

Alexandria City Public Schools School Division Efficiency Review



Submitted by:



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Final Report

SCHOOL EFFICIENCY REVIEW FOR ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Report

Presented to:

Alexandria City Public Schools

Submitted by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2005, the Commonwealth of Virginia inaugurated the school efficiency review program as a part of Governor Mark Warner's *Education for a Lifetime* initiative. The program involves contracting with outside educational experts to perform efficiency reviews of school divisions within the Commonwealth. School divisions must volunteer to participate, and the results of the reviews provide guidance in determining whether educational dollars are being utilized to the fullest extent possible.

Since its inception, the program has expanded to include greater numbers of school divisions each year. In October 2006, MGT of America was awarded a contract to conduct an efficiency review of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). As stated in the Request for Proposal (RFP), the purpose of the study was to conduct an external review of the efficiency of various offices and operations within ACPS and to present a final report of the findings, recommendations, and projected costs and/or cost savings associated with the recommendations. The object of the review is to identify ways in which ACPS could realize cost savings in non-instructional areas in order to redirect those funds towards classroom activities.

Overview of Alexandria City Public Schools

Alexandria is located in northern Virginia on the west bank of the Potomac River and encompasses over 15 square miles. The city was incorporated in 1779 when it became a port of entry for foreign vessels and a major export center for flour and hemp. At the time of the American Revolution, Alexandria was one of the prime trading centers and ports in the colonies. During the Civil War, the city became a logistical supply center for the federal army. Alexandria is one of America's most historic communities and features many authentic eighteenth-century buildings. It is now home to approximately 140,000 citizens.

Alexandria City Public Schools consists of 13 elementary schools, two middle schools, one ninth grade school, one high school, and one alternative school. ACPS has slightly fewer than 11,000 students and employs approximately 1,031 teachers. The starting teacher salary is \$42,040, and the average class size is 20 students in elementary, 21 in middle school, and 23 in high school. A nine-member elected school board supervises the division. The city is divided into three districts, and three members are elected from each district. The members serve three-year terms and hold meetings twice a month. The school division's mission is to effectively educate all learners and enable them to succeed in a changing world, in partnership with families and the community.

Review Methodology

This section describes the methodology MGT used to prepare for and conduct the Alexandria City Public Schools Efficiency Review. Throughout our practice we have discovered that to be successful, an efficiency review of a school division must:

- Be based upon a very detailed work plan and time schedule.
- Take into account the unique environment within which the school division operates and the specific student body involved.
- Obtain input from board members, administrators, staff, and the community.
- Identify the existence, appropriateness, and use of specific educational objectives.
- Contain comparisons to other similar school divisions to provide points of reference.
- Follow a common set of guidelines tailored specifically to the division being reviewed.
- Include analyses of the efficiency of work practices.
- Identify the level and effectiveness of externally imposed work tasks and procedures.
- Identify exemplary programs and practices as well as needed improvements.
- Document all findings.
- Present straightforward and practical recommendations for improvements.

With this in mind, our methodology primarily involved a focused use of Virginia review guidelines as well as MGT's audit guidelines, following the analysis of both existing data and new information obtained through various means of employee input. Each of the strategies we used is described in this executive summary.

Review of Existing Records and Data Sources

During the period between project initiation and the beginning of our on-site review, we simultaneously conducted many activities. Among these activities were the identification and collection of existing reports and data sources that provided us with recent information related to the various administrative functions and operations we would review in Alexandria City Public Schools.

MGT requested more than 100 documents from ACPS, including, but 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
- Annual budget and expenditure reports
- Job descriptions
- Salary schedules
- Personnel handbooks

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

Diagnostic Review

A diagnostic review of ACPS was conducted on January 29 and 30, 2007. An MGT consultant interviewed central office administrators, community leaders, school board members, and members of the City Council concerning the management and operations of Alexandria City Public Schools.

Employee Surveys

To secure the involvement of central office administrators, principals/assistant principals, and teachers in the focus and scope of the efficiency review, three on-line surveys were prepared and disseminated in February 2007. These anonymous surveys gave administrators and teachers the opportunity to express their views about the management and operations of Alexandria City Public Schools. The three sets of surveys were similar in format and content to provide a database for determining how the opinions and perceptions of central office administrators, principals/assistant principals, and teachers vary.

ACPS staff was given from February 2, 2007, through February 14, 2007, to respond. The ACPS response rates for the three surveys were as follows: 54 percent of central office administrators returned a survey, as did 60 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 22 percent of teachers. In addition to comparing the survey responses of these three employee groups, we compared the responses of all ACPS district and school administrators and teachers to those of their counterparts in the more than 40 divisions where we have conducted similar surveys.

The survey results may be found in **Appendix A**. Specific survey items pertinent to findings in the functional areas MGT reviewed are presented within each chapter.

Conducting the Formal On-Site Review

A team of consultants conducted the formal on-site review of Alexandria City Public Schools during the week of February 19, 2007. As part of our on-site review, we examined the following ACPS systems and operations:

- Division Organization and Management
- Financial Management, Purchasing
- Human Resources Management
- Cost of Education Services
- Facilities Use and Management
- Transportation
- Technology Management
- Food Services

Prior to the on-site review, each team member received an extensive set of information about ACPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted detailed reviews of the structure and operations of Alexandria City Public Schools in their assigned functional areas. The team made 30 site visits to 18 different schools and school properties (e.g., the bus garage) in ACPS.

Our systematic assessment of Alexandria City Public Schools included the use of MGT's *Guidelines for Conducting Management and Performance Audits of School Divisions*. In addition, the Commonwealth of Virginia school efficiency review guidelines were used. Following our collection and analysis of existing data and new information, we tailored our guidelines to reflect local policies and administrative procedures, the unique conditions of Alexandria City Public Schools, and the input of administrators in the school division. Our on-site review included meetings with appropriate central office and school-level staff and reviews of documentation provided by these individuals.

Comparison Summary

To effectively facilitate ongoing, systemic improvement and to overcome the continual challenges of a changing environmental and fiscal landscape, a school division must have a clear understanding of the status of its internal systems and processes. One way to achieve this understanding is to compare the operations of one school division to those of other divisions with similar characteristics. MGT has found that such comparisons yield valuable insights and often form a basis for determining efficient and effective practices for a school division interested in making improvements. For these comparisons to be meaningful, however, the "peer" school divisions must be chosen carefully. Ideally, a school division should be compared with others that are similar not only in size and demographics, but also in operations and funding.

The practice of benchmarking is often used to make such comparisons between and among school divisions. Benchmarking refers to the use of commonly held organizational characteristics in making concrete statistical or descriptive comparisons of organizational systems and processes. It is also a performance measurement tool used in conjunction with improvement initiatives to measure comparative operating performance and identify best practices.

With this in mind, MGT initiated a benchmarking comparison of Alexandria City Public Schools to provide a common foundation from which to compare systems and processes within the school division with those of other, similar systems. It is important for readers to keep in mind that when comparisons are made across more than one division, the data are not as reliable, as different school divisions have different operational definitions, and data self-reported by peer school divisions can be subjective.

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. Alexandria City Public Schools is identified in Cluster 6. ACPS and MGT selected the following peer school divisions for the review:

- Charlottesville City Public Schools
- Fredericksburg City Public Schools
- Manassas City Public Schools
- Winchester City Public Schools

In the appendix of this report, numerous exhibits illustrate how the peer school divisions compare to Alexandria City Public Schools in terms of enrollment, demographics, staffing, and funding for the most current school year available from the Virginia Department of Education's Web site. In reviewing the comparison tables, it should be noted that the state applies a "cost of competing" factor to all Northern Virginia school divisions in recognition of the higher costs of living and doing business in the area. Currently, this cost factor is 9.83 percent for instructional personnel and 24.61 percent for support staff. These cost factors have the effect of skewing ACPS data upwards in comparison with its Cluster 6 peers.

Commendations

Detailed findings for each commendation for exemplary practices may be found in Chapters 2 through 9 of the full report. Alexandria City Public Schools received the following commendations:

- The School Board and administration of Alexandria City Public Schools are commended for approving specific measures designed to ensure a cost-effective method for maintaining a current policy manual (**Chapter 2: Commendation 2-A**).
- The department of information and outreach is commended for its efforts to improve internal and external communications with its stakeholders (**Chapter 2: Commendation 2-B**).
- ACPS is commended for developing and adopting readily available and updated finance-related policies, procedures and guidelines as well as for having a cross-trained finance staff (**Commendation 3-A**).
- ACPS is commended for having a good working relationship with the City of Alexandria department of finance as well as strict adherence to internal controls to have the delegated authority to print signed checks at ACPS (**Chapter 3: Commendation 3-B**).

- ACPS is commended for providing elaborate and detailed monthly financial reports to school board members so that they can administer appropriate oversight **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-C)**.
- ACPS is commended for maintaining financial reporting standards sufficient to merit the Association of School Business Officials' Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for each fiscal year since 1997 **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-D)**.
- ACPS is commended for its effective budget process, which features a comprehensive budget manual, annual training, support to staff involved in budgeting, and the production of an elaborate budget document **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-E)**.
- ACPS is commended for its well-developed and well-documented grants management system **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-F)**.
- ACPS is commended for having an effective records retention system **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-G)**.
- ACPS is commended for having an accounting system for school activity funds for all schools and for having policies and procedures for reviewing monthly statements of revenues and expenditures **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-H)**.
- ACPS is commended for having an elaborate and comprehensive fixed assets management coupled with a systematic system for annual physical verification of its inventory **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-I)**.
- ACPS is commended for having a fully certified purchasing office that participates in cooperative agreements and for seeking the maximum education value for every dollar ACPS expends **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-J)**.
- ACPS is commended for adopting an efficient on-line purchasing system, for adequately training all personnel in effectively using this new system, and for having a responsive purchasing office **(Chapter 3: Commendation 3-K)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for committing resources to teacher recruitment **(Chapter 4: Commendation 4-A)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for developing and implementing a user-friendly, fully on-line job application process **(Chapter 4: Commendation 4-B)**.
- ACPS is commended for implementing differentiated employer health insurance contribution levels for different employee categories **(Chapter 4: Commendation 4-C)**.

- ACPS is commended for a professional staff development policy that outlines activities that reflect best practice **(Commendation 4-D)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for providing a user-friendly and effective system for accessing professional development services **(Commendation 4-E)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for its use of curriculum specialists as a means of bridging the gap between curriculum program intent and implementation in schools **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-A)**.
- ACPS is commended for maintaining and updating curriculum and instruction policies in a timely manner **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-B)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for developing and aligning curriculum guides that identify critical standards to be achieved, curriculum pacing guides, and benchmark assessments **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-C)**.
- ACPS is commended for implementing a more inclusive approach to TAG screening as outlined in its revised Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-D)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for developing a comprehensive professional plan in support of school improvement efforts **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-E)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for setting budget priorities in alignment with the mission of ACPS schools and central office departments **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-F)**.
- ACPS is commended for employing strategies that successfully limit incidents of crime and violence on school campuses **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-G)**.
- ACPS is commended for providing a system of comprehensive guidance and counseling services for students that provides for continuous improvement of programmatic operations **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-H)**.
- ACPS is commended for creating a comprehensive manual to ensure consistency and compliance with state and federal mandates related to special education **(Chapter 5: Commendation 5-I)**.
- The City of Alexandria and Alexandria City Public Schools are commended for their aggressive approach to maintaining and improving the school facilities **(Chapter 6: Commendation 6-A)**.
- The division's use of the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) demonstrates strong leadership and a fiscally

- sound practice that benefited the taxpayers of Alexandria City (**Chapter 6: Commendation 6-B**).
- Alexandria City Public Schools and the City of Alexandria are commended for their commitment to saving energy for future generations (**Chapter 6: Commendation 6-C**).
 - The ACPS transportation department is commended for the thoroughness of its driver training program (**Chapter 7: Commendation 7-A**).
 - The ACPS transportation department is commended for reducing the off-site accident rate (**Chapter 7: Commendation 7-B**).
 - The ACPS transportation department is commended for reducing turnover in personnel (**Chapter 7: Commendation 7-C**).
 - ACPS is commended for establishing the Technology Leadership Group, the Technology Leadership Council, and the Technology Leadership Group Executive Committee to assist in guiding the technology efforts of the school division (**Chapter 8: Commendation 8-A**).
 - The Alexandria City Public School Technology Planning Team is commended for developing a technology plan that effectively addresses technology use by students, teachers, administrators, and staff (**Chapter 8: Commendation 8-B**).
 - Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for implementing and maintaining a highly effective wide area network (**Chapter 8: Commendation 8-C**).
 - The network services manager is commended for implementing the innovative warning “ticket” as a way of reminding students that they are obligated to adhere to ACPS rules regarding Internet access (**Chapter 8: Commendation 8-D**).
 - ACPS is commended for its significant investment in the education of its students through its one-to-one laptop program (**Chapter 8: Commendation 8-E**).
 - The food service department is commended for providing ongoing training to food service workers (**Chapter 9: Commendation 9-A**).
 - The food service department is commended for implementing a five-year preventive maintenance and replacement plan (**Chapter 9: Commendation 9-B**).
 - ACPS is commended for its participation in the Shenandoah Food Buying Cooperative (**Chapter 9: Commendation 9-C**).

- The ACPS food service department is commended for implementing its responsibilities in a fiscally sound manner and thereby creating a healthy fund balance (**Chapter 9: Commendation 9-D**).
- ACPS is commended for regularly comparing its meal prices with those of surrounding divisions, and examining ways to generate additional food service revenue to ensure that the food service program remains financially successful (**Chapter 9: Commendation 9-E**).
- FNS is commended for its extensive use of technology in creating a user-friendly system for purchasing meals and helping to ensure regular, positive communication with parents in ACPS (**Chapter 9: Commendation 9-F**).

Recommendations

This executive summary briefly highlights key efficiency issues in Alexandria City Public Schools. Detailed recommendations for improving operations are found throughout the main body of the full report. Recommendations for improvement include the following:

- Conduct a retreat utilizing an outside consultant to assist the Board in developing the vision, mission, and goals of Alexandria City Public Schools (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-1**).
- Develop and implement a new School Board member orientation program (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-2**).
- Develop and implement an annual School Board self-assessment system (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-3**).
- Develop and implement a superintendent Performance Assessment system (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-4**).
- Actively seek ways to cooperate with the Mayor's Committee to Review the Election Process for City Council and School Board (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-5**).
- Create a policy provision containing a list of existing procedural manuals, handbooks, forms, and planning documents, and, on the Web site, create a series of hot links from the manual to the cited documents or procedures (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-6**).
- Explore the possibility of creating a partnership with the City of Alexandria for shared legal services (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-7**).
- Move the executive director of information and outreach to report to the assistant superintendent of administrative services and public relations (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-8**).

- Re-evaluate the present committee structure for effectiveness and efficient use of time (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-9**).
- Reorganize the superintendent's Executive Team to include representation from the building principals (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-10**).
- Delegate opening and processing of e-mail to the executive assistant to the superintendent (**Chapter 2: Recommendation 2-11**).
- Change the current monthly financial report to the school board to include a statement of revenues by fund and a comparative statement of expenditures by function on a monthly basis, reserving detailed reports as necessary (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-1**).
- Move the payroll function from compensation services to the finance department so that the three payroll technicians report to the director of finance (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-2**).
- Automate leave accounting for hourly employees (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-3**).
- Evaluate the need for a new financial management system that includes payroll by assessing the current financial management system and the HR system for payroll against new systems for effectiveness, ease of use, compatibility to ACPS functions, and reduction of inefficiencies (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-4**).
- Adopt a budget process that involves teachers in budget preparation to effectively meet ACPS needs and promote a process that involves principals in the instructional category funding of the budgeting process (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-5**).
- ACPS should streamline its chart of accounts and budget and appropriate all benefits at the school division level to reduce the complexity inherent in the current, long-standing ACPS budgeting system (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-6**).
- Use the Highline Personality System for Human Resources and Payroll for all position control by implementing procedures to ensure its timely maintenance, train personnel in effective use of the system, and simultaneously abandon the parallel Excel spreadsheet (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-7**).
- Create, adopt, and implement an updated manual for school activity funds, make it available to all school principals and treasurers, and provide training in the standardized procedures (**Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-8**).

- Institute a system of internal, on-site audits of school activity funds by the finance department at all elementary schools to ensure proper management of these funds as well as to ensure that policies and procedures are appropriately followed **(Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-9)**.
- ACPS should convert its fixed asset system to the module for its current financial management system and work on incorporating new acquisition data into this system from the on-line purchasing system to streamline labor-intensive processes **(Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-10)**.
- Implement a division-wide purchasing card program for purchases of less than \$1,000 to reduce costs, paperwork and time in obtaining goods while improving efficiency and allowing departments and schools to make essential purchases when needed **(Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-11)**.
- Update the ACPS purchasing guidelines to explicitly include set deadlines as well as school and departmental responsibility for processing paperwork once goods and services are received **(Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-12)**.
- Provide explicit procedures with training on planning, creating, encumbering, and maintaining open purchase orders as well as appropriately using budget transfers and account numbers in making purchase requisitions **(Chapter 3: Recommendation 3-13)**.
- Develop a long-term strategic plan for the human resources department **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-1)**.
- Explore a reconfiguration of the HR department and the restoration of appropriate personnel to the department to facilitate employee set-up **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-2)**.
- Establish a regular schedule to update personnel policies **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-3)**.
- Develop a procedural manual for the human resources department **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-4)**.
- Continue efforts to maintain salary competitiveness with neighboring school divisions **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-5)**.
- Stay abreast of trends in employee benefits offered by other educational organizations **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-6)**.

- Establish a policy for support staff development that mirrors the high-quality standards outlined in the policy for professional staff **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-7)**.
- Create a staff development link on the home page of the Curriculum and Instruction Department Web site **(Chapter 4: Recommendation 4-8)**.
- Structure the agenda of all curriculum specialists' meetings to allow time for shared planning and discussion of their activities in schools **(Chapter 5: Recommendation 5-1)**.
- Strengthen the component of the CTE strategic plan that emphasizes promoting CTE programs to middle and high school students **(Chapter 5: Recommendation 5-2)**.
- Develop a procedures manual for the English as a Second Language Program **(Chapter 5: Recommendation 5-3)**.
- Employ strategies to reduce the number of incidents of disorderly conduct in ACPS schools **(Chapter 5: Recommendation 5-4)**.
- Reorganize so that the director of transportation assumes supervisory responsibility over all mechanics **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-1)**.
- Prepare written Board policies to guide the long-range facilities planning process and define the scope of the planning process **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-2)**.
- Prepare a detailed, long-range facility master plan **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-3)**.
- Implement necessary improvements for the transportation facility **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-4)**.
- Complete the maintenance management software upgrade and train personnel on its use **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-5)**.
- Monitor the work order process using the SchoolDude® work order software presently in place **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-6)**.
- Improve the preventive maintenance schedule and extend equipment life **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-7)**.
- Create a custodial staffing formula to be applied to the 2007-08 school year **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-8)**.
- Develop standards for custodial services that are consistent with APPA standards **(Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-9)**.

- Implement an ongoing staff development program for custodial personnel (**Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-10**).
- Review employee supervision and discipline procedures (**Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-11**).
- Engage daily energy users in ACPS in a more aggressive energy conservation program (**Chapter 6: Recommendation 6-12**).
- Restructure the transportation department by transferring the vehicle maintenance function from the maintenance department (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-1**).
- Evaluate all transportation department personnel at least once per year (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-2**).
- Distribute the responsibility for conducting transportation personnel evaluations across the department to other qualified evaluators (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-3**).
- Strengthen the transportation section of the school board policy manual by adding additional policies that provide guidance to the transportation department (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-4**).
- Implement an annual report card using performance indicators to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the ACPS transportation department (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-5**).
- Develop a policy and internal procedure to establish a transportation complaint hotline (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-6**).
- Develop a transportation department Web site linked to the ACPS Web page (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-7**).
- Place a standing item for “transportation issues” on the agenda for all regularly scheduled principals’ meetings (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-8**).
- Require building principals to return a copy of each discipline referral sheet submitted by a bus driver stating the action taken for the disciplinary infraction (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-9**).
- Cross-train a transportation department staff member in the EDULOG system (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-10**).
- Increase the utilization of buses by increasing the number of riders per bus (**Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-11**).

- Conduct an annual needs assessment to determine additional staff development priorities for the coming year in addition to those required **(Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-12)**.
- Purchase a Vehicle Maintenance Information System (VMIS) **(Chapter 7: Recommendation 7-13)**.
- Restructure the ITS department such that there are no more than seven direct reports to the director and responsibilities are delegated to the managers, who will then be held accountable for effectively managing their functions and budgets **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-1)**.
- Continue to seek ways of providing backup personnel to support the finance area **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-2)**.
- Assign the annual evaluation responsibilities for the technology resource teachers jointly to their principal and the instructional technology coordinator **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-3)**.
- Establish a five-year replacement cycle for computers **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-4)**.
- Implement a training program for teachers and other staff that provides basic troubleshooting skills **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-5)**.
- Implement a program that involves students as providers of technical support for their schools **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-6)**.
- Redeploy the computer technicians to a defined set of ACPS schools **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-7)**.
- Provide an ACPS parking sticker that will allow the technicians to park close to school buildings to facilitate and expedite their technical support work **(Chapter 8: Recommendation 8-8)**.
- Develop an attendance handbook for all food service workers **(Chapter 9: Recommendation 9-1)**.
- Adjust food services staffing levels to increase the number of schools that are maintaining benchmark levels for meals per labor hour **(Chapter 9: Recommendation 9-2)**.
- Improve breakfast participation rate for free/reduced to 60 percent **(Chapter 9: Recommendation 9-3)**.

Fiscal Impact

Based on analyses of data obtained from interviews with ACPS personnel, parents, and the community at large; ACPS surveys; state and school division documents; and firsthand observations during the on-site review, MGT developed 72 recommendations, only 13 of which have fiscal implications.

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, full implementation of the recommendations in this report would result in a net cost of **\$2,773,840** over a five-year period.

**EXHIBIT 1
SUMMARY OF ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)**

CATEGORY	YEARS					TOTAL FIVE-YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$1,018,312	\$1,068,312	\$1,118,312	\$1,168,312	\$1,208,312	\$5,581,560
TOTAL (COSTS)	(\$1,692,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$8,424,400)
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	(\$673,768)	(\$614,768)	(\$564,768)	(\$514,768)	(\$474,768)	(\$2,842,840)
ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						\$69,000
TOTAL FIVE YEAR NET SAVINGS (COSTS) INCLUDING ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						(\$2,773,840)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In October 2006, the Commonwealth of Virginia contracted with MGT of America, Inc., to conduct an Efficiency Review of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The review focused on the financial, organizational, and operational effectiveness of ACPS. **Exhibit 1-1** shows an overview of MGT's work plan and **Exhibit 1-2** provides the timeline for the project activities.

1.1 Overview of Alexandria City Public Schools

Alexandria is located in northern Virginia on the west bank of the Potomac River and encompasses over 15 square miles. The city was incorporated in 1779 when it became a port of entry for foreign vessels and a major export center for flour and hemp. At the time of the Revolution, Alexandria was one of the prime trading centers and ports. During the Civil War, the city became a logistical supply center for the federal army. Alexandria is one of America's most historic communities and many authentic eighteenth-century buildings have been preserved. Alexandria is home now to approximately 140,000 citizens.

Alexandria City Public Schools consists of 13 elementary schools, two middle schools, one ninth grade school, one high school, and one alternative school. ACPS has slightly less than 11,000 students and employs approximately 1,031 teachers. The starting teacher salary is \$42,040 and the average class size is 20 students in elementary, 21 in middle school, and 23 in high school. A nine-member elected school board supervises the division. The city is divided into three districts and three members are elected from each district. The members serve three-year terms and hold meetings twice a month. The school division's mission is to, in partnership with families and the community, effectively educate all learners to succeed in a changing world.

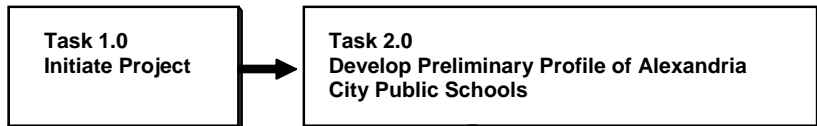
1.2 Methodology

The methodology MGT used to prepare for and conduct the ACPS Efficiency Review is described in this section. Throughout our practice we have discovered that to be successful, an efficiency review of a school division must:

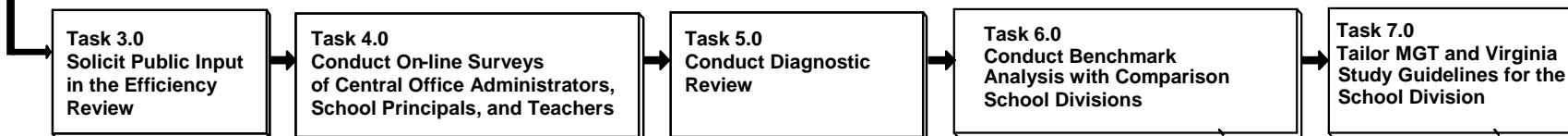
- Be based upon a very detailed work plan and time schedule.
- Specifically take into account the unique student body and environment within which the school division operates.
- Obtain input from board members, administrators, staff, and the community.
- Identify the existence, appropriateness, and use of specific educational objectives.

**EXHIBIT 1-1
OVERVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN FOR THE EFFECIENCY REVIEW
OF ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

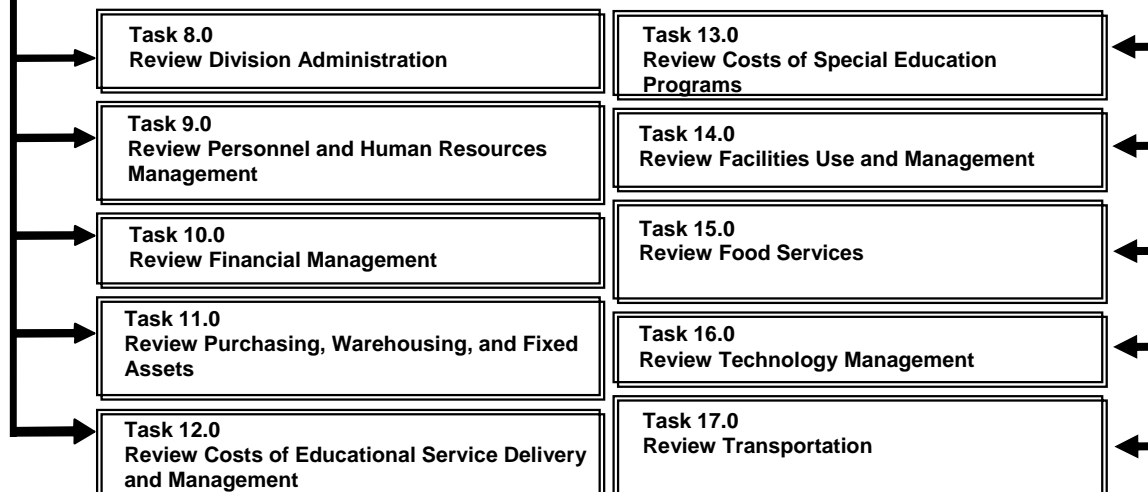
PHASE I - PROJECT INITIATION



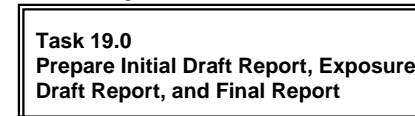
PHASE II - STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW



PHASE III - IN-DEPTH EFFICIENCY REVIEW



***PHASE V -
PROJECT REPORTING***



***PHASE IV -
INTERIM REPORTING***



**EXHIBIT 1-2
TIMELINE FOR THE EFFECIENCY REVIEW OF
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITY
October 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Finalized contract with Virginia. ■ Designed tailor-made, on-line surveys for central office administrators, principals, and teachers. ■ Collected and analyzed existing and comparative data available from the school division. ■ Produced profile tables of Alexandria City Public Schools. ■ Disseminated surveys to administrators and teachers.
January 29 - 30, 2007	<p>On-site visit with Alexandria City Public Schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conducted diagnostic review. ■ Collected data. ■ Interviewed School Board members. ■ Interviewed central office administrators.
February 2007	Analyzed collected data.
February 2007	Tailored review guidelines and trained MGT team members using findings from the above analyses.
Week of February 19, 2007	Conducted formal on-site review, including school visits.
February – March 2007	Requested additional data from the school division and analyzed data.
February – March 2007	Prepared Draft Report.
April 2007	Submitted Draft Report.
May 6, 2007	Revised Draft Report
June 15, 2007	Submitted Final Report

- Contain comparisons to other similar school divisions to provide a reference point.
- Follow a common set of guidelines tailored specifically to the division being reviewed.
- Include analyses of the efficiency of work practices,
- Identify the level and effectiveness of externally imposed work tasks and procedures.

- Identify exemplary programs and practices as well as needed improvements.
- Document all findings.
- Present straightforward and practical recommendations for improvements.

With this in mind, our methodology primarily involved a focused use of Virginia review guidelines as well as MGT's audit guidelines following the analysis of both existing data and new information obtained through various means of employee input. Each of the strategies we used is described below.

Review of Existing Records and Data Sources

During the period between project initiation and beginning our on-site review, we simultaneously conducted many activities. Among these activities were the identification and collection of existing reports and data sources that provided us with recent information related to the various administrative functions and operations we would review in Alexandria City Public Schools.

More than 100 documents were requested from ACPS. Examples of materials MGT requested included, but were 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
- annual budget and expenditure reports
- job descriptions
- salary schedules
- personnel 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 Alexandria City Public Schools was conducted on January 29 and 30, 2007. MGT consultants interviewed central office administrators, school board members, and city personnel concerning the management and operations of Alexandria City Public Schools.

Employee Surveys

To secure the involvement of central office administrators, principals/assistant principals, and teachers in the focus and scope of the efficiency review, three on-line surveys were prepared and disseminated in February 2007. Through the use of anonymous surveys, administrators and teachers were given the opportunity to express their views about the management and operations of Alexandria City Public Schools. These surveys were similar in format and content to provide a database for determining how the opinions and perceptions of central office administrators, principals/assistant principals, and teachers vary.

ACPS staff was given from February 2, 2007 through February 14, 2007 to respond. The ACPS response rates for the three surveys were as follows: 54 percent of central office administrators returned a survey, as did 60 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 22 percent of teachers. MGT provides a comparison of all survey responses among the three employee groups, as well as, a comparison of all ACPS district and school administrators and teachers to similar groups in the more than 40 divisions where we have conducted similar surveys.

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

Conducting the Formal On-Site Review

A team of consultants conducted the formal on-site review of Alexandria City Public Schools during the week of February 19, 2007. As part of our on-site review, we examined the following ACPS systems and operations:

- Division Organization and Management
- Financial Management, Purchasing
- Human Resources Management
- Cost of Education Services
- Facilities Use and Management
- Transportation
- Technology Management
- Food Services

Prior to the on-site review, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about ACPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted detailed reviews of the structure and operations of Alexandria City Public Schools in their assigned functional areas. The team made 30 site visits to 18 different schools and school properties (e.g., the bus garage) in ACPS.

Our systematic assessment of Alexandria City Public Schools included the use of MGT's *Guidelines for Conducting Management and Performance Audits of School Divisions*. In addition, the Commonwealth of Virginia school efficiency review guidelines were used. Following our collection and analysis of existing data and new information, we tailored our guidelines to reflect local policies and administrative procedures; the unique conditions of Alexandria City Public Schools, and the input of administrators in the school division. Our on-site review included meetings with appropriate central office and school-level staff and reviews of documentation provided by these individuals.

1.3 Comparisons to Other School Divisions

To effectively facilitate ongoing, systemic improvement and to overcome the continual challenges of a changing environmental and fiscal landscape, a school division must have a clear understanding of the status of its internal systems and processes. One way to achieve this understanding is to compare the operations of one school division to others with similar characteristics. MGT has found that such comparisons with other school divisions yield valuable insights and often form a basis for determining efficient and effective practices for a school division interested in making improvements. For these comparisons to be meaningful, however, the comparison school divisions must be chosen carefully. Ideally, a school division should be compared with others that are not only similar in size and demographics, but also similar in operations and funding.

The practice of benchmarking is often used to make such comparisons between and among school divisions. Benchmarking refers to the use of commonly held organizational characteristics in making concrete statistical or descriptive comparisons of organizational systems and processes. It is also a performance measurement tool used in conjunction with improvement initiatives to measure comparative operating performance and identify best practices.

With this in mind, MGT initiated a benchmarking comparison of the Alexandria City Public Schools to provide a common foundation from which to compare systems and processes within the school division with those of other similar systems. As comparisons are made, it is important for readers to keep in mind that when comparisons are made across more than one division, the data are not as reliable, as different school divisions have different operational definitions and self-reported data by peer school divisions can be subjective.

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. Alexandria City Public Schools is identified in Cluster 6. ACPS and MGT selected the peer school divisions for the review. The Virginia public school divisions chosen for comparison were:

- Charlottesville City Public Schools
- Fredericksburg City Public Schools
- Manassas City Public Schools
- Winchester City Public Schools

These exhibits are in **Appendix B** of the report.

Exhibits B-3 through **B-19** illustrate how the comparison school divisions compare to Alexandria City Public Schools in terms of enrollment, demographics, staffing, and funding for the most current school year available from the Virginia Department of Education's Web site. In reviewing the comparison tables, it should be noted that the state applies a "cost of competing" factor to all Northern Virginia school divisions in recognition of the higher costs of living and doing business in the area. Currently, this cost factor is 9.83 percent for instructional personnel and 24.61 percent for support staff. These cost factors have the effect of skewing ACPS data upwards in comparison with its Cluster 6 peers.

2.0 DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

2.0 DIVISION ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter presents findings and recommendations for the overall organization of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The major sections of the chapter include:

- 2.1 Introduction and Legal Foundation
- 2.2 School Board Governance
- 2.3 Policies and Procedures
- 2.4 Legal Services
- 2.5 Organization and Management
 - 2.5.1 Division Organization
 - 2.5.2 Decision Making, Communications, and Management
 - 2.5.3 Public Information

ACPS is led and managed by a superintendent who officially assumed the position on August 1, 2001. The Board and superintendent are committed to providing a quality education for the students of Alexandria City Public Schools. In interviews with the MGT Review Team, Board members all expressed a strong desire to make a difference for students. Their present and prior experiences make them uniquely qualified to serve on the Board. Members have demonstrated a past commitment to being involved in both the school division and community at large.

The superintendent has expressed a strong desire to work with this Board to build a better school division. Past accomplishments and a strong work ethic are positive signs that this commitment is genuine. The School Board and superintendent are to be commended for their strong desire to make a positive difference for the children of this community.

Recommendations contained in this chapter are essentially focused on assisting the Board, superintendent and the executive leadership team in their efforts to ensure the success of all students. Among these recommendations are the following key suggestions that should assist the School Board and superintendent as they consider all aspects of improving the school division:

- Conduct a retreat utilizing an outside consultant to assist the Board in developing a vision, mission, and goals for Alexandria City Public Schools (**Recommendation 2-1**).
- Develop and implement an annual School Board self-assessment system (**Recommendation 2-3**).
- Develop and implement a superintendent Performance Assessment system (**Recommendation 2-4**).
- Actively seek ways to cooperate with the Mayor's "Committee to Review the Election Process for City Council and School Board" (**Recommendation 2-5**).
- Explore the possibility of creating a partnership with the City of Alexandria for shared legal services (**Recommendation 2-7**).

- Move the executive director, information and outreach to report to the assistant superintendent, administrative services and public relations (**Recommendation 2-8**).
- Reorganize the superintendent's Executive Team to include representation from the building principals (**Recommendation 2-10**).

2.1 Introduction and Legal Foundation

The Baldrige Model for Continuous Improvement is a nationally recognized school improvement model. Those organizations committed to quality will often use this model to understand the complex nature of making systemic changes in an organization that will produce measurable results on a consistent basis. The central piece that drives this model is its commitment to the alignment of all key processes. Without this alignment, an organization will experience “random acts of improvement” rather than consistent results.

Alexandria City Public Schools is an organization that has made significant progress towards improving student learning. The division is ready to take the next step towards excellence by introducing more sophisticated processes and systems into the organization.

The School Board has a duty to exercise its responsibility to set the direction for this division by clearly articulating a vision, mission, and goals. Unless this is done, senior leadership cannot align itself in a manner that will most likely produce the intended results. Senior leadership cannot devise strategies that will move the organization towards the intended outcomes unless those outcomes have been articulated by the Board. Because of some challenging circumstances facing Alexandria City Public Schools, this issue becomes paramount to achieving success.

The heart of an organization is its overall structure and management. Therefore, one way to determine the health of an organization is to review how it is structured and managed. Richard Beckhard in *The Organization of the Future* profiles the healthy organization as one that:

- Defines itself as a system; the organization's stakeholders include its owners and staff, its suppliers, intermediate customers, the ultimate customers of the product or service, the media, and the communities in which the organization operates.
- Has a strong sensing system for receiving current information on all parts of the system and its interactions (system dynamics thinking).
- Possesses a strong sense of purpose.
- Operates in a “form follows function” mode—work determines the structures and mechanisms to do it—and consequently uses multiple structures: formal pyramidal structures, horizontal structures and teams, project structures, and temporary structures (as when managing a major change).

- Respects customer service both to outside customers and to others within the organization, as a principle.
- Is information-driven and information is shared across functions and organizational levels.
- Encourages and allows decisions to be made at the level closest to the customer, where all the necessary information is available.
- Has relatively open communication throughout the system.
- Has reward systems designed to be congruent with the work and to support individual development—managers and teams are appraised against both performance and improvement goals.
- Operates in a learning mode and identifying learning points is part of the process of all decision making.
- Makes explicit recognition for innovation and creativity.
- Has a high tolerance for different styles of thinking and for ambiguity.
- Has policies which reflect respect for the tensions between work and family demands.
- Keeps an explicit social agenda.
- Gives sufficient attention to efficient work, quality, and safety awareness in operations, and identifying and managing change; and
- Is generally managed with and guided by a strong executive officer employing a variety of work groups composed of individuals possessing appropriate skills and complementary traits.

Conditions in ACPS of importance to this review include:

- A recent election that resulted in a complete turnover of the nine-person School Board.
- A superintendent focused on improving student learning and instituting data-driven planning processes.
- A new Board that wants to make a positive difference for the children of the community.
- The need to develop strong School Board support for the division's vision, mission, and goals.
- Dependence upon the state and the local City Council funding.
- Concern among some Board members about the effectiveness of the superintendent;

In interviews with MGT, the School Board members, superintendent and other ACPS staff emphasized the challenges created when an organization is fiscally dependent upon an external source. ACPS is fiscally dependent upon the Alexandria City Council since the Commonwealth of Virginia, Code of Virginia, Title 22.1, and other controlling regulations assign final budget approval and appropriations authority to the Council.

The superintendent, administrative staff, and Board members stated in interviews with MGT that the budget process for Alexandria City Public Schools was extremely difficult during this past budget cycle. The city imposed an accelerated adoption schedule as well as a “target” budget number. An inexperienced school Board was asked to submit a budget with little time to complete a complicated process that is challenging even without these additional challenges.

Throughout the country, there is considerable variation in the legal structure of school divisions. Some school divisions are fiscally independent (i.e., do not have to depend upon the state or another body politic for fiscal resources), while others are totally dependent upon other entities for their resources. School systems organized as is ACPS in Virginia typically must rely on city councils or like bodies and the state for budget approval and funds. Some school divisions in the United States must take budget proposals or operating tax levies to the public for approval, while other Boards of Education have latitude to set budgets and approve revenue levies within the constraints of law. The legal foundation of school divisions is critical to the overall functioning of the organization, as it defines the locus of power that determines how School Boards and executive personnel may carry out their assigned responsibilities.

The primary state laws controlling the governance and operation of schools in Virginia are found in the Code of Virginia, Title 22.1, which implements the Constitution of Virginia (1971), Article VIII mandate. Specifically, Chapter 7 of Title 22.1 details the general powers and duties of School Boards. These laws give the School Board powers to adopt policies, fix contracts, approve the appointment of personnel, develop a budget for further review and approval by the Alexandria City Council, and take other actions designed to ensure secure, safe, and proper schools for the citizens.

The Board and superintendent must weigh carefully the need to have a strong working relationship with the mayor and City Council while fulfilling its duties to provide a quality education for the students of Alexandria City Public Schools. Community expectations for this school division have always been high, exacerbating the pressures faced by the Board.

2.2 School Board Governance

There are numerous school system governance configurations in the United States. These governance structures range from Hawaii, which represents a highly centralized system with all public schools controlled by a single School Board and the state serving as single school division, to Texas and Illinois, each with approximately 1,000 school divisions and School Boards. Virginia, with city, county, and other division configurations, presents yet another structure.

The educational system in Alexandria City Public Schools is the result of Commonwealth of Virginia legislation authorizing the establishment of city and county school divisions.

Members to the ACPS Board are elected for three year terms with three members each elected from Divisions “A”, “B”, and “C”.

Exhibit 2-1 provides an overview of the members of the ACPS School Board. The exhibit shows that:

- The Board consists of nine members.
- Two members of the nine-person Board have prior School Board experience.
- All nine members were elected in May of 2006, began their terms in July, and are thus new to the School Board.
- Membership is composed of three men and six women.
- All but three members are actively employed outside of the home.
- All members are highly engaged in community affairs.
- The chair and vice-chair are newly elected Board members.

**EXHIBIT 2-1
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL BOARD
JANUARY 2007**

NAME	TITLE	INITIAL APPT. DATE	MONTHS OF SERVICE ON JANUARY 2007	OCCUPATION
Arthur E. Peabody Jr.	Chair	7/1/06	6	Lawyer
Blanche D. Maness	Vice-Chair	7/1/06	6	Retired Educator
Sheryl K. Gorsuch	Member	7/1/06	6	Business
Scott A. Newsham	Member	7/1/06	6	Government
Eileen Cassidy Rivera	Member	7/1/06	6	Business
Claire M. Eberwein	Member	7/1/06	6	Lawyer/Architect
Yvonne A. Folkerts	Member	7/1/06	6	Public Relations
Ronnie M. Campbell	Member	7/1/06	6	Postal Service
Charles Wilson	Member	7/1/03	42	Financial Planner

Source: ACPS superintendent’s Office and the Clerk of the Board, February 2007.

Regular School Board meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of each month in the School Board Meeting Room on North Beauregard Street. Regular meeting locations, dates, and times are posted on the ACPS Web site and advertised as required by law. The Board has published a “School Board 100” brochure that provides to the public pertinent information regarding School Board protocols. Meetings are televised in Alexandria on channel 70 (in English) and Channel 71 (in Spanish). Regular open meetings are held at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

The School Board meeting agenda may be organized into the following sections:

- Committee Meetings, (held separately from regular Board meetings)
- Communications and Addresses to the Board
- Superintendent’s Report

- Spotlight on Instruction
- Approval of the Minutes
- Consent Calendar
- Old Business and Action Items
- New Business
 - Curriculum and Instruction Committee
 - Facilities Committee
 - Budget, Human Resources and Administrative Committee
- Announcements by Board Members
- Future Business
- Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting
- Adjournment

The agenda is developed by the Board chair and vice chair in a meeting with the superintendent prior to each meeting. A Board packet is then prepared which is delivered to each Board member on the Friday preceding the Thursday meeting.

The public is welcome to attend all meetings, and citizens wishing to address the School Board are provided an opportunity to do so. The designated period to speak is called, "Communications and Addresses to the Board." Persons wishing to appear before the School Board are asked to contact the clerk for placement on the agenda.

The School Board is permitted under Commonwealth law to conduct closed meetings for certain purposes at any time as long as they have been properly advertised in advance. These purposes include:

- Discussion of individual personnel.
- Student matters.
- Negotiations of material terms for purchase of property or a specific contract for employment.
- Attorney-client privilege as relates to litigation preparation and execution.
- Other matters as permitted under Commonwealth of Virginia law.

If scheduled, School Board committee meetings also may be held prior to the regular meeting.

Minutes of all regular meetings are recorded by the School Board clerk, transcribed, and approved by the Board at the next regular meeting. Approved minutes are then published on the Web site. Minutes are not maintained for closed meetings; rather, the School Board clerk prepares a record of motions and related votes. Minutes and supplementary data are stored in secured, fireproof file cabinets.

FINDING

The School Board lacks a clearly articulated vision, mission, and goals that will guide the future of the school division.

On May 2, 2005, the City of Alexandria adopted Budget Resolution No. 2150 which required ACPS to accelerate the operating budget process, prepare a budget forecast and develop an operating budget that met a budget target issued by the city council. This process became an all-consuming activity for the Board and senior leadership and became controversial within the community as indicated by public participation at school Board meetings. All parties agreed that the budget process took a toll on the relationship between the Board and central office staff.

Exhibit 2-2 shows a comparison of survey responses among ACPS central office administrators, principals/assistant principals, and teachers and a comparison with responses to their counterparts in other school divisions. When asked to respond to the statement, "*Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in the school division*" with a rating of *good* or *excellent* or *fair* or *poor*, three percent of central office administrators responded *good* or *excellent* and 88 percent *fair* or *poor*; 29 percent of principals responded *good* or *excellent* and 63 percent *fair* or *poor*; and 22 percent of teachers responded *good* or *excellent* and 45 percent *fair* or *poor*.

The statement "*Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in ACPS*" received similar low ratings from central office administrators with six percent responding *good* or *excellent* and 85 percent responding *fair* or *poor*. Principal responses were 25 percent *good* or *excellent* and 67 percent *fair* or *poor*; and 20 percent of teachers responded *good* or *excellent* and 51 percent *fair* or *poor*.

When compared with responses from other divisions, the response patterns demonstrate significant differences in all categories of statements. Central office administrators in other divisions rated their School Board's knowledge of operations at 40 percent good/excellent and 51 percent as fair/poor. Principals in other divisions rated the same category as 41 percent excellent/good and 56 percent at fair/poor. Teachers in other divisions followed the same pattern, rating the Board's operational knowledge as 24 percent excellent/good and 64 percent fair/poor. In response to the question pertaining to the School Board members' knowledge of the educational needs of students, central office administrators, principals, and teachers consistently scored their Board higher than the scores given to the members of the ACPS School Board.

**EXHIBIT 2-2
SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING DIVISION
ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL YEAR 2006-07**

STATEMENT	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR OTHER DIVISIONS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OTHER DIVISIONS	TEACHER	TEACHER OTHER DIVISIONS
Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in this school division.	6/85	40/51	25/67	39/57	20/51	24/64
Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in this school division.	3/88	36/58	29/63	41/56	22/45	29/55
Board of Education members' work at setting or revising policies for this school division.	9/79	44/48	25/58	50/47	21/43	27/58
The School Division superintendent's work as the educational leader of this school division.	88/9	78/18	92/8	81/17	46/36	49/40
The School Division superintendent's work as the chief administrator (manager) of this school division.	87/9	77/20	100/0	81/17	50/32	50/38
Principals' work as the instructional leaders of their schools.	88/6	70/29	92/4	89/11	63/30	63/36
Principals' work as the managers of the staff and teachers.	87/6	74/25	92/8	94/6	60/34	67/32

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, MGT Survey Results, 2007.

Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted

The survey data previously referenced in **Exhibit 2-2** illustrates the point that the School Board has been side-tracked from its traditional role of establishing a vision, mission, and goals in order to respond to the immediate crisis of passing a budget, also a critical function of a Board. With little or no preparation, the Board was thrust into a difficult process that was made even more so with the accelerated budget adoption process, the imposition of a “target” budget number that was significantly less than previous budget numbers, and a Board that was lacking in school budget experience. The City Council’s introduction of these variables into the budget process represents a fiscally responsible position, and under normal circumstances, this process might have produced a responsible budget for the City of Alexandria. However, given that these were not normal circumstances, the City Council’s actions served to produce an even more stressful situation.

It is incumbent upon this Board to produce a clearly defined vision and mission, with accompanying goals, through a consensual process. By doing so, the Board will have the much needed opportunity to discuss various opinions regarding the leadership of the division, direction that must be taken, and the priorities for doing so. The superintendent and other key central office staff must also be engaged in this process in a role that recognizes the Board’s major responsibility for providing a vision, mission, and goals. A

qualified consultant is needed to assist the Board in arriving at consensus and developing a communication plan to disseminate these documents to internal and external stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 2-1:

Conduct a retreat utilizing an outside consultant to assist the Board in developing a vision, mission, and goals for Alexandria City Public Schools.

Alexandria City Public Schools presently has a sophisticated goal setting process. As late as May 2006, the superintendent presented a status report on the School Board's strategic goals to the previous School Board. The goals outlined in the report were:

- Curriculum and Instruction: Laptop initiative.
- Safe and Orderly Environment: Establish Wellness Task Force.
- Improve Community Awareness: Outreach to Non-school Alexandria community; Increase opportunities for access to preschool
- Board Governance: Review budget process

These goals, however, belong to the previous Board and not to this one; the documents that have already been produced and the reporting process that has been developed by previous Boards will serve as a catalyst for developing a vision, mission, and goals for this School Board and should be considered during the retreat. It is critical to the success of this Board that they be given an opportunity to re-evaluate vision, mission, and goals if they are to develop ownership in these plans. Without this process, the superintendent and staff will continue to function in a system that may not be congruent with this Board's wishes.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with a minimum of expense. Training should be provided by an outside professional. A facilitative leadership model should be used. The training should be conducted off-site over a two to three-day time span. The initial cost is estimated at approximately \$10,000 to facilitate this retreat. An additional yearly amount has been added to renew the Board's plan on an annual basis for additions, corrections, and changes. The total costs for this recommendation are \$14,000 over a five year period of time.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Conduct Vision, Mission, and Goal Setting Retreat	(\$10,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)

FINDING

ACPS lacks a comprehensive new School Board member orientation program.

The new members of the School Board met with the superintendent prior to assuming office in July in order to receive information germane to the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities. Shortly after assuming their office, the entire Board met with the Virginia School Board's Association (VSBA) for a one day retreat at the VSBA site. Board members reported that this session was productive, but only a beginning. Almost immediately upon their return from this retreat the Board became engaged in the intense and controversial budget process. No other strategic planning events were scheduled.

Although effort was made to provide some training to the new School Board members, the results were less than satisfying for those members. This Board is well positioned to developing a valuable tool for making a smoother transition to this challenging role. As new Board members are elected throughout the Commonwealth, this plan could become a benchmark for others to emulate.

RECOMMENDATION 2-2:

Develop and implement a new School Board member orientation program.

Implementation of this recommendation should result in the development of a comprehensive new School Board member orientation program that, minimally, should cover the following topics:

- Organization of the School Board, rules of order, procedures for obtaining information, establishment of the meeting agenda, and other operational matters.
- Organization of the school division including key administrative personnel that can provide assistance to Board members upon request.
- The role of the Board member as reflected in Commonwealth of Virginia law and by best practices (the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and VSBA can provide valuable information for this portion of the orientation).
- A review of important documents including, but not necessarily limited to, the policy and procedures manual, employee handbooks, student code of conduct, and pupil progression plans or like documents describing division and state student matriculation requirements.
- A review of the division's planning documents and related processes for their development.
- A review of the division's budget and associated development and adoption timelines.
- The calendar of important dates and deadlines for Board actions including approval of employee contracts for employment, establishment of the staffing plan for each year, review of the student code of conduct, and other required matters; and

- Other local items that are deemed important to include.

The orientation program should be implemented over a scheduled series of meetings, allowing the participants to assimilate information in an orderly and systematic fashion, and should avoid overloading participants with too much information at any one session.

Accomplishment of this recommendation should lead to the establishment of a Board Development Program. Such a program can be developed in conjunction with the VSBA. An additional resource for Board development can be secured from the National School Board's Association.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department, and with assistance available from the Virginia School Board Association or other similar agencies.

FINDING

The School Board does not have an appropriate self-assessment instrument of its performance.

The ACPS Board members all expressed a strong desire to make a positive difference for the children they serve and the Board evaluation process is an essential element in fulfilling this desire. Board Policy AFA, "Evaluation of School Board Operational Procedures," outlines the following requirements for Board evaluation:

The School Board will review its performance annually to ensure its proper discharge of responsibilities to the community. Evaluation will be based on a positive approach, which will indicate the strengths of the School Board and the areas that need improvement.

To help the School Board meet this goal, the following elements will be included in the self-evaluation process:

- 1. School Board members will be involved in the development of an evaluation instrument and procedure.*
- 2. The School Board evaluation instrument will be completed by individual board members on a confidential basis, and submitted to the School Board Chairman, or his or her designee, for compilation.*
- 3. The School Board will meet, with all members present, to review and discuss the composite results.*
- 4. Each conclusion will be supported by objective evidence*

Upon final discussion of the results, the School Board will develop both short and long-range goals and objectives to ensure continued proficiency in its areas of excellence, to strengthen weak areas, and to improve the efficiency of the Board.

The School Board's present method for determining its effectiveness lacks a proper contextual basis for conducting a self-evaluation, and is not in alignment with the processes outlined in its policy.

Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is fundamental in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest, ongoing dialogue and discussion. Governing boards in any organization can improve their performance through a formal self-evaluation in addition to an informal feedback process.

RECOMMENDATION 2-3:

Develop and implement an annual School Board self-assessment system.

Steve Benjamin, in his work, *The Quality Rubric*, offers clear criteria for a successful organization. In an aligned system, everybody is headed in the same direction because goals are clear and linked, with everybody expected to implement best practices and processes. An aligned Board evaluation model will focus on the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. Once these elements have been introduced into the division by the Board, the search for the right instrument will be more easily accomplished.

The research for effective School Board evaluation models is extensive. The National School Board's Association offers an on-line self-evaluation instrument. Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools has also developed an effective evaluation instrument that should be reviewed. A third exemplar is the Minnesota School Board Association evaluation model for Vision, Structure, Accountability, Advocacy, and Conduct/Ethics. Each of these approaches should be reviewed by the ACPS Board prior to deciding on the instrument that will increase the Board's effectiveness.

Implementing this recommendation can be a significant step toward supporting Board accountability, providing a medium for reporting governance activity, and setting governance improvement goals.

FISCAL IMPACT

By modifying existing evaluative instrumentation, the implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The School Board has not agreed upon a performance review system for evaluating the superintendent.

Interviews with School Board members revealed that they plan to assess the superintendent's job performance, but have neither discussed how they intend to accomplish this, nor developed specific performance-related goals. However, it is clear to the superintendent that among her prime responsibilities are to bring about changes resulting in improvement in the overall academic performance of students. The superintendent evaluation process is an essential tool in allowing the Board to exert a

leadership role over the organization by giving the superintendent clear directions. This will enable the superintendent to provide meaningful feedback to division personnel and adopt necessary changes in the established processes of the division.

RECOMMENDATION 2-4:

Develop and implement a superintendent performance assessment system.

Developing and adopting a uniform assessment procedure that is used by the entire School Board can result in providing a unified series of recommendations. Suggested evaluation criteria for a superintendent's evaluation that could be used as a basis for discussion and the formulation of procedures that are acceptable to ACPS and the superintendent include the following:

- Establishment of a specific time frame for conducting the performance evaluation each year.
- Development of an assessment instrument that includes a specific listing of Board-superintendent goals that are related to school performance and other agreed on indicators.
- Provision for establishing performance goals and related outcomes for the next year.
- Provision for the individual Board members to rate the superintendent on an agreed to form that includes the Board goals.
- Provision for all Board members to meet to compile Board member ratings, discuss all aspects of the superintendent's performance, and develop a single evaluation report to be reviewed with the superintendent; and
- Guidelines for the actual evaluation review session (in closed session with the Board chair as spokesperson).

Exhibit 2-3 provides an example of an assessment instrument that could be modified to meet the ACPS School Board needs. Revision should include the development of current performance standards relevant to division goals and the establishment of measurable benchmarks against which to rate the superintendent's performance. The rating scale could be modified to reflect three levels: 1 - does not meet the standard; 2 - partially meets the standard; and 3 - meets the standard or is making adequate progress towards meeting the standard. Provision should be made for listing evidence that supports the status of meeting goals or standards. A one through three scale would minimize variation among Board members' rankings.

**EXHIBIT 2-3
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
PERFORMANCE RATING**

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY	RATING					
<p>Overall Goals for Action Implementation The extent to which the goals for action are implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lap Top Initiative - Community Awareness - Professional Development - Governance <p>Comment:</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Student Achievement Improves system-wide student achievement as measured by the division's Student Assessment System.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fiscal Management Utilizes all available resources in the most effective and efficient manner. Develops a plan for a balanced budget. Seeks and obtains grants from local, regional, state, and national sources which support the division's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Management of Division Effectively manages the business and education operations of the division.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeps all Board Members informed on issues, problems, and needs related to the operation of the school division. - Works with the Board to plan the future direction of the school division. - Supports Board policy with the staff and public. - Holds senior staff accountable for managing their operations. - Works with the leadership of public and private agencies with which the division maintains partnerships. - Assures that division facilities are well maintained. <p>Comment:</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**EXHIBIT 2-3 (Continued)
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
PERFORMANCE RATING**

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY	RATING					
<p>Public Engagement Regularly informs constituents on all aspects of the business and educational activities of the division.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds an understanding of the issues facing the school division and the division's vision for improving the performance of student achievement. - Works effectively with public and private agency leadership. - Maintains and extends partnerships and collaborations with colleges and universities, business, civic, nonprofit, faith-based, and philanthropic groups which enhance the goals of the division. <p>Comment:</p>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Safety and Security Maintains a high level of safety and security for all students and employees.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>School Environment Ensures that educational programs optimize the use of all facilities within the division and that the school environment supports academic learning.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Political Leadership Actively engages with other community leaders in enhancing the community. Creates, maintains, and extends local and regional partnerships that further the mission of the division.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Personal Qualities Maintains high standards of ethics, honesty, and integrity in professional matters. Defends principles and convictions in the face of pressure and partisan influence. Works and relates well with others.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Overall Evaluation</p> <p>Comment:</p>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1 – 2 = Does Not Meet Expectations 3 – 4 = Meets Expectations 5 – 6 = Exceeds Expectations</p>						

Source: MGT of America, (Based on research-based best practices), 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented utilizing the current ACPS human and fiscal resources.

FINDING

The absence of staggered terms for School Board members creates significant operational inefficiencies.

The Mayor has created a committee to study this issue and has charged staff to study the following areas:

- Moving the election of both city and school division from May to November.
- Staggering the terms of offices.
- Studying the compensation for these positions.
- Creating the same number of offices held for both city and school division.

Effective school boards have continuity in order to assimilate new members into the system. The most recent School Board election resulted in all nine Board members being newly elected in a single period, and does not represent a “best practice.” It is also not consistent with the principles of effective organizational leadership. With an entirely new School Board comes the need for intensive training and orientation to the roles and responsibility of Board membership and the requisite time and energy that would otherwise be spent focusing on other Board business.

Continuity in leadership is required to achieve systemic changes in an organization. This continuity is lacking in a system that can turn over an entire Board in one election.

RECOMMENDATION 2-5:

Actively seek ways to cooperate with the Mayor’s “Committee to Review the Election Process for City Council and School Board.”

The City of Alexandria has the authority to make recommendations to change the present elections system for both city and school division. Their recommendation must be acted upon by the Commonwealth of Virginia’s legislative branch in order to be changed.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

2.3 Policies and Procedures

The development of policy and procedures constitutes the means by which an organization can communicate expectations to its constituents. In addition, adopting policy and establishing related procedures provides the mechanism for:

- Establishing the ACPS School Board's expectations and what may be expected from the Board.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the School Board.
- Establishing an essential division between policy making and administrative roles.
- Creating guidelines within which employees operate.
- Providing reasonable assurances of consistency and continuity in decisions.
- Providing a legal basis for the allocation of funds, facilities, and other resources.
- Facilitating and guiding the orientation of School Board members and employees; and
- Encouraging citizen involvement within structured guidelines.

Policy and procedures, therefore, reveal the philosophy and position of the School Board and should be stated clearly enough to provide for executive or staff direction.

Commonwealth of Virginia law (22.1-253.13:7) contains specific provisions governing School Board policy. The law requires that policies be up to date, reviewed at least every five years, and revised as needed. The policies must address the following eight overall areas:

- A system of two-way communication between employees and the local School Board and its administrative staff.
- The selection and evaluation of all instructional materials purchased by the division, with clear procedures for handling challenged controversial materials.
- Standards of student conduct and attendance, and related enforcement procedures.
- School-community communications and involvement.
- Guidelines to encourage parents to provide instructional assistance to their children.

- Information about procedures for addressing school division concerns with defined recourse for parents.
- A cooperatively developed procedure for personnel evaluation; and
- Grievance, dismissal, and other procedures as prescribed by the General Assembly and School Board.

FINDING

ACPS School Board policies are in keeping with Commonwealth regulations and are updated regularly.

ACPS policies are overseen and managed in the superintendent's office by the School Board Clerk. The official policy manual is located in the superintendent's office, and is also available at the division's Web site.

The policies have been codified using the NSBA model, with specific model policy language procured from the VSBA. The policy manual is composed of 12 chapters or major classifications denoted as sections, with each section containing a detailed table of contents. Individual policies are coded within these A-L sections (chapters). The manual contains an alphabetical subject index in the back of the document, behind Section L policy provisions.

Exhibit 2-4 presents the ACPS policy manual classifications (chapters), titles, and policy codes.

**EXHIBIT 2-4
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL BOARD
ORGANIZATION OF POLICY HANDBOOK**

CLASSIFICATION	SECTION TITLES	POLICY CODES
A	Foundations and Basic Commitments	AA -
B	School Board Governance and Operations	BA -
C	General School Administration	CA -
D	Fiscal Management	DA -
E	Support Services	EA -
F	Facilities Development	FA -
G	Personnel	GA -
H *	Negotiations	None
I	Instructional Program	IA -
J	Students	JA -
K	School-Community Relations	KA -
L	Education Agency Relations	LA -
	Code Finder Index	n/a
	Topical Index	n/a

Source: ACPS School Board Policy Manual, February 2007.

* The Supreme Court of Virginia has stated that neither Virginia constitutional nor statutory authority exists for School Boards to enter into collective bargaining agreements with their employees.

The School Board has a contract with the VSBA for a policy updating service designed to assist ACPS in maintaining a current manual in compliance with Commonwealth of Virginia law. The annual cost for this updating service is \$3,480. This compares with outsource service fees that range from a low of \$4,000 to as high as \$12,000 or more annually.

COMMENDATION 2-A:

The School Board and administration of Alexandria City Public Schools are commended for approving specific measures designed to ensure a cost-effective method for maintaining a current policy manual.

FINDING

A central list of administrative guidelines and forms is unavailable.

The policy and procedures manual contains a number of references to procedural documents related to policy implementation, but it is difficult to obtain these when needed. For example, policy DGB requires the superintendent to develop administrative guidelines for issuance of credit cards; policy DA requires the superintendent to administer the division budget; KG identifies a facilities use procedure and use fees document; DJA, purchasing controls; and CH, Policy Implementation procedures. To obtain these documents, a person would have to visit several offices, consuming large quantities of valuable time and effort.

Requirements for student behavior, procedures related to drug testing, and other matters are included in this referencing process. While MGT consultants were able to review some of these documents, we were unable to identify a complete listing of all such materials. This situation suggests that neither the School Board nor various administrators and other employees could, if required, identify and review these documents in an expeditious manner.

RECOMMENDATION 2-6:

Create a policy provision containing a list of existing procedural manuals, handbooks, forms, and planning documents, and, on the Web site, create a series of hot links from the manual to the cited documents or procedures.

Creating this document should provide ACPS with a compilation of important procedures and operation manuals, handbooks, forms, and other materials. Also, this provision should serve as a valuable tool for the orientation of new School Board members as well as new school division personnel. Some school systems have included in their policy manual such a provision within the equivalent Section B, *School Board Governance and Operations*.

This provision may be phrased as follows:

SCHOOL BOARD AND SCHOOL SYSTEM PLANS AND PROCEDURES

The School Board has plans, manuals, handbooks, forms, and codes that outline procedures to be followed relative to stated topics. The plans, manuals, handbooks, and codes listed below may be adopted by reference as part of these policies when required by other Board provisions, Commonwealth of Virginia code, or other controlling requirements. These include, but are not limited to...

Within this portion of the policy manual, the titles of various documents could be listed. This list should become an important resource for School Board members and employees to understand the extent of activity and responsibilities involved in managing a complex organization.

Exhibit 2-5 provides a partial list of the types of materials often included in such a document. Upon development and adoption of the list of documents a series of hot links should be created between the policy manual and related documents. This action should result in providing the policy manual user easy access to other related information, thus increasing user efficiency by reducing time required to locate needed documents.

**EXHIBIT 2-5
SAMPLE LIST OF PROCEDURAL, OPERATIONAL, PLANNING,
AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Administration

Emergency Plan
Strategic Plan
Staff Development Plan
Safety Plan
General Outline of Revenue and Meal Accountability Procedures
Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) Plan
Capital Project Priority List
Transportation Procedures Manual
Food Service Procedures

Instructional & Pupil Services

Field Trips
After-School Child Care Program Manual
Code of Student Conduct
Testing Procedures Manual
Alternative Education Plan
Instructional Material Manual
Instructional Technology Plan
Limited-English Proficient (LEP) Plan
Manual for Admissions and Placement in Special Education Programs
Student Graduation Requirements
School Handbooks
School Health Procedures Manual
School Improvement Plans
Special Programs and Procedures Manual
Student Education Records Manual
Pupil Services Plan
Truancy Plan

Source: Created by MGT of America, November 2006.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

2.4 Legal Services

Throughout the United States, school systems procure legal services either through in-house counsel, with the use of outside counsel for situations requiring additional expertise or exclusively from outside firms or attorneys. In the latter situation, some school systems, particularly those in urban areas, can secure the services of a single, large, diversified firm while others must depend on more than one firm. Fees for services vary greatly, depending on the locale and the specialization required.

Costs for legal work have increased dramatically over the last three decades due to a number of factors. These factors include due process activity associated with disciplinary

proceedings, complicated issues related to special education students, risk management matters, and a variety of other issues.

Areas of special education and student disciplinary activity are particularly troublesome and require special legal expertise. These areas are typically complicated by the complexities of federal requirements and their relationship to local and state regulations, coupled with the school system's need to maintain an orderly educational environment.

Commonwealth of Virginia code (22.1-82) provides authority for the School Board 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, when such proceeding is instituted by or against it or against the member or official by virtue of his actions in connection with his duties as such member or official.

FINDING

ACPS expenditures for legal services are excessive.

Board policy BCG-1, School Attorney, authorizes the Board to retain an attorney for legal counsel and services; however, there is a lack of understanding concerning this role and how these services can be accessed and by whom. Questions were raised to the MGT Review Team over who the legal firm currently employed represents—the Board or the superintendent and the total costs for these services.

Exhibit 2-6 shows the expenses as reported to MGT consultants for a three-year period, from 2004-06. The division has averaged \$230,000 over this period of time. Legal services for the building projects have not been included in these calculations.

MGT consultants have maintained data related to cost per enrolled students for many school divisions, the majority of which are larger than ACPS. For example, in a recent study, we found that six school divisions expended from \$3.41 to \$21.63 per pupil, with an overall average of \$9.20 per pupil. With a 2006-07 enrollment of 10,300 and a three year average expenditure of \$230,000, the average student costs for services for ACPS is \$22.33 per pupil.

**EXHIBIT 2-6
GENERAL LEGAL EXPENSES FOR ACPS
2004-06 SCHOOL YEARS**

VENDOR	AMOUNT SPENT IN FY 2004	AMOUNT SPENT IN FY 2005	AMOUNT SPENT IN FY 2006
Blankingship & Keith	\$224,594	\$193,541	\$208,058
Special Education	\$7,640	\$6,640	\$50,500
Total	\$232,234	\$200,181	\$258,558

Source: ACPS Fiscal Services Department, February 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 2-7:

Explore the possibility of creating a partnership with the City of Alexandria for shared legal services.

Expenditures for legal services can be kept to a minimum through cooperative use of a municipal legal counsel, engaging private firms only when their specific expertise is required. School divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia have used this approach to achieve substantial legal savings. For example, the City of Roanoke and the Roanoke City Public Schools achieved substantial savings using this model. The average legal expenses over a three-year time frame were \$58,635. The Roanoke City Attorney's office also provides school law training to division personnel and offers legal orientation to new School Board members. Services for special education are obtained through a reputable private firm.

Exhibit 2-7 presents the legal expenses during a three-year period of time for the Roanoke City Public Schools. The average for these three years is \$58,634 compared to ACPS's three-year average of \$230,000.

**EXHIBIT 2-7
LEGAL EXPENSES FOR RCPS
2002-05 SCHOOL YEARS**

VENDOR	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
City Attorney Office	\$14,398	\$14,371	\$9,487
Private Firms *	71,365	46,602	19,681
Total	\$85,763	\$60,973	\$29,168

Source: RCPS Fiscal Services Department, October 2005.

* Costs for Special Education.

In addition to the partnership, the division should also work to hold down legal costs by delineating in policy and procedures, defining who may access legal services and under what conditions. Unrestricted access to such services can result in spiraling costs.

This recommendation should save on legal expenses for the division. Obviously, there are delicate negotiations that must occur with the city before this can become a reality. Legal expenses can also be somewhat unpredictable since it is impossible to predict litigation during any year. Implementing this recommendation should conservatively realize a potential savings of \$100,000 per year or \$500,000 over a five-year period using an estimated amount based on Roanoke's (and other divisions') past experiences.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Combine Legal Services	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

2.5 Organization and Management

The effective organization and management of a school system is typically composed of the executive and management functions incorporated into a system organization. Each

system contains a series of functional areas determined by its mission and related goals. The successful contemporary organization has among its essential characteristics the capacity to alter its structure to meet changing client requirements. The more the existent culture of the organization restricts this response, the less likely it is that the organization will meet client requirements and, as a result, experience success.

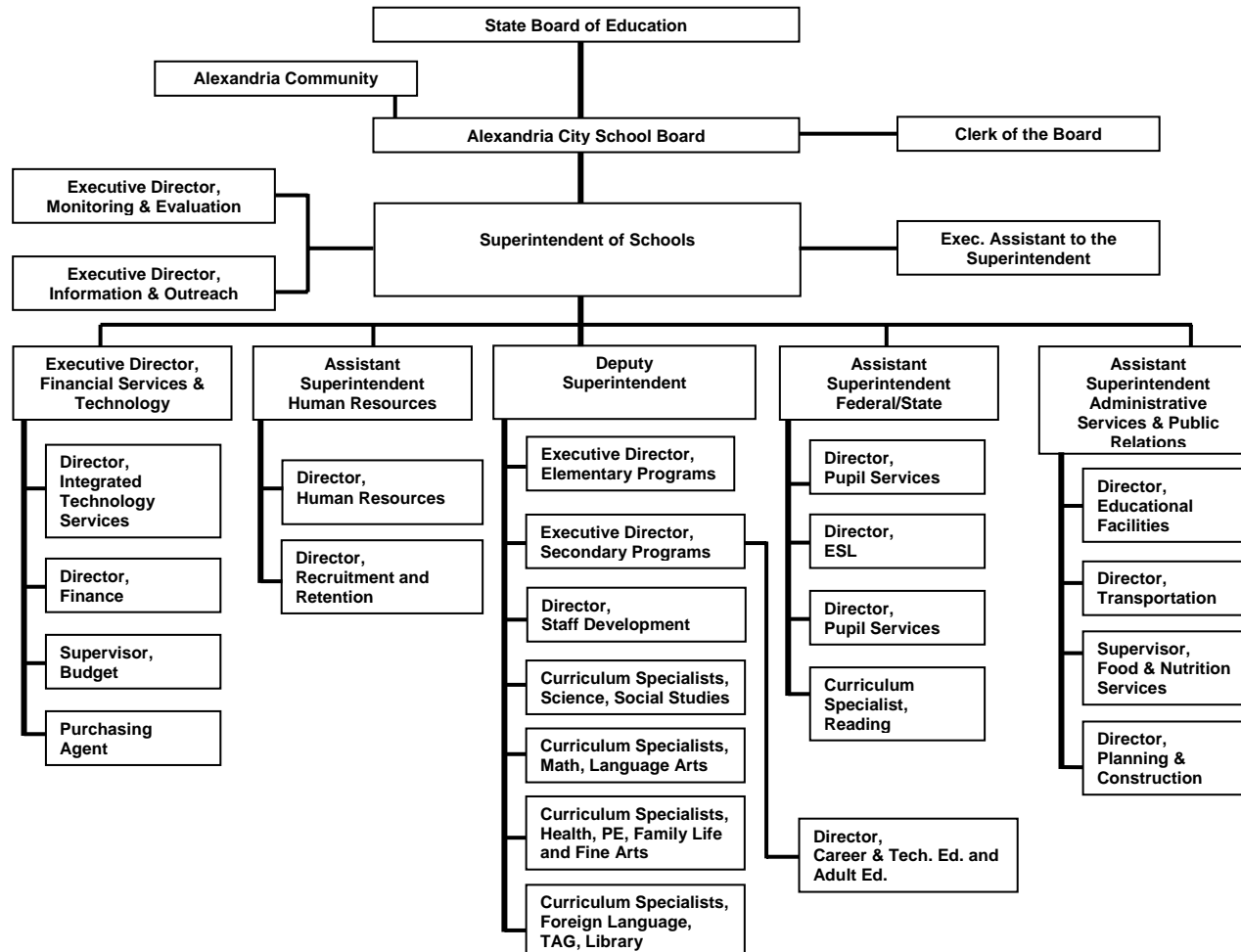
Section 2.5 reviews the ACPS organization, decision making, management, planning and accountability.

2.5.1 Division Organization

Exhibit 2-8 reflects the current organizational structure for ACPS. As can be seen, the executive and administrative functions of ACPS are managed through a system that is organized into line and staff relationships that define official spans of authority and communication channels. School systems are typically pyramidal organizations with clear lines of authority leading from the School Board and superintendent down through departments, offices, and schools. The organizational chart of the school system is developed to graphically depict this scheme.

The organizational chart for Alexandria City Public Schools has experienced changes over the past three years, beginning in FY 2005. The superintendent reported to the MGT Review Team that these efforts were intended to streamline the organizational structure for both effectiveness and efficiency. Presently there are seven positions that report directly to the superintendent. The building principals are also granted direct access to the superintendent but are not reflected in the organizational chart.

**EXHIBIT 2-8
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



Source: Alexandria City Public Schools Web site, 2007.

FINDING

The current organizational placement of the executive director of information and outreach is out of alignment.

The functions for the assistant superintendent for administrative services and public relations are more in line with the duties and responsibilities of the information and outreach position and will serve the division better. The reduction of one position reporting directly to the superintendent will result in more effective supervision and monitoring of the overall organization.

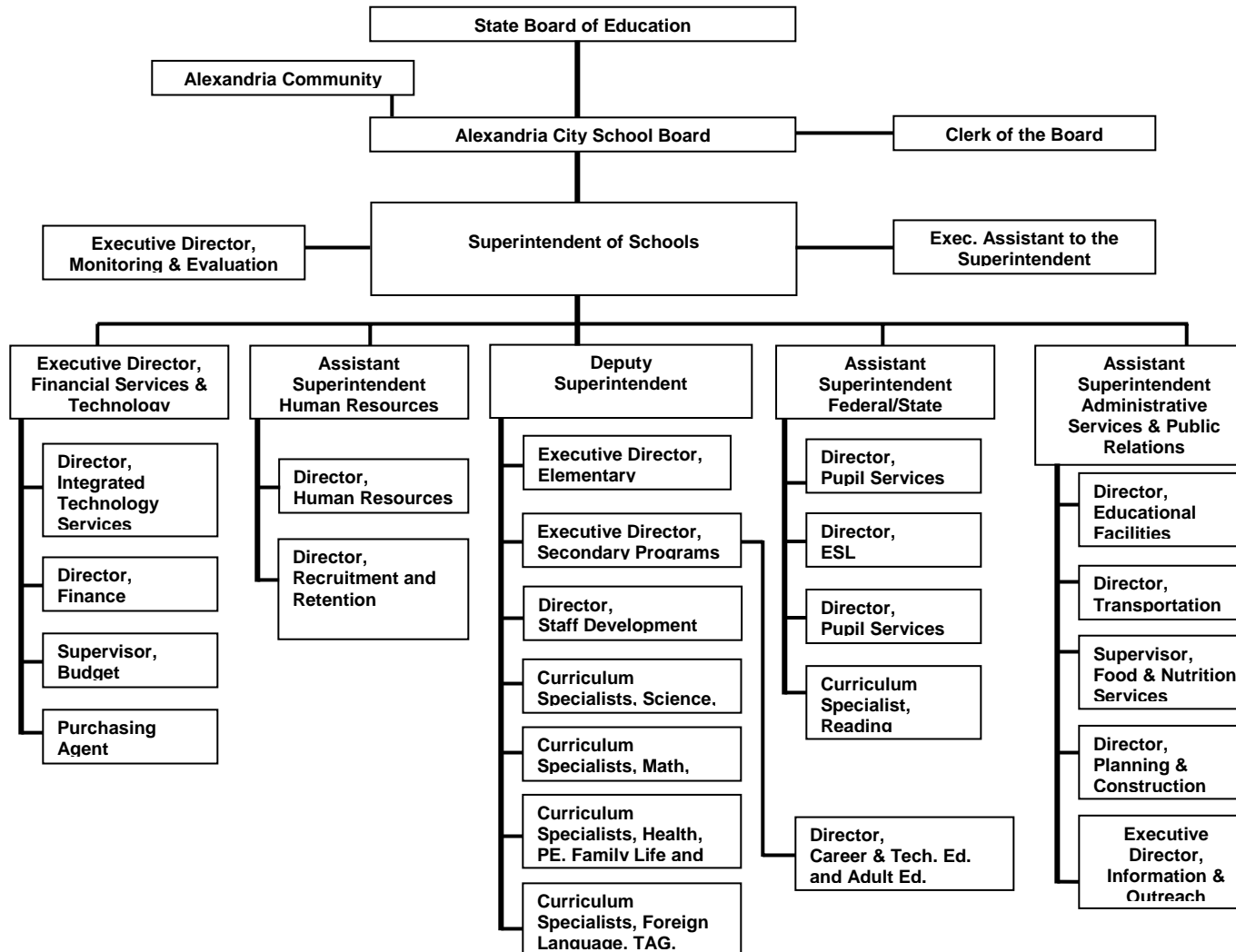
RECOMMENDATION 2-8:

Move the executive director of information and outreach to report to the assistant superintendent of administrative services and public relations.

The present organizational chart should be re-organized on a modest level by moving the position of executive director, information and outreach under the supervision of the assistant superintendent, administrative services and public relations. This move aligns these responsibilities under the position most logical to supervise these duties. This will also eliminate one reporting position directly to the superintendent.

Exhibit 2-9 reflects the proposed reorganization of the ACPS hierarchal structure. This minor change in the administrative organizational chart presents a more logical placement of this position. It is expected that the superintendent will continue to modify the organizational chart as the needs of the division continue to evolve. Once the Board has expressed a vision, mission, and goals for the division, this will guide the superintendent in aligning the organization in the most efficient and effective manner possible to achieve these goals.

**EXHIBIT 2-9
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



Source: Modification to Organizational Chart by MGT of America, 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

2.5.2 Decision Making, Communications, and Management

The superintendent for Alexandria City Public School was appointed to that position on August 1, 2001 after serving as the superintendent of Mecklenburg County, VA. The superintendent's contract, initiated on August 1, 2001, provides the terms and conditions for employment. Her present contract expires on June 30, 2008. The contract includes specific provisions for benefits and compensation increases consistent with those of other ACPS administrative and professional employees. Additionally, she is entitled to a monthly automobile reimbursement and an annuity paid by the School Board. The superintendent's contract also contains provisions for professional development. The contract in all respects is consistent with Commonwealth of Virginia law and sound business practice.

The superintendent states that her immediate goals include addressing student achievement, advancing technology, safe and effective teaching environments, enhanced management and efficiency, quality staff, and strong home, school, and community relations. To this end, she has developed a strategic planning process for 2003-09 utilizing a broad based leadership team to develop the strategic plan; based the initiatives on the effective schools research; deployed a laptop initiative for secondary students; and developed a communications-community relations plan based on the laptop program and other initiatives. Further, there are initiatives to establish a wellness program for students; increase the opportunities for outreach to the non-school Alexandria community; and increase the opportunities for access to pre-school.

FINDING

The superintendent's communication's model does not achieve the intended result of improving communications throughout the school system.

The superintendent has created an elaborate system of communications in order to engage building-level personnel in the decision-making process. Board policy GBB, Staff Involvement in decision-making, charges the superintendent with the responsibility of developing a plan that will encourage employees to communicate ideas and concerns in an orderly and constructive manner. This has been accomplished with this committee structure.

The executive team is composed of key central office executive positions but does not have principal or school-level representation. Nine positions are represented on the team, including the deputy superintendent, assistant superintendent for state and federal programs, assistant superintendent for administration services and public relations, assistant superintendent for human resources, executive directors for monitoring and evaluation; information and outreach; financial services; elementary programs; and secondary programs. The cabinet meets on the day after every Board meeting with a prepared agenda. Other forums for dialog between and among ACPS administration and other stakeholders include the following:

- The Teacher Advisory Council meets on a pre-determined schedule and consists of one representative from each school elected by the teaching faculty.
- Secondary and elementary principals meet monthly with their respective supervisors and members of the central office senior staff. The meeting is chaired by the deputy superintendent.
- The deputy superintendent also meets with all associate and assistant principals on a monthly basis.
- There is an Employee Advisory Council consisting of one representative elected from each of employee groups – paraprofessionals; bus drivers; food service; and custodians/maintenance.
- The PTA Council meets on a regularly scheduled basis and consists of the presidents from each PTA. The committee is chaired by the PTA Chair.
- The City Council and School Board meet on the 4th Monday of each month. The committee is comprised of the mayor, vice mayor, city manager, School Board chair, vice chair, and superintendent.

Exhibit 2-10 displays the results of the MGT-conducted surveys of central office administrators, principals, and teachers. Each group was asked questions related to the effectiveness of the communications efforts within ACPS. When asked to respond to the statement, “*Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level,*” only 40 percent of administrators and 50 percent of principals and 14 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed. When asked to respond to the statement regarding the effectiveness of the committee structure, 57 percent of the central office administrators, 63 percent of the principals, and 41 percent of the teachers agree/strongly agreed.

Interviews with school-level personnel revealed a strong sentiment that more principal engagement in decisions affecting schools is needed and that the superintendent needs to be more accessible. In interviews with Board members, improving communications was deemed to be a high priority by individuals.

**EXHIBIT 2-10
SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING DIVISION ADMINISTRATION
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL YEAR 2006-07**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
Central Office Administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/3	71/17	31/35
Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	40/31	50/13	14/26
The extensive committee structure in our school division ensures adequate input from teachers and staff on most important decisions.	57/9	63/8	41/31
Our school division has too many committees.	22/28	12/37	29/23

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, MGT Survey Results, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 2-9:

Re-evaluate the present committee structure for efficiency and effectiveness.

Improving communications is a common theme in every organization. The present communications plan may be the right plan; however, it is important to look at this plan to determine if the plan is accomplishing its intended results. Re-visiting the present process is an opportunity to receive feedback from constituents; make adjustments based on meaningful input from those involved, and most importantly, validate the system that is created to maximize communications within the division. A more careful examination of the MGT survey results would also assist the administration in gauging the effectiveness of the present committee structure.

Re-visiting the committee process will also be responsive to the present School Board's desire to improve communications among all groups. In interviews with individual Board members, this was a consistent theme. The superintendent has the opportunity to show responsiveness to this desire by re-examining the present structure and making any changes that will improve communications, both internally and externally.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

RECOMMENDATION 2-10:

Reorganize the superintendent's Executive Team to include representation from the building principals.

The superintendent's executive team, composed of key central office executive positions, does not have principal or school-level representation, and adding building-level representation to this meeting would allow the superintendent to engage in a higher

level thinking process. The superintendent is committed to achieving the Board's goals and the addition of a building level perspective would assist in that process.

Consideration should be given as to which members should be included from the central office during the evaluation stage of this recommendation.

The superintendent's cabinet should perform the following functions:

- Coordinate strategic plan development.
- Review projections and alternative "what if" analyses as part of long-range planning.
- Establish and maintain focus on mission, goals, and related initiatives of ACPS.
- Analyze and interpret data to ensure that decisions are based upon accurate and complete information.
- Ensure community involvement.
- Monitor internal communications to ensure effective communication of decisions and related information.
- Communicate the vision of ACPS to all stakeholders.
- Guide program evaluation.
- Identify and participate in training designed to ensure that the team functions effectively.
- Engage in orchestrating the specific and purposeful abandonment of obsolete, unproductive practices and programs.
- Maintain focus on continuous division and school improvement.
- Monitor the division's organizational climate.
- Coordinate the development and equitable allocation of resources (fiscal, personnel, facilities, technology, etc.).

Decisions should be based upon the best information available and have appropriate input. Day-to-day operational decisions should rest with the administrators responsible for their respective units and departments. Within the organizational plan, the team members would maintain effective, frequent communications (almost daily) to ensure consistency and effective monitoring of activities. The superintendent would continue to maintain daily communications with various administrators, but should begin a process of systematically sharing control with all members of the executive team.

The superintendent's executive team should continue meeting on a regularly scheduled basis with a developed agenda. This team should focus upon consensus building to

achieve important goals and objectives. Decisions and activities of the executive team would be effectively communicated to impacted parties through copies of meeting activity and e-mail requiring confirmation of receipt.

Strategic planning should become the centerpiece of activity from the perspective of responsibility for ensuring that all related planning processes and effective plan monitoring are ongoing processes. The placing of the planning function at the executive level of the division reflects the important nature of ensuring that planning processes are data-driven and that outcomes can be independently assessed.

The sophisticated development of this process should contribute information that can drive the school division's planning and implementation processes (see Section 2.5.3 for Planning and Accountability).

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The superintendent spends a large quantity of time processing e-mail each day. The superintendent receives and processes her own e-mail, and the quantity of such correspondence has grown to 100 or more e-mails per day, requiring her to devote more and more time to preparing responses. As appropriate, she forwards messages to his secretarial/executive assistant staff to prepare responses or handle issues. However, the superintendent has been arriving at her office earlier and staying later just to process e-mail and take care of other ministerial tasks.

RECOMMENDATION 2-11:

Delegate opening and processing of e-mail to the executive assistant to the superintendent.

Implementation of this recommendation should result in assigning the superintendent's executive assistant responsibility for opening and processing all of the superintendent's e-mail. The superintendent's executive assistant currently processes the regular mail, including preparing responses, and can easily incorporate this activity into her schedule.

Additionally, the superintendent should acquire a second e-mail address to be provided only to those who must communicate directly with her. The second e-mail address should be shared sparingly to protect the integrity of this private address. Such persons could include members of the School Board and the executive team. This action should result in freeing up the superintendent's time for important work while still providing access by selected persons.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department and the use of the current e-mail system and assigning the superintendent a second address.

2.5.3 Public Information

Effective communication is a key aspect of developing and maintaining organizations that facilitate the realization of essential goals and objectives. Phillip Schlechty, in his publication, *Working on the Work—An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents*, continues his important theme, which articulates his 12 standards for the WOW school. The underlying piece, as always, is fundamentally sound communications. The modern organization, having emerged into an age of producing results tailored to the individual client, must engage in effective communication to all stakeholders and, furthermore, produce needed responses in a timely fashion.

Community involvement programs are essential for bringing financial resources and community support to schools and school divisions. Involved schools and school divisions strive to build and maintain effective partnerships with parents, area businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, and other concerned citizens, who provide valuable support for each student's academic success. Members of the community, including parents and grandparents, can offer needed volunteer services to the schools. Building and maintaining open lines of communication with parents and community members help in building long-term public support for the school division's efforts.

The department of information and outreach is charged with the responsibility for communication with the public. The director reports to the superintendent. The office is responsible for issuing individual school newsletters; central office newsletters; ACPS e-news; an annual wall calendar; issuing the superintendent's report to the community; news releases; paid ads; publishing a monthly newsletter for the City; providing information for the Web site; providing material to the ACPS television station (Channel 71); conducting an information hot line; sending employee e-mails; publishing the "Ed Lines;" and maintaining an intranet Web site.

FINDING

The department of information and outreach provides valuable information and services to the school division and community.

The department is constantly looking for additional opportunities to expand their efforts to improve communications for what is presently happening within the school division. A new endeavor for the 2006-07 school year was child care providers for pre-school parents, and creating a translation plan for families who speak languages other than English.

Exhibit 2-11 and **2-12** display the results of the MGT conducted surveys of central office administrators, principals, and teachers. Each group were asked to rate "*How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community,*" 72 percent of the

responding administrators, 67 percent of the responding principals, and 52 percent of responding teachers selected either good or excellent. In other school divisions, 60 percent of administrators, 66 percent of principals, and 43 percent of teachers stated that their situation was either *good or excellent*. When asked to rate the quality of *community relations*, 72 percent of administrators, 79 percent of principals, and 52 percent of teachers reported that the areas adequate/outstanding. These scores were also consistently higher than those of other school divisions.

**EXHIBIT 2-11
SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING COMMUNITY RELATIONS
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DIVISIONS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DIVISIONS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DIVISIONS
How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community.	72/9	60/35	67/29	66/32	52/29	43/44

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, MGT Survey Results, 2007.

¹Percentage responding *good or excellent* / Percentage responding *fair or poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT 2-12
SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING COMMUNITY RELATIONS
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION PROGRAMS AND FUNCTIONS	% (NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT) ¹ / % (ADEQUATE + OUTSTANDING) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DIVISIONS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DIVISIONS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DIVISIONS
Community relations	19/72	39/53	21/79	37/61	27/52	42/38

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, MGT Survey Results, 2007.

COMMENDATION 2-B:

The department of information and outreach is to be commended for their efforts to improve internal and external communications with their stakeholders.

3.0 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PURCHASING

3.0 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PURCHASING

This chapter reviews the financial management and purchasing functions at Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The major sections of this chapter are:

- 3.1 Organization and Management
- 3.2 Financial and Accounting Services
- 3.3 Payroll
- 3.4 Budget Management
- 3.5 Grants Administration and Management
- 3.6 Records Management
- 3.7 School Activity Funds
- 3.8 Fixed Assets Management
- 3.9 Purchasing

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The financial services operations of Alexandria County Public Schools (ACPS) are managed by the Executive Director of Financial Services and Technology with total staff of 19 and three managers or supervisors for the four sections: finance, budget, purchasing, and compensation services.

The commendations for ACPS finance operations include:

- Readily available and recently updated finance policies and procedures **(Commendation 3-A)**.
- Good working relationship with City of Alexandria finance department and strict adherence to internal controls required by that relationship **(Commendation 3-B)**.
- An accurate and comprehensive annual finance report, and elaborate and detailed financial reports to the school board each month **(Commendation 3-C)**.
- An effective budget process supported by a comprehensive procedure, annual training, and support from budget staff **(Commendation 3-E)**.
- An accounting system in place for school activity funds, including monthly review of revenues and expenditures **(Commendation 3-H)**.
- Use of cooperative agreements and implementation of on-line purchasing to get the most value of every dollar spent **(Commendations 3-J and 3-K)**.
- Grants management, records retention, and fixed asset management systems that are particularly systematic and effective **(Commendation 3-F)**.

While there are several things that ACPS does well, there are several areas of labor intensive and inefficient practices that ACPS needs to consider for improvement. Some system-wide changes would have an effect on functions including budget, payroll, accounts payable and purchasing. If recommended processes, policies and procedures are implemented, they would collectively result in streamlined and effective practices for these areas as well as the departments and the schools they serve. Many long-standing processes started as a temporary fix to a function or process that was not working and now, creates unnecessary and duplicative work.

Recommendations for improvement include:

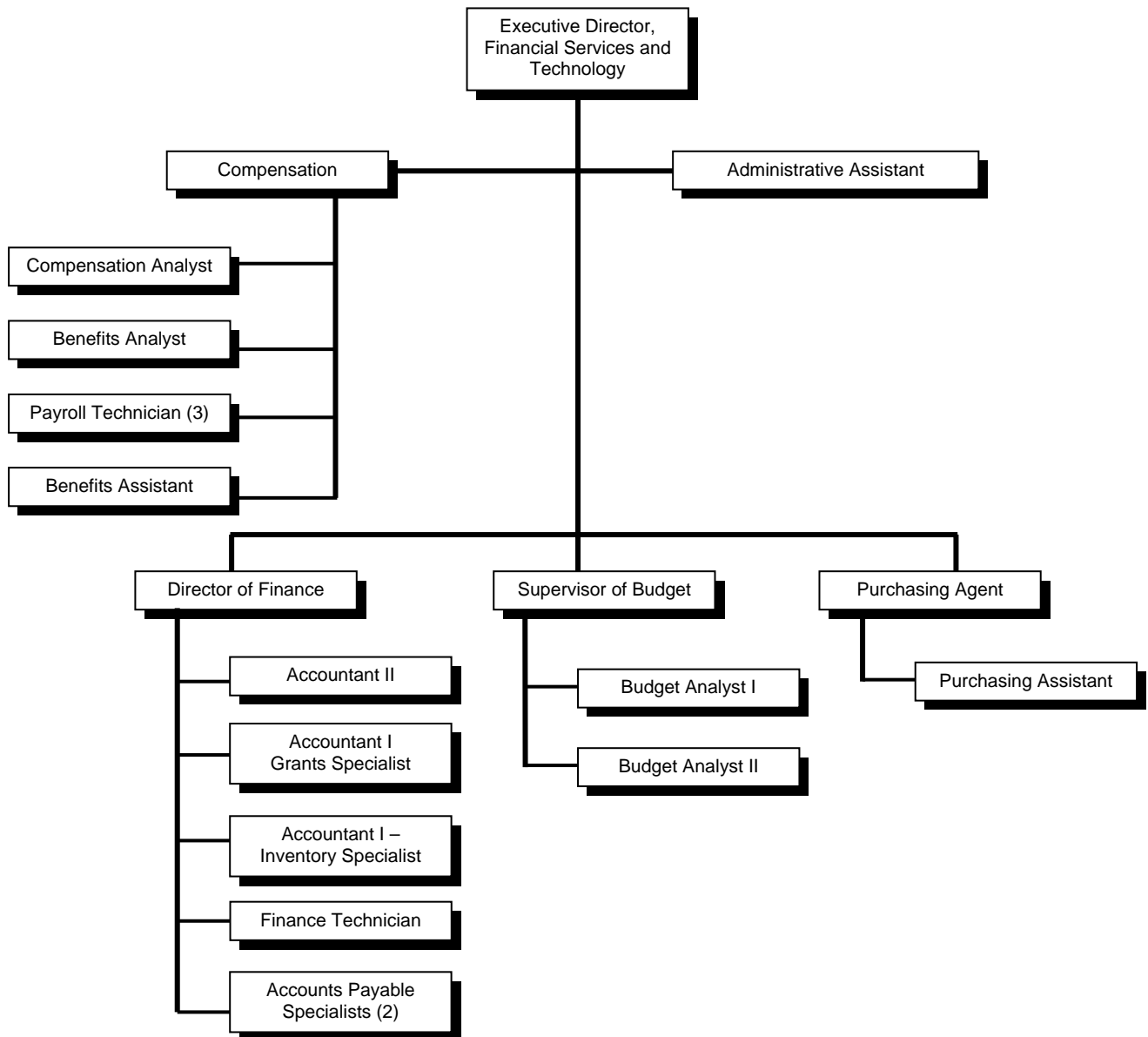
- Simplify the monthly financial report to the school board and add explanatory material to make the report more useful **(Recommendation 3-1)**.
- Move the payroll function from compensation services to finance **(Recommendation 3-2)**.
- Automate leave accounting and timecard system **(Recommendation 3-3)**.
- Involve teachers and principals more fully in budget preparation **(Recommendation 3-5)**.
- Simplify the budgeting system by consolidating the chart of accounts to include budgeting benefits at the school division level **(Recommendation 3-6)**.
- Maintain the Highline Personality System for Human Resources and Payroll, convert the fixed asset system to the appropriate module in ACPS' current financial management program, and abandon the parallel spreadsheet systems **(Recommendation 3-7)**.
- Develop a manual for school activity funds and make it available to principals and treasurers **(Recommendation 3-8)**.
- Conduct on-site internal audits of school activity funds at all elementary schools to ensure that the funds are managed well and that procedures are being followed **(Recommendation 3-9)**.
- Implement a division-wide purchasing card program for small purchases **(Recommendation 3-11)**.
- Set deadlines and clarify the responsibility of school and department staff for processing purchase orders and making budget transfers **(Recommendation 3-12)**.

This chapter focuses on financial services at ACPS. Information about types of funds and expenditures for ACPS will not be included in this chapter since this information is readily available in the division's annual adopted budget in a well-laid out format, available on the ACPS web site: <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/budgets/index.php>.

3.1 Organization and Management

ACPS financial services is organized into four different areas: Finance, Budget, Purchasing and Compensation Services. An executive director for financial services and technology heads these areas. As **Exhibit 3-1** shows, finance has a director of finance and six employees, budget has a supervisor of budget and two budget analysts, purchasing has a purchasing agent and a purchasing assistant and compensation services has six employees reporting directly to the executive director of financial services and technology. This executive director reports directly to the ACPS superintendent.

**EXHIBIT 3-1
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FINANCIAL SERVICES ORGANIZATION CHART**



Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Finance Department, 2007.

As **Exhibit 3-2** shows, ACPS is the only true urban school division among its peers. It has the lowest student population per 1,000 general population. In addition, it has the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students at 56 percent. As **Exhibit 3-3** shows, ACPS has the highest percentage of local funds, at almost 80 percent during the 2005-06 school year, and with just over eight percent, the lowest percentage of funds coming from the state. ACPS also has a considerably larger student population and staff than any of its peer divisions.

**EXHIBIT 3-2
OVERVIEW OF CLUSTER 6 PEER PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION	STUDENT POPULATION PER 1,000 GENERAL POPULATION	PERCENTAGE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
Alexandria	10,643	82.97	56.0	18
Charlottesville	4,331	96.14	48.9	12
Fredericksburg	2,496	129.47	46.0	4
Manassas	6,554	186.54	20.0	9
Winchester	3,743	158.70	39.6	7
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5,553	130.76	42.1	10

Sources: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007, United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census Data, www.schoolmatters.com.

**EXHIBIT 3-3
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
RECEIPTS BY FUND SOURCE
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005 FISCAL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	SALES AND USE TAX	STATE FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	LOCAL FUNDS	OTHER FUNDS	LOANS, BONDS, ETC.
Alexandria City Public Schools	5.40%	8.19%	6.05%	78.99%	1.38%	0.00%
Charlottesville City Public Schools	8.38%	23.73%	7.90%	55.34%	4.63%	0.01%
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	7.07%	16.70%	16.09%	55.45%	2.26%	2.43%
Manassas City Public Schools	6.82%	26.99%	2.98%	52.39%	2.09%	8.73%
Winchester City Public Schools	4.93%	17.36%	4.71%	38.34%	2.63%	32.03%
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	6.52%	18.59%	7.54%	56.10%	2.60%	8.64%

Source: 2005 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia, Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

3.2 Financial and Accounting Services

FINDING

ACPS has school board-adopted fiscal management policies that are backed by comprehensive procedures and guidelines that cover travel, deposits, workers' compensation, accounts payable, payroll, credit cards, and leave accounting (including

an elaborate methodology for calculating leave pay by type of personnel that provides numerous examples).

These Finance Office's Procedures and Guidelines (FOGP) outline the necessary guidelines, internal controls and segregation of duties so that, when followed, ACPS finance department has adequate controls and segregation of duties.

Interviews for this review revealed that the finance department personnel are cross-trained. In addition, every position and task has a backup person so that when necessary, duties can be performed by another staff member in the department. Although several finance department staff perform distinct tasks and their absence for any length of time would leave a serious backlog in areas they are responsible for, cross-trained staff equipped with written procedures are better able to adapt to unforeseen absences of staff members with distinct responsibilities.

In addition, ACPS has sound monthly cash reconciliation procedures that allows the finance department to track ACPS financial transactions and these are validated by the City of Alexandria, the division's appropriating entity.

COMMENDATION 3-A:

ACPS is commended for developing and adopting readily available and updated finance-related policies, procedures and guidelines as well as for having a cross-trained finance staff.

FINDING

ACPS has delegated authority from the City of Alexandria to print all checks at the school division.

Whereas many Virginia school divisions, as fiscally dependent entities, have labor-intensive procedures to transmit batches to a treasurer's office or if printed at the school division, have to take checks to the treasurer's office for signature, ACPS with its delegated authority is able to print signed checks in an efficient and secure manner.

The finance department spells out the procedures for handling the check signature stamp that carries the Alexandria city official signature as well as that of the chairperson of the ACPS school board. This FOGP 8, Check Signature Stamp outlines:

- The custody of the laser check safety paper.
- Segregation of duties.
- Physical security over signature stamp and check printer.
- Standard procedure for check run.
- Maintenance of log book for check run.

ACPS follows these procedures and internal controls that were mandated by the City of Alexandria Office of Internal Audit when the procedure was adopted in 1998.

COMMENDATION 3-B:

ACPS is commended on having a good working relationship with the City of Alexandria department of finance as well as strict adherence to internal controls to have the delegated authority to print signed checks at ACPS.

FINDING

ACPS internal financial reporting meets or exceeds standards. Financial reporting for governmental entities occurs on two levels:

- Audited *annual financial report* that must comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
- *Interim financial reports*. These reports are provided to principals and administrators and track the school division's adopted budget against expenditures and revenues. Periodic interim reports are also provided to the school board.

ACPS provides monthly budget-to-actual expenditure reports to principals and department directors so each knows where the budget for their school or department stands.

ACPS financial accounting and reporting policy, adopted October 1996 and revised April 20, 2006 states that:

The School Board will receive monthly financial statements, including statements of revenues and expenditures, showing the financial condition of the division as of the last day of the preceding month.

Accordingly, ACPS provides an elaborate monthly financial report to the school board. These detailed monthly budget-to-actual expenditure reports provide the school board with an important tool in its oversight role. It allows the school board to compare budgeted amounts against revenues and expenditures. According to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA),

Regular monitoring of budgetary performance provides an early warning of potential problems and gives decision makers time to consider actions that may be needed if major deviations in budget-to-actual results become evident. It is also an essential input in demonstrating accountability.

COMMENDATION 3-C:

ACPS is commended for providing elaborate and detailed monthly financial reports to school board members so that they can administer appropriate oversight.

FINDING

ACPS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) complies with GAAP.

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO)'s certificate of excellence program recognizes school systems for excellence in the preparation and issuance of their comprehensive annual financial report. A governmental entity that meets these standards can receive a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The requirements for an award-winning CAFR include:

- An introductory section with an organizational overview, summary of fiscal operations, and a strategic plan of the division.
- A financial section that includes independent auditor reports, basic financial statements as required by GASB 34, and Combining and Individual Fund Information.
- A statistical section that presents certain financial and demographic information on a multiyear basis.

Besides compiling the above information for the CAFR, the processes that lead to developing and compiling the data for the CAFR allow a division to use the same data for planning, both in the short term and the long term. Applying for and receiving an ASBO award each successive year demonstrates the division's commitment to excellence in financial reporting. ACPS has been receiving the ASBO certificate of excellence since 1997 and received it for fiscal year 2005, the most current year awarded.

COMMENDATION 3-D:

ACPS is commended for maintaining financial reporting standards sufficient to merit receiving the Association of School Business Officials' Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for each of the fiscal years since 1997.

FINDING

The monthly financial reports that the school board receives as part of their monthly board meeting packet include a financial report and a cash reconciliation report.

The finance department does cash reconciliation between its bank accounts and its general ledger system every month and this is verified by the City of Alexandria Finance Office. This practice alone ensures that ACPS has the adequate procedures and controls with appropriate checks and balances provided by the City of Alexandria to verify cash balances each month are properly stated.

As **Exhibit 3-4** shows, the detailed monthly financial report includes ten attachments. The first attachment provides information by each of the three funds at ACPS—general, special and lunch fund—by budgeted revenues against amounts and percentage collected to date. The second attachment provides expenditures under each of the three

funds by function by providing adopted budget by function, expenditures to date, percent spent as well as previous year-to-date expenditure amount and percentage. This allows for comparison between years. It also provides an indicator for revenues and expenditures to date. Given these monthly data, the school board can assess the significance of deviations in revenues and expenditures, distinguishing between one-time fluctuations and those with long-term consequences.

The rest of the attachments provide further breakdowns in each revenue category by each fund and expenditures for each of the three funds by personnel and non-personnel services categories. The personnel services category for each of the three funds has as many as eight object codes and non-personnel services as 29 object codes. This is extremely detailed information that requires time on the part of the director of finance to compile. Even though some of the reports are programmed in the ACPS financial management system, they still take up time to compile each month.

Interviews for this review revealed that ACPS has been providing such detailed information for a very long time. Sometimes, when an oversight board such as a school board is inundated with detail at this level, it focuses the board's attention on minutiae, rather than on policy matters such as the overall financial status of the division. The current financial reports provide too much detail.

They also provide too little summary. Financial staff could include explanations of variances and trends, and focus attention on areas of concern that need to be tracked over several months. Instead, the figures are provided with little explanation.

ACPS should provide its school board with a summary revenue and expenditure statement and accompanying explanatory material. It might also discuss providing this information on a quarterly, rather than a monthly basis. This would provide the board with sufficient information to apply proper oversight, while reducing the workload on the finance staff considerably.

A less detailed report with more explanations will not always suffice. The board may ask for more information from time to time. The finance department may provide details if worrisome trends or large variations in revenues and expenditures require board attention. But the experience of other school divisions suggests that a properly annotated summary will provide the board with more information it can use than the current level of detail.

**EXHIBIT 3-4
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Statement of revenues
General Fund revenues, Special Fund revenues and Lunch Fund revenues
Comparative statement of expenditures by function
General Fund, Special Fund and Lunch Fund
Revenue collected FY 2006 – Operating Fund budget
State aid revenues
Local source revenues
Federal aid revenues
Appropriated fund
Revenue collected FY 2006 – Special Revenue Fund budget
State aid revenues
Local source revenues
Federal aid revenues
Revenue collected FY 2006 – Lunch Fund budget
State aid revenues
Local source revenues
Fund balance
Federal aid revenues
Statement of expenditures by object
Operating Fund
Special Revenue Fund
Lunch Fund
Glossary

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Financial Services Department, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 3-1:

Change the current monthly financial report to the school board to include a statement of revenues by fund and a comparative statement of expenditures by function on a monthly basis, reserving detailed reports as necessary.

The monthly report should only include the information in what are now Attachments I and II, together with background information needed to make sense of the raw data. The finance department should only provide the remaining information upon request or to assist the board in understanding special circumstances. If the board really wants to see information at this level of detail, it should be provided on either a quarterly or a semiannual basis.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

3.3 Payroll

Payroll at ACPS is currently organized as compensation services with six personnel as previously shown in **Exhibit 3-1**. Three of the six are payroll technicians with divided responsibilities by schools and departments; the other three are responsible for benefits and compensation. All six are directly under the executive director of financial services and technology, but do not have a supervisor or manager.

FINDING

ACPS restructured the payroll function about a year ago to solve a larger problem that was related to compensation and human resources functions.

The three payroll technicians were previously in the finance department. The finance department still has many payroll related responsibilities. These include certain segregation of duties required by the City of Alexandria related to printing of checks, wiring of funds for direct deposit as well as paying payroll taxes.

Although part of the compensation services section, the payroll personnel have limited interaction with the benefit and the compensation personnel. Many of the interactions with finance continue, however. For instance, technical questions related to payment submission to the Virginia Retirement System are answered by the director of finance, and questions concerning benefits are referred to the benefits analyst. Because these six staff members have no direct supervisor, when they have questions they must turn to the executive director of financial services and technology. This may have been an adequate short-term solution to an emergency, but it should not continue as a permanent solution.

Payroll was under the finance department, as is customary for many school divisions. Segregation of duties for good internal control purposes require that where payment of personnel takes place be separated from human resources where data entry on new personnel takes place and so the finance department would be the logical placement for the personnel.

In addition, many of the payroll related finance office guidelines and procedures have been developed and adopted by the finance department. The segregation of duties for running the payroll and printing of checks has been well developed and implemented at the finance department and can continue regardless of where the payroll technicians are placed.

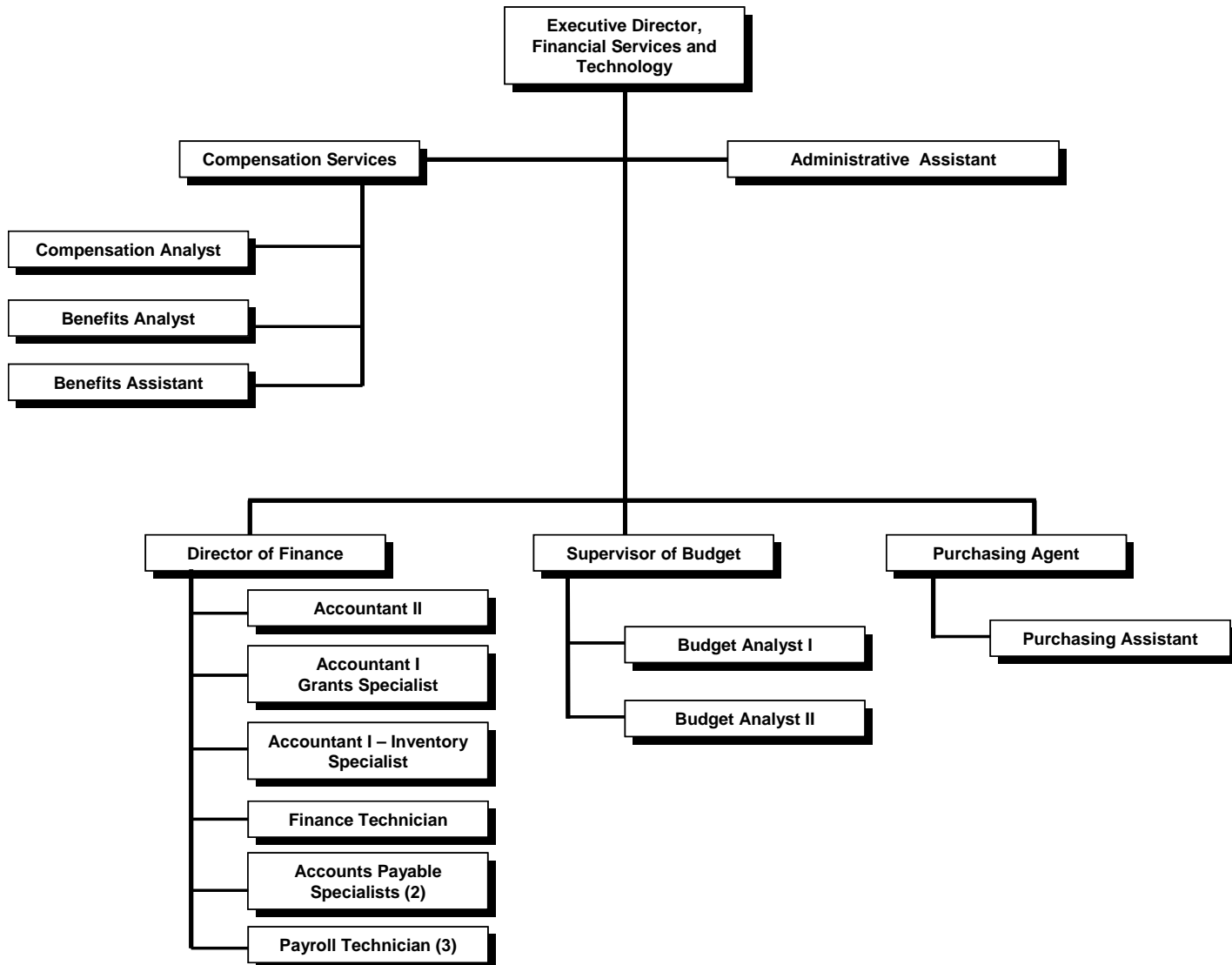
Without direct involvement from a supervisor or manager who can focus attention on payroll, day-to-day management and oversight of this area would likely suffer. If the executive director of financial services and technology turns her attention to the compensation services area, it would take away from the focus she would otherwise need to maintain over the many areas under her responsibility: finance, purchasing, budget, technology and compensation services.

RECOMMENDATION 3-2:

Move payroll function from compensation services to the finance department so that the three payroll technicians report to the director of finance.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-5**, payroll technicians should be moved back under the director of finance. The payroll technicians need to have an intermediate supervisor or manager that is easily approachable and available to report to and to turn to for assistance instead of someone at the level of the executive director of financial services and technology whose focus should be at a much higher level.

**EXHIBIT 3-5
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROPOSED FINANCE ORGANIZATION CHART**



Source: Created by Mgt of America, Inc., 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

Several ACPS payroll functions require labor-intensive manual processes.

ACPS payroll system is part of the Highline Personality System for HR and payroll. As such, the system is tied to HR functions and is interfaced with the ACPS financial management system. This system is not tied to the timecard system used at ACPS for its hourly staff. ACPS has many employees that are on salary, but hourly pay staff include the custodial staff, bus drivers, and food service personnel.

ACPS provides an hourly pay timekeeping system at various locations in the school division. The punch card system used for timekeeping for these hourly employees produces timekeeping information that is difficult to read at times. Once deciphered, treasurers at schools, for instance, have to separate what are normal, leave and overtime hours.

ACPS maintains an automated substitute teachers system. This system, however, is not used for leave accounting or for substitute teacher payroll. Schools have to manually write down individual substitute pay rate and hours worked, get the principal's signature, and then send it to payroll for processing. Substitute teachers are paid on a semi-monthly basis.

All leave accounting at ACPS is done manually. This results in the three payroll technicians handling between 800 and 1,000 leave forms each pay period. Payroll staff run twice monthly payroll for over 2,000 employees. It takes the payroll staff a week and a half to get the payroll ready; manual data entry of leave takes considerable time.

Hourly-pay staff leave forms manually note overtime and leave. Other employee leave forms note type and amount of leave taken. These as well as the substitute forms are required to be signed by a supervisor, a principal or department head. They are then received by HR for approval and then forwarded to the appropriate payroll technician for processing. Many of the leave forms examined during this review did not have necessary approval signatures, nor was there a place on the form for approval signatures. Some substitute teacher forms also did not have principal's signature although there is a place for principal's initials.

RECOMMENDATION 3-3:

Automate leave accounting for hourly employees.

Institute a timekeeping system for hourly employees that can be interfaced with the payroll system for automated processing to replace the cumbersome manual process of paper leave forms with unclear signoff requirements and inadequate forms, and replace the current timecard system.

Implementing this recommendation will require the current payroll system to be used for leave accounting as well as adopting a reliable and automated timecard system that can be programmed to interface with the ACPS payroll system.

Classified personnel would be responsible for entering their own leave accounting, subject to approvals or audit by reporting supervisors, managers or principals. Treasurers at the schools would handle processing of hourly employee timekeeping system timesheets.

The substitute teacher system would be need to be enhanced to incorporate automated substitute teacher pay and teacher leave accounting. In addition, ACPS would need to adapt the current leave policies managed by HR to reflect the new automated leave accounting. Once the initial work for setting up the system is in place, it would greatly reduce the ongoing work associated with the current manual leave system for the schools, departments and payroll staff. This recommendation should be considered and implemented along with **Recommendation 3-12** on evaluation of the financial management system and payroll system.

In particular, it would require dedicated time from the ITS personnel to configure the system to allow leave accounting. The Highline Time entry package is apparently quite complex according to ITS and may require dedicated time to initiate and run the system. Also, there may be a cost involved if ACPS does not have all the components of the time entry and leave accounting module and has to make this purchase.

Timekeeping systems come as web or PC-based system that can be freestanding or are part of a time and attendance system. The fiscal impact of \$10,000 is for a free standing system. The costs, however, can vary greatly depending on the components and capabilities of the system. It would be preferable, instead, for ACPS to obtain the timekeeping module as part of a time and attendance system.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementing this recommendation will require purchase of a new timecard system as well as an upgrade (or better programming) to the Highline Personality System to allow for automated leave accounting by all classified individuals and an upgrade to the substitute teacher system.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Purchase or Upgrade Timekeeping System	(\$10,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The ACPS financial management system (FMS) and the HR system used for the payroll function, as currently operated, is not efficient.

ACPS currently has Mitchell Humphrey’s FMS II accounting software for its general ledger, accounts payable and purchasing and Highline Personality System for payroll and HR, both acquired in about 1997.

Interviews with finance and payroll personnel revealed that there are numerous inefficiencies in the way the systems work. The FMS, however, seems to work better than the payroll and HR system. These two systems were acquired and paid for with unexpended funds available towards the end of a fiscal year and due to time constraints for expending these funds, were not preceded by careful evaluation for suitability of the systems to ACPS. Furthermore, it did not eliminate the very labor-intensive processes that otherwise well-adapted or functioning systems would limit.

The Highline system for HR and payroll is used by personnel in HR, payroll, budgeting, and finance with support from ITS for the HR, payroll and budgeting functions. The system is such that changes made in one area often result in changes or “glitches” in other areas that need to be fixed by departmental personnel or ITS. Some of this could be prevented by better training or better understanding of the system and the various screens and effects of inputs in one area to another. However, long-time ACPS employees, with support from ITS, have been working with this system for several years now and likely know the system reasonably well.

Highline apparently is capable of allowing complex reports but these are not used either due to their complexity or the sheer difficulty in creating them. In addition, each payroll cycle, batches to be processed for payroll need ITS intervention before finance runs the payroll. A better system would allow seamless integration of such batches rather than requiring manual handling by ITS each pay cycle.

As stated in **Section 3.3. Payroll**, this system does not have a leave accounting function, or interface with the timekeeping system for hourly employees. When ACPS first purchased Highline, it did not have a time scheduling module. Whereas this module is now available, ACPS has not evaluated the feasibility or the ease with which this could be added on, but given their experience to date, ITS expects this to be a time-consuming and complex expansion of their current system.

The Mitchell Humphrey FMS II accounting software is supposed to allow efficiencies of a paperless office. Their FMS-Docuvue module, for instance, allows supporting accounts payable documents to be stored electronically. Currently, accounts payable (AP) services personnel processed 24,232 invoices and 8,936 purchase orders.

Electronically scanned and stored invoices would reduce a great amount of paper handled by the AP services as well as the amount of copying and filing of this paperwork, sometimes in triplicate. There are other enhancements of this system that are supposed to make the FMS functions work efficiently; this does not seem to be the case at ACPS.

It is difficult to determine the true nature of the systems problem: whether the FMS and the Highline systems are not adequately adapted for serving an institution such as a fiscally dependent school division, whether ACPS has not used the systems to their fullest by taking advantage of system capabilities or whether the current systems are not optimally compatible with each other and are just cumbersome to learn and use.

ACPS, therefore, might benefit from reviewing their current system against other systems in the marketplace. Consideration of the FMS should include the following functions:

- General ledger
- Accounts payable
- Purchasing and procurement
- Budget creation and management
- Grant Management to the extent that it works along with the Virginia Department of Education OMEGA system
- Inventory and asset management with capability to allow of future bar coding or other method of identification and tracking of assets
- Payroll
- Time and attendance to include leave accounting and timekeeping

If a new system is being considered, then it would need to be integrated or interfaced with other systems and would need to allow conversions from existing systems. This could be the Highline system, for payroll and leave accounting functions, the timekeeping system if not a module of the FMS, or the substitute teacher system, for instance.

Rationale provided by ACPS for not funding infrastructure needs has been ACPS' focus on funding direct student expenditures. However, the division may be incurring ongoing costs from inefficient processes and support systems. An efficient, user friendly system could greatly reduce workload, reduce errors, streamline the workflow and provide easy access to reports with detailed budgeting and expenditure information that ACPS school board and management would desire.

ACPS derives nearly 80 percent of its funding from local funds as compared to about 56 percent for its peer divisions. ACPS can invest a small percentage of its local funds to purchase or enhance an effective financial management system that appropriately serves the school division in an efficient and streamlined manner.

RECOMMENDATION 3-4:

Evaluate the need for a new financial management system that includes payroll by assessing the current financial management system and the HR system for payroll against new systems for effectiveness, ease of use, compatibility to ACPS functions and reduction of inefficiencies.

ACPS should obtain reviews of different financial management systems designed specifically for school divisions. Before issuing a RFP, ACPS could use an accounting software matchmaking service. Such a service would provide different accounting packages to review in response to ACPS needs, requests and characteristics. Such a service can provide ACPS the ability to review customized packages at no cost without the commitment to purchase at the same time providing valuable information on different packages available for the criteria important to ACPS.

For the payroll function, ACPS could turn to the American Payroll Association's 2007 Time and Attendance Systems Buyer's Guide to review available systems, their capabilities and review those against what the ACPS system can currently do and what ACPS would like in any new system. Many FMS, however, do have payroll modules as part of the same system.

In addition, ACPS should also obtain first-hand reviews from similarly sized Virginia school divisions on FMS they use and receive information on highly recommended packages from other school divisions and districts.

Against these two reviews, ACPS should also review its current systems for their effectiveness, ease of use, any redundancy, system maintenance and management, as well as evaluate the ability to enhance or add to the current system. This would include consultation with the providers of the two systems. It would also include evaluating the compatibility of the current systems with each other, the ability of Highline or the substitute teacher system, SAM, to do leave accounting cost effectively and efficiently.

Such a review would affect the implementation of other recommendations in this chapter. This includes the implementation of the fixed asset module as well as leave accounting and timekeeping for hourly employees. If this recommendation is to be implemented then upgrades and enhancements to the current system should be delayed until a decision is made on the FMS and the payroll system. If the new FMS includes the budgeting module, then implementation of the revised chart of accounts should be done subsequent to the adoption of the new FMS.

Evaluation of the FMS should be undertaken this fiscal year so that next steps that affect the finance and payroll functions, may be appropriately adopted. A review team or working group to undertake this evaluation should be created and should at least include the director of finance, the budget supervisor and the ITS systems director.

FISCAL IMPACT

A new financial management system with all the modules mentioned above will cost between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for a school division with the characteristics of ACPS. Depending on the customization and the product chosen by ACPS, this amount could be higher or lower.

If ACPS decides to purchase a new system, then the School Board should include this purchase in their budget request for fiscal 2009. ACPS could ask the City to appropriate funding for the FMS from the unexpended funds at the end of fiscal year 2007. Unexpended funds at the end of the fiscal year have ranged from \$1.6 million in fiscal 2002 to a high of \$4.3 million in fiscal 2005.

A move to a new system, or even an upgrade to the current system, would require a tremendous dedicated time for personnel in ITS and finance. This should be planned for, accordingly.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Purchase New Financial Management System	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)

3.4 Budget Management

FINDING

ACPS has a very thorough budget process and budget document.

The ACPS budget calendar and operating budgets are available on the ACPS Web site. The budget document provides useful information about the ACPS methodology for budgeting as well as clearly laid out graphs and charts about the finances at ACPS.

According to the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Award Program that reflects the best practices on budget presentation, a budget needs to have the following minimum for consideration for this award:

- The budget as a policy document that includes entitywide long-term financial policies and a budget message that articulates priorities and issues for the budget for the new fiscal year.
- The budget as a financial plan that provides a summary of revenues and expenditures for the prior year, the current year (both budgeted and estimated actual), and the proposed budget year.
- The budget as a communication device that describes the process for preparing, reviewing, and adopting the budget for the coming fiscal year.

The ACPS budget is transparent and well laid out and provides sufficient information to its stakeholders. Although ACPS has yet to apply for or receive the GFOA or the ASBO awards for excellence in budgeting, the ACPS meets and exceeds the minimum requirements for consideration of these awards. As such ACPS should submit for such consideration. A school division's effort in meeting the many requirements of GFOA or ASBO demonstrates a commitment to an effective budget process.

In addition, ACPS budgeting staff provides annual training to all staff involved in submitting budgets. This is supplemented by an elaborate *Budget Planning & Instruction Manual*, which is annually produced and distributed. It provides the complete budget cycle dates; information on budget requests with justifications; staff roles in the budget process; role of the building budget committee that each school convenes each budget cycle; and descriptions for school budgets and various allocations.

Interviews for this review as well as surveys revealed that a majority of principals and administrators believe that the budgeting process effectively involves administrators and staff. In addition, support from the budgeting staff is highly regarded.

COMMENDATION 3-E:

ACPS is commended on its effective budget process through a comprehensive budget manual, annual training, support to staff involved in budgeting and the production of its elaborate budget document.

FINDING

The current budget process does not effectively include the teachers even though there are building budget committees at each school.

In the GFOA publication, "Best Practices in Public Budgeting," a budget planning process includes "the need for a budget calendar, specific guidelines and instructions for each participant, a mechanism for coordinating the budget preparation and review, discussion, modification, and adoption, and opportunities for stakeholder input."

The school division practices all the above criteria except providing opportunities for stakeholder input at the teacher level as well as from principals on the overall ACPS budget. According to the GFOA, "A government should develop mechanisms to identify stakeholder concerns, needs, and priorities." Teachers and principals need to actively be part of this stakeholder discussion.

As the stakeholders responsible for educating the students, teachers and principals have firsthand experience of the needs at the classroom level and at the school level. The majority of the ACPS budget covers personnel and benefits, teachers and principals would have much beneficial input as to how these funds are allocated, to what programs, and at what level.

In addition, ACPS allocates funds called "differentiated resources" for funding programs for at-risk students. This allocation is based on a formula that captures site-specific information such as the number of students who move during the school year, who live in public housing, and who qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Although principals have almost complete autonomy as to how these funds are spent (so long as they are used for risk prevention activities), they have no input on the formula for allocating these funds.

RECOMMENDATION 3-5:

Adopt a budget process that involves teachers in budget preparation to effectively meet ACPS needs and promote a process that involves principals in the instructional category funding of the budgeting process.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

ACPS uses a line-item budget and for at least twenty years, ACPS has been budgeting at a detailed object code level.

This means that ACPS financial management system and the accounting and budgeting processes have been configured to budget, appropriate, and expend funds at this level.

Line-item budgeting is the most widely used approach for many governmental entities including schools. Its simplicity and control orientation make it attractive to many school divisions and depending on the level of appropriation and expenditure detail, it allows control over how funds are budgeted and expended. The expenditure detail is often at fund, function and object level.

According to the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics' Financial Accounting for local and State School Systems:

The most severe criticism is that it (Line-item budgeting) presents little useful information to decisionmakers on the functions and activities of organizational units. Since this budget presents proposed expenditure amounts only by category, the justifications for such expenditures are not explicit and are often unintuitive. In addition, it may invite micro-management by administrators and governing boards as they attempt to manage operations with little or no performance information. However, to overcome its limitations, the line-item budget can be augmented with supplemental program and performance information.

The ACPS chart of accounts, described in **Exhibit 3-6** shows the extreme amount of detail that ACPS uses. It has 24-digit account numbers and budgeting and appropriation control occurs at this level.

**EXHIBIT 3-6
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHART OF ACCOUNTS DESCRIPTION**

TYPE OF CODE	# OF DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS	# IN EACH DIGIT CODE	AN EXAMPLE IN EACH CATEGORY	
			CODE NUMBER	CODE NAME
Project code	120	4	0100	Operating Fund
Cost center code	3	1	2	Elementary
Site code	30	2	03	Mount Vernon
Department code	77	4	9411	Staff Development
Function code	110	4	1313	Staff Training Services
Program code	181	4	1029	English
Character	9	5	10000	Salaries
Object group	103	5	10200	Professional Instruction Regular
Object code	407	5	11210	Teacher Regular

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Finance Department, 2007.

Such a complex system results in an inordinate number of budget transfers. In the current fiscal year 2007, from July to November 2007, there were 990 budget transfers, some as small as a penny or a few dollars. Appropriating funds at very small amounts amongst numerous categories results in the need for budget transfers. When schools and departments are making budget requests in early fall, they do not yet know what the next school year is going to look like. There may be numerous changes in student enrollment and needs that requires shifting priorities.

In addition, all budget transfer requests are filled out on a paper form. The triplicate copy form requires description for the transfers to and from, reasons for adjustment and requires approval signature by the requesting principal, manager or director, approval by the budget office and then final processing by the finance office. If the amount for the transfer is over \$15,000, it has to go to the school board for approval. This is an incredible amount of paperwork involving several personnel at different levels handling a process that has roots in an inefficient detailed system of budgeting and appropriation control.

The current system 24-digit account code is prone to errors by its sheer complexity. Further, it makes it very difficult for departments and schools to budget at that level. Interviews for this review showed the budgeting methods used by schools. This included budgeting less than \$100,000 among scores of accounts. This practice accounts for many of the errors that the Accounts Payable services personnel have to manage (see 3.9 Purchasing). As described above, it also necessitates many budget transfers, which are themselves error-prone.

RECOMMENDATION 3-6:

Streamline the chart of accounts and budget and appropriate all benefits at the school division level to reduce the complexity inherent in the current, long-standing ACPS budgeting system.

At the very least, ACPS should budget at a higher object level but configure the financial management system so that expenditures are tracked at the current detailed level to maintain appropriation control but provide the flexibility necessary to budget at a reasonable level of detail.

Accounting for benefits in a centralized manner at the school division level would streamline the process and eliminate the source of many errors and budget transfer requests. Budget staff project benefit amounts and these are included in the adopted operating budget. Having a benefit category in the budget at the school division level would allow the budget staff and payroll staff to appropriately assign these and expend accordingly without needlessly involving schools and departments.

Implementation of this recommendation would require a careful look at the current chart of accounts and appropriate consolidation at the function, program and object code levels to allow a manageable system that still provides adequate historical data for trend analysis. In addition, the consolidation of all benefits at the division level would require changes and necessitate a cross walk to allow comparisons to historical data.

Changes in the system would be difficult for some personnel who have been working under the long-standing current system. Training with appropriate guidelines would be

necessary. This implementation should also be used to automate the budget transfer system replacing the current paper form process.

To provide adequate oversight to the school board, while implementing this recommendation, ACPS should include program and performance information so that ACPS can better track effectiveness of funds expended rather than focusing on dollars spent at the most detailed levels.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

ACPS runs two parallel systems to maintain position control data.

Budget staff maintains an Excel spreadsheet that was initially created for making budget projections and tracking actual positions and full-time equivalents (FTE) at ACPS. The Highline Personality System for payroll and HR has been used by ACPS since 2000. This is the official ACPS system for all HR-related information, including position control.

Over the years, as HR did not effectively maintain the Highline system, the budget Excel spreadsheet has become the default system. It is maintained by the budget personnel with the latest FTE information. The Excel spreadsheet has become extremely elaborate and is consistently reliable to the extent that other departments, schools and HR itself are turning to the budget personnel for position-related questions.

In addition, there are several problems with the Highline system. As different personnel make changes in their respective areas of HR, compensation, benefits, payroll or budget, unexpected changes occur with problematic consequences. Information Technology Services has to be involved often to correct the system to prevent further problems.

Since FTE-related expenditures are made in the financial management system and FTEs themselves are tracked in the Highline system, budget personnel monitor both systems to keep their Excel spreadsheet updated. Every pay period, budget personnel receive pay memoranda from the compensation analyst with latest information that is used to upkeep with Excel spreadsheet.

The three budget personnel would like to stop using the Excel spreadsheet and have even talked about convening a workgroup to ensure that Highline becomes the position control system as intended. If this happens, data from Highline should be downloaded as necessary to make the necessary projections when needed. Highline does have the capability to project as well as run the types of reports that budget personnel would need on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION 3-7:

Use the Highline Personality System for Human Resources and Payroll for all position control by implementing procedures to ensure its timely maintenance, train personnel in effective use of the system and simultaneously abandon the parallel Excel spreadsheet.

As soon as the procedures and necessary training are completed for maintaining an up-to-date Highline system, the Excel sheet should be abandoned. Continued reliance on the spreadsheet will further delay necessary effort from all personnel to make the Highline system work. Since the primary problem with updating the system has been one of personnel rather than the system itself, extra effort should be made to properly train and support those working on the system.

This should include the budget personnel helping during the transition period to maintain the Highline system due to their knowledge of that system. The executive director of financial services and technology should make one person responsible for this implementation to ensure accountability and proper transition. The supervisor of budget has already planned on forming a working group to make this transition, and the two budget personnel are familiar with the both the Highline system as well as the needs for a properly maintained Highline system. Thus the budget supervisor could be made responsible for this implementation and finance and HR and compensation personnel should work together for a smooth transition.

Initial implementation of this recommendation requires some focused time for several personnel; the Excel spreadsheet-related workload for the budget personnel could then be used for quality assurance and monitoring of an accurate Highline system for position control. In addition, the budget personnel could provide some program and performance information to the school board to augment the line-item budget system.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

3.5 Grants Administration and Management

FINDING

ACPS has a well-defined system for administering federal, state and local funds headed by an assistant superintendent for federal and state programs.

ACPS is audited by federal and state funding agencies each year and has been successfully meeting all requirements. All grants related files are very well maintained and all information is readily and easily available. The majority of the grants for the division, both state and federal, are administered through the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

The approval processes use electronic timesheets that are received, reviewed and approved electronically. The majority of the reimbursements under these programs are

made using the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) OMEGA system. Three personnel in finance are responsible for managing federal, state and local funds and any reimbursements.

COMMENDATION 3-F:

ACPS is commended on a well-developed and well-documented grants management system.

3.6 Records Management

FINDING

ACPS has a well-developed records management system.

Proper records management requires an appropriate records retention policy that tracks state and federal requirements and guidelines. These requirements are covered under Virginia statutes and rules set by the Virginia Library Board as well as federal regulations governing academic, School Board, financial, and personnel records. Generally, records should be maintained in the legally allowable format that provides greatest density and easiest access. Procedures following these requirements outline retention schedules by type of record and dictate policies and procedures on the safe storage of current and past records and the appropriate disposal of records at the end of the required retention period.

ACPS personnel during interviews for this review were quite aware of the procedures for records retention and knew precisely what records needed to be stored and how they needed to be labeled before being sent to storage each year. ACPS should ensure that this system of records retention is adequately documented so that in the event of personnel change, this system would continue.

COMMENDATION 3-G:

ACPS is commended on having an effective records retention system.

3.7 School Activity Funds

FINDING

At ACPS, school activity funds are managed by individual schools with the finance department monitoring these on a monthly basis.

ACPS has 13 elementary schools and four secondary schools: a high school, two middle schools, and one school for ninth grade. Each school has its own school activity fund. School activity funds comprise funds for numerous extracurricular school activities, groups, and clubs at each school for the benefit of that school. The principal at each school has authority and oversight over these school activity funds and the secretary/treasurer at each school assists the principal in managing the school activity funds.

The School Board Policy D1, Financial Accounting and Reporting on School Level Accounting System, adopted October 24, 1996 and revised April 20, 2006, 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.

A record of all receipts and disbursements will be maintained in accordance with the principal's Manual of Accounting Procedures, as promulgated by the Superintendent and in accordance with regulations issued by the State Board of Education.

The principal will prepare and forward to the Superintendent or his/her designee monthly financial statements, including statement of revenues and expenditures, showing the financial condition of the school as of the last day of the preceding month.

Interviews for this review revealed that the finance department receives bank reconciliation and monthly statements from each school that show receipts and disbursements and year-to-date transfers; these are reviewed by the finance department. In addition, all the schools use the Manatee accounting software that allows for consistent electronic accounting for school activity funds. Finally, the finance department maintains a standardized chart of accounts for activity funds that all schools use while some schools do add new accounts to this list. The finance department senior accountant trains and provides support to school treasurers who need help using this accounting system.

COMMENDATION 3-H:

ACPS is commended for having an accounting system for school activity funds for all schools and for having policies and procedures for review of monthly statements of revenues and expenditures.

FINDING

The School Board-adopted Policy D1, stated above, for school level accounting is appropriate and readily available for everyone on the ACPS Web site under School Board policy manual.

Nevertheless, when asked about a school activity funds manual during the onsite visit for this review, several principals and other school personnel had not seen one or knew of one. The manual initially provided to the review team upon a request to the finance department was an old user manual for the Manatee accounting software. Some schools may have this volume. On the last day of the review, the finance department did find and provide a 1988 school activity fund manual.

This March 1988 *Manual of Accounting and Internal Control, School Activity Funds*, is very thorough, providing extensive information on roles and responsibilities, including a responsibility matrix, use of funds and handling disbursements, suggestions on uses of funds by sources as well as inappropriate use, bank accounts and fund raising, records

retention. The ten attachments includes: monthly review checklists for principals and treasurers, various forms and instructions. Even a thorough, well-written, comprehensive manual such as this is useful only if it is readily available, widely known to exist and kept up-to-date on an ongoing basis. The current manual may be a good guide to a new treasurer or principal (if they can find a copy), but it is not going to be consistent with current board policies, ACPS practices, or state or federal regulations.

Principals interviewed for this review revealed that they did not have clear guidelines on use of funds from school activity funds, weren't aware of a manual, nor were they provided with procedures on how to use specific funds or limitations, if any. Several expressed their nervousness on expending funds out of school activity funds for fear of doing the wrong thing.

One example of a type of fund causing uncertainty for principals is the use of rental fee funds. ACPS has a policy of dedicating fees collected from rental of schools buildings to each respective school. These fees are provided to schools as school activity funds; there is, however, no direction on what those funds can be used for.

Site visits and interviews with bookkeepers and principals further revealed that different schools have different systems for maintaining and managing their school activity funds. Treasurers follow instructions passed down to them from previous treasurers. Principals worried about these funds probably provide adequate oversight and controls over them; several have adopted self-imposed internal controls on their own. Not all schools may be following adequate procedures; these procedures, adequate or not, will almost certainly be inconsistent among schools. Without the benefit of audits at all schools, it would be difficult to determine if proper controls are in place at all schools.

At the only high school at ACPS, one treasurer is responsible for managing school activity funds with no other individual able to undertake these duties. The treasurer, in this position for eleven years, learned the procedures from the previous treasurer. Although there have been no citations on the management of the funds in the outside accounting firm's audit, there are some problematic procedures. The high school requires two signatures on checks, and cash left overnight is handled appropriately in an account that has annual revenues and expenditures of over a million dollars a year. There is no oversight on what individual teachers or coaches do with checks and cash received. The treasurer provides receipts to all teachers and coaches that submit funds to her. But it is not certain that individual teachers and coaches know of the procedures or whether they in turn have provided receipts in an appropriate manner or how long and where they hold on to cash before bringing it to the treasurer.

RECOMMENDATION 3-8:

ACPS needs to create, adopt and implement an updated manual for school activity funds, make it available to all school principals and treasurers, and provide training in the standardized procedures.

As source documents, the finance department can use the 1988 manual and manuals the current CFO produced previously for a very large school division, incorporating current Virginia regulations and ACPS needs, policies and procedures. Some of the issues to address in this manual include:

- Procedures for making purchases and reimbursements.
- Thresholds and allowable transfers between accounts.
- Guidelines for appropriate use of funds.
- Need for duplicate receipts and cash receipt records for all funds received at the school.
- Training for school treasurers with periodic follow-up training to ensure adherence to policies and procedures.
- Training for teachers and coaches at the beginning of the school year.
- Include a section on handling School Activity Funds in the teachers' handbook.
- Limitations on amounts that teachers and coaches can keep in cash.
- Procedures for cash and check deposits and for leaving cash in safety vaults overnight.
- Availability of records to finance department staff or external auditors.

The School Activity Fund manual, besides being distributed to all school principals and treasurers, should also be uploaded on ACPS intranet or on ACPS Web site. It should also be updated on a regular basis. All treasurers should be trained in the standardized procedures. Secondary schools that have larger activity fund accounts should designate and train a backup person who can undertake treasurer duties during a treasurer's absence.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The secondary schools at ACPS have their school activity funds audited annually by an outside firm.

This is done as part of the annual financial audits for ACPS, as a fiscally dependent school division, in conjunction with City of Alexandria audit, and as such, is requested and paid for by the City of Alexandria.

The four secondary schools receive these regular, annual audits with on-site visits and findings are included in the management letters provided to the schools by the accounting firms conducting such audits. TC Williams High School averages over a million dollars in its school activity funds, with middle schools ranging between \$500,000 to \$750,000 and elementary schools ranging from \$15,000 to \$50,000.

According to the finance department, due to cost, longstanding practice, and to the relatively low amounts in elementary school's activity funds, elementary school activity funds are not subject to outside audits. ACPS relies on internal reviews by the finance department to monitor these accounts.

Monitoring by ACPS finance department is limited to the review of the monthly statements for schools that is reviewed by the senior accountant. Any mistakes on a monthly statement are requested to be corrected. According to interviews for this review, there are no on-site reviews of accounts or informal audits by the finance department staff.

The only on-site visits that the schools receive are when a new treasurer comes to a school and has to be trained on the Manatee accounting software (used by every school for managing the school activity funds). This visit is more about resetting the password on the system for the new treasurer as well as training on using the accounting software than training on activity fund policies and procedures.

The 2005 audit of the secondary school activity funds noted the lack of timely deposits at one school and problems with the way receipts were issued. Whereas both these problems were likely corrected since there were no activity fund-related citations in 2006, there is no way of knowing how elementary schools might have fared under a similar audit.

Audits by outside accounting firms help ascertain that school activity funds are being properly reported and that ACPS accounting policies and procedures are being adhered to. They also provide assurance to school principals that their financial procedures are adequate and help alleviate the kind of anxiety that ACPS principals currently feel.

RECOMMENDATION 3-9:

Institute a system of internal, on-site audits of school activity funds by the finance department at all elementary schools to ensure proper management of these funds as well as to ensure that policies and procedures are appropriately followed.

For its internal audits, the finance department should follow protocols similar to what an outside audit firm would do. The finance department staff should schedule annual site visits to each elementary school to ensure that all policies and procedures are being followed. In addition, periodic site visits to the secondary schools that have larger accounts and designated personnel would be helpful in adopting and adapting policies and procedures for all activity funds at ACPS. It would also help ensure that all

treasurers are appropriately trained and following the procedures laid out in the new manual. In addition, the finance staff should work with the schools to fix irregularities, if any, and conduct follow-up compliance reviews.

At a future date, ACPS should discuss with the city about having a few elementary schools activity accounts audited each year by the outside accounting firm since the finance department is currently not large enough to conduct such internal audit type functions.

Implementing this recommendation will require staff time for the finance department. Efficiencies identified elsewhere will require reallocation of staff time to allow such oversight and audit workload. Since the elementary schools have small accounts, most site visits should take less than a day, even in the first year.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

3.8 Fixed Assets Management

ACPS has an elaborate system to track and manage its inventory. The finance department manages fixed assets at ACPS. Fixed assets for a school division include all properties, vehicles, equipment and building contents. Accounting for all these assets requires continuous tracking as new ones are added and old ones disposed and deleted from the list. There are several important reasons for identifying, inventorying, and managing fixed assets:

- Periodic assessment of the inventory's capacity to meet current and future needs is useful in budgeting and for planning purposes.
- Systematic physical inventory of fixed assets provides the basis for surveying physical condition of assets and the need to repair, maintain or replace these items.
- Regular physical inventory provides information on loss or damage of assets and makes it possible to implement adequate controls to recover lost property or reduce losses and damage.
- Fixed assets records provide a basis for appropriate and adequate insurance coverage, and for financial reporting.
- A well-managed and well-recorded system demonstrates accountability and meets reporting requirements.

ACPS conducts annual inventories of all its assets. It starts with all schools and departments receiving a guide called the Inventory Verification Process. This guide includes a memorandum from the superintendent, information on what items should be verified, procedures for conducting the physical inventory and other pertinent information and forms related to inventory control such as standardized location codes, special

program and room designation lists, explanation of equipment condition codes for inventory with estimated life span.

Each school or department receives a physical inventory entry form that lists assets for that school by location; asset number; serial number, if applicable; description; condition; and quantity. The school provides the current condition and quantity as well as changed location, if applicable, and adds any missing assets to this list.

Each principal and department designates a staff member overseeing inventory verification. Completion dates for annual physical verification are provided to the schools and principals and department heads are required to sign completed inventory verification. ACPS tracks assets as: 1) capitalized assets if their original unit cost is over \$100 and 2) controlled assets if items cost less than \$100 but are “sensitive, portable, theft-prone and essential to classroom education or curriculum support.” Controlled assets are used for forecasting and budgetary process.

Such an inventory verification process allows a division to have the necessary data for reporting on capitalized assets in financial reporting as well as protect its assets by knowing what it has and where it is located.

COMMENDATION 3-I:

ACPS is commended for having an elaborate and comprehensive fixed assets management system coupled with an effective system for annual physical verification of its inventory.

FINDING

ACPS inventory is maintained on a system that is separate from the financial management system utilized by the division. This freestanding system, called the “Then Inventory System” was custom written for ACPS about 25 years ago and it requires manual entry for assets on the system.

The finance department has a process for running biweekly financial activity reports that includes purchases and payments for all equipment. The accountant I – inventory specialist, pulls and makes copies of accounts payable files for the preceding period, identifies new acquisitions from the purchase order and manually enters the information into the system.

Assets with value in excess of \$5,000 are identified to be tracked for annual financial reporting in an Excel spreadsheet. The procedures followed by the finance department follows board-adopted policies. In addition, the finance department works well with the City of Alexandria to identify ACPS project expenditures that are capitalized by the city or ACPS depending on funding source.

Although ACPS has a thorough and well-developed process for managing and tracking its assets, the process is very labor-intensive and inefficient. An automated system would allow new acquisitions to be assigned as such in the inventory tracking system. All equipment received by the information technology services department that are tagged

and tracked by that department should be automatically uploaded into the inventory tracking system.

The finance department has plans to convert to a fixed asset module that is part of the financial management system currently owned by ACPS. This module may allow an easier interface from the new on-line purchasing system as well as the information technology services department's tracking system. ACPS has plans to migrate to this module this year.

RECOMMENDATION 3-10:

ACPS should convert its fixed asset system to the module for its current financial management system and work on incorporating new acquisition data into this system from the on-line purchasing system to streamline its current labor-intensive processes.

Implementing this recommendation will require that ACPS convert to the module sooner rather than later, and it will require involvement of the systems director in information technology services assigned to finance.

It will also initially require staff time, especially on part of the systems director in information technology services assigned to the finance department. However, moving the current system to a module of the current financial management system, if properly configured will do away with a high percentage of the data entry. There will, however, be some data entry that will have to continue in the absence of a bar coding or some other tagging system. This accountant would be able to use his or her time to manage other areas identified in this review that are currently not done.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

3.9 Purchasing

FINDING

The ACPS purchasing department is headed by a purchasing agent, supported by a purchasing assistant and is a fully certified office.

The Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council (UPPCC) has a program that is applicable to all public and governmental entities that offers two designations, a Certified Public Purchasing Officer (CPPO) and a Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB). According to the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing:

certification is the process by which the public purchaser demonstrates a standard of competency for the benefit of the public. Certification reflects achievement of established professional standards and a competency for those engaged in governmental purchasing, and attests to the purchaser's ability to obtain maximum value for the taxpayer's dollar.

Both the purchasing office personnel are certified as a CPPO and CPPB, respectively.

ACPS is not a large school division but due to its urban location in the Washington DC metropolitan area, it is able to partake in cooperative agreements from surrounding governmental entities, some very large. This has allowed ACPS to obtain competitive pricing on such commodities as natural gas as well as other services. In addition, the purchasing agent is involved in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Cooperative Purchasing Program (COG Program).

The COG program aims to reduce costs through economies of scale created through volume buying and participating agencies, school divisions, authorities, and commissions combine bidding requirements for more than 20 different purchases, resulting in larger volume and better unit pricing. In addition, ACPS saves on administrative expenses by substantially reducing the paperwork associated with competitive procurement. Although voluntary, ACPS' involvement and active participation in the COG Program allows a small school division such as ACPS to benefit from much larger governmental entities.

For example, ACPS currently uses the City of Alexandria and Commonwealth of Virginia contracts to purchase office supplies, and Fairfax and Fauquier County contracts for various food products for its school cafeteria.

COMMENDATION 3-J:

ACPS is commended for having a fully certified purchasing office that participates in cooperative agreements and for seeking the maximum education value for every dollar ACPS expends.

FINDING

ACPS has been converting to an on-line purchasing system since 2004. The new on-line system was initiated first at the central office and then expanded into the schools.

The purchasing agent and the assistant received training first and then trained five to six people at a time. The purchasing department provides ongoing training as necessary and readily answers questions from users of the system. In addition, the purchasing office compiled and provided a user-friendly training guide on using the on-line system to all users. This training guide is also available on ACPS intranet along with the chart of accounts, purchasing guidelines and active purchasing contracts.

Personnel interviewed or surveyed for this review commented on the effective training and support that the two person purchasing office provides. Currently ACPS has 160 employees at 41 different departments, schools and locations on the on-line purchasing system.

At this point, ACPS is almost entirely on the on-line electronic system. The system has 57 different locations within ACPS as ship to addresses. In addition, all regularly used vendors are in the on-line system and new ones are added as necessary. The schools have catalogs for supplies and for regularly used items that the purchasing office has

received competitive bids from. This allows ACPS personnel ordering from such catalogs to benefit from contracted discounts while using the catalogs and placing orders using the on-line system.

The on-line system, overall, has cut down on processing time for POs where a requisition is entered by a department secretary or a school treasurer, and then electronically approved by the department director or principal followed by the purchasing department. In addition, the electronic system has also helped in ensuring that departments and schools have adequate budget before the requisition is approved; without the appropriate budget amount, the system flags the requisition prompting for a budget transfer, if necessary.

COMMENDATION 3-K:

ACPS is commended for adopting an efficient on-line purchasing system, for adequately training all personnel in effectively using this new system and for having a responsive purchasing office.

FINDING

ACPS currently does not have a purchasing card program.

In fiscal year 2006, ACPS processed 8,938 purchase orders (POs) and to date, for the current fiscal year 2007, ACPS has processed 6,260 POs. Most of these POs are now processed on the on-line purchasing system making it more efficient to process than a manual system.

ACPS has credit cards issued through the Sun Trust Bank, and managed by the Finance Department. All 29 credit cards are held within the Finance Department. The Department has elaborate policies and procedures that are updated on an ongoing basis. In addition, ACPS has adequate control and oversight to prevent credit card abuse by ACPS employees and school board members. Each assigned credit card user has to sign an agreement that spells out their responsibilities.

Although it is good that ACPS has credit cards for use by ACPS employees, especially at the central office, it is of limited use to schools. Although principals have the authority to check out the credit cards, virtually all school purchases are made through the more traditional means.

If school principals need to make purchases, they have to first obtain a purchase order. However, if the school wants to take advantage of an on-line discount or needs supplies immediately, the purchaser has to use their own funds and then request reimbursement for those funds. Borrowing a credit card from the ACPS central office is hence inconvenient and sometimes impossible.

Use of credit cards to make purchases as opposed to using purchase orders is a good way for a school or a department to handle multiple small purchases that do not require competitive bidding. Many school divisions and governmental entities effectively use a formalized system of making purchases through credit cards. Just as department heads

and principals are entrusted with managing large departments and schools, they are also trusted with credit cards to make small purchases.

Purchase cards (P-cards) are credit cards that are assigned to individual employees with per transaction and monthly limits. The arrangements for P-cards are made with a banking institution and centrally administered. Properly implemented P-card systems help school divisions reduce costs and streamline purchasing by eliminating POs for small purchases. Employees are able to make small purchases as needed, including online purchases thereby allowing schools to take advantage of discounts. In fiscal year 2007, to date through January, ACPS had 950 POs in amounts under \$500.

The MGT review team found York County Public Schools (YCPS) to have a well-managed and administered purchasing card program. The YCPS P-card program has about 100 users, with each school having three cardholders: the principal, the secretary/bookkeeper, and the media specialist. P-cardholders can purchase goods and services of less than \$1,000 per transaction using P-cards. The majority of cardholders have monthly limits of \$5,000, and each card is tied to a separate account.

Each cardholder maintains a log for each purchase and receipts for purchases. Twice a year, the YCPS Finance Department audits each P-cardholder's log and purchase activities. The school division is able to maintain integrity in purchasing by biannual audits, comprehensive policies and procedures, and Web-based and in-person training for P-card use.

The move to a P-card system has decreased the need for YCPS to process numerous small POs and has increased efficiency in purchasing by reducing paperwork. Purchasers also obtain goods faster and can shop online while taking advantage of discounts.

RECOMMENDATION 3-11:

Implement a division-wide purchasing card program for purchases of less than \$1,000 to reduce costs, paperwork and time in obtaining goods while improving efficiency as well as allowing departments and schools to make essential purchases when needed.

ACPS should provide P-cards to employees currently authorized to make purchases. This would include principals, secretaries/treasurers, department heads, and other departmental and central office staff members who routinely need to make purchases. Single transaction limits should be set in the amount of \$500 to \$1,000 as well as daily transaction limits. ACPS should analyze past purchases of less than \$1,000 to determine monthly limits for P-cardholders by departments or schools. The new electronic purchasing system makes obtaining such reports relatively easy. Monthly limits of \$5,000 are appropriate in most cases for a school division this size, with exceptions for larger limits for select employees.

ACPS already has a no-fee account with its current banking institution for its credit card program. ACPS should negotiate with this institution similar arrangements for the P-card program. ACPS should adopt the following controls and procedures as part of the P-card program:

- Single and daily transaction limits.
- Built-in restrictions by merchant category code to limit erroneous or fraudulent purchases.
- Signed consent forms for P-card users similar to those currently used by credit card users.
- Online review, reporting, and reconciliation.
- Internal controls and audit guidelines to prevent fraudulent and personal use or abuse of the P-cards.

FISCAL IMPACT

Once a P-card system is in place, it would result in decreased staff time to request and process numerous small POs. This is especially true for the departments and schools where the requisitions first occur, as well as for the purchasing agent who must approve every PO. Initially, however, developing procedures, training, and implementing the program would require increased staff time. The purchasing agent has already successfully implemented an on-line system; he should be able to implement a P-card program. Obtaining policies and procedures from other schools divisions, such as YCPS, would be a good start.

With the decrease in number of POs and processing time, there would be an increase in workload with the staff designated to audit and manage the P-card system. This should be done by the finance department. The finance department already has procedures for managing the credit cards. Those procedures should be adapted to the P-card system. The decrease in workload from decreased POs and therefore numbers of invoices to be processed would require some staff realignment to allow management of this new activity.

FINDING

The guidelines have not been updated to reflect current purchasing practices.

Purchasing guidelines adopted in September 2003 by the finance and purchasing offices cover all aspects of purchasing activities from the initial request for purchases to the accounts payable services for payment of vouchers for purchased goods and services received. These elaborate guidelines have been supplemented, and in some cases, replaced by the on-line purchasing system that, for instance, no longer requires the four-page purchase order form to be used.

Accounts Payable Services (AP services) personnel are responsible for encumbering all purchase orders once they are approved by the purchasing agent. There are two AP Services personnel that handle all purchase orders and invoices and they have divided responsibilities by schools and departments. Once goods or services are received, the receiving schools or departments are supposed to sign and acknowledge receipt of the goods and services and forward the necessary paperwork to the accounts payable services personnel to have the invoices paid.

The invoices themselves are received by AP services. Purchasing guidelines related to payment are covered under VI. *Prompt payment of vendors*. Specifically, it states that:

As soon as the product(s) or service(s) is received, the appropriate individual will sign the receiving copy and forward it to the Finance Office – Accounts Payable Services so that the payment can be made.

These guidelines still refer to the four-part form used prior to the implementation of the on-line system. The procedures still apply to the current system and further state that a delay in receiving signed copies will unnecessarily delay payments to the vendor and may cause the vendor to place ACPS on a credit hold which will jeopardize future orders and deliveries. It should be noted that many personnel still use the old paper system though everyone at ACPS is now supposed to be on the on-line system.

Several departments and schools at ACPS do not follow this procedure. This review revealed that at least six schools and departments consistently delay sending the paperwork once goods or services are received; some are as much as four months behind. In the meantime, the vendors call AP services and threaten to put ACPS on credit hold.

In some instances, AP services personnel have to follow up with responsible treasurers, secretaries and administrative assistants in the offending departments and schools. At times, they have to research receipt of the goods, obtain proof of receipt, get approval for payment from director of finance and pay the invoices. Such follow up with the departments and schools including involving the principal or department head, interaction with vendors, and extra research makes for an inefficient use of the AP services personnel's time.

In fiscal year 2006, the two AP services personnel encumbered 8,936 POs, processed 24,232 invoices and many PO changes. To keep track of outstanding invoices in a system where departments and schools do not promptly forward approval for payment once goods and services are received, AP services personnel have to regularly run open PO lists, and then send out lists to schools and departments for their outstanding open POs. Such open PO lists should be run for quality control to track the occasional missed open PO, not as a regular means of paying invoices.

RECOMMENDATION 3-12:

Update the ACPS purchasing guidelines to explicitly include set deadlines as well as school and departmental responsibility for processing paperwork once goods and services are received.

These guidelines should include explicit lines of responsibility with explanations for any delay in processing and with ultimate responsibility resting with the principal or department head. Signed packing slips for goods and services received should be approved and forwarded to AP services within a reasonable timeframe of about a week. This should track the AP services' weekly schedule for paying invoices.

Vendors offering discounts or requiring quick payment terms should be met if deadlines are implemented and enforced. Updated procedures with deadlines should be communicated to all treasurers, secretaries, administrative assistants, principals and

department heads making purchases and consequences of continued failure to follow these deadlines without explanation or adequate reason should be conveyed.

Every school or department should have one single point of contact for all purchases with responsibilities for that school or department POs. AP services should not be required to track down which department head or supervisor might have ordered and received certain goods. At the high school, for instance, this procedure should require that the treasurer be the point person for tracking all goods and services requested and be responsible for the high schools' timely submittal of approval for payment.

The new procedures do not need to be cumbersome or create extra work for any individual. They should simply assign responsibility with expectations of follow through and enforcement of outlined consequences for habitual noncompliance. During initial implementation, for the first three months or so, the purchasing agent should work with AP services to ensure that these procedures are properly followed and once all personnel is trained, the process should be expected to run efficiently.

Once implemented and all personnel are doing what they should be doing anyway, it would reduce the workload for AP services allowing them to help take on additional duties identified elsewhere in this review. In addition, ACPS may be able to take advantage of discounts and improve relationships with vendors resulting from prompt payment.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

ACPS does not have an efficient open purchase order process.

ACPS has many budget transfers as stated in 3.4 Budget Management. This affects AP services and processing of invoices. In addition, many treasurers do not check account codes, often sending requests for POs without first making the budget transfers. Such requests have to be returned to the PO requestor for correcting errors or completing budget transfers prior to approval of a PO. This is yet another way that ACPS' fine-grained line-item budget creates needless paperwork.

Although the on-line purchasing system prevents requisitions from being processed without the necessary amount in the budget for a particular line item, paper POs, PO changes or special checks for purchases already made still create problems when requesting personnel do not first check to see if funds are available or make necessary budget transfers prior to PO requisition.

In addition, many of the PO changes that AP services receives have to do with open POs. All PO changes are handwritten on Purchase Order Change Notice forms. Some PO change requests are for increasing amounts for POs, others are for changing account numbers. Unless absolutely necessary, as can be the case with changing circumstances, as a standard practice, this is a labor-intensive process for all concerned.

Open POs are widely used throughout ACPS. To appropriately encumber funds for certain purchases that a department or school knows it will incur throughout the year, an open PO is created to spend down funds through the year as purchases are made. Examples include a school having an open PO for office supplies at a particular office supply store, or the maintenance department having an open PO at a retail hardware store.

In one specific example, ACPS Transportation Department has contracts with Alexandria Yellow Cab, among cab companies, for transportation of special education students. As **Exhibit 3-7** shows, an open PO, with a requisition date of August 14, 2006, was created by Transportation Department for \$75,000. In December 2006, four invoices from the Alexandria Cab Company were received totaling \$57,276. However, without funds to cover all the invoices, a budget transfer not in process and the vendor threatening to stop serving ACPS, first partial payment was made on 1/12/2007 with authorization from the executive director of finance and technology services. Remaining amount was paid on 1/23/07 as a special check request from AP services to the director of finance and by authorization from transportation personnel.

**EXHIBIT 3-7
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
DECEMBER INVOICES FOR ALEXANDRIA YELLOW CAB**

ITEM DESCRIPTION	RELEVANT DATE	RELEVANT AMOUNT
Open PO requisition date	8/14/06	\$75,000.00
Invoice	12/1/06	\$10,739.00
Invoice	12/8/06	\$14,330.00
Invoice	12/15/06	\$16,310.00
Invoice	12/22/06	\$15,897.00
Total December invoices		\$57,276.00
Amount in Account in December 2006		\$30,638.95
Partial invoice paid	1/12/07	\$30,638.95
Balance of invoice paid	1/23/07	\$26,637.05

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Finance Department, 2007.

Previous year's expenditures for the Alexandria Yellow Cab shows that Transportation spent nearly four hundred thousand dollars. As such, an open PO should accordingly budget an amount that tracks projected expenditures; as a matter of good planning it should be closer to 75 percent of expected expenditures to avoid numerous PO changes.

Such examples are not unique at ACPS. Many departments or schools request one-dollar PO changes to maintain their open POs. To date, from July 1 to mid-February, AP services had requests for 187 PO changes for the first 100 POs for fiscal year 2007. Several open POs had five or six PO changes.

RECOMMENDATION 3-13:

Provide explicit procedures with training on planning, creating, encumbering, and maintaining open purchase orders as well as appropriately using budget transfers and account numbers in making purchase requisitions.

This recommendation should be implemented in coordination with Recommendation 3-5 on consolidating the chart of accounts to avoid numerous budget transfers. ACPS should provide appropriate training, guidance and written procedures with emphasis on teaching how to budget, project expenses through the school year, and encumber funds. The aim of this training would be to remove the current scenarios such as the one at the transportation department or such time consuming and unnecessary practices such as one-dollar PO change requests. This training should include principals so that they can provide appropriate oversight as personnel with authority to approve all purchases.

Although the training and guidance will require some dedicated staff time, once everyone is trained and following proper procedures, it should cut down substantially on the number of PO change requests, special check requests requiring signatures and approvals from the director of finance and the executive director of finance and technology services, and a lot of processing time for the AP services personnel. The reduced workload from implementing this recommendation would allow finance personnel to conduct other important functions such as more thorough school activity funds oversight.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

4.0 PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

4.0 PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

This chapter reviews the personnel and human resources management functions of the Human Resources Department of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The five areas of review include:

- 4.1 Organization and Administration
- 4.2 Personnel Policies and Procedures
- 4.3 Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention
- 4.4 Compensation and Benefits
- 4.5 Professional Development

In its review of these functional areas, MGT examined a wide variety of documentation including policy and procedural handbooks, personnel records, staff training information, departmental financial data, employment contracts, departmental forms and informational brochures, and the human resources Web site. In addition, MGT consultants conducted interviews with all central office personnel in the human resources department, the superintendent, and school-based administrators and staff. These activities allowed MGT to gain insight into the operational routines of the department, make recommendations, and note commendations regarding its policies and practices.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Alexandria City Public Schools human resources department has restructured its functions and the assignment of personnel functions. Among the commendable practices found during the review were:

- Committing adequate funding in support of teacher recruitment activities (**Commendation 4-A**).
- Developing and implementing a user-friendly, fully online employment application system (**Commendation 4-B**).
- Implementing a system of differentiated employer contribution levels for health insurance benefits to help contain health care costs (**Commendation 4-C**).
- Establishing a Board policy for staff development that represents best practices in professional development (**Commendation 4-E**).

In addition to these areas of commendation, there are other operational areas of the department that need improvement. MGT's recommendations include:

- Develop a long-term strategic plan for the human resources department (**Recommendation 4-1**).
- Explore a reconfiguration of the department and the restoration of appropriate personnel to the HR department to facilitate employee set-up (**Recommendation 4-2**).

- Establish a regular schedule to update personnel policies **(Recommendation 4-3)**.
- Develop a procedural manual for the human resources department **(Recommendation 4-4)**.
- Continue efforts to maintain salary competitiveness with neighboring school divisions **(Recommendation 4-5)**.
- Stay abreast of trends in employee benefits offered by other educational organizations **(Recommendation 4-6)**.
- Establish a policy for support staff development that mirrors the high-quality standards outlined in the policy for professional staff **(Recommendation 4-7)**.
- Create a staff development link on the home page of the Curriculum and Instruction Department Web site **(Recommendation 4-8)**.

INTRODUCTION

As Alexandria City Public Schools is the largest employer in the city, the human resources department plays a vital role in carrying out all the personnel functions necessary to staff the school division with highly qualified, capable, and competent employees. These functions include:

- Conducting recruitment and initial screening of job applicants.
- Posting/updating position vacancy listings.
- Processing new employees.
- Monitoring licensure for certified personnel.
- Maintaining personnel files.
- Responding to human resources inquiries from ACPS employees and the public.
- Ensuring proper adherence to state and federal regulations regarding personnel operations.
- Preparing materials for human resources recommendations to the School Board.
- Performing any and all other personnel duties in accordance with board policies and procedures established for human resources management.

ACPS had 2,038 full-time employees as of MGT's on-site review, 50.6 percent of whom were full-time teachers. The distribution of ACPS employees is shown in **Exhibit 4-1**.

The exhibit shows employees by position and category. The individual positions represented by the categories are as follows:

- Administrative (Central Office): superintendent, deputy/assistant superintendent, executive director, director, coordinator, supervisor, manager, officer analyst, administrator, and executive assistant.
- Administrative (school): elementary, middle and high school principal, assistant principal, associate principal and director.
- Food Services: school nutrition assistant, delivery/warehouse, manager, and manager trainee.
- Transportation: bus driver, bus monitor, transportation coordinator, and administrative support.
- Facilities/Maintenance: assistant custodial supervisor, building services coordinator, building engineer/service coordinator, custodial supervisor, custodian, head custodian, maintenance service work coordinator, and security specialist.
- Clerical/Secretarial/Technical: media technology manager, media technology specialist, TV station manager, Xerox operator, administrative support specialist, registrar, support specialist, technical support assistant, cafeteria hostesses, accountants, payroll technician, security monitor, security specialist, its technician, telephone support specialists, and telephone technician.

**EXHIBIT 4-1
EMPLOYEE DISTRIBUTION
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

TYPE OF EMPLOYEE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
Teachers	1,031
Para-Professionals	206
Administrators (School and Central Office)	80
Librarians/Librarian Assistants	46
Food Services	80
Clerical/Secretarial/Technical	184
Transportation Workers	152
Student and Pupil Services	98
Facilities and Maintenance	104
Other Instructional Staff	57
TOTAL	2,038

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Human Resources Department, 2007.

MGT consultants conducted electronic surveys of ACPS central office administrators, principals, and teachers, seeking their perceptions of all aspects of divisional operations. With regard to human resources, these groups were asked to rate four areas—

personnel recruitment, selection, evaluation, and staff development—as either needing *some* or *major improvement* or as *adequate* or *outstanding*.

As shown in **Exhibit 4-2**, the opinions among the central office administrators, principals, and teachers did not show a great deal of variation across these HR functions. Principals had the most favorable opinions, with ratings of *adequate* or *outstanding* for the four areas ranging from 67 to 83 percent. Central office administrators’ ratings ranged from 43 to 69 percent. Teachers rated the four areas lowest, with *adequate* or *outstanding* ratings ranging from 36 to 56 percent. Staff development received the highest ratings from central office administrators, principals and teachers, with ratings favorable ratings of 69, 83, and 56 percent respectively.

As shown in **Exhibit 4-3**, additional survey questions sought input from ACPS teachers and administrators on other aspects of human resources. When asked to respond to the statement, “Salary levels in this school division are competitive,” central office administrators, principals and teachers stated that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* at rates of 84, 83, and 71 percent, respectively. The strong ratings given to staff development in the previous discussion on survey results were seen again when respondents were asked whether they knew who to contact regarding accessing training services. Once again, staff development received the highest ratings from the three survey groups, with favorable ratings ranging from 87 to 100 percent. The remaining seven items also reflected the overall positive outlook held by these employees regarding various aspects of human resources.

**EXHIBIT 4-2
SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING
HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

	ADMINISTRATORS		PRINCIPALS		TEACHERS	
	% NEEDS SOME/MAJOR IMPROVEMENT	% ADEQUATE/OUTSTANDING	% NEEDS SOME/MAJOR IMPROVEMENT	% ADEQUATE/OUTSTANDING	% NEEDS SOME/MAJOR IMPROVEMENT	% ADEQUATE/OUTSTANDING
Personnel Recruitment	44	50	34	67	26	36
Personnel Selection	47	43	33	66	32	40
Personnel Evaluation	47	47	25	76	39	49
Staff Development	25	69	17	83	39	56

Source: MGT of America, Alexandria City Public Schools Survey Results, 2007.

**EXHIBIT 4-3
SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING
HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
Salary levels in this school division are competitive.	84/9	83/16	71/16
Our division has an effective employee recognition program.	47/12	46/25	23/34
Our division has an effective process for staffing critical shortage areas of teachers.	51/6	42/25	23/20
My supervisor evaluates my job performance annually.	53/22	59/13	85/7
I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with professional development.	91/3	100/0	87/6
I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with human resources matters such as licensure, promotion opportunities, employee benefits, etc	87/3	100/0	83/9
My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	66/22	75/17	53/32
Our division has an effective teacher recruitment plan.	57/6	71/12	28/12
I have a professional growth plan that addresses areas identified for my professional growth.	60/19	55/21	60/19

Source: MGT of America, Alexandria City Public Schools Survey Results, 2007.

4.1 Organization and Administration

The human resources department employs 12 full-time staff members to carry out various human resource activities for the division's 2,038 employees. The stated mission of the department is to *foster equity and equal opportunity and advance educational excellence by recruiting, selecting, and retaining a quality caliber and diverse pool of employees; providing for a climate in which optimum staff performance and satisfaction can be achieved; and promoting positive employee/employer relations.* In support of this mission, the HR department carries out the following functions:

- Provide the services and environment each employee requires for professional and personal development.
- Fill all vacancies with qualified persons who reflect the needs of a culturally diverse, urban community.

- Adhere to standards and practices of equity in compensation for duties performed, classifications, licensure, and other contractual standards.
- Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local mandates involving personnel.
- Assist in the adjudication of grievances and administrative complaints.
- Maintain personnel transactions and HR databases associated with all aspects of the management of employees.

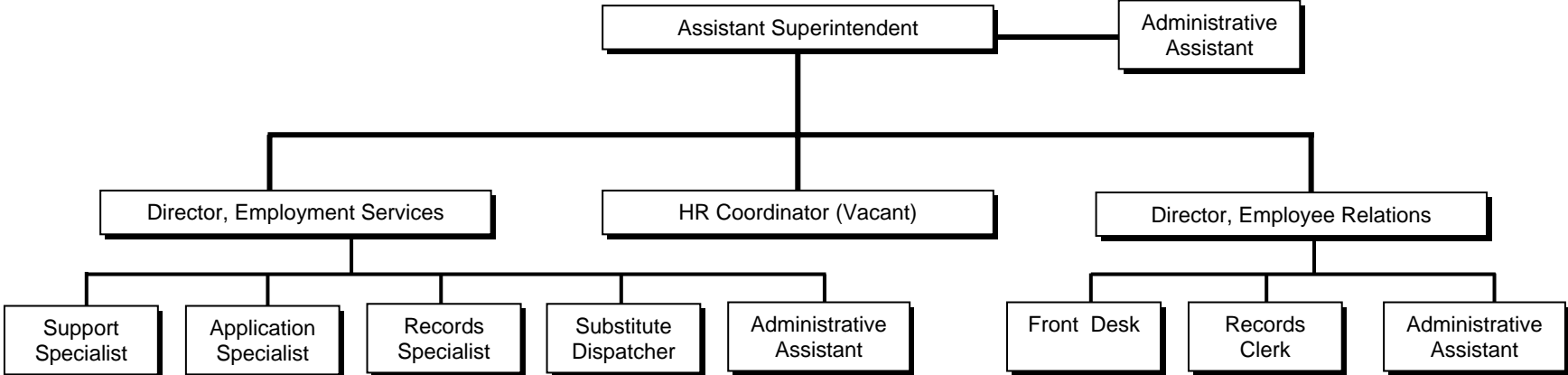
In the current organizational structure, the department is headed by an assistant superintendent of human resources, whose position reports directly to the superintendent. The primary functions and responsibilities of HR staff are as follows:

- **Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources:** Oversees all operations of the HR department including recruitment, staffing, employee appraisal, employee discipline and termination, revision and update of policies and procedures, and monitoring and compliance (Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, etc.).
- **Director, Employment Services:** Oversees all activities related to teacher recruitment, as well as the HR aspects of new employee hiring; supervised the launch of the online application process for all staff.
- **Director, Employee Relations:** Oversees issues related to classified employees and all employee investigations related to discipline and/or termination.
- **HR Coordinator (vacant):** Performs all duties as assigned for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the HR department. These duties relate to areas such as employee grievances, implementation of personnel policies, teacher recruitment, and participating in meetings, workshops, and other information-gathering activities.
- **Administrative Assistant:** Provide administrative support to assistant superintendent for HR and/or HR directors; processes paperwork for new employee set-up and ensures that proper documentation is placed in personnel files. Also processes letters of resignation and related employee termination paperwork.
- **Substitute Dispatcher:** Coordinates substitute employment process including enrolling new substitutes, maintain documents and records for audit trail, and overseeing the automated substitute system.

- **Support Specialist:** Compiles data from a variety of sources for the purpose of complying with financial, legal and other administrative requirements; performs record keeping and general departmental clerical functions.
- **Records Management Specialist:** Maintains records and their security for providing audit trails and documenting departmental activities; serves as custodian for personnel records.
- **Licensure Specialist:** Assists employees seeking to renew their professional certification, evaluates transcripts and/or other credentials for the purpose of assessing applicant eligibility and salary placement.

The HR staff's duties and responsibilities are structured in such a way as to provide support for both the administrative personnel in human resources and the internal and external "customers" who contact the office in person or by phone for service. The organizational structure of the human resources department is illustrated in **Exhibit 4-4**.

**EXHIBIT 4-4
HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**



Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Human Resources Department, 2007.

FINDING

The human resources department does not have a long-term strategic plan.

Recently, key functions within the department were realigned and duties were reassigned among HR staff. The effectiveness of the realignment has been hampered by the fact that the new job assignments have not been clearly communicated to the consumers of HR services, i.e., ACPS employees. This has resulted in those seeking services continuing to seek assistance from persons who were formerly assigned the job responsibilities.

In interviews with HR personnel, this situation was cited as a frustration and underscores the need to have a system of duty assignment that is clearly understood by both HR staff members and ACPS employees. Providing such clarity would allow for greater efficiency, as tasks are delegated properly and job assignments are balanced across the department.

A contributing factor to this lack of clarity is the absence of a long-term strategic plan for the department. Such a plan would assist in defining the roles and responsibilities of all departmental staff, both administrative and clerical and provide the basis for both long-term and day-to-day activities.

RECOMMENDATION 4-1:

Develop a long-term strategic plan for the human resources department.

The plan should provide specific, measurable goals, with clearly stated objectives sufficient to the achievement of each goal. **Exhibit 4-5** provides an example of a plan.

**EXHIBIT 4-5
SAMPLE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR
HUMAN RESOURCES**

Goal 1:

Engage in continuous improvement efforts to provide high quality and useful human resources information.

- Successful implementation of the Finance Manager system.
- Reorganize HR staff roles and responsibilities and assign areas of accountability.
- Work with HR staff to define and identify important fields of information for Finance Manager, and develop better ways to present the information.
- Develop and make accessible, personnel reports that are useful for all levels of administrative staff.
- Review and revise the Lakeland Central School Division Handbook of Personnel Guidelines (last reviewed 1990), as well as all Certified and Classified job descriptions currently utilized.

**EXHIBIT 4-5
SAMPLE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR
HUMAN RESOURCES (Continued)**

- Develop a Personnel Calendar that highlights all required HR-related tasks, procedures and events that need to be accomplished during the course of the school year, with due dates.
- Meet with administrators at monthly meetings to discuss relevant issues and topics.
- Meet with HR and Business Office staff regularly to resolve issues and answer questions, as well as impart pertinent information that they will need to be a resources to building-level staff.

Goal 2:

HR will seek to assist school administrators in their efforts to recruit, retain, develop and evaluate a diverse faculty of certified and classified staff, ensuring that they possess the core competencies needed for personal and professional success.

- Develop tools and techniques that staff can use to assess and improve their efforts to recruit, hire, train, promote, and retain highly qualified individuals.
- Staff development or training sessions for administrators on successful interviewing and hiring techniques for certified and classified staff.
- Make sure all administrators have a basic working knowledge of appropriate evaluation and disciplinary procedures, and are proactive and consistent in their approach.

Goal 3:

To steadily redeploy HR resources away from lower value-added administrative activities to new practices and services that impact directly on the future success of the school division.

- Continuously assess our employees' needs, and in response, evaluate and improve our services where applicable
- Implement best practices approaches to managing the HR function.
- Become more actively involved in professional learning activities.

Goal 4:

Develop an atmosphere of trust and confidence.

- Hold HR staff accountable for the quality and accuracy of their work, as well as the way in which they interact with school-based staff.
- Provide accurate information, follow-up on unresolved issues.

Source: Lakeland County (NY) School Division, Human Resources Department, 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

Several functions that traditionally are carried out in the human resources department have been reassigned to other departments.

The recent reorganization of the HR department resulted in several functions related to benefits and payroll being relocated to other departments in the division. This has produced an operational disconnect when new employees are being processed. Not having all personnel connected with new employee set-up in proximity with each other, added to the fact that the set-up process is still paper-intensive, and results in files of applicants and new hires being handled repeated by different persons in different departments. This diminishes the operational efficiencies that have been gained through the implementation of the online application process.

RECOMMENDATION 4-2:

Explore a reconfiguration of the department and the restoration of appropriate personnel to the HR department to facilitate employee set-up.

A full explanation of the implementation of this recommendation can be found in **Chapter 3: Financial Management and Purchasing**, along with accompanying information on the fiscal impact.

4.2 Personnel Policies and Procedures

The primary purpose of school board policies is to establish and communicate the priorities, expectations, and programs of the division. All policies should govern aspects of board governance including legal compliance, public accountability and information, and assurance of safety, equity, and order. Accompanying board policy should be procedures which operationalize the policies.

FINDING

There is not a systematic schedule for updating ACPS personnel policies.

The personnel policies and procedures that guide the delivery of services to ACPS employees are set forth in *Section G: Personnel* of the Policy Manual for Alexandria City Public Schools. The policies are organized around four major areas: personnel policy goals, equal employment opportunity/non-discrimination, professional staff, and support staff. Under these broad categories are sub-categories that encompass all personnel functions. Personnel policies are posted on the division's Web site along with the rest of the policy manual.

Exhibit 4-6 shows the current HR policies, the initial year of adoption, the year the policies were upgrade, and the number of policies adopted and upgraded during each of the years listed.

**EXHIBIT 4-6
SCHOOL BOARD POLICY ADOPTIONS AND UPDATES
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006**

YEAR OF BOARD ADOPTION	NO. OF POLICIES ADOPTED	YEAR OF BOARD UPDATE	NO. OF POLICIES UPDATED
1998	42	None	22*
1999	9	2000	2
2000	4	2001	3
2001	1	2002	12
2005	1	2003	1
2006	2	2005	2
		2006	17
No. of Policies	59		59

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Division Web Site, 2007.

*This number represents the number of policies not updated.

As shown in the exhibit, the majority of the policies were adopted in 1998 (42 policies), and updated in 2006 (17 policies). Slightly more than a third of the policies have not been updated since adoption (22 policies), and an additional 17 policies have not been updated within the last five years. That equates to over half the policies not having been updated within the last five years.

In the ACPS Board Policy Manual, *Policy BF: Board Policy Manual* states that “*The division manual shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.*” Updating departmental policies regularly provides guidance and supports the operational procedures in the school division and allows for the incorporation of recently enacted state and federal laws.

RECOMMENDATION 4-3:

Establish a regular schedule to update personnel policies.

ACPS Personnel Policy GA requires a review of departmental policies annually. The number of policies updated in 2006 would indicate that this review did take place at that time, but the pattern of updates does not show that these reviews are being conducted regularly. The assistant superintendent for human resources should create a schedule and procedure for review and updating personnel policies. Guidelines for these activities are available through the Virginia School Board Association or other qualified organizations.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The human resources department does not have a procedures manual.

Many of the personnel policies in the School Board Policy Manual include detailed procedures for policy implementation; however, the majority of policies do not. The lack of written procedures can result in uneven or sporadic implementation of policies and leave the division vulnerable to legal action. Such manuals are also valuable as a training tool for new employees and serve to communicate, to both internal and external stakeholders, the department's efforts to provide fair and consistent application of departmental and division policy.

RECOMMENDATION 4-4:

Develop a procedural manual for the human resources department.

As stated previously, there has recently been a realignment of duties in the human resources department, resulting in the creation of a variety of HR procedures and practices that are not contained in a written format. The department should develop a procedural handbook for both HR personnel and school division employees to guide daily duties and actions related to human resources.

Employee handbooks are statements of procedures related to school board policies and serve as an important communications tool between division administration and employees. The manual should provide an explanation of what is expected of employees—as well as what they can expect from the organization. It would also provide protection in legal disputes, as courts have typically considered an employee handbook to be a contractual obligation.

The HR department has a broad array of practices and procedures for implementing staff personnel policies. A procedures manual is designed to document those practices and procedures and to identify authority for effecting personnel actions. The manual is intended to be a current and practical administrative guide for all users. It supplements, but does not replace, division-wide policy manuals.

Although school division procedural manuals differ, depending on size, number of employees, and benefits offered, most include the following sections:

- **Division Overview:** Includes an introduction to the division, with a few paragraphs about its history, growth, goals, mission, and leadership philosophy.
- **Legal Issues:** Includes, but is not limited to, Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement, Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, Americans With Disabilities Act Policy Statement, Conflict of Interest and Outside Employment Statement, and any work confidentiality issues.
- **Compensation and Evaluation:** Discusses performance management and compensation programs, performance evaluation schedule, payment of salary, overtime pay, and employee referral programs.
- **Time-Off Policies:** Includes procedures for taking vacations, sick time, personal time, bereavement, jury duty, leave under the Family

and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), parental leave, and leave of absence without pay.

- **Benefit Information:** Includes information on health insurance, dental insurance, flexible spending accounts, group life insurance, long-term disability, retirement plan, 401(k) plan, and worker's compensation benefits.
- **Job-Related Issues:** Includes information regarding attendance and punctuality, drug and alcohol abuse, appearance and dress code, intolerance of violence in the workplace, responses to accidents and emergencies, internal complaint channels, e-mail and Internet policies, use of company equipment and computer systems, reference checks, smoking policy, and tuition reimbursement programs (if applicable).
- **Terminating Employment:** Communicates expectations and procedures relating to resignations and dismissals, including immediate dismissals and those other than immediate termination. Also covers post-resignation/termination procedures.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

4.3 Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

4.3.1 Recruitment

The business of recruiting high-quality teachers has become very competitive. New teachers recognize that they are in demand, and look for places to work that offer both support mechanisms to help them successfully navigate the challenges of the classroom and other benefits such as financial support to continue their education.

FINDING

ACPS has committed human and fiscal resources to the successful recruitment of teachers.

For the last several years, the division has participated in various recruitment fairs in the region. **Exhibit 4-7** shows the recruiting schedule of the 2006-07 school year.

**EXHIBIT 4-7
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
RECRUITING SCHEDULE
2006-07**

DATE	SCHOOL	LOCATION
March 26, 2007	West Virginia University	Morgantown, WV
March 26, 2007	Penn State University	State College, PA
March 27-30, 2007	SUNY - Buffalo, Courtland, Rochester	New York
March 29, 2007	PERC Consortium	Pittsburgh, PA
April 11, 2007	University of North Carolina	Chapel Hill, NC
April 17, 2007	Ohio State - Teach Ohio	Columbus, OH
April 18, 2007	University of Delaware	Newark, DE
April 19, 2007	MERC Consortium	Boston, MA
PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED SITES INCLUDE:		
October 31, 2006	Central Pennsylvania	State College, PA
November 29, 2006	University of Delaware - MAEE Conference	Newark, DE
December 6, 2006	VASPA	Charlottesville, VA
January 25, 2007	Virginia Tech - Radford	Christiansburg, VA
February 1, 2007	North Carolina A&T	Greensboro, NC
February 7, 2007	Winston-Salem State	Winston-Salem, NC
February 7, 2007	Old Dominion University	Norfolk, VA
February 7, 2007	William & Mary	Williamsburg, VA
February 8, 2007	UVA Education Expo	Charlottesville, VA
February 26, 2007	James Madison University	Harrisonburg, VA
February 28, 2007	George Mason University	Fairfax, VA
February 28, 2007	Howard University	Washington, DC
March 1, 2007	University of Maryland	College Park, MD
March 2, 2007	SHAV Conference	Richmond, VA
March 8, 2007	Maryland-Eastern Shore	Salisbury, MD
March 13, 2007	Hampton University	Hampton, VA
March 16, 2007	Longwood University	Farmville, VA
March 17, 2007	Great Virginia Teach-In	Richmond, VA
March 20, 2007	Greater Philadelphia Teacher Fair	Philadelphia, PA
March 22, 2007	Elizabeth City State University	Elizabeth City, NC
March 22, 2007	Mary Washington University	Fredricksburg, VA
March 23, 2007	Long Island — CW Post	Long Island, NY
March 24, 2007	National Minority Fair	Brooklyn, NY

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Human Resources, 2007.

These activities are part of a coordinated recruitment plan by the division with the primary objective of “obtaining highly qualified teachers as defined by NCLB mandate.” Among the strategies utilized by the division are the following:

- Analyze the previous year’s recruitment schedule to determine the key contact colleges and locales which were successful in meeting the hiring needs of the division for that year.
- Review last year’s database of new hires to identify the colleges and states represented.
- Target minority colleges and recruitment venues to increase the percentage of minority teachers in Alexandria City Public Schools.
- Target teacher market areas through newspaper advertisements.
- Attend recruitment fairs which represent multiple college participation.
- Continue to review recruitment materials, and network with key personnel from colleges and surrounding school divisions to enhance recruiting skills, materials, and ideas.
- Update recruitment materials.
- Involve teachers, administrators, and minority representatives in the recruiting process.
- Offer a Letter of Intent to outstanding candidates or candidates in critical needs areas.

The recruitment activities of the human resources department are supported by financial resources to allow for travel, production of recruitment materials, and other costs associated with recruitment. The budget allocation for this year and the two previous years are \$31,143, \$25,601, and \$23,600, respectively. These figures represent a 24 percent increase over the last three years. Such an increase reflects the division’s recognition of the need to actively seek high value teacher candidates in order to remain competitive in the high-demand environment of the Washington, D.C. area.

COMMENDATION 4-A:

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for committing resources to teacher recruitment.

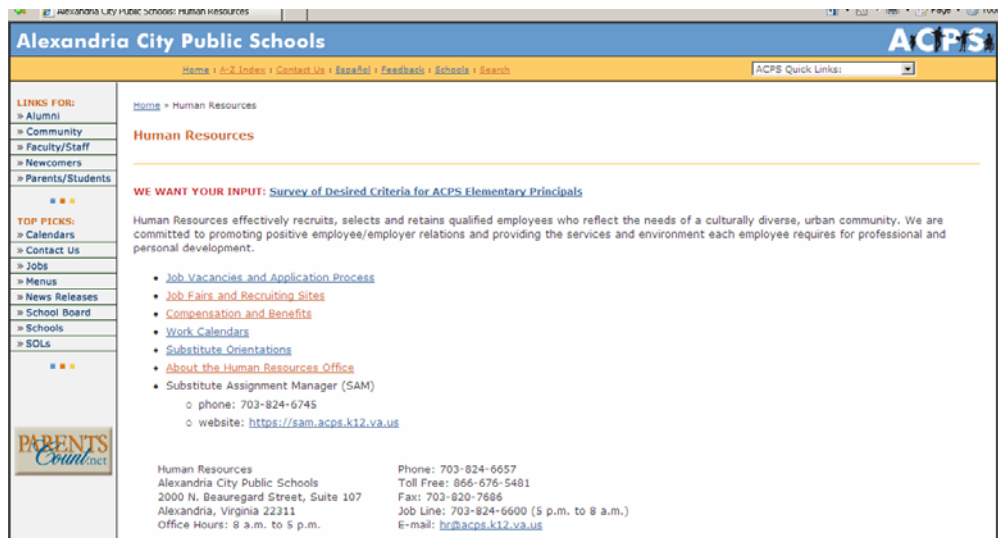
By continually monitoring the results of recruitment efforts, the division is better able to selectively target its resources toward the activities and areas that prove to be the most productive in terms of obtaining highly qualified teachers.

4.3.2 Hiring

Alexandria City Public Schools face intense competition for high quality teachers, and the division has stepped up its recruiting efforts to keep pace. Persons seeking employment in Alexandria City Public Schools may begin their search at the school division’s Web site. In **Exhibit 4-8**, the home page includes a quick link called “Job Vacancies and Application Process” that takes applicants to the job application portal. From there, applicants can complete the entire application process online, including expressing interest in posted job vacancies and attaching resumes and letters of reference.

After interviewing with designated human resources staff and/or the school principal, selected applicants are issued a Letter of Intent, which the division states is not a legal document, but serves as evidence of ACPS’s commitment to hire the individual. The letter outlines the next steps in the hiring process, describes any necessary fees or payments, and provides the starting salary for the position.

EXHIBIT 4-8 ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HUMAN RESOURCES HOME PAGE



Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Human Resources Homepage, 2007.

FINDING

The job application process in ACPS is fully online.

At the human resources section of the division’s Web site, applicants can complete the employment application and attach their resume, reference forms, and any other necessary document. Applications for classified and professional positions can be completed at the human resources Web site.

This recent upgrade to the HR Web site allows for prospective employees to submit applications for employment, and for existing employees to request a transfer to fill

vacancies at other job locations and/or positions in the division. School administrators and other work supervisors can access the applications and accompanying paperwork (e.g., resumes, reference forms, etc.), indicate which applicants they desire to interview and which ones they ultimately hire. This greatly expedites the hiring process and eliminates the need to travel to the central office to review paper files. It also frees HR clerical staff from the responsibility of preparing application files for review.

Interviews with HR administrators in charge of the process revealed that future improvements to the system include linking applicant results on job aptitude assessments to their application files.

COMMENDATION 4-B:

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for the development and implementation of a user-friendly, fully online job application process.

4.4 Compensation and Benefits

4.4.1 Compensation

According to a research review published by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), salary increases and financial incentives can play significant roles in teacher recruitment and retention. ECS also found evidence that the relative difference between salary levels in neighboring divisions is more important to teachers than absolute salary or even the salary differences in their own division. Other studies provide evidence that, in certain cases, working conditions may ultimately be more important to teachers than compensation. In particular, the group points to the potential effectiveness of giving teachers strong administrative support and “adequate autonomy” in their work.

FINDING

ACPS has a highly competitive salary schedule.

One of the keys to being competitive in recruitment efforts is salary. Each year the school division conducts a salary comparison among neighboring divisions. **Exhibit 4-9** highlights the starting and ending salaries for Alexandria City and comparative school divisions, as well as the number of steps in their respective salary schedules, for the 2006-07 school year.

As shown, the ACPS starting salary of \$42,040 is comparable to that of neighboring and peer divisions. One advantage to the salary schedule is the relatively small number of steps to the top. Only one of the comparable neighboring divisions has a 20-step salary schedule, with the next closest number of steps being 23. This is important to note as a recruitment incentive in that it takes less time to get to the top of the teacher pay scale, so that teachers may enter at an equal or higher salary than comparable divisions, and they move up the scale more quickly. Typically each step equals one year of service, but advancement to the next higher step is dependent upon the availability of adequate funding and local policies governing step advancement.

**EXHIBIT 4-9
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PEER AND NEIGHBORING DIVISION SALARY COMPARISON
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	STARTING SALARY	TOP SALARY	NUMBER OF STEPS
Alexandria City Public Schools	\$42,040	\$72,551	19
Charlottesville City Public Schools	\$37,800	\$57,014	29
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	*	*	*
Manassas City Public Schools	\$40,838	\$78,868	23
Winchester City Public Schools	\$35,000	\$58,706	27
Arlington County Public Schools	\$42,040	\$65,641	23
Fairfax County Public Schools	\$42,400	\$75,284	20

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, 2006. *Data unavailable.

The division has conducted salary comparison studies to keep the Board of Supervisors and the community at large informed as to how the salaries of its administrative, instructional, and classified employees compare with those of neighboring divisions. In the 2006-07 budget request ACPS submitted to the City Council, the school division emphasized the need to recruit and retain high-quality staff and discussed the challenge it faces with regard to keeping teacher salaries competitive with those of neighboring divisions.

RECOMMENDATION 4-5:

Continue efforts to maintain salary competitiveness with neighboring school divisions.

The division should continue to make its case for suitable funding to support competitive teacher salaries through the publication of the salary studies and the budget requests to the Alexandria City Council and School Board.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will be dependent upon the availability of funding and the degree to which ACPS will be required to continue to keep pace with salary increases in surrounding school divisions in order to continue its success in recruiting high quality teachers.

4.4.2 Employee Benefits

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), employers offer benefits to attract and retain capable people, to remain competitive with other employers, to foster good morale, and to keep employment channels open by providing opportunities for advancement and promotion as older workers retire.

A combination of mandatory and optional benefits programs is often the most effective and efficient means of meeting employees' economic security needs. For many employers, a benefit plan is an integral part of total compensation because employers either pay the entire cost of the plan or have employees contribute a small portion of premium costs for their coverage.

ACPS offers a competitive package of benefits for its employees. As outlined in budget documents provided by the division, 16 benefits are afforded to ACPS employees:

- **Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA): Social Security and Medicare.** Participation and rates are mandated by law. ACPS contributes 7.65 percent of employees' gross pay. The tax rate for the Social Security portion of FICA is 6.2 percent; the tax rate for the Medicare portion of FICA is 1.45 percent.
- **Virginia Retirement System (VRS).** Participation and rates are mandated by state regulations. The current employer contribution rate for administrators, teachers, clerks and paraprofessionals is 9.2 percent of covered compensation pay. Plan members are required by state statute to contribute 5.0 percent of their annual covered payroll to VRS. This 5.0 percent member contribution is assumed by ACPS.
- **Virginia Retiree Health Insurance Credit (VRHIC).** Participation is mandatory. Eligible retired teachers and other professional school employees can receive a monthly health credit to be used towards the cost of their individual health insurance premiums. The monthly credit amount is \$2.50 per year of service, not to exceed \$75 per month or the amount of the retiree's health insurance premium for single coverage. The current employer contribution rate is 0.49 percent of covered payroll. The current employer contribution rate for maintenance workers, custodians, cafeteria staff and bus drivers is 1.33 percent of covered compensation pay. Plan members are required by state statute to contribute 5.0 percent of their annual covered payroll to VRS. This 5.0 percent member contribution is assumed by ACPS.
- **Group Life Insurance.** Participation is mandatory. For FY 2008, the Group Life Insurance Program rate will be 1.13 percent for annual covered payroll. This rate is composed of a 0.68 percent employee share and a 0.45 percent employer share. The 0.68 percent employee contribution is assumed by ACPS.
- **City Supplemental Retirement (Principal Financial Group).** Participation is mandatory. The contribution rates are determined by

an annual actuarial valuation performed by the Principal Financial Group. The employer and the employees are required to make contributions to the pension plans which are 1.25 percent and 1.00 percent of the covered payroll, respectively. The cost of the employee's share is assumed by ACPS.

- **Hospitalization (Optimum Choice and Kaiser).** Participation is optional. Rates are determined by the carrier. The amount contributed for employee health insurance is determined by the school system. At present, the school system pays the following percentages of the highest premium (family coverage) for each of the following employee groups:

Health Benefit Costs to ACPS

MAMSI (OPTIMUM CHOICE)	<u>HMO</u>	<u>POS</u>
Professional	61.4%	56.1%
Support below SUP 25	98.8%	89.4%
Support SUP 25 and above	88.3%	80.1%
Administrators	100.0%	100.0%

KAISER	<u>HMO</u>	<u>POS</u>
Professional	73.8%	61.9%
Support below SUP 25	100.0%	93.5%
Support SUP 25 and above	100.0%	84.6%
Administrators	100.0%	100.0%

- **Worker's Compensation.** Participation is mandatory. In 1992, the school system instituted a self-insured program administered by a third-party administrator. The budgeted amount is based on an estimate of the open claims ACPS will pay in FY 2008.
- **Unemployment Compensation.** Participation is mandatory. Rates are determined by the state. The school system is considered a Reimbursable Employer. The Virginia Employment Commission invoices the school system on a quarterly basis.
- **Employee Assistance (INOVA Employee Assistance Program).** Participation is mandatory. Rate is determined by contract with the provider. The contracted cost to the school system for FY 2006-2007 is \$18.12 per employee. There are currently 2,100 employees eligible for the program.
- **Long-Term Disability Insurance.** Participation is mandatory. Rate is determined by contract with provider. The contracted cost to the school system is \$0.32 per \$1,000 of covered payroll.
- **Professional Certification Fees.** Participation is optional. Virginia Code 22.1-299 requires that all regularly-employed teachers hold certificates in accordance with regulations of the State Board of Education. The School Board pays this fee for selected new teachers.

- **National Teacher Exam Fees (NTE).** Participation is optional. The NTE is a standardized examination that provides objective measures of academic achievement for those completing teacher education programs. The School Board pays the fees for selected new teachers.
- **Dental Insurance.** Participation is optional. Rate is determined by the carrier. The amount contributed by the employee is determined by the employee's election of plan type. At present, the school system pays 100% of individual premiums and 100% of all premiums for administrators.
- **Beneflex Program (Section 125 Plan).** Participation is optional. This enables employees to set aside money to be used for out-of-pocket medical and dependent care expenses using pre-tax dollars. The cost to the school division is \$4.57 per employee per flexible spending account per month. Additionally, employees may use pre-tax dollars to pay for health and dental insurance premiums. In addition, ACPS pays a service fee of \$18.00 per year per participant in the health care account.
- **Medical Premium Expense Benefit.** Participation is mandatory. Employer paid benefit which will pay employees a monthly benefit up to \$500 to offset the cost of their health insurance premiums while they are on long-term disability. The cost to the school division is \$2.14 per employee per month.
- **Long-Term Disability Buy-Down.** Participation is optional. The current waiting period for long-term disability benefits to begin is 60 days. The buy-down option allows employees to decrease the waiting period from 60 days to 30 days. Premiums are paid by employees and are based on their annual salary.

Providing a comprehensive menu of benefits, with a combination of mandatory and voluntary participation, allows ACPS to be competitive with its larger surrounding systems. In addition, by employing a differentiated level of employer contribution on the health insurance benefits for different employee groups (i.e., having lower contribution rates for employee groups with the largest number of members), allows the division to realize millions of dollars in saving on health care costs annually.

COMMENDATION 4-C:

ACPS is commended for implementing differentiated employer health insurance contribution levels for different employee categories.

RECOMMENDATION 4-6:

Stay abreast of trends in employee benefits offered by other educational organizations.

This action would help to ensure that ACPS offerings are comparable with those of neighboring divisions and help to keep costs down to the greatest extent possible. Since

employee compensation and benefits comprise the largest percentage of division expenses, it is critical to the sound fiscal management of the division that these costs not be allowed to escalate unreasonably.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department. The division has a benefits analyst charged with overseeing this responsibility.

4.5 Professional Development

Professional development can have an impact on student achievement. The Council for School Performance has identified the following characteristics of effective professional development programs:

- Long-term programs embedded in the school year.
- Active learning activities such as demonstration, practice, and feedback.
- Collaborative study of student learning.
- Administrative support for continuing collaboration to improve teaching and learning.

Professional development programs should be designed and implemented for one of four major purposes:

- **Awareness/Exploration:** Describes professional development activities that address those first stages of concern/interest/understanding regarding an innovation.
- **Skill-Building Activities:** Describes activities designed to help participants build and apply specific instructional skills; generally these activities are assumed to include follow-up coaching and support.
- **Program Improvement:** Improved performance requires both individual and team development coupled with systemic change. Program improvement occurs when individuals or teams engage in a continuous, collaborative, problem-solving process. The process involves reflection and refocusing instructional practice to improve student learning.
- **Strategic Planning/Systems Thinking:** Effective professional development and change initiatives must acknowledge that complex, interdependent relationships exist among the various aspects of an educational system. All professional development activities must share common elements; a comprehensive approach to change that facilitates effective operation and integration of all components of the system.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools has board policy specifying staff development activities for professional staff that reflect best practice as defined by national standards for staff development, but has no companion policy for support staff.

Policy GCL: Professional Staff Development outlines the components of the professional development program in Alexandria City Public Schools. As stated in the policy:

The Alexandria City School Board will provide a program of high-quality professional development:

- i. in the use and documentation of performance standards and evaluation criteria based on student academic progress and skills for teachers and administrators to clarify roles and performance expectations and to facilitate the successful implementation of instructional programs that promote student achievement at the school and classroom levels.*
- ii. as part of the license renewal process, to assist teachers and principals in acquiring the skills needed to work with gifted students, students with disabilities, and students who have been identified as having limited English proficiency and to increase student achievement and expand the knowledge and skills students require to meet the standards of academic performance set by the Board of Education.*
- iii. in educational technology for all instructional personnel which is designed to facilitate integration of computer skills and related technology into the curricula, and*
- iv. for administrative personnel designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management, including training in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and administrator performance based on student academic progress and the skills and knowledge of such instructional or administrative personnel.*

This policy evidences ACPS' strong commitment to staff development for professional staff. The policy goes on to specify professional development activities that will be provided annually for professional personnel:

In addition, the board will also provide teachers and principals with high-quality professional development programs each year in:

- i. instructional content.*
- ii. the preparation of tests and other assessment measures.*
- iii. methods of assessing the progress of individual students, including Standards of Learning assessment materials or other criterion-referenced tests that match locally developed objectives.*
- iv. instruction and remediation techniques in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science.*

v. *interpreting test data for instructional purposes.*

vi. *technology applications to implement the Standards of Learning.*

The policy concludes in noting the requirement that all instructional personnel must participate in professional development on an annual basis and that the division's professional development plan will be reviewed annually by the School Board. Additional review concerning the content and quality of staff development offerings as they relate to instruction is included in **Chapter 5 – Cost of Educational Services Delivery.**

COMMENDATION 4-D:

ACPS is commended for a professional staff development policy that outlines activities that reflect best practice.

RECOMMENDATION 4-7:

Establish a policy for support staff development that mirrors the high-quality standards outlined in the policy for professional staff.

The policy should encompass all categories of support staff (e.g., transportation, paraprofessionals, food services workers, clerical, etc.) and specify both required training and topics of professional development. The policy should also outline the procedures related to the implementation of a support staff training program and requirements for participation.

Having a specific policy for professional development of support staff emphasizes not only the importance of training for this employee group, but also the challenge of coordinating training efforts across multiple skill-areas and work locations.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

Staff development does not have a presence on the division's Web site.

Activities relating to professional development are facilitated in the curriculum and instruction department. While there are a myriad of activities being conducted on a daily basis throughout the school division, there is no link on the main page of the curriculum and instruction home page that would direct teachers or other staff to the electronic professional development course catalog. As shown in **Exhibit 4-9**, the curriculum and instruction homepage lists "Staff Development," but has no active link to more information on the topic.

RECOMMENDATION 4-8:

Create a staff development link on the home page of the Curriculum and Instruction Department Web site.

Several school divisions in Virginia have staff development links which take users to sites which allow them to access a range of staff development-related services. These services include registering on-line for courses, filing for tuition reimbursement for college courses, and monitoring their recertification credits/points. The human resources

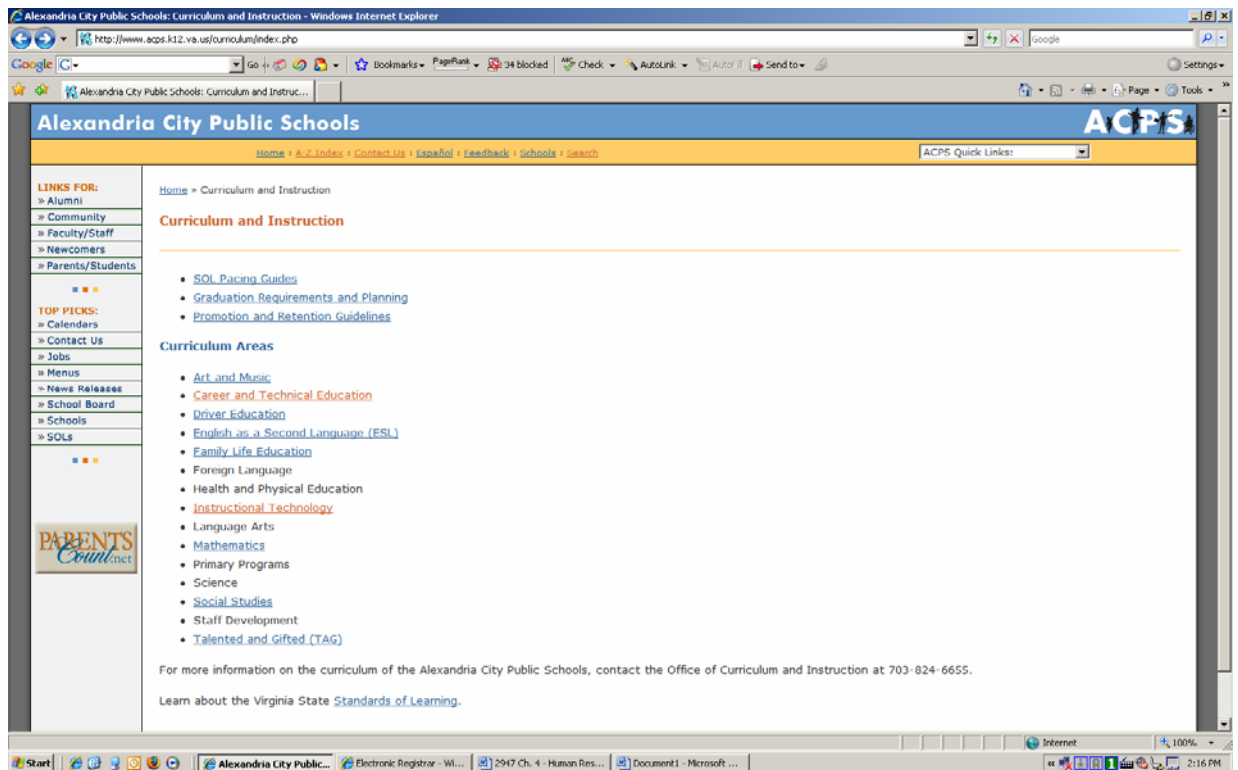
Web site for Chesterfield County contains an active staff development link to these services. In Fairfax County, a link on the division's Professional Learning and Training home page provides information for administrative, instructional and support personnel on staff development opportunities both in the division and around the country through professional development conferences.

With such significant fiscal and human resources devoted to training and development activities throughout the division, providing an active link to more information about staff development course offerings would provide greater accessibility, and in turn, greater utilization of this valuable resource.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

**EXHIBIT 4-9
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION WEB SITE HOMEPAGE
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07**



Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Curriculum and Instruction Web Site Homepage, 2007.

FINDING

ACPS has an excellent online professional development course catalog and registration system.

Management of the processes involved with developing, scheduling, registering participants, evaluating, and documenting recertification points for training activities can be a daunting, labor intensive process. ACPS has purchased software and installed a program that allows these processes to be handled seamlessly through a single, integrated system. Key features of the system are as follows:

- Password-protected access to ensure privacy of employee information.
- Provides a means for instructors to place courses on the Web site, with all accompanying logistical information for prospective course participants. Features allow instructors to control course access by giving them the ability to cap class size, specify pre-requisite skills and/or courses, and limit the number of course offerings, as needed to ensure course integrity.
- Provides teachers with a record of courses for which they have already enrolled, cancelled, or are pending notification of course availability. In addition, teachers can access a transcript showing specific information on courses taken and the number of recertification points accumulated to date.
- The system has the capability of sending e-mail notices for such things as reminding participants of course start dates and time and informing participants of closed or cancelled courses.

Having such a user-friendly, comprehensive system enhances the professional “look” of the course registration process and allows the responsibility for and control of accessing professional development in the hands of the participants.

COMMENDATION 4-E

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for providing a user-friendly and effective system for accessing professional development services.

**5.0 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE
DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT**

5.0 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter reviews the costs of educational services to students of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The chapter examines the educational delivery system to determine if programs are efficient, and staffed appropriately in order for the school division to meet its goal to provide rigorous, standards-based instruction for its students, and to comply with state and federal law.

The review includes an analysis of documents, interviews with ACPS personnel, school visits, and survey responses from many employees who participated in the study, as well as comparative information from school divisions.

The five major sections of this chapter as follows:

- 5.1 Organization and Management of Curriculum and Instruction
- 5.2 Curriculum and Instruction
- 5.3 School Improvement and Accountability
- 5.4 Pupil Services
- 5.5 Special Education

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The leadership and instructional staff of Alexandria City Public Schools are committed to equipping students with the skills necessary for academic success today and future success in the worlds of higher education and work. ACPS is committed to the achievement of all students and has provided many high quality learning alternatives for students of every ability level.

ACPS School Board Policy contains the educational philosophy of the division:

It shall be the philosophy of the Alexandria City School Board to provide equal opportunity for every student to achieve maximum intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth, to ensure that each individual be equipped to communicate effectively with other people, to be competent both in the work place and in higher education, and to feel confident of the ability to make creative and constructive decisions in his/her life.

The mission of the curriculum and instruction department supports this philosophy in stating that the department will, “provide support and resources facilitation of effective and high quality school-based and division-wide K-12 instructional programs for all students.”

MGT found many practices within ACPS that were aligned with this philosophy. The division has demonstrated progressive approaches to higher and accelerated student achievement. ACPS has also developed, provided staff development for, and disseminated curriculum guides by grade and content area. These guides are central to establishing a framework for standards-based instruction and aligned assessment.

ACPS has also identified the key initiatives for closing the minority/majority achievement gap. The division has strategies in place to improve the performance of subcategories of students who are not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) according to state and national standards. ACPS's data analysis initiative has focused on the collection and disaggregation of data for principals and teachers. And, the correlation between assessment data, instructional planning, and improved student achievement is evident in ACPS.

MGT consultants found a number of commendable practices in its review of this operational area. The commendations cited in this chapter are as follows:

- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended on the use of curriculum specialists as a means of bridging the gap between curriculum program intent and implementation in schools **(Commendation 5-A)**.
- ACPS is commended for maintaining and updating curriculum and instruction policies in a timely manner **(Commendation 5-B)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for developing and aligning curriculum guides that identify critical standards to be achieved, curriculum pacing guides, and benchmark assessments **(Commendation 5-C)**.
- ACPS is commended for implementation of a more inclusive approach to talented and gifted screening as outlined in its revised Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted **(Commendation 5-D)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for developing a comprehensive professional plan in support of school improvement efforts **(Commendation 5-E)**.
- Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for setting budget priorities in alignment with the mission of ACPS schools and central office departments **(Commendation 5-F)**.
- ACPS is commended for employing strategies that successfully prevent high incidents of crime and violence on school campuses **(Commendation 5-G)**.
- ACPS is commended for providing a system of comprehensive guidance and counseling services for students that provides for continuous improvement of programmatic operations **(Commendation 5-H)**.

Recommendations included in this chapter relate to developing written procedures, structures, and functions that contribute to more effective coordination and planning of tasks, as well as a more cohesive support system for the curriculum and instruction functions of the division. Key recommendations that should be considered include:

- Structure an agenda so that all curriculum specialists have time during their regular meetings to share best practices **(Recommendation 5-1)**.
- Strengthen the component of the CTE strategic plan that emphasizes promoting CTE programs to middle and high school students **(Recommendation 5-2)**.
- Develop a procedures manual for the English as a Second Language Program **(Recommendation 5-3)**.
- Employ strategies to reduce the number of incidents of disorderly conduct in ACPS schools **(Recommendation 5-4)**.

INTRODUCTION

ACPS has shown continual improvement in student achievement as measured by the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments and end of course assessments. The administration continues to focus on the alignment of SOLs, curriculum and instruction, and benchmark assessments. Teachers are becoming more familiar with data analysis and the use of data for instructional planning. Curriculum guides are a valuable resource to teachers and serve as a framework for pacing the instruction of essential skills. Gifted education, honors programs, and dual enrollment opportunities challenge the division's highest achievers.

The increasingly diverse population challenges ACPS to expand quality instruction to a growing number of students. The fastest growing student sub-group in ACPS is English Language Learners. Providing appropriate, focused instruction for students with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students of minority ethnicity has proven to be the division's greatest challenge.

Exhibit 5-1 shows a comparison of ACPS and its Cluster 6 peer public school divisions. As shown in the exhibit, ACPS is the largest in terms of student population, has a comparable percentage of students with disabilities, has the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and has the largest number of schools.

EXHIBIT 5-1 OVERVIEW OF PEER PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISIONS 2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION	STUDENT POPULATION PER 1,000 GENERAL POPULATION	PERCENTAGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	PERCENTAGE ESL STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
Alexandria City Public Schools	17	10,643	82.97	17.85	28.3	56.0
Charlottesville City Public Schools	12	4,331	96.14	17.39	6.1	48.9
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	4	2,496	129.47	14.42	7.1	46.0
Manassas City Public Schools	9	6,554	186.54	12.24	30.8	20.0
Winchester City Public Schools	7	3,743	158.70	18.67	13.4	39.6
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	10	5,553	130.76	16.11	17.1	42.1

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

The next several exhibits display the MGT survey results related to the delivery of educational services. As can be seen, the results indicate positive beliefs about the quality of ACPS schools and the division’s focus on improved educational performance for students.

Exhibit 5-2 displays the survey responses to questions regarding the overall quality of the school division. Central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers were asked to provide their assessment of the overall quality of the school division. As shown in the exhibit, when completing the statement, “*The overall quality of public education in our school district is,*” 94 percent of central office administrators, 100 percent of school administrators and 88 percent of teachers rated the quality as *good or excellent*. When offered the option of stating whether the quality of education was “*improving, staying the same, getting worse or don’t know,*” the same respondents overwhelmingly responded that the quality of improving, with percentages ranging from 61 to 88.

Respondents were also asked to rate aspects of the quality of teachers work in the classroom as either *excellent/good, or fair/poor*. **Exhibit 5-3** displays the responses to several statements. As shown in the exhibit, central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers rated four areas: the quality of teachers’ efforts to meet individual learning needs, communicating with parents, explaining test results to parents, and keeping students focused on learning tasks in the classroom. The percent of respondents rating these areas as *good/excellent* ranged from 60 to 87 percent, again showing the positive regard with which ACPS teachers and administrators view the quality of educational services.

**EXHIBIT 5-2
COMPARISON SURVEY DATA FOR
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DELIVERY
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

STATEMENT	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
Overall quality of public education in our school district is:			
Good or Excellent	94%	100%	88%
Fair or Poor	6	0	3
Overall quality of education in our school district is:			
Improving	88	92	61
Staying the Same	6	8	27
Getting Worse	0	0	5
Don't Know	6	0	7

Source: Created by MGT of America, Inc., 2007.

**EXHIBIT 5-3
COMPARISON SURVEY DATA FOR
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DELIVERY
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
Teachers' work in meeting students' individual learning needs.	63/16	84/17	82/14
Teachers' work in communicating with parents/guardians.	63/16	79/21	84/14
How well students' test results are explained to parents/guardians.	56/19	63/37	62/25
The amount of time students spends on task learning in the classroom.	60/9	87/13	79/16

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

Source: Created by MGT of America, Inc., 2007.

Respondents were then given a series of statements regarding the educational environment in the school division and then asked to indicate if they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* or *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with each statement. As shown in **Exhibit 5-4**, every statement regarding the school or classroom environment was rated positively by over 50 percent of respondents. The following statements had the highest percentage of respondents (80 percent or more) stating that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement:

- *Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.*
- *I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with curriculum and instruction matters.*
- *Our district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subject areas.*
- *Our district uses the results of benchmark tests to monitor student performance and identify performance gaps.*

**EXHIBIT 5-4
COMPARISON SURVEY DATA FOR
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DELIVERY
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
The emphasis on learning in this school district has increased in recent years.	85/0	100/0	72/9
Sufficient pupil services are provided in this school district (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).	81/9	92/0	70/20
Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.	94/0	100/0	81/6
I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with curriculum and instruction matters.	91/0	100/0	83/9
Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	57/3	75/0	81/7
The curriculum is broad and challenging for most students.	62/6	84/0	81/8
Teachers in our schools know the material they teach.	65/0	87/0	86/2
Teachers and staff are given opportunities to participate in the textbook and material adoption processes.	82/0	92/4	73/5
Teachers have adequate supplies and equipment needed to perform their jobs effectively.	88/0	100/0	76/12
Our district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subject areas.	81/0	100/0	81/9
Our district uses the results of benchmark tests to monitor student performance and identify performance gaps.	85/0	88/0	81/5
The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	90/0	46/0	78/13
Our district provides a high quality education that meets or exceeds state and federal mandates.	88/3	54/0	79/5

Source: Created by MGT of America, Inc., 2007.

The final portion of the survey on educational services delivery required respondents to review a list of academic subject areas and state if they *agreed/strongly agreed or disagreed/strongly disagreed* on whether the division has an effective educational program in each of the subjects listed. As shown in **Exhibit 5-5**, core subject areas—reading/language arts, writing, mathematics, science and social studies—received the highest percentage of favorable ratings from all three respondent categories. Career and technical education received the lowest ratings, with fewer than half of the teachers and school administrators agreeing that the program is effective.

The second section of this survey asked respondents to use the same ratings key to indicate if specific programs that cut across the curriculum were effective. The programs receiving the highest ratings (e.g., number of respondents indicating they agreed that

they were quality programs) were special education, literacy, and summer schools. Alternative education, career counseling and college counseling programs received the lowest ratings, especially among school administrators and teachers.

**EXHIBIT 5-5
COMPARISON SURVEY DATA FOR
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DELIVERY
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
Our district has effective educational programs for the following:			
a) Reading and Language Arts	72/0	92/0	80/5
b) Writing	69/3	96/0	68/12
c) Mathematics	68/3	92/0	68/11
d) Science	72/0	92/4	65/8
e) Social Studies (history or geography)	68/3	96/0	73/6
f) Foreign Language	66/3	55/0	37/2
g) Basic Computer Instruction	69/0	79/0	56/15
h) Advanced Computer Instruction	66/0	62/0	31/8
i) Music, Art, Drama, and other Fine Arts	72/0	84/0	64/3
j) Physical Education	69/3	96/0	76/3
k) Career and Technical (Vocational) Education	62/6	42/8	26/8
l) Business Education	62/0	59/0	30/2
The district has effective programs for the following:			
a) Special Education	79/0	87/4	64/19
b) Literacy Program	81/0	84/4	70/10
c) Advanced Placement Program	79/3	58/0	38/6
d) Drop-out Prevention Program	50/6	37/17	14/10
e) Summer School Programs	72/0	84/4	60/9
f) Honors and Gifted Education	78/0	63/8	59/11
g) Alternative Education Programs	62/12	25/41	24/11
h) Career Counseling Program	56/6	42/4	15/8
i) College Counseling Program	56/6	38/8	17/7

Source: Created by MGT of America, Inc., 2007.

5.1 Organization and Management of Curriculum and Instruction

ACPS is committed to using its resources, including personnel, to provide a safe, technology-rich environment in which students can engage in meaningful schoolwork that challenges them to think, reason, and develop ownership for their learning. This section of the report reviews the organizational structure of educational service delivery including general education and federal programs, special education, career and technical education, and pupil services.

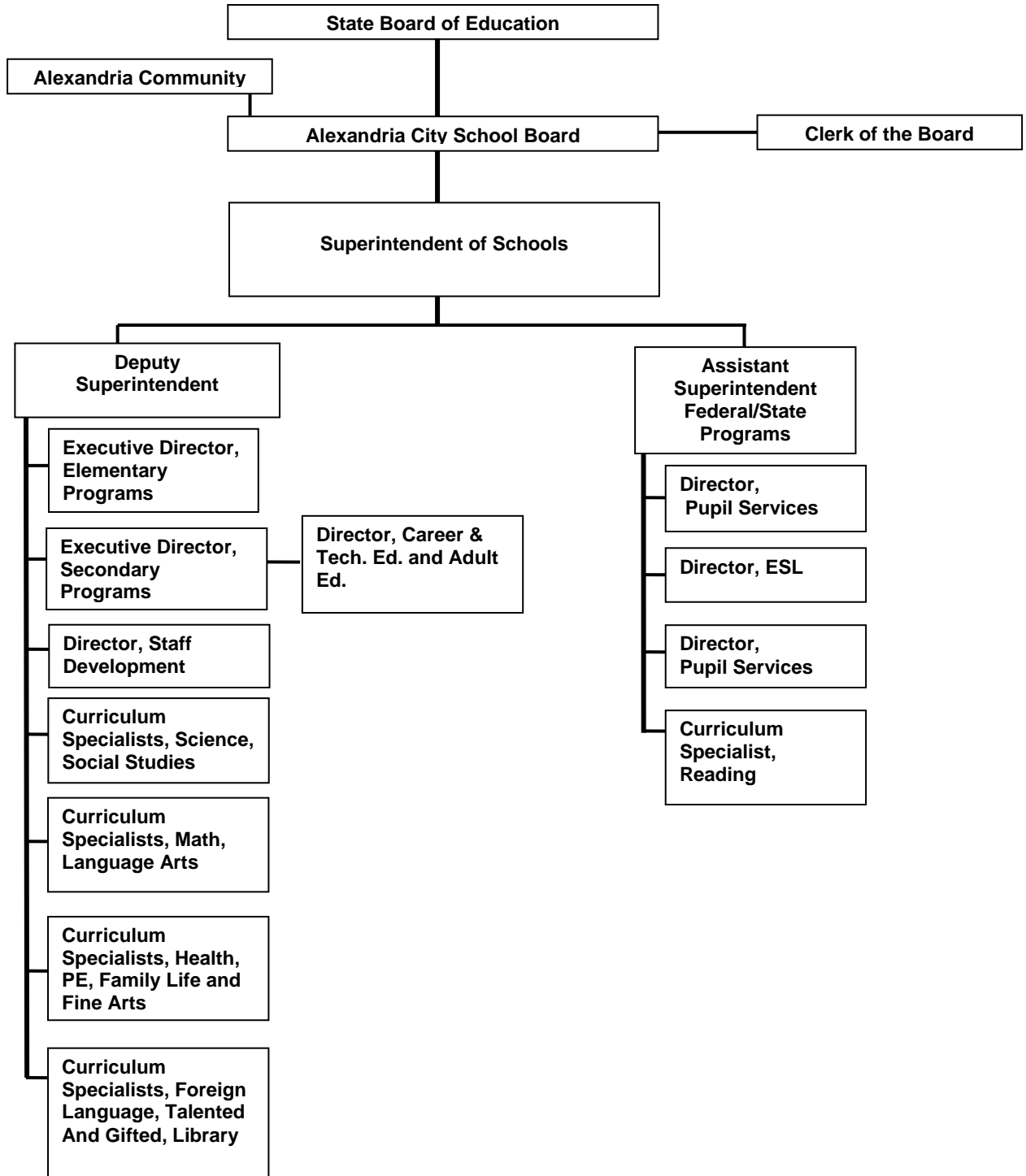
An efficient organization promotes improved achievement for all students with clearly designated functions, roles, and responsibilities for all staff. Communication within the

department of curriculum and instruction, in conjunction with other departments, and with school-level staff is critical to ensure a true focus on the mission and guiding principles of the division. Student achievement is directly linked to the efficiency of the organization's curriculum planning, appropriate research-based instruction, and adequacy of resources and support.

Exhibit 5-6 shows the organizational structure of the curriculum and instruction department. The positions under the deputy superintendent include the executive directors for elementary and secondary programs, each of whom are the direct supervisors of elementary and secondary principals in the division. The executive director for secondary programs also has the director for career, technical education and adult education as a direct report. The division's curriculum specialists for all subject areas are also in this reporting structure.

The assistant superintendent for federal and state programs oversees operations in pupil services and pupil services, with the directors of both areas, as well as the English as a Second Language (ESL) director and the curriculum specialist in reading as direct reports.

EXHIBIT 5-6
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
FEBRUARY, 2007



Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Curriculum and Instruction Department, 2007.

FINDING

The curriculum specialists are based in the curriculum and instruction department and this placement creates better lines of communication between division schools and the curriculum and instruction department.

The curriculum specialists represent a highly skilled force of master teachers who spend the majority of their time in schools assisting teachers and school administrators in the attainment of the specific improvement goals of the individual school site, and in carrying out an effective instructional program. Their work provides a vital linkage between those responsible for setting policy and procedures and enforcing programmatic mandates at the division level, and those responsible for ensuring high quality instruction for all students at the school level.

When school divisions do not have persons charged with the responsibility for helping teachers and schools carry out the responsibilities associated with the curriculum (i.e., pacing of instruction, alignment with Standards of Learning (SOL's), etc.), what often occurs is a disconnect where curriculum administrators perceive that a particular program is being well implemented in schools, but school personnel have little understanding of the program's operational requirements or are not implementing it in accordance with the program design. Having curriculum specialists who are subject matter experts in the field, and have daily communication with both school and division-level personnel helps prevent this disconnect and facilitate a more efficient and effective implementation of the curriculum programs.

COMMENDATION 5-A:

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended on the organizational placement of curriculum specialists at the central office as a means of bridging the gap between curriculum program intent and implementation in schools.

FINDING

There is not a structured, regularly scheduled time period for curriculum specialists to meet and share "best practices" in the field and raise issues of mutual concern.

From responses gathered in focus group discussions with curriculum specialists, interviews with school personnel, and responses to MGT surveys, it is very apparent that the work of the curriculum specialist provides a vital service to schools in their efforts to provide high quality instruction to all students. Each of the subject area curriculum specialists have a great deal of expertise in his/her assignment area and works effectively with teachers and administrators. Currently, however, there are not regularly scheduled opportunities to share the great instructional practices that are happening in schools and for curriculum specialists to share their own best practices of working with teachers, administrators, and other school personnel.

RECOMMENDATION 5-1:

Structure the agenda of all curriculum specialists meetings to allow time for shared planning and to discuss their successful activities in schools.

The needed frequency of such meetings can be determined by the specialists; however, it would be advisable to meet monthly at a minimum so that issues that are pressing or topical can be addressed in a timely manner. The agenda for the meeting should be structured to allow sufficient time for both structured discussion of specific agenda items that are of interest to the entire group and time for breakout groups of specialists to discuss matters of particular relevance to them.

Such meetings should also allow time for shared planning among the specialists and to have other staff and administrators both within the department and throughout the division attend and discuss pertinent curricular issues.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

5.2 Curriculum and Instruction

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction provides leadership and expertise in the development of general education curricular and instructional initiatives that support achievement for all students in ACPS. The department is responsible for the developing new curricula based on the Virginia Standards of Learning.

The Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework expands the Standards of Learning and defines the content knowledge, skills, and understandings that are measured by state assessments. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction recognizes that the curriculum framework provides additional guidance to its administrators and teachers as they develop an instructional program appropriate for students at all grade levels. Department staff assists administrators and teachers as they plan appropriate instruction by identifying essential content knowledge and documenting research-based, proven practices. Application of research-based, proven practices involves the use of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to ensure student achievement. In support of these efforts, the department has nearly 60 policies that address curricular issues and provide direction for administrators and instructional staff.

FINDING

ACPS regularly updates policies related to curriculum and instruction.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-7**, of the 58 policies shown at the division's Web site, 57 were either adopted or updated in the last three years. Policies serve as a legal foundation for activities undertaken by the division. Updating policies regularly provides the benefit of keeping the division abreast of the latest changes in state and or federal legislation and allow the policies to reflect those changes.

COMMENDATION 5-B

ACPS is commended for maintaining and updating curriculum and instruction policies in a timely manner.

**EXHIBIT 5-7
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION POLICIES
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07**

POLICY TITLE	ADOPTED	UPDATED
IA - Instructional Goals and Objectives	1997	2005
IAA - Notification of Learning Objectives	2005	2006
IC/ID - School Year/School Day	1997	2006
IE - Moment of Silence	July, 2000	Sept., 2000
IEA - Pledge of Allegiance	2001	2005
IF - Curriculum Development	1997	2005
IFB - Pilot, Research or Experimental Projects	1997	2006
IFD - Curriculum Adoption	1997	2005
IFE - Curriculum Guides and Course Outlines	1997	2005
IGA - Basic Instructional Program	1997	2005
IGAD - Career and Technical Education	1997	2005
IGAE/IGAF - Health/Physical Education	1997	2005
IGAG - Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco	1997	2006
IGAH - Family Life Education	1997	2005
IGAI - Character Education	2005	2006
IGAJ - Driver Education	1997	2005
IGAK - Alternatives to Animal Dissection	2006	No Date
IGBA - Programs for Students with Disabilities	1997	2005
IGBB - Programs for Gifted Students	1997	2005
IGBC - Parental Involvement	1997	2005
IGBE - Remedial Instruction	1997	2005
IGBF - Limited English Proficient Students	1997	2005
IGBG - Homebound, Correspondence, and Alternative Means of Instruction	2006	No Date
IGBH - Alternative School Programs	1997	2005
IGBI - Advanced Placement Classes and Special Programs	2005	No Date
IGCA - Summer Schools	1997	2005
IGDA - Student Organizations	1997	2005
IGDAA - Grade Average Requirement for Eligibility to Participate in Athletic and Co-Curricular Programs	1997	2005
IGE - Adult Education	1997	2006
IHA - Grouping for Instruction	1997	2005
IHB - Class Size	1997	2006
IIA - Instructional Materials	1997	2005
IIAA - Textbook Selection and Adoption	1997	2005
IIAB - Supplementary Materials Selection and Adoption	1997	2005
IIAE - Innovative or Experimental Projects	1997	2005
IIBD - School Libraries/Media Centers	1997	2005

**EXHIBIT 5-7
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION POLICIES
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Continued)
2006-07**

POLICY TITLE	ADOPTED	UPDATED
IIBEA/GAB - Acceptable Computer System Use	2001	2005
IIBEA-R/GAB - Acceptable Computer System Use (Regulation)	2001	2005
IIBEA-E2/GAB - Acceptable Computer Use Agreement	2001	2005
IICA - Field Trips	1997	2005
IICA-R - Field Trip Procedures (Regulation)	2004	No Date
IICB/IICC - Community Resource Persons/School Volunteers	1997	2006
IJ - School Counseling Program	1997	2006
IKA - Parental Involvement with Instruction	1997	2005
IKB - Homework	1997	2005
IKC - Grading	1997	2005
IKCA - Reports to Parents/Guardians	1997	2005
IKE - Academic Progress/Promotion/Retention	1997	2005
IKEB - Acceleration	1997	2005
IKF - Standards of Learning and Graduation Requirements	1997	2006
IKFA - Locally Awarded Verified Credits	2002	2005
IKG - Remediation Recovery Program	2005	No Date
IKH - Retaking SOL Assessments	2005	No Date
IL - Testing Programs	1997	2005
ILA - Examination	1997	2005
IM - Evaluation of Instructional Programs	1997	No Date
INB - Teaching About Controversial Issues	1997	2005
INDC - Religion in the Schools	1997	2005

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools Policy Manual, 2007.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools provide pacing and other curricular materials at its Web site to allow instructional staff and parents access to materials to enhance the instructional program.

ACPS has curriculum pacing guides that are aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning. The division also developed a curriculum resource Web site to assist instructional staff and parents seeking to provide added support by working with their children at home, by providing curriculum resources in one location.

As changes are made in the curricula or requests are made from users, new resources and links are added to the Web site. The site is updated regularly to meet the needs of teachers at all grade levels. The curriculum guides provide a quarterly pacing schedule to ensure that content standards are taught in preparation for the state assessments. In addition, for each lesson, the curriculum guides show the SOLs, identify targeted skills,

and provide assessment guidelines. As principals are trained in curriculum management for standards achievement, curriculum specialists and lead teachers develop and install curriculum support at the division and school level. Teachers at each grade level know the critical standards to teach, the order in which they are to be achieved, and an approximate time schedule.

Student achievement is greatly enhanced when schools provide teachers with an articulated curriculum that is aligned with assessment and ensure that the curriculum is actually taught. Alignment of curriculum and instruction can have a profound impact on student achievement. ACPS has identified critical standards to be achieved in each subject area and at each grade level; has developed a curriculum pacing guide that informs teachers when their students should achieve critical standards throughout the year; and uses benchmark tests to measure the achievement of important standards at quarterly intervals throughout the school year.

COMMENDATION 5-C

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for developing and aligning curriculum guides that identify critical standards to be achieved, curriculum pacing guides, and benchmark assessments.

FINDING

ACPS has actively pursued strategies to have a more diverse representation of student in the talented and gifted program (TAG).

Traditional identification procedures often fail to identify students who come from minority groups or disadvantaged environments as gifted. However, many school divisions are now using a multiple criteria approach to identify giftedness in children who are poor or from diverse cultural backgrounds. Past research has suggested that as many as 15 percent of the gifted population may be disadvantaged students.

In its *Local Plan of the Gifted* for 2006-07 through 2011-12, ACPS has revised the strategies used by the division in identifying gifted students from underserved populations of students. As stated in the plan:

Alexandria City Public Schools conducts an active search for students who should be evaluated for the specific academic gifted programs. Alexandria City Public Schools applies the criteria for the screening, identification, and placement of gifted students without regard to sex, race, color, religion, disabilities, or national origin. A pool of potential candidates is created through general screening, direct referral, or transfers from other school divisions.

*For six weeks in the fall and spring of the school year, K-5 teachers use the **Kingore Observation Inventory (See Appendix Form/Letter 1a, 1b)** to identify students in their class who exhibit characteristics of giftedness. Ongoing throughout the year, grades 6-8 teachers create a pool of students using a content specific **Purdue Rating Scale (See Appendix Form/Letter 2)** and students' past and present performance in*

specific content areas. During the spring of each year in grades 9-12, counselors use past performance in the classroom, scores on standardized tests, and advanced scores on Standards of Learning tests to create a pool of candidates who would benefit from instruction in the Honors and Advanced Placement classes.

Teachers, in consultation with the reading and mathematics specialists, consider the performance of all students in their class and informally nominate candidates each quarter for further consideration for specific academic aptitude. Those students who qualify for the screening pool and continue to demonstrate a high level of academic aptitude will be considered for a complete evaluation.

In addition to the above, the Curriculum Specialist for the Talented and Gifted (TAG) creates a pool of candidates from special populations (students with special circumstances, such as students with disabilities, ESL students, students who qualify for free and reduced-priced meals, and students who lack advocacy, access, and affirmation.) using data from past Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test scores, advanced scores on the Standards of Learning tests, and/or recommendations from ESL teachers, special education teachers, and school counselors.

COMMENDATION 5-D:

ACPS is commended for implementation of a more inclusive approach to Talented and Gifted screening as outlined in its revised Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted.

FINDING

The effectiveness of the career and technical education program is impeded by insufficient promotion and awareness by students entering high school.

The stated mission of career and technical education (CTE) is “to provide all students with the skills and technology necessary for tomorrow’s careers, successful citizenship, and lifelong learning.” **Exhibit 5-8** shows the student enrollment in CTE by program and by schools. These figures represent a decline from the previous year’s enrollment of 6,155. One of the keys to strong program enrollment is awareness of the program offerings by students prior to their arrival to high school.

**EXHIBIT 5-8
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENT ENROLLMENT
BY PROGRAM AND BY SCHOOL
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006**

CTE ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM		CTE ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL	
Business & Information Technology	1564	F.C. Hammond Middle School	1341
Family & Consumer Sciences	1037	George Washington Middle School	1047
Health & Medical Sciences	142	Minnie Howard Middle School	116
Marketing	205	T.C. Williams High School	2338
Technology Education	765		
Trade & Industrial Education	1129		
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	4842	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	4842

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Career and Technical Education, 2007.

In the fall of 2006, a three-year CTE strategic plan was approved by the ACPS School Board. The goals and objectives of the plan are as follows:

CTE Goals:

- Career awareness and workforce readiness skills will be included in the K-12 curriculum.
- Each middle and high school student will develop a career-focused educational plan using the resources of the school, family, and community.
- The CTE program will prepare all students for a post-secondary experience that includes higher education, career development, and lifelong learning.
- The CTE program components – curriculum, instructional methodology, facilities, technology, and equipment – will be state-of-the-art, rigorous, aligned with industry standards, evaluated on a regular basis, and updated when appropriate.
- CTE instruction will integrate academic learning and workplace knowledge, skills, and technologies.
- Each CTE teacher will possess the skills, knowledge, attitudes, technological expertise, and certification needed to deliver a state-of-the-art program.
- The present and anticipated needs of the workplace and the community drive the CTE curriculum, ensuring its currency and relevance.

CTE Objectives

- School Board and administrative support for inclusion of career awareness in the K-12 curriculum.
- To include career awareness in the elementary school curriculum.
- To include career exploration and workforce readiness skills in the middle school curriculum.
- To include career experience and workforce readiness skills in the high school curriculum.
- To assist each student in developing his/her career-focused educational plan using the resources of the school, family, and community.
- To continue career planning in the high school guidance process.
- To demonstrate to students and parents the value added by the CTE program to the student's educational experience and to preparation for his/her postsecondary opportunities.
- To offer each ACPS student an exemplary CTE program that enable the student to graduate as a CTE program completer.
- To support each student in achieving licensure or certification in his/her course of study.
- To align CTE course content with postsecondary educational institutions through seamless articulation and dual enrollment.
- To support each CTE student in achieving at his/her highest academic potential.
- To offer a CTE curriculum that combines academics, workplace knowledge, and the skills and technologies essential for careers and higher education.
- To provide well-maintained, state-of-the-art facilities, technology, and equipment.
- To maintain and increase student participation in the CTE program.
- To organize and deliver instruction that requires the acquisition and application of workplace skills
- To model behaviors and skills associated with a career field.
- To engage in authentic work in the classroom that is related to current and emerging career opportunities.

- To engage students in work-based learning experiences.
- To develop student assessments that evaluate the authentic work experiences that the program provides.
- To recruit a highly qualified and effective CTE teaching staff.
- To retain a highly qualified and effective CTE teaching staff.
- To develop and maintain strong linkages to the regional business community.
- To develop and maintain strong linkages to industry-specific councils.
- To develop and maintain strong regional linkages to regional institutions of higher education

In support of these goals and objectives, the CTS strategic plan outlines specific strategies, work tasks associated with each strategy, the person(s) responsible to oversee completion of work tasks, and target completion dates. At the heart of the work tasks outlined in the plan is promotion of the CTE program both to students throughout the school division, and to the business community to encourage increased participation through partnerships with CTE programs. With nearly \$250,000 in federal Carl Perkins funds and an additional \$3,000,000 in local dollars to fund CTE personnel, the financial investment in the programs is significant and thus it is important to have the program reach as many of the students as possible. Given the decline in enrollment figures, it is apparent that this imperative is not being met.

RECOMMENDATION 5-2:

Strengthen the component of the CTE strategic plan that emphasizes promoting CTE programs to middle and high school students.

CTE administrators should increase their efforts at promoting awareness and interest in CTE programs among middle and high school students. Key to this effort would be working more effectively with guidance counselors and classroom teachers in identifying students who represented the target population of CTE programming.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

5.3 School Improvement and Accountability

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is sweeping federal legislation that requires state and local education agencies to demonstrate progress from year to year in raising the percentage of students who are proficient in reading and mathematics and in

closing the achievement gap of subgroups of students. NCLB sets five performance goals for states and local education agencies, as follows:

- All students will reach high standards of proficiency or better in reading and language arts and mathematics by 2013-14.
- All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards by attaining proficiency or better in reading and language arts and mathematics.
- All students will be taught by highly qualified teachers by 2005.
- All students will learn in schools that are safe and drug free.
- All students will graduate from high school.

School improvement is built on the principle of focused planning based on student achievement and program data important for enhancing student achievement. Schools must determine appropriate goals for school improvement and objectives to meet those goals. Schools must also determine the data elements needed to measure progress toward meeting the objectives, and ultimately, the goals. Effective strategies must be designed to move the schools toward meeting their goals. School leaders must then measure how successfully these strategies are being implemented. Ongoing professional development is critical to the school improvement process.

Each school in the division develops a School Improvement Plan that is then submitted to either the executive director for elementary programs or the executive director for secondary programs for approval. Each plan should focus on improving school programs and priorities for increasing student achievement. Specifically, school administrators and teachers should work collaboratively in the improvement planning process and conduct the following activities:

- Define and refine the school's mission.
- Identify school priorities.
- State objectives based on division requirements.
- Include multiple indicators of achievement to assess progress in meeting each objective.
- Regularly monitor the indicators of achievement for each objective.
- Modify school programs, when warranted throughout the school year.
- Draw conclusions about progress to meet each objective.
- Determine next steps in light of these conclusions.
- Revise the plan yearly.

- Develop organization and communication structures that support the planning process.

FINDING

ACPS has developed key initiatives to close the minority/majority achievement gap.

ACPS did not make Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) in English in 2004-05, for students with disabilities. Student performance data also show depressed scores in core academic subjects for subcategories of students.

Exhibit 5-9 shows the SOL required assessments. As indicated, students are assessed in grades 3 through 12. Very few exemptions are allowed for state assessments.

**EXHIBIT 5-9
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STANDARDS OF LEARNING ASSESSMENTS
REQUIRED TESTS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

GRADE	STANDARDS OF LEARNING ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED TESTS
3	Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies
4	Reading, Mathematics, Virginia Studies
5	Reading, Writing, Mathematics
6	Reading, Mathematics (<i>Grade 5 or 7 or 8</i>), US History to 1877
7	Reading, Mathematics (<i>Grade 7 or 8 or Algebra I</i>), US History 1877 to Present
8	Reading, Writing, Mathematics (<i>Grade 8 or Algebra I or Geometry</i>), Science, World Geography
9-12	The following tests are administered upon completion of the class in which the student is enrolled: Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, English: Reading, English: Writing, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Virginia and US History, World History I, and World History II
Exemptions Allowed	No exemptions are allowed in Reading or Mathematics 3-8. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Special Education students, according to their IEP's, could be exempted in science or social studies. Certain special education students also participate in the VGLA or VAAP assessment ■ Limited English Proficiency students may take a one-year exemption at one grade level for either writing or science or social studies. Also LEP students may use the SELP (Stanford English Language Proficiency Test) as a proxy for Reading in Grades 3-8. ■ No exemptions are allowed for the End of Course Assessments. If the student is enrolled in the class, then he must take the corresponding Standards of Learning test.
Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP)	
In grades K-12 all Limited English Proficiency students are administered the SELP test. Students who are Levels 1-4 take the entire battery (<i>Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening</i>). Students who are Monitor Year 1 or 2 are given only the Reading and Writing subtests. There are no exemptions.	

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 2007.

Exhibit 5-10 shows the AYP data by school. As can be seen in the exhibit, Cora Kelly Elementary, Hammond Middle School, George Washington Middle School and T. C. Williams High School did not meet AYP. The division as a whole also did not make AYP. Francis C Hammond Middle is in Year 1 of improvement for English and math, while George Washington Middle and T.C. Williams High are both in Year 3 of improvement

for both subjects. Jefferson-Houston Elementary is in Year 2 for English and Year 1 for math. All other schools are currently “Not in Improvement” and attained AYP for 2006.

**EXHIBIT 5-10
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS BY SCHOOL
2003-04 TO 2005-06 SCHOOL YEARS**

SCHOOLS	2004	2005	2006	ENGLISH IMPROVEMENT	MATH IMPROVEMENT	HOLDING
Charles Barrett Elementary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Cora Kelly Elementary	No	Yes	No	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Douglas Macarthur Elem.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Francis C Hammond Middle	No	No	No	Year 1	Year 1	No
George Mason Elementary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
George Washington Middle	No	No	No	Year 3	Year 3	No
James K. Polk Elementary	Yes	No	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Jefferson-Houston Elementary	No	No	Yes	Year 2	Year 1	Yes
John Adams Elementary	No	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Lyles-Crouch Elementary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Maury Elementary	No	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Mount Vernon Elementary	Yes	No	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Patrick Henry Elementary	No	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
Samuel W. Tucker Elementary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No
T. C. Williams High	No	No	No	Year 3	Year 3	No
William Ramsay Elementary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not in Improvement	Not in Improvement	No

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 2007.

FINDING

ACPS has developed a comprehensive professional development plan for curriculum and instruction to assist schools’ efforts in achieving AYP.

The instructional professional development program is a collaborative effort among teachers, principals, support staff, human resources, and the department of curriculum and instruction to improve the professional development opportunities for all staff in ACPS. In addition to being outcomes-focused and targeted toward specific learner needs, professional development is viewed as being an integral part of the culture of teaching and learning in the division. Each year, staff development days are set aside for day-long training, with varieties of workshop topics specifically designed for elementary, middle and high school teachers. These set-aside days are in addition to the on-going professional development provided by curriculum specialists in ACPS schools throughout the year.

Professional development plays an essential role in successful school improvement. High-quality professional development is rigorous and relevant to content, strategies, and ACPS supports that ensure the preparation and career-long development of teachers and others whose competence, expectations, and actions influence the teaching and learning environment. Professional development requires partnerships among schools, higher education institutions, and other agencies to promote inclusive learning communities among everyone who impacts students and their learning.

ACPS has begun to link instructional professional development with the goals of the board and targeted initiatives of the department of curriculum and instruction. Significant efforts have been made to bridge the gap between school-based professional development and centralized staff development.

COMMENDATION 5-E:

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for developing a comprehensive professional plan in support of school improvement efforts.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools sets budget priorities in alignment with the mission of ACPS schools and central office departments.

With the demands for accountability in the use of financial resources, school divisions are ever mindful of the importance of linking dollars to outcomes and ensuring that what gets funded are those programs and activities that can be linked to positive student achievement. Towards that end, ACPS has budget documents for all schools that detail requests for supplemental funding for specific programs and human resources in support of school mission and improvement targets. In addition, this same type of document is produced for programs within the curriculum and instruction department, as well as for the department as a whole. The document consists of the following components:

- **Mission Statement.** The statement is unique to each school and C&I program and specifies the intent/outcome of the academic efforts.
- **Purpose.** This section of the budget details document is an expansion of the mission statement specifies the school/department's goals.
- **Budget Priorities and Justification.** These are the measurable outcomes that the school department plans to achieve as a result of implementing the funding program/activity.
- **Supplemental Requests.** These are the specific items to be funded, and the requested amount of funding
- **Instructional Programs.** This is a listing of the programs being offered at that building location.

This type of budget specificity increases accountability at both the school and division level. It provides a means of clearly communicating to those making budgetary decisions and to persons responsible for carrying out the activities associated with the budget request.

An additional feature of school budgeting in ACPS is the use of Differentiated Resources (DR) in assisting schools in the greatest need of improvement. DR funds are allocated to elementary schools based on three variables: percentage of free and reduced students

enrolled, student mobility rates, and percentage of students living in public housing. School administrators and their staff determine how these funds are expended at the school, but they must be devoted to initiatives embedded in the school improvement plan, and linked to measurable student achievement outcomes.

COMMENDATION 5-F:

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for setting budget priorities in alignment with the mission of ACPS schools and central office departments.

FINDING

ACPS does not have a procedures manual for services to English language learners.

Limited English proficient (LEP) students are the fastest growing population in ACPS. Coordination of services for LEP students has been splintered, inconsistent from school-to-school, and lacking a division-wide focus.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) program is ultimately designed to teach English to non-native speakers so that they may acquire the language and communication skills necessary to participate successfully in the mainstream classroom from kindergarten through grade 12. ESL services must be designed to help students develop proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the English language as well as to assist them in adapting to a new culture. Language and culture taught in the program reinforce skills and concepts taught in all areas of the general curriculum. Instruction must also be designed to meet the needs of students at various English proficiency levels in all linguistic minority groups. Students must be assigned to programs based on their level of native-language literacy, academic level, and level of English literacy.

The Virginia Department of Education recognizes that the rapid growth of the LEP student population, coupled with the increased federal accountability requirements under NCLB, has made it that much more important for language arts and content teachers to understand the unique needs of LEP students in their classes. Appropriate instructional strategies provide teachers with effective practices for incorporating their particular content SOLs and the LEP SOLs in daily instruction. Use of these strategies will increase the likelihood of the LEP students' success in content classrooms.

Based on on-site interviews, the current ESL program is lacking in several areas. As more and more non-English speaking students enter ACPS, greater demands are placed upon the division to provide additional ESL services. While MGT found that staff welcomed the new students, more emphasis must be placed on developing programs to appropriately address the educational needs of these students. Teachers report a lack of program consistency from school to school.

RECOMMENDATION 5-3:

Develop a procedures manual for the English as a Second Language Program.

ACPS should develop a procedures manual for the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. The manual should detail the screening, evaluation, and identification process; testing procedures and accommodations for state and local assessments; instructional strategies for general education teachers; parent and community involvement; and evaluation guidelines for special education services. Miami-Dade County (Florida) Public Schools has a majority Hispanic student population and has addressed the challenges of a large constituency of non-English speaking students. The district's ESL is available online and serves as an exemplar for this type of guiding document.

Estimated costs and other expenditures for implementing the plan should also be developed. The manual should be distributed to schools for staff development and implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing funds from Title III.

5.4 Pupil Services

The purpose of pupil services is to coordinate and deliver services which contribute to the holistic development of children, support to families, and improvement of schools. These services emphasize prevention and intervention support systems, as well as use of appropriate resources. The ultimate purpose of student support services is to maximize coordinated efforts that focus upon students' health and social and emotional development in reducing barriers to learning, thus enabling students to achieve optimally.

FINDING

ACPS has employed strategies to successfully maintain a safe and orderly environment in its schools.

Exhibit 5-11 shows the discipline, crime, and violence incidents that occurred in ACPS during 2004-05. As can be seen, these incidents most frequently involved disorderly conduct, a general category entitled "other offenses", and battery against student. Some of the key initiatives used to reduce number of school offenses include reducing class size and establishing smaller learning communities at the high school level.

In response to survey questions on safe school environment, ACPS respondents were overwhelmingly favorable with regards to the handling of student discipline and other related factors. As shown in **Exhibit 5-12**, over 75 percent of all respondents agreed that ACPS schools were safe and secure from crime. When asked if the division had problems with gangs, drugs and vandalism, less than one-third of all respondents felt these were issues in the division. These opinions are borne out by the crime statistics.

**EXHIBIT 5-11
DISCIPLINE, CRIME, AND VIOLENCE VERIFICATION
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR**

TYPE OF OFFENSE	NO. OF OFFENSES
Alcohol	1
Arson	2
Battery against staff	34
Battery against student	261
Malicious wounding	0
School threat	2
Burglary	4
Bullying	18
Disorderly conduct	1497
Drugs	12
Fighting with injuries	2
Fighting without injuries	110
Gang activity	23
Homicide	0
Kidnapping	0
Other offenses	740
Robbery	1
Sexual offenses	14
Rape and attempted rape	0
Sexual battery against student	0
Tobacco	11
Theft	42
Threat-intimidation	82
Trespassing	10
Vandalism	29
Other weapons	40
Firearms, rifles and other firearms	1
TOTAL OFFENSES	2,936

Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2005.

**EXHIBIT 5-12
SURVEY RESPONSES ON SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
Our schools are safe and secure from crime.	78/0	96/0	75/11
Our schools effectively handle misbehavior problems.	69/6	96/0	44/31
There is administrative support for managing student behavior in our schools.	75/3	100/0	56/19
If there were an emergency in my school/office, I would know how to respond appropriately.	84/3	96/4	78/9
Our district has a problem with gangs.	34/22	25/38	25/22
Our district has a problem with drugs, including alcohol.	25/28	13/46	23/22
Our district has a problem with vandalism.	16/43	21/37	24/26
Our school enforces a strict campus access policy.	44/12	71/0	44/25

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

Source: Created by MGT of America, Inc., 2007.

COMMENDATION 5-G:

ACPS is commended for employing strategies that successfully prevent high incidents of crime and violence on school campuses.

RECOMMENDATION 5-4:

Employ strategies to reduce the number of incidents of disorderly conduct in ACPS schools.

Of the 2,936 discipline incidents reported in Alexandria City Public Schools for 2004-05, nearly half, or 1,497 were incidents involving student disorderly conduct in schools. Combating this type of behavior problem is a school system-wide effort, with consistent application of behavior standards and discipline.

The most effective strategies for dealing with student misconduct are those that focus on prevention and are active in nature, rather than reactionary strategies after the fact. Outlined below are features recommended for the development of positive school-wide systems that focus on the prevention and early intervention of problem behavior:

- **Schools should draft a clear statement of purpose that focuses on both academic and social outcomes** for all students and include the faculty, staff, and parents' roles.
- **Schools should develop a short set (no more than about 5) of clearly defined, positively stated expected behaviors** (e.g.

positively stated rules). For each expectation, clear and specific behavioral examples should be provided.

- **Schools should develop procedures for teaching expected behavior.** Expectations should be taught throughout the school year and embedded across the curriculum.
- **Schools should develop procedures for encouraging expected behavior.** The critical component at this level is to provide students with multiple opportunities to receive specific feedback for appropriate behavior. At minimum, school personnel should provide specific verbal feedback when students display appropriate social skills related to school-wide expectations. However, it may be necessary to plan other forms of positive feedback for appropriate behaviors, especially for students who have histories of school-based behavior problems.
- **Schools should develop procedures for discouraging problem behavior.** Schools should review and revise current discipline policies to a) provide clear definitions of infractions, b) determine which behaviors should be managed in the classroom and which should be sent to the office, and c) develop data-based decision rules to ensure appropriate strategies are used with students who frequently receive administrative action as a result of problem behavior.
- **Schools should develop procedures for record-keeping and decision making.** Sources of data for decisions can include surveys, teacher anecdotal information, student evaluations, parent reports, office referrals, and discipline reports. In addition to developing formative and summative data collection systems, schools should use that data to make informed decisions about overall discipline effectiveness, and adjust discipline systems as needed.
- **Schools should involve parents and families through activities such as disseminating information regarding school expectations and specific social skills** being addressed, inviting parents to serve on behavior committees, and involving families in the development and implementation of individual student Positive Behavior Support plans.
- **Schools should develop discipline systems that reflect and respond to the cultural, language, and ethnic make-up of the community in which the school resides.** Increasingly, there is greater disconnection between student learning histories and the learning histories and subsequent expectations of a fairly homogeneous education work force

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

ACPS has a comprehensive, system-wide approach to guidance and counseling services.

The mission of the school counseling program is to provide “a comprehensive and developmental counseling program that addresses the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. Towards this end, specific programs have been developed and deployed at each level of school in the division. These programs include:

Elementary Programs

- Individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, i.e., academic support, study skills, friendship, social skills, anger management, self-esteem, behavior, grief and loss, divorce and separation.
- Character Counts
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)
- Prevention Education Programs (e.g., conflict management, peer mediation, bullying prevention, behavior management)
- Career day/Career awareness
- Parental Involvement
- Open house hours

Middle School Programs

- Individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, i.e., academic support, study skills, friendship, social skills, anger management, self-esteem, behavior, grief and loss, divorce and separation.
- Character Counts
- Prevention Education Programs (e.g., conflict management, peer mediation, bullying prevention, behavior management)
- Program of studies

- Course selection
- Career Day/Career Awareness
- Parental Involvement
- Open house hours

High School Programs

- Individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, i.e., academic support, study skills, friendship, social skills, anger management, self-esteem, behavior, grief and loss, divorce and separation.
- Classroom guidance (e.g., graduation requirements, post-secondary education, career counseling)
- Character Counts
- Prevention Education Support
- Program of studies
- Course selection
- Parental Involvement
- Open house hours

The counseling programs are staffed by a full-time guidance counselor at every elementary school, directors of guidance and three full-time counselors at each middle school, and a director and nine full-time counselors at the high school, including one athletics counselor. There are no part-time counselors in the division. School counselors meet regularly to stay abreast of all guidance-related policy and procedural issues.

The guidance department has created an informational brochure for parents that describe services in the division. The publication is available in both English and Spanish.

COMMENDATION 5-H:

ACPS is commended for providing a system of comprehensive guidance and counseling services for students that provides for continuous improvement of programmatic operations.

5.5 Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) defines special education as specially designed instruction, at no cost to the child's parents, to meet the

unique needs of a student with a disability [20 U.S.C., sec 1401 (25)]. A student is eligible for special education and related services if he or she has a disability as identified by IDEA and, because of the disability, needs specially designed instruction. IDEA mandates a two-part standard for eligibility.

IDEA is a federal law that gives guidance and direction for providing special education services to students with disabilities. Originally passed in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, IDEA was reauthorized by Congress in 1997 and again in 2004. In 2004 the federal law was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Many provisions of the IDEA amendments address and clarify procedures for improving education and related services to students with disabilities. IDEA establishes six principles that govern the education of students with disabilities; these are summarized in **Exhibit 5-13**.

EXHIBIT 5-13
SIX PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES

- **Zero reject:** A rule against excluding any student.
- **Nondiscriminatory evaluation:** A rule requiring schools to evaluate students fairly to determine if they have a disability and, if so, what kind and how extensive.
- **Appropriate education:** A rule requiring schools to provide individually tailored education for each student based on the evaluation and augmented by related services and supplementary aids and services.
- **Least restrictive environment:** A rule requiring schools to educate students with disabilities with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate for the students with disabilities.
- **Procedural due process:** A rule providing safeguards for students against schools' actions, including a right to sue in court.
- **Parental and student participation:** A rule requiring schools to collaborate with parents and adolescent students in designing and carrying out special education programs.

Source: *Exceptional Lives* by Turnbull and Turnbull, 2005.

FINDING

ACPS has developed a local special education procedures manual that is reflective of the six principles of educating students with disabilities.

ACPS has developed a document entitled, *Local Special Education Annual Plan and Report, 2006-2007 (Parts I and II)*. The document provides forms that are required for the preparation of the annual special education plan, and details a variety of information on the special education program in Alexandria City Public Schools. The information provided in the document includes the following:

- ACPS Assurance Statement
- ACPS special education policy statements.
- Guidance document for IDEA 2004 Policies and Procedures.
- A description of the local special education advisory committee, including the membership roster.
- A report on the implementation status of the previous year's special education plan.

Much of the remainder of the document consists of forms related to IDEA funding and additional information on special education related services.

With the large array of state and federal regulations related to funding and compliance issues, it is essential that those involved in the process of preparing special education data reports have reliable reference materials to ensure that reports and informational updates are provided accurately. Having such a manual also serves as a tool for training new personnel and for assuring program and reporting consistency across the division.

COMMENDATION 5-I:

ACPS is commended for creating a comprehensive manual to ensure consistency and compliance with state and federal mandates related to special education.

6.0 FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

6.0 FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter presents the results of the review of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) facilities use and management policies and procedures in five key sections. The major sections in this chapter are:

- 6.1 Organizational Structure
- 6.2 Capital Planning and Facility Use
- 6.3 Maintenance
- 6.4 Operations and Custodial Services
- 6.5 Energy Management

A comprehensive facility management program should coordinate all the physical resources of a school division to ensure the most efficient and economical operation. The creation of a comprehensive long-term facility plan is essential to planning for present and future facility needs in a manner acceptable to the community. The administration of the program must effectively integrate a comprehensive facility plan with the other aspects of institutional planning including instructional priorities. Well-planned facilities are based on the educational program and on accurate student enrollment projections.

Proper planning involves input from all stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, security specialists, parents, students, patrons, and the maintenance and operations staff. 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 uses the school system's resources.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The work of Alexandria City Public Schools custodial and maintenance staff, along with outsourced contractors, is evident in all buildings, but the challenge to meet the many demands placed upon them is also evident.

Key recommendations in this chapter seek to build on the hard work and dedication of ACPS staff to provide a quality environment in which to educate children, by suggesting ways to improve existing processes and add others so that the division can continue to respond to the ever-increasing demands for accountability and excellence. The goal of these and related recommendations is to direct more budgetary dollars away from the cost of building operations and maintenance, and towards educational program activities. A formal facility planning process will be recommended to serve as a catalyst for future planning.

ACPS is commended for:

- Adhering to an aggressive Capital Improvement Plan since FY 1997 (**Commendation 6-A**).
- Using the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) for construction of a new high school (**Commendation 6-B**).

- Implementing an aggressive energy management plan that is producing significant results (**Commendation 6-C**).

Some key recommendations in this chapter include:

- Make minor modifications in the existing organization structure (**Recommendation 6-1**).
- Conduct a physical assessment of all ACPS facilities, including support buildings, site conditions, structural, electrical-mechanical, safety, and accessibility issues (**Recommendation 6-2**).
- Conduct an educational suitability assessment of all school division buildings to include general classrooms, special learning spaces, support spaces, technology readiness, and parent drop-off/bus circulation issues (**Recommendation 6-3**).
- Study the options for relocating the central office (**Recommendation 6-4**).
- Implement the necessary changes to the Transportation and Maintenance facility (**Recommendation 6-5**).
- Complete the deployment of maintenance management software upgrade and train personnel on its use (**Recommendation 6-6**).
- Improve the preventive maintenance schedule and extend equipment life (**Recommendation 6-7**).
- Create a custodial staffing formula to be applied to the 2007-08 school year (**Recommendation 6-8**).
- Develop standards for custodial services that are consistent with APPA standards (**Recommendation 6-9**).
- Review employee supervision and discipline procedures (**Recommendation 6-10**).
- Implement an ongoing staff development program for custodial and maintenance personnel (**Recommendation 6-11**).
- Engage daily users in the energy conservation program (**Recommendation 6-12**).

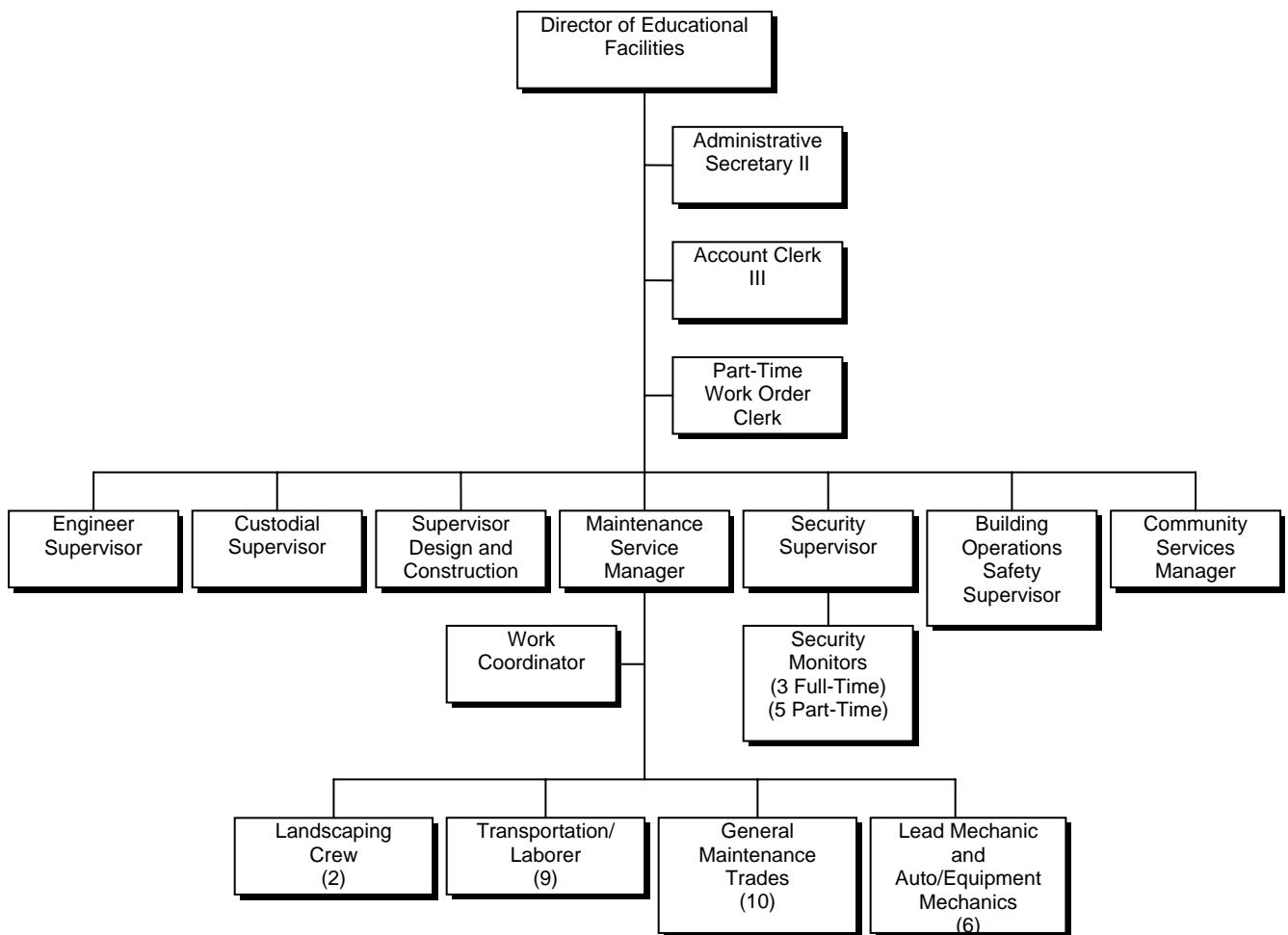
6.1 Organizational Structure

The facility management functions in the Alexandria City Public Schools are administered by the director of educational facilities who reports to the assistant superintendent of administrative services and public relations. The assistant superintendent reports directly to the superintendent.

The director of educational facilities oversees seven departments including, security; maintenance; design and construction; custodians; engineers; building operations; and community services. A secretary, account clerk, and work order clerk (part time), assist the director of educational facilities. The maintenance service manager supervises the landscaping crew, transportation/grounds laborers, general maintenance trades, lead mechanic, and auto mechanics.

Exhibit 6-1 illustrates the current organizational structure showing the relationship of the educational facilities department to the management of the division.

**EXHIBIT 6-1
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



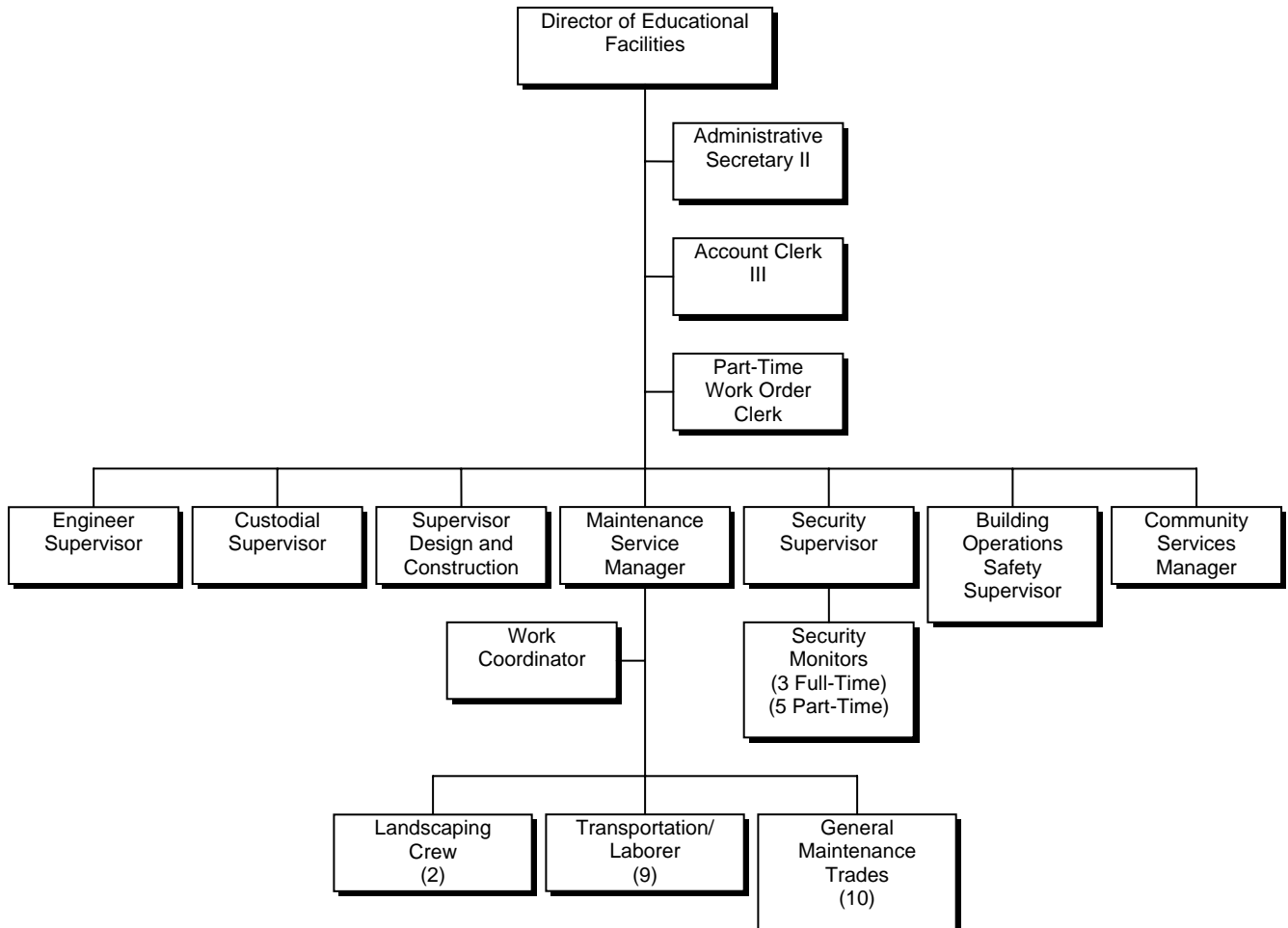
Source: Alexandria City Public Schools Education Facilities Department, 2006.

FINDING

The maintenance service manager is responsible for supervising the transportation mechanics.

There appear to be two reasons for this anomaly. The physical location of the mechanics is in close proximity to the maintenance supervisor's office and tradition has dictated that the mechanics report to maintenance department rather than the transportation department. Having the vehicle maintenance operations under the transportation department should improve the operational effectiveness of the vehicle maintenance section. **Exhibit 6-2** shows the recommended organization for the facilities unit.

**EXHIBIT 6-2
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



Source: MGT of America, Inc., 2006.

RECOMMENDATION 6-1:

Reorganize so that the director of transportation assumes supervisory responsibility over all mechanics.

A full discussion of the recommendation is contained in **Chapter 7, Recommendation 7-1**.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

6.2 Capital Planning and Facility Use

School facility planning is a major responsibility for a local public school division. New school facilities require a substantial taxpayer investment. Existing school facilities represent a community equity that requires ongoing maintenance investments to maintain the value of that equity. Because of the financial requirements of school facilities, governing boards must carefully plan how facilities are built, renovated, and maintained. Policies that guide the planning of school facilities and site acquisition are important components in governing board policy manuals.

Planning for smaller facility improvements in the Alexandria City Public Schools is primarily the responsibility of the supervisor of design and construction, who reports to the director of educational facilities. The division has operated under an ambitious capital improvement plan for many years.

Among the 50 states, there is considerable variation in the legal structure of school districts. Some school districts are fiscally independent (i.e., do not have to depend upon the state or another body politic for fiscal resources), while others are totally dependent upon other entities for their resources. Divisions organized as is ACPS in Virginia typically must rely on city councils or like bodies and the state for budget approval and funds. Some school divisions or divisions in the United States must take budget proposals or operating tax levies to the public for approval, while other boards of education have latitude to set budgets and approve revenue levies within the constraints of law. The legal foundation of school divisions is critical to the overall functioning of the organization, as it defines the locus of power that determines how school boards and executive personnel may carry out their assigned responsibilities.

ACPS places a premium on the importance of community involvement in the budget development process. School Board policy FB, Facility Planning, was adopted in 1996 and states the following:

“The staff and community, including school PTA’s and PTSA’s, shall have the opportunity to participate in the early stages of the preparation of the Capital Improvement budget. The building principal or designee will ensure that such participation occurs during each principal’s preparation of the approved CIP and prior to submission of a proposal to the Superintendent.”

After the School Board approves the plan for capital improvements, it is forwarded to the City Manager and City Council for review and incorporation into the total city capital improvement program. The city has until May to make additions, corrections, and changes prior to adopting the budget.

Exhibit 6-3 presents the school pertinent data concerning each of the ACPS buildings. The division operates thirteen K-5 elementary schools; two 6-8 middle schools; one ninth

grade center; and one 10-12 high school. In addition, the division operates a maintenance/transportation facility as well as a rowing facility, located on the Potomac River. The central office is leased from Duke Inc. The total value of all ACPS facilities is \$246,158,427.

**EXHIBIT 6-3
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL	ACREAGE	SQUARE FEET	ORIGINAL COMPLETION	BUILDING ADDITIONS	REPLACEMENT VALUE	STUDENT ENROLLMENT
John Adams	14.5	137,350	1966	N/A	15,773,505	514
Charles Barrett	5.0	62,760	1949	1971,1977 1991	7,644,514	224
Patrick Henry	15.0	62,400	1953	1955,1996	7,743,521	388
Jefferson-Houston	2.0	83,385	1970	N/A	10,578,036	281
Cora Kelly	12.0	69,000	1955	1996	6,844,395	446
Lyles-Crouch	2.0	65,645	1958	1985, 2002	3,460,162	292
Douglas MacArthur	6.0	63,120	1942	1949, 1955, 1966, 1970, 1981, 2000	6,984,913	546
George Mason	9.0	50,935	1939	1949, 1977	6,962,891	357
Maury	6.0	51,800	1929	1941,1949, 1960, 1971, 2005	6,348,746	160
Mount Vernon	6.5	112,730	1923	1941, 1950, 1967, 1991	13,770,858	475
James Polk	13.5	76,265	1965	1994	9,102,098	409
William Ramsay	25	87,650	1958	1963, 1977, 1990, 2004	9,831,665	564
Samuel Tucker	14.9	80,180	2000	N/A	12,043,867	585
F.C. Hammond	25	236,125	1956	1959, 2002	30,757,191	1,136
George Washington	23.5	237,332	1935	1937, 1941, 1944, 1948, 1961, 2003	33,020,319	997
Minnie Howard	12	130,435	1954	1955, 1969	13,870,718	686
T.C. Williams/Step	28.4	360,450	1965	1976, 1982	44,875,805	1,997
Maint/Trans	2.0	18,300	1953	1979, 1991	4,290,052	N/A
Rowing Facility	4.7	16,300	1986	N/A	2,255,172	N/A
TOTALS	227	2,002,162		N/A	246,158,428	10,057

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Educational Facilities Department, 2007.

To maintain and enhance these assets, the City of Alexandria and the Alexandria City Public Schools have made a significant investment. **Exhibit 6-4** presents the actual capital improvement expenditures from 1989 through 2006, which are broken down by the major expenditure categories. The total investment over this time frame was \$106,749,047. Over the last five years, the division has targeted outdated HVAC, electrical, and plumbing systems for replacement.

**EXHIBIT 6-4
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
ACTUAL EXPENDITURE
BY CATEGORY
1989 THROUGH 2006**

	HVAC	ROOF WORK	MODERNIZATION	RENOVATION & CONSTRUCTION	ARCHITECT SERVICES
TOTALS	26,079,709	7,303,605	14,400,624	53,451,109	5,514,000
GRAND TOTALS					106,749,047

Source: Alexandria Public Schools, Educational Facilities Department, 2007.

Exhibit 6-5 presents the enrollment of Alexandria City Public Schools over the past ten years. Student enrollment peaked at 11,167 during the 2000-01 school year and since that time, enrollment has decreased to 10,057. Since the 2000-01 school year there has been a decrease in enrollment of 1,110 students. The most recent demographic study done by DeJong, using a moderate enrollment projection, predicts that the division will continue to see slight decreases in enrollment projected through 2015-2016.

**EXHIBIT 6-5
TEN-YEAR STUDENT ENROLLMENT TREND FOR
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	20001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
10,488	10,803	11,017	11,167	11,104	10,979	10,762	10,677	10,284	10,057

Source: Alexandria Public Schools, Educational Facilities Department, 2007.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools and the City of Alexandria have made a significant financial investment in the division's school facilities.

The capital improvement plan has served the division and city well over the past ten years or more. Much effort has been expended to present a realistic yet aggressive budget to maintain buildings that have seen a lot of use, some of which were originally built in the 1920's. Visitations to all of the school facilities by the MGT review team reinforced the belief that the school buildings are well-maintained.

COMMENDATION 6-A:

The City of Alexandria and Alexandria City Public Schools are commended for their aggressive approach to maintaining and improving the school facilities.

FINDING

The division's capital improvement plan should be reinvigorated using information critical to the process. The present plan conducted in 1996 by Sverdrup Facilities Inc. has served the division well; however, the time has come to enter into a more sophisticated

process that can then be used to build future capital improvement plans. The School Board policy manual should identify the basis for planning and prioritizing facilities projects. The Board should authorize the facility and capital improvement committee, a standing School Board committee, to outline the scope of the facility planning process.

The policies should ensure that the educational specification and design processes are inclusive, not only of staff and parents, but also of maintenance and operations personnel. This action should help to ensure facilities are not costly or problematic to operate and maintain. There should also be a policy that prioritizes facility projects. For instance, the first priority should be to correct unsafe, unhealthy, or code-violating conditions.

RECOMMENDATION 6-2:

Prepare written Board policies to guide the long-range facilities planning process and define the scope of the planning process.

The policy should include the following:

- **Grade Configuration:** The School Board should validate a preferred grade configuration for the division. Grade configuration policies often include feeder school components as well as “choice” components.
- **Attendance Boundaries:** Policies should require periodic attendance boundary analysis for irregularities and inefficiencies.
- **Definition of Educational Suitability:** The School Board, in conjunction with the curriculum committee, should establish what elements an educationally suitable facility should have. These elements should include items such as classroom size, flexible areas that support a variety of learning styles, types of special use classrooms, and level of technology infrastructure. Suitability should be defined for each educational program at each grade level grouping.
- **Utilization Analysis:** Policies for utilization at a division wide level of 85 percent should be developed along with procedures for calculating utilization.
- **Site Selection:** The Board policy should include the following criteria to be used as policy guidelines in determining the best possible site for school facilities. Land is scarce within the Division which might require to Board to explore other means of securing land. The following criteria will assist the Board in considering every option available to them:
 - Will the site support the educational program?
 - Is the site’s location convenient for the majority of the students?

- Is the site the right size and shape?
- Is the topography conducive to desired site development?
- Is the general environment aesthetically pleasing?
- Is the site safe?
- Is the air quality healthful?
- Is the site free of industrial and traffic noise (both air and ground)?
- Does the land drain properly and are other soil conditions good?
- Does the site have desired trees and other natural vegetation?
- Does the site meet the feeder patterns for the school zone?
- Does the site meet the needs of local traffic and parking regulations?
- Can the site be developed to meet the needs of water quality issues and water retention requirements?
- Are there easements of any nature affecting the use of the site?
- Is the site suitability oriented for energy conservation?
- Is the site near other community services – libraries, parks, and museums?
- What is the relation of the site to existing educational facilities?
- How is the surrounding land zoned – will its development enhance the site?
- Are all utility services available? (sewer, water, gas, electrical, telephone)
- Is the site served by public agencies – police, fire department, etc.?
- Is the site easily accessible for service vehicles and buses?
- Can the land be shared with other community facilities and organizations, especially parks?
- Will the site provide desirable open space for the community where it is needed?

- Is the site available?
- Is the site expandable in the future?
- Is the site affordable?
- Are life-cycle costs reasonable?
- Are neighbors in opposition or in favor of a school facility?
- **Public Involvement:** Present policies should be reviewed to ensure public involvement in each step of the process.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

ACPS and the facilities and capital improvement committee do not have all the detailed components of a long-range facility master plan.

With the new T.C. Williams High School opening in August 2007, the timing for a comprehensive look at the ACPS buildings is right. In addition, the present office space for the central office utilizes a leased space at approximately \$1,000,000 per year. The building has recently been sold to Duke Inc. a national firm with holdings across the United States. The Board included this issue for consideration as a goal and allocated \$20,000 for the study. However, with the budget cuts from the City, this amount has been deleted.

With the recent change in building ownership, this issue might become even more compelling and in a short period of time. The new owners could decide to substantially increase the yearly fee. The amount of available land within the division is a critical issue which makes solutions even more challenging. It is incumbent upon the division to explore every opportunity available while there are still options available.

RECOMMENDATION 6-3:

Prepare a detailed, long-range facility master plan.

ACPS should develop a long-range school facility master plan to serve as an umbrella for the changing educational environment. The school division's facility planning process should have the following goals:

- To maintain safe, healthy buildings that enrich the educational experience.

- To maximize the utilization of the facilities (Note: Utilization of school facilities should include ideas such as after-hours use and use by community groups).
- To contain costs associated with building maintenance.

The long-range school facility master plan should include, at the minimum, the following:

- **Assessment of Educational Suitability:** The facility committee, in conjunction with a curriculum committee, should assess and enter into a facilities database the elements of educational suitability each facility has. These elements should include items such as classroom size, types of special use classrooms, traffic patterns, and level of technology infrastructure. High-level budget estimates should be developed for correcting deficiencies at each school.
- **Assessment of Building Condition:** The physical condition of each school building should be assessed. The amount of money needed to correct each deficit should be calculated at a high-level budget figure, not as a detailed cost estimate. These data should be entered into the facilities database as well.
- **Attendance Boundaries:** Each attendance boundary should be analyzed for irregularities and inefficiencies. Steps to correct deficiencies should be outlined.
- **Utilization Analysis:** The utilization of each school should be analyzed in the context of current enrollment projections and potential changes in student/ teacher ratios. Scenarios should be developed to improve utilization to a division-wide level of 85 percent, or the level of utilization established by the School Board.
- **Site Selection:** Sites identified according to the criteria in **Recommendation 6-2** should be included in the long-range facility master plan.
- **Public Involvement:** The public should be involved in each step of the process and should be kept informed as the master plan evolves.

FISCAL IMPACT

If the division develops the master facility plan internally, the project may take longer, and require the time commitment of division staff involved with the plan's development. If the division chooses to outsource the development of the master plan, it is estimated to cost an additional \$100,000.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Prepare a Long-Range Facility Plan	(\$100,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING

The school maintenance/transportation facility complex is not meeting the needs of this school division.

The parking for the bus fleet is inadequate. The present complex consists of three buildings: maintenance shop which was built in 1979; the custodial supply storage/carpenter shop originally built in 1953; and the storage building constructed in 1991. These three facilities are located on two acres of land and comprise a total of 18,300 square feet. The sizes of spaces for all functions are inadequate. In the upper floor of the transportation building there are size and adjacency problems with offices, conference rooms, reception areas, records storage, restrooms, driver lounge, and training rooms. In the lower level, there is inadequate space for storage, tool rooms, parts rooms, and wash bays. Outside the building, there is inadequate space for bus parking. Room to maneuver buses into the shop is also problematic.

RECOMMENDATION 6-4:

Implement necessary improvements for the transportation facility.

The City of Alexandria is in the process of building a new facility to address their maintenance and transportation needs. The new facility is located near the division's present facility. The division has plans in 2008 to spend \$1,666,860 to replace roofs, HVAC systems, upgrade the electrical power systems, lighting systems, and plumbing systems. Prior to expending these resources, the division should investigate the opportunities with the city for a joint venture.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation cannot be determined at this time. There are too many unknown variables to make this estimation. As the division conducts a study of all of its facilities, the cost for providing a transportation/maintenance facility that meets the needs of the division should emerge.

6.2.1 Design and Construction

The mission of the typical design and construction department is to provide new and modernized facilities that meet the needs of students at the lowest possible cost. The specific goals of a design and construction department usually include the:

- Establishment of a policy and framework for long-range planning.
- Determination of the student capacity and educational adequacy of existing facilities, and evaluation of alternatives to new construction.
- Development of educational specifications that describe the educational program and from which the architect can design a functional facility that matches the curriculum needs with the potential to enhance and reinforce the education the division desires for its students.

- The securing of architectural services to assist in planning and constructing facilities.
- The development of a capital planning budget that balances facility needs and expenditures necessary to meet those needs, and shows how expenditures will be financed.
- Satisfactory translation of the approved architectural plans into a quality school building, within the budget and the time scheduled.
- Establishment and implementation of an orientation program so that users of the facility can better understand the design rationale and become familiar with the way the building is supposed to work.

FINDING

The division has successfully used the Virginia Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) of 2002 to build a new high school.

This process has been successful in building a high school of 461,000 square feet at a hard cost of \$90,416,000. PPEA promises greater flexibility and a less adversarial model than the traditional building construction model. This model has seen limited use within Virginia public schools, but the concept continues to grow in popularity.

The legislature has made amendments to the act in 2004 and 2005, tweaking the law to address issues that emerged from other PPEA projects. The Request for Proposal for T.C. Williams produced bids that were within one half percent, indicating very tight design documents. The process produced ten high quality contractors, four of whom were invited to submit detailed phase proposals. Two declined. Interviews with the MGT review team revealed that the process allowed for a better understanding of the project by all involved, that serious value engineering occurred which produced significant cost savings, and that there existed a more cooperative attitude among the players.

The T.C. Williams High School presented some special challenges. The space was very confined for a large school within an urban setting. There was a need to use existing spaces which made the phasing more difficult to achieve. Utilities, such as storm sewers, were old and located deep in the ground. Construction costs were rising at a substantial pace. These challenges led the division to consider this relatively new concept.

COMMENDATION 6-B:

The division's use of the Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) demonstrates strong leadership and a fiscally sound practice that benefits the taxpayers of Alexandria City.

6.3 Maintenance

The proper maintenance of facilities is critical to ensuring support for an effective instructional program. Research has shown that appropriate heating and cooling levels, building and room appearances, condition of rest rooms and other facilities, as well as safety concerns, all impact how students and faculty/staff are able to carry out their respective responsibilities. Ineffective or inadequate maintenance provisions have proven to lead to increased costs of facility operations by shortening the useful life span of equipment and buildings. Many school systems have adopted rigorous preventive maintenance programs and maintain a record of the performance of equipment and the costs of regular maintenance against which they measure the effectiveness of programs.

The maintenance services department is responsible for the maintenance of each school/facility, and for providing a clean, dry, safe environment with adequate lighting and proper climate support. The maintenance department divides its personnel into an East and West team for greater efficiency. "Drive time" was not reported as a serious obstacle to performing these duties.

Exhibit 6-6 provides detailed information on the staffing of the maintenance department. As shown, the department is supervised by a maintenance service manager, a twenty-eight year veteran of the division. A total of 30 individuals comprise the department. The department is organized into support areas which include carpentry, electrical, plumbing, landscaping, locksmith, transportation/grounds, and auto mechanics.

**EXHIBIT 6-6
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MAINTENANCE STAFFING
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

POSITION	NUMBER
Manager	1
Transportation/Grounds	9
Landscaping	2
Carpenters	4
Electricians	2
Plumbers	2
Locksmiths	2
Lead Mechanic	1
Auto/Equipment Mechanics	6
Clerical	1
TOTAL	30

Source: Alexandria Public Schools, Maintenance Department, 2007.

During the site visit, conversations were occurring with the City of Alexandria to relieve the division of all landscaping responsibilities. The decision was not final and further conversation is needed on the advantages/disadvantages of this move.

A computerized maintenance management system is provided to the maintenance section to generate and track work orders and related costs. Administrative office staff conducts data entry and generates reports.

The maintenance department is designed to support the daily maintenance needs in each school/facility with the repair of buildings and building systems, painting, and emergency response. These positions are supported by a building engineer within the larger schools who is expected to make minor repairs and do triage on a problem prior to instituting the work order system. Primary responsibilities for the maintenance department include:

- All emergency response repairs.
- Routine maintenance of all schools/facilities.
- All electrical work, carpentry, plumbing, and painting when needed.
- Locksmith services.
- Roofing repair.
- Minor parking lot and fence repair.
- Window replacement.
- Flooring installation.

FINDING

The School Dude® program is not being used to its fullest capabilities.

The division has utilized the program for less than one year and has purchased only the work order component, and the division is in the early stages of comprehension and use of the software. Recently, additional software was purchased that will permit the tracking of educational facilities' use and all related costs but this has not yet been deployed.

The plant and operations department has acquired a maintenance management component of a larger computerized accounting and fixed assets system. The system that was purchased is School Dude®. The division is utilizing the work order management system and does not have any of the components of typical maintenance management software. The existing work order management system allows:

- Remote generation of a work order request.
- The generation of the work order by the director of educational facilities.
- The work order to be “accepted” or “rejected” and allows for the insertion of rejection codes.
- A number of reports to be generated from the data.

Typical maintenance management software packages have characteristics that allow the school system to perform a variety of functions. The following is a list of the software components for School Dude®:

- Work order management
- IT asset management
- Help desk management
- Trip management
- Facility scheduling
- Wireless work orders
- Wireless IT incidents

- Preventive maintenance
- Inventory control
- Utility management
- Capital planning
- Peer networking

More specifically, most maintenance management software is utilized to provide records, planning schedules, and/or information related to the following:

- Work order requests, processing, and tracking.
- Tracking labor and materials to work orders and jobs.
- Preventive maintenance for vehicles.
- Preventive maintenance for boilers and HVAC systems.
- Equipment repair histories.
- Equipment replacement schedules.
- Equipment controls including location, failures, use metering, routing and other matters.
- Inventory controls including asset catalogue, issuance, transfer, and other data.
- Key and lock control systems.
- Developing job plans, safety/hazard plans, and lock out/tag out.
- Extensive and varied breakdowns of data and activity.

RECOMMENDATION 6-5:

Complete the deployment of maintenance management software upgrade and train personnel on its use.

Expanded use of current state-of-the-art maintenance management software can reduce unscheduled downtime and improve equipment performance. It can better utilize maintenance time, resources and budget. Lowered inventory costs with more timely parts availability can also be expected. Most importantly, maintenance management becomes an aggressive cost management tool and not a passive function.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation will require the use of technology and maintenance staff resources.

RECOMMENDATION 6-6:

Monitor the work order process using the School Dude® work order software presently in place.

The School Dude® software is an excellent tool that will permit the director to monitor the work order process. This move will permit the work order system to move more quickly as it eliminates one level of bureaucracy. The reports that are generated by School Dude® will give the director all the information he presently needs to be comfortable with the work order process and will provide additional pertinent data. The time gained from implementing this recommendation can be redirected to his other leadership duties.

FISCAL IMPACT

Full implementation of the software should result in improved operational efficiency and allow for more timely response to facilities work orders. The increased efficiency has the potential to equate to cost savings in terms of decreased down time due to inoperable equipment.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools has a limited internal preventive maintenance program within the educational facilities department.

The HVAC systems are outsourced at an annual fee of \$765,000. Most preventive maintenance personnel agree that regular preventive maintenance will extend the life of equipment by 20 percent beyond factory life estimates. The physical facilities of the Alexandria City Public Schools represent a sizable investment with a building replacement cost exceeding \$246,000,000.

The division understands and respects the need for preventive maintenance. There are plans to implement a building inspection program that will identify and prioritize critical areas before the system fails. This will permit better planning of available resources, reduce down time of the facility, and minimize future problems. Presently these standards have been applied only to the roofs and HVAC systems.

Exhibit 6-7 shows a sample preventive maintenance schedule that should be an integral part of such a software program.

**EXHIBIT 6-7
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SAMPLE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

AREA	COMPONENT	INSPECTION AND REPAIR 3-6 MONTH INTERVALS	INSPECTION AND REPAIR ANNUALLY	INSPECTION AND REPAIR 2-5 YEAR INTERVALS	INSPECTION AND REPLACEMENT 7-10 YEAR INTERVALS	INSPECTION AND REPLACEMENT 12-15 YEARS
Exterior	Roof		X	X		X
	Roof Drainage		X	X		
	Windows and Glass		X	X	X	
	Masonry		X	X		
	Foundations		X			X
	Joints and Sealants		X		X	
Equipment	Belts and Filters	X				
	Motors and Fans	X		X		X
	Pipes and Fittings	X			X	
	Ductwork		X		X	
	Electrical Controls		X		X	
	Heating Equip.	X			X	
	Air-conditioning Equipment	X			X	
Interior	Doors and Hardware		X			X
	Wall Finishes		X			X
	Floor Finishes		X		X	
Site	Parking and Walks		X	X		
	Drainage		X	X		
	Landscaping	X			X	
	Play Equipment		X		X	

Source: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, 2006.

RECOMMENDATION 6-7:

Improve the preventive maintenance schedule and extend equipment life.

The emphasis on more preventive maintenance would allow the educational facilities department to service equipment more often and extend the equipment life by 20 percent. Since there are limited division records available to estimate the cost savings associated with this recommendation, exact cost savings cannot be determined. The deployment of the maintenance management software will allow the division an opportunity to be as aggressive in the area of preventive maintenance as they have been in other areas such as the development of its capital improvement plan and energy conservation.

Use of the maintenance software, in conjunction with a routine maintenance schedule, would have also have a positive impact on the number of work orders being generated.

In data provided by the school division, the total work orders generated was 2,412, from the start of the school year, through February 8, 2007. The cumulative effect of comprehensive preventive maintenance program would reduce the number of work orders.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact for this recommendation. It is expected that the division will experience a substantial cost savings as the preventive maintenance program is expanded.

6.4 Operations and Custodial Services

The buildings of any school division represent a substantial investment by the community and should be maintained in an orderly and sanitary condition. To this end, these facilities should be staffed by a sufficient number of custodians with adequate supplies and who are provided with modern equipment to keep the buildings in a clean and attractive state and achieve a high standard of cleanliness. Workloads should be reasonably balanced, and custodian responsibilities should be clearly outlined in both job descriptions and a list of daily, weekly, and monthly tasks, juxtaposed against established cleaning standards.

In focus group interviews and conversations during the visitation to all the school facilities, the custodians showed a dedication to the schools they serve and expressed a willingness to work hard to create a safe and orderly environment for the community, staff, and students. The MGT review team visited every building in the division. Some custodial crews appear to be more knowledgeable in how to use chemicals and cleaning processes than others. Principals described varying degrees of understanding of their role in the supervision of custodians. This section will focus on providing processes that will produce consistent results among buildings throughout the division.

FINDING

The new T.C. William High School will necessitate a re-examination of the present custodial staffing formula.

ACPS has entered into a contract with SCC Service Solutions to provide custodial services at an annual fee of \$543,018. The elimination of the custodial positions at the existing high school will require the division to reconsider its present staffing patterns within the remaining schools.

The 35th Annual Maintenance and Operations Report from the April 2006 issue of the *American School & University* reports that in public school systems across the country, the median amount of square feet maintained per custodian was 25,173. It should also be noted that certain buildings may have conditions that warrant a variance to this guideline.

Exhibit 6-8 depicts the number of custodians assigned to the buildings of ACPS and the square footage assigned for cleaning. The number of custodians varies between

buildings as a result of past practices rather than through an application of a custodial staffing formula. The majority of the buildings are under the median square foot per custodian formula of 25,173. The rowing facility is below these standards at 8,873 square feet; the T.C. Williams exceeds the standards by 3,663 square feet.

**EXHIBIT 6-8
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COMPARISON OF CUSTODIAL STAFFING
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL	TOTAL GROSS SQUARE FEET	ASSIGNED FTE CUSTODIANS (NIGHT ONLY)	GROSS SQUARE FEET PER CUSTODIAN (NIGHT ONLY)	GROSS SQUARE FEET VARIANCE WITH INDUSTRY STANDARD
John Adams	137,350	5.5	24,972	201
Charles Barrett	62,760	2.5	25,104	(69)
Patrick Henry	62,400	2.5	24,960	(213)
Jefferson-Houston	83,385	4.5	18,530	(6643)
Cora Kelly	69,000	4	17,143	(8030)
Lyles-Crouch	65,645	2.5	26,258	1085
Douglas MacArthur	63,120	3.0	21,040	(4133)
George Mason	50,935	2.0	25,467	294
Maury	51,800	2.0	25,900	727
Mount Vernon	112,730	5.5	20,496	(4677)
James Polk	76,265	3.5	21,790	(3383)
William Ramsay	87,650	4.5	19,418	(5765)
Samuel Tucker	80,180	4.0	20,045	(5128)
F.C. Hammond	236,125	10.5	22,488	(2685)
George Washington	237,335	10.0	23,733	(1440)
Minnie Howard	130,435	5.0	26,087	905
T.C. Williams/Step	360,450	12.5	28,836	3663
Rowing Facility	16,300	1.0	16,300	(8873)

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Maintenance Department, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 6-8:

Create a custodial staffing formula to be applied to the 2007-08 school year.

The issue of custodial staffing in each of the buildings is compounded by the number of day custodians. In the eighteen facilities of ACPS, there are 38.5 day custodians and engineers. Establishing standards for custodial cleaning will permit the school division the opportunity to examine the entire staffing pattern. SCC Services Solutions has indicated that T.C. Williams can be cleaned with fewer custodians than the present high school staffing model. It remains to be seen whether this is true and whether the building will achieve the cleaning standards set by the division.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost for this recommendation is indeterminable at this time pending the creation of the new staffing formula.

FINDING

The administrative guidelines for ACPS do not contain custodial standards.

As a result, the buildings are not consistently cleaned at the level indicated by the staffing allocation. According to the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA), one custodian can clean approximately 25,000 square feet in an eight-hour period and meet the industry standard of Level 2: "Ordinary Tidiness."

There are three major components of the time and task standards identified by the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers or the APPA standards:

- Appearance levels must be defined and described in some detail. (The APPA handbooks provide descriptions for five levels of cleanliness, as summarized in **Exhibit 6-9**.)
- Standard spaces must be identified to ensure that the differences in the types of spaces and the cleaning effort required for those spaces are clearly distinguished. (The APPA handbooks identify 33 different types of spaces.)
- CSF (Cleanable Square Feet) is an industry standard that is used to measure and compare data.

Custodial staff and principals need an established set of policies and guidelines explaining the expectations of the division with regard to cleanliness standards for the facilities. At present, there is no definition of what constitutes a safe and clean learning environment. Until these standards have been established, the level of cleanliness will continue to vary from one building to the next.

Exhibit 6-9 provides a description of the levels of cleanliness according to the Association of Higher Education Facility Officers. The MGT Review team can provide the division with a checklist for cleanliness that MGT developed in conjunction with the Houston Independent School division. These two documents will provide the basis to establish cleaning standards that will guide the custodial staff and building principals in achieving a higher level of building cleanliness.

**EXHIBIT 6-9
ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICAL PLANT ADMINISTRATORS
CLEANLINESS SCALE**

Level 1: Ordinary Spotlessness - Only small amounts of litter and ashes in containers. Floor coverings are kept bright and clean at all times. No dust accumulation on vertical surfaces, very little on horizontal surfaces. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins are kept clean. Only small amounts of spots visible.
Level 2: Ordinary Tidiness - Only small amounts of litter and ashes in containers. Floor coverings show periods of peak and valleys in appearance. Dusting is maintained at a high level. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins show evidence of spots and dust.
Level 3: Casual Inattention - Only small amounts of litter and ashes in containers. Floor coverings show periods of peak and valleys in appearance. Dust accumulation on vents, vertical, and horizontal surfaces. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins show accumulations of dust, spots, and prints.
Level 4: Moderate dinginess - Waste containers are full and overflowing. Floor coverings are normally dull, marked and spotted with infrequent peaks. Dusting is infrequent and dust balls accumulate. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins are dirty and spotted.
Level 5: Unkempt Neglect - No trash pickup. Occupants of building are responsible. Regular floor care is eliminated. Dusting is eliminated. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins are very dirty.

Source: Association of Physical Plant Administrators: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers, 1998.

RECOMMENDATION 6-9:

Develop standards for custodial services that are consistent with APPA standards.

Establishing custodial standards will create internal consistencies across the division. This will improve the quality of cleaning and light maintenance activities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation should result in a more effective system for ensuring building cleanliness and allow for a more efficient use of existing resources.

FINDING

ACPS lacks a systematic training program for its custodial and maintenance employees that would ensure that they are implementing current best practices and provide access to information that would improve services.

Ongoing training that focuses on board policy, state and federal laws, and best practices occur only on an intermittent basis at the building level and rely heavily on vendors as the primary trainers.

RECOMMENDATION 6-10:

Implement an ongoing staff development program for custodial personnel.

Including facilities personnel in regular staff development activities should ensure that they keep pace with changes in technical and human relations skills, and enable them to contribute to larger, system wide goals. Training should include, at a minimum:

- Leadership training for supervisors that focuses on individual growth and contributions of personal leadership.
- Training to keep pace with innovations in cleaning processes and chemicals.
- Time management.
- Customer communication skills.
- Required subjects such as:
 - Sexual harassment.
 - Discrimination.
 - Family Medical Leave Act.
 - HIPAA.
 - Laws associated with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation will require time during the workday devoted to training as a part of the custodial staff's normal work responsibilities.

FINDING

MGT consultant interviews with administrative personnel cited occasional problems relating to supervising school custodial personnel.

The most frequently raised issue is related to discipline procedures. Under current procedures, only the principal or principal's administrative designee may deal with custodial personnel failing to maintain appropriate work standards. However, the custodial supervisor and/or engineer supervisor may be the individual closest to the problem and able to deal with a matter in the timeliest fashion. Since all ACPS schools employ a building engineer, the engineer supervisor also must be involved in this process.

Building level administration expressed frustration on the transfer policy. Opinions were expressed that custodians that were performing in an unsatisfactory manner were being transferred rather than disciplined.

RECOMMENDATION 6-11:

Review employee supervision and discipline procedures.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in the consideration of the following identified human resource management best practices:

- Place responsibility for employee performance review and supervision with personnel assigned direct work supervision responsibility—the custodial supervisor and engineer supervisor.

- Develop procedures for managing employee discipline that fully involve the employee, the building principal, and the managing supervisor.
- Incorporate the APPA standards into the employee evaluation process.

Personnel and human resource experts typically recommend that issues of employee discipline should involve all parties to ensure fair treatment of the employee and place the administrative/supervisory personnel in the position of fully understanding the actions taken.

Having the custodial supervisor and engineer supervisor become an integral part of the evaluation system should result in changes that will contribute to greater efficiency in managing personnel. At the same time, the building principal will have a lower direct FTE supervisory load and will be able to spend more time in curriculum and instructional leadership.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation involves actions that would be a part of the normal job responsibilities of the custodial supervisor and engineer supervisor.

6.5 Energy Management

The school buildings and other facilities of a school division consume significant amounts of energy that translate into what often appears to be an ever-growing and sometimes unpredictable component of the overall annual budget. With the advent of increased costs for energy to provide fuel 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 the 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 improvement 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. Most school divisions are interested in energy management; a few are doing something about it; an elite group demonstrates a high level of commitment to energy conservation.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools is a role model in energy conservation efforts.

At every level, ACPS exemplifies a school division that is deeply committed to conservation. As much as they have accomplished, they will continue to accomplish even more.

The lists of accomplishments for the division are many. Below are a few of these accomplishments:

- All school buildings will have new energy efficient double pane windows and new energy efficient exterior doors.
- All of the roofing systems that have been installed since 1995 have four inches of insulation and thirteen of those roofs are covered with a white reflective roofing membrane.
- 15 of 17 schools have energy efficient electronic/T8 lighting systems.
- Boilers have been replaced with energy efficient “pulse” hot water boilers.
- School buildings are controlled through a web-based building automation system with a trained operator on staff.
- 15 of the 17 school buildings have replaced the boiler room with roof mounted heating (gas) and cooling units. This enables the Division to be more flexible in heating/cooling buildings during non-occupied periods.

As impressive as this list is, the efforts being expended for the new high school are even more so. T.C. Williams will be a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) school and the division will be seeking silver-level LEED certification. Given their efforts, it is likely that they will be successful. The following is a list of the initiatives that are being incorporated into the high school:

- Temperature sensors will compare rooftop temperatures on vegetated green roof, white TPO roof, and black roof test area.
- Vegetated green roof to slow and cleanse storm water.
- 100 percent outdoor air variable volume air handling units with energy recovery will provide superior indoor air quality and energy efficiency.
- Cooling towers are equipped with quiet fans to reduce noise pollution.
- Demonstration photovoltaic array.
- Energy Star and high emissivity roof surface.
- Reuse of existing school site (land is at a premium in Alexandria).

- Rain garden to cleanse surface runoff.
- Structured parking saves land and reduces the urban heat island effect.
- Drip irrigation to keep landscaping healthy while conserving water.
- Buried cistern to store storm water for non-potable uses will save over five million gallons of potable water each year.
- Low E-glazing to reduce unwanted heat gain.
- Building performance data will be made available to students in real time.
- More than 70 percent of the regularly occupied interior spaces have a direct line of sight to the outdoors.
- All classrooms have high quality indirect lighting.

These efforts respond to the checklist provided by LEED based on the NC Green Building Rating System.

COMMENDATION 6-C:

Alexandria City Public Schools and the City of Alexandria are commended for their commitment to savings energy for future generations.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools does not have a human behavioral element incorporated into their energy conservation efforts.

There are significant savings to be realized when users become actively engaged in energy conservation efforts. To go to the next level, ACPS must now engage daily users in these conservation efforts.

Common energy management programs include the following components:

- Coordinating with utilities to ensure best rates.
- Monitoring utility use for irregularities which may indicate leaks.
- Preparing and distributing facility checklists during holiday periods.
- Checking heating, ventilating, and air conditioning units in schools and portable classrooms.
- Training staff in thermostat operation.
- Consulting on design of new schools.

- Overseeing scheduling of times of operation for HVAC equipment at all schools.
- Checking all utility meters.
- Checking utility bills for accuracy.
- Conducting education programs for building users.

Exhibit 6-10 presents the total Million British Thermal Units (MBTU) costs for each of the ACPS buildings. The Division's total costs for energy consumption are \$2,412,520. The most expensive building to operate is Douglas MacArthur at \$1.98 per square foot; the most economical is the rowing facility at 65 cents per square foot.

**EXHIBIT 6-10
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ENERGY USE BY FACILITY
FY 2005-06**

SCHOOL	BUILDING SQUARE FT	TOTAL MBTU COST	COST PER SQ FT
John Adams	137,350	119,489	0.87
Charles Barrett	62,760	80,349	1.28
Patrick Henry	62,400	81,917	1.31
Jefferson-Houston	83,385	83,437	1.00
Cora Kelly	69,000	83,172	1.20
Lyles-Crouch	65,645	77,604	1.18
Douglas MacArthur	63,120	125,082	1.98
George Mason	50,935	75,621	1.48
Maury	51,800	77,815	1.50
Mount Vernon	112,730	115,405	1.02
James Polk	76,265	68,441	0.89
William Ramsay	87,650	92,753	1.05
Samuel Tucker	80,180	111,091	1.38
F.C. Hammond	236,125	311,225	1.31
George Washington	237,335	276,740	1.16
Minnie Howard	130,435	148,713	1.14
T.C. Williams/Step	360,450	416,844	1.16
Rowing Facility	16,300	10,608	0.65

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Maintenance Department, 2007.

An aggressive energy management program will consist of these fundamental components:

- Supply side efficiency: This essentially means purchasing energy at the lowest available dollars.
- Operating efficiency: This requires operating the equipment that consumes energy as efficiently as possible.
- Demand side efficiency; this involves upgrading equipment with more energy efficient equipment when it is cost effective to do so.

- Energy education programs for staff and students.
- Energy use and tracking software.
- Incentive rebate programs for schools that reduce energy consumption.

RECOMMENDATION 6-12

Engage daily energy users in ACPS in a more aggressive energy conservation program.

Engaging the daily users in a more vigorous energy conservation plan can result in additional cost avoidance. It has been estimated that having a program that actively engages the daily users in the savings of energy will result in additional savings/cost avoidance of 10-20 percent. More widespread application of the energy management program components previously listed would produce this level of cost savings.

Clark County School Division (CCSD) in Nevada is recognized as a national leader in energy conservation efforts. CCSD has been highly successful in integrating all the key components in a successful energy savings program.

FISCAL IMPACT

For purposes of this report, the more conservative figure will be used to illustrate the point that there are still more energy dollars available to the division. Based on an annual utility cost of \$2,412,520, at 10 percent, the cost savings could reach \$241,250 per year. A graduated scale was used in order to recognize that these types of programs take time to implement. Using this scale the cost savings could reach \$740,000 over the five-year period.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Engage Consumers in Energy Conservation	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$240,000

7.0 TRANSPORTATION

7.0 TRANSPORTATION

Among the most important functions and responsibilities of any school division is transporting our nation's children. The nation's 450,000 school buses make 8.8 billion to-and-from school trips and approximately 1.2 billion activity trips a year, carrying 24 million children. School systems collectively operate one of the safest forms of transportation in the country, better than any other form of mass transit and nearly 94 times safer than a family car.

Yet, in the face of growing public expectations and ever-shrinking public dollars, this superior national achievement is at a crossroads in many schools districts and many states. School system budgets continue to shrink while public expectations continue to rise. Parents expect door-to-door, timely service, while transportation directors struggle with employee absenteeism and buses that are in service from before dawn until past dusk, with few spares in their lots. Meanwhile, in their efforts to improve student achievement, school boards across the country are pressuring transportation departments to do more with less and achieve ever-greater efficiencies so that saved dollars can be spent in the classroom.

This chapter presents the major findings, commendations, and recommendations for the transportation function in the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The five major sections of this chapter are:

- 7.1 Organization and Staffing
- 7.2 Planning, Policies, and Procedures
- 7.3 Routing and Scheduling
- 7.4 Training and Safety
- 7.5 Vehicle Maintenance

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Overall, the ACPS transportation department provides effective and efficient student transportation services. The department does an effective job controlling costs, training drivers, maintaining buses, and delivering students to and from their destinations. Vehicle maintenance services are conducted by the maintenance department and they have been effective in maintaining the fleet of buses and other transportation vehicles. MGT found some areas that could be improved. Making recommended improvements outlined in this chapter will increase efficiency, personnel retention, and operational integrity.

Notable accomplishments of the transportation department in the areas of operations, safety, and staff development are:

- The transportation department has an effective training program for the transportation operations and management processes and procedures (**Commendation 7-A**).
- The transportation department has reduced the off-site accident rate by over half in the last three years (**Commendation 7-B**).

- The transportation department has significantly reduced bus driver turnover in the last four years, thereby reducing retraining costs and allowing existing personnel to gain advanced skills beyond those required for licensing (**Commendation 7-C**).

MGT found that the division needs to improve in the areas of its bus replacement policy, transportation software technology determining bus routing and scheduling; and substitute bus driver recruitment. Specifically:

- The division needs to transfer the vehicle maintenance function from the maintenance department to the transportation department (**Recommendation 7-1**).
- Transportation department personnel should be evaluated at least once per year (**Recommendation 7-2**).
- Restructure the organization of the transportation department to reduce the number of evaluations done by the assistant transportation director (**Recommendation 7-3**).
- A number of transportation policies in the School Board manual need to be added (**Recommendation 7-4**).
- An annual report card on the transportation department needs to be established to determine progress toward goals (**Recommendation 7-5**).
- Develop a policy and internal procedure to establish a transportation complaint hot line (**Recommendation 7-6**).
- Develop a transportation Web site linked to the ACPS Web Page (**Recommendation 7-7**).
- Place a standing agenda item for “transportation issues” at each regularly scheduled principals meeting (**Recommendation 7-8**).
- Require building principals to return a copy of each discipline referral sheet submitted by a bus driver stating the action taken for the disciplinary infraction (**Recommendation 7-9**).
- Cross-train a transportation department staff member in the EDULOG system (**Recommendation 7-10**).
- Increase the utilization of the buses by increasing the riders per bus (**Recommendation 7-11**).
- Conduct an annual needs assessment to determine additional staff development priorities for the coming year in addition to those required (**Recommendation 7-12**).

- A vehicle maintenance information system needs to be implemented to make better use of vehicle maintenance data (**Recommendation 7-13**).

INTRODUCTION

The division provides transportation on a daily basis for approximately 5,312 students in the division who attend the division’s schools, take field trips, participate in after-school activities, or are shuttled to other educational agencies or school locations. The number of trades, operatives, and service personnel per student places ACPS in the “middle of the pack” when compared to the peer school divisions. Among those served are exclusive students, who, because of their varying disabilities or special needs, require special arrangements to school sites throughout the county and in some cases to neighboring school divisions. The division observes the one-mile walking zone for K-9 students and the one-and-one-half-mile walking zone for 10-12 students. The only exceptions are those areas within the walking zones designated by the School Board as safety transportation areas. ACPS is in compliance with the Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-176 which states, in part, “County School Boards may provide transportation of pupils, but nothing herein contained shall be construed as requiring such transportation.”

As shown in **Exhibit 7-1**, the division’s transportation department had 125.0 FTE personnel in school year 2004-05. These personnel were categorized as administrative, technical and clerical, other professional, or trade, operatives and service. The exhibit details how the ACPS transportation personnel were spread across the four categories.

**EXHIBIT 7-1
TRANSPORTATION PERSONNEL
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	TRANSPORTATION			
	ADMINISTRATIVE	TECHNICAL AND CLERICAL	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	TRADES, OPERATIVES AND SERVICE
Alexandria City Public Schools	1.00	3.00	0.00	121.00
Charlottesville City Public Schools*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	1.00	1.00	0.00	41.75
Manassas City Public Schools	0.00	1.50	0.00	58.00
Winchester City Public Schools	1.00	0.00	0.00	52.07
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	0.60	1.10	0.00	54.56

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007. *Note: Charlottesville City Public Schools does not have a transportation department.

MGT conducted a survey of ACPS administrators, principals, teachers as part of this efficiency review. **Exhibit 7-2** provides the survey results. As the exhibit shows, 22 percent of central office administrators, 41 percent of principals, and 19 percent of teachers stated that the transportation function needs some improvements or needs major improvements. Conversely, 59 percent of central office administrators, 59 percent of principals, and 55 percent of teachers stated that transportation services are adequate or outstanding.

**EXHIBIT 7-2
TRANSPORTATION COMPARISON SURVEY
RESPONSES OF ADMINISTRATORS, PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

SCHOOL DISTRICT/PROGRAM FUNCTION	% NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT		/	% ADEQUATE + OUTSTANDING	
	ACPS SCHOOL DISTRICT CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS	ACPS SCHOOL DISTRICT PRINCIPALS		ACPS SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHERS	
Transportation	22/59	41/59		19/55	

Source: MGT Survey, 2007.

Exhibit 7-3 details the comparative information from previously surveyed personnel in other divisions. As shown in the exhibit, 21 percent of central office administrators, 43 percent of principals, and 32 percent of teachers stated that the transportation function *needs some improvements or needs major improvements*. Conversely, 65 percent of central office administrators, 54 percent of principals, and 46 percent of teachers in the comparison divisions stated that transportation services are *adequate or outstanding*. The opinions of the quality of the ACPS transportation department were very similar to those expressed in previously surveyed divisions.

**EXHIBIT 7-3
TRANSPORTATION COMPARISON SURVEY
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

SCHOOL DISTRICT/PROGRAM FUNCTION	% NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT		/	% ADEQUATE + OUTSTANDING	
	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT PRINCIPALS		OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHERS	
Transportation	21/65	43/54		32/46	

Source: MGT Survey, 2007.

The cost per mile and cost per student for regular students is shown in **Exhibit 7-4**. **Exhibit 7-5** details the same information for exclusive students.

**EXHIBIT 7-4
COST PER MILE AND COST PER STUDENT
FOR REGULAR STUDENTS
COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	# REGULAR STUDENTS	TOTAL REGULAR MILES	TOTAL REGULAR COSTS	COST/REGULAR STUDENT	COST/REGULAR MILE
Alexandria City Public Schools	4,352	253,748	\$1,349,569	\$310.10	\$5.32
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,018	108,720	\$500,190	\$124.49	\$4.60
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,379	151,740	\$492,351	\$206.96	\$3.24
Manassas City Public Schools	3,963	94,981	\$645,506	\$162.88	\$6.80
Winchester City Public Schools	1,599	86,593	\$319,896	\$200.06	\$3.69
AVERAGE	3,262	139,156	\$661,502	\$200.90	\$4.73

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2006.

**EXHIBIT 7-5
COST PER MILE AND COST PER STUDENT
FOR EXCLUSIVE STUDENTS
COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	# EXCLUSIVE STUDENTS	TOTAL EXCLUSIVE MILES	TOTAL EXCLUSIVE COSTS	COST/EXCLUSIVE STUDENT	COST/EXCLUSIVE MILE
Alexandria City Public Schools	367	117,450	\$1,246,703	\$3,397.01	\$10.61
Charlottesville City Public Schools	169	44,820	\$334,057	\$1,976.67	\$7.45
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	45	39,960	\$155,369	\$3,452.64	\$3.89
Manassas City Public Schools	143	79,782	\$604,356	\$4,226.27	\$7.58
Winchester City Public Schools	160	39,114	\$300,659	\$1,879.12	\$7.69
AVERAGE	177	64,225	\$528,229	\$2,986.34	\$7.44

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2006.

Exhibit 7-6 shows that for the 2006-07 school year, ACPS owned 98 school buses with 23 of them being handicapped buses and 12 being designated as spare buses. The spare buses equal approximately 12 percent of the entire ACPS fleet.

**EXHIBIT 7-6
SCHOOL BUS INVENTORY
CLARKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

BUS TYPE	REGULAR
Regular	63
Handicapped	23
Spare	12
TOTAL	98

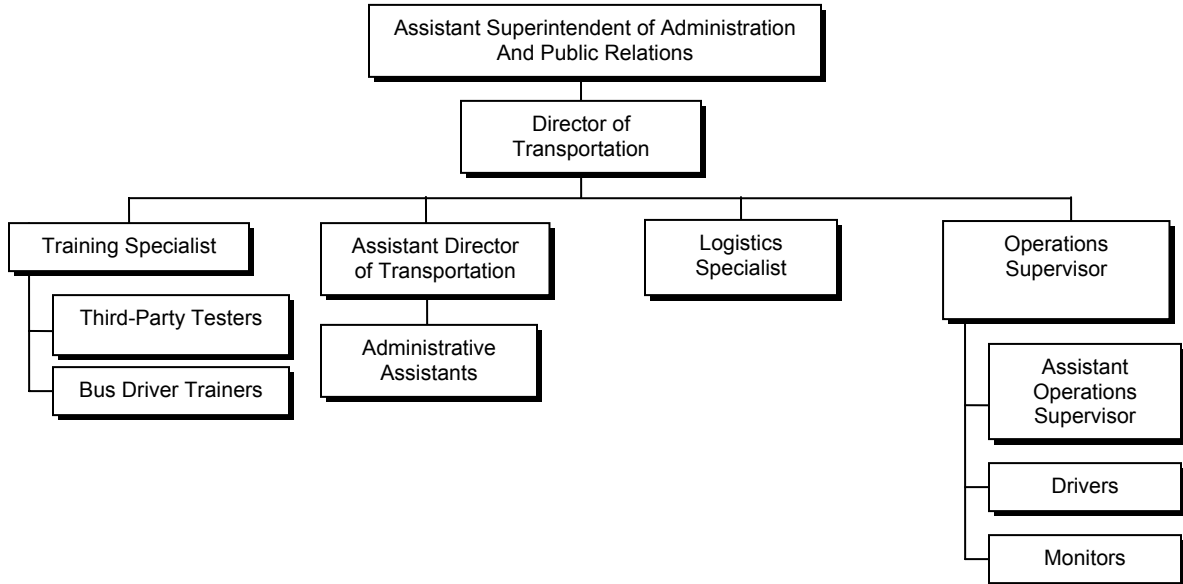
Source: ACPS, Transportation Department, 2007.

7.1 Organization and Staffing

One of the primary goals of all transportation departments is to deliver their services safely, efficiently, and effectively. The more efficient the transportation operation, the greater the potential return dollars to the classrooms. The more effective the operation, the higher is the quality of transportation services. An efficient and effective transportation department will directly and indirectly support the educational goal of the division.

Exhibit 7-7 shows how the ACPS transportation department is currently structured to accomplish daily operations. According to the organizational chart provided MGT, the director of transportation reports to the assistant superintendent of administration and public relations.

**EXHIBIT 7-7
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVISION
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**



Source: ACPS, Transportation Department, February 2007.

There is no staffing formula and all staffing levels are based on division precedent. There are 96 drivers for 87 routes. The department has a recruiting program, and has enough regular drivers for its planned routes and other transportation activities.

FINDING

The vehicle maintenance function is not properly aligned on the current organizational chart. With most vehicles in ACPS being school buses, the current organization chart placing vehicle maintenance under the maintenance department is inefficient. The current reporting requirements for school bus maintenance require the school bus maintenance personnel to work much more closely with the administration of the transportation department. In addition, the physical location of the vehicle maintenance shop is in the current transportation facility. Efficient school divisions are organized with common department functions placed in the line of the department administration.

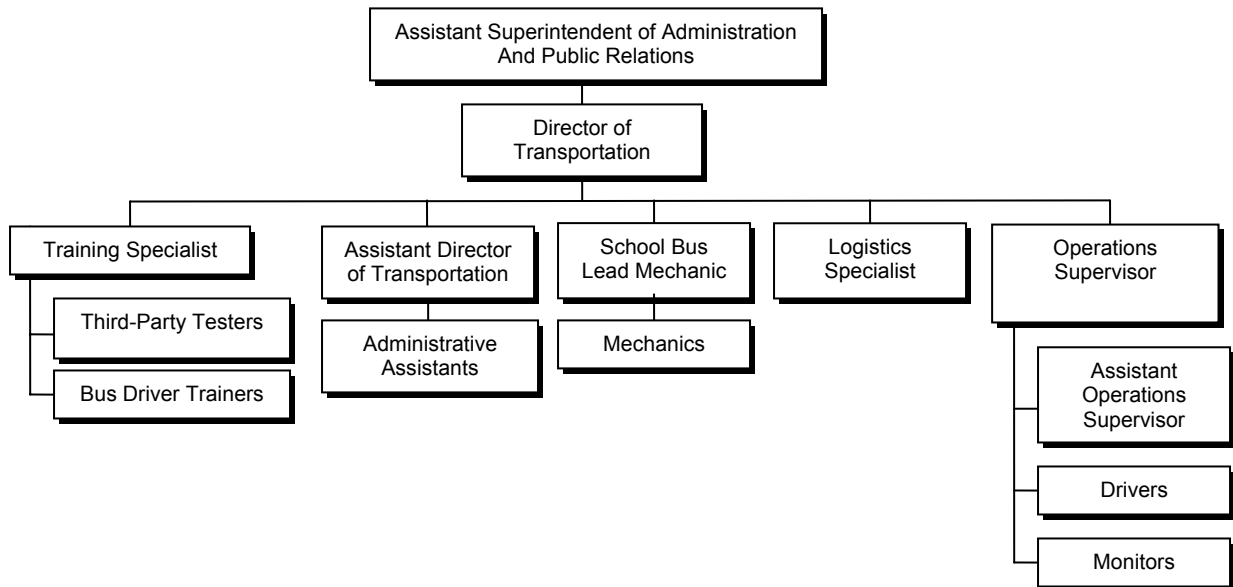
RECOMMENDATION 7-1:

Restructure the transportation department by transferring the vehicle maintenance function from the maintenance department to the transportation department.

Having the vehicle maintenance operations under the transportation department should improve the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the vehicle maintenance section. Communications should be improved by having supervisory personnel in the same building. Decision making should also be improved by being able to efficiently include

the vehicle maintenance personnel into transportation department team meetings. **Exhibit 7-8** details the proposed organizational structure.

**EXHIBIT 7-8
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVISION
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**



Source: MGT of America, 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

Evaluations of non-drivers in the transportation department have not been conducted on a regular basis.

Some of the personnel have not been evaluated in several years. Periodic employee evaluations are important aspects of the improvement process for any organization. With formal written feedback, employees tend to become more goal-driven and effective team members. In addition to regular evaluations being a best practice, ACPS policy requires periodic evaluation of all employees.

RECOMMENDATION 7-2:

Evaluate all transportation department personnel at least once per year.

By evaluating all employees of the transportation department on a regular basis, the employees will have regular formal feedback regarding his/her performance. This will

enable the employees to more fully participate in the professional improvement process. In addition, the school division will have a record of performance in the event of the employee's promotion, reassignment, or dismissal.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The assistant transportation director has too many personnel evaluations to complete per year.

The assistant transportation director is the only person responsible for the evaluation of approximately 98 bus drivers and approximately 25-30 monitors. Although a limited number of other staff members provide input into this process, one person does them all. This creates a condition where there is "let's just get it done" mentality and the evaluations become more of a formality and are less meaningful. A more common ratio is one supervisor per 20-25 drivers and monitors. Because the monitors require a special skill set and because their numbers vary according to the number of special education students requiring these related services, the evaluator for the bus monitors may require have a special set of skills.

RECOMMENDATION 7-3:

Distribute the responsibility for conducting transportation personnel evaluations across the department to other qualified evaluators.

By spreading out the number of bus driver and monitor evaluations, the quality of the evaluations should increase and the likelihood that the evaluations are meaningful increases also. The operations supervisor and assistant operations supervisor are capable of evaluating drivers as well as the training specialist. They should concentrate on driver evaluations and the assistant director should concentrate on monitor evaluations.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

7.2 Planning, Policies, and Procedures

Effective policies guide a school system's transportation department in the execution of its duties. Transportation policies should include procedures to ensure that public funds are spent in the most effective manner possible.

Competent transportation planning is crucial. The best transportation planning is supported by sophisticated technology that helps a school system maximize its bus

resources. A school system operation is dynamic, and the planning of routes should be dynamic as well. Students are moving in and out of the school system on a daily basis, and the scheduling and routing of school buses must fit into that framework.

The ACPS transportation department has an experienced staff. There are published ACPS policies and procedures for transportation including a transportation department driver's manual.

The internal procedures for the department are developed by applying new learning from operations or adapting to directed policy changes. The transportation department driver's manual is updated periodically. MGT found this manual to be complete and user-friendly. Staff and drivers (new and old) are kept knowledgeable about changes in procedures through in-service training that occurs before school and periodically throughout each year. Attendees at the required training sessions are paid for their time. The training specialist is responsible for the training, but others, including the transportation director, also participate and contribute.

FINDING

The ACPS School Board Policy Manual has only five policies in the student transportation section.

These policies deal with walking zones, bus scheduling and routing, bus inspections, student conduct, and special uses of buses. Additional policies are needed in the areas of transportation (e.g., school bus replacement, inspections, school bus maintenance, bus driver training and certification, school bus driver drug and alcohol testing, etc.). Without these policies, the transportation department must rely on state policies or the judgment of the administration. This may create an undue liability risk for the transportation department. School systems with comprehensive policies and procedures are able to significantly reduce risk and improve both internal and external communications.

RECOMMENDATION 7-4:

Strengthen the transportation section of the school board policy manual by adding additional policies that provide guidance to the transportation department.

By improving and adding additional critical policies to the school board manual, the transportation department will reduce its liability risk, improve internal and external communications, and have an improved set of guiding policies to set their procedures.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

Currently, the ACPS transportation department does not regularly track, compile, or publish its findings on performance indicators.

Many high-performing school systems use indicators to assess ongoing performance in key management areas. Performance indicators allow departments of transportation to track service quality and make adjustments where required. Improvements in performance can be documented to demonstrate progress. Accurate and timely performance indicators help management allocate scarce funds to the most critical needs. They also provide assurances to the central office, the School Board, and the public that the department of transportation is using its resources in the best possible manner.

Some of the transportation performance indicators typically used by school systems are shown in **Exhibit 7-9**. Indicators can assist the department in consistently tracking and monitoring performance. The department can then compare these statistics to those of peer school systems and its own past history. Ideally, the transportation department would annually select a target goal for each indicator and track its progress towards that goal.

**EXHIBIT 7-9
OVERVIEW OF POSSIBLE ACPS STANDARDS AND
TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

PERFORMANCE AREA	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accidents per 100,000 miles ■ Incidents per 100,000 miles ■ Number of first, second, and third student discipline referrals
Cost-Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Operation cost per route mile ■ Annual operation costs per route ■ Operation costs per student for regular education, special education, magnet, and diversity busing
Cost-Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On-time performance ■ Open routes due to unfilled positions ■ Driver absentee rate ■ Percent of routes driven by team leaders ■ Average rider trip time in minutes ■ Average bus occupancy
Maintenance Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Miles between road calls ■ Percent of preventive maintenance completed on time ■ Turnover time per bus repair ■ Operational rate for regular buses

Source: Created by MGT of America, 2006.

The department does collect a portion of these statistics, as required by the state for funding reasons, but does not report them in an open forum, such as a Board meeting.

The recent survey in North Carolina included a question of parents regarding their perception of the safety of various modes of transporting students. According to the parents who responded, the safest mode of transporting students is in the parent's car.

The school bus was ranked the second safest form of transportation. If the ACPS transportation department regularly tracked and published its performance statistics, it is possible that parents would become better informed and elect to have their children ride the bus.

RECOMMENDATION 7-5:

Implement an annual report card using performance indicators to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the ACPS transportation department.

Such an annual review of its operations should provide assurances that the department is performing up to standards, both in comparison to its past and in comparison to its peers. The report card will serve to highlight solid performance and areas in need of improvement.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The ACPS does not have a policy or established procedures for parents or employees to report instances of ineffective or inefficient operations.

Further, the employees have no established mechanism to anonymously report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse. In the past, top administration or other supervisors have received information of these types but they were not anonymous reports. A number of public agencies have benefited from establishing a “hot-line” for parents and employees to report information to the administration. Although not necessary, hotlines can be maintained by a third-party administrator to ensure anonymity.

RECOMMENDATION 7-6:

Develop a policy and internal procedure to establish a transportation complaint hot line.

An effective policy with internal procedures will provide employees and citizens with an effective mechanism for reporting issues, complaints, or even suspected instances of fraud, waste, or abuse. The ability of an employee to contact someone other than a direct supervisor enables employees to come forward without fear of retribution. Anonymity in such a procedure is essential.

Although not all hot-line information will be useful, and some can be expected to be vindictive, the establishment of a hot-line does improve communications and helps formalize alternative paths of communication.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The ACPS transportation department does not have a presence on the ACPS Web site.

Employees and patrons must personally contact the transportation department to obtain information that might be readily available on a Web site. This information might be route schedules, approximate pick-up and drop-off times, driver contact numbers, activity bus schedules, a link to the emergency closure information, bus discipline policies and procedures, etc. Each call to transportation department personnel for data takes them away from other important tasks and diminishes the effectiveness of the department.

RECOMMENDATION 7-7:

Develop a Transportation Web site linked to the ACPS Web Page.

As a result of having a Web page on the ACPS Web site, the transportation department will be able to more effectively communicate with other ACPS personnel and patrons. It also gives the department an opportunity to share important successes with others. Report card information recommended in this report can be shared with the public to bolster public confidence in the entire school system.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

There is no systematic communications process between building principals and the director of transportation.

Presently, building principals and the director of transportation communicate with each other through telephone calls, email, or personal contact. However, in MGT focus group meetings with building principals, several issues were raised that had not been raised with the drivers, the director, or at administrative meetings. Some had to do with discipline and some with bus scheduling. Presently there is no standing agenda item for “transportation issues” at regularly scheduled administrative team meetings. Effective and efficient school systems have both formal and informal methods of ensuring that important professional issues are communicated in a timely and effective manner.

RECOMMENDATION 7-8:

Place a standing agenda item for “transportation issues” at each regularly scheduled principals meeting.

Having a standing agenda item for transportation issues for each regularly scheduled administrative meeting should help improve communications between the building principals and the transportation department. It provides an opportunity for any member of the administrative team to raise issues related to policy, procedures, personnel, or communications. Occasionally, the agenda item will simply remind administrators of unresolved issues and they are able to set up discussions in other venues.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The bus drivers in ACPS do not have a systematic method of receiving feedback about action taken by administrators on discipline referrals made by the drivers.

Drivers do have discipline referral forms that are submitted in writing to the offender's principal. In focus groups with bus drivers conducted by MGT, many drivers reported that they do not receive feedback regarding the referrals and many assume that nothing was done. Some felt marginalized in the discipline process. Effective discipline systems have feedback mechanisms for the drivers so they can monitor the effectiveness of the disciplinary actions taken. It is also important that the bus drivers be active participants in the team of adults helping students overcome disciplinary issues. If a consequence of an infraction is not effective, the bus drivers need to persevere and continue working with the building principal and other adults to help the student change inappropriate behavior.

RECOMMENDATION 7-9:

Require building principals to return a copy of each discipline referral sheet submitted by a bus driver stating the action taken for the disciplinary infraction.

When building principals communicate back to bus drivers about actions taken, bus drivers become integral members of educational team. They are better able to monitor the results of actions taken, support the actions taken, and provide further feedback to administrators if further disciplinary action is necessary. The inclusion of bus drivers in the feedback loop helps students learn from their mistakes and should improve student performance in the long run.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

7.3 Routing and Scheduling

An effective and efficient routing and scheduling program is absolutely essential for a school transportation program. Virginia School Review Procedures for Transportation

state that “an effective routing and scheduling system not only will help the division control costs, but can maximize the state’s reimbursement for miles driven.”

Effective routing and scheduling systems can impact:

- Efficiencies pertaining to student start and end times in coordination with bell times.
- Bus routes’ average ridership and miles driven.
- Key components of the division’s routing and scheduling software and processes.
- Ride times for regular students and special education (exclusive) students.
- Efficiency and effectiveness of regular routes.
- Efficiency and effectiveness of special education routes.

FINDING

Only one ACPS employee is trained formally in the division’s routing and scheduling program.

In ACPS, the routing and scheduling process is continuous. It consists of downloading student data each day into EDULOG database, and then generating routes and schedules. Subsequent student data changes and modifications are input as they occur to ensure bus drivers have useful routing and scheduling printouts for their use.

The complexity of this process requires that more than one person in the division have professional skills with the routing software. The division can solve this problem by having the logistics specialist cross-train a second transportation department staff member on the EDULOG System.

EDULOG is used a number of school transportation units throughout the nation with varying degrees of success. Those with EDULOG systems who are successful ensure:

- A sufficient number of personnel are adequately trained.
- Software and hardware are current and properly used.
- Input of data are made by competent personnel.
- Routes and scheduling improvements generated by the system are implemented, monitored, and adjusted as necessary.

Although most of these basic requirements are implemented, having a cross-trained staff member in the department should be implemented.

RECOMMENDATION 7-10:

Cross-train a transportation department staff member in the EDULOG system.

Taking steps to make the transportation department's logistics specialist cross trains a back-up person helps ensure that the computerized routing software program will be fully in use regardless of illness or other conditions that might limit the services of the present logistics specialist.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The utilization of school buses is too low and presents an inefficiency in the operations of the division.

The transportation department is operating 98 school buses. Sixty-five of the buses have capacity from 71-84 and only five of them are used for spares or exclusive routes. Of the 60 remaining buses, the average capacity is 78.1 with an average of 35.4 riders. The division has a practice of limiting routes to 30 minutes or less. It is not uncommon to find one hour limits for routes in many parts of the country.

The division is underutilizing its buses. To increase utilization of buses, two things may be adjusted. The first is to reduce the number of buses and transport the same number of students. Operating costs would decrease because there would be fewer buses. Capital costs would decrease because fewer buses would have to be purchased annually to rotate older buses out of the fleet. Bus route lengths would have to be increased because it would take longer to fill the buses.

The second is to purchase smaller buses and transport the same number of students. Operating cost probably would not change appreciably because there would still be the same number of buses, mechanics, drivers, etc. Capital cost would decrease somewhat because smaller buses would be capable of handling the student load. Route lengths would probably not change.

Although school bus capacities are clearly labeled, the loading of elementary students and secondary students is usually different. The smaller elementary students can usually have three per seat. The larger secondary students usually load two per seat. Therefore, in a 78 passenger bus, only 52 secondary students can be expected to sit comfortably. Efficient and effective school divisions have utilization rates that match the grade levels of students being transported and bus capacities.

Exhibit 7-10 details the current buses, routes, and capacities of buses with capacities of 71-84 students that are not used for spares or exclusive routes.

**EXHIBIT 7-10
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL BUS UTILIZATION
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

BUS #	ROUTE ID #	CAPACITY	REGULAR ROUTE 1	REGULAR ROUTE 2	REGULAR ROUTE 3	REGULAR ROUTE 4	REGULAR ROUTE 5	AVERAGE RIDERS
2	139	71	35	40	40			38
14	117	71	46	25	25	25		30
16	107	71	39	39	26			35
17	177	71	31					31
52	125	71	23	42	42			36
53	105	71	58	29	29			39
58	141	71	0	0	0			0
69	111	71	42	22	22			29
70	174	71	33	33	33	29		32
71	185	71	42	42	42	42		42
75	172	71		37	37			37
76	128	71	34	34	36	36		35
10	109	77	47	45	45			46
19	138	77	38	20	20	20		25
67	106	77	52	52	52	28		46
74	101	77	0	41	41			27
91	157	77	22	40	40			34
92	118	77	45	38	38	38		40
93	120	77	2	65	0			22
97	181	77	44					44
98	160	77	29	47	47			41
6	112	78	36	24	24	24		27
9	140	78	31	17				24
31	182	78	22	55	55			44
32	150	78	11	63	63			46
34	129	78	41					41
35	133	78	33	36	36	36		35
37	132	78	46	50	50			49
39	102	78	25	59	59			48
42	137	78	32	35	35			34
43	149	78	11	54	54			40
47	142	78	41	26	26	26		30
48	131	78	35	42	42			40
49	153	78	32	5	5			14
54	119	78	43	45	45			44
55	155	78	30	18	18			22
59	180	78	19	46	46	46		39
60	156	78	21	23	23			22
61	147	78	5	26	26	38	38	27
62	166	78	56	12	12			27
66	146	78	29	29	24			27

**EXHIBIT 7-10 (continued)
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR SCHOOL BUS UTILIZATION
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

BUS #	ROUTE ID #	CAPACITY	REGULAR ROUTE 1	REGULAR ROUTE 2	REGULAR ROUTE 3	REGULAR ROUTE 4	REGULAR ROUTE 5	AVERAGE RIDERS
68	169	78	49	35	35	35		39
81	161	78	18	36	36			30
11	159	84	20	58				39.0
20	148	84	20	33	33			28.7
21	103	84	33	62	62	62		54.8
22	170	84	37	37	47			40.3
23	115	84	37	18	18			24.3
24	144	84		47	47			47.0
25	158	84	12	45	45			34.0
26	183	84	43					43.0
27	151	84	25	60	60			48.3
28	130	84	30	63	63			52.0
30	110	84	39	44	44			42.3
82	152	84	44	47	47			46.0
83	165	84	35	38	38			37.0
84	175	84	36	36	36			36.0
85	104	84	47	49	49			48.3
86	116	84	16	13	13			14.0
88	171	84	25	0	0			8.3
AVERAGES		78.2	31.5	37.1	35.8	34.6	38.0	35

Total number of buses =	60
Total students transported =	6358
Total number of routes =	183
Average number of routes per bus =	3.05
Average riders per route =	34.7

Source: ACPS, Transportation Department, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 7-11:

Increase the utilization of the buses by increasing the riders per bus.

By increasing the utilization of regular route buses, ACPS should be able to decrease both operating and capital cost because there would be fewer buses. Operating cost would decrease because fewer personnel would be needed. Capital costs would decrease because fewer buses would have to be purchased annually to rotate older buses out of the fleet.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is driven by the number of students that can reasonably be transported on one bus. Sixty regular school buses carry 6,358 regular students on 183 routes. The average number of routes per bus is 3.05 (183 ÷ 60) and

the average number of students per route is 34.7 (6,358 ÷ 183). The average capacity of the 60 buses is 78.2 students. Assume that 78 elementary students can comfortably fit on the bus (three per seat) but only 52 secondary students (78 X 2/3) at two per seat. If half the routes are elementary and half are secondary, the average students per seat would be 65 (78+52 = 130; 130 ÷ 2 = 65).

If the average number of students per bus increased from 34.7 to 65, there will only need to be 33 buses (6,358 students ÷ 65 students = 98 routes, and 98 routes ÷ 3.05 routes per bus = 33 buses). This is 27 fewer regular buses than are presently being used. Assume that only two-thirds of these buses could be cut (routing issues, scheduling issues, etc.) then 18 buses can be eliminated (27 x 2/3).

If buses are replaced on a 12 year cycle, then 1.5 buses per year less will be needed. At \$68,000 per bus the annual bus replacement costs can be reduced by \$102,000. A one-time sale of the excess 18 buses at \$10,000 per bus would yield \$180,000 (18 X \$10,000). Eighteen fewer drivers would also be needed. Assume that each driver works approximately 185 days per year for 6 hours per day, the annual hourly savings per driver is 1,110 (185 days X 6 hours). The salary range for drivers is \$14.23 - \$22.83 per hour. The less experienced drivers would be affected by a reduction in force, and their hourly wage would be \$16 per hour. With a 53.9 percent benefit rate, the annual savings for bus drivers is \$491,988 (18 drivers X 185 days X 6 hours per day X \$16 per hour plus 53.9 percent benefits)

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
One-Time Sale Of Excess Buses	\$180,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Annual Savings For School Bus Replacement	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000
Annual Operations Savings For Fewer Bus Drivers	\$491,988	\$491,988	\$491,988	\$491,988	\$491,988
Total Savings From Improved Utilization Of Buses	\$773,988	\$593,988	\$593,988	\$593,988	\$593,988

7.4 Training and Safety

ACPS transportation training and safety programs are the responsibility of the safety coordinator for the transportation department. This position has as stated goals to monitor all safety issues related to pupil transportation, investigate all accidents, and file accidents reports with VDOE. The safety coordinator is also responsible for the planning, integration, and implementation of all training for personnel assigned to the department.

The transportation department stresses the importance of maintaining an active and responsive program to keep its personnel highly trained. It also sets high standards of safety and strives to achieve zero injuries and zero chargeable accidents.

The transportation department site is very small for the number of buses. A number of minor accidents have occurred on the transportation site. **Exhibit 7-11** details the number of accidents and those with a “small site” factor. The recommendation for the expansion of the site is tied to the entire facility and can be found in Chapter 6.0.

**EXHIBIT 7-11
SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS
2003-06**

SCHOOL YEAR	ON-SITE ACCIDENTS	OFF-SITE ACCIDENTS	TOTAL ACCIDENTS	% ON-SITE ACCIDENTS	% OFF-SITE ACCIDENTS
2003-04	10	13	23	43%	57%
2004-05	15	10	25	65%	43%
2005-06	10	5	15	43%	22%

Source: ACPS, Transportation Department, February 2007.

FINDING

The transportation department has a model training program.

A number of training courses are offered to personnel in the transportation department. In those circumstances where training is given at other locations in the Commonwealth or other parts of the country, ACPS covers registration, accommodations, food, and other incidental costs for employees to attend.

The specialist ensures that:

- Safety meetings are conducted for all drivers.
- ACPS bus drivers possess a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL), are 21 years of age, are physically fit to operate a school bus safely, and are literate.
- State-mandated classroom and 24-hours behind the wheel training is completed by all bus drivers.
- Training, as required, is conducted for all other personnel assigned to the transportation department.

Exhibit 7-12 shows training required by law. ACPS transportation staff development consists of training that is conducted or provided for all personnel in the transportation department. The director of transportation is aware that well-trained bus drivers and staff contribute to operational and cost efficiencies.

**EXHIBIT 7-12
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION-RELATED TRAINING
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

TRAINING OFFERED BY ACPS	REQUIRED BY LAW
CPR & First Aid	No
Driver Training	Yes
VA Assn. for Pupil Transportation	No
Special Needs*	Yes
Passenger Control	Yes
Safety	Yes
DMV Regulations	Yes
Drug Abuse	Yes
Bus Evacuation of Students	Yes
Radio and Cell Phone Use	Yes
School Bus Safety Curriculum	Yes
Driver's role and responsibility	Yes
Passenger conduct	Yes
Driving fundamentals	Yes
Loading and unloading passengers	Yes
Pre-trip and post-trip responsibilities	Yes
Accidents and emergencies	Yes
Detecting hazards	Yes
Transit buses	Yes
The challenge of transporting children with disabilities	Yes
The characteristics of children with special needs	Yes
Legal aspects of transporting children with disabilities	Yes
Communication is critical for special needs bus drivers/monitors	Yes
Behavior management strategies for children with disabilities	Yes
Safe loading, unloading, and transportation of children using adaptive equipment	Yes
Special preparation for emergencies	Yes
Unique responsibilities of drivers/monitors of children with disabilities	Yes

Source: ACPS Transportation Department, 2007.

COMMENDATION 7-A:

The ACPS transportation department is commended for the thoroughness of its driver training program.

FINDING

The ACPS transportation department has reduced the off-site accident rate by over half in the last three years.

In school year 2003-04 there were 13 off-site accidents. In 2004-05, the number was reduced to 10 off-site accidents. Last year, 2005-06, the rate dropped to five off-site accidents. This reduction of accidents was described as a "team effort" that included everyone from the director through each and every driver. **Exhibit 7-13** details the accident rate reduction.

**EXHIBIT 7-13
OFF-SITE SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS
2003-06**

SCHOOL YEAR	OFF-SITE ACCIDENTS
2003-04	13
2004-05	10
2005-06	5

Source: ACPS, Transportation Department, February 2007.

COMMENDATION 7-B:

The ACPS transportation department is commended for reducing the off-site accident rate.

FINDING

The turnover rate for ACPS has fallen appreciably in the last four years.

Exhibit 7-14 details the reduction in school bus driver turnover. Over the four-year period shown in the exhibit, driver turnover has been reduced by a little less than 50 percent, from 22 drivers in 2003, to 12 in 2006. Reducing turnover is a great benefit to the division in that it reduces costs both for retraining and for re-staffing vacancies. In addition, low turnover creates a larger base of personnel with enhanced training to gain advanced skills beyond those required for licensure.

**EXHIBIT 7-14
SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TURNOVER
2003-06**

YEAR	TURNOVER
2003	22
2004	17
2005	17
2006	12

Source: ACPS, Transportation Department, February 2007.

COMMENDATION 7-C:

The ACPS transportation department is commended for reducing turnover in personnel.

FINDING

A number of workshops and courses that may be of interest to drivers and other staff members are not included in the annual staff development cycle.

The ACPS transportation department does conduct a number of required workshops and courses as part of the staff development program. They are very comprehensive and well done. However, a number of other topics that may improve the professional effectiveness of drivers and other staff may not be included in the list of workshops. Effective and efficient organizations survey their staffs regularly to identify topics that may be of personal or professional interest in addition to required courses. For those topics that appear to be of high interest, they are included as workshops or courses in subsequent months or years.

RECOMMENDATION 7-12:

Conduct an annual needs assessment to determine additional staff development priorities for the coming year in addition to those required.

Bus drivers and other staff members will have the opportunity to expand the variety of workshops and mini-courses that may improve their professional skills. These additional skills help the employees by increasing the collective skill set of the entire transportation department team.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

7.5 Vehicle Maintenance

ACPS vehicle maintenance responsibilities are performed by one full-time mechanic. The mechanic also ensures adequate and timely parts availability to support the mechanic function. The Vehicle Maintenance Section operates from 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Mechanics work staggered shifts, with each mechanic completing eight hours. The shop foreman has been in his position of responsibility for several years and reports to the director of transportation.

FINDING

ACPS does not use a computerized vehicle maintenance information system (VMIS).

Presently, all records are kept by hand. The current practice makes it more likely that preventative maintenance will not be completed on schedule. Perhaps even more important is the presence of critical management information to be available to the transportation director for management decisions. For example, if the information shows that one type of tire is not performing to expectations, the transportation director will be able to discern it in time to change the bid specifications for the next tire purchase.

The finance department can provide an audit report inquiry that will provide cost data paid to specific vendors such as the local NAPA auto parts franchise. The format is useful for accounting purposes, but currently there is no way to link the cost shown to a particular vehicle, track consumption rates for particular parts, or determine the nature of the repairs performed in order to determine if that repair should have been performed by ACPS transportation mechanics rather than a vendor.

Such cost information has implications for managing the aging of the bus fleet and commercial vehicles. Additional data need to be provided to allow the transportation staff to monitor maintenance costs for each bus and other vehicles, as well as repair parts and obtain consumption rates for the fleet.

A variety of automated fleet information management systems are currently available from a wide number of vendors. MGT does not endorse nor recommend a particular software system or vendor. ACPS must consider the capability of its existing hardware, availability of communications lines, and cost implications in determining which technical approach best meets the needs of the transportation department.

MGT does not believe ACPS needs to invest large resources in any “high end” automated systems. At present, considering the relatively small size of the ACPS fleet, a more modest approach to fleet management challenges should be accomplished.

Some of the commercially available VMIS software includes these critical components:

- Fleet inventory tracking (year, make, model, serial number, etc.)
- Preventative maintenance (automated work order generation, PM tracking by date, mileage, hours, etc.)
- History recording (preventive and repair maintenance history, costs of repairs, parts, labor, tax, etc.)
- Fuel management (fuel consumption, economy, etc.)
- Parts management (stock management, part associations, re-order notifications, purchase order system, etc.)
- Work orders (work order generation, job costing, etc.)

Some of the best systems for a smaller transportation department have two-user licenses, one for the transportation director and one for the mechanic and drivers.

RECOMMENDATION 7-13:

Purchase a Vehicle Maintenance Information System (VMIS).

The use of VMIS software can help the division avoid costly repairs and make it less likely that they will experience any unexpected surprises. Each vehicle receives the right kind of service at the right time. The transportation department will be able to keep track of repairs, problems, fuel usage, and accurately determine the cost effectiveness of equipment repairs.

FISCAL IMPACT

A two-user VMIS software package is estimated to cost \$1,000.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Purchase VMIS Software	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

8.0 TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

8.0 TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

This chapter presents findings, commendations, and recommendations relating to administrative and instructional technology use in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The five sections of the chapter are:

- 8.1 Technology Planning
- 8.2 Organization and Staffing
- 8.3 Infrastructure
- 8.4 Hardware
- 8.5 Technical Support

When reviewing the administrative technology resources of a school division, MGT examines the computing environment within which the administrative applications operate; the applications themselves and the degree to which they satisfy user needs; the manner in which the infrastructure supports the overall operations of the school division; and the organizational structure within which the administrative technology support personnel operate.

In reviewing instructional technology, MGT analyzes all areas that typically contribute to the effective use of technology in the classroom. This ranges from broad areas, such as the technology plan, the organizational structure, and the infrastructure to more specific resources available in the classroom, such as the type of hardware employed, the method of selecting software, and the access to outside resources. Other critical factors assessed include staff development for teachers, school-level technology support and maintenance, and the equitable distribution of technology among schools.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Administrative technology support is provided by the Information Technology Services Department. The staff includes a director, network services manager, help desk coordinator, web administrator, WAN administrator, financial systems analyst, and senior analyst as well as 24 other lower level positions.

Instructional technology support is provided by an instructional technology coordinator and two part-time teachers who assist with instructional technology integration at the high school. In addition, there is a technology resource teacher at each school, except the high school where there are two technology resource teachers.

The division has a robust wide area network (WAN) and an attractive and informative Web site.

The following are a sample of the commendations for ACPS:

- ACPS is commended for establishing the Technology Leadership Group, the Technology Leadership Council and the Technology Leadership Group Executive Committee to assist in guiding the technology efforts of the school division (**Commendation 8-A**).

- ACPS is commended for implementing and maintaining a highly effective wide area network (**Commendation 8-C**).
- ACPS is commended for its significant investment in the education of its students through its one-to-one laptop program (**Commendation 8-E**).

The recommendations for improvement include the following:

- Restructure the ITS department such that there are no more than seven direct reports to the director and that responsibilities are delegated to the managers who are then held accountable for effectively managing their functions and budgets (**Recommendation 8-1**).
- Continue to seek ways of providing backup personnel to support the finance area (**Recommendation 8-2**).
- Assign the annual evaluation responsibilities for the technology resource teachers jointly to their principal and the instructional technology coordinator (**Recommendation 8-3**).
- Establish a five-year replacement cycle for computers (**Recommendation 8-4**).
- Implement a training program for teachers and other staff that provides basic troubleshooting skills (**Recommendation 8-5**).
- Implement a program that involves students as providers of technical support for their schools (**Recommendation 8-6**).
- Redeploy the computer technicians to a defined set of ACPS schools (**Recommendation 8-7**).
- Provide an ACPS parking sticker that will allow the technicians to park close to school buildings to facilitate and expedite their technical support work (**Recommendation 8-8**).

8.1 Technology Planning

A decade ago, technology was seen as an add-on in school systems, indeed in many organizations, including many private businesses. Now, technology is a foundational aspect of almost every organization.

Planning is the key to success in using technology. This applies to a school division overall as well as to each of its schools. Schools should have a technology plan that is closely aligned with their curricula. Technology is after all, a tool—though a very powerful one—that can greatly enhance the teaching and learning process. Similarly, a school division's technology plan should be designed to help the division achieve its educational goals.

Effective planning is the only way that educational enterprises can adequately address five of the most critical factors related to the use of technology:

- **Training.** Professional development is critical for all staff, but it is especially important for teachers. Unless serious attention is given to what training will be provided, how it will be delivered, when and how frequently it can be made available, and to whom is it directed, effective training will not occur.
- **Equity.** Without careful planning at the school division level, there is a risk of inadequately supporting all schools, especially in a division that emphasizes site-based management.
- **Rapid Change.** Few things change more rapidly than technology. If the implementation and ongoing operation of the technology resources are not carefully monitored, the school division or school will not handle this rapid change effectively.
- **Funding.** Many people identify funding as the greatest barrier to the effective use of technology in the classroom. Unless planning addresses how things will be funded, this barrier will have a considerably greater impact than it should.
- **Credibility.** Only through planning is it possible to demonstrate that proposed strategies have been well conceived, that acquisitions of technology resources have been carefully considered, and that every aspect of the implementation is cost effective.

A technology plan must address the specific requirements and preferences of the organization it is designed to serve. Although multiple plans may contain very similar elements, no two plans will be alike. Likewise, while there are guidelines that can help a school division develop a plan that is right for the environment within which it operates, there is no "right way" to develop a technology plan.

FINDING

The ACPS Technology Plan mandated the formation of a Technology Leadership Group whose responsibilities are as follows:

- Provide advice and assistance to senior staff charged with the implementation and continued development of the ACPS Technology Plan.
- Communicate the vision of the plan, and the expectations for all levels of ACPS staff in the implementation of the plan and the integration of technology into instruction and administration.
- Review and revise the plan, as appropriate, on an ongoing basis, producing a bi-annual revision and extension of the plan.

- Identify training and educational opportunities for appropriate senior staff (both instructional and administrative).¹

The Technology Leadership Group (TLG) is led by the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and is composed of representatives of each of the ACPS Technology Plan stakeholder groups. It includes the following members:

- Director of staff development
- Executive director of monitoring and evaluation
- Executive director of information and outreach
- Executive director, secondary programs
- Executive director, elementary programs
- Assistant superintendent, state and federal programs
- Director, career and technical education
- ESL(1)
- Curriculum specialists(2)
- Library/media specialists(1)
- Parents (1 elementary, 1 secondary, nominated by PTA Council)
- Technology business partners (2 or 3)
- Family involvement coordinator
- Higher education representative/teacher preparation(1)
- Technology resource teachers (3:elementary, middle and high)
- Adaptive technology (1)
- Budget and finance(1)
- Human resources(1)
- Principals (2:elementary and secondary)
- PEP specialists(1)
- Web administrator
- WAN administrator
- Senior IT analyst.

The TLG meets approximately once a month during the bi-annual review year, and has two primary functions:

- 1) Each “action” in the Technology Plan will be assigned an owner among the members of the TLG, who will be responsible for progress on that action during the current year.
- 2) Review the progress of the Technology Plan and update it every other year.

The TLG is representative of all the stakeholders of education in the school division and is actively engaged in helping to guide the technology efforts of ACPS.

In addition to the TLG, there is a Technology Leadership Council (TLC) which is a larger body that includes representatives from the city (Departments of Information Technology and Budget and Finance), some business and technology partners, and a few additional members of the ACPS staff. The TLC serves as an advisory group to the Technology Leadership Group.

¹ Alexandria City Public School 2006 – 2010 Technology Plan, p.7.

Finally, there is a Technology Leadership Group Executive Committee that is responsible for maintaining the Technology Plan's schedule and focus. This is composed of the director of information systems and the instructional technology coordinator.

COMMENDATION 8-A:

ACPS is commended for establishing the Technology Leadership Group, the Technology Leadership Council and the Technology Leadership Group Executive Committee to assist in guiding the technology efforts of the school division.

FINDING

ACPS has a comprehensive Technology Plan. The ACPS Technology Plan was approved by the School Board in June 2004, and is patterned after the *Educational Technology Plan for Virginia 2003-2009*. The introduction of the plan states that the mission of Alexandria City Public Schools is as follows:

Alexandria City Public Schools, in partnership with our families and community, will educate effectively all learners to succeed in a changing world.

The plan goes on to say that the "mission of the school division is teaching and learning. The technology plan, and the technology infrastructure it outlines, has no purpose other than to facilitate learning for all students."²

As prescribed in the Educational Technology Plan for Virginia 2003-2009, ACPS identified five "elements" in the plan which were Integration, Professional Development, Connectivity, Educational Applications, and Accountability. Goals, targets and strategies for achieving the goals are included in each.

Among the strategies that are to be followed in each of the five areas are the following:

Integration

- Establish an ACPS Technology Leadership Group (TLG).
- Foster a collaborative approach for technology integration.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate projects that focus on closing student achievement gaps.
- Monitor compliance of the Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel (TSIP).
- Provide training to administrators, teachers, educational specialists, and paraprofessionals on assistive technology tools and strategies in each ACPS school.

² Alexandria City Public School 2006 – 2010 Technology Plan, p.1.

Professional Development and Support Programs

- Include within the ACPS new teacher induction program professional development activities and other experiences that strengthen new staff members' use of technology and their integration of technology into instruction.
- Offer recertification points for technology course work.
- Provide training on technology integration topics that differentiates according to content area, skill level, and experience.
- Form "technology mentoring teams" and/or peer-coaching programs.

Connectivity

- All wiring plants will be upgraded.
- Explore alternative means of permitting students to use existing internet access from home without compromising security.
- Explore avenues to create a more paperless learning environment.
- Monitor the service levels sustained to adjust staffing as required.

Educational Applications

- Develop training and approaches where all stakeholders can easily access and incorporate resources and materials.
- Continue with the division's plan to provide students a wireless environment with wireless laptop computers.
- Make curriculum resources electronically accessible.
- Create an environment that promotes staff participation in online courses.

Accountability

- Under the leadership of the Technology Leadership Group and the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, ACPS will implement a metric for assessing Technology Integration.
- Develop and implement assessment strategies to ensure ACPS students master the Computer/Technology Standards of Learning.
- Ensure that ACPS teachers are TSIPs certified.

The above strategies illustrate the comprehensiveness of the ACPS Technology Plan. Each of the five "elements" contains from 12 to 22 strategies the division plans to follow in an aggressive effort to use technology to improve teaching and learning.

The comprehensive technology plan has apparently contributed greatly to the division's successful use of technology. The online survey that was conducted by MGT early in this review process indicated that employees of ACPS consider technology to be a strength of the division. For example, 78 percent of teachers rated the division's support of instructional technology as "good" or "excellent" whereas only 47 percent of teachers in other school divisions and districts rated their instructional technology support that highly. Furthermore, only 19 percent of ACPS teachers rated the division's instructional technology support as "fair" or "poor," in contrast to teachers in other divisions and districts where over half (51 percent) rated their support "fair" or "poor."

It is not only teachers who consider the division's instructional technology support to be very good. Ninety-seven percent of central office administrators and 96 percent of principals and assistant principals ranked the division's support of instructional technology as "good" or "excellent." These ratings are considerably higher than those MGT has found in other divisions and districts where only 54 percent of central office administrators and 46 percent of principals/assistant principals rank their school system's instructional technology support as "good" or "excellent."

In addition, comments such as the following illustrate the positive view that teachers and administrators have of instructional technology support in ACPS:

- *"I think ACPS is a leader with regards to technology. Administrators have what they need to do their job."*
- *"This school district has devoted numerous resources to developing the use of technology for teachers and students. I think that our school district is above and beyond most in the United States in this area."*

COMMENDATION 8-B:

The Alexandria City Public School Technology Planning Team is commended for developing a technology plan that effectively addresses technology use by students, teachers, administrators and staff.

8.2 Organization and Staffing

Ideally, technology is one area of a school division that supports all administrative and instructional personnel in a constructive way. Organizing technology resources to effectively achieve this outcome can be challenging.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), an internationally recognized non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the effective use of technology in PK-12 education, has developed a Technology Support Index rubric to assist school divisions in determining their needs in a variety of technology support areas. In the index, school divisions are divided into one of the following four categories for various areas of technology usage and support:

- Low efficiency (beginning support capability)
- Moderate efficiency (isolated areas of effective support)

- Satisfactory efficiency (very good support provided in most areas)
- High efficiency (excellent support in most areas).

With respect to organizational structure, the Technology Support Index classifies school divisions as “satisfactory” when they have a structure where the “technical support functions and instructional technology functions report differently, but each unit is cohesively organized and there is communication between units.” Higher-functioning divisions, those operating at a “high efficiency” level, instead have 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....”

FINDING

The organization chart for the Information Technology Services Department does not accurately reflect the staffing structure in the department.

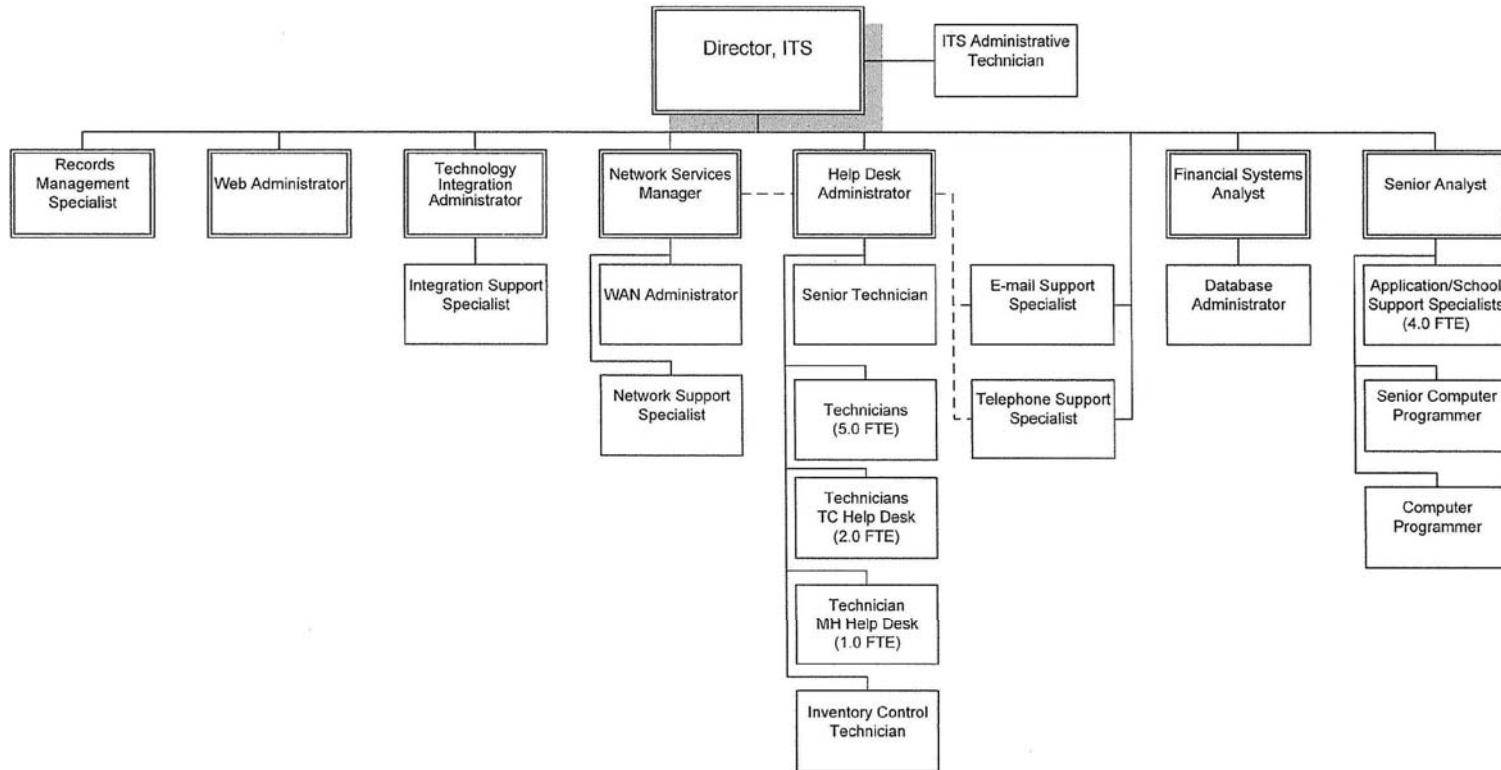
Exhibit 8-1 shows the current organizational structure. Looking at the structure, one would conclude that there are five or six managers at the second level and all report to the director. That is a proper conclusion. From the chart, one would also conclude that there are a number of individuals who report to those managers. That is not a proper conclusion. In fact, based on interviews it was reported that everyone in the department reports to the director.

For example, the computer technicians said during their focus group session that they report to the director. There is a help desk coordinator who assigns technical support tasks to them but the director is the one who supervises them. Moreover, when the help desk coordinator is out or tied up and his backup, and the email support specialist, is also unavailable, the WAN administrator and the Web administrator respond to calls. Every effort is made to ensure that the help desk phone does not go to voicemail, which sometimes means that the director and the network services manager answer the phone.

In most information technology support organizations, the help desk and the computer repair technicians report to a position such as the network services manager, an appropriate assignment of responsibilities since that individual is typically the most technically savvy individual in the department. Similarly, programmers and application support personnel typically report to an applications manager, but in ITS the application/school support specialists do not report to the senior analyst, as the organization chart suggests. Instead they apparently report to the director.

Similarly, there is a financial systems analyst to which the chart shows a database administrator (DBA) reporting. When MGT was on site, that individual did not report to the financial systems analyst, despite what the chart shows. To the department’s credit; however, a couple of weeks after the onsite visit, the financial systems analyst was told that the DBA reported to him. This is particularly important since there is a serious need for additional expertise in support of the finance applications. With the DBA reporting to the head analyst, that backup support can be more effectively developed.

**EXHIBIT 8-1
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, 2007.

Interviews also revealed that the managers do not feel that they are involved in the budget development process. Nor are there periodic staff meetings that would allow each manager to hear what else is going on in the department.

There has long been a guideline for span of control for administrators which says that one person should have no more than seven direct reports, (i.e., no one administrator should try to supervise more than seven subordinates). If the organization chart correctly depicted the reporting structure, the ITS director would still supervise eight people. Since most everyone apparently reports to the director, the span of control guideline is exceeded.

RECOMMENDATION 8-1:

Restructure the ITS Department such that there are no more than seven direct reports to the director and that responsibilities are delegated to the managers who are then held accountable for effectively managing their functions and budgets.

This restructuring should result in lower level support personnel being assigned to report to top level managers who would supervise them in the traditional manner. Typical functional divisions within an information technology department include an applications development unit, a network support unit, a technical support unit, and a web support unit. Of course, the director of ITS has the latitude to devise what ever support units that are appropriate and he has the leeway to assign staff members to which ever manager that works best. But the most essential requirement is that the director should avoid becoming involved in the details of the technical operations, and instead delegate specific responsibilities to each manager, assign individual staff members to their support unit, and then monitor the progress each manager makes with his or her unit in terms of effectively serving the users of ACPS. MGT heard from several sources that ITS has some outstanding personnel in its lead positions. By assigning more responsibility to these individuals, the department should enhance the level of service and support it provides to customers.

Once the organization is restructured, the director can monitor progress toward achieving unit goals in several ways, including individual meetings with the unit managers, weekly or bi-weekly manager meetings, and periodic status reports as appropriate. Regardless of the methods employed, it is important that the managers be held accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

One of few criticisms of the IT Department by users was that there is perhaps not sufficient backup capability among the staff.

This was particularly true in the finance area. Serious concern was expressed that there was really only one person who had technical savvy and knowledge of the finance applications and losing this individual would create significant problems for both the IT department and the end users. This concern was expressed both by the users and by members of the ITS staff.

This is probably the most significant issue facing the IT Department. It is essential that it be addressed in an effective manner in order to avoid serious problems for the department and ultimately for the division.

RECOMMENDATION 8-2:

Continue to seek ways of providing backup personnel to support the finance area.

Not long after MGT's visit to ACPS, the firm was notified that a reporting change had occurred. At the time of the onsite visit, the database administrator (DBA) that is shown on the organization chart as reporting to the financial systems analyst, did not in fact report as shown. About three weeks after the onsite visit, MGT was notified that the DBA was assigned to report to the financial systems analyst. This is a very positive step because the new arrangement will enable the department to more effectively develop the backup capability that it needs in the finance area. Despite this encouraging development, the ITS director needs to closely monitor this effort to ensure that the necessary backup capability is being created. Meetings with the user will be critical to the continual assessment of this undertaking.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

There is not a line of authority with regards to the evaluation of technology resource teachers.

There is a technology resource teacher (TRT) at every elementary school, two at each middle school, and three at the high school. These teachers are very favorably viewed by the teachers, as evidenced by statements such as the following in response to MGT's online survey:

- *"We must keep our technology resource teachers. They are life-savers!"*
- *"We are fortunate enough to have a technology person in each school to help the teachers!"*

The TRTs report to the principal, but their activities are coordinated by the Instructional Technology Coordinator. Generally this works well but there are some professional development inconsistencies.

While the TRTs need to continue to be a resource that teachers can call upon for help, and they need to continue to look to their principal for guidance as it relates to their particular school, there is also a need for there to be some consistency divisionwide with respect to the types of professional development and classroom integration support that is provided throughout ACPS. By having these teachers evaluated by both their principal and the instructional technology coordinator, this objective can be achieved.

RECOMMENDATION 8-3:

Assign the annual evaluation responsibilities for the technology resource teachers jointly to their principal and the instructional technology coordinator.

By having principals work cooperatively with the instructional technology coordinator, not only will the TRT's receive richer, and more meaningful feedback on their effectiveness at individual schools, the instructional technology coordinator will get a better sense of these teachers overall effectiveness throughout the division.

8.3 Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the underlying system of cabling, communications lines, hubs, switches, and routers that connects the various parts of a wide area network (WAN). 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.

Given the capabilities and benefits that will accrue, most organizations, both public and private, have learned that to achieve their desired level of success, they must invest adequately in an infrastructure. This is particularly true of school divisions which typically have a central office and multiple school sites spread over a wide area.

The most fundamental requirement of a sound infrastructure is a WAN that serves all users in the enterprise. A key function of a WAN is to connect the local area networks (LANs) that are located throughout the enterprise. A LAN is typically found within a building and serves to connect all the users within that building to one local network. Connecting the LAN to a WAN allows all LAN users access to others in the enterprise, as well as to the electronic world beyond. An enterprise where every user is connected through a LAN to a WAN has the infrastructure necessary to take full advantage of the telecommunications capabilities that exist today and those that will be available tomorrow.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools has a highly effective wide area network.

The ACPS network is comprised of a 22-site Wide Area Network connected via a switched one gigabyte fiber optic backbone. The fiber is configured in loops providing redundant paths back to the head end, which automatically compensates for fiber breaks in one path to the head end by routing all traffic around the loop in the opposite direction.

The local area network at each site employs switched 100mb Ethernet to the desktop. Fiber is run from the LAN main distribution point to each classroom, providing both lighted and dark fiber in every classroom in the division. This architecture allows division network administration to make large scale adjustments to the physical cable plan (e.g., schoolwide wireless access) very quickly, without extensive additional resources.

The approach to LAN design is a significant departure from the standard wiring design. While most school systems simply appropriate typical office building wiring plant design, ACPS has designed its wiring plant to meet unique characteristics of school buildings: the rooms do not change, but the activities within them do. The wireless networks support students via high speed (54mb) connectivity. The wireless networks are tied into the fiber backbone at each of the secondary schools.

The ACPS network is one of the most robust and effective networks that MGT has observed in its reviews of school systems around the country.

COMMENDATION 8-C:

Alexandria City Public Schools is commended for implementing and maintaining a highly effective wide area network.

FINDING

Alexandria City Public Schools has an effective monitoring and warning system with respect to ensuring student adherence to the division's acceptable use policy.

Among the many duties that the network services manager has assumed is behavior monitoring of students with respect to their use of the ACPS network. He devised a tactic, which the principals liked, that involves monitoring student use of the network. When ever a student attempts to access Web sites that are not approved by the division, within a few hours that student is sent via email a warning "ticket" that alerts him or her that their access is being monitored and that the network services manager is aware of the site the student attempted to access. A copy of the email message is also sent to the appropriate administrator at the school. The ticket is a reminder that students are required to observe division rules regarding Internet use.

COMMENDATION 8-D:

The network services manager is commended for implementing the innovative warning "ticket" as a way of reminding students that they are obligated to adhere to ACPS rules regarding Internet access.

8.4 Hardware

MGT's review of equipment involves an analysis of the type of hardware resources available for staff, teacher, and student use. While computers are the predominant resource in the classroom, other relevant technologies include, but are not limited to, digital cameras, projectors, and networking equipment. It is important that computers used for instruction have sufficient power and speed to support the use of recently

developed multimedia courseware and effective access to the Internet/World Wide Web. All such computers should be networked. Similarly, computers that are used for administrative purposes need sufficient power and speed if they are to effectively use the more advanced software tools available for data storage, manipulation, and analysis. Administrative computers, too, should be networked.

FINDING

ACPS does not have an adequate replacement cycle for computers.

During interviews and focus group sessions several participants indicated that significant numbers of the computers in their schools were old and there was a need for a computer replacement policy. A review of the ACPS computer inventory reveals that there are about 9,440 computers (laptops and desktops) in the division. The inventory includes “years in use” (one of the few school system inventories MGT has seen that so clearly indicates the age of the computers) and an examination of the “years in use” shows that approximately 2,340 computers are at least five years old, with some being as old as 10 years. This represents almost 25 percent of the total computers in use in the division. In addition, there are a few hundred more computers that are four years old. According to ITS, most administrative computers are three-years old or less, thus the primary problem area is in instruction.

Respondents to MGT’s online survey seeking input on school division operations made a few comments relating to the need for a process for renewing computers. Here are some of their comments:

- *“We were getting new computers regularly to keep up with growing needs. It has been several years since we’ve gotten new laptops for teachers or new emacs for students.”*
- *“Up to date computers in all schools should be a priority if integrating technology is a priority.”*
- *“Computers need to be constantly updated. The classroom computers are out of date.”*
- *“Computers are so old. Cannot use in the classroom. ex. keys are stuck, download too long, entering grades is horribly long.”*

Not surprisingly, division staff members that are close to the technical support function, including the network services manager and instructional technology coordinator, were in strong agreement with those who expressed the need to regularly replenish computers.

ISTE’s Technology Support Index categorizes school divisions in which “no replacement cycle has been defined” as low efficiency divisions. The index characterizes school divisions where “equipment is placed on a 3-year or better replacement cycle” as being high efficiency divisions, and divisions whose “equipment is placed on a 4-5-year replacement cycle” are described as having satisfactory efficiency.

The only way to avoid having computers become too old to be effective tools is to implement a replacement cycle that refreshes the computers every three to five years. To its credit, ACPS currently has a policy of replacing servers every three years, but it does not have a replacement policy for administrative or instructional computers.

RECOMMENDATION 8-4:

Establish a five-year replacement cycle for computers.

Because technology advances so rapidly, it is critical that computer purchases are evaluated against the current market to ensure that the investment is as cost-effective as possible. This is particularly true when financial resources are limited. For this reason, it is important that ACPS establish a purchasing strategy that ensures that only state-of-the-art computers are acquired, thereby maximizing the useful life of new equipment. Additionally, a replacement cycle (three to five years) for these systems should be established to ensure proper support. During the International Society for Technology in Education's (ISTE) Technology Support Project it was found that establishing a computer replacement cycle allowed districts to avoid obsolescence and provided for better support, thereby reducing TCO (total cost of ownership—an indicator used in business to determine the costs associated with the acquisition and maintenance of computers and other technologies over their lifetime).

Creating a life cycle for new computers involves purchasing replacement equipment every three to five years. The ideal cycle is three years, which is typical in private industry, but most school systems find that replacement rate cost prohibitive. This is one of those issues, however, that the Technology Leadership Group (TLG) should monitor and, depending upon the funds available and the priorities that exist in any particular year, the TLG may determine that a different replacement cycle is more appropriate.

FISCAL IMPACT

The costs shown below are based on a discounted price for computers of \$795 per unit. Since ACPS currently has approximately 9,440 computers, a five-year replacement cycle would require that one-fifth of that number, or 1,888 computers, be purchased each year. Thus the annual cost for replenishment would be \$1.4 million and \$7.4 million over a five-year period.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Establish a Five-Year Replacement Cycle for Instructional Computers	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)

FINDING

ACPS has made a significant investment in its innovative one-to-one lap top program.

During the 2003-04 school year, laptop computers were provided to all teachers and students at Minnie Howard School and during the following year, that program was expanded to include T.C. Williams High School. This has become known as the Technology Integration Project (TIP).

Part of the rationale for implementing this program was to help eliminate the “digital divide” that is prevalent in Alexandria and elsewhere. The primary reason for implementing the program was to increase student achievement through the full integration of technology as a tool for learning. In developing the National Education Technology Standards for Students, ISTE stated the following:

“Effective integration of technology is achieved when students are able to select technology tools to help them obtain information in a timely manner, analyze and synthesize the information, and present it professionally. The technology should become an integral part of how the classroom functions—as accessible as all other tools.”³

By providing every student in grades 9 through 12 with a laptop computer, ACPS has made technology “as accessible as all other tools” for learning.

While the ACPS 2006-2010 Technology Plan lays a framework for TIP, the division created an implementation plan specifically for the project which is entitled, “ACPS High School Technology Integration Project Implementation Plan, 2004-2008.” This plan addresses the following eight topics:

1. Instructional Integration
2. Laptop Customization
3. Offsite Internet Access
4. Printing Access
5. Email Access
6. Collaborative Systems
7. Family Involvement
8. Evaluation.

A series of actions are specified for each topic for each of the four school years 2004-2005 through 2007-2008. Each action identifies the person(s) responsible, the resources needed to carry it out, and evidence of completion.

As a part of the program, students are provided with an individual email account that is supported by an ACPS server. This allows students to communicate with each other, teachers, guidance counselors, parents, and to access Internet resources.

This program will be greatly enhanced with the announced citywide wireless capability that Alexandria is going to provide in the near future.

Typically teachers are very supportive of the program. A U.S. History teacher expressed high excitement about the program. She was new to ACPS this year and in her previous school system—a very large school district out west—there was no money for resources

³ ACPS High School Technology Integration Project Implementation Plan, 2004-2008, p.3.

like laptops. She is much happier here with the resources she and her students have. She said that she now has a problem that she thought she'd never have: students who come into her class early frequently open up their laptops and start right away on their lesson. She has to tell them to wait to start because typically there are instructions that she wants to give to the entire class before they begin work on the day's lesson.

This teacher is one of six teachers at T.C. Williams High School that is participating in a paperless pilot, now possible with the laptops, in which the objective is to eliminate 85 percent of the paper used in the classroom. She says the pilot is going very well and believes that social studies is an easy subject area in which to go paperless. The six teachers that are participating in the project meet once a month to share experiences and ideas about their teaching in a near paperless environment. Interestingly, after observing this pilot, other teachers now are interested in becoming participants.

When a math teacher was asked what he thought of the laptop program, he said it was a great program and considers it the "best way to prepare kids for the world of work." This teacher also said that he had seen the laptops make a positive difference among those students who do not have a computer at home.

When asked about people in the community who are critical of the laptop program, three different teachers said that they wished those community members who are critical would come to their classroom and observe students using the laptops. They believe that seeing how the students use the laptops would help the public understand and appreciate their value.

Administrators who were involved in the original implementation acknowledge that the program did not get off to a good start. It was not planned as well as it should have been and professional development at the outset was not as thorough or effective as was needed. As one of those administrators said, if you are going to be a risk taker, you must be prepared to face the challenges that come with trying something new. Now that the program has been in place for a few years, most of those challenges have been overcome.

Also interesting are the comments on the laptop initiative made by community members who attended the community forum that MGT conducted on the evening of February 21, 2007. This was perhaps the one issue that was most frequently addressed by those who came out to convey their thoughts about school division operations. Of course there were contrasting views but the supporters far outnumbered the skeptics. The following are a representative sample of the comments that were made:

- *"One of the greatest things that has happened in this school district of mostly minority students....is the issuance of laptop computers. They have obviously and measurably improved academically and their morale has increased greatly....This has gone a long way in closing the digital divide."*
- *"I do not believe that a PC given to each student is required, although each student needs access to a computer."*

- *“The laptop computer program has not only invigorated the learning experience of our students, but it has also provided an opportunity for parents to become computer literate. They can more easily dialogue with teachers and school officials; and keep up with their children’s progress or lack thereof.”*
- *“I like the laptop program at the high school, especially the model ‘paperless classrooms.’ Can this be expanded?”*
- *“I agree with this great program. I think middle school would benefit as well.”*
- *“Excellent! This is the best part of our technology program. Exciting! And improving!”*
- *“Forefront of technology! Wish the board understood what it takes to prepare children—all children for the future!”*
- *“Our emphasis on the integration of technology into every phase of the instructional program will result in a more vigorously, and relevant academic experience for all our students. This will take time, but the train has left the station and our high school teachers are on a roll with the laptops and Blackboard.”*

In 2005, ACPS implemented Blackboard, an instructional management system that maximizes the division’s use of the laptops. This product helped to create a more student-centered learning environment with flexibility that allows content to be used according to a teacher’s goals. This system proved to be a “turning point” for TIP. According to the instructional technology coordinator, teachers “were hungry for a way to share their materials online. They had laptops for a year, and Blackboard gave the teachers a way to really use them. As a result of implementing this system across our division, we have many more teachers using their laptops directly with their students.”⁴

A bi-lingual education teacher, who described Blackboard as “a tremendous tool,” related her personal experience—which she said was typical—as a way of illustrating the effect Blackboard has had on the laptop program. Said she, “Although I used technology a lot, I didn’t really know how to use it in my teaching until I found Blackboard.” She reported that she was using it to post assignments, identify class resources, store grades, identify helpful web sites for herself and her students, interact with other teachers, and maintain a calendar that is useful for her classroom activities. Several times this teacher said that she “would not go back.”

An astronomy teacher, who admitted that he was not an avid technology user, was initially skeptical about the laptop program and Blackboard. However, once he learned to use Blackboard, he found that it served his purposes “unbelievably well.” In fact, he indicated that he “does not know how we got along without it.” He also said that he would not want to change.

⁴ *Maximizing District Investments toward Better Teaching and Learning in Alexandria City Public Schools, a report on a Blackboard K-12 Case Study, p. 2.*

A high school student, in the library working on a class project, said that she really liked Blackboard. A big plus for her was that she was able to access Blackboard from her computer at home. That allowed her to confirm what her assignments were and to draw on subject area resources that were stored there.

The division's monitoring and evaluation services conducted a formative evaluation of the Technology Integration Program during the 2004-05 school year. Some of the interesting findings that came out of this study were:

- In October of 2004, 15 percent of students reported that “most” or “all” of their teachers incorporated the laptop into instruction, but by June of 2005, 30 percent reported that “most” or “all” of their teachers incorporated the laptop into instruction.
- Seventy-two percent of students reported that the computer made it easier to conduct research for school projects. Low-income students were much more likely (87 percent) to agree with this statement than were other students (62 percent).
- Sixty-two percent of teachers reported that their teaching had benefited from the laptop program.
- Only 38 percent of teachers said they had received the right amount of technology training.
- Fifty-three percent of parents agreed that having access to a laptop made a positive difference in the way their child did school work.⁵

The data from this first evaluation confirm that the program did not get off to the best of starts, but most everyone involved in the program now believes that the integration effort is going much better and that the most critical component in the program—the teachers—are now much better prepared to make effective use of the laptops in their teaching. One indicator that teachers have made a significant adjustment is that when training was offered during the 2005-06 school year, over 100 high school teachers signed up for training when only 30 were expected.

Not satisfied to continue the program based solely on the positive observations of ACPS educators, the division has commissioned the Metiri Group of Santa Monica, California, to conduct a full evaluation of the initiative. The Metiri Group is a highly respected and highly credible evaluation group. Their evaluation will identify the positive outcomes as well as any challenges that remain.

Provided the Metiri Group's review is positive, the division should continue to invest in this innovative one-to-one computer program.

⁵ Formative Evaluation of the Technology Integration in 2004-05, Executive Summary, p. iii.

COMMENDATION 8-E:

ACPS is commended for its significant investment in the education of its students through its one-to-one laptop program.

8.5 Technical Support

Only training is more important than technical support in determining how effectively technology is used in the classroom. Frequently teachers, even those with considerable experience with technology, encounter difficulties that interrupt their planning or classroom activities. Unless they are able to get quick responses, their effectiveness is diminished.

In addition to technical questions, teachers have a multitude of instruction-related questions. Particularly when they have had limited experience in using technology, they frequently want and need help in incorporating some specific technology-related resource into their math, science, social studies, etc., lessons. At those times, they need an experienced technology-using teacher to work with them one-on-one to address the specific issue with which they are dealing.

FINDING

The ACPS ITS department lacks a training module on basic computer troubleshooting skills.

As reported earlier, central office administrators, principals, assistant principals, and teachers all rate the division's support for instructional technology very favorably. For example, 78 percent of teachers rated that support as good or excellent, as compared to their counterparts in other divisions and districts where only 47 percent of teachers rated their support as good or excellent. The figures for ACPS central office administrators and principals and assistant principals were similarly better than their counterparts in other school systems.

One of the primary factors that influences these ratings is the quality of technical support that teachers and others receive. The survey responses indicated that technical support must be pretty good in ACPS. However, some school-based personnel reported that, while technical support is improving, it still is not where it should be.

During a focus group with the technicians, they reported that they are sometimes called to work on problems that are extremely minor such as a computer or another device was not plugged in or was not turned on, or a cable was not connected properly. These types of service calls are an indication that many teachers do not have a good understanding of the basics of troubleshooting. This point was reinforced by the help desk coordinator who said that he also devotes a considerable amount of time working on what turns out to be very minor issues.

Some school systems have found that, by providing some basic training to users on various types of technology problems, they have reduced the cost of providing technical

support. Another strategy that has proven successful in improving technical support without increasing costs is to draw upon the expertise of a resource available in every division, but not often tapped: the students.

RECOMMENDATION 8-5:

Implement a training program for teachers and other staff that provides basic troubleshooting skills.

A significant way to strengthen the technical support available to schools is to help teachers learn to diagnose and resolve problems they encounter while using technology. A few years ago a large school district in another state conducted a study that indicated that as many as 90 percent of the problems their teachers sought help desk assistance to resolve could be handled by the teachers if they had received basic troubleshooting training. While that percentage seems to be unrealistically high, it does indicate that a large number of problems could be resolved by teachers if they were better prepared to address those problems. Since ACPS staff members are able to offer this type of professional development, providing such training should be a high priority for the division.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

RECOMMENDATION 8-6:

Implement a program that involves students as providers of technical support for their schools.

Another way to enhance technical support is to implement a program similar to those in place in a number of secondary schools around the country where students actually provide technical support services to teachers and students in their school. This has been done effectively in middle/junior high schools and high schools. Frequently these student technical support units operate as a club, although usually participating students have one class period which is dedicated to installing equipment, installing software upgrades, working on equipment failures, etc.

Of course, such a program requires a teacher who is sufficiently proficient in using technology to guide the efforts of those students, but it has proven to be an excellent way to augment technical support. In addition, it helps students develop work place skills that prove to be very valuable when they go to college or enter the work place. In fact, it has been so successful in preparing students for the work place that in one school system in another state the program received criticism from some members of the community because after graduating, a few students went directly into technical support jobs with a local company, rather than going to college. Needless to say, the other side of that argument is that the school district is doing exactly what business and industry wants: through this program, they are preparing students to be very good employees right out of high school.

If ideas are needed about the specifics of such a program, examine the State of Kentucky's Student Technology Leadership Program. Information on that program can be found on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web Site. That URL is www.kde.state.ky.us.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

The logistics of the deployment of computer technicians to ACPS are inefficient.

One factor that contributes positively to technical support in schools is a familiarity with the people, the facility, and the programs that one gets from working in a particular site. In ACPS there are five computer technicians who provide support to the schools. All are housed in the central office, although one is assigned to the high school. The others work with all the other schools, i.e., the ninth grade center, the two middle schools, and the 13 elementary schools. Because they may work in all of the schools over the course of a month, they do not get the opportunity to learn the environment very well, consequently they are missing out on one advantage that would accrue if they worked in fewer schools. Given that there are 13 elementary schools, two middle schools, a 9th grade center and a high school, it should be possible to divide the support work fairly equally among the technicians. If they work with the same three to five schools day in and day out, they will become familiar with the people and the culture of those schools. This knowledge will enable them to provide more effective and user-friendly support.

RECOMMENDATION 8-7:

Redeploy the computer technicians to a defined set of ACPS schools.

This redeployment would still have the technicians housed at the central office, but their primary assignments would be limited to a smaller number of schools. This arrangement would not preclude technicians from servicing schools outside of their assignment (e.g., in the event of the extended absence of a technician), but would allow them to become more familiar with the people and programs underway at their assigned schools. This would greatly facilitate technical support for those schools. This deployment schedule should be arranged so that technicians would still have the same 15 minutes or less travel time from the administration building to their assigned schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

ACPS does not currently provide parking decals to its computer technicians.

Computer technicians use their personal vehicles when making service calls to ACPS schools. While the division does provide reimbursement for gas, the technicians are not provided with parking decals. This effectively bars them from parking on school campuses with impunity. Those who have parked without the decals have been subjected to having their vehicles towed, ticketed, or receiving a warning.

Computer technicians, who have parked off campus to avoid these consequences, sometimes have to walk long distances to reach the building where they need to work, or have to move their cars closer to the building when needing to carry out heavy equipment or avoid getting drenched during rain showers. These types of challenges impede the technicians' ability to use their limited time efficiently.

RECOMMENDATION 8-8:

Provide an ACPS parking sticker that will allow the technicians to park close to school buildings to facilitate and expedite their technical support work.

Arranging for technicians to have a parking sticker, or allowing them to have greater parking flexibility through other means is essential to their being able to use the majority of their at schools effectively working with computers.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

9.0 FOOD SERVICES

9.0 FOOD SERVICES

This chapter presents findings, commendations, and recommendations relating to the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Department in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The major sections of the chapter are as follows:

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Organization and Management
- 9.3 Financial Performance
- 9.4 Student Eligibility
- 9.5 Student Participation

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The director of FNS reports to the assistant superintendent of administrative services and public relations. In addition to the director, the department includes an operations supervisor, a computer applications specialist, one administration assistant, and one finance technician. At the school sites, there are 20 managers, one food service trainer, 64 full- and part-time workers, and three drivers.

According to its financial status and the favorable reactions of many educators in ACPS, food services is an effective operation. As a consequence, the department received several commendations, including the following for:

- Providing ongoing training to food service workers (**Commendation 9-A**).
- Implementing a five-year preventive maintenance and replacement plan (**Commendation 9-B**).
- Participating in the Shenandoah Food Buying Cooperative (**Commendation 9-C**).

ACPS food services department is also noted for serving a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables daily, offering healthy menu choices to students, and providing meals that reflect the ethnic diversity of the student population.

Two recommendations are made to provide suggestions for ways in which the department could increase its overall efficiency. These include:

- Making appropriate adjustments in staffing levels to help increase the number of schools that are at benchmark levels for meals per labor hour (**Recommendation 9-2**).
- Employing strategies to improve participation rates for breakfast (**Recommendation 9-3**).

9.1 Introduction

School breakfast and lunch are an integral part of many students' education. Good nutrition is a vital component of a child's ability to learn. In response to this need, the federal government has established breakfast and lunch programs in the nation's schools to ensure that children receive proper nutrition so they can succeed in school.

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. Lunch is available to all children in participating schools and must meet specific nutritional requirements to qualify for federal funds.

The Child Nutrition Act of 1966 authorized the National School Breakfast Program as a pilot program providing funding in low-income schools and in schools where students had to travel long distances in the morning and therefore might not have a chance to eat breakfast. Congress started the program in 1975 and made breakfast "available in all schools where it is needed to provide adequate nutrition for children in attendance." Congress further expanded the program in 1989 by requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to provide funds to states to support the costs of starting school breakfast programs in low-income areas. USDA administers the National School Breakfast Program.

Under the basic school breakfast and lunch programs, household income determines whether a child pays for his or her meal or receives a reduced price or free meal. The ACPS food services department Web site provides the free/reduced lunch application on-line, along with information about the school nutrition program in both English and Spanish.

The ACPS food services department is headed by a director with previous experience in another school division in Virginia. During her tenure, she has implemented greater quality and variety to the breakfast and lunch programs. Food services operates under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The menu planning option used is Enhanced Food Based. Federal requirements include providing a menu that offers one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for Breakfast and one-third of the RDA for lunch based on age level. "Offer versus Serve" is implemented in all ACPS schools. Food services uses a USDA approved computerized program (NUTRIKIDS) to analyze menus. Menus are posted on the ACPS website and menus are sent home monthly. Standardized recipe books are in each kitchen. Recipes do not add sugar, salt, or fat. There are no deep fat fryers in any school in ACPS. FNS works with manufacturers to develop products that are lower in sodium and fat and higher in whole wheat or whole grains. Managers are required to keep Food Loss Records and submit them weekly. FNS analyzes participation rates by menu to determine the most popular menu mix; thus enabling better menu planning in the future.

ACPS is experiencing a slight decrease in student population. That decrease has only slightly affected the percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced meals. Currently, that percentage is 49 percent compared with 50 percent in 2005. As shown in **Exhibit 9-1**, since 2000, the percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced meals has maintained a percent in the low 50s.

**EXHIBIT 9-1
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES
ANNUAL OCTOBER 31 PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE
FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICED MEALS BY INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL
2000-2006**

SCHOOL	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
John Adams	56	49	52	48	56	51	52
Charles Barrett	36	33	29	26	28	32	22
Patrick Henry	67	62	65	65	64	63	65
Jefferson-Houston	77	72	73	71	79	76	82
Cora Kelly	56	59	61	60	63	63	64
Lyles-Crouch	64	57	42	36	31	27	28
MacArthur	34	29	30	31	32	30	28
George Mason	42	37	40	36	37	32	27
Maury	73	76	78	78	79	69	47
Mount Vernon	65	72	72	62	69	69	64
Polk	41	46	48	48	49	51	44
Ramsay	67	59	66	67	68	63	66
Tucker	57	56	57	59	58	57	54
F.C. Hammond	54	54	55	57	56	56	53
George Washington	47	53	49	52	54	52	51
Minnie Howard	45	50	47	49	47	48	49
T.C. Williams	33	35	40	40	40	40	41*
S.T.E.P.	59	59	45	52	56	47	n/a
ANNUAL DIVISION %	51	50	51	51	52	50	49

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools, Food and Nutrition Services Department, 2007.

The FNS department provides catering services to school board offices, PTA's school administrators, and other school-community related groups. The department forges positive relationships within the school community, and services are in demand throughout the school year.

The MGT survey of central office administrators, principals, and teachers yielded mixed results with respect to the food service program. When asked whether they agreed that "the food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks," 44 percent of administrators and 71 percent of principals "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement; however, only 31 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, and 38 percent either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed."

When asked whether "the food services department encourages student participation through customer satisfaction surveys," 28 percent of administrators and 33 percent of principals "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement; however, only 17 percent of teachers "agreed." When asked whether they agreed that "the cafeteria facilities are clean and neat," 96 percent of principals "agreed" or "strongly agreed." Teachers and central office administration agreed with percentages of 74 and 62 respectively.

9.2 Organization and Management

The director of food service reports to the assistant superintendent of administrative services and public relations. In addition to the director, the department includes an

operations supervisor, a computer applications specialist, one administration assistant, and one finance technician. At the school sites, there are 17 managers, one food service trainer, 64 full- and part-time workers, and three drivers. There is a cafeteria manager in each of 16 schools and four at T.C. Williams that also serves as the central kitchen for ACPS. **Exhibit 9-2** presents the Alexandria County Public Schools site managers by school in addition to the number of employees they oversee.

**EXHIBIT 9-2
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FOOD AND NUTRITION DEPARTMENT
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PER SITE**

SCHOOL	SITE MANAGER(S)	EMPLOYEES
Minnie Howard	Manager	6
Samuel Tucker	Manager	3
John Adams	Manager	3
James Polk	Manager	3
William Ramsay	Manager	4
Hammond	Manager	9
Cora Kelly	Manager	3
Charles Barrett	Manager	1
Douglas MacArthur	Manager	2
George Mason	Manager	1
Jefferson-Houston	Manager	2
Lyles Crouch	Manager	1
Maury	Manager	1
Patrick Henry	Manager	3
Mount Vernon	Manager	3
George Washington	Manager	8
T.C. Williams/Central Kitchen*	Manager	14**
TOTAL	17	67 (including drivers)

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools Food Service Department, February 2007.

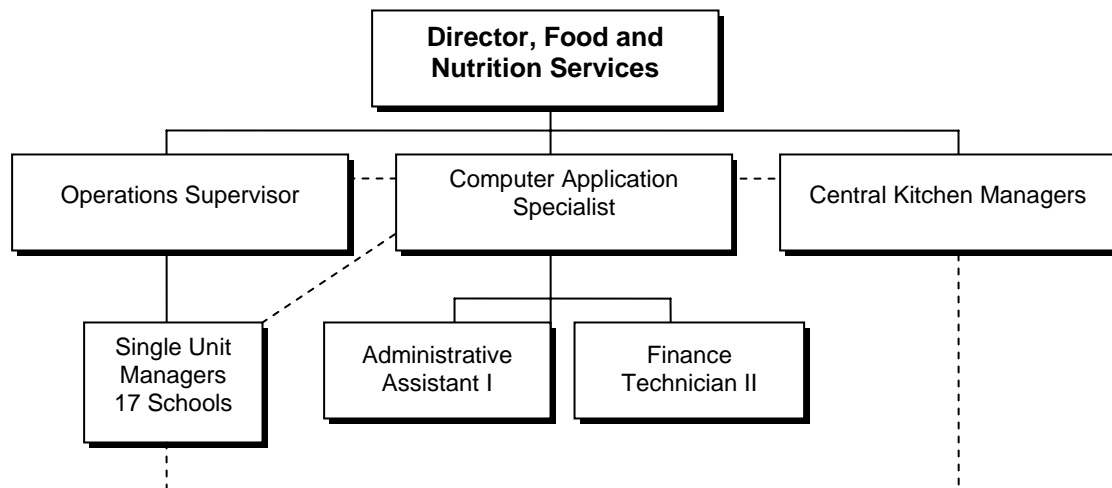
*Two MIT's(Manager-in-Training) are based out of T.C. Williams High School, but are utilized where needed. The school also houses a Production Manager and Trainer.

**Three of the 14 employees are drivers.

In addition, there is a pool of substitute workers who fill in at any school. Thus, there are a total of 93 individuals working in the food service department, including the substitutes.

Exhibit 9-3 depicts the organizational structure of the food service department.

**EXHIBIT 9-3
ALEXANDRIA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT
CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



Source: ACPS Food Service Department, February 2007.

FINDING

Attendance among food services workers is problematic.

With respect to staff, the main concern of the food service director and managers is attendance. When interviewed, the director and managers stated that attendance continues to be an issue for the department. The director has made a concerted effort to hire a pool of substitutes; however, substitutes are required to report to any of the ACPS on any given day. This proposes additional issues such as logistics, travel time, and day-care problems.

RECOMMENDATION 9-1:

Develop an attendance handbook for all food service workers.

In addition to the regular employee handbook, school systems experiencing attendance problems among employees provide additional documents that outline expectations for attendance, procedures for reporting absences, and recognition activities for outstanding attendance. Use of such tools not only highlights the importance of regular attendance, but also provides a guide to improving worker attendance. **Exhibit 9-4** shows a sample of the contents of an attendance handbook.

**EXHIBIT 9-4
SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR
WORKER ATTENDANCE HANDBOOK**

<p>Attendance Is Important Why An Attendance At Work Policy? Being At Work Attendance Goals</p> <p>Employees' Role When Absence Is Unavoidable Consequences Of Absenteeism</p> <p>Managers' Role When An Employee Is Absent Monitor Absenteeism Ways To Accommodate</p> <p>If Regular Attendance Cannot Be Restored Employment Termination</p> <p>Department Of Finance's Role</p> <p>Determining If A Problem Exists – Guidelines</p> <p>Addressing Attendance Problems – Guidelines</p> <p>Why Appreciate Employees? How To Help Employees Video</p> <p>Appreciation – Motivation – Recognition Tips Training</p>	<p>A Safe Work Environment Prevention Tips Virtual Health Centre</p> <p>Attendance At Work Policy Technical Definitions Sick, Illness, Reasonable, Fairness, Obligation, Duty To Accommodate, Paid Absence Innocent Absenteeism, Non-Innocent Absenteeism, Ways To Accommodate Reasonable Accommodation, Request For Medical Information, Undue Hardship</p> <p>Impact Of The Duty To Accommodate On Others</p> <p>Applying Benefits</p> <p>Forms Absence From Work Report Benefit Application And Work Capability Assessment Form Non-Physical Ability Assessment Physical Capability Assessment</p>
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Source: New Brunswick School District, Finance Department, 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation will require the expenditure of fiscal and human resources that are currently allocated to the department.

FINDING

ACPS has a strong, ongoing training program for food service workers.

Managers attend state workshops annually and the director conducts training a couple of times a year. The food and nutrition service department trainer provides training to staff and to substitutes. A good portion of the new employees that are hired come from the pool of substitutes. These workers learn the requirements of the job by working in the

cafeteria under the watchful eye of the manager, the trainer, and the person who is performing a job similar to the one the new employee will assume.

Of particular importance is the training that is made available on safety and sanitation. Food service workers need safety and sanitation training to understand their role in keeping a sanitary environment in order to deliver nutritious meals safely. Failure to continually reinforce training could result in contamination of food, injuries, or worse, which could prove to be a financial burden for the division. ACPS has stressed safety and sanitation training. All cafeteria managers have obtained their certification in this area, and in most schools one or two other workers are also certified.

During a focus group session facilitated by MGT consultants, cafeteria managers reported that the department's practice of holding monthly managers' meetings has proven to be a very effective way for them not only to keep up with what is going on across the division, but also to learn from each other. The managers strive to promote the same level of communication within their own schools by holding monthly staff meetings.

In addition, when new food service employees are hired, they are given a copy of the ACPS Employee Handbook, which they are required to follow. The department provides training from the food and nutrition services "trainer". The trainer provides training in the following areas: personnel, general equipment use and maintenance of facilities, purchasing, receiving, storing, food preparation, transportation, service, consumer communications, hazard analysis of critical control points, employee orientation, and other. Other includes food safety in emergency situations, visitors in food and nutrition services, and bag lunches.

COMMENDATION 9-A:

The food service department is commended for providing ongoing training to food service workers.

FINDING

The food service department has a five-year preventive maintenance plan.

The plan identifies equipment that would be slated for replacement; however the food services director may determine that it is in good enough condition to be retained for another year, especially if the budget is tight.

A preventive maintenance plan for equipment helps to ensure that the central kitchen can meet the production demands of the school division. The impact of an equipment breakdown in a central kitchen would be large due to the number of schools and students served by the facility. Also, because of the quantities produced it would not be feasible to substitute other methods or equipment as would be done in an on-site kitchen.

COMMENDATION 9-B:

The food service department is commended for implementing a five-year preventive maintenance and replacement plan.

9.3 Financial Performance

FINDING

The ACPS food services department participates in a food-buying cooperative as a means of reducing food costs.

The food service department is a member of the Shenandoah Food Buying Cooperative, whose mission statement reads as follows: "The Shenandoah Food Buying Cooperative consists of eight school divisions working together to serve healthy, nutritious, affordable meals to our customers." The organization's objective states that "We are dedicated to lowering fat and sodium while providing meals of the highest quality that our customers will enjoy. Monthly product testing is conducted in order for manufacturers, brokers, and distributors to present their products to our members."

In addition to ACPS, members of the cooperative include Culpeper, Fauquier, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Alexandria City, Falls Church City, Augusta County, and Harrisonburg City. These are school divisions in Northern Virginia that range in size from 2,200 to 11,000 students. ACPS saves about nine percent on the cost of food purchased by the group.

COMMENDATION 9-C:

ACPS is commended for its participation in the Shenandoah Food Buying Cooperative.

FINDING

ACPS food services department meets or exceeds the meals per labor hour (MPLH) standard in slightly over half of the division schools.

Meals per labor hour (MPLH) measures the average number of full meals divided by the number of employee hours worked. MPLH provides a way to determine the level of efficiency in meal delivery: the higher the MPLH, the more efficient the provision of meals. **Exhibit 9-5** displays the MPLH for each school in ACPS as of January, 2007. As shown, nine of 17 division schools are meeting the MPLH benchmark, and all nine are elementary schools. By contrast, none of the secondary schools are meeting the standard.

**EXHIBIT 9-5
ALEXANDRIA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MEALS PER LABOR HOUR FOR JANUARY, 2007**

SCHOOL	AVERAGE NUMBER OF LUNCHESES SERVED PER DAY	STAFFING HOURS ALLOCATED	MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH)	INDUSTRY BENCHMARK ON STAFF HOURS	STAFF HOURS OVER/UNDER BENCHMARK
Cora Kelly Elementary	380	19	20.0	18	2.0
George Washington Middle	579	42	13.8	19	-5.2
MacArthur Elementary	281	16	17.6	16	1.6
Polk Elementary	297	18	16.5	16	0.5
John Adams Elementary	364	19	19.2	18	1.2
Jefferson-Houston Elementary	244	15	16.3	15	1.3
Lyles-Crouch Elementary	166	9	16.6	14	2.6
Ramsay Elementary	469	26	18.0	19	-1.0
Patrick Henry Elementary	329	22	15.0	18	-3.0
Minnie Howard 9 th Grade Ctr.	360	30.5	11.8	18	-6.2
Hammond Middle	708	47	15.1	22	-6.9
Tucker Elementary	425	22	19.3	19	0.3
Mount Vernon Elementary	352	20	17.6	18	-0.4
Maury Elementary	117	9	11.7	13	-1.3
George Mason Elementary	170	9	17.0	14	3.0
Barrett Elementary	140	9	14.0	13	1.0
TC Williams High	526	57	9.2	17	-7.8

Source: Alexandria County Public Schools, Food Service Department, February 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 9-2:

Adjust food services staffing levels to increase the number of schools that are maintaining benchmark levels for meals per labor hour.

Staffing levels should be based on the number of meals served by kitchen type. These levels are shown in **Exhibit 9-6**, based on kitchen type. In ACPS, all the kitchens are convenience kitchens, except for T.C. Williams, which is a conventional kitchen.

**EXHIBIT 9-6
MEALS PER LABOR HOUR BENCHMARK LEVELS
BY CONVENTIONAL AND CONVENIENCE SYSTEMS**

MEALS SERVED	CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM	CONVENIENCE SYSTEM
Up to 90	9	12
91 - 150	11	13
151 - 200	12	14
201 - 250	14	15
251 - 300	15	16
301 - 400	16	18
401 - 500	17	19
501 - 600	17	19
601 - 700	18	20
701 - 800	19	22
801 - 900	20	23
901 - Up	21	23

Source: *Controlling Costs for School Food Services*, Third Edition, 2000.

FISCAL IMPACT

ACPS should maintain current staffing levels at cafeterias performing above industry standards and reduce staffing levels at other schools, which would result in a cost savings of approximately \$74,324 per year, or \$371,620 over a five-year period.

The school division should see a reduction in labor costs of \$412.91 per day based on an average of \$13.15 per hour for staff. MGT's calculations were based on the following:

- George Washington Middle School (the average of \$13.15 per hour × 5 hours below benchmark levels = \$65.75)
- Ramsey Elementary School (the average of \$13.15 per hour × 1 hour below benchmark levels = \$13.15)
- Patrick Henry Elementary School (the average of \$13.15 per hour × 3 hours below benchmark levels = \$39.45)
- Minnie Howard 9th Grade Center (the average of \$13.15 per hour × 6 hours below benchmark levels = \$78.90)
- Hammond Middle School (the average of \$13.15 per hour × 7 hours below benchmark levels = \$92.05)
- Mount Vernon Elementary School (the average of \$13.15 per hour × .4 hours below benchmark levels = \$5.26)
- Maury Elementary School (the average of \$13.15 per hour × 1 hour below benchmark levels = \$13.15)
- T.C. Williams High School (the average of \$13.15 per hour × 8 hours below benchmark levels = \$95.20)

To achieve benchmark standards for MPLH in all schools, the division should reduce the 31.4 extra hours per day from the staff hours that are below industry benchmarks for the four elementary schools and four secondary schools. The \$13.15 average hourly rate for ACPS food service staff (e.g., School Nutrition Assistant II) times 31.4 extra hours per day equals \$412.91; \$412.91 times 20 days equals \$8,258.20 per month in net savings; and \$8,258.20 per month net savings times 9 months equals an annual total labor savings of \$74,323.80. These figures are based on 2006-07 labor costs.

The implementation of this recommendation should establish the appropriate staffing levels at each school, which should ensure that MPLH levels are efficient across the entire division.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Adjust Staffing Patterns to Meet MPLH Benchmarks	\$74,324	\$74,324	\$74,324	\$74,324	\$74,324

FINDING

The ACPS food services department is financially sound.

Exhibit 9-7 illustrates that food services has had positive fund balances for the last three years. Specifically, the chart shows that the 2003-04 end of year fund balance was \$593,956.14, and the department generated a profit of \$17,463.17 during the 2004-05 year, which left an ending balance for that year of \$611,419.67. For the 2005-06 school year, revenues exceeded expenses by \$409,364.83, which yielded an end of year fund balance of \$1,020,784.50.

In order for the department to remain self-sustaining, it is essential that it generate a positive fund balance that will enable it to replace the kitchen equipment as needed. Clearly, from the information depicted in **Exhibit 9-7**, the department has done a commendable job in that area, and consequently has remained self-supporting for the last few years.

**EXHIBIT 9-7
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FOOD SERVICE REVENUE, EXPENSES, AND END OF YEAR BALANCES
2003-04 THROUGH 2005-06 FISCAL YEARS**

CATEGORIES	FY	DOLLAR AMOUNTS
End of Year Balance	2003-04	\$593,956.50
Revenues	2004-05	\$3,814,126.03
Expenses	2004-05	\$3,796,605.86
End-of-Year Balance	2004-05	\$611,419.67
Revenues	2005-06	\$4,412,906.84
Expenses	2005-06	\$4,003,542.01
End of Year Balance	2005-06	\$1,020,784.50

Source: Alexandria City Public Schools Food Service Department, February 2007.

COMMENDATION 9-D:

The ACPS food service department is commended for implementing its responsibilities in a fiscally sound manner and thereby creating a healthy fund balance.

9.4 Student Meal Eligibility

ACPS free/reduced price eligibility rate of 49.73 percent is approximately 16 points above the state average of 33.48 percent. **Exhibit 9-8** shows a comparison between ACPS and its peer divisions, the peer division average, and the state average. As can be seen from the exhibit, ACPS has the second lowest free/reduced eligibility rate of the six divisions listed.

**EXHIBIT 9-8
FREE/REDUCED PRICE ELIGIBILITY COMPARISON
2006-2007 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP	%TOTAL F/R
Alexandria City Public Schools	9,026	49.73
Arlington County Public Schools	18,456	33.83
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,228	52.51
Lynchburg City Public Schools	9,138	49.87
Portsmouth City Public Schools	15,807	51.87
Roanoke City Public Schools	13,300	61.55
PEER AVERAGES	11,659	49.93
STATE AVERAGE	1,179,218	33.48

Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2006–2007 Statistics.

FINDING

ACPS food services department regularly renews meal pricing structures to explore opportunities for additional revenue.

Exhibit 9-9 compares the ACPS prices of breakfast and **Exhibit 9-10** provides lunch prices comparisons, to those of its peer divisions. As seen, the \$1.05 price of breakfast in ACPS is higher than all divisions in the group ranging from 5 to 20 cents; however, ACPS is the only peer division to absorb the cost of the reduced breakfasts and lunches. ACPS lunch price is higher than all divisions (except for Arlington Elementary Lunch). The prices of lunch (\$2.05 and \$2.35) range from 5 to 75 cents higher.

**EXHIBIT 9-9
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BREAKFAST PRICES FOR THE PEER DIVISIONS
2006-07**

DIVISION NAME	ELEMENTARY STUDENT BREAKFAST	MIDDLE STUDENT BREAKFAST	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT BREAKFAST	ELEMENTARY REDUCED BREAKFAST	MIDDLE REDUCED BREAKFAST	HIGH SCHOOL REDUCED BREAKFAST
Alexandria City	\$1.05	\$1.05	\$1.05	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Arlington County	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
Charlottesville City	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
Lynchburg City	\$0.85	\$0.95	\$0.95	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
Roanoke City	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$0.70	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
PEER AVERAGE	\$0.92	\$0.94	\$0.94	\$0.24	\$0.24	\$0.24
STATE AVERAGE	\$0.87	\$0.91	\$0.92	\$0.29	\$0.29	\$0.29

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

**EXHIBIT 9-10
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LUNCH PRICES FOR THE PEER DIVISIONS
2006-07**

DIVISION NAME	ELEMENTARY STUDENT LUNCH	MIDDLE STUDENT LUNCH	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LUNCH	ELEMENTARY REDUCED LUNCH	MIDDLE REDUCED LUNCH	HIGH SCHOOL REDUCED LUNCH
Alexandria City	\$2.05	\$2.35	\$2.35	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Arlington County	\$2.30	\$2.30	\$2.30	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
Charlottesville City	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
Lynchburg City	\$1.40	\$1.60	\$1.60	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
Roanoke City	\$1.65	\$1.65	\$1.65	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
PEER AVERAGE	\$1.78	\$1.93	\$1.93	\$0.32	\$0.32	\$0.32
STATE AVERAGE	\$1.55	\$1.70	\$1.70	\$0.39	\$0.39	\$0.39

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

Exhibit 9-11 provides a comparison of breakfast prices among the divisions in Virginia's Region 4, and **Exhibit 9-12** provides the comparisons for lunch prices. Compared with the regional average, ACPS breakfast prices are one cent higher for elementary, two cents lower for middle, and three cents lower for high school. Compared with the regional averages for lunch, ACPS prices are 26 cents higher for elementary, 39 cents higher for middle, and 42 cents higher for high school. Additionally, ACPS is the only division in Region 4 that does not charge for reduced breakfast or lunch.

**EXHIBIT 9-11
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BREAKFAST PRICES FOR REGION 4 DIVISIONS
2006-07**

REG NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION NAME	ELEMENTARY		MIDDLE		HIGH SCHOOL	
		PAID	REDUCED	PAID	REDUCED	PAID	REDUCED
REGION 4							
4	Alexandria City Public Schools	\$1.05	\$0.00	\$1.05	\$0.00	\$1.05	\$0.00
4	Arlington County Public Schools	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30
4	Clarke County Public Schools	\$1.15	\$0.30	\$1.15	\$0.30	\$1.15	\$0.30
4	Culpeper County Public Schools	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30
4	Fairfax County Public Schools	\$1.9	\$0.30	\$1.9	\$0.30	\$1.9	\$0.30
4	Falls Church City Public Schools					\$1.00	\$0.30
4	Fauquier County Public Schools	\$1.05	\$0.30	\$1.15	\$0.30	\$1.30	\$0.30
4	Frederick County Public Schools	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30
4	Loudoun County Public Schools	\$1.9	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.9	\$0.30
4	Madison County Public Schools	\$0.80	\$0.30			\$0.80	\$0.30
4	Manassas City Public Schools	\$1.9	\$0.30	\$1.9	\$0.30	\$1.9	\$0.30
4	Manassas Park City Public Schools	\$1.35	\$0.30	\$1.35	\$0.30	\$1.35	\$0.30
4	Orange County Public Schools	\$0.85	\$0.25	\$0.85	\$0.25	\$0.85	\$0.25
4	Page County Public Schools	\$0.85	\$0.30			\$0.85	\$0.30
4	Prince William County Public Schools	\$1.20	\$0.30	\$1.20	\$0.30	\$1.20	\$0.30
4	Rappahannock County Public Schools	\$1.00	\$0.30			\$1.50	\$0.30
4	Shenandoah County Public Schools	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$1.00	\$0.30
4	Warren County Public Schools	\$1.9	\$0.30			\$1.9	\$0.30
4	Winchester City Public Schools	\$0.95	\$0.30			\$1.00	\$0.30
	No. of School Divisions	18	18	13	13	19	19

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, April 2006-07.

**EXHIBIT 9-12
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LUNCH PRICES FOR REGION 4 DIVISIONS
2006-07**

REG NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION NAME	ELEMENTARY		MIDDLE		HIGH SCHOOL	
		PAID	REDUCED	PAID	REDUCED	PAID	REDUCED
REGION 4							
4	Alexandria City Public Schools	\$2.05	\$0.00	\$2.35	\$0.00	\$2.35	\$0.00
4	Arlington County Public Schools	\$2.30	\$0.40	\$2.30	\$0.40	\$2.30	\$0.40
4	Clarke County Public Schools	\$1.85	\$0.40	\$1.85	\$0.40	\$1.85	\$0.40
4	Culpeper County Public Schools	\$1.75	\$0.40	\$1.75	\$0.40	\$1.75	\$0.40
4	Fairfax County Public Schools	\$2.00	\$0.40	\$2.00	\$0.40	\$2.00	\$0.40
4	Falls Church City Public Schools	\$2.15	\$0.40	\$2.15	\$0.40	\$2.15	\$0.40
4	Fauquier County Public Schools	\$1.65	\$0.40	\$1.90	\$0.40	\$2.9	\$0.40
4	Frederick County Public Schools	\$1.70	\$0.40	\$1.95	\$0.40	\$1.95	\$0.40
4	Loudoun County Public Schools	\$2.00	\$0.40	\$2.9	\$0.40	\$2.9	\$0.40
4	Madison County Public Schools	\$1.50	\$0.40	\$1.65	\$0.40	\$1.75	\$0.40
4	Manassas City Public Schools	\$2.9	\$0.40	\$2.9	\$0.40	\$2.9	\$0.40
4	Manassas Park City Public Schools	\$1.85	\$0.40	\$1.85	\$0.40	\$1.85	\$0.40
4	Orange County Public Schools	\$1.60	\$0.40	\$1.75	\$0.40	\$1.75	\$0.40
4	Page County Public Schools	\$1.25	\$0.40			\$1.35	\$0.40
4	Prince William County Public Schools	\$2.00	\$0.40	\$2.15	\$0.40	\$2.25	\$0.40
4	Rappahannock County Public Schools	\$1.50	\$0.40			\$2.00	\$0.40
4	Shenandoah County Public Schools	\$1.50	\$0.40	\$1.50	\$0.40	\$1.50	\$0.40
4	Warren County Public Schools	\$1.60	\$0.40			\$1.60	\$0.40
4	Winchester City Public Schools	\$1.65	\$0.40			\$1.90	\$0.40
	No. of School Divisions	19	19	15	15	19	19

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, April 2006-07.

COMMENDATION 9-E:

ACPS is commended for regularly comparing its meal prices with those of surrounding divisions, and examining ways to generate additional food service revenue to ensure that the food service program remains financially successful.

FINDING

ACPS food services has used technology effectively to create a user-friendly system for parents and students to purchase meals.

The food services department has been using the Schoolhouse Software point of sale (POS) system for two years. The system provides the division the ability to rapidly process free and reduced meal applications and have the information applied in a batch method for input into to each school's POS system. Students key in a five digit PIN for identification when they go through the lunch line.

ACPS also uses technology to communicate with parents regarding all aspects of food services. The department uses www.cafeprepay.com which is an online payment processing system, to allow parents easy access to their children's meal account balance. In conjunction with this system, food services utilizes the Voice Messenger, a computer-assisted voice message program in Spanish and English, that reminds parents their child's meal balance is low or that applications are due. Other means of communication include the departmental Web site, which contains links to nutritional information documents such as *A Parent's Guide to Food and Nutrition 2006-2007*, and *Wake Up to a Healthy Start*. Parents can also access breakfast and lunch menus as well as meal price lists in English and Spanish at the same Web site.

COMMENDATION 9-F:

FNS is commended for their extensive use of technology in creating a user-friendly system for purchasing meals and helping to ensure regular, positive communication with parents in ACPS.

9.5 Student Meal Participation

FINDING

The participation rate in the breakfast program is significantly below the free/reduced eligibility percentage. **Exhibits 9-13** and **9-14** provide a comparison of breakfast and lunch participation percentages by free/reduced students. Students who qualify for either free or reduced lunch in elementary grades through high school are participating at a percentage rate of approximately 82 percent. In comparison, those exact same students are only participating in free or reduced breakfast at a percentage rate of 36 percent. That equates to 64 percent of all eligible free/reduced students not participating in breakfast.

The reimbursement rate provided to ACPS by the Federal Government to qualified students for the School Breakfast Program (SBP) is \$1.56 (free) and \$1.26 (reduced). By

this equation (# of students) times (\$1.56 or \$1.26) times (approximately 180 days of school) minus (costs), food services department is failing to realize hundreds of thousands of dollars in attendance revenue.

**EXHIBIT 9-13
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION RATE PERCENTAGES
2006-07**

TYPE OF MEAL	NUMBER OF QUALIFIED STUDENTS	BREAKFAST			
		NUMBER SERVED	PERCENT SERVED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENT OF PARTICIPATION
Free	3824	7249	68	1453	38
Reduced	1208	1924	18	387	32
Paid	5113	1532	14	307	6
Total	9145	9705	90	2130	21
TOTAL F/R STUDENTS	5032	9173	86	1835	36.46%

Source: ACPS Food Service Department, February 2007.

**EXHIBIT 9-14
ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LUNCH PARTICIPATION RATE PERCENTAGES
2006-07**

TYPE OF MEAL	NUMBER OF QUALIFIED STUDENTS	LUNCH			
		NUMBER SERVED	PERCENT SERVED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENT OF PARTICIPATION
Free	3824	15582	51	3097	81
Reduced	1208	4990	16	903	83
Paid	5113	9770	32	1943	38
Total	9145	30342	90	6087	60
TOTAL F/R STUDENTS	5032	20572	67	4114	81.76%

Source: ACPS Food Service Department, February 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 9-3:

Improve breakfast participation rate for free/reduced to 60 percent.

Strategies to help increase participation rates include the following:

- Provide monthly participation percentages to all school administrators.
- Coordinate services with school administration, transportation, and the FNS Department to ensure all eligible free/reduced students have ample time to participate.
- Educate school administrators on the financial implications of students not participating.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides a *School Breakfast Toolkit* to assist food services managers in developing programs to promote participation in school breakfast. The five components of the kit are: *“There’s More Than One Way to Serve Breakfast,” “Calculating Costs,” “Roadmaps to Success,” “Marketing Efforts,”* and *“Resources.”* The toolkit is available online with links to the sites lists. At each of the links are a wealth of additional resources that are downloadable and easy to adapt to individual recruitment needs.

FISCAL IMPACT

The current rate of 36 percent is extremely low compared to the 81% participation rate for the same eligible students who participate in free/reduced lunch.

By increasing to 60 percent (approximately 3,000 students), the increased gross profit nets approximately \$200,000 to the food services department.

Recommendation	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Improve Breakfast Participation Rate for Free/Reduced to 60 percent	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000

**10.0 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL
SAVINGS AND COSTS**

10.0 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS AND COSTS

Based on the analyses of data obtained from interviews with ACPS personnel, parents, and the community at large, online surveys, state and school division documents, and first-hand observations during the onsite visit to the division, the MGT team developed 72 recommendations, 13 of which are accompanied by fiscal implications.

As shown in **Exhibit 10-1**, full implementation of the recommendations in this report would result in net costs of **\$2,773,840** over a five-year period.

EXHIBIT 10-1 SUMMARY OF ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)

CATEGORY	YEARS					TOTAL FIVE-YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	
TOTAL SAVINGS	\$1,018,312	\$1,068,312	\$1,118,312	\$1,168,312	\$1,208,312	\$5,581,560
TOTAL (COSTS)	(\$1,692,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$8,424,400)
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	(\$673,768)	(\$614,768)	(\$564,768)	(\$514,768)	(\$474,768)	(\$2,842,840)
ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						\$69,000
TOTAL FIVE YEAR NET SAVINGS (COSTS) INCLUDING ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						(\$2,773,840)

Exhibit 10-2 provides a chapter-by-chapter summary for all costs and savings. It is important to note that 13 of the 72 recommendations had fiscal impacts that are identified in this chapter. The remaining 59 recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Alexandria City Public Schools are included in chapters 2 through 9 of this report. A full summary of all 72 recommendations are listed in the executive summary. MGT recommends that ACPS give each of the recommendations serious consideration and develop plans to proceed with their implementation and a system to monitor subsequent progress.

**EXHIBIT 10-2
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS (COSTS)**

CHAPTER REFERENCE		ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
CHAPTER 2: DIVISION ADMINISTRATION								
2-1	Conduct Vision, Mission, and Goal Setting Retreat	(\$10,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)	(\$14,000)	\$0
2-7	Combine Legal Services	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$0
TOTAL SAVINGS/(COSTS)		\$90,000	\$99,000	\$99,000	\$99,000	\$99,000	\$486,000	\$0
CHAPTER 3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT/PURCHASING								
3-3	Purchase or Upgrade Timekeeping System	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$10,000)
3-4	Purchase New Financial Management System	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$1,000,000)	\$0
TOTAL SAVINGS/(COSTS)		(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$200,000)	(\$1,000,000)	(\$10,000)
CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT								
6-3	Prepare Facility Master Plan	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$100,000)
6-12	Engage Consumers in Energy Conservation	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$240,000	\$740,000	\$0
TOTAL SAVINGS/(COSTS)		\$50,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$240,000	\$740,000	(\$100,000)
CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION								
7-11	One-Time Sale Of Excess Buses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$180,000
7-11	Annual Savings For School Bus Replacement	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	\$510,000	\$0
7-11	Annual Operations Savings For Fewer Bus Drivers	\$491,988	\$491,988	\$491,988	\$491,988	\$491,988	\$2,459,940	\$0
7-13	Purchase VMIS Software	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,000)
TOTAL SAVINGS/(COSTS)		\$593,988	\$593,988	\$593,988	\$593,988	\$593,988	\$2,969,940	\$179,000

**EXHIBIT 10-2 (CONTINUED)
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL SAVINGS (COSTS)**

CHAPTER REFERENCE		ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12		
CHAPTER 8: TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT								
8-4	Establish a Five-Year Replacement Cycle for Instructional Computers	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$7,410,400)	\$0
TOTAL SAVINGS/(COSTS)		(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$1,482,080)	(\$7,410,400)	\$0
CHAPTER 9: FOOD SERVICES								
9-2	Adjust Staffing Patterns to Meet MPLH Benchmarks	\$74,324	\$74,324	\$74,324	\$74,324	\$74,324	\$371,620	\$0
9-3	Improve Breakfast Participation Rate for Free/Reduced to 60%	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$1,000,000	\$0
TOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)		\$274,324	\$274,324	\$274,324	\$274,324	\$274,324	\$1,371,620	\$0
TOTAL SAVINGS		\$1,018,312	\$1,068,312	\$1,118,312	\$1,168,312	\$1,208,312	\$5,581,560	\$180,000
TOTAL COSTS		(\$1,692,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$1,683,080)	(\$8,424,400)	(\$111,000)
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)		(\$673,768)	(\$614,768)	(\$564,768)	(\$514,768)	(\$474,768)	(\$2,842,840)	\$69,000
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS) LESS ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)							(\$2,773,840)	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX A SURVEY RESULTS

EXHIBIT A-1 COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Total responses for Central Office Administrators = 32
Total responses for Principal/Assistant Principals = 24
Total responses for Teachers = 219

STATEMENT	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. How long have you worked in the district? Five years or less 6-10 years 11-20 years 21 years or more	25 22 31 22	13 38 21 29	49 22 14 15
2. How long have you been in your current position? Five years or less 6-10 years 11-20 years 21 years or more	63 22 16 0	58 25 17 0	61 21 10 9
3. Overall quality of public education in our school district is: Good or Excellent Fair or Poor	94 6	100 0	88 3
4. Overall quality of education in our school district is: Improving Staying the Same Getting Worse Don't Know	88 6 0 6	92 8 0 0	61 27 5 7
5. Grade given to our school district teachers: Above Average (A or B) Below Average (D or F)	75 3	92 0	84 1
6. Grade given to our school district school level administrators: Above Average (A or B) Below Average (D or F)	88 0	92 8	65 6
7. Grade given to our school district central office administrators: Above Average (A or B) Below Average (D or F)	91 0	79 0	44 18

*Percentages may add up to over 100 percent due to rounding.

**EXHIBIT A-2
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART B: SCHOOL/DISTRICT CLIMATE**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	81/13	96/0	85/8
2. I am actively looking for a job outside of this school division.	3/75	12/66	8/77
3. I am very satisfied with my job in this school division.	90/3	92/0	74/11
4. The work standards and expectations in this school district are equal to or above those of most other school districts.	72/9	87/12	69/14
5. This school district's officials enforce high work standards.	72/9	83/8	67/16
6. Workload is evenly distributed.	54/28	67/21	43/45
7. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	81/6	88/4	68/15
8. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	31/34	59/13	21/41
9. Staff (excluding teachers) who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	34/34	55/17	14/40
10. I feel that I am an integral part of this school division team.	90/3	83/8	72/12

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-3
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART C1: DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Teachers and administrators in our district have excellent working relationships.	76/3	75/4	46/20
2. Most administrative practices in our school district are highly effective and efficient.	72/3	75/4	36/27
3. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	66/19	71/8	37/29
4. Central Office Administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/3	71/17	31/35
5. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	40/31	50/13	14/26
6. Teachers and staff are empowered with sufficient authority to perform their responsibilities effectively.	66/9	92/0	58/19
7. The extensive committee structure in our school district ensures adequate input from teachers and staff on most important decisions.	57/9	63/8	41/31
8. Our school district has too many committees.	22/28	12/37	29/23
9. Our school district has too many layers of administrators.	9/78	12/63	36/26
10. Most of district administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient.	60/19	71/8	41/29
11. Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	88/0	71/4	32/27
12. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in our school district.	75/0	67/17	40/23

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-4
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART C2: DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in this school division.	6/85	25/67	20/51
2. Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in this school division.	3/88	29/63	22/45
3. Board of Education members' work at setting or revising policies for this school division.	9/79	25/58	21/43
4. The School Division Superintendent's work as the educational leader of this school division.	88/9	92/8	46/36
5. The School Division Superintendent's work as the chief administrator (manager) of this school division.	87/9	100/0	50/32
6. Principals' work as the instructional leaders of their schools.	88/6	92/4	63/30
7. Principals' work as the managers of the staff and teachers.	87/6	92/8	60/34

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-5
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART D1: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. The emphasis on learning in this school district has increased in recent years.	85/0	100/0	72/9
2. Sufficient student services are provided in this school district (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).	81/9	92/0	70/20
3. Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.	94/0	100/0	81/6
4. I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with curriculum and instruction matters.	91/0	100/0	83/9
5. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	57/3	75/0	81/7
6. The curriculum is broad and challenging for most students.	62/6	84/0	81/8
7. Teachers in our schools know the material they teach.	65/0	87/0	86/2
8. Teachers and staff are given opportunities to participate in the textbook and material adoption processes.	82/0	92/4	73/5
9. Teachers have adequate supplies and equipment needed to perform their jobs effectively.	88/0	100/0	76/12
10. Our district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subject areas.	81/0	100/0	81/9
11. Our district uses the results of benchmark tests to monitor student performance and identify performance gaps.	85/0	88/0	81/5

EXHIBIT A-5 (Continued)
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART D1: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
12. Our district has effective educational programs for the following:			
a) Reading and Language Arts	72/0	92/0	80/5
b) Writing	69/3	96/0	68/12
c) Mathematics	68/3	92/0	68/11
d) Science	72/0	92/4	65/8
e) Social Studies (history or geography)	68/3	96/0	73/6
f) Foreign Language	66/3	55/0	37/2
g) Basic Computer Instruction	69/0	79/0	56/15
h) Advanced Computer Instruction	66/0	62/0	31/8
i) Music, Art, Drama, and other Fine Arts	72/0	84/0	64/3
j) Physical Education	69/3	96/0	76/3
k) Career and Technical (Vocational) Education	62/6	42/8	26/8
l) Business Education	62/0	59/0	30/2
13. The district has effective programs for the following:			
a) Special Education	79/0	87/4	64/19
b) Literacy Program	81/0	84/4	70/10
c) Advanced Placement Program	79/3	58/0	38/6
d) Drop-out Prevention Program	50/6	37/17	14/10
e) Summer School Programs	72/0	84/4	60/9
f) Honors and Gifted Education	78/0	63/8	59/11
g) Alternative Education Programs	62/12	25/41	24/11
h) Career Counseling Program	56/6	42/4	15/8
i) College Counseling Program	56/6	38/8	17/7
14. The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	90/0	46/0	78/13
15. Our district provides a high quality education that meets or exceeds state and federal mandates.	88/3	54/0	79/5

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-6
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART D2: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Teachers' work in meeting students' individual learning needs.	63/16	84/17	82/14
2. Teachers' work in communicating with parents/guardians.	63/16	79/21	84/14
3. How well students' test results are explained to parents/guardians.	56/19	63/37	62/25
4. The amount of time students spends on task learning in the classroom.	60/9	87/13	79/16

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-7
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART E1: HUMAN RESOURCES**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Salary levels in this school district are competitive.	84/9	83/16	71/16
2. Our district has an effective employee recognition program.	47/12	46/25	23/34
3. Our district has an effective process for staffing critical shortage areas of teachers.	51/6	42/25	23/20
4. My supervisor evaluates my job performance annually.	53/22	59/13	85/7
5. Our district offers incentives for professional advancement.	53/22	63/16	58/19
6. I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with professional development.	91/3	100/0	87/6
7. I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with human resources matters such as licensure, promotion opportunities, employee benefits, etc	87/3	100/0	83/9
8. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	66/22	75/17	53/32
9. Our district has an effective teacher recruitment plan.	57/6	71/12	28/12
10. I have a professional growth plan that addresses areas identified for my professional growth.	60/19	55/21	60/19

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-8
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART E2: HUMAN RESOURCES**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Staff development opportunities provided by this school division for teachers.	94/0	96/4	63/35
2. Staff development opportunities provided by this school division for school administrators.	59/31	50/50	18/4
3. Staff development opportunities provided by this school division for support staff.	56/38	46/46	20/16

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-9
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART F: FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Our school buildings provide a healthy environment in which to teach.	84/6	88/8	54/28
2. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	75/9	87/12	59/23
3. Our facilities are clean.	84/9	71/13	61/21
4. Our facilities are well maintained.	81/6	75/8	58/20
5. Our district plans facilities in advance to support growing enrollment.	69/6	67/8	42/11
6. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, and staff have opportunities to provide input into facility planning.	72/3	79/4	48/7
7. Our school buildings and grounds are free of hazards that can cause accidental injury.	72/6	84/0	63/17

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-10
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART G: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT/PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Funds are managed wisely to support education in this school district.	78/6	88/4	34/27
2. The budgeting process effectively involves administrators and staff.	79/13	71/17	26/37
3. School administrators are adequately trained in fiscal management techniques.	50/16	41/29	16/6
4. My school allocates financial resources equitably and fairly.	38/6	88/4	46/14
5. The purchasing department provides me with what I need.	82/6	75/4	54/13
6. The purchasing process is easy.	72/3	63/4	49/23
7. Textbooks are distributed to students in a timely manner.	56/0	92/8	63/13
8. The books and resources in the school library adequately meet the needs of students.	47/3	92/4	72/10

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-11
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART H: TRANSPORTATION**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Students are often late arriving at or departing from school because the buses do not arrive at school on time.	22/37	42/55	20/61
2. The district has a simple method of requesting buses for special events and trips.	54/3	92/4	60/8
3. Bus drivers maintain adequate discipline on the buses.	37/0	33/34	20/10
4. Buses are clean.	47/0	79/4	37/3
5. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	41/0	67/17	56/16
6. Buses are safe.	56/0	67/8	37/5

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-12
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART I1: TECHNOLOGY**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Our school district provides adequate technology-related staff development.	88/9	100/0	83/7
2. Our school district requests input on the long-range technology plan.	76/6	71/8	36/21
3. Our school district provides adequate technical support.	91/3	100/0	71/16
4. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0	100/0	75/14
5. Administrative computer systems are easy to use.	97/0	96/0	59/3
6. Technology is effectively integrated into the curriculum in our district.	66/3	88/8	72/8

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-13
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART I2: TECHNOLOGY**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. The school division's job of providing adequate instructional technology.	97/0	96/4	78/19
2. The school division's use of technology for administrative purposes.	88/9	100/0	62/14

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-14
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART J: FOOD SERVICES**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. The food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	44/6	71/12	31/38
2. The food services department encourages student participation through customer satisfaction surveys.	28/0	33/25	17/19
3. Cafeteria staff is helpful and friendly.	44/0	80/8	64/13
4. Cafeteria facilities are clean and neat.	62/0	96/0	74/2
5. Parents/guardians are informed about the menus.	69/0	92/0	70/0

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-15
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART K: SAFETY AND SECURITY**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Our schools are safe and secure from crime.	78/0	96/0	75/11
2. Our schools effectively handle misbehavior problems.	69/6	96/0	44/31
3. There is administrative support for managing student behavior in our schools.	75/3	100/0	56/19
4. If there were an emergency in my school/office, I would know how to respond appropriately.	84/3	96/4	78/9
5. Our district has a problem with gangs.	34/22	25/38	25/22
6. Our district has a problem with drugs, including alcohol.	25/28	13/46	23/22
7. Our district has a problem with vandalism.	16/43	21/37	24/26
8. Our school enforces a strict campus access policy.	44/12	71/0	44/25

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-16
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART L1: PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND THE COMMUNITY**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. In general, parents/guardians take responsibility for their children's behavior in our schools.	41/19	62/17	31/44
2. Parents/guardians in this school district are satisfied with the education their children are receiving.	65/6	96/0	73/5
3. Most parents/guardians seem to know what goes on in our schools.	47/19	67/8	49/23
4. Parents/guardians play an active role in decision making in our schools.	56/9	63/13	39/20
5. This community really cares about its children's education.	85/0	87/4	72/5
6. Our district works with local businesses and groups in the community to help improve education.	91/0	88/4	65/2
7. Parents/guardians receive regular communications from the district.	84/0	92/0	79/3
8. Our school facilities are available for community use.	97/0	100/0	86/0

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-17
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART L2: PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND THE COMMUNITY**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹		
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
1. Parent/Guardians/guardians' efforts in helping their children to do better in school.	47/28	71/29	43/53
2. Parent/Guardians/guardians' participation in school activities and organizations.	56/25	62/37	38/56
3. How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community.	72/9	67/29	52/29

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-18
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT
PART M: SCHOOL DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS AND FUNCTIONS	%(NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT) ¹	/	%(ADEQUATE + OUTSTANDING) ¹
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	TEACHER
a. Budgeting	13/75	29/71	49/26
b. Strategic planning	22/69	17/75	34/31
c. Curriculum planning	9/75	13/88	44/48
d. Financial management and accounting	13/79	21/80	33/31
e. Grants administration	9/66	12/55	16/30
f. Community relations	19/72	21/79	27/52
g. Program evaluation, research, and assessment	31/62	17/79	37/38
h. Instructional technology	3/90	8/92	25/65
i. Administrative technology	12/84	8/83	14/45
j. Internal Communication	31/69	33/67	40/48
k. Instructional support	13/63	37/63	34/57
l. Coordination of Federal Programs (e.g., Title I, Special Education)	9/78	8/84	26/42
m. Personnel recruitment	44/50	34/67	26/36
n. Personnel selection	47/43	33/66	32/40
o. Personnel evaluation	47/47	25/76	39/49
p. Staff development	25/69	17/83	39/56
q. Data processing	3/81	12/75	14/37
r. Purchasing	6/84	16/75	18/49
s. Safety and security	6/75	17/83	26/62
t. Plant maintenance	12/78	21/80	25/54
u. Facilities planning	9/75	17/84	21/43
v. Transportation	22/59	41/59	19/55
w. Food service	6/66	21/79	40/44
x. Custodial services	22/57	50/50	28/60
y. Risk management	9/47	25/55	15/30

¹ Percentage responding *needs some improvement* or *needs major improvement* / Percentage responding *adequate* or *outstanding*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-19
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS**

STATEMENT	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. How long have you worked in the district? Five years or less 6-10 years 11-20 years 21 years or more	25 22 31 22	N/A	13 38 21 29	N/A	49 22 14 15	N/A
2. How long have you been in your current position? Five years or less 6-10 years 11-20 years 21 years or more	63 22 16 0	N/A	58 25 17 0	N/A	61 21 10 9	N/A
3. Overall quality of public education in our school district is: Good or Excellent Fair or Poor	94 6	85 14	100 0	89 11	88 3	74 25
4. Overall quality of education in our school district is: Improving Staying the Same Getting Worse Don't Know	88 6 0 6	69 20 2 3	92 8 0 0	78 15 7 1	61 27 5 7	53 27 16 4
5. Grade given to our school district teachers: Above Average (A or B) Below Average (D or F)	75 3	78 1	92 0	85 1	84 1	83 1
6. Grade given to our school district school level administrators: Above Average (A or B) Below Average (D or F)	88 0	76 3	92 8	91 1	65 6	59 11
7. Grade given to our school district central office administrators: Above Average (A or B) Below Average (D or F)	91 0	76 5	79 0	73 7	34 18	44 21

*Percentages may add up to over 100 percent due to rounding.

**EXHIBIT A-20
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART B: SCHOOL/DISTRICT CLIMATE**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	81/13	79/15	96/0	80/13	85/8	81/12
2. I am actively looking for a job outside of this school division.	3/75	8/78	12/66	8/78	8/77	11/74
3. I am very satisfied with my job in this school division.	90/3	77/12	92/0	83/8	74/11	70/15
4. The work standards and expectations in this school district are equal to or above those of most other school districts.	72/9	75/7	87/12	83/6	69/14	63/14
5. This school district's officials enforce high work standards.	72/9	73/12	83/8	81/9	67/16	63/15
6. Workload is evenly distributed.	54/28	32/46	67/21	45/35	43/45	36/43
7. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	81/6	75/13	88/4	74/15	68/15	65/21
8. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	31/34	26/33	59/13	48/31	21/41	25/39
9. Staff (excluding teachers) who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	34/34	37/34	55/17	54/25	14/40	23/36
10. I feel that I am an integral part of this school division team.	90/3	74/11	83/8	74/12	72/12	59/20

¹Percentage responding agree or strongly agree/Percentage responding disagree or strongly disagree. The neutral and don't know responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-21
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART C1: DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Teachers and administrators in our district have excellent working relationships.	76/3	54/14	75/4	76/7	46/20	45/26
2. Most administrative practices in our school district are highly effective and efficient.	72/3	54/23	75/4	69/18	36/27	34/36
3. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	66/19	44/33	71/8	62/21	37/29	36/36
4. Central Office Administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	97/3	65/18	71/17	71/15	31/35	39/35
5. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	40/31	28/44	50/13	36/38	14/26	15/29
6. Teachers and staff are empowered with sufficient authority to perform their responsibilities effectively.	66/9	52/18	92/0	77/12	58/19	55/27

EXHIBIT A-21 (Continued)
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART C1: DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
7. The extensive committee structure in our school district ensures adequate input from teachers and staff on most important decisions.	57/9	50/20	63/8	60/21	41/31	29/39
8. Our school district has too many committees.	22/28	37/32	12/37	35/34	29/23	43/13
9. Our school district has too many layers of administrators.	9/78	19/64	12/63	27/57	36/26	53/15
10. Most of district administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient.	60/19	54/25	71/8	57/26	41/29	35/28
11. Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	88/0	76/8	71/4	65/20	32/27	27/34
12. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in our school district.	75/0	48/23	67/17	61/24	40/23	35/33

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-22
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART C2: DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in this school division.	6/85	40/51	25/67	39/57	20/51	24/64
2. Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in this school division.	3/88	36/58	29/63	41/56	22/45	29/55
3. Board of Education members' work at setting or revising policies for this school division.	9/79	44/48	25/58	50/47	21/43	27/58
4. The School Division Superintendent's work as the educational leader of this school division.	88/9	78/18	92/8	81/17	46/36	49/40
5. The School Division Superintendent's work as the chief administrator (manager) of this school division.	87/9	77/20	100/0	81/17	50/32	50/38
6. Principals' work as the instructional leaders of their schools.	88/6	70/29	92/4	89/11	63/30	63/36
7. Principals' work as the managers of the staff and teachers.	87/6	74/25	92/8	94/6	60/34	67/32

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-23
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART D1: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. The emphasis on learning in this school district has increased in recent years.	85/0	83/6	100/0	89/4	72/9	71/13
2. Sufficient student services are provided in this school district (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).	81/9	57/26	92/0	56/36	70/20	53/34
3. Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.	94/0	63/17	100/0	75/14	81/6	54/31
4. I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with curriculum and instruction matters.	91/0	N/A	100/0	N/A	83/9	N/A
5. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	57/3	56/10	75/0	86/6	81/7	79/9
6. The curriculum is broad and challenging for most students.	62/6	70/8	84/0	86/7	81/8	77/11
7. Teachers in our schools know the material they teach.	65/0	69/6	87/0	90/4	86/2	88/4
8. Teachers and staff are given opportunities to participate in the textbook and material adoption processes.	82/0	N/A	92/4	N/A	73/5	N/A
9. Teachers have adequate supplies and equipment needed to perform their jobs effectively.	88/0	N/A	100/0	N/A	76/12	N/A
10. Our district provides curriculum guides for all grades and subject areas.	81/0	N/A	100/0	N/A	81/9	N/A
11. Our district uses the results of benchmark tests to monitor student performance and identify performance gaps.	85/0	N/A	88/0	N/A	81/5	N/A
12. Our district has effective educational programs for the following:						
a. Reading and Language Arts	72/0	N/A	92/0	N/A	80/5	N/A
b. Writing	69/3	N/A	96/0	N/A	68/12	N/A
c. Mathematics	68/3	N/A	92/0	N/A	68/11	N/A
d. Science	72/0	N/A	92/4	N/A	65/8	N/A
e. Social Studies (history or geography)	68/3	N/A	96/0	N/A	73/6	N/A
f. Foreign Language	66/3	N/A	55/0	N/A	37/2	N/A
g. Basic Computer Instruction	69/0	N/A	79/0	N/A	56/15	N/A
h. Advanced Computer Instruction	66/0	N/A	62/0	N/A	31/8	N/A
i. Music, Art, Drama, and other Fine Arts	72/0	N/A	84/0	N/A	64/3	N/A
j. Physical Education	69/3	N/A	96/0	N/A	76/3	N/A
k. Career and Technical (Vocational) Education	62/6	N/A	42/8	N/A	26/8	N/A
l. Business Education	62/0	N/A	59/0	N/A	30/2	N/A

EXHIBIT A-23 (Continued)
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART D1: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
13. The district has effective programs for the following:						
a. Special Education	79/0	N/A	87/4	N/A	64/19	N/A
b. Literacy Program	81/0	N/A	84/4	N/A	70/10	N/A
c. Advanced Placement Program	79/3	N/A	58/0	N/A	38/6	N/A
d. Drop-out Prevention Program	50/6	N/A	37/17	N/A	14/10	N/A
e. Summer School Programs	72/0	N/A	84/4	N/A	60/9	N/A
f. Honors and Gifted Education	78/0	N/A	63/8	N/A	59/11	N/A
g. Alternative Education Programs	62/12	N/A	25/41	N/A	24/11	N/A
h. Career Counseling Program	56/6	N/A	42/4	N/A	15/8	N/A
i. College Counseling Program	56/6	N/A	38/8	N/A	17/7	N/A
14. The students-to-teacher ratio is reasonable.	90/0	N/A	46/0	N/A	78/13	N/A
15. Our district provides a high quality education that meets or exceeds state and federal mandates.	88/3	N/A	54/0	N/A	79/5	N/A

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-24
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART D2: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Teachers' work in meeting students' individual learning needs.	63/16	62/32	84/17	80/20	82/14	79/20
2. Teachers' work in communicating with parents/guardians.	63/16	49/41	79/21	68/32	84/14	75/24
3. How well students' test results are explained to parents/guardians.	56/19	36/44	63/37	51/47	62/25	38/52
4. The amount of time students spend on task learning in the classroom.	60/9	49/34	87/13	72/27	79/16	60/37

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-25
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART E1: HUMAN RESOURCES**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Salary levels in this school district are competitive.	84/9	45/40	83/16	40/48	71/16	33/53
2. Our district has an effective employee recognition program.	47/12	N/A	46/25	N/A	23/34	N/A
3. Our district has an effective process for staffing critical shortage areas of teachers.	51/6	N/A	42/25	N/A	23/20	N/A
4. My supervisor evaluates my job performance annually.	53/22	N/A	59/13	N/A	85/7	N/A
5. Our district offers incentives for professional advancement.	53/22	N/A	63/16	N/A	58/19	N/A
6. I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with professional development.	91/3	N/A	100/0	N/A	87/6	N/A
7. I know who to contact in the central office to assist me with human resources matters such as licensure, promotion opportunities, employee benefits, etc	87/3	N/A	100/0	N/A	83/9	N/A
8. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	66/22	42/45	75/17	32/58	53/32	20/69
9. Our district has an effective teacher recruitment plan.	57/6	N/A	71/12	N/A	28/12	N/A
10. I have a professional growth plan that addresses areas identified for my professional growth.	60/19	N/A	55/21	N/A	60/19	N/A

¹Percentage responding agree or strongly agree/Percentage responding disagree or strongly disagree. The neutral and don't know responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-26
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART E2: HUMAN RESOURCES**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Staff development opportunities provided by this school division for teachers.	94/0	N/A	96/4	N/A	63/35	N/A
2. Staff development opportunities provided by this school division for school administrators.	59/31	N/A	50/50	N/A	18/4	N/A
3. Staff development opportunities provided by this school division for support staff.	56/38	N/A	46/46	N/A	20/16	N/A

¹Percentage responding good or excellent / Percentage responding fair or poor. The don't know responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-27
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART F: FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Our school buildings provide a healthy environment in which to teach.	84/6	N/A	88/8	N/A	54/28	N/A
2. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	75/9	26/62	87/12	30/59	59/23	28/62
3. Our facilities are clean.	84/9	70/30	71/13	65/34	61/21	52/47
4. Our facilities are well maintained.	81/6	70/30	75/8	65/34	58/20	52/47
5. Our district plans facilities in advance to support growing enrollment.	69/6	N/A	67/8	N/A	42/11	N/A
6. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, and staff have opportunities to provide input into facility planning.	72/3	N/A	79/4	N/A	48/7	N/A
7. Our school buildings and grounds are free of hazards that can cause accidental injury.	72/6	N/A	84/0	N/A	63/17	N/A

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-28
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART G: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT/PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Funds are managed wisely to support education in this school district.	78/6	68/18	88/4	67/19	34/27	28/46
2. The budgeting process effectively involves administrators and staff.	79/13	N/A	71/17	N/A	26/37	N/A
3. School administrators are adequately trained in fiscal management techniques.	50/16	N/A	41/29	N/A	16/6	N/A
4. My school allocates financial resources equitably and fairly.	38/6	N/A	88/4	N/A	46/14	N/A
5. The purchasing department provides me with what I need.	82/6	N/A	75/4	N/A	54/13	N/A
6. The purchasing process is easy.	72/3	N/A	63/4	N/A	49/23	N/A
7. Textbooks are distributed to students in a timely manner.	56/0	N/A	92/8	N/A	63/13	N/A
8. The books and resources in the school library adequately meet the needs of students.	47/3	N/A	92/4	N/A	72/10	N/A

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-29
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART H: TRANSPORTATION**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Students are often late arriving at or departing from school because the buses do not arrive at school on time.	22/37	8/55	42/55	18/68	20/61	17/60
2. The district has a simple method of requesting buses for special events and trips.	54/3	N/A	92/4	N/A	60/8	N/A
3. Bus drivers maintain adequate discipline on the buses.	37/0	N/A	33/34	N/A	20/10	N/A
4. Buses are clean.	47/0	N/A	79/4	N/A	37/3	N/A
5. Buses arrive early enough for students to eat breakfast at school.	41/0	N/A	67/17	N/A	56/16	N/A
6. Buses are safe.	56/0	N/A	67/8	N/A	37/5	N/A

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-30
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART I1: TECHNOLOGY**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Our school district provides adequate technology-related staff development.	88/9	N/A	100/0	N/A	83/7	N/A
2. Our school district requests input on the long-range technology plan.	76/6	N/A	71/8	N/A	36/21	N/A
3. Our school district provides adequate technical support.	91/3	N/A	100/0	N/A	71/16	N/A
4. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	100/0	70/22	100/0	74/19	75/14	54/36
5. Administrative computer systems are easy to use.	97/0	N/A	96/0	N/A	59/3	N/A
6. Technology is effectively integrated into the curriculum in our district.	66/3	N/A	88/8	N/A	72/8	N/A

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-31
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART I2: TECHNOLOGY**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. The school division's job of providing adequate instructional technology.	97/0	54/43	96/4	46/52	78/19	47/51
2. The school division's use of technology for administrative purposes.	88/9	53/46	100/0	54/45	62/14	45/31

¹Percentage responding *good* or *excellent* / Percentage responding *fair* or *poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-32
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART J: FOOD SERVICES**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. The food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	44/6	62/14	71/12	58/26	31/38	43/34
2. The food services department encourages student participation through customer satisfaction surveys.	28/0	N/A	33/25	N/A	17/19	N/A
3. Cafeteria staff are helpful and friendly.	44/0	N/A	80/8	N/A	64/13	N/A
4. Cafeteria facilities are clean and neat.	62/0	N/A	96/0	N/A	74/2	N/A
5. Parents/guardians are informed about the menus.	69/0	N/A	92/0	N/A	70/0	N/A

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree* / Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-33
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART K: SAFETY AND SECURITY**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Our schools are safe and secure from crime.	78/0	66/16	96/0	81/9	75/11	53/28
2. Our schools effectively handle misbehavior problems.	69/6	54/24	96/0	74/14	44/31	37/48
3. There is administrative support for managing student behavior in our schools.	75/3	69/12	100/0	89/6	56/19	55/29
4. If there were an emergency in my school/office, I would know how to respond appropriately.	84/3	78/7	96/4	96/2	78/9	87/7
5. Our district has a problem with gangs.	34/22	N/A	25/38	N/A	25/22	N/A
6. Our district has a problem with drugs, including alcohol.	25/28	N/A	13/46	N/A	23/22	N/A
7. Our district has a problem with vandalism.	16/43	N/A	21/37	N/A	24/26	N/A
8. Our school enforces a strict campus access policy.	44/12	N/A	71/0	N/A	44/25	N/A

¹Percentage responding *agree* or *strongly agree*/Percentage responding *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-34
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART L1: PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND THE COMMUNITY**

STATEMENT	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. In general, parents/guardians take responsibility for their children's behavior in our schools.	41/19	42/34	62/17	51/31	31/44	27/53
2. Parents/guardians in this school district are satisfied with the education their children are receiving.	65/6	57/16	96/0	73/9	73/5	53/14
3. Most parents/guardians seem to know what goes on in our schools.	47/19	36/38	67/8	43/36	49/23	29/50
4. Parents/guardians play an active role in decision making in our schools.	56/9	35/24	63/13	60/20	39/20	36/38
5. This community really cares about its children's education.	85/0	63/15	87/4	72/14	72/5	49/27
6. Our district works with local businesses and groups in the community to help improve education.	91/0	N/A	88/4	N/A	65/2	N/A
7. Parents/guardians receive regular communications from the district.	84/0	N/A	92/0	N/A	79/3	N/A
8. Our school facilities are available for community use.	97/0	N/A	100/0	N/A	86/0	N/A

¹Percentage responding agree or strongly agree/Percentage responding disagree or strongly disagree. The neutral and don't know responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-35
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART L2: PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND THE COMMUNITY**

STATEMENT	(%G + E) / (%F + P) ¹					
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
1. Parent/Guardians/guardians' efforts in helping their children to do better in school.	47/28	29/56	71/29	35/64	43/53	21/76
2. Parent/Guardians/guardians' participation in school activities and organizations.	56/25	27/59	62/37	33/66	38/56	23/75
3. How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community.	72/9	60/35	67/29	66/32	52/29	43/44

¹Percentage responding good or excellent / Percentage responding fair or poor. The don't know responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-36
COMPARISON OF RESPONSES WITH OTHER DISTRICTS
PART M: SCHOOL DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS AND FUNCTIONS	% (NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT) ¹		/		% (ADEQUATE + OUTSTANDING) ¹	
	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR IN OTHER DISTRICTS	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN OTHER DISTRICTS	TEACHER	TEACHER IN OTHER DISTRICTS
a. Budgeting	13/75	47/45	29/71	49/48	49/26	65/16
b. Strategic planning	22/69	44/42	17/75	38/53	34/31	47/24
c. Curriculum planning	9/75	30/50	13/88	40/59	44/48	52/41
d. Financial management and accounting	13/79	36/53	21/80	35/60	33/31	49/23
e. Grants administration	9/66	24/49	12/55	34/49	16/30	53/38
f. Community relations	19/72	39/53	21/79	37/61	27/52	42/38
g. Program evaluation, research, and assessment	31/62	34/50	17/79	32/65	37/38	53/40
h. Instructional technology	3/90	48/41	8/92	60/39	25/65	65/16
i. Administrative technology	12/84	42/49	8/83	48/49	14/45	24/34
j. Internal Communication	31/69	N/A	33/67	N/A	40/48	N/A
k. Instructional support	13/63	32/51	37/63	48/49	34/57	48/45
l. Coordination of Federal Programs (e.g., Title I, Special Education)	9/78	24/52	8/84	32/57	26/42	36/40
m. Personnel recruitment	44/50	47/42	34/67	47/48	26/36	40/35
n. Personnel selection	47/43	46/48	33/66	41/57	32/40	42/37
o. Personnel evaluation	47/47	47/49	25/76	40/58	39/49	41/48
p. Staff development	25/69	48/49	17/83	43/57	39/56	42/52
q. Data processing	3/81	38/45	12/75	39/51	14/37	21/34
r. Purchasing	6/84	34/53	16/75	37/58	18/49	33/30
s. Safety and security	6/75	26/61	17/83	29/67	26/62	40/46
t. Plant maintenance	12/78	43/48	21/80	55/43	25/54	41/37
u. Facilities planning	9/75	38/48	17/84	51/43	21/43	41/28
v. Transportation	22/59	21/65	41/59	43/54	19/55	32/46
w. Food service	6/66	18/67	21/79	35/65	40/44	41/47
x. Custodial services	22/57	37/54	50/50	47/52	28/60	44/49
y. Risk management	9/47	20/54	25/55	23/63	15/30	22/32

¹ Percentage responding *needs some improvement* or *needs major improvement* / Percentage responding *adequate* or *outstanding*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

APPENDIX B:
PEER COMPARISON DATA

APPENDIX B

Exhibits B-1 through **B-17** illustrate how the comparison school divisions compare to Alexandria City Public Schools in terms of enrollment, demographics, staffing, and funding for the most current school year available from the Virginia Department of Education's Web site. In reviewing the comparison tables, it should be noted that the state applies a "cost of competing" factor to all Northern Virginia school divisions in recognition of the higher costs of living and doing business in the area. Currently, this cost factor is 9.83 percent for instructional personnel and 24.61 percent for support staff. These costs factors have the effect of skewing ACPS data upwards in comparison with its Cluster 6 peers.

**EXHIBIT B-1
OVERVIEW OF PEER PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	CLUSTER IDENTIFICATION	TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION	STUDENT POPULATION PER 1,000 GENERAL POPULATION	PERCENTAGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	PERCENTAGE ESL STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
Alexandria City Public Schools	6	10,643	82.97	17.85%	28.3%	56.0%	18
Charlottesville City Public Schools	6	4,331	96.14	17.39%	6.1%	48.9%	12
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	6	2,496	129.47	14.42%	7.1%	46.0%	4
Manassas City Public Schools	6	6,554	186.54	12.24%	30.8%	20.0%	9
Winchester City Public Schools	6	3,743	158.7	18.67%	13.4%	39.6%	7
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	N/A	5,553	130.76	16.11%	17.1%	42.1%	10

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007, United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census Data, www.schoolmatters.com.

**EXHIBIT B-2
TEACHER STAFFING LEVELS AND PUPIL: TEACHER RATIOS
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	TOTAL TEACHERS PER 1,000 STUDENTS*	RATIO OF PUPILS TO CLASSROOM TEACHING POSITIONS FOR GRADES K-7**	RATIO OF PUPILS TO CLASSROOM TEACHING POSITIONS FOR GRADES 8-12
Alexandria City Public Schools	103.56	11.4	6.3
Charlottesville City Public Schools	94.57	10.2	9.5
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	92.93	8.9	12.7
Manassas City Public Schools	80.21	11.9	11.5
Winchester City Public Schools	89.52	10.6	10.5
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	92.16	10.6	10.1

Source: 2006 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia, Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007. *Ratios based on End-of-Year enrollments.**Pupil/teacher ratios for elementary and secondary may vary because of the reporting of teaching positions for middle school grades 6 - 8.

**EXHIBIT B-3
RECEIPTS BY FUND SOURCE
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 FISCAL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	SALES AND USE TAX	STATE FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	LOCAL FUNDS	OTHER FUNDS ¹	BEGINNING BALANCES ²	LOANS, BONDS, ETC. ³
Alexandria City Public Schools	5.30%	7.62%	5.95%	71.20%	1.29%	8.63%	0.00%
Charlottesville City Public Schools	7.81%	22.28%	8.23%	51.76%	5.55%	4.35%	0.02%
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	4.00%	8.82%	8.58%	33.45%	1.75%	42.41%	0.98%
Manassas City Public Schools	5.82%	21.10%	3.16%	43.95%	1.70%	7.79%	16.48%
Winchester City Public Schools	3.97%	13.28%	3.69%	28.73%	1.85%	6.65%	41.83%
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5.38%	14.62%	5.92%	45.82%	2.43%	13.96%	11.86%

Source: 2006 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia, Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007. ¹ Includes funds from private sources, food service receipts, transportation revenues, the sale of assets and supplies, rebates and refunds, and receipts from other agencies. ² Represents the total amount of beginning-year balances as reported by school divisions and regional programs on the Annual School Report Financial Section. ³ Represents proceeds from Literary Fund loans, the sale of bonds, and interest earned on bank notes and/or investments.

**EXHIBIT B-4
DISBURSEMENTS PER PUPIL FOR
INSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 FISCAL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	INSTRUCTION PER PUPIL ¹	ADMINISTRATION PER PUPIL ^{2,3}
Alexandria City Public Schools	\$12,438.76	\$855.24
Charlottesville City Public Schools	\$9,927.73	\$619.06
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	\$8,711.08	\$642.42
Manassas City Public Schools	\$8,671.01	\$358.90
Winchester City Public Schools	\$8,487.53	\$315.26
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	\$9,647.22	\$558.18

Source: 2005 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia, Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

¹ Represents expenditures for classroom instruction, guidance services, social work services, homebound instruction, improvement of instruction, media services, and office of the principal. This column does not include expenditures for technology instruction, summer school, or adult education, which are reported in separate columns within this table. This column also excludes local tuition revenues received for divisions 001 - 207, and prorates the deduction of these revenues across administration, instruction, attendance and health, pupil transportation, and operations and maintenance categories. Local tuition is reported in the expenditures of the school division paying tuition.

² Represents expenditures for activities related to establishing and administering policy for division operations including board services, executive administration, information services, personnel, planning services, fiscal services, purchasing, and reprographics.

**EXHIBIT B-5
STAFF PER 1,000 STUDENTS
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR***

SCHOOL DIVISION	STUDENTS AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP	PRINCIPALS/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS PER 1,000 STUDENTS	TEACHERS PER 1,000 STUDENTS	TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTORS PER 1,000 STUDENTS	TEACHER AIDES PER 1,000 STUDENTS	GUIDANCE COUNSELORS/ LIBRARIANS PER 1,000 STUDENTS
Alexandria City Public Schools	10,336.81	3.94	103.56	0	16.93	5.42
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,098.56	4.65	94.57	0	27.04	6.60
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,464.29	4.87	92.93	0	26.38	4.87
Manassas City Public Schools	6,371.76	3.14	80.21	0.16	10.29	4.16
Winchester City Public Schools	3,693.11	3.79	89.52	1.08	22.71	4.93
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5,392.91	4.08	92.16	0.25	20.67	5.20

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

*Ratios based on ADM.

**EXHIBIT B-6
ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLERICAL PERSONNEL
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

School Division	STUDENTS AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP	ADMINISTRATIVE	ADMINISTRATIVE PER 1000 STUDENTS	TECHNICAL AND CLERICAL	TECHNICAL AND CLERICAL PER 1000 STUDENTS
Alexandria City Public Schools	10,336.81	13.88	1.34	95.97	9.28
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,098.56	19.73	4.81	42.09	10.27
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,464.29	6.75	2.74	49.75	20.19
Manassas City Public Schools	6,371.76	3.52	0.55	48.64	7.63
Winchester City Public Schools	3,693.11	6.00	1.62	32.25	8.73
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5392.91	9.98	1.85	53.74	9.96

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007. Alexandria City Public Schools, 2007.

**EXHIBIT B-7
ADMINISTRATIVE, ATTENDANCE AND HEALTH PERSONNEL
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	STUDENTS AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP	ADMINISTRATION, ATTENDANCE AND HEALTH					
		ADMINISTRATIVE	ADMINISTRATIVE PER 1000 STUDENTS	TECHNICAL AND CLERICAL	TECHNICAL AND CLERICAL PER 1000 STUDENTS	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	OTHER PROFESSIONAL PER 1000 STUDENTS
Alexandria City Public Schools	10,336.81	24.32	2.35	50.39	4.87	31.67	3.06
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,098.56	11.20	2.73	9.83	2.40	18.04	4.40
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,464.29	10.10	4.10	15.50	6.29	11.50	4.67
Manassas City Public Schools	6,371.76	11.00	1.73	18.77	2.95	15.75	2.47
Winchester City Public Schools	3,693.11	12.53	3.39	4.57	1.24	14.20	3.84
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5,392.91	13.83	2.56	19.81	3.67	18.23	3.38

Source: Virginia Department of Education 2005-06 Annual School Reports for each division.

**EXHIBIT B-8
TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

School Division	STUDENTS AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP	ADMINISTRATIVE	ADMINISTRATIVE PER 1000 STUDENTS	TECHNICAL/ CLERICAL	TECHNICAL/ CLERICAL PER 1000 STUDENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PER 1000 STUDENTS
Alexandria City Public Schools	10,336.81	6.00	0.58	28.63	2.77	0.00	0.00
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,098.56	11.20	2.73	9.83	2.40	18.04	4.40
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,464.29	10.10	4.10	15.50	6.29	11.50	4.67
Manassas City Public Schools	6,371.76	11.00	1.73	18.77	2.95	15.75	2.47
Winchester City Public Schools	3,693.11	12.53	3.39	4.57	1.24	14.20	3.84
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5392.91	10.17	1.89	15.46	2.87	11.90	2.21

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007. Alexandria City Public Schools, 2007.

**EXHIBIT B-9
TRANSPORTATION PERSONNEL
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

School Division	STUDENTS AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP	ADMINISTRATIVE	ADMINISTRATIVE PER 1000 STUDENTS	TECHNICAL/ CLERICAL	TECHNICAL/ CLERICAL PER 1000 STUDENTS	TRADES, OPERATIONS, AND SERVICE	TRADES, OPERATIONS, AND SERVICE PER 1000 STUDENTS
Alexandria City Public Schools	10,336.81	6.00	0.10	2.68	0.26	109.76	10.62
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,098.56	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,464.29	1.00	0.41	4.50	1.83	41.00	16.64
Manassas City Public Schools	6,371.76	1.00	0.00	1.50	0.24	63.00	9.89
Winchester City Public Schools	3,693.11	1.00	0.27	0.00	0.00	56.16	15.21
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5392.91	1.80	0.14	2.17	0.40	67.48	12.51

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007. Note: Charlottesville City Public Schools does not have a transportation department.

**EXHIBIT B-10
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

School Division	STUDENTS AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP	ADMINISTRATIVE	ADMINISTRATIVE PER 1000 STUDENTS	TECHNICAL/ CLERICAL	TECHNICAL/ CLERICAL/ PER 1000 STUDENTS	TRADES, OPERATIONS, AND SERVICE	TRADES, OPERATIONS, AND SERVICE PER 1000 STUDENTS
Alexandria City Public Schools	10,336.81	6.00	0.58	3.60	0.35	172.11	16.65
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,098.56	0.00	0.00	1.30	0.32	63.40	15.47
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,464.29	1.00	0.41	0.00	0.00	38.00	15.42
Manassas City Public Schools	6,371.76	1.00	0.16	8.00	1.26	58.50	9.18
Winchester City Public Schools	3,693.11	1.00	0.27	3.50	0.95	43.29	11.72
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5392.91	1.80	0.33	3.28	0.61	75.06	13.92

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

**EXHIBIT B-11
FOOD SERVICE DISBURSEMENTS
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	FOOD SERVICES	PER PUPIL COST
Alexandria City Public Schools	4,369,680	\$418.51
Charlottesville City Public Schools	1,606,184	\$387.73
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	1,160,562	\$468.69
Manassas City Public Schools	2,109,114	\$325.44
Winchester City Public Schools	1,401,675	\$377.35
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	2,129,443	\$395.54

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site 2007

**EXHIBIT B-12
FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	ENROLLMENT	TOTAL FREE LUNCH	PERCENT FREE LUNCH	TOTAL REDUCED LUNCH	PERCENT REDUCED LUNCH	PERCENT FREE/REDUCED LUNCH
Alexandria City Public Schools	10,317	4,043	39.19%	1,194	11.57%	50.76%
Charlottesville City Public Schools	4,426	1,905	43.04%	340	7.68%	50.72%
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	2,665	1,064	39.92%	164	6.15%	46.08%
Manassas City Public Schools	6,479	1,128	17.41%	392	6.05%	23.46%
Winchester City Public Schools	3,981	1,267	31.83%	382	9.60%	41.42%
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	5,574	1,881	34.28%	494	8.21%	42.49%

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

**EXHIBIT B-13
FREE AND REDUCED
BREAKFAST PRICES
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	ELEMENTARY STUDENT BREAKFAST	MIDDLE STUDENT BREAKFAST	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT BREAKFAST	ELEMENTARY REDUCED BREAKFAST	MIDDLE REDUCED BREAKFAST	HIGH SCHOOL REDUCED BREAKFAST
Alexandria City Public Schools	\$1.05	\$1.05	\$1.05	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Charlottesville City Public Schools	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	\$1.15	*	\$1.15	\$0.30	*	\$0.30
Manassas City Public Schools	\$1.10	\$1.10	\$1.10	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
Winchester City Public Schools	\$0.95	*	\$1.00	\$0.30	*	\$0.30
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	\$1.05	\$1.05	\$1.06	\$0.24	\$0.20	\$0.24

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

*Shaded areas indicate combined schools or no program participation.

**EXHIBIT B-14
FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH PRICES
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	ELEMENTARY STUDENT LUNCH	MIDDLE STUDENT LUNCH	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LUNCH	ELEMENTARY REDUCED LUNCH	MIDDLE REDUCED LUNCH	HIGH SCHOOL REDUCED LUNCH
Alexandria City Public Schools	\$2.05	\$2.35	\$2.35	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Charlottesville City Public Schools	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	\$1.80	*	\$1.90	\$0.40	*	\$0.40
Manassas City Public Schools	\$2.10	\$2.10	\$2.10	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.40
Winchester City Public Schools	\$1.65	*	\$1.90	\$0.40	*	\$0.40
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	\$1.82	\$2.07	\$2.00	\$0.32	\$0.27	\$0.32

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

*Shaded areas indicate combined schools or no program participation.

**EXHIBIT B-15
GRADUATES BY DIPLOMA TYPE
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

DIVISION NO./NAME	STANDARD DIPLOMA	ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA	SPECIAL DIPLOMA	CERTIFICATE OF PROGRAM COMPLETION	GED CERTIFICATE	ISAEP	GAD DIPLOMA	MODIFIED STANDARD DIPLOMA	TOTAL GRADUATES AND COMPLETERS BY DIPLOMA TYPE
Alexandria City Public Schools	43.75%	32.37%	4.97%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.49%	534
Charlottesville City Public Schools	14.08%	15.82%	1.74%	0.80%	0.27%	0.13%	0.00%	0.94%	252
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	8.06%	9.95%	0.83%	0.00%	0.00%	0.36%	0.00%	0.12%	163
Manassas City Public Schools	17.84%	26.13%	1.38%	0.00%	0.00%	3.77%	0.00%	0.50%	395
Winchester City Public Schools	10.25%	9.28%	0.29%	0.10%	0.00%	0.88%	0.00%	0.49%	218
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	12.56%	15.29%	1.06%	0.23%	0.07%	1.28%	0.00%	0.51%	312

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

**EXHIBIT B-16
GRADUATES BY CONTINUING EDUCATION PLANS
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

DIVISION NO./NAME	ATTENDING TWO-YEAR COLLEGES	ATTENDING FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES	OTHER CONTINUING EDUCATION PLANS	EMPLOYMENT	MILITARY	NO PLANS	TOTAL GRADUATES AND COMPLETERS BY CONTINUING EDUCATION PLANS
Alexandria City Public Schools	19.85%	64.61%	5.62%	7.12%	1.50%	1.31%	534
Charlottesville City Public Schools	34.52%	42.46%	6.35%	12.30%	1.59%	2.78%	252
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	21.47%	59.51%	3.07%	11.04%	0.61%	4.29%	163
Manassas City Public Schools	34.68%	41.27%	3.04%	13.67%	2.53%	4.81%	395
Winchester City Public Schools	20.18%	49.54%	5.50%	17.89%	1.38%	5.50%	218
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	26.14%	51.48%	4.72%	12.40%	1.52%	3.74%	312

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.

**EXHIBIT B-17
DROPOUT PERCENTAGE
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	GRADES 7-12 ENROLLMENT	TOTAL DROPOUTS	DROPOUT PERCENTAGE
Alexandria City Public Schools	4,375	141	3.22%
Charlottesville City Public Schools	1,971	61	3.09%
Fredericksburg City Public Schools	1,167	36	3.08%
Manassas City Public Schools	2,932	117	3.99%
Winchester City Public Schools	1,769	15	0.85%
PEER DIVISION AVERAGE	2,443	74	2.85%

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2007.