	Total Technology Disbursements	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$267,275.17	\$302.29
Buena Vista City	\$1,432,031.14	\$337.91
Franklin City	\$641,831.70	\$459.09
Galax City	\$583,300.00	\$439.10
Norton City	\$251,041.33	\$368.59
West Point	\$318,780.96	\$413.64
Peer Division Average	\$645,397.03	\$403.67
State Total	\$433,958,314.54	\$372.07

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

This relatively low level of investment was at least partially reflected in CCPS student test scores. **Exhibit 8-13** compares CCPS students in 5th and 8th grade to those in peer divisions on the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in computers and technology. The exhibit shows the 2002 results, which are the most recent available through the Virginia Department of Education. As the exhibit shows, 67 percent of CCPS 5th graders and 72 percent of CCPS 8th graders met or exceeded the SOL standards. These figures are lower than both the peer averages of 88 percent and 76 percent, and the state averages of 86 percent and 76 percent. Overall, CCPS students demonstrated lower levels of computers and technology skills than their peers or the state as a whole. However, since then, the division has developed a new technology plan and in 2005-06 created its first Instructional Technology Specialist position.

Exhibit 8-13
Standards of Learning (SOL) Results
Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards in Computers/Technology
Spring 2002

School Division	5 th Grade	8 th Grade
Covington City	67%	72%
Buena Vista City	91%	75%
Franklin City	74%	50%
Galax City	91%	79%
Norton City	82%	82%
West Point	100%	92%
Peer School Division Average	88%	76%
Commonwealth Average	86%	76%

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

Since 2003-04, CCPS has made a number of technology investments—in personnel, infrastructure, hardware, and software—and the division is likely much closer to its peers in technology spending. 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.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-7:

Develop procedures to assess technology usage and satisfaction.

Covington City 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. The division could also implement a method to assess student and community satisfaction with classroom tools and its Web site.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

8.5 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

Covington City Public Schools offers a number of avenues for teachers and staff to obtain technology training.

CCPS holds an annual Technology Expo as part of the teacher pre-service workshops. Teachers can select workshops on topics of interest and can make requests for desired workshop topics. The CCPS Technology Expo is held in mid-August each year. Teachers select the workshops they wish to attend the Spring before. While they can choose whatever topics they wish, teachers are required to attend four sessions.

In addition to the Technology Expo, professional development opportunities are available through the Dabney S. Lancaster Community College’s summer technology program and Jackson River Technical Center night classes. Each year, the division holds data collection workshops for school office personnel to minimize errors on state report submissions. As needed, Education Technology Center staff will also provide professional development opportunities.

For Fall 2006, classes available to the community and division staff through the Jackson River Technical Center included:

- Microsoft Windows XP Operating System — a 5-week, 15-hour class;
- Microsoft PowerPoint 2003 — a 5-week, 15-hours class;
- Protect your PC — a 5-week, 10-hour class;
- Educational Technology — a 10-week, 30-hour class; and
- Upgrade your PC — a 5-week, 10-hour class.

Exhibit 8-14 shows the results of Evergreen’s survey regarding technology training and expectations. As can be seen, Covington City administrators and teachers generally have more positive opinions related to whether teachers receive technology training, are expected to integrate technology, and know how to use technology in the classroom in comparison to counterparts in Evergreen’s survey database.

**Exhibit 8-14
Administrators and Teachers Survey Results Regarding Technology Training
Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database**

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding
Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	100%	0%	85.4%	7.3%	89.7%	7.7%	72.8%	20.5%
Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	87.5%	0%	90.2%	7.3%	92.3%	2.6%	80.1%	9.4%
Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	87.5%	0%	80.7%	7.5%	87.2%	10.3%	63.9%	14.2%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.



COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools offers teachers and staff a myriad of technology training opportunities.

FINDING

Although the division makes a variety of technology training available to teachers and staff, CCPS could go further in developing overall competency levels by developing technology proficiency expectations for administrators, teachers, and staff.

Despite the resources available to teachers and staff, CCPS staff noted 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.

Exhibit 8-15 compares the current level of CCPS professional development related to technology with the ISTE indicators, based on Evergreen's analysis. As shown, CCPS has a relatively low level of professional development related to technology.

Exhibit 8-15
CCPS Professional Development Assessed on the ISTE Index

Domain Indicator	CCPS Level	Resulting ISTE Efficiency Rating
Comprehensive Staff Development Programs	Technology training is provided infrequently. When offered, staff are not required to attend a sequence in curriculum but can choose own sequence.	Low
Online Training Opportunities	Online training opportunities do not exist. A video conferencing unit has been installed at the central office with the capacity for online training but it is not currently scheduled for such use.	Low
Just-in-time Training	Some just-in-time training is available as needs arise through the ETC.	Moderate
Expectations for All Staff	The CCPPS Technology Plan is not in use. No clear expectations for learning technology are in place.	Low
Troubleshooting as Part of Professional Development	Some troubleshooting training is available through the Technology Expo, but it is not a required part of the CCPS professional development program.	Moderate
Training for Technical Staff	Technical staff can obtain training as necessary. ETC staff can determine and budget for their training needs, although funds are limited.	Moderate

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.

The Virginia Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel (VA TSIP) provides a foundation for developing technical literacy standards within Covington City Public Schools. The VA TSIPs are provided in **Exhibit 8-16**. As shown, 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 Covington City Public Schools can be used to differentiate instruction within the 3rd grade classroom on a daily basis.



**Exhibit 8-16
Virginia Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel**

Standard	Sample Enablers	Justification
Demonstrate effective use of a computer system and utilize computer software.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of computer system input/output devices and peripherals • Store, organize, and retrieve software programs and data files on a variety of storage devices • Use different types of software programs including instructional, productivity, application tools, and courseware • Troubleshoot general hardware and software problems 	<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>
Apply knowledge of terms associated with educational computing and technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Apply functional knowledge of various technology tools, e.g., video records and players, optical disc players, computer presentation devices, multimedia computer work station 	<p>Educators need a common vocabulary and a functional understanding of educational technologies.</p>
Apply computer productivity tools for professional use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use software tools to assist with classroom administrative tasks; use software tools to design, customize, or individualize instructional materials • Use software to enhance communication with students, parents, and community <p>Use telecommunications software to collaborate and find resource materials</p>	<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>
Use electronic technologies to access and exchange information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use local and worldwide telecommunications • Use search strategies to retrieve electronic information 	<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
Identify, locate, evaluate, and use appropriate instructional technology-based resources (hardware and software) to support Virginia's Standards of Learning and other instructional objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand types, characteristics, sources, and use of effective instructional software and other technology-based learning resources • 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. 	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.
Use educational technologies for data collection, information management, problem solving, decision making, communications, and presentation within the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate word processing, spreadsheet, or database software in instruction • Incorporate telecommunications as a component of instruction; and use a presentation and/or authoring program to present a lesson or develop instructional materials 	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.
Plan and implement lessons and strategies that integrate technology to meet the diverse needs of learners in a variety of educational settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize technology to facilitate assessment and student-centered instruction as determined by the discipline and/or grade level taught • 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 • 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) • Effectively utilize an automated library media center 	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.
Demonstrate knowledge of ethical and legal issues relating to the use of technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abide by copyright laws • Practice responsible uses of technology 	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.



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."¹ 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
Level 0 Non-use	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.
Level 1 Awareness	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.
Level 2 Exploration	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).
Level 3 Infusion	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).
Level 4a Integration (Mechanical)	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.
Level 4b Integration (Routine)	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.
Level 5 Expansion	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.
Level 6 Refinement	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, 2006.

¹ www.loticonnection.com



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 as 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 CCPS teachers and staff.

The division 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.

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 Covington City Public Schools (CCPS) 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. CCPS 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.

CCPS, 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 Service Program. Asked of CCPS administrators and teachers, the results for some of these questions are shown in **Exhibit 9-2**. The CCPS responses are compared to responses provided by administrators and teachers in other school districts where Evergreen has collected data. CCPS administrators were generally more positive regarding food service operations, both in comparison to CCPS teachers and administrators in other school districts. Covington City teachers were somewhat less positive than their peers in other school districts.

The CCPS Food Service Program consists of an administrative assistant (paid for 70% from the Food Service Fund), a cafeteria manager at Edgemont Primary, a cafeteria coordinator shared between Jeter-Watson Intermediate and Covington High School, and 10 cafeteria workers. The Director of Administrative Services provides administrative oversight. Together, they provide daily breakfast and lunch to all division students through three cafeterias. In 2005-06, the division served 934,621 breakfast meals and 82,572 student lunch meals. More than two-fifths of CCPS students, 42.67 percent, are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The district averages student participation rates of 28.8 percent for breakfast and 55.8 percent for lunch.

Exhibit 9-2
Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses Related to Food Services in Covington City Public Schools and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database		CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
The food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	87.5%	12.5%	57.0%	15.8%	35.9%	53.9%	38.8%	33.8%
Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	87.5%	12.5% ⁷	3.2%	22.0%	71.8%	25.7%	60.1%	24.5%
Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	87.5%	12.5%	63.5%	17.5%	41.0%	46.1%	38.5 %	33.3%
	Needs Some Improvement	Needs Major Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding	Needs Some Improvement	Needs Major Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
Food Service	0% /	100%	17.7% /	55.7%	48.4% /	50.0%	38.9% /	48.1%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

CCPS is taking commendable steps to improve student wellness and is providing cafeteria managers and staff with important current training in food service safety topics. It is also serving reimbursable lunch meals to a higher percentage of its elementary and middle school students than the standard industry minimum.



The CCPS Food Services Program had had to rely on its fund balance to meet operating expenses for the past three years. This method of operating is ultimately not sustainable and the division should take steps to both increase food program revenues and reduce expenses.

The recommendations for improvement are:

- adopt shared purchasing with Alleghany County School Division in order to reduce overall food costs;
- charge the CCPS Food Service Fund for applicable utilities expenses;
- evaluate Food Services Program performance relative to selected indicators each year;
- verify portion control on a regular basis;
- establish goals and programs to improve student breakfast participation, particularly among free and reduced-price student populations;
- establish goals and programs to improve student lunch participation at the high school;
- invest in software to assist with nutrient analysis and menu planning that will increase variety in student meals;
- establish goals for CCPS Food Services Program financial performance;
- establish and implement a meal staffing formula for the CCPS cafeterias; and
- seek an agreement with ACPS to share a portion of the existing POS system.

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 service 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 9-3**. The CCPS Food Services Program had adopted a wellness policy and is taking other steps to support healthy student habits.



Exhibit 9-3 Federal Requirements for a Local Wellness Policy

At a minimum, the policy must:
(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.

CCPS adopted its policy on Student Wellness in June 2006. In this policy, the 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 20 goals in the areas of:

- Nutrition Education
- Physical Activity
- Other School-Based Activities
- Nutrition Guidelines

In addition to implementing a wellness policy, CCPS has developed a Wellness Club as part of its after-school program.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is taking steps to improve student wellness through its Wellness Club and its adopted Wellness Policy.

FINDING

The CCPS Food Service Program is not paying for utilities, maintenance, or custodial services provided by the division. CCPS is not currently allocating allowable utilities and custodial costs to the food service fund.

A school food operation is typically operated as an enterprise fund, as it is in CCPS. In such a situation, the school food operation is expected to be self-supporting. However, the CCPS Food



Service Program is not paying for the indirect costs that supports its operations, including maintenance, custodial services, and utility costs. For utilities, in many school districts, the cafeterias are on separate utility meters so that the cost can be determined explicitly. In other districts, the utilities cost is determined by the percentage of square footage occupied by the cafeteria and then applying that percentage to total cost.

Currently, the food service fund is self-sustaining and does not require transfers from the general fund. It would be appropriate to expect the CCPS Food Services Department to cover these costs as well. School district food services operations across the country are generally expected to operate at a profit level that covers all of their cost, including indirect costs.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-1:

Charge all applicable expenses to the Food Service Fund.

The division should charge the Food Service Fund for all allowable expenses, including utilities. It is common and legally allowable to encourage or even require school food operations to be fiscally self-supporting. It is commendable that the CCPS program is already largely self-supporting, with the exception of utilities. The review of its operations did not indicate that requiring the program to be completely self-supporting would be detrimental. In fact, 'raising the bar' in this manner will likely lead to greater efficiency in the operation. Every dollar that can be supported by the food service fund frees general funds to be redirected to the classroom.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on figures provided by CCPS staff, the division's campuses comprise 168,915 square feet. Of this, Evergreen estimates the food service areas comprise the following:

- Edgemont Primary – 1,150 sq. ft.
- Jeter-Watson Intermediate – 2,100 sq. ft.
- Covington High – 3,800 sq. ft.

Therefore, CCPS has approximately 7,050 square feet devoted to cafeteria functions. The division's 2004-05 utility costs, including electricity and natural gas, were \$144,027.84, or \$0.853 per square foot. For the cafeteria areas, this yields an annual cost of \$6,014 (7,050 x \$0.853).

For 2006-07, CCPS budgeted approximately \$464,500 for custodial costs, including custodians' compensation, FICA, VRS (Virginia Retirement Service), Health Care, Group Life, custodial supplies, and transportation for custodians. Allocating this figure over all division campuses yields an annual cost of \$2.75 per square foot. Applying this cost factor to half of the 7,050 square feet devoted to cafeteria functions (cafeteria staff typically clean their own kitchens) yields a cost of \$9,694 (\$2.75 x 3,525 sq. ft.).



These figures would represent a savings for the district’s General Fund, but a cost to the Food Service Fund.

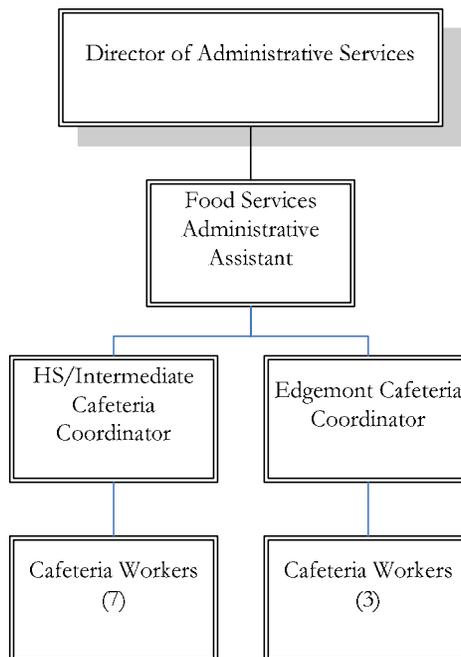
Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Charge Food Services Program for Utilities and Custodial Costs	\$15,708	\$15,708	\$15,708	\$15,708	\$15,708

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 service operations, whose largest expenses are labor and food costs.

The current organization of the CCPS Food Service Department is shown in **Exhibit 9-4**. The Food Services Administrative Assistant handles most of the menu planning (with input from the cafeteria managers), purchasing, and required reporting. Her salary is 70 percent paid for by the Food Service Fund. Because she also handles responsibilities as assigned outside of food service, this is likely an appropriate burden for the fund. The cafeteria managers have each been with the division for more than 25 years and report that they have hard-working staffs; turnover among cafeteria staff is generally due to retirements.

**Exhibit 9-4
CCPS Food Service Organization
2006-07 School Year**



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.



FINDING

CCPS provides cafeteria managers with training in several important areas.

Both CCPS cafeteria managers attended training during Summer 2005 and Summer 2006 related to 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 9-5**.

Exhibit 9-5 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.

In October 2006, both cafeteria managers also attended training related to workplace safety. This training was provided at the suggestion of the division's loss control advisor.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is providing cafeteria managers and staff with important training on food service safety topics.

FINDING

CCPS does not routinely examine cafeteria efficiency or effectiveness, and the division lacks established performance measures.

The division has established some goals in its 2005-2011 Comprehensive Plan related to food service. These are shown in **Exhibit 9-6**. While commendable that the division strategic plan includes food services, these strategies/activities fall short of providing the Food Services Program with regular measures against which to assess performance on a daily, monthly, and annual basis.



**Exhibit 9-6
2005-2011 Comprehensive Plan
Objectives and Strategies/Activities Related to Food Services**

Objective:	Provide school food service program which provides nutritious meals to all students.	
Time Line	Strategies / Activities	Responsibility
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate and maintain school food service program which meets local, state, and federal regulations 	Director Adm. Services
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide staff training and safety programs 	Director Adm. Services
Spring 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement HCAAP Procedures 	Food Service Staff
Fall 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement software program to determine eligibility for free/reduced meals 	Director Adm. Services
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain financial integrity of food service program 	Director Adm. Services
Fall 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for CRE and SMI reviews 	Director Adm. Services Food Service Staff
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine software programs for use in schools to use in serving lines to track paid, free, and reduced meals 	Director Adm. Services Food Service Staff

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Comprehensive Plan, 2005-2011.

Some common measures of food services performance are provided in **Exhibit 9-7**.

**Exhibit 9-7
Common Food Service Performance Indicators**

Performance Area	Performance Indicator
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitchen accidents per number of meals served Workers' compensation claims
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing based on internally or externally established MPLH rates Hours of training provided to cafeteria workers and managers Labor costs as percentage of total costs Administrative staffing costs as percentage of total costs
Cost Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food costs as percentage of total costs Per meal costs
Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures of student satisfaction with menu items Number of new food items introduced Cafeteria worker absentee rate Annual turnover rate of cafeteria staff Average student line wait time in minutes Average student eating period (from tray receipt to end of allotted lunch time) A la carte revenues

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 CCPS Food Services Program performance relative to selected indicators each year.

Evergreen recommends that CCPS 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 an annual basis. Such an annual 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.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should serve to support continuing fiscal stability in the program.

FINDING

Portions observed during some meals served by CCPS likely exceed recommended portions for students.

In observing cafeteria observations, Evergreen found that, in some cases, the portions served to students exceed the requirements of the National School Lunch Program. At Edgemont Elementary School, the cafeteria provides students with a portion of all menu items each day and students can choose to eat or not eat the items. If they do not wish to eat them, they can throw items away.

On the day Evergreen observed Edgemont operations, the lunch trays provided to students included:

- chili, made with meat and beans;
- grilled cheese made with two full slices of bread;
- approximately three-fourths cup of Tater tots;
- approximately one-half of one apple, sliced;
- approximately 1.5-inch square of cakes with icing; and
- milk.

Based on the nutritional guidelines provided through the National School Lunch Program, these portions together may exceed the minimum requirements for elementary students. Moreover, Evergreen observed a fairly significant amount of plate waste among the 1st grade students. Most students rejected at least one and some students rejected several items on the tray.

At Jeter-Watson Intermediate School, Evergreen observed a number of students obtaining more than the single portion of menu items. On the day observed, the menu was a hot dog, baked beans, french fries, pineapple tidbits, and milk. Students could purchase juice and water products from a vending machine in the cafeteria. With “offer versus serve” implemented, students were free to refuse any items at the time they obtained their lunches. In such a system, cafeteria staff



must be vigilant in counting only reimbursable meals at the full price. For students who do not take enough components to qualify for a reimbursable meal, cafeteria staff should charge the a la carte price for the fewer number of items. Likewise, when students select more than the full meal, they should be charged for the reimbursable meal plus the a la carte price for the additional items. Instead, Evergreen observed a small number of students obtaining two hot dogs or extra french fries and being charged only the price for a single reimbursable meal.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-3:

Verify portion control on a regular basis.

Because CCPS participates in the National School Lunch Program and receives reimbursement from the federal government for each qualifying meal served, it should adhere to the portion controls established through that program. Students who desire additional portions of certain food items should be charged the applicable a la carte prices.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should result in decreased food costs and perhaps less plate waste, as the division adheres more closely to National School Lunch Program guidelines.

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 9-8 compares the percentages of free/reduced-price qualifying students in Covington City Public Schools and the peer divisions. CCPS, at 42.67 percent free/reduced, is just slightly above the peer average.

Exhibit 9-8
Student Demographics
2005-06 School Year

School Division	Total Student Population	Percent Eligible Free/Reduced Lunch*
Covington City	870	42.67%
Buena Vista City	1,125	29.80%
Franklin City	1,324	64.42%
Galax City	1,329	50.55%
Norton City	730	47.48%
West Point	802	15.96%
Peer Division Average	1,062	41.64%

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

*As of October 31, 2005.



In 2005-06, Covington City served 82,572 student lunches and 34,621 student breakfasts. 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 meal participation. In 2000, one of the most widely used food service management manuals published industry standards for student lunch participation. These are compared to CCPS rates in **Exhibit 9-9**. As can be seen, Covington City Public Schools exceeds these rates at both the elementary and middle school levels, but falls short at the high school level.

Exhibit 9-9
Industry Standard and CCPS Lunch Participation Rates
2005-06 School Year

School Level	Industry Standard	CCPS
Elementary	70%	79%
Middle	60%	76%
High	50%	25%

Source: Pannell-Martin, School Foodservice Management, 4th Edition, 2000.

FINDING

Breakfast participation in the CCPS schools is low and, in some cases, may be due to late-arriving buses.

The average monthly breakfast participation in 2005-06 was 28.8 percent. Given that the percentage of free and reduced-price eligible students during the year averaged 42.67 percent of all students, the division is not serving breakfast to a significant portion of its poorer students.

Exhibits 9-10 through **9-12** show the monthly totals for the number of students in each category—free, reduced-price, or full-pay—and the overall breakfast participation figure for each school. As the exhibits show, breakfast participation is highest among the free students, then among the reduced-price students.

Exhibit 9-10
Edgemont Primary Student Breakfast Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year

Date	Students Eligible for Free Meals	Students Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals	Full-Pay Students	Percent Participation Among Free Students	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	Percent Participation Among Full-Pay Students
August 2005	121	14	97	64.7%	70.4%	33.1%
September 2005	124	25	85	63.6%	54.7%	41.0%
October 2005	124	26	83	64.9%	52.4%	38.7%
November 2005	126	25	79	65.2%	55.8%	40.9%
December 2005	129	25	79	56.1%	51.0%	38.4%
January 2006	125	25	80	54.8%	45.8%	39.1%
February 2006	124	25	83	54.6%	44.0%	38.7%
March 2006	126	27	81	56.2%	45.6%	38.3%
April 2006	126	27	81	51.5%	45.2%	36.9%
May 2006	126	27	79	58.9%	51.3%	38.7%
June 2006	126	27	79	54.2%	48.1%	41.8%
AVERAGE	125	25	82	58.9%	51.1%	38.6%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.



Exhibit 9-11
Jeter-Watson Intermediate Student Breakfast Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year

Date	Students Eligible for Free Meals	Students Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals	Full-Pay Students	Percent Participation Among Free Students	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	Percent Participation Among Full-Pay Students
August 2005	105	14	130	31.7%	10.2%	7.5%
September 2005	85	26	140	38.7%	31.3%	8.7%
October 2005	88	27	135	36.2%	29.8%	9.0%
November 2005	91	24	133	35.3%	37.1%	9.6%
December 2005	88	24	137	37.8%	33.7%	9.4%
January 2006	89	23	136	33.8%	30.4%	9.2%
February 2006	89	25	133	34.2%	31.2%	9.6%
March 2006	92	26	131	37.7%	34.9%	11.9%
April 2006	94	26	127	36.9%	24.5%	11.1%
May 2006	94	26	126	39.2%	25.0%	10.9%
June 2006	94	26	126	22.1%	11.5%	7.7%
AVERAGE	92	24	132	35.7%	30.7%	9.8%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

Exhibit 9-12
Covington High School Student Breakfast Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year

Date	Students Eligible for Free Meals	Students Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals	Full-Pay Students	Percent Participation Among Free Students	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	Percent Participation Among Full-Pay Students
August 2005	71	11	255	12.9%	11.7%	1.3%
September 2005	69	16	262	16.8%	9.2%	2.3%
October 2005	71	16	255	19.9%	6.9%	2.5%
November 2005	73	16	257	20.0%	7.6%	2.0%
December 2005	75	16	254	18.6%	8.3%	1.8%
January 2006	71	17	253	15.4%	7.9%	1.9%
February 2006	72	16	253	19.1%	8.6%	1.8%
March 2006	75	16	247	19.9%	5.7%	1.5%
April 2006	75	16	249	21.2%	7.6%	2.0%
May 2006	74	16	249	21.4%	8.8%	1.5%
June 2006	74	16	249	4.4%	1.6%	0.1%
AVERAGE	73	16	253	18.6%	7.9%	1.8%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

Exhibit 9-13 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 CCPS school in 2005-06. 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 approximately 214 free/reduced students were not eating breakfast on a daily basis.



**Exhibit 9-13
CCPS Student Average Daily Breakfast Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year**

Date	Edgemont			Jeter-Watson			Covington HS		
	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
August 2005	135	88	47	119	35	84	82	10	72
September 2005	149	92	57	111	41	70	85	13	72
October 2005	150	94	56	115	40	75	87	15	72
November 2005	151	96	55	115	41	74	89	16	73
December 2005	154	85	69	112	41	71	91	15	76
January 2006	150	80	70	112	37	75	88	12	76
February 2006	149	79	70	114	38	76	88	15	73
March 2006	153	83	70	118	44	74	91	16	75
April 2006	153	77	76	120	41	79	91	17	74
May 2006	153	88	65	120	43	77	90	17	73
June 2006	153	81	72	120	24	96	90	4	87
AVERAGE	150	86	64	116	40	76	88	15	74

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

Exhibit 9-14 provides the breakfast serving periods and school start times at each school. These serving periods appear to coordinate well with the school start times. However, school staff at Jeter-Watson noted that, although the cafeteria doors open at 7:50 am, buses typically arrive later than that and school starts at 8:20 am. This would leave students with little time to select, purchase, and consume a school breakfast. For example, a bus arriving at 8:10 am, although well before the start of school, would still leave its passengers with almost no time to eat a school breakfast.

**Exhibit 9-14
Comparison of Breakfast Serving and School Start Times**

School	Breakfast Start/End Times	Length of Breakfast Period	School Start Time
Edgemont Primary School	8:20 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	40 minutes	8:50 a.m.
Jeter-Watson Intermediate	7:55 a.m. to 8:10 a.m.	15 minutes	8:20 a.m.
Covington High School	7:20 a.m. to 7:40 a.m.	20 minutes	7:48 a.m.

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

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.



In the Texas school district of Water Valley, for example, the cafeteria staff developed an innovative program to increase student breakfast participation. With a student population of around 300, the district introduced a breakfast burrito program. Each morning the Superintendent delivers grab-and-go breakfast burritos to the high school students. The district reports that these are very popular and sell out each morning.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-4:

Establish goals and programs to improve student breakfast participation, particularly among free and reduced-price students.

CCPS is not currently serving breakfast to a significant portion of the free and reduced-price student population. The CCPS Food Services Program should establish monthly goals to increase student participation. CCPS should then identify root causes for less than optimal student participation, including transportation timing and alternatives to the current menus.

FISCAL IMPACT

In 2005-06, Covington City Public Schools had an average of 290 students qualifying for free and 65 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 \$4,244, based on these calculations:

- 290 free students x 5% increase in participation x \$1.31 (federal reimbursement) x 180 school days = \$3,419; and
- 65 reduced-price students x 5% increase in participation x \$1.41 (federal reimbursement of \$1.01 + student pay of \$0.40) x 180 school days = \$825.

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	\$4,244	\$4,244	\$4,244	\$4,244	\$4,244

FINDING

While lunch participation at Edgemont Primary and Jeter-Watson Intermediate Schools typically exceed the national average, participation at Covington High School is low.

The average monthly breakfast participation in 2005-06 was 55.8 percent and, as shown previously, varied from a high of 79 percent at Edgemont to a low of 25 percent at Covington High School. **Exhibits 9-15** and **9-16** show the monthly totals for the number of students in each category—free, reduced-price, or full-pay—and the overall lunch participation figure for each



for Edgemont and Jeter-Watson. As the exhibits show, lunch participation is highest among the free students, then among the reduced-price students. Furthermore, the participation figures for Edgemont and Jeter-Watson are fairly high among all student types.

Exhibit 9-15
Edgemont Primary Student Lunch Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year

Date	Students Eligible for Free Meals	Students Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals	Full-Pay Students	Percent Participation Among Free Students	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	Percent Participation Among Full-Pay Students
August 2005	121	14	97	91.7%	88.8%	51.8%
September 2005	124	25	85	91.2%	73.9%	61.9%
October 2005	124	26	83	91.3%	73.5%	64.4%
November 2005	126	25	79	89.5%	78.5%	66.0%
December 2005	129	25	79	89.7%	73.7%	67.8%
January 2006	125	25	80	91.4%	75.8%	66.8%
February 2006	124	25	83	90.0%	69.3%	64.6%
March 2006	126	27	81	90.2%	70.9%	63.6%
April 2006	126	27	81	82.9%	65.6%	65.0%
May 2006	126	27	79	89.1%	72.4%	68.4%
June 2006	126	27	79	78.6%	57.4%	58.5%
AVERAGE	125	25	82	89.6%	74.3%	64.0%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

Exhibit 9-16
Jeter-Watson Intermediate Student Lunch Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year

Date	Students Eligible for Free Meals	Students Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals	Full-Pay Students	Percent Participation Among Free Students	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	Percent Participation Among Full-Pay Students
August 2005	105	14	130	90.6%	43.9%	74.0%
September 2005	85	26	140	96.0%	78.9%	66.2%
October 2005	88	27	135	94.6%	82.8%	67.9%
November 2005	91	24	133	87.4%	89.9%	70.1%
December 2005	88	24	137	88.4%	81.3%	64.3%
January 2006	89	23	136	87.0%	81.7%	67.1%
February 2006	89	25	133	84.6%	75.8%	68.4%
March 2006	92	26	131	88.8%	79.6%	69.0%
April 2006	94	26	127	86.6%	71.7%	67.7%
May 2006	94	26	126	87.0%	69.9%	67.9%
June 2006	94	26	126	57.2%	47.1%	46.0%
AVERAGE	92	24	132	87.3%	79.3%	67.8%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

Exhibit 9-17 provides the same data for Covington High School and shows that participation falls off significantly among the older students. High school students have the option of purchasing a greater variety of a la carte items than students in lower grades. In 2005-06, the high school sold an average of \$181 per day in a la carte items, such as nachos with cheese. While these revenues have a positive impact on the Food Services Program, 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; many a la carte items, while popular, do not meet similar standards.

Exhibit 9-17
Covington High School Student Lunch Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year

Date	Students Eligible for Free Meals	Students Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals	Full-Pay Students	Percent Participation Among Free Students	Percent Participation Among Reduced-Price Students	Percent Participation Among Full-Pay Students
August 2005	71	11	255	64.0%	84.4%	16.9%
September 2005	69	16	262	67.6%	53.3%	15.1%
October 2005	71	16	255	64.6%	51.0%	14.6%
November 2005	73	16	257	58.5%	50.7%	13.9%
December 2005	75	16	254	50.7%	43.8%	12.3%
January 2006	71	17	253	55.1%	48.8%	14.7%
February 2006	72	16	253	56.5%	50.3%	15.5%
March 2006	75	16	247	56.8%	59.5%	14.5%
April 2006	75	16	249	59.4%	54.5%	13.9%
May 2006	74	16	249	58.3%	59.4%	13.2%
June 2006	74	16	249	12.2%	12.5%	4.3%
AVERAGE	73	16	253	57.9%	53.8%	14.2%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

Exhibit 9-18 provides the total daily number of free and reduced-price 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 CCPS school in 2005-06. 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 74 free/reduced students were not eating lunch on a daily basis.

Exhibit 9-18
CCPS Student Average Daily Lunch Participation by Category
2005-06 School Year

Date	Edgemont			Jeter-Watson			Covington HS		
	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
August 2005	135	123	12	119	101	18	82	55	27
September 2005	149	132	17	111	102	9	85	55	30
October 2005	150	132	18	115	106	9	87	54	33
November 2005	151	132	19	115	101	14	89	51	38
December 2005	154	134	20	112	97	15	91	45	46
January 2006	150	133	17	112	96	16	88	47	41
February 2006	149	129	20	114	94	20	88	49	39
March 2006	153	133	20	118	102	16	91	52	39
April 2006	153	122	31	120	100	20	91	53	38
May 2006	153	132	21	120	100	20	90	53	37
June 2006	153	115	39	120	66	54	90	11	79
AVERAGE	150	131	19	116	99	17	88	51	38

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-5:

Establish goals and programs to improve student lunch participation at the high school.

The lunch participation at the high school is the only one below a commonly accepted industry standard. The division should seek to improve participation among high school students by implementing greater variety, such as a salad bar, grab-and-go sandwich packs, alternate hot entrees, etc.

FISCAL IMPACT

In 2005-06, Covington City Public Schools had an average of 253 full-pay high school students. Given the division's 14 percent participation rate, it would be reasonable to assume that, with improvements in menu offerings, participation could increase 10 percentage points. Assuming this 10 percent increase in lunch participation among full-pay students, the district will realize increased annual revenues of \$7,878, based on this calculation:

- 253 free students x 10% increase in participation x \$1.73 (\$1.50 student pay + \$0.23 federal reimbursement) x 180 school days = \$7,878.

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	\$7,878	\$7,878	\$7,878	\$7,878	\$7,878

FINDING

The CCPS Food Services Program lacks the technology to do efficient and effective nutrient analysis and menu planning.

School breakfast and lunch menus must follow a detailed and rigorous set of USDA guidelines. Currently, the Administrative Assistant for Food Services develops menus for all CCPS schools by hand. Both the Cafeteria Manager and Cafeteria Coordinator provide input to the menu as necessary. All three schools offer breakfast and lunch.

In reviewing a sample of menus, Evergreen found that the CCPS menus are generally traditional. The main entrees are typically hot dogs, hamburgers, pizza, and chicken patties/nuggets. The vegetables are typically corn, peas, green beans, and broccoli. None of the schools offer a salad bar.

Exhibit 9-19 compares the survey results for CCPS administrators and teachers as to whether the Food Service Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks. As the exhibit shows, while a majority of CCPS administrators *agree* or *strongly agree* that the cafeterias provide nutritious and appealing meals and snacks, the same is not true of CCPS teachers. A



majority of CCPS teachers *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that the cafeterias provide nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.

Exhibit 9-19
Survey Results on Food Service Meals and Snacks
in Covington City School Division and Districts in Evergreen’s Survey Database

Survey Statement	CCPS Administrators		Administrators in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
The Food Service Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	87.5%	12.5%	57.0%	15.8%
Survey Statement	CCPS Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen’s Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
The Food Service Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	35.9%	53.9%	38.8%	33.8%

Source: *Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2006.*

At the Public Forum hosted by Evergreen in November 2006, the only three comments provided by members of the public regarding food service related to menu choice. These comments were:

- *The schools need a better menu of choices for food.*
- *The schools need healthier food.*
- *The schools serve too many deep fried foods and no choices.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-6:

Invest in software to assist with nutrient analysis and menu planning that will increase variety in student meals.

Menu planning software should make it relatively easy to increase the variety of the current menu and enable cafeterias to offer more choices in daily lunch.

FISCAL IMPACT

The exact fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend on the software package selected. One possibility for menu planning is NutriKids, which is a USDA-approved program available for less than \$1,000. Evergreen estimates that the division would need to purchase a software upgrade at least every three years.

Implementing greater menu variety should result in at least a small increase in student participation. Considering just lunch, CCPS had an average of 290 free, 65 reduced-price, and



468 full-pay students. Assuming a three percent increase in lunch participation, the district will realize increased annual revenues of \$13,964, based on these calculations:

- 290 free students x 3% increase in participation x \$2.40 (federal reimbursement) x 180 school days = \$3,758;
- 65 reduced-price students x 3% increase in participation x \$2.40 (federal reimbursement of \$2.00 + student pay of \$0.40) x 180 school days = \$842; and
- 468 full-pay students x 3% increase in participation x \$1.605 (federal reimbursement of \$0.23 + average student pay of \$1.375) x 180 school days = \$4,056.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Purchase Menu Planning Software	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,000)
Improve Menu Choice and Increase Lunch Participation	\$8,656	\$8,656	\$8,656	\$8,656	\$8,656
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$7,656	\$8,656	\$8,656	\$8,656	\$7,656

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.

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 service programs are expected to support all of the operating expenditures through these revenue sources. In some divisions, food service programs also support all of their capital and overhead expenditures as well. Food service funds may maintain a balance of up to three months of their operating expenses, with some exceptions.

Exhibit 9-20 compares the division meal prices for full-pay students and adults. In CCPS, adults are not charged a per meal price but rather a la carte prices. An adult lunch meal comparable to the full student meal typically costs \$1.90 in CCPS. As the exhibit shows, CCPS charges the least of the peer divisions for breakfast and some of the least prices for lunch meals



**Exhibit 9-20
Division Meal Prices (Full-Pay Students)
2005-06 School Year**

Category	Covington City	Buena Vista City	Franklin City	Galax City	Norton City	West Point City
Breakfast						
Elementary	\$0.75	\$0.80	\$1.00	\$0.75	\$0.90	\$X
Middle	0.75	0.80	1.25	0.95	X	X
High School	0.75	0.80	1.25	0.95	0.90	X
Adult	X	1.20	2.00	1.25	1.65	X
Lunch						
Elementary	1.25	1.60	1.50	1.10	1.30	1.35
Middle	1.25	1.75	1.75	1.30	X	1.50
High School	1.50	1.75	1.75	1.30	1.30	1.50
Adult	X	2.20	3.00	2.05	1.90	2.50

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

Exhibit 9-21 compares the food services distributions for Covington City Public Schools and the peer divisions. As shown, the division had the second highest cost per student, at \$429 in 2004-05. This is well above the peer average of \$314.

**Exhibit 9-21
Food Services Distributions
Fiscal Year 2005**

School Division	Food Services	Per Pupil Cost
Covington City	\$373,125	\$429
Buena Vista City	\$351,929	\$313
Franklin City	\$686,946	\$518
Galax City	\$554,077	\$417
Norton City	\$159,185	\$218
West Point	\$81,121	\$101
Peer Division Average	\$366,652	\$314

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

FINDING

The CCPS Food Services Program is not adhering to best practices in financial control. For 2005-06, the program’s revenues did not meet of its operational expenditures. As a result, the program must supplement operating funds from its fund balance that could otherwise be used for other purposes.

Exhibit 9-22 compares the revenues and expenditures for the past three years. As the exhibit shows, in the past three years, revenues have only increased by 2.7 percent, while expenditures have increased by 13.7 percent. The largest significant increases in expenditures were in the



categories of employee benefits and food products; each increased by more than 20 percent over the three-year period. Among the revenues, the division’s federal reimbursements increased by 18.3 percent, but student meal sales (the portion of a meal paid by the student) were down slightly. For 2005-06, revenues fell short of meeting expenditures by more than \$30,000.

**Exhibit 9-22
CCPS Food Services Financial Performance
2003-04 through 2005-06 School Years**

Revenue/Expenditures	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	Percent Change
Revenues				
School Lunch, Breakfast, Special Milk, and Summer School Lunch/Breakfast Program Sales	\$98,274.60	\$95,473.77	\$101,646.58	-3.3%
A La Carte and Adult Meal Sales	\$2,439.25	\$1,594.25	\$1,769.25	37.9%
Rebates	\$890.64	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Interest Earned	\$0.00	\$180.70	\$235.45	-100.0%
Other Revenues - A La Carte (only) Schools	\$116.90	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Other Revenues - Miscellaneous	\$13,139.26	\$4,412.08	\$27,204.07	-51.7%
Program Reimbursements (Federal Funds)	\$150,577.63	\$155,692.23	\$127,335.88	18.3%
State Funds	\$4,091.66	\$4,178.10	\$4,272.63	-4.2%
Total Revenues	\$269,529.94	\$261,531.13	\$262,463.86	2.7%
Expenditures				
Personal Services	\$77,814.59	\$72,053.82	\$76,674.95	1.5%
Employee Benefits	\$78,073.04	\$69,357.53	\$61,767.77	26.4%
Materials and Supplies	\$8,628.01	\$7,814.79	\$7,333.41	17.7%
Food Products	\$120,599.73	\$111,076.04	\$97,325.25	23.9%
Capital Outlay	\$9,520.19	\$8,996.88	\$17,878.04	-46.7%
Other Uses of Funds	\$8,162.30	\$0.00	\$5,305.76	53.8%
Total Expenditures	\$302,797.86	\$269,299.06	\$266,285.18	13.7%
Revenues - Expenditures	-\$33,267.92	-\$7,767.93	-\$3,821.32	770.6%

Source: Covington City Public Schools, SNP-14, Financial Report – School Nutrition Programs, 2006.

One widely used source of cafeteria operational standards may be found in the 2000 edition of *Cost Control for School Foodservices, Third Edition*. **Exhibit 9-23** 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 9-24 shows calculations based on the **Exhibit 9-22**, and compares them with the operational standards of the previous exhibit. As can be seen, none of the 2005-06 CCPS figures meets generally accepted standards. Although the 10 percent for administrative overhead exceeds the standard, given that this is only 70 percent of one administrative position, Evergreen does not consider that to be significantly beyond the standard. However, school labor costs are significantly higher than the standard and school food costs are somewhat higher than the standard. Most troubling is that costs in both of these categories, compared to revenues, have climbed each of the past three years.



Exhibit 9-23
Food Services Financial Performance Standards

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 9-24
Comparison of CCPS Food Services Financial Performance to Standards

Category	Percent of Revenue Standard	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
School Labor, Including Fringe Benefits	40%	43%	44%	48%
Food Cost as Percent of Revenue	40%	37%	43%	45%
Administrative Cost (Central Office Salaries w/Fringe)	7%	10%	10%	10%

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.

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 service operations to maintain a profit margin equal to three or four percent of revenues. For smaller school divisions, such as CCPS, 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-7:

Establish goals for the financial performance of the CCPS Food Services Program.

While the program currently has sufficient fund balance to cover any short-term shortfall between operating revenues and expenditures, this should not be considered an acceptable long-term strategy. The division should establish a modest profit margin goal range and seek to operate its Food Services Program to achieve that goal. Many of the recommendations made elsewhere in this chapter should either increase revenues or reduce costs, and should contribute to achieving the goal. In addition, with its relatively high rate of full-pay students, the division should regularly compare its per plate costs with those charged to students. The division may need to adjust full-pay meal prices on an annual basis to ensure it is not providing those meals at a net loss.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, and should lead to greater fiscal stability in the CCPS Food Services Program.



FINDING

The CCPS Food Services Program is not adjusting its staffing to ensure a high level of cafeteria productivity. As a result, all three cafeterias are overstaffed.

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 9-25 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. As the exhibit shows, a cafeteria serving less than 100 meal equivalents per day, would be within industry standards at eight to 10 MPLH. Both the Edgemont and Jeter-Watson cafeterias fell within the 201-250 meal equivalents per day.

**Exhibit 9-25
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
201-250	12	14
251-300	13	15
301-400	14	16
401-500	14	17
501-600	15	17
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 Foodservices, Third Edition, July 2000.

Because student a la carte sales were not provided to Evergreen, the data for Covington High School are somewhat incomplete. Evergreen estimates that the Covington High School cafeteria is serving between 151 and 200 meal equivalents per day. These figures would equate to an expected production capacity of between 12 and 14 MPLH at Edgemont and Jeter-Watson and between 10 and 12 at Covington High School, based on staffing guidelines. Documentation provided through the Commonwealth establishes goals of 14 to 20 MPLH at Edgemont.

Exhibit 9-26 provides a breakdown of the number of daily hours cafeteria staff works on an average day. Two hours out of each work day for the Cafeteria Manager and Cafeteria Coordinator are taken from the potential labor hours because they are instead spent on paperwork, reporting, and supervisory duties. The totals shown for each school show the number of average daily labor hours available to prepare and serve student meals.



**Exhibit 9-26
CCPS Cafeteria Staffing**

School	Position Title	Number of Workers	Daily Hours
Edgemont	Cafeteria Manager	1	7.0*
Edgemont	Cafeteria Worker	3	5.5
	Total	4	21.5
Jeter-Watson	Cafeteria Worker	4	5.5
	Total	4	22.0
Covington High School	Cafeteria Coordinator	1	7.5*
Covington High School	Cafeteria Worker	2	5.5
Covington High School	Cafeteria Worker	1	6.5
	Total	3.5	23.0

Source: Covington City Public Schools, 2006.

*Two hours daily excluded to handle reporting, paperwork, and supervisory duties.

Exhibits 9-27 through 9-29 provide the monthly meals served for 2005-06, the labor hours expended each month, and the final MPLH calculation for each school. As the exhibits show, the Food Service Program averaged meals per labor hour of 11.8, 11.5 and 7.3, at Edgemont Primary, Jeter-Watson Intermediate, and Covington High Schools, respectively. All of these figures fall below the expected efficiency ranges. In four months, Edgemont achieved or exceeded the lower level of industry standard productivity; Jeter-Watson did the same in October 2005. However, in no month of the 2005-06 school year did any of the schools meet the Virginia standard expected ranges of productivity.

**Exhibit 9-27
Edgemont Primary School Cafeteria Productivity
2005-06 School Year**

Month	Number of Lunch Meals Served	Number of Breakfast Meals Served	A La Carte Sales	Meal Equivalentents	Number of School Days	Labor Hours	MPLH
August 2005	1,216	842	\$170.35	1,704	7	150.5	11.3
September 2005	3,869	2,673	\$592.70	5,439	21	451.5	12.0
October 2005	3,531	2,398	\$809.20	5,049	19	408.5	12.4
November 2005	3,505	2,441	\$495.20	4,920	19	408.5	12.0
December 2005	2,253	1,385	\$384.65	3,097	12	258.0	12.0
January 2006	3,731	2,225	\$547.80	5,059	20	430.0	11.8
February 2006	3,469	2,107	\$476.35	4,710	19	408.5	11.5
March 2006	4,240	2,627	\$694.95	5,827	23	494.5	11.8
April 2006	2,447	1,498	\$607.05	3,435	14	301.0	11.4
May 2006	4,089	2,611	\$553.70	5,612	22	473.0	11.9
June 2006	643	457	\$92.70	908	4	86.0	10.6
TOTAL	32,993	21,264	\$5,424.65	45,761	180	3,870.0	11.8

Source: Calculated by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.



Exhibit 9-28
Jeter-Watson Intermediate School Cafeteria Productivity
2005-06 School Year

Month	Number of Lunch Meals Served	Number of Breakfast Meals Served	A La Carte Sales	Meal Equivalents	Number of School Days	Labor Hours	MPLH
August 2005	1,382	709	\$206.30	1,818	7	154.0	11.8
September 2005	4,091	2,145	\$824.22	5,488	21	462.0	11.9
October 2005	3,748	2,006	\$974.05	5,134	19	418.0	12.3
November 2005	3,693	1,922	\$769.00	4,957	19	418.0	11.9
December 2005	2,225	1,168	\$450.45	2,986	12	264.0	11.3
January 2006	3,749	1,924	\$639.95	4,963	20	440.0	11.3
February 2006	3,520	1,791	\$525.35	4,622	19	418.0	11.1
March 2006	4,432	2,354	\$660.80	5,869	23	506.0	11.6
April 2006	2,604	1,400	\$333.25	3,435	14	308.0	11.2
May 2006	4,082	2,200	\$604.25	5,420	22	484.0	11.2
June 2006	496	264	\$110.94	672	4	88.0	7.6
TOTAL	34,022	17,883	\$6,098.56	45,365	180	3,960.0	11.5

Source: Calculated by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.

Exhibit 9-29
Covington High School Cafeteria Productivity (excluding A La Carte Sales)
2005-06 School Year

Month	Number of Lunch Meals Served	Number of Breakfast Meals Served	a la Carte Sales	Meal Equivalents	Number of School Days	Labor Hours	MPLH
August 2005	685	96	\$1,199.10	1,205	7	161.0	7.5
September 2005	1,992	399	\$4,088.80	3,801	21	483.0	7.9
October 2005	1,734	411	\$3,651.50	3,377	19	437.0	7.7
November 2005	1,645	399	\$3,219.35	3,112	19	437.0	7.1
December 2005	916	238	\$1,731.15	1,717	12	276.0	6.2
January 2006	1,692	341	\$3,832.7	3,371	20	460.0	7.3
February 2006	1,673	372	\$3,479.3	3,229	19	437.0	7.4
March 2006	2,021	452	\$4,667.2	4,084	23	529.0	7.7
April 2006	1,230	308	\$2,584.55	2,402	14	322.0	7.5
May 2006	1,882	749	\$4,137.75	3,886	22	506.0	7.7
June 2006	87	15	\$75.40	124	4	92.0	1.3
TOTAL	15,557	3,780	\$32,666.80	30,308	180	4,140.0	7.3

Source: Calculated by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-8:

Establish and implement a meal staffing formula for CCPS cafeterias.

The CCPS Food Services Program should establish goals for productivity based on established best practices and Commonwealth guidance and adjust staffing accordingly. Based on the other



recommendations in this chapter that, once implemented, should have an impact on student meal participation, Evergreen recommends that the CCPS Food Services Program establish a standard for efficiency of 14 meals per labor hour at Edgemont and Jeter-Watson. By establishing a standard at the lower end of guidelines, CCPS will have sufficient staff available as other recommendations lead to increased meal sales. Because of the lack of a la carte data, Evergreen recommends that the division establish a productivity goal for Covington High School, but does not provide a specific target.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on 2005-06 figures, going from an average productivity of 11.8 MPLH to 14.0 MPLH at Edgemont would equate to a reduction from current staffing of 21.5 labor hours per day to 18.2 labor hours per day, a savings of 3.3 hours of labor cost per day.

At Jeter-Watson, going from an average productivity of 11.5 MPLH to 14.0 MPLH would equate to a reduction from current staffing of 22.0 labor hours per day to 18.0 labor hours per day, a savings of four hours of labor cost per day.

At Covington High School, going from an average productivity of 7.3 MPLH to 12.0 MPLH would equate to a reduction from current staffing of 23.0 labor hours per day to 15.0 labor hours per day, a savings of eight hours of labor cost per day. Although achieving a productivity level of 14.0 MPLH would be desirable, it is likely unrealistic given the current layout of the high school kitchen and serving line.

Currently, the CCPS Cafeteria Workers at Step 10 of the salary schedule earn an average of \$8.07 per hour. If the district elects to reduce the work hours of each employee by some portion that reduces the overall labor effort by 3.3 hours per day at Edgemont, by four hours per day at Jeter-Watson, and by eight hours per day at Covington High School, it will save \$123.47 per day in costs (15.3 hours x \$8.07 per hour), or \$22,225 over the course of a school year. These savings would accrue to the CCPS Food Services Fund.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Implement Meal Staffing Formula	\$22,225	\$22,225	\$22,225	\$22,225	\$22,225

ALSO SEE RECOMMENDATIONS 10-14 AND 10-18 IN CHAPTER 10



**CHAPTER 10:
SHARED SERVICES**



Chapter 10

SHARED SERVICES

This chapter reviews shared services in Covington City Public Schools (CCPS), and includes two major sections:

- 10.2 Shared Services with the City of Covington
- 10.2 Shared Services with Alleghany County Public Schools (ACPS)

Shared services is a process that involves centralizing functions that most times were once performed in separate divisions or municipalities. Service sharing is recognized as an innovative way that can lower operating costs and improve overall performance. Sharing a service provides the opportunity to reduce redundancy and inefficiencies by sharing personnel and investments with others. Entities that participate in shared service arrangements can cut costs while improving the quality of the services shared. Divisions and municipalities that implement shared services also enjoy savings by standardizing practices and procedures, and by creating economies of scale.

When developing and implementing shared service arrangements, one may encounter obstacles that must be overcome by a flexible attitude and a spirit of cooperation between the entities. Obstacles that are often encountered when attempting to implement shared services that impede cooperation include:

- territorialism and turf;
- disputes between entities;
- competition for limited resources;
- fear of lost jobs;
- loss of control;
- liability issues;
- limitations on time, money, and staff resources; and
- inadequate knowledge about the steps needed to encourage further cooperation and the legal implications of such steps.

Often times, school divisions and municipalities of small to median size and in a rural location have difficulties finding and funding specialized personnel with the skills necessary to support the increasing needs of the entities. Many times sharing the skills of specialized personnel increases the level of services and reduces cost. Also, sharing the skills of management level staff and consolidating support processes reduces cost and increases production.



It is always a good business practice to document in writing specific provisions of agreements for sharing a service. A shared services agreement should be in the form of a contract tailored to the specific needs of the entities involved that, at a minimum, includes the following:

- nature and scope of the service(s) to be performed;
- measurable performance standards;
- assignment of responsibility;
- cost allocation;
- duration of the contract;
- procedure for payment; and
- dispute resolution.

Peer divisions were selected for comparative purposes for both Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools. Peer divisions for CCPS include Buena Vista City, Franklin City, Galax City, Norton City, and West Point Public Schools. Peer divisions for ACPS include Dickenson County, Nottoway County, Patrick County, Prince Edward County, and Southampton County Public Schools.

Many shared service opportunities originate in activities associated with a division’s administration, transportation, operations and maintenance, and food services programs. **Exhibit 10-1** compares the cost per pupil of administration, pupil transportation, operation and maintenance, and food services for CCPS and ACPS to each other and their respective peer divisions. Per pupil cost provides a general comparison of operational costs, but does not always present the best comparison as when data specific to the operation is used and does not reflect the actual level of services provided. It should also be noted that, while divisions use criteria required by the Virginia Department of Education for submitting information, certain situations do exist which cause the data not to be totally comparable (such as when a county or city provides a service at no cost to a division thus causing the cost of that operation for that division to be understated). Further analysis has been conducted in individual chapters for each operation.

Exhibit 10-1
Comparative Per Pupil Cost for Administration and Operations
in Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools
Fiscal Year 2005

Operation	Covington Public Schools and Peer Divisions		Alleghany County Public Schools and Peer Divisions	
	Covington	Peer Average	Alleghany	Peer Average
Administration	\$360	\$391	\$299	\$282
Pupil Transportation	\$270	\$307	\$538	\$668
Operation and Maintenance	\$867	\$973	\$944	\$839
Food Services	\$429	\$314	\$323	\$396

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site 2006.



As shown in **Exhibit 10-1**, both CCPS and ACPS have total administrative and operational costs that are less than their peer division averages. CCPS has lower costs than the peer division average for administration, pupil transportation and operation and maintenance, but a higher cost for food services than the peer average. ACPS has a higher per pupil cost for administration and operations and maintenance than the peer average, but a lower per pupil cost for pupil transportation and food services than the peer average. CCPS per pupil cost was lower than ACPS per pupil cost for pupil transportation and operations and maintenance, but a higher cost for administration and food services.

Many comments were received from division administrators and teachers and from the general public directed at the concept of sharing of services. Most comments pertained to the merits and benefits of either consolidating CCPS or ACPS or to the merits and benefits of consolidating the local governments of the City of Covington and Alleghany County Government, both of which are outside the scope of this review. Nonetheless, opportunities do exist for sharing services between CCPS and ACPS, and between CCPS and the City of Covington. Notwithstanding the consolidation of the administration and support functions that would force a sharing of administration and support services, there are services that are being shared and others that should be considered.

CCPS and ACPS each have a school board that is responsible for the administration and success of the respective divisions. Although almost any administrative or support function could be performed on a shared basis, each entity is still responsible for ensuring that its needs are met, responsibilities fulfilled, and the services are provided at a cost that is in the best interest of its students and taxpayers. ACPS and CCPS must each report to the Virginia Department of Education as a separate school division, and all federal reporting, including payroll-related reports must also be reported separately. Sharing a service normally adds an administrative burden to the entity that provides the shared service, and the entity that agrees to have the service provided by another entity loses a degree of control over the service provided. Divisions that receive services through a shared service arrangement must assign responsibility to a division employee to oversee the arrangement and ensure the division receives the services at the agreed to cost.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Covington City Public Schools shares a number of services with Alleghany County Public Schools and the City of Covington. Consolidating divisions would result in combining almost all services being performed by the divisions. Short of a consolidation, sharing services are limited to those where a sharing arrangement is approved by both CCPS and ACPS. Likewise sharing services between CCPS and the City of Covington must have each entity's approval. Covington taxpayers have benefited from the cooperative relationship with ACPS and the City of Covington that has resulted in cost saving sharing of services.

The division is commended for sharing services with the City of Covington for vehicle maintenance, fuel distribution, secured bus parking, accounting services, and the services of city police officers, and with Alleghany County Public Schools for a technology center, a school nurse program, substitute teachers and an attendance officer. Recommendations in this chapter are intended to focus attention on areas where services that are currently being shared can be



improved and on other services that should be considered for sharing. Primary recommendations in this chapter include:

- develop a shared purchasing agreement for commonly acquired office, custodial and building supplies, as well as fuel and vehicle maintenance supplies;
- pursue sharing services arrangement for health insurance with both City and ACPS employees;
- establish a joint education foundation for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools that is operated as a shared services arrangement;
- review the class times for Covington High School and Alleghany High School, and better align the bell times to reduce the impact on Covington High School students, and enable the Jackson River Technical Center to offer a fourth period;
- develop an arrangement to share the services of the ACPS Energy Manager with Covington City Public Schools;
- align the calendars for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools to improve current shared services and to enhance future shared services possibilities;
- develop a formal shared services agreement with Alleghany County Public Schools to encourage and manage additional shared service arrangements; and
- establish indirect cost rates for shared service arrangements for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools that are calculated using the same methodology.

10.1 SHARED SERVICES WITH THE CITY OF COVINGTON

The City of Covington provides the local revenue necessary to fund the operations of Covington City Public Schools. Sharing services between the two entities reduces costs and benefits taxpayers of the City of Covington. Although the two entities serve the same taxpayers, their missions are different and they incur costs for providing services to different segments of the City's population. In addition to the two entities sharing services of the Police Department for security of the schools, athletic facilities, snow removal, vehicle maintenance and fueling operations, additional opportunities exist.

FINDING

The City of Covington and CCPS share resources for a number of services that reduce the cost to Covington taxpayers. Most of the services are provided by the City of Covington for benefit of CCPS at no cost to the division. Services shared by the City of Covington and CCPS include, but are limited to:



- Athletic facilities for baseball and football are owned and maintained by the City, but are used by CCPS students at no cost to the school division.
- Water, wastewater, and sewer services are provided by the City at no cost to CCPS.
- City-owned snow removal equipment is used to clear heavy snow on CCPS parking lots and entrances to schools, at no cost to CCPS.
- Gymnasiums and other CCPS athletic facilities are provided to the City of Covington for use by youth sports programs sponsored by the City.

In addition, CCPS has also secured the services of inmates, under the custody of the Alleghany Sheriff's Department, to provide painting services needed to paint the wall surrounding Covington High School's practice field that was covered with graffiti and in need of new paint.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing a number of general services with the City of Covington that provide cost savings to Covington taxpayers.

FINDING

CCPS and the City of Covington also share a vehicle maintenance and fueling operation that is operated by the City of Covington. All CCPS buses and other vehicles are maintained by the City of Covington employees and fuel is provided to the buses and vehicles at a central fueling station also maintained by the City. The City of Covington performs the purchasing function for all fuel, oil, and parts necessary to maintain City and CCPS vehicles.

CCPS has nine buses, three cars, one van and three pickups that are maintained by the City vehicle maintenance staff. City vehicle maintenance employees also maintain approximately 80 city vehicles and motorized equipment. Preventive maintenance service is provided to all vehicles, including oil changes. A thorough inspection is conducted on all buses on monthly and six-month basis to help ensure that brakes, tires, and other safety-related parts of buses are safe.

Bus drivers call the Vehicle Maintenance Shop when there is a problem with a bus and complete a driver's report that describes the problem that needs to be addressed. The Head Mechanic for the City of Covington is in charge of the vehicle maintenance facility and manages all repairs to City and CCPS vehicles. The Head Mechanic has been delegated the authority to perform all needed services and repairs to division vehicles. Repairs that cannot be performed by City vehicle maintenance staff are bid out and contracted for by the City. When a repair is expected to exceed \$1,000, a call for approval is made to the CCPS Director of Administrative Services.

CCPS reimburses the City of Covington for the cost of fuel, oil, maintenance supplies, and repair parts used by the City's vehicle maintenance staff for the division's vehicles. Monthly billings are prepared by the City and sent to the division. Each bill details the maintenance and repair work that was performed, and the amount of fuel that was dispensed to CCPS vehicles. Labor costs for services performed by the City vehicle maintenance staff are not billed to the division.



COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for participating with the City of Covington in sharing the services of vehicle maintenance and fuel distribution.

FINDING

The City of Covington shares facilities needed by CCPS for school bus parking.

CCPS and the City of Covington have an arrangement that provides the division with a location for school bus parking that is inside a fenced area owned and maintained by the City. The facility is located near Covington High School and previously served as an armory. The facility is equipped with electrical outlets that enable school bus engine heaters to be connected during cold winter months. The City provides the facility at no cost to Covington City Public Schools.

Sharing a facility owned by the City for CCPS buses reduces the cost to the division of providing and maintaining a separate facility.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing a facility owned and maintained by the City of Covington for secured bus parking equipped with electrical connections for bus engine heaters.

FINDING

The City of Covington shares accounting services with Covington City Public Schools and provides the services at no cost to the division.

The accounting system maintained by the City of Covington is shared with CCPS. Financial data, including division budget information, are maintained in the City's accounting system. Monthly budget reports are provided to CCPS by the City's accounting system to enable the division to manage its budget. In addition to budget reports, the City's accounting staff provide CCPS with payroll-related information needed for quarterly reports to the Internal Revenue Service and for annual W2 reports to CCPS employees.

The City also processes all CCPS checks for employee payrolls and payments to vendors. The CCPS Director of Finance prepares excel spreadsheets detailing payroll information for CCPS employees that is needed to process monthly payroll checks. The excel spreadsheets are sent to the City's Finance Office where the information is entered into the City's payroll system. The City's payroll system produces the checks that are then signed and sent to the division for distribution to employees. A similar process is performed for payments to vendors. The CCPS Director of Finance prepares an excel spreadsheet that details payments to vendors that have provided services or materials to the division, and sends the spreadsheet to the City's Finance Office. The City's Finance Office prints the checks and sends them back to the division for mailing to the appropriate vendor.



COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing accounting services with the City of Covington.

FINDING

The City of Covington shares its accounting system with CCPS that eliminates the need for the school division to maintain a separate system; however, the service could be further enhanced and administrative workloads reduced.

The CCPS Director of Finance accumulates data needed to process the monthly payroll to division employees. The data include all changes to an employee's monthly pay amount or changes to an employee's deductions. Data are also compiled for hours worked and pay amounts for the division's employees paid on an hourly basis and for employees who are to receive supplemental pay for additional work performed. The Director of Finance enters the data needed for the month into an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is then taken to the City of Covington's central accounting unit where an accounting clerk duplicates the information contained on the excel spreadsheet by entering it into the City's automated payroll system.

Information needed for payments to CCPS vendors for services performed for the division or for materials, supplies and equipment received by the division is also entered by CCPS Director of Finance into an excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet, along with a copy of the vendor invoice, is sent to the City's central accounting unit where the data are duplicated into the City's automated accounting system. Checks are prepared, signed, and sent to the division for distribution to vendors.

The City's automated accounting system is used by CCPS to maintain its financial information and to produce budget reports that are used to manage the division's budget. Although the system provides sufficient reports that enables the division to manage its operating budget, it does not provide financial data in a format that is aligned with the format required for information needed by the CCPS Director of Finance to prepare the annual school report. Data on reports produced by the City's automated system must be adjusted by the CCPS Director of Finance for alignment with the reporting requirements of the annual school report (also see **Chapter 4, Recommendation 4-4**).

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-1:

Work with the City of Covington to provide the CCPS Director of Finance with limited access to the City's accounting system and better align the chart of accounts with the requirements of the annual school report.

The alignment of the chart of accounts with the Annual School Report will require the City to revise or purchase software.



FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The City of Covington shares resources with CCPS to provide security-related services for the students attending schools in the City.

The City of Covington shares the services of its police officers to provide a School Resource Officer (SRO) to CCPS. Three city police officers are certified to be SROs. A SRO is primarily stationed at Covington High School, but does visit the other CCPS schools a couple of times a week. This service from the City is provided at no cost to CCPS.

The purpose of the SRO is to deter crime. As part of this effort, the SRO interacts with students in the classroom, presenting safety, crime prevention and law enforcement career information. The SRO also presents safety and crime prevention training to school staff, such as how to improve building security, and handles reports by school administrators on criminal activity, including student infractions that break the law. The SRO reports to the high school campus and works with principals of both the high school and intermediate school. The SRO receives training in working with youth.

The City has a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Officer that provides drug and alcohol programs to CCPS schools. DARE is a collaborative effort by certified law enforcement officers, educators, students, parents, and community members to offer an educational program in the classroom to prevent or reduce drug abuse and violence among youth.

The DARE Program teaches CCPS students how to refuse alcohol and drugs by:

- providing accurate information about drugs and alcohol;
- providing ideas for alternatives to drug use;
- teaching decision-making skills;
- showing students how to resist peer pressure; and
- building self-esteem.

The service of a DARE Officer is provided by the City on part-time basis, normally about four to six hours a week. The DARE Officer is primarily assigned to Jester-Watson Intermediate School. CCPS pays for the DARE classes conducted by the police officer provided by the City.

To help deter bringing drugs on CCPS campuses, a drug dog is provided by the City of Covington that visits Covington High School once-a-month and occasionally is dispatched to the intermediate school for routine checking. CCPS allows the City Police Department to train their drug dogs on the school premises. The dogs are trained inside the high school, the parking lots, and the football field.



COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing city police officers with the City of Covington to provide the services of a School Resource Officer and a DARE Officer, and for the services of a drug dog to deter drugs from being brought onto school campuses.

FINDING

Within the four entities (CCPS, ACPS, the City of Covington, and Alleghany County Government), there are three separate arrangements for providing technology services. The City of Covington provides support for its technology with one technology staff member, while Alleghany County has two contracts to provide technology services for its technology system. CCPS and ACPS have technology supported by the Education Technology Center (ETC) located at the Jackson River Technology Center.

The Education Technology Center is supported from taxpayer funds provided by the City of Covington and Alleghany County Government. ACPS and CCPS are provided with identical support for the Educational Technology Center. Employees at the Center are extremely cautious for ensuring that one division does not receive a service that is not provided to the other division. A good example of this pertains to the automated trouble ticket system that staff at the Center use to track requests for assistance received from either division. When either division needs assistance with a technology-related issue, a hard copy of a trouble ticket is completed and sent to the Education Technology Center. Once received by the Educational Technology Center, information on the trouble ticket is entered into the automated work order system. Staff at ACPS have the bandwidth capability to enter their trouble tickets directly into the automated system, but CCPS has not been provided with that same capability. Since CCPS does not have the same capability to access the automated system, ACPS is not allowed to directly enter their trouble tickets directly into the system.

Although the City of Covington and Alleghany County Government provide funding to the ETC and each need technology support, neither is provided the support from ETC and must secure the service elsewhere. Alleghany County has an immediate need for additional technology support and has provided funding to hire a technology technician in its budget. Consolidating technology support allows for a greater degree of coverage by having cross-trained staff. Consistent support is enhanced because employees are cross-trained. When a service is provided with just one employee or by a contract with a vendor from another city, the support can be disrupted when the one employee leaves or the contracted vendor changes.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-2:

Consider expanding the shared services provided by the Educational Technology Center (ETC) to include both the City of Covington and Alleghany County Government.

Allowing the City of Covington and Alleghany County Government to share in the services of the ETC should enable both entities to provide better technology services to its employees and



the public. The standardization of technology among all four entities can also be provided to enhance the sharing of information among the entities.

FISCAL IMPACT

While this recommendation can be implemented without additional costs to ACPS and CCPS, funding included in Alleghany County and the City of Covington’s budgets will need to be transferred to the Educational Technology Center’s budget to cover the cost of services provided to the County and City.

FINDING

The City of Covington and CCPS both participate in the Local Choice Health Insurance Program provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Although both entities participate in the Local Choice Insurance Program, their insurance plans are different with different coverages and premiums.

The amount of premiums paid by the City for its employees is different than those paid by the CCPS for its employees. **Exhibit 10-2** presents the premiums associated with the two plans.

The Commonwealth of Virginia allows entities to request combined policies that have the same coverages and premiums. The Commonwealth of Virginia has to approve a combined insurance program and establishes the premiums for a combined program. Many times, a combined program is advantageous with lower premiums or the ability of the entities to provide better coverages at approximately the same cost.

**Exhibit 10-2
CCPS and City of Covington Health Insurance Premiums
2006-07 Fiscal Year**

Plan Type	Premiums		
	Paid by Employee	Paid by City/CCPS	Total
City of Covington			
KEY ADVANTAGE 200			
Single	\$64.80	\$394.20	\$459.00
Dual	\$119.84	\$729.16	\$849.00
Family	\$174.90	\$1,064.10	\$1,239.00
KEY ADVANTAGE EXPANDED			
Single	\$82.80	\$394.20	\$477.00
Dual	\$153.84	\$728.16	\$882.00
Family	\$223.90	\$1,064.10	\$1,288.00
Covington City Public Schools			
KEY ADVANTAGE 300			
Single	\$71.00	\$406.00	\$477.00
Dual	\$209.23	\$672.77	\$882.00
Family	\$306.09	\$981.91	\$1,288.00
KEY ADVANTAGE EXPANDED			
Single	\$132.00	\$406.00	\$538.00
Dual	\$322.23	\$672.77	\$995.00
Family	\$471.09	\$981.91	\$1,453.00

Source: City of Covington and Covington City Public Schools, Finance Offices, November 2006.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-3:

Pursue a shared services arrangement for the City of Covington and Covington City Public Schools for health insurance.

Proposing a combined Local Choice Health Insurance Program for CCPS and the City of Covington, that would have to be approved the Commonwealth of Virginia, could reduce the cost insurance for the both the division and the City.

CCPS and the City of Covington could also consider proposing a shared insurance program with ACPS and Alleghany County in an attempt to further reduce employee insurance cost to the taxpayers of both Alleghany County and the City of Covington (also see **Recommendation 10-19 in Chapter 10**).

FISCAL IMPACT

Both CCPS and the City of Covington could realize cost savings by combining employee insurance policies. Premiums vary between policies depending on policy provisions and the number of employees in each group type. A conservative estimate on which to base cost savings on (based on best practices found in other school districts) would be \$25.00 a month per employee which represents a reduction in premiums for a single employee of about 5.5 percent to less than two percent for a family. A reduction in average employee monthly premiums of only \$25 per month would provide CCPS with annual savings of \$48,000 (\$25.00 x 160 employees x 12 months). Additional savings could be possible if CCPS and the City of Covington expanded the agreement to include ACPS and the Alleghany County.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Develop Shared Services Arrangement for Health Insurance	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000

FINDING

CCPS and the City of Covington have separate purchasing programs that acquire commonly used items through separate bids and contracts. They do not have purchasing agreements to share purchasing functions. Both CCPS and the City of Covington purchase general office, custodial, and building maintenance supplies.

Purchasing agreements are entered into by entities to get better pricing from vendors and to reduce administrative costs. Generally, each entity will determine an approximate amount of merchandise they intend to purchase during a 12-month period. One of the entities will then consolidate all amounts and perform the competitive purchasing. All entities are allowed to process individual purchase orders from these bids. Vendors normally offer better pricing to



consolidated purchases because the amounts to be purchased are generally larger than if purchased by a single entity.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-4:

Develop a shared purchasing agreement between Covington City Public Schools and the City of Covington for general office, custodial, and building maintenance supplies.

The City of Covington and CCPS can benefit from a shared services arrangement for commonly acquired supplies. Although each of the entities acquires a portion of their supplies from state contracts, sharing bids and contracts for other items will reduce the administrative work associated with processing and managing separate bids and contracts.

CCPS, the City of Covington, ACPS, and Alleghany County Government could benefit from a consolidated shared purchasing agreement for similar supplies and materials. Each agency could save administrative time by using the same bids and contracts and addition could reduce the cost of items when purchased in bulk.

FISCAL IMPACT

Both CCPS and the City of Covington can realize cost savings in addition to reducing administrative workloads by combining purchases and sharing bids and contracts. CCPS expenditures for food, fuel, supplies and materials total approximately \$194,000 a year. A conservative estimate of a two percent savings on total purchases will provide CCPS an annual savings of \$3,880 (\$194,000 x 2 percent). The City of Covington will also realize similar savings by participating in the shared purchasing agreement. Additional savings would be possible if CCPS and the City of Covington expanded the agreement to include ACPS and Alleghany County.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Develop Shared Purchasing Agreement	\$3,880	\$3,880	\$3,880	\$3,880	\$3,880

10.2 SHARED SERVICES WITH ALLEGHANY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CCPS and ACPS share the same primary mission of educating the students attending schools in each division. Each division is provided local funding from their respective county or city. Sharing services that reduce costs provide a lower tax burden on local taxpayers. Since each division incurs costs to provide almost identical type services in order to provide education to the students attending their schools, opportunities exist for a variety of services to be shared on a cost-effective basis. Services to students can be either direct services or indirect services. Direct



services are those that are provided directly to students such as instructional, transportation and food services. Indirect services are those that must be performed to support the direct services, such as human resources, finance, and other operations.

COMMENDATIONS

FINDING

CCPS and ACPS share vocational programs, an Alternative Education Center, and an Educational Technology Center (ETC) all operated at the Jackson River Technical Center (JRTC). The JRTC is operated under an agreement between CCPS and ACPS dated December 19, 2001. The operation of the JRTC is under the governance of a Board of Control, whose membership consists of four designated members of the ACPS School Board and three designated members of the CCPS School Board. The responsibility of a Superintendent for the Center is provided on a two-year rotating basis between the Superintendents of the two divisions. The CCPS Superintendent is currently serving as the JRTC Superintendent.

Vocational programs are provided to CCPS and ACPS high school students during three class periods of 8:40 a.m. to 10:05 a.m., 10:19 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., and 12:19 p.m. to 1:49 p.m. The Student Handbook for the Center lists 34 vocational related courses that are offered at the center. The courses include, but are not limited to:

- Accounting
- Business Law
- Computer Systems and Technology
- Marketing
- Sports, Entertainment, and Recreation Marketing
- Health
- Automotive
- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Welding
- Building Maintenance and Trades
- Culinary Arts
- Early Childhood Education
- Work Experience

The costs of providing vocational and technology courses at the JRTC are shared by CCPS and ACPS on a percentage that is calculated based on the average daily attendance of the two divisions for the last three years. The operating cost for 2006-07 is shared on a basis of 80 percent from ACPS and 20 percent from CCPS. Each class has 15 slots with 20 allocated to ACPS and five to CCPS.

The cost of the Alternative Education Program maintained at the JRTC is shared at the same percentages of 80 percent for ACPS and 20 percent for CCPS. The Alternative Education Program offers classes at three different times. A morning class from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. that



has slots for 25 students, an afternoon class from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. with slots for 25 students, and a late afternoon class from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for 15 students. For 2006-07, the program has 39 students enrolled in classes.

The ETC provides computer and technology support to CCPS, ACPS and also staff of JRTC. The cost for the operation is funded 63 percent from ACPS, 20 percent from CCPS, and 17 percent from JRTC's budget. The ETC has a coordinator, one network operations specialist, and two technicians who provide voice, data, and audio visual support to the two divisions and the JRTC. The staff provides support to 1,500 personal computers at ACPS, 450 personal computers at CCPS, 85 personal computers at JRTC, 89 network infrastructure devices, and 25 servers.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing, with Alleghany County Public Schools, the Jackson River Technical Center which provides vocational and technology courses, an alternative education program, and a technology support operation.

FINDING

Health services to CCPS and ACPS students are provided through a shared school nursing program. The shared program is supported by and partially funded by the Alleghany Foundation.

The shared nursing program provides educational and preventative information for students and staff of both divisions. In addition to attending to student illnesses, nurses also provide screenings for vision, hearing, and other health problems. The program is managed by a full-time Nurse Coordinator and a part-time Secretary that is employed for seven hours a day.

School nurses are provided to all CCPS and ACPS schools for the number of hours shown in **Exhibit 10-3**.

Exhibit 10-3
School Nurses by School
2006-07 School Year

Division/School	Hours per Day
Covington City Public Schools	
Covington High School	4.0
Jester –Watson Intermediate School	4.0
Edgemont Primary School	7.0
Alleghany County Public Schools	
Alleghany High School	6.0
Clifton Middle School	8.0
Boiling Springs Elementary School	4.5
Callaghan Elementary School	4.5
Falling Springs Elementary School	4.5
Mountain View Elementary School	6.0
Sharon Elementary School	4.5

Source: Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington County Public Schools, Health Service Office, November 2006.



The Alleghany Foundation pays 50 percent of the cost of each nurse for a six-hour shift. The remaining 50 percent of cost is shared by CCPS and ACPS, at the rate of 25 percent and 75 percent respectively. The cost of the Nurse Coordinator and six hours of the secretary is also shared on a 25 percent and 75 percent basis. The additional hour for the Nurse Coordinator's secretary is funded by ACPS Medicaid reimbursement funds.

The cost of the program for the 2005-06 school year was \$226,820. The Alleghany Foundation funded \$113,410 of the cost, while ACPS paid \$85,058 and CCPS paid \$28,353 of the remaining cost.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing a School Nurse Program with Alleghany County Public Schools.

FINDING

CCPS and ACPS share substitute teachers. Prospective substitute teachers who apply at either CCPS or ACPS are asked if they would also like to provide services to the other division. When prospective substitute teachers indicate that they would like for their applications to be filed with both divisions, the human resource offices share the applications. Once an application is satisfactorily completed at one of the division's human resource offices, a copy is sent to the other human resource office. Each division's human resource office then maintains a list of qualified substitute teachers from which they can make a selection when the need arises. The JRTC also receives copies of applications for use when substitute teachers are needed at the Center.

By sharing applications for prospective substitute teachers, each division increases the pool of qualified teachers that otherwise would not be available unless the applicant also completed an application at the other division. By sharing applications, the administrative workload is reduced at each division and the process is also a service to the prospective substitute teacher since they do not have to complete duplicate applications.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing applications for substitute teachers with Alleghany County Public Schools.

FINDING

CCPS and ACPS share an Attendance Officer that enables the divisions to provide the service without each having separate operations.

The Attendance Officer accepts referrals from both CCPS and ACPS for students that have non-attendance issues. There is not a set number of referrals that each division can make to the Attendance Officer. In a normal year, less than 100 referrals are made. By far the majority of the referrals are from ACPS because of the difference in the number of enrolled students. The cost of



the Attendance Officer is shared by the two divisions with ACPS paying 80 percent and CCPS paying 20 percent.

After students are referred to the Attendance Officer, a meeting is scheduled with a parent. Sometimes when a parent of an older student is unable or refuses to attend, a meeting is scheduled with only the student. When parents do not agree to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer, they are eligible to be referred to the court for non-participation. The parent is also eligible to be taken to court, if the Attendance Officer believes the student is in need of supervision for behavioral problems.

Some students are referred to the Attendance Officer for behavior issues. The student is evaluated and the Attendance Officer determines if the student is disruptive in the classroom environment and needs help. When the student is believed to need additional supervision, the Attendance Officer can petition the court for help through a program called *Child In Need Of Supervision*.

In addition to the Attendance Officer, the two divisions share an organization that assists the Attendance Officer with students that continue to have problems after the Attendance Officer has attempted to help the student make improvements. Prior to referring the student to the court, the Attendance Officer refers the student to a Truancy Team for further evaluation and assistance. The Truancy Team is composed of members from the following organizations:

- Virginia Cooperative Extension;
- Alleghany Highlands Community Services Board;
- Covington High School;
- Alleghany High School;
- Alleghany-Covington Health Department;
- ACPS-CCPS Attendance Officer;
- Alleghany/Covington Department of Social Services; and
- Goodwill Industries of the Valleys.

During 2005-06, a total of 96 students were referred to the Attendance Officer. Eighty-four (84) were from ACPS and 25 were from CCPS. Most years, CCPS refers less than 15 students. These statistics are shown in **Exhibit 10-4**.

Exhibit 10-4
ACPS and CCPS Attendance Statistics
2003-04 to 2005-06 School Years

Category	ACPS			CCPS		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Referrals to Attendance Officer:						
High School	32	25	46	9	10	9
Middle School	8	13	22	2	2	8
Elementary	6	22	16	1	1	8
Referrals made to court	21	40	37	12	13	88
Referrals made to court two or more times	16	15	N/A	3	4	3
Parent conferences held	45	87	80	12	13	25

Source: Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools Attendance Office, November 2006.



It is always a good business practice to continue to monitor workloads to help ensure that services are provided in the most cost effective manner. While a process proves to be efficient during a certain period, considering methods to improve shared services with entities that provide similar services for future periods increases the ability to provide those services in the most effective manner.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for participating in the shared services with Alleghany County Public Schools for the services of an Attendance Officer.

FINDING

Both CCPS and ACPS operate school buses for the benefit of the students who attend classes in each of the divisions. CCPS has ten bus routes—four regular bus routes in the morning, five regular routes in the afternoon, and one special education route in both the morning and afternoon. All routes are within the City of Covington.

ACPS has 43 buses that make 38 regular and five special education routes daily. Although eight of the routes go through the City of Covington to pick up or deliver students, the buses are almost always close to capacity. In fact, the transportation needs for two of the buses that go through the City were such that 64-passenger buses had to be replaced with 78-passenger buses.

While the opportunity for sharing bus services has not been extensively explored by CCPS and ACPS, a special route is shared where CCPS has only one student that requires transportation. Transportation services are shared for transporting students to the Shenandoah Autism Center in Clifton Forge. A CCPS autism student is picked up by an ACPS bus and transported to and from the Autism Center. This arrangement eliminates the need for a CCPS bus to duplicate the route made by the ACPS bus.

COMMENDATION

Covington City Public Schools is commended for sharing the transportation of an autism student to the Shenandoah Autism Center in Clifton Forge with Alleghany County Public Schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING

The Alleghany Foundation is very active in the City of Covington and Alleghany County. However, neither CCPS nor ACPS have an active education foundation to assist the divisions with receiving and administering funds for educational programs, scholarships, and activities that either have not been funded or have been underfunded by each division’s normal operating budget.



Since CCPS and ACPS have no education foundation or formal fundraising function, no specific programs exist to use the assets or to identify ways for interested donors, corporations, or other foundations to support educational programs. Without a foundation, both CCPS and ACPS have limited funds to recognize creative and exemplary teaching, innovative class projects, or provide scholarships.

ACPS currently has over \$100,000 in grant funds and interest earnings are used for scholarships. The funds are maintained in a student activity account at Allegheny High School. Maintaining these funds in the student activity account provides internal control of the funds at a less than desirable level.

In 1984, an Allegheny Highlands Education Foundation was formed, but has been inactive for a number of years. The ACPS administration is of the understanding that the articles of incorporation had been amended to reflect that CCPS and ACPS were the member divisions; however, documents could not be located to document the change.

The articles of incorporation state that the purpose of the former education foundation was to:

- accept and expend funds in support of such curricular and extracurricular activities and programs of the Allegheny Highlands School Division, that upon approval of the Allegheny Highlands School Board, the corporation may from time to time determine;
- provide financial assistance to such graduates of the school division who have demonstrated the achievement of excellence at the secondary school level, and to assist in their pursuit of postsecondary education;
- provide rewards, both financial and laudatory, to students, teachers and administrators of the school division who have demonstrated the pursuit and/or achievement of excellence in scholastic fields of study, and in the visual and performing arts throughout the elementary and secondary levels;
- take and hold by bequest, devise, gift, purchase or lease either absolutely or in trust, for any of its purposes, any property, real or personal, without limitation as to amount or value; and
- sell, convey and dispose of any such property and to invest and reinvest the principal thereof, and to deal with and expend the income and principal of the corporation for any of the purposes hereinbefore set forth.

Many school divisions have established and operated foundations to secure and maintain additional revenue for local public education. These foundations receive Internal Revenue Service designation as IRS Code Section 501(c) (3) organizations that are nonprofit and tax-exempt. The Council on Foundations, a nonprofit membership organization of grant making foundations and corporations located in Washington, D.C., publishes *First Steps in Starting a Foundation* as an information guide along with a number of other publications related to operating a foundation.



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-5:

Re-establish a joint education foundation for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools that is operated as a shared services arrangement.

By re-establishing a joint education foundation, each division will have access to an organization that will enable them to enhance funding for educational services not provided through the normal budget process, and to better management scholarship funds. With community input, the two boards should explore the initial legal steps necessary to either revise the Alleghany Highlands Education Foundation or form a new education foundation. The steps should include:

- selecting a committee of community, business, and division representatives charged with creating the foundation;
- filing articles of incorporation with the State;
- selecting a foundation board of trustees; and
- adopting bylaws to guide the operation of the nonprofit foundation, including policies and criteria for the disbursement of funds.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

Class offerings at the JRTC are impacted because class times at Alleghany High School and at Covington High School are not coordinated. Starting times and class schedules at the high schools are different and the differences have not been addressed to limit the impact on students attending the JRTC.

Alleghany High School is on a four-by-four block schedule while Covington High School is on a seven-period schedule. Each school is convinced that its particular class schedule is best for its students, but they are negatively impacting the amount of time that CCPS students spend in classes at the JRTC and the inability of JRTC to offer a fourth period of instruction.

The schedules for the two high schools are shown in **Exhibit 10-5**.

JRTC's schedule is more closely aligned with Alleghany High School's schedule and is presented in **Exhibit 10-6**.



**Exhibit 10-5
Class Schedules for Covington and Alleghany High Schools
2006-07 School Year**

Period	Covington High School (CHS)		Alleghany High School (AHS)	
	Begin	End	Begin	End
First	7:48 a.m.	8:48 a.m.	8:35 a.m.	10:00 a.m.
Second	8:53 a.m.	9:42 a.m.	10:15 a.m.	11:45 a.m.
Third	9:47 a.m.	10:36 a.m.	11:45 a.m.	1:50 p.m.
Fourth	10:41 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	1:55 p.m.	3:25 p.m.
Fifth – First Lunch	12:07	12:56 p.m.	n/a	n/a
Fifth – Second Lunch	11:35 a.m.	12:24 p.m.	n/a	n/a
Sixth	1:01 p.m.	1:50 p.m.	n/a	n/a
Seventh	1:55 p.m.	2:44 p.m.	n/a	n/a

Source Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools Administration Office, November 2006.

**Exhibit 10-6
JRTC Class Schedule
2006-07 School Year**

Period	Beginning Time	Ending Time	Impact
First	8:40 a.m.	10:05 a.m.	CHS students arrive at 8:50 a.m. and miss about 10 minutes of instruction.
Second	10:19 a.m.	11:45 a.m.	CHS students leave at 11:30 a.m. and miss about 15 minutes of instruction.
Third	12:19 p.m.	1:49 p.m.	CHS students leave at 1:35 p.m. and miss about 14 minutes of instruction

Source: Jackson River Technical Center, November 2006.

The JRTC class schedule requires Covington High School students to either arrive 10 or 15 minutes after a class begins or leave before the class is complete. Attendance by Alleghany High School students is not impacted by the JRTC schedule, since it closely aligns with Alleghany High School’s schedule and the campuses are located within about a five-minute walk from each other. However, the schedule does restrict all JCTS courses to the first three Alleghany High School blocks. Providing no JRTC sections during the fourth block creates conflicts for Alleghany High School students, resulting in many students not being able to fit JRTC options into their schedules. In addition, since the class day for CCPS students ends at 2:44 p.m., the possibility of JRTC offering a fourth class is prohibited.

These differences cause educational problems for students as well as when one division has holidays or workdays and the other one does not. An example of how differing school calendars affect students at both high schools occurred during the week of the site visit when Alleghany students were not in school, but Covington students were. As a consequence, no classes were held on campus at JRTC. These calendar differences prevent students in both divisions from benefiting from a full year’s coursework. Staff at the JRTC reported that sometimes students from one division attend while students from the other do not. Testimony from one student who attended the public forum during the site visit provided evidence of the benefits that students reap who attend classes at the JRTC and the positive impact attendance has on their employability options, both during high school and after graduation. Since CTE courses are



limited at both division high schools, the Center offers students important opportunities to broaden career and technical coursework and prepare for post-graduation pursuits.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-6:

Review the class times for Covington High School and Alleghany High School to better align bell times to reduce the impact on Covington High School students, and enable the Jackson River Technical Center to offer a fourth period.

More closely aligning the bell time would reduce the impact on CCPS students and provide the possibility of JRTC to offer a fourth period. One scenario that should be considered is starting the classes at Covington High School about 30 minutes later. This would provide for a better alignment with the JRTC class schedule and also for a fourth period to be offered.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

School calendars are not coordinated between CCPS and ACPS impacting the ability to increase the sharing of services. The school calendars for CCPS and ACPS are different, and the differences make it difficult to share services and impact the services that are being shared especially at the Jackson River Technical Center.

Exhibit 10-7 presents excerpts from the calendars for CCPS and ACPS for the 2006-07 school year.

**Exhibit 10-7
Selected CCPS and ACPS Calendar Dates
2006-07 School Year**

Date	Covington City Public Schools	Alleghany County Public Schools
October 02	Teacher Workday	
October 16		Teacher Workday – Parent teacher conferences
November 10		Teacher In-Service
November 13	Teacher Workday	
Dec 22-23, January 01-02	Winter Break	
Dec 22 – Jan 01		Winter Break
January 17		Teacher Workday – Parent Teacher Conferences
February 26	Professional Development/Workday	
March 19		Teacher Workday/Teacher Conference
March 20		Teacher In-service
April 5,6,9,10	Spring Break	
April 6-10		Spring Break
April 16	Professional Development/Workday	

Source: Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools, November 2006.



Both divisions stated that attempts are made to share professional development that occurs in each of the divisions. When one of the divisions plans for an instructor to present a professional development class at the division, they contact the other division to offer their training on shared bases. Training is usually scheduled on the dates established on each of the division's calendars for professional development or teacher in-service dates. As shown in **Exhibit 10-7**, professional development days and in-service dates are different on the two calendars and limit the ability of each division to share professional development.

As previously stated, the difference in the schedules has also impacted the services provided to students by JRTC. When schools in each division are closed at different dates, the number of students that attend classes at JRTC are impacted. When ACPS is closed for teacher workdays or days that are different for holidays or spring break than CCPS, the number of students that attend classes at JRTC is drastically reduced. When ACPS is closed based on its calendar, normally only about five students from CCPS are present in JRTC classes. Instruction to CCPS students was reported as almost nonexistent when ACPS students are not there. Instruction to CCPS students does not take place when ACPS closes for snow days and CCPS is open because JRTC closes when ACPS closes. JRTC provides instruction to ACPS students when ACPS has snow make-up days, but CCPS students do not attend if CCPS was not also closed for the same snow days.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-7:

Align the calendars for Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools to improve current shared services and to enhance future shared services possibilities.

Aligning the calendars for CCPS and ACPS will improve instructional times for CCPS students attending JRTC. The alignment of calendars will also make it more favorable to create shared professional development for each division.

A number of challenges will need to be addressed in order for calendars for ACPS and CCPS to be better aligned. These include standardizing when schools are closed for inclement weather and when make up days are scheduled, addressing the need for ACPS to complete 90 days of instruction per semester, and standardizing when each division administers exams prior to the winter holiday break.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Professional development in Covington City Public Schools is handled separately from Alleghany County Public Schools and the Jackson River Technical Center.



Each entity within Alleghany County (CCPS, ACPS, and JRTC) conducts its own professional development activities. While there are some informal opportunities to pool resources, this typically consists of one employee at CCPS calling one employee at ACPS and discussing a professional development opportunity.

There has been significant overlap in the instructional professional development conducted for ACPS and CCPS within the past few years. There has been some overlap in non-instructional professional development between the divisions. By working together to coordinate professional development offerings, each division/school will be able to increase the number and type of professional development events. A formal arrangement between the divisions can help solidify the relationship.

Many school divisions use Web-based calendaring systems for professional development opportunities. Staff are able to log in to the Web site, view available professional development events in the area, and sign up online, with supervisor approval. The divisions could create a pay arrangement based on the number of attendees from each.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-8:

Develop a plan to coordinate professional development with Alleghany County Public Schools and the Jackson River Technical Center.

The divisions should also implement a shared Web-based calendar system to encourage participation and coordination among the divisions/center.

The CCPS should develop a plan to formally coordinate professional development with ACPS and the Jackson River Technical Center. The plan should include the responsibilities of each participating organization, goals for the cooperative, and procedures for identifying, scheduling, and organizing professional development events.

The cooperative should use a Web-based calendaring system for posting professional development activities and allowing employees to sign-up for events. Evergreen Solutions estimates development of a simple, e-mail-based system would cost between \$300 and \$500, and development of a more elaborate database system would cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000. The cost for the system could be divided among the divisions and the JRTC.

Exhibit 10-8 shows a potential breakout of costs for the calendar system.

Exhibit 10-8 Costs for Development of Online Professional Development Calendar System

Participating Organization	Cost for Participation	Percentage of Total Cost
Covington City Public Schools	\$1,800	36.0%
Alleghany County Public Schools	\$2,575	51.5%
Jackson River Technical Center	\$625	12.5%
Total	\$5,000	100.0%

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2006.



FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at a one-time cost to the division of approximately \$1,800 for the Covington City Public Schools. This cost assumes a cost of \$5,000 for the professional development system and that CCPS would be responsible for 36 percent of the total cost.

The division currently has an estimated \$30,000 budget dedicated to professional development activities, including tuition reimbursement, outside staff development events, and in-service training. The division utilizes funding from Title I, Teacher Quality Enhancement, and Reading First grants for staff development, as well as local funding supplements. Assuming that half of this budget is used for training/staff development, with the other half used for tuition reimbursement, the division would spend approximately \$15,000 annually for professional development. The division can expect to save an estimated 20 percent of this budget on an annual basis through the cooperative arrangement, or \$3,000. This cost savings is based on experiences of other school districts.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Develop Online Professional Development System	(\$1,800)	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000

FINDING

ACPS developed and implemented an energy management program, while CCPS has a very limited program to help reduce energy costs for heating and cooling facilities.

ACPS is in the fourth year of its energy program. In 2001, the division contracted with Energy Education Inc. to assist the division in establishing an energy management program. The contract called for the vendor to provide software for capturing data for division’s facilities, and for training staff in how to use the software and how to interpret data in order to manage the energy used. The first year of the contract was spent learning the software and populating the software with needed data. Training was so successful that ACPS was able to buy out the contract and continue the program with division personnel.

The energy program has enabled ACPS to realize savings or cost avoidances from both electrical and fuel oil usages. For the 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06 school years, ACPS has avoided costs for electricity and fuel of over \$482,000. **Exhibit 10-9** shows the base year of 2002-03 that is used as the starting point to determine the amount of cost avoidance that the division has been able to achieve. Cost avoidance for both electricity and fuel oil was achieved for the 2003-04 through the 2005-06 school years.



Exhibit 10-9
Avoided Energy Usage and Cost in
Allegheny County Public Schools
2002-03 through 2005-06 School Years

Category	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Electricity				
KWH Usage	\$5,655,379	\$4,321,735	\$4,476,731	\$4,463,251
Cost Avoidance		\$93,355	\$82,505	\$92,985
Fuel Oil				
Gallons Used	194,652	174,797	140,099	129,380
Cost Avoidance		\$19,259	\$78,556	\$115,531
Total Cost Avoided		\$112,614	\$161,061	\$208,516

Source: Allegheny County Public Schools Energy Manager, November 2006.

ACPS reports that the success of the division's energy program and its continued success was due to and is dependant upon continuing to:

- closely following energy conservation guidelines as they are drawn out;
- reduce the number of non-essential energy consuming equipment in school buildings (such as personal microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, etc.) unless they are necessary for classroom curriculum);
- rigorous scheduling applied with strict parameters;
- closely monitoring HVAC units/system through temperature loop parameters, setbacks, high/low set points;
- trying to further decrease "on and off peak demand" with Dominion Power; and
- self-monitoring of electric meters to check billed KWH.

The ACPS Energy Manager worked full-time on the energy management program during its implementation and now spends approximately 90 percent of the time on energy matters. The other ten percent is spent on a new work order process initiated by the division. It was reported to the Evergreen Review Team that the development of an energy program for CCPS could be accomplished without significant impact to ACPS operations.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-9:

Develop an arrangement to share the services of the ACPS Energy Manager with Covington City Public Schools.

By sharing the services of the ACPS Energy Manager, an energy program can be developed for CCPS which should result in a success similar to that which ACPS achieved. The arrangement will provide CCPS the expertise of ACPS Energy Manager on an as needed part-time basis, and



significantly reduce the cost of hiring a separate energy manager. The shared services would also enable ACPS to recover a portion of the costs incurred for the Energy Manager.

FISCAL IMPACT

It is estimated that ACPS’s Energy Manager should spend approximately 30 percent of the time implementing and managing an energy program for CCPS. This is based on the number of schools that each division has, seven for ACPS and three for CCPS. The Energy Manager’s compensation is \$43,560 a year (\$32,000 salary + \$11,520 fringe benefits at a 36 percent fringe benefits rate). Reimbursement for 30 percent of the Energy Manager’s compensation will be \$13,068 a year (\$43,560 x 30 percent).

ACPS has benefited from energy cost avoidance rates that started at 17 percent for 2003-04, 26 percent for 2004-05, and almost 30 percent for 2005-06. Energy cost avoidance for CCPS is estimated at a conservative 15 percent starting in 2008-09 to provide sufficient time to implement an energy program and rising to 20 percent for 2009-10 and 25 percent for 2010-11 and thereafter. Based on an CCPS energy cost of approximately \$200,000 annually, cost avoidance is estimated to be \$30,000 for 2008-09 (\$200,000 x 15 percent), \$40,000 for 2009-10 (\$200,000 x 20 percent), and \$50,000 for 2010-11 and thereafter (\$200,000 x 25 percent).

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Share ACPS Energy Manager	(\$13,068)	(\$13,068)	(\$13,068)	(\$13,068)	(\$13,068)
Generated Cost Avoidance	\$0	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Total Savings	(\$13,068)	\$16,932	\$26,932	\$36,932	\$36,932

Also see Section 6.5 of Chapter 6.

FINDING

CCPS and ACPS provide psychologists to assist in its special education program. Both divisions use psychologists, but do not attempt to coordinate their needs in order to better use the resource.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires all public school districts, that receive federal funds, to identify students with learning disabilities or special learning needs so that accommodations can be made to provide equal learning opportunities. Once a student has been referred, the division must provide a comprehensive, nondiscriminatory assessment within a prescribed amount of time.

Exhibit 10-10 shows the number of special needs students for ACPS and its peer divisions, and **Exhibit 10-11** shows the same information for CCPS and its peer divisions.



Exhibit 10-10
Special Needs Students
Alleghany County and Peer Divisions
2004-05 School Year

School Division	Total Student Population	Special Education Students	Percent Special Education Students*
Alleghany County	2,928	498	17.0%
Dickenson County	2,494	446	17.9%
Nottoway County	2,391	426	17.8%
Patrick County	2,580	441	17.1%
Prince Edward County	2,741	559	20.4%
Southampton County	2,852	533	18.7%
Peer Division Average	2,612	480	18.4%

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

*December 1, 2005 count.

Exhibit 10-11
Special Needs Students
Covington City and Peer Divisions
2005-06 School Year

School Division	Total Student Population	Special Education Students	Percent Special Education Students*
Covington City	870	205	23.6%
Buena Vista City	1,125	169	15.0%
Franklin City	1,324	265	20.0%
Galax City	1,329	140	10.5%
Norton City	730	108	14.8%
West Point	802	93	11.6%
Peer Division Average	1,062	153	14.4%

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

*December 1, 2005 count.

ACPS has two psychologists that are responsible for testing approximately 500 special needs students at designated schools. CCPS contracts for the services of a psychologist who is based in Lynchburg, Virginia for testing about 200 special education students. The psychologist must provide a comprehensive written assessment for each student referred to special education within 60 days of the referral.

The two ACPS psychologists are extremely busy with the testing and assessments of ACPS students, and often must work additional hours normally at the end of the school year to complete evaluations and make sure all paperwork is complete. ACPS includes its psychologists in Medicaid billings and uses some of the funds received to pay the psychologists for their additional hours.

Both CCPS and ACPS have the need for psychologists that are employed by one of the divisions. CCPS must contract for its psychologist and ACPS frequently pays its psychologist for



additional hours. Workloads at ACPS vary during the year and could possibly be leveled if an additional psychologist was added and those services were shared with CCPS.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-10:

Develop a shared services arrangement between Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools for the services performed by psychologists.

Developing a shared service arrangement for psychologists should enable the divisions to balance the needs of each division. A part-time psychologist paid for using the funds currently expended by CCPS for a contracted psychologist should provide both divisions with local service, and balance the changing needs of both divisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Although no cost savings are anticipated, the service level to both divisions should be increased with the addition of a part-time psychologist funded from the CCPS budget that is being used to pay for a contracted psychologist, and ACPS using this third psychologist as needed.

FINDING

Both CCPS and ACPS are required to provide a special education program for students with disabilities, but do not share the services of specialized teachers or aides with each other.

The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires divisions to provide appropriate public education for all children with disabilities regardless of the severity of the handicap. The law states the education is to be provided in the least restrictive environment, and that students with disabilities are to be included in state and district assessment programs.

The Virginia Department of Education establishes minimum staffing requirements for special education programs. Alternative special education staffing plans can be presented to the Department of Education for their approval for unique situations.

Special education instructional arrangements are based on individual needs and individualized education programs of eligible students receiving special education services. Students who receive their instruction and related services in a regular classroom are considered to be in a mainstream instructional setting. Additional instructional arrangements include, but are not limited to, a resource room where the student is removed from the regular classroom less than 50 percent of the day, or a self-contained class where the student is removed from the regular classroom more than 50 percent of the day. If a student's disability is so severe that satisfactory education cannot take place for any part of the school day in a regular classroom, he or she may be served in a separate self-contained classroom. In addition, a school division must be prepared to provide a more restrictive setting, such as a day treatment program or even a residential



treatment placement, if the student's needs and educational program requires a more restrictive placement.

Specific areas of eligibility for special education services include autism, deafness, hearing impairment, mental retardation, speech and language impairment, auditory impairment, traumatic brain injury, serious emotional disturbance, vision impairment including blindness, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairments, learning disabilities, pervasive developmental issues, and homebound instruction for students unable to attend school. Most divisions also provide a pre-school program for children with disabilities who are three to five years old.

Prior to 1998, CCPS and ACPS shared some special education services for a number of years. At one time the divisions shared a pre-school program, with ACPS providing pre-school services to eight to ten CCPS students, and CCPS providing services to two or three severely mentally retarded students. The divisions also shared specialized teachers, including those who specialized in working with hearing and sight impaired students.

ACPS reports that it is providing services to as many special education students as it can, and is no longer approving any transfers from other divisions. For legal reasons, the freeze on transfers is for both special education and regular education students.

The need for special education services changes between school years and even during a school year. The staffing necessary to provide needed services and to meet the Commonwealth's minimum staffing requirements also changes. An example of how situations can easily change that would significantly impact teacher staffing needs would be if either the one CCPS hearing impaired student or the one specialized teacher for the hearing impaired were to leave the division.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-11:

Develop a shared services arrangement between Covington City Public Schools and Allegheny County Public Schools for special education needs, especially for specialized teachers where there are a limited number of students needing that service.

Both CCPS and ACPS could benefit from an arrangement that shares special education staff. Analyzing the needs of each division as a part of the annual budget process, and developing a shared service arrangement based on those annual needs, would have the potential of decreasing costs for both divisions. Also by developing an arrangement that monitors student needs and available specialized teachers during the year could also improve the services to each division's students.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The cost savings can not be determined at this time.



FINDING

CCPS and ACPS are both hampered by their small size in their efforts to make available a variety of Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment (DE) courses. Each division attempts to make AP and DE courses available to students who desire to take these courses.

During the 2005-06 school year, two AP classes were offered to CHS students. Thirty-two (32) students are currently enrolled in four advanced placement courses. Two are offered on the Internet in US Government and Senior English. Additionally, two courses in US History and English 11 are being taught on campus by Covington High School (CHS) teachers. The CCPS Virginia School Report Card reflects that too few CCPS students are currently enrolled in dual enrollment and advanced placement courses. No CCPS students were enrolled in the Governor’s School courses.

Alleghany High School provides a number of advanced placement and dual enrollment classes for its students. Five advanced placement teachers provide courses on campus in English, Government, Calculus and US History. The division has five advanced placement teachers—one each for Art, Calculus, Government, US History, and English 12. Four dual enrollment teachers provide course in English, Political Science, Marine Ecology and Forestry.

CCPS and ACPS students have participated in classes offered by the Jackson River Governor’s School located in Clifton Forge. Advanced courses are offered at the Governor’s School that are taught by college professors in a college environment. Enrollment of CCPS and ACPS students has drastically declined since 2000-01. One major reason given for the decline was the travel that students had to incur between their campuses and the Governor’s School.

Student enrollment of CCPS and ACPS at the Jackson River Governor’s School is shown in **Exhibit 10-12**.

**Exhibit 10-12
School Enrollment by Year**

Year	Alleghany County Public Schools	Covington City Public Schools
2000-01	19	3
2001-02	13	1
2002-03	12	3
2003-04	13	5
2004-05	8	4
2005-06	23	7
2006-07	5	0

Source: Jackson River Governor’s School, 2006.

Many divisions find that a cost effective way to offer additional opportunities to students that desire to take advanced courses is to share its instructional resources. In many instances, students are transported between campuses to enable them to attend AP and DE classes that are not offered at their campuses. Others use technology to simulcast instruction that is presented at one location to another location so that students can take the course without having to travel between campuses (also see **Recommendation 8-4 in Chapter 8**).



RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-12:

Consider establishing a shared service arrangement to enhance the opportunities for Covington High School and Alleghany High School students to take advanced placement and dual enrollment courses.

By establishing a shared service arrangement for advanced placement and dual enrollment courses, students who desire to take advanced courses can be provided more opportunities. A shared service arrangement will probably benefit the students of CCPS more than ACPS because CCPS students will be provided more of an increase in the number of courses than ACPS students. The cost to the division that administers a shared course can be reduced by recovering a portion of the cost from the other division. Developing a program that uses simulcasting of classes will provide students access to the advanced courses without having to leave their campuses.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Each division could incur minimal transportation expense to transport students between campuses. Simulcasting of courses between the divisions can be implemented using each division's current Internet connections. While both CCPS and ACPS have the technology equipment and infrastructure necessary for simulcasting classes between Covington High School and Alleghany High School using the Internet, each would need to establish priority for the simulcasting to help with the quality of the transmission. Should the quality of simulcasting using the Internet prove to be less than desirable, a direct connection between the high schools would need to be considered and evaluated? Many options are available that could cost between \$1,000 and \$2,250 a month for each division.

FINDING

CCPS and ACPS have separate purchasing programs that acquire commonly used items through bids and contracts, but do not have purchasing agreements to share purchasing arrangements.

Purchasing programs at both CCPS and ACPS are decentralized with the finance officer at each division providing central oversight for each division. Neither CCPS nor ACPS has staff who perform central purchasing functions for their respective divisions. Almost all purchases are made by staff at the schools and departments. Purchasing is initiated by the schools and departments, and then sent to the finance offices for final review and processing.

Many entities enter into purchasing agreements with other entities to get better pricing from vendors and to reduce administrative costs. Generally, each entity will determine an approximate amount of merchandise they intend to purchase during a 12-month period. One of the entities will then consolidate all amounts and perform the competitive purchasing functions. All entities are then allowed to process individual purchase orders from these bids. Vendors normally offer



better pricing to consolidated purchases because the amounts to be purchased are generally larger than if purchased by a single entity.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-13:

Develop a shared purchasing agreement between Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools for commonly acquired office supplies, custodial and instructional supplies.

Although both divisions acquire much of their supplies from state contracts, coordinating and sharing bids and contracts for all other items will reduce the actual cost of the items by increasing the volume purchased and also decrease administrative work associated with processing and managing separate bids and contracts. Combining bidding and contracting for commonly acquired items for items not acquired from state contracts can also reduce the cost to each of the divisions.

CCPS, the City of Covington, ACPS, and Alleghany County all could benefit from a consolidated shared purchasing agreement for commonly acquired supplies and materials. Each could save administrative time by using the same bids and contracts and addition could reduce the cost of items when purchased in bulk (also see **Recommendation 10-4**).

FISCAL IMPACT

Both CCPS and ACPS can realize an additional cost savings in reducing administrative workloads by combining purchases and sharing bids and contracts. While each entity purchases items unique only to that entity, savings on common items should result in savings that average three percent of total purchases. CCPS expenditures for food, fuel, supplies and materials total approximately \$194,000 a year. A conservative estimate of a three percent savings will provide CCPS an annual savings of \$5,820 (\$194,000 x 3 percent). This conservative estimate is based on the experiences of the Evergreen consultants. Additional savings would be possible if CCPS and ACPS expanded the agreement to include the City of Covington and Alleghany County.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Develop Shared Purchasing Agreement	\$5,820	\$5,820	\$5,820	\$5,820	\$5,820

FINDING

Both CCPS and ACPS are using many of the same vendors for products necessary in food service operations, but are not seeking to negotiate together and thus potentially reduce costs.

Exhibit 10-13 compares the 2006-07 vendors for CCPS and ACPS. As the exhibit shows, both divisions share the same vendors for most of their food purchases. Moreover, staff in both



divisions noted that they do not receive many bids from a variety of vendors. Both divisions believe this is related to the relatively small value of the separate contracts.

Exhibit 10-13
Comparison of Food Service Vendors in Covington City Public Schools
and Alleghany County Public Schools
2006-07 School Year

Product	CCPS Vendor	ACPS Vendor
Food Products	Staunton Foods Quality Foods	Staunton Foods Quality Foods
Fruit and Produce	Staunton Fruit and Produce	Staunton Fruit and Produce
Dairy	United Dairy	Broughton Foods Company
Bread	Flowers Baking Company	Flowers Baking Company

Source: Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools, 2006.

Joining with other government entities to make shared purchases typically results in overall cost savings, as the entities are able to negotiate lower per unit costs at higher volumes. Various food service departments across the country report significant food savings from joining a purchasing cooperative. One large national purchasing cooperative, run by the Region IV Educational Service Center in Houston, Texas, reports that members of the cooperative save as much as 25 percent in certain categories of purchase, with an administrative cost of two percent.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-14:

Adopt shared purchasing for food services with Alleghany County Public Schools.

Both school divisions currently use many of the same vendors for milk, bread, food, and paper products. The two divisions could likely achieve a greater economy of scale by purchasing the same items jointly and may find that additional vendors will compete for their business, as the contract volume will be larger.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Joining with ACPS to purchase food products should save the division at least two percent of its annual food costs. In 2005-06, the division spent \$120,599.73 on food products. A modest two percent reduction in that cost would result in an annual savings of \$2,412.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Adopt Shared Purchasing with ACPS	\$2,412	\$2,412	\$2,412	\$2,412	\$2,412



FINDING

The CCPS Transportation Program is relatively small with the Covington City garage serving all maintenance and fueling needs. The City incorporates these buses into its maintenance program with little effort. The overall size of the City garage remains small with relatively little buying power for parts, supplies, fuel, etc. The City does an excellent job of maintaining the equipment, but there is room for improvement in the area of cost control because of the size of the operation.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-15:

Actively seek a shared or co-op transportation purchasing arrangement with other nearby governmental entities.

CCPS should explore with other nearby divisions (e.g., the City, Public Works, DOT, State, etc.) as to what items of similar kind are generally purchased (i.e., fuel, lubes, oils, parts, supplies, etc.). Expanding the buying power by increasing the quantities is common place around the country and is being done more and more as agencies seek to control costs. The division along with the City should begin researching this possibility and see what policies and procedures at both levels would need to be altered in order to create these potential savings.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based upon the projected expenses for fuels, lubes, and other parts and support items (\$43,500), a reduction of 10 percent for CCPS would be expected by grouping purchases. This would equate to a favorable \$4,350 potential impact for the division plus an additional savings for the other participants, all of which are supported by tax dollars.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Create a Co-op Transportation Purchasing Arrangement	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$4,350

FINDING

CCPS and ACPS both operate pupil transportation programs for the students of the divisions. ACPS runs 43 routes each day compared to five for CCPS. Very little coordination or sharing of services exists between the divisions.

Although the cost per pupil for transporting division students for both CCPS and ACPS are below the peer averages of their respective peer divisions, costs could be reduced with a consolidated transportation program. The CCPS cost per pupil is \$270 compared to its peer division average of \$307 and the ACPS cost per pupil of \$538 is below its peer division average of \$668. Determining the efficiency of a pupil transportation program and comparing cost on a



pure cost per student, is difficult and does not provide a reliable basis for comparability purposes.

A recommendation in the transportation chapter of the ACPS report recommends the division hire a transportation director to manage the transportation needs of the division. ACPS Transportation is managed on part-time basis by a long-time employee who is contemplating retirement. The CCPS transportation operation is managed by the Director of Administrative Services who also is responsible for the division’s food services program, procurement, testing, and maintenance of facilities.

Many entities find the most opportune time to consider sharing a service is when there is a change in personnel, such as when a long-time employee leaves or when an additional position is added.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-16:

Consider sharing the services of a Director of Transportation between Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools.

Sharing of the service of a full-time transportation director employed by ACPS will improve both CCPS and ACPS transportation programs and has the potential of reducing cost for each division. Sharing the services of a Director of Transportation will provide each division with expertise of a transportation professional that will potentially improve transportation programs in both divisions. While the initial benefit provides management expertise to the two programs, coordinating and combining routes of the two divisions should be explored to reduce the cost to both divisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

The annual compensation for a Director of Transportation is estimated to be \$74,800 which includes a salary of \$55,000 plus employee benefits of \$19,800 (\$55,000 x 36 percent). The split in time is estimated to be approximately 85 percent for ACPS and 15 percent for CCPS. The additional cost to hire a Director of Transportation is presented in Chapter 7, Transportation of the ACPS report.

The CCPS cost of the shared transportation service is estimated to be \$11,220 per year (\$74,800 x 15 percent) plus indirect costs previously discussed.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Share ACPS Director of Transportation	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)



FINDING

The ACPS Transportation System serves a large area that is geographically concentric to the Covington City Schools (CCPS) service area. The ACPS system serves its own needs as well as those of the area vocational school. The CCPS system was reviewed in conjunction with its neighboring division (ACPS). During this effort it was discovered that a number of ACPS transportation buses traverse through and in some cases actually stop in Covington City to pick up students on their own daily transport endeavors. Currently, one CCPS autistic child is being transported with an agreement with ACPS to the Clifton Forge area. Each division serves a common vocational school which is proximate to Alleghany High School. The bus fleet for ACPS has a higher percentage of single routed buses with fewer mid-day route commitments. The CCPS transportation system is more stressed with extra work.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-17:

Analyze opportunities to coordinate transportation services with the Alleghany County Public Schools to leverage existing assets.

This analysis would expand upon the bell schedule and route consolidation recommendation (**Recommendation 7-6**) in Chapter 7 and require a more refined review of the bell systems between both divisions. This effort must concentrate on affixing times that will create opportunities to share services and assets, while allowing for an improved service to the vocational school. All services and issues need to be considered, including vocational school shuttles, the mid-day routes (City has many while the County has only a few), special education, extra-curricular trips, the short City routes, bus capacities, all single-routed buses, avoidance of driver overtime, and bus maintenance. Every opportunity to lower overhead must be explored.

The concept must be beneficial to both divisions as well as their shared vocational school. In order to gain efficiencies, positive gains occur in some or all of the following: in reduced numbers of drivers, hours, buses, reduced additional equipment purchases, and less overtime.

These shared services must be coordinated and managed on a centralized basis. This can be achieved in several ways: 1) Create a more formal Transportation Coop agency which becomes a separate entity managed by one transportation director and funded and supervised by both divisions via a transportation committee; or (2) a more simplified sharing effort via an intergovernmental agreement similar to the less official method used now for the one autistic child being shared. Keep the two entities separate, but still managed by one director; or (3) it can be a contracted service arrangement where ACPS would be paid by CCPS to deliver their services for a fixed fee. The more formal entity or the contracted method would be more easily managed and would result in gaining the greatest amount of savings as it would be headed by one independent director who would oversee both transportation operations and have the ability to leverage all assets and combine as many efforts as is possible.

FISCAL IMPACT

The computation of an actual fiscal impact becomes nearly impossible until a decision is made as to which of the entity structures is best suited for all parties and what combined services along



with their associated costs become known. To view some potential savings, we have to make some assumptions: the combined expense for the two systems is determined by combining 2005-06 reported costs for all transportation (CCPS: \$236,000, ACPS: \$1,620,000 = \$1,856,000---13% for CCPS and 87% for ACPS) the combined route bus fleets would be 6 + 43 = 49 total route buses and this also approximates the 13 percent and 87 percent ratio from above. Adjusting the combined total cost per bus for fixed overhead the estimated combined cost per bus per year would be $(\$1,856,000 \times .90 = \$1,670,400 / 49 = \$34,089$ per bus per year).

In an attempt to estimate potential savings, one can assume that a certain number of buses will be reduced or one can make an assumption of a fixed percent reduction of overall costs (assumes some percent of the miles, labor, etc. has been consolidated between the two operations, or in the case of the contracted services, ACPS would charge CCPS their cost of providing the services plus a management fee).

If the fixed percent method is chosen and 10 percent (which is more than possible) is used, the combined savings would be \$167,000 annually. This number would be enhanced by the overtime savings that would be saved within CCPS as the ACPS drivers have a lesser guarantee so the overtime pay at CCPS would disappear as work was shifted more equally among all drivers available. This would be an additional \$16,000 annually with an estimated annual combined total of \$183,000.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Share Transportation Services with ACPS*	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000

* These are estimates using broad assumptions. If the combined costs method is used at the minimal 10 percent savings level, these approximate savings would translate back into the 13 percent and 87 percent assumption of costs described above leaving ACPS with an estimated \$159,000 savings and CCPS with \$24,000 savings. These estimates are based on best practices seen in other school districts/divisions by transportation consultants.

FINDING

CCPS does not have an automated point-of-sale (POS) system in place. All student accounts are maintained by hand in spiral notebooks.

An automated POS system typically allows students to maintain electronic accounts. Parents can send in checks that are added to the account and students input a unique numeric code to pay for their meals.

Covington City cafeterias maintain student accounts by hand in spiral notebooks. Such a process can slow serving lines, as students bring in checks and extra money to pay for future meals. At Covington High School, one student’s wait time was seven minutes and 54 seconds on the day that Evergreen observed and timed wait times from the end of the line to the front. There were several students at the end of the line who had not had sufficient time to consume their meals before the lunch period ended. At Jeter-Watson Intermediate, one student’s wait time was three minutes and 35 seconds, which is much quicker, but could still likely be improved with an automated POS system.



A manual sales system is also more prone to error than one that is electronically maintained. Finally, some studies show an increase in student participation where automated POS systems are implemented. These studies point to increase ease of use for students and parents, and reduced wait times as likely causes for the increased participation.

One of the division’s strategies related to food service in its Comprehensive Plan 2005-11 is to “examine software programs for use in schools to use in serving lines to track paid, free, and reduced meals.” Many programs that provide this function also provide functionality for maintaining student meal accounts.

Over the past three years, Alleghany County Public Schools has implemented an automated POS product called Café Terminal. Staff in that division are pleased with the product. Café Terminal provides numerous reports that can either be printed from the local cafeteria manager’s computer or from a central office computer.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-18:

Seek an agreement with ACPS to share a portion of the existing POS system.

ACPS already has an established POS system and is satisfied with the product. CCPS should seek an agreement to buy into a proportional share of this system. Given the shared technology resources of each division, it would be possible to purchase additional Café Terminal packages for each CCPS school and develop an agreement for one designated staff member to generate reports for each division.

FISCAL IMPACT

At a minimum, CCPS would need to purchase the Café Terminal application for each of its three schools. Evergreen estimates these will cost approximately \$15,000 for the initial packages (including computer hardware) and then a small amount each year (\$1,000) for updates and/or replacement equipment.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Purchase a Share of the ACPS POS System	(\$15,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)

FINDING

Both Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools provide varying levels of employee benefits packages to their employees. Employee benefit packages include coverages such as health, dental, and vision.



Exhibit 10-14 shows the CCPS Anthem health insurance premium and participation information. The employer rate and the employee rate show the proration of the cost of insurance for each option.

**Exhibit 10-14
Covington City Public Schools
Health Insurance Rates
July 2006**

Option	Monthly Employee Rate	Monthly Employer Rate	Total Monthly Insurance Rate
Key Advantage 300 - Single	\$71.00	\$406.00	\$477.00
Key Advantage 300 - Dual	\$209.23	\$672.77	\$882.00
Key Advantage 300 - Family	\$306.09	\$981.91	\$1,288.00
Key Advantage Expanded - Single	\$132.00	\$406.00	\$538.00
Key Advantage Expanded - Dual	\$322.23	\$672.77	\$995.00
Key Advantage Expanded - Family	\$471.09	\$981.91	\$1,453.00

Source: Covington City Public Schools, Finance Department, November 2006.

Exhibit 10-15 provides the Board discussion on the 2004-05 health insurance. Health insurance premiums experienced a 21.9 percent increase for 2004-05 over the previous year, and 4.3 percent increase for the next year.

**Exhibit 10-15
School Board Minutes
Excerpts of Health Insurance Discussion
School Board Meetings in 2004 and 2005**

School Board Meeting Date	Health Insurance
March 31, 2004	<i>Our health premiums for 2004-05 have increased significantly and we have gone out into the private sector and gotten quotes on coverage which is similar to the coverage that we now have. We asked for quotes from Anthem, Southern Health, and Signa. We did not receive any quotes from Signa. We received two quotes from Anthem and two quotes from Southern Health, but they were not comparable to our current coverage. The two plans proposed by Anthem did not include dental insurance and were higher than Local Choice and the two plans from Southern Health did not include dental. The health insurance committee reviewed the quotes and randomly polled the employees. It was the recommendation of the health insurance committee that we remain with the Local Choice Plan for 2004-2005. Recommendation made to continue to offer employees the Cost Alliance and Key Advantage Plans. The school board will pay 80% of the single premium for the Cost Alliance coverage and an increase of 12% from the board's current contribution on the other plans. Member said that insurance premiums were getting to a crisis point and other board members agreed. This increase this year was 21.9%.</i>
March 22, 2005	<i>The overall increase for health care premiums is budgeted at 4.3%.</i>

Source: Covington City Public Schools, School Board Minutes, 2006.

The ACPS and CCPS employee benefit plans have similarities and differences. Both divisions procure health insurances for their own plan. Dental insurance is provided as an employer-paid benefit for CCPS employees and a self-paid option for ACPS.



Exhibit 10-16 shows examples of similarities and differences between both division plans. **Exhibit 10-17** shows the ACPS comparison of ACPS insurance costs based on the CCPS plan and CCPS insurance costs based on the ACPS insurance plan. Calculations for these estimates assume the same participant levels for each division and, thereby, do not consider potential savings that may be experienced for pooling the risk.

Exhibit 10-16
Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools
Health Insurance Comparisons
2006-07 School Year

Category	ACPS	CCPS
Out of pocket	\$3,000/\$6,000	\$1,000/\$2,000/\$3,000
Deductible	None	\$100/\$200/\$300
Lifetime Maximum	Unlimited	Unlimited
Co Payments	\$20/\$40	\$15/\$20
Emergency Facility Service	\$100	\$75
In Patient Service	\$400	\$200
Out Patient Service	\$100	\$75
Dental	None	Included

Source: Alleghany County Public Schools Records, November 2006.

Exhibit 10-17
Alleghany County Public Schools and Covington City Public Schools
Health Insurance Projected Cost Comparisons

Division	Number of Participants	Total Annual Cost with Current Plan	Estimated Costs for ACPS Using CCPS Plan	Estimated Costs for CCPS Using ACPS Plan	Estimated Additional (Costs) Savings
Alleghany County Public Schools	317	\$2,707,389	\$3,080,655		\$356,266
Covington City Public Schools	115	1,324,153		1,191,169	(132,984)
TOTAL	432		3,080,655	1,191,169	\$223,266

Source: Alleghany County Public Schools Records, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-19:

Explore cooperative bidding for health benefits.

Cooperating with the health insurance bids could potentially benefit both divisions. Both plans are more similar than different. The opportunity to pool participants and spread the risk over a larger pool could have a dilutive impact on premiums. School divisions with small employee populations have benefited from a pooling of the risk. Even though each plan has aspects which are more costly than the other, the divisions, working cooperatively, should strive for a plan design that benefits both divisions and minimizes the costs. Insurance cooperatives have been very successful in other parts of our country.



FISCAL IMPACT

An estimated potential cost savings of \$66,208 could be saved by a five percent reduction in costs associated with the pooling of risks. Estimated savings are calculated by multiplying the projected total annual health insurance costs of \$1,324,153 times five percent.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Explore Cooperative Bidding for Health Benefits	\$66,208	\$66,208	\$66,208	\$66,208	\$66,208

FINDING

CCPS and ACPS do not have a formal agreement to encourage and manage a comprehensive shared services program. Additional shared service arrangements are available for the school divisions. Although cost savings can be achieved and services increased, they can only be successful if each shared service arrangement is properly organized and continually monitored under the auspices of a formal agreement.

Whether a new shared service is implemented by sharing the services of specific specialized staff members, consolidating operations, centralizing management, or sharing facilities, the success will be enhanced if each entity is provided a degree of oversight to the program. A formal structure that provides each entity the opportunity to be involved in the oversight and monitoring of the shared service will greatly increase the success of the services shared and enhance the possibilities for future shared service arrangements. Most entities do not actively pursue new arrangements if an employee or multiple employees will be required to be terminated. Many times, shared service opportunities that are compatible with an entity's beliefs comes available when there is a resignation of a key employee whose duties could be enhanced or savings achieved through a shared services arrangement.

The arrangement for the JRTC provides CCPS and ACPS a good example, and offers the foundation for forming a very sound and effective comprehensive formal shared services program. The JRTC is operated under a formal agreement between the two school divisions. Each division provides school division board members who serve on the JRTC Board of Control to provide oversight and direction. The agreement also specifies how costs are to be funded for participation in programs offered by the Center.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-20:

Develop a formal shared services agreement with Alleghany County Public Schools to encourage and manage shared service arrangements.



A formal shared services agreement will enhance the opportunities for additional shared service arrangements by ensuring that each division has an opportunity to participate in the oversight of the services provided. An agreement will also encourage further sharing of services by continually bringing shared services to the attention of both divisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

Indirect cost allocation rates have not been established to enable CCPS and ACPS to recovery their respective indirect and support costs when providing shared services to other entities.

While a number of shared services are being performed between CCPS and ACPS (such as a shared nursing program and an attendance officer), an indirect cost rate has not been calculated to determine the total cost of providing the services. This report identifies other services that should be considered for a shared services arrangement where indirect costs should be considered.

One concern pointed out to the Evergreen Review Team that would be a deterrent to additional sharing service arrangements was the ability of the division that manages a shared service to be reimbursed for its total costs of providing the service, including employee benefits and indirect costs. The division that provides a shared service with its staff incurs costs in addition to direct labor costs which is not reimbursed. The division that provides the staff to perform a shared service incurs the cost of supporting that personnel, while the division that receives the service receives a benefit for not being required to provide support to the personnel. In order for each division to incur only its proportionate share of the total costs of providing or receiving a shared service, the total costs including the direct costs and indirect costs must be calculated and shared on an equitable basis.

Indirect costs are normally those which are not directly associated with the actual salary of the personnel that performs a specific service or function. Although, many times the employee benefits of the personnel such as health and dental insurance premiums, workers' compensation costs, social security and/or retirement benefits have been calculated and are readily identifiable, the indirect costs incurred by the division to support the personnel are less tangible and have not been calculated. These costs are normally the support costs of administration, such as those for the Superintendent, finance, human resources, and for indirect costs such as providing office space, supplies, telephone, and technology.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-21:

Establish indirect cost rates for shared service arrangements between Covington City Public Schools and Alleghany County Public Schools that are calculated using the same methodology.



Calculating and using indirect cost rates will help ensure that the total costs for providing a shared service is included in reimbursements. Calculating indirect costs rates using the same methodology will also ensure that reimbursements between the two divisions are equitable.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

JRTC personnel reported that the advisory committee is instrumental in encouraging the addition of new programs at the Center. Specific instances of contributions made by long-standing committee members were cited as well. However, the advisory committee does not, by organizational charter, reflect the current local job market. Interviewees stated that no by-laws exist to specify operational and organizational guidelines. Provisions should be made for the rotation of membership to ensure that representation reflects local and national employment needs as they continue to change.

The 2001 cooperative agreement between the two school boards regarding the operation of the Technical Center references one of the Board of Control's powers to "adopt such constitution and by-laws as are necessary for the efficient operation" of JRTC. They specify a set pro rata share contributed by each division for capital outlay and specify the pro rata portion of operating costs as three-year average of Average Daily Membership (ADM) of each division's students on March 30. Membership on the Board of Control is not similarly representative of each division's enrollment. ACPS has four representatives and CCPS three. However, the percentage of students that ACPS has is 76 percent compared to 24 percent in CCPS.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-22:

Adopt by-laws for governance of the JRTC that specify tenure and turnover of advisory committee members, and re-address the percentages of Board of Control representatives to mirror student enrollments at the Center.

As many interviewees from the schools and community testified during site visits, the local job market has changed dramatically within the past five years. As local circumstances change, so does the need for the CTE courses offered within the community to change to reflect both local and national employment needs. Such ongoing reflection is essential to prepare local students for success after graduation. Both divisions are in the same community. Graduates of both divisions will continue to benefit from the career preparation they receive at JRTC. It is critical that current job market trends are represented on the advisory committee. Having by-laws, upon which both divisions agree, will ensure that the employment needs of all students in the community will be represented in Board and advisory committee decisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.



**CHAPTER 11:
COSTS AND SAVINGS SUMMARY**



Chapter 11

COSTS AND SAVINGS SUMMARY

The Evergreen Team has developed about 120 recommendations in this report. Approximately 30 of the recommendations have fiscal implications. **Exhibit 11-1** shows the total costs and savings for study recommendations that have fiscal impacts in the operational areas in CCPS (excluding shared services), while **Exhibit 11-2** shows the savings for shared services recommendations. As can be seen, the total net savings is almost \$1.3 million over five years for operational efficiencies in CCPS and over \$800,000 for shared services recommendations. The five-year costs and savings are shown in 2007 dollars. It is important to keep in mind that the identified savings and costs are incremental and cumulative.

Exhibit 11-1
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year
Over Five Years for Non-Shared Services Recommendations
(Chapters 2-9)

Costs/Savings	Years					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
Total Costs	(\$74,880)	(\$103,080)	(\$88,880)	(\$75,080)	(\$74,480)	(\$416,400)	
Total Savings	\$159,542	\$317,269	\$413,196	\$413,196	\$426,196	\$1,715,399	
Total Net Savings	\$84,662	\$214,189	\$324,316	\$338,116	\$351,716	\$1,298,999	
Total Five-Year Net Savings Minus One-Time (Costs)						\$1,298,999	

Exhibit 11-2
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year
Over Five Years for Shared Services Recommendations
(Chapter 10)

Costs/Savings	Years					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
Total Costs	(\$26,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$75,100)	
Total Savings	\$154,670	\$174,602	\$184,602	\$194,602	\$194,602	\$903,078	(\$14,868)
Total Net Savings	\$128,450	\$162,382	\$172,382	\$182,382	\$182,382	\$827,978	
Total Five-Year Net Savings Minus One-Time (Costs)						\$813,110	



Exhibit 11-3 shows costs and savings by chapter for non-shared services recommendations in Chapters 2 through 9.

Exhibit 11-4 shows costs and savings for shared services recommendations in Chapter 10. These costs/cost savings would directly impact CCPS if pursued with either Covington City Government (**Recommendations 10-3 and 10-4**) or with Covington City Public Schools (other recommendations).

About 90 additional recommendations in this report do not have a fiscal impact. These recommendations are included in Chapters 2 through 10 of the full report.



**Exhibit 11-3
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year
for Non-Shared Services Recommendations by Chapter
(Chapters 2-9)**

Chapter	Recommendation	Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year Savings	One-Time (Costs)
		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 2: DIVISION ADMINISTRATION								
2-6	Hire a Testing Coordinator	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)	(\$30,590)	(\$152,950)	
2-9	Administer Organizational Climate Survey	(\$400)	\$0	\$0	(\$400)	\$0	(\$800)	
2-14	Reduce Legal Expenses	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$7,920	
Chapter 2 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		(\$29,406)	(\$29,006)	(\$29,006)	(\$29,406)	(\$29,006)	(\$145,830)	
CHAPTER 5: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT								
5-8	Bill for Psychological Services and Physical Therapy	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$92,505	
Chapter 5 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$18,501	\$92,505	
CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT								
6-3	Implement Formal Life-Cycle Costing	\$0	\$95,927	\$191,854	\$191,854	\$191,854	\$671,489	
6-7	Limit Variety of Equipment/Materials	\$0	\$9,600	\$9,600	\$9,600	\$9,600	\$38,400	
6-11	Use the LEED Green Building Rating System	\$0	\$51,200	\$51,200	\$51,200	\$51,200	\$204,800	
6-12	Implement Energy Management System	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	
6-14	Install Lighting Control Devices	\$0	(\$28,600)	(\$14,400)	(\$200)	\$14,000	(\$29,200)	
Chapter 6 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		\$5,000	\$133,127	\$243,254	\$257,454	\$271,654	\$910,489	
CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION								
7-2	Improve Driver Time Record System	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$55,000	
7-3	Change Guaranteed Hours from Eight to Six Hours per Day	\$38,300	\$38,300	\$38,300	\$38,300	\$38,300	\$191,500	
7-7	Adjust Bells and Reduce Fleet	\$27,446	\$27,446	\$27,446	\$27,446	\$27,446	\$137,230	
Chapter 7 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		\$76,746	\$76,746	\$76,746	\$76,746	\$76,746	\$383,730	
CHAPTER 8: TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT								
8-2	Increase Technical Staff	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$219,450)	
Chapter 8 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$43,890)	(\$219,450)	



Exhibit 11-3 (Continued)
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year
for Non-Shared Services Recommendations by Chapter
(Chapters 2-9)

Chapter	Recommendation	Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year Savings	One-Time (Costs)
		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 9: FOOD SERVICE								
9-1	Charge Food Services Program for Utilities and Custodial Costs	\$15,708	\$15,708	\$15,708	\$15,708	\$15,708	\$78,540	
9-4	Improve Breakfast Participation	\$4,244	\$4,244	\$4,244	\$4,244	\$4,244	\$21,220	
9-5	Improve High School Lunch Participation	\$7,878	\$7,878	\$7,878	\$7,878	\$7,878	\$39,390	
9-6	Invest in Software to Assist with Nutrient Analysis and Menu Planning	\$7,656	\$8,656	\$8,656	\$8,656	\$7,656	\$41,280	
9-8	Implement Meal Staffing Formula	\$22,225	\$22,225	\$22,225	\$22,225	\$22,225	\$111,125	
Chapter 9 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		\$57,711	\$58,711	\$58,711	\$58,711	\$57,711	\$291,555	
TOTALS FOR CHAPTERS 2 THROUGH 9								
TOTAL COSTS		(\$74,880)	(\$103,080)	(\$88,880)	(\$75,080)	(\$74,480)	(\$416,400)	
TOTAL SAVINGS		\$159,542	\$317,269	\$413,196	\$413,196	\$426,196	\$1,715,399	
TOTAL NET SAVINGS		\$84,662	\$214,189	\$324,316	\$338,116	\$351,716	\$1,298,999	
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS MINUS ONE-TIME (COSTS)							\$1,298,999	



**Exhibit 11-4
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year for
Shared Services Recommendations by Chapter
(Chapter 10)**

Chapter	Recommendation	Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year Savings	One-Time (Costs)
		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 10: SHARED SERVICES								
10-3	Develop Shared Services Arrangement for Health Insurance*	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$240,000	
10-4	Develop Shared Purchasing Agreement*	\$3,880	\$3,880	\$3,880	\$3,880	\$3,880	\$19,400	
10-8	Develop Online Professional Development System	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$12,000	(\$1,800)
10-9	Develop Shared Arrangements with ACPS Energy Manager	\$0	\$16,932	\$26,932	\$36,932	\$36,932	\$117,728	(\$13,068)
10-13	Develop Shared Purchasing Agreement	\$5,820	\$5,820	\$5,820	\$5,820	\$5,820	\$29,100	
10-14	Adopt Shared Purchasing For Food Services With Alleghany County Public Schools. *	\$2,412	\$2,412	\$2,412	\$2,412	\$2,412	\$12,060	
10-15	Create a Co-op Transportation Purchasing Arrangement	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$4,350	\$21,750	
10-16	Share ACPS Director of Transportation	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)	(\$11,220)	(\$56,100)	
10-17	Share Transportation Services Between ACPS and CCPS	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$120,000	
10-18	Purchase a Share of the ACPS POS System	(\$15,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$19,000)	
10-19	Explore Cooperative Bidding for Health Benefits	\$66,208	\$66,208	\$66,208	\$66,208	\$66,208	\$331,040	
Chapter 10 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		\$287,450	\$321,382	\$331,382	\$341,382	\$341,382	\$1,622,978	
TOTALS FOR NON-SHARED SERVICES (CHAPTER 10)								
TOTAL COSTS		(\$26,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$12,220)	(\$75,100)	
TOTAL SAVINGS		\$154,670	\$174,602	\$184,602	\$194,602	\$194,602	\$903,078	(\$14,868)
TOTAL NET SAVINGS		\$128,450	\$162,382	\$172,382	\$182,382	\$182,382	\$827,978	
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS MINUS ONE-TIME (COSTS)							\$813,110	

*Related to shared services with Covington City Government



***APPENDIX:
SURVEY RESULTS***



Covington City Public Schools Administrator Survey

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
1. How long have you worked in the school division?	50.0%	25.0%	0%	0%	25.0%
2. How long have you been in your current position in the school division?	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0%	0%

B. DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. The division's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0%	0%
4. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the division's strategic plan.	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0%	0%
5. School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division.	50.0%	37.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
6. School board members know and understand the operations of the school division.	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
7. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
9. The division administration is efficient.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
10. The division administration supports the educational process.	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
11. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the division.	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
12. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0%	0%
13. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%
14. Most administrative practices in the school division are highly efficient and effective.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%
15. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	12.5%	75%	0%	12.5%	0%
16. School division administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
17. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0%	0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	0%	0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%
19. The school division has too many layers of administrators.	0%	0%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%
20. Division administrators provide quality service to schools.	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%

C. EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. The emphasis on learning in the school division has increased in recent years.	75%	25.0%	0%	0%	0%
22. The division uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
23. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
24. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
25. The division has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0%
b. Special Education	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	12.5%	12.5%	75%	0%	0%
d. Advanced Placement	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0%
e. Alternative Education	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%	12.5%	0%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	0%	0%	87.5%	12.5%	0%
g. Career and Vocational	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0%	0%
h. Dropout Prevention	0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0%
26. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
27. Teacher turnover is low.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
28. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
29. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	12.5%	62.5%	0%	25.0%	0%
30. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
31. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
32. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
33. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	0%	87.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
34. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	12.5%	50.0%	12.5%	25.0%	0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35. Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
36. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school division.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
38. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	12.5%	62.5%	0%	25.0%	0%
39. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	62.5%	25.0%	12.5%	0%
40. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	75%	12.5%	12.5%	0%
41. The division has a good orientation program for new employees.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
42. The division accurately projects future staffing needs.	12.5%	75%	0%	12.5%	0%
43. The division has an effective employee recruitment program.	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0%	0%
44. Division employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	37.5%	50.0%	0%	0%	12.5%
45. The division rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	0%	62.5%	37.5%	0%	0%
46. I am satisfied with my job in the school division.	50.0%	50.0%	0%	0%	0%
47. I am actively looking for a job outside the school division.	0%	0%	12.5%	12.5%	75%
48. The division has a fair and timely grievance process.	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
49. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	0%	0%	0%	50.0%	50.0%
50. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	0%	12.5%	0%	37.5%	50.0%

E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
51. The division regularly communicates with parents.	12.5%	75%	12.5%	0%	0%
52. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	0%	75%	12.5%	12.5%	0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
53. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	0%	87.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
54. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	0%	62.5%	12.5%	25.0%	0%
55. The school division explains test results to parents.	0%	87.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
56. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0%	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	0%
57. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	0%	75%	12.5%	0%	12.5%

F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
58. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
59. Schools are clean.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%
60. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	0%	25.0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%
61. Schools are well-maintained.	0%	87.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
62. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	0%	75%	0%	25.0%	0%
63. Division facilities are open for community use.	0%	87.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
64. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
65. The division has an effective energy management program.	0%	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0%

G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
66. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	0%	62.5%	25.0%	12.5%	0%
67. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0%	87.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
68. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
69. The division's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	0%	62.5%	37.5%	0%	0%
70. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	0%	62.5%	25.0%	0%	12.5%
71. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	12.5%	75%	12.5%	0%	0%



H. PURCHASING

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
72. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
73. The school division purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
74. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
75. The division provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0%	50.0%	0%	50.0%	0%

I. TRANSPORTATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
76. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
77. There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%
78. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
79. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	12.5%	87.5%	0%	0%	0%
80. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	0%	75%	12.5%	12.5%	0%
81. Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0%	0%	0%	25.0%	75%

J. FOOD SERVICES

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
82. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	25.0%	62.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
83. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	50.0%	37.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
84. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%	0%
85. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
86. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	12.5%	75%	0%	12.5%	0%



K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
87. Students regularly use computers.	25.0%	62.5%	0%	0%	12.5%
88. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	37.5%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%
89. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0%	0%
90. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	12.5%	75%	12.5%	0%	0%
91. The division Web site is a useful tool.	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	0%	12.5%
92. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	25.0%	62.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
93. The school division provides adequate instructional technology.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
94. The school division provides adequate administrative technology.	25.0%	62.5%	0%	12.5%	0%
95. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	25.0%	75%	0%	0%	0%
96. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	25.0%	50.0%	0%	12.5%	12.5%
97. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	12.5%	0%	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%

L. OVERALL OPERATIONS

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
a. Strategic Planning	0%	0%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%
b. Curriculum Planning	0%	0%	0%	62.5%	37.5%
c. Facilities Planning	0%	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%
d. Budgeting	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%
e. Financial Management	0%	0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%
f. Asset Management	0%	0%	12.5%	75%	12.5%
g. Risk Management	0%	0%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%
h. Community Relations	0%	0%	62.5%	37.5%	0%
i. Program Evaluation	0%	0%	12.5%	75%	12.5%
j. Instructional Coordination	0%	0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%
k. Student Support Services	0%	0%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%
l. Federal Programs (e.g., NCLB) Coordination	0%	0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%
m. Instructional Technology	0%	0%	62.5%	25.0%	12.5%
n. Administrative Technology	0%	0%	12.5%	87.5%	0%
o. Grants Administration	0%	0%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%
p. Personnel Recruitment	0%	0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%
q. Personnel Selection	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%



School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
r. Personnel Evaluation	0%	0%	25.0%	75%	0%
s. Personnel Retention	0%	0%	0%	62.5%	37.5%
t. Professional Development	0%	0%	12.5%	75%	12.5%
u. Safety And Security	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%
v. Facilities Maintenance	0%	0%	75%	12.5%	12.5%
w. Custodial Services	0%	0%	25.0%	75%	0%
x. Food Services	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
y. Transportation	0%	0%	0%	87.5%	12.5%
z. Purchasing	0%	0%	25.0%	75%	0%



Covington City Public Schools Teacher Survey

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	20+ years
1. How long have you worked in the school division?	30.8%	20.5%	10.3%	12.8%	25.6%
2. How long have you been in your current position in the school division?	41.0%	18.0%	12.8%	10.3%	18.0%

B. DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. The division's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	5.1%	46.2%	20.5%	23.1%	5.1%
4. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the division's strategic plan.	7.7%	41.0%	15.4%	28.2%	7.7%
5. School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division.	5.1%	30.8%	5.1%	48.7%	10.3%
6. School board members know and understand the operations of the school division.	5.1%	35.9%	5.1%	43.6%	10.3%
7. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	5.1%	25.6%	18.0%	30.8%	20.5%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	10.3%	33.3%	20.5%	25.6%	10.3%
9. The division administration is efficient.	5.1%	33.3%	18.0%	30.8%	12.8%
10. The division administration supports the educational process.	12.8%	53.8%	7.7%	25.6%	0%
11. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the division.	2.6%	35.9%	15.4%	25.6%	20.5%
12. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	15.4%	61.5%	5.1%	15.4%	2.6%
13. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	12.8%	61.5%	5.1%	18.0%	2.6%
14. Most administrative practices in the school division are highly efficient and effective.	2.6%	33.3%	15.4%	43.6%	5.1%
15. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	5.1%	25.6%	12.8%	38.5%	18.0%
16. School division administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	5.1%	41.0%	18.0%	28.2%	7.7%
17. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	0%	12.8%	33.3%	35.9%	18.0%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	10.3%	35.9%	25.6%	23.1%	5.1%
19. The school division has too many layers of administrators.	0%	15.4%	35.9%	41.0%	7.7%
20. Division administrators provide quality service to schools.	5.1%	53.8%	15.4%	25.6%	0%

C. EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. The emphasis on learning in the school division has increased in recent years.	20.5%	61.5%	10.3%	7.7%	0%
22. The division uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	7.7%	53.8%	7.7%	28.2%	2.6%
23. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	33.3%	59.0%	2.6%	5.1%	0%
24. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	18.0%	43.6%	15.4%	18.0%	5.1%
25. The division has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	2.6%	10.3%	7.7%	59.0%	20.5%
b. Special Education	30.8%	61.5%	0%	7.7%	0%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	2.6%	18.0%	59.0%	12.8%	7.7%
d. Advanced Placement	5.1%	38.5%	23.1%	23.1%	10.3%
e. Alternative Education	10.3%	33.3%	10.3%	25.6%	20.5%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	0%	2.6%	56.4%	33.3%	7.7%
g. Career and Vocational	20.5%	64.1%	5.1%	7.7%	2.6%
h. Dropout Prevention	0%	23.1%	43.6%	28.2%	5.1%
26. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	15.4%	61.5%	10.3%	12.8%	0%
27. Teacher turnover is low.	20.5%	61.5%	5.1%	12.8%	0%
28. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	7.7%	48.7%	18.0%	23.1%	2.6%
29. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	7.7%	38.5%	15.4%	25.6%	12.8%
30. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	18.0%	69.2%	5.1%	7.7%	0%
31. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	23.1%	61.5%	2.6%	10.3%	2.6%
32. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	12.8%	61.5%	5.1%	20.5%	0%
33. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	15.4%	59.0%	2.6%	23.1%	0%
34. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	7.7%	20.5%	12.8%	30.8%	28.2%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35. Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	12.8%	59.0%	12.8%	12.8%	2.6%
36. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school division.	5.1%	53.8%	33.3%	7.7%	0%

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. Salary levels in the school division are competitive.	25.6%	51.3%	0%	18.0%	5.1%
38. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	12.8%	53.8%	2.6%	28.2%	2.6%
39. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	5.1%	33.3%	51.3%	10.3%
40. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	0%	5.1%	33.3%	51.3%	10.3%
41. The division has a good orientation program for new employees.	10.3%	41.0%	18.0%	23.1%	7.7%
42. The division accurately projects future staffing needs.	2.6%	33.3%	33.3%	23.1%	7.7%
43. The division has an effective employee recruitment program.	2.6%	35.9%	35.9%	20.5%	5.1%
44. Division employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	30.8%	64.1%	0%	5.1%	0%
45. The division rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	0%	15.4%	33.3%	30.8%	20.5%
46. I am satisfied with my job in the school division.	12.8%	59.0%	12.8%	10.3%	5.1%
47. I am actively looking for a job outside the school division.	0%	12.8%	12.8%	33.3%	41.0%
48. The division has a fair and timely grievance process.	0%	18.0%	61.5%	20.5%	0%
49. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	10.3%	20.5%	15.4%	43.6%	10.3%
50. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	0%	7.7%	53.8%	28.2%	10.3%

E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
51. The division regularly communicates with parents.	5.1%	64.1%	12.8%	15.4%	2.6%
52. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	0%	10.3%	25.6%	41.0%	23.1%



Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
53. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	15.4%	74.4%	5.1%	5.1%	0%
54. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	2.6%	41.0%	10.3%	38.5%	7.7%
55. The school division explains test results to parents.	0%	30.8%	30.8%	35.9%	2.6%
56. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	0%	15.4%	12.8%	48.7%	23.1%
57. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	0%	53.8%	15.4%	23.1%	7.7%

F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
58. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the board provide input into facility planning.	0%	46.2%	18.0%	33.3%	2.6%
59. Schools are clean.	12.8%	46.2%	10.3%	25.6%	5.1%
60. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	0%	33.3%	5.1%	33.3%	28.2%
61. Schools are well-maintained.	5.1%	48.7%	7.7%	33.3%	5.1%
62. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	2.6%	35.9%	15.4%	33.3%	12.8%
63. Division facilities are open for community use.	12.8%	76.9%	7.7%	2.6%	0%
64. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	5.1%	56.4%	20.5%	18.0%	0%
65. The division has an effective energy management program.	0%	15.4%	46.2%	20.5%	18.0%

G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
66. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	0%	15.4%	51.3%	25.6%	7.7%
67. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	0%	20.5%	71.8%	7.7%	0%
68. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school division.	2.6%	15.4%	38.5%	35.9%	7.7%
69. The division's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	0%	5.1%	76.9%	12.8%	5.1%
70. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	0%	20.5%	71.8%	7.7%	0%
71. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	0%	10.3%	79.5%	5.1%	5.1%



H. PURCHASING

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
72. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	2.6%	41.0%	23.1%	28.2%	5.1%
73. The school division purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	0%	38.5%	38.5%	12.8%	10.3%
74. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	0%	56.4%	12.8%	23.1%	7.7%
75. The division provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0%	33.3%	15.4%	33.3%	18.0%

I. TRANSPORTATION

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
76. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	5.1%	2.6%	7.7%	56.4%	28.2%
77. There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	7.7%	35.9%	18.0%	23.1%	15.4%
78. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0%	0%	12.8%	66.7%	20.5%
79. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	0%	28.2%	23.1%	28.2%	20.5%
80. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	2.6%	46.2%	46.2%	0%	5.1%
81. Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	2.6%	5.1%	35.9%	28.2%	28.2%

J. FOOD SERVICES

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
82. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	5.1%	30.8%	10.3%	46.2%	7.7%
83. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	28.2%	43.6%	2.6%	23.1%	2.6%
84. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	2.6%	30.8%	20.5%	41.0%	5.1%
85. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	15.4%	59.0%	20.5%	5.1%	0%
86. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	7.7%	33.3%	12.8%	25.6%	20.5%



K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
87. Students regularly use computers.	12.8%	61.5%	5.1%	18.0%	2.6%
88. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	7.7%	82%	2.6%	7.7%	0%
89. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	15.4%	76.9%	5.1%	2.6%	0%
90. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	10.3%	76.9%	2.6%	7.7%	2.6%
91. The division Web site is a useful tool.	5.1%	61.5%	10.3%	15.4%	7.7%
92. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	7.7%	41.0%	2.6%	28.2%	20.5%
93. The school division provides adequate instructional technology.	5.1%	61.5%	0%	30.8%	2.6%
94. The school division provides adequate administrative technology.	5.1%	38.5%	46.2%	7.7%	2.6%
95. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	10.3%	43.6%	5.1%	30.8%	10.3%
96. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	2.6%	61.5%	2.6%	18.0%	15.4%
97. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	2.6%	5.1%	69.2%	12.8%	10.3%

L. OVERALL OPERATIONS

School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
a. Strategic Planning	0%	18.0%	56.4%	25.6%	0%
b. Curriculum Planning	0%	10.3%	30.8%	56.4%	2.6%
c. Facilities Planning	0%	33.3%	28.2%	38.5%	0%
d. Budgeting	0%	20.5%	38.5%	41.0%	0%
e. Financial Management	0%	15.4%	33.3%	51.3%	0%
f. Asset Management	0%	7.7%	41.0%	51.3%	0%
g. Risk Management	0%	15.4%	33.3%	51.3%	0%
h. Community Relations	0%	30.8%	48.7%	18.0%	2.6%
i. Program Evaluation	0%	7.7%	38.5%	53.8%	0%
j. Instructional Coordination	0%	7.7%	35.9%	56.4%	0%
k. Student Support Services	0%	18.0%	35.9%	46.2%	0%
l. Federal Programs (e.g., NCLB) Coordination	2.6%	7.7%	33.3%	56.4%	0%
m. Instructional Technology	0%	20.5%	38.5%	38.5%	2.6%
n. Administrative Technology	0%	12.8%	33.3%	51.3%	2.6%
o. Grants Administration	0%	23.1%	30.8%	46.2%	0%
p. Personnel Recruitment	2.6%	12.8%	41.0%	41.0%	2.6%
q. Personnel Selection	0%	5.1%	33.3%	56.4%	5.1%



School Division Operation	Should Be Eliminated	Needs Major Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Adequate	Outstanding
r. Personnel Evaluation	0%	2.6%	25.6%	69.2%	2.6%
s. Personnel Retention	0%	5.1%	15.4%	71.8%	7.7%
t. Professional Development	0%	18.0%	20.5%	61.5%	0%
u. Safety And Security	2.6%	20.5%	28.2%	48.7%	0%
v. Facilities Maintenance	2.6%	25.6%	30.8%	41.0%	0%
w. Custodial Services	0%	33.3%	30.8%	33.3%	2.6%
x. Food Services	0%	23.1%	33.3%	41.0%	2.6%
y. Transportation	0%	5.1%	30.8%	64.1%	0%
z. Purchasing	0%	10.3%	38.5%	51.3%	0%

