

Operational Audit Of Fairfield Public Schools



December 14, 2010



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Executive Summary

In August 2010, Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) contracted with Prismatic Services, Inc., to complete an operational audit of the district. The contract required an assessment of all functional areas of the school district, seeking to identify areas of commendation and recommendation. The overall goals of the audit were to assist the district in:

- * identifying areas where greater efficiencies can be achieved;
- * identifying areas where greater effectiveness can be achieved; and
- * improving management strategies.

The district undertook this operational audit in recognition of likely challenging budget discussions for 2011-12 and beyond. The national economic downturn has resulted in difficult times in many school districts, and it was in this environment that FPS took the commendable step of seeking out a consulting firm to conduct this operational audit. While the need to reduce expenditures may not be overly pressing yet, with this audit FPS will have a menu of options from which to choose to become more efficient and effective.

It should be noted that the district is under no obligation to implement any recommendation in this report. FPS undertook this audit voluntarily, in an effort to identify areas for improvement. Moreover, as district staff works through the chapters of this report, they may find alternative ways to address the findings presented.

1 METHODOLOGY

In completing this operational audit, Prismatic followed a 10-step work plan:

1. Initiate project.
2. Conduct Advance Team visit.
3. Complete initial comparative analyses.
4. Field staff survey.
5. Prepare initial analysis.
6. Conduct On-Site visit.
7. Develop initial draft report.
8. Complete quality control.
9. Review draft report with client.
10. Develop final report and close project.

A Prismatic Advance team of two was on-site in the district September 14-15, 2010. The Advance team interviewed 31 staff and Board members. The full on-site visit was completed with five Prismatic team members October 11-14, 2010. The initial interview schedule included 54 interviews of either individuals (or several staff together) and 19 focus groups. Once on-site, team members were free to schedule additional and follow-up interviews, as needed.

Team members also observed operations at a number of schools. All schools were visited at least once during the on-site period, although the team member may have only been there to observe a specific aspect of operations, such as custodial cleaning or lunch being served.

As part of the analyses completed in this audit, Prismatic made comparisons to these peer districts:

- * Greenwich;
- * Norwalk;
- * Stamford;
- * Trumbull; and
- * West Hartford.

In addition to interviews and focus groups with specific district staff members, Prismatic provided all staff the opportunity to participate in an 80-question survey. A total of 634 employees responded to the survey, a response rate of approximately 35 percent.

Community members were asked to send an e-mail with suggestions to a Prismatic-administered e-mail account. A total of 126 community members provided input.

This audit was completed with few limitations. Because the district wished to have results in time for use in 2011-12 budget discussions, the timeframe of the audit was somewhat shorter than other comparable projects. In a few areas, the district did not have information the team requested for analysis. Because the Board had already made a decision regarding middle school rezoning at the time of project initiation, the Prismatic team did not undertake further analysis in this area. In addition, the district notified Prismatic that it separately contracted to review enrollment projections, educational specifications, and building utilization, so Prismatic did not undertake any work tasks related to those areas.

2 **COMMENDATIONS**

Overall, Prismatic awarded 25 commendations. Recommendations are organized below by functional area reviewed.

Chapter 3: Organization and Management

- * The Superintendent has immediately made positive organizational changes.
- * The Superintendent has streamlined and re-directed the focus of administrative meetings from business topics to administrative development.
- * FPS has only minimally increased its administrative staff, and at rates that compare favorably to the increase in student enrollment over the past five years.

- * FPS has opened Advanced Placement classes to all students, resulting in more students taking and passing AP test and earning college credit while still in high school.
- * FPS is commended for working to ensure that identification procedures more accurately identify students who are truly Gifted and Talented and for developing programs targeted to their needs and interests.
- * District special education leaders and parents are commended for instituting a strong partnership that benefits both children and educators.
- * The special education department has increased direct services to students by building capacity in FPS staff while, at the same time, working diligently to contain expenditures.

Chapter 4: Technology

- * FPS has begun implementing technology to streamline procedures and begin to reduce paper processes.

Chapter 5: Financial Management

- * FPS is commended for successfully implementing the Munis payroll, purchasing, and accounting modules with little negative impact on operations.
- * FPS is commended for closely analyzing and monitoring high dollar budgets and authorized full-time equivalent positions.
- * FPS is commended for development and use of a Payroll Run Sheet for each payroll to ensure completeness and accuracy of payrolls.
- * FPS is commended for cross-training employees in the critical functions of processing employee payrolls and vendor payments.
- * FPS is commended for making budget information readily available by distributing widely copies of its annual budget document.

Chapter 6: Human Resources

- * The FPS HR department is commended for its exemplary work in the areas of personnel, employee records, and employee staffing.
- * FPS is commended for supporting continuing education.
- * District leaders have begun developing professional development models that are most likely to result in fidelity of implementation of programs, a more uniform approach to instructional programs, and potentially save the district funds.

Chapter 7: Facilities Use and Management

- * FPS maintains its facilities in very good condition. All of the schools are attractive, pleasant-looking, and appear to be conducive to learning.
- * FPS employs a number of custodians that is able to maintain satisfactory levels of cleanliness and sanitation in its facilities, and is in consonance with national standards.
- * The construction manager was able to put together the required forms for FEMA funding in minimal time. As a result of his knowledge and documentation regarding FPS facilities, the response from FEMA was in minimal time.

Chapter 8: Food Services

- * FPS is commended for joining the Connecticut Healthy Food Certification program as part of its continuous efforts to improve its meal program.
- * The FPS food services department is an efficient and effective operation in a number of areas.
- * The FPS food services department makes an abundance of information available through the district website.
- * FPS elementary schools are adhering to best practices by providing recess before lunch.

Chapter 9: Transportation

- * The FPS transportation department is a responsive, effective organization.
- * The FPS transportation department provides students with short ride times.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, Prismatic made 74 recommendations. Of those, Prismatic estimated fiscal impacts for 27, which are the only recommendations where the most likely implementation path is clear and direct costs or savings can be estimated from that implementation. In all cases, we have endeavored to be conservative in estimating savings and aggressive in estimating costs.

Recommendations are organized below by functional area reviewed.

Chapter 3: Organization and Management

- * Adopt a new organizational structure.
- * Schedule a board workshop to discuss ways to balance public input and the need to move the district's agenda for children forward as quickly as possible.

- * Expand the use of data to include evaluation of programs and processes to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of district activities.
- * Develop PreK-12 horizontal and vertical cross-curricular standards connection documents.
- * Revise the current staff evaluation process.
- * Improve the organizational structure for curricular leadership.
- * Review the intended assignment of district-allocated positions to schools.
- * Improve district allocation of resource positions to elementary schools.
- * Improve paraprofessional development.
- * Adopt a new approach for McKinley School and its students.
- * Adopt extended day as the only option for all kindergarten students.
- * Ensure that the same level of instructional support is available for all kindergarten students.
- * Re-configure music schedules in the middle schools.
- * Reorganize both FPS high schools to eliminate the House Plan.
- * Require high school English teachers to teacher five periods a day, which is the same as other core teachers.
- * Charge non-handicapped students a fair tuition for preschool.
- * Improve utilization of district psychologists and social workers.
- * Bring FPS psychologist and social worker staffing ratios closer to those recommended by ASHA.

Chapter 4: Technology

- * Recommit the district to technology.
- * Realign the technology department.
- * Address technology disparity among FPS campuses.
- * Improve customer service levels through the Help Desk.
- * Develop procedures to ensure that the Technology/Media Curriculum Leader has a strong voice in instructional technology decisions.
- * Prioritize paper-based processes for review, reengineering, and elimination.

- * Include in planning and budgeting the purchase of integrated student management data collection and reporting systems and require universal use.
- * Develop a formula-driven technician staffing ratio.
- * Develop rigorous technology expectations for FPS technology support staff.
- * Develop and implement a professional development plan for technology integration.
- * Re-think technology's potential for FPS students and teachers.

Chapter 5: Financial Management

- * Create separate finance and operations departments organized under a Chief Operations Office, as noted in Chapter 3.
- * Develop a user manual for school and department staff to assist them in completing finance and budget related duties and provide periodic training.
- * Identify all critical functions performed by finance section of the Business Office staff and document procedures in a comprehensive procedures manual.
- * Document desk procedures for all finance processes within the Business Office.
- * Adopt a formal policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of report recommendations made.
- * Eliminate weekly payrolls for all employees not required to be paid weekly per union contracts and attempt to eliminate the requirement in future negotiations when contracts are renewed.
- * Develop a policy that requires all arrangements with private vendors that use district facilities to be delineated in written, approved contracts.
- * Develop summary and easily understood financial reports for the Board and train board members on how to interpret the information.
- * Annually analyze historical expenditures early in the budget process and establish budget targets to increase the funding percentage for instruction.
- * Improve the district's budget document and submit it for review to the Association of School Business Officials and the Government Finance Officers Association for continued improvement.
- * Reduce funding for Principals' Account.
- * Work with the Town of Fairfield to develop purchasing procedures that allow principals and department heads to purchase small dollar items without preapproval.

- * Consider expanding the use of the purchasing card program to increase efficiencies in the purchasing and payment processes.
- * Require compliance with purchasing procedures.
- * Track fixed assets acquired with district funds, and develop fixed asset policies.

Chapter 6: Human Resources

- * Discontinue the funding and participation in the Intern Program after the current year.
- * Develop a comprehensive instructional professional development plan.

Chapter 7: Facilities Use and Management

- * Implement a computerized maintenance management system.
- * Implement a technology solution for event management.
- * Conduct a thorough review of policy and procedures as they are actually employed in the time and attendance program for custodians, with a view toward eliminating all "summer cleaning" overtime.
- * Improve the day-to-day supervision of custodians.
- * Seek reimbursement from the food service fund for the cost of providing custodial services in the dining rooms.
- * Seek reimbursement from the food service fund for the cost of kitchen and dining room utilities.
- * Ensure specifications are appropriate and enforced.

Chapter 8: Food Services

- * Increase regular student meal prices.
- * Address secondary access issues.
- * Distribute monthly MPLH comparisons to Cook Managers.
- * Evaluate the food services program relative to selected performance indicators.
- * Offer direct deposit to all food services employees.
- * Implement menu planning software.
- * Promote more training, sharing of ideas, and central office oversight.

- * Develop a parent advisory committee at each school to complete plate waste surveys and tasting panels.

Chapter 9: Transportation

- * Provide additional training in Edulog.
- * Implement a “use it or lose it” policy regarding bus transportation.
- * Require high school students to opt out in order to obtain a parking spot.
- * Reduce door-to-door stops.
- * Review bell times.
- * Seek legal counsel regarding reduction of nonpublic student transportation.
- * Separate the budget for transportation of nonpublic students from the regular FPS budget.

Chapter 10: Safety and Security

- * Implement OSHA required training for maintenance and custodial staff to ensure worker and workplace safety.
- * Develop a database of all fire safety equipment.
- * Shift safety, security, and emergency management duties from the construction manager to the high school security coordinator.
- * Request that the town public works department maintain the two storm water retention ponds as previously agreed.
- * Require separation of traffic circulation around every FPS school.
- * Improve kitchen security.

As a first step in implementing report recommendations, Prismatic recommends that district leaders review all report recommendations to identify which (in whole or in part) can be implemented immediately or within the next three months. From there, district leaders should then develop a prioritized action plan with accompanying deadlines and metrics. Individuals or small teams within the district should be assigned to spearhead each effort and should be held accountable for producing results.

Introduction

In August 2010, Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) contracted with Prismatic Services, Inc., to complete an operational audit of the district. The contract required an assessment of all functional areas of the school district, seeking to identify areas of commendation and recommendation. The overall goals of the audit were to assist the district in:

- * identifying areas where greater efficiencies can be achieved;
- * identifying areas where greater effectiveness can be achieved; and
- * improving management strategies.

This report is presented to fulfill the requirements of the district's contract with Prismatic.

1.1 BACKGROUND

FPS is one of 169 school districts in Connecticut, a state with nearly 553,000 students. With just under 10,000 students in 2008-09, Fairfield educated 1.8 percent of the state's students. In doing so, Fairfield spent nearly \$144 million, or \$14,452 per student. The district ranked 33rd highest in net current expenditures per student (**Exhibit 1-1**).

Exhibit 1-1
Net Current Expenditures
2008-09

	FPS
Average Daily Membership	9,960.92
Net Current Expenditures	\$143,958,769
Net Current Expenditures per Student	\$14,452
Rank	33

Source: Connecticut Department of Education website

The district undertook this operational audit in recognition of likely challenging budget discussions for 2011-12 and beyond. The national economic downturn has resulted in difficult times in many school districts. For the first time ever, states' overall spending decreased for two years in a row—4.8 percent in FY2009 and 4.0 percent in FY 2010.¹ Because Connecticut school districts receive most of their revenue from local sources (57% in 2007-08), the budget concerns have not yet been as deep as they have been in other states.

¹ Hess, F. and Downs, W. (2010) K-12 budget picture: lean years ahead. *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*. (10).

However, that may change soon. One economist predicts that Connecticut is one of four states that will empty their pension fund before the end of the decade.² And, as one expert recently noted:

State are looking at tens of billions in budget shortfalls for fiscal year 2011. And the accelerating downturn in commercial real estate and the soft housing market mean that districts will likely be looking at tight budgets into 2014 and beyond.³

It was in this environment that FPS took the commendable step of seeking out a consulting firm to conduct this operational audit. While the need to reduce expenditures may not be overly pressing yet, with this audit the district will have a menu of options from which to choose to become more efficient.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In completing this operational audit, Prismatic followed a 10-step work plan:

1. Initiate project.
2. Conduct Advance Team visit.
3. Complete initial comparative analyses.
4. Field staff survey.
5. Prepare initial analysis.
6. Conduct On-Site visit.
7. Develop initial draft report.
8. Complete quality control.
9. Review draft report with client.
10. Develop final report and close project.

Project initiation occurred on August 25, 2010. At that time, Prismatic and district staff confirmed overall project goals, finalized a project timeline, and discussed areas of potential focus for the audit.

Prismatic then provided to the district an Initial Data Request List comprised of 110 items. The items requested were in the categories of:

- * General Information
- * Human Resources
- * Financial Management, Purchasing, Asset and Risk, Warehousing, Fixed Assets
- * Instruction

² Ibid.

³ Hess, F. and Osberg, E. (2010). *Stretching the school dollar: how schools and districts can save money while serving students best*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

- * Facilities
- * Technology
- * Food Service
- * Technology
- * Safety and Security

District staff provided all information requested and did so in a timely manner. Most collected data were digitized and distributed electronically to Prismatic team members prior to the on-site visit. A few larger items were distributed in paper form.

A Prismatic Advance team of two was on-site in the district September 14-15, 2010. The Advance team interviewed 28 staff/Board members in person and completed three telephone interviews with other staff/Board members. The results of the Advance visit were distributed internally to Prismatic team members to assist them in developing interview and focus group questions, prioritize areas for on-site observations, and tentatively identify any areas of likely findings.

The full on-site visit was completed with five Prismatic team members October 11-14, 2010. The initial interview schedule included 54 interviews of either individuals (or several staff together) and 19 focus groups. Once on-site, team members were free to schedule additional and follow-up interviews, as needed.

Team members also observed operations at a number of schools. All schools were visited at least once during the on-site period, although the team member may have only been there to observe a specific aspect of operations, such as custodial cleaning or lunch being served.

1.3 PEER DISTRICTS

As part of the analyses completed in this audit, Prismatic made comparisons to peer districts where appropriate and possible. After discussions with district staff, the peers selected for the study were:

- * Greenwich (October 2009 enrollment of 8,847);
- * Norwalk (10,856);
- * Stamford (15,036);
- * Trumbull (6,973); and
- * West Hartford (10,184).

Several other districts in the Southern Fairfield County were considered but eliminated as being much smaller than Fairfield (Darien, New Canaan, Weston, Westport, and Wilton).

In some analyses, the team used peer data available from the State Department of Education. In other analyses, team members contacted the peer districts with specific data requests. Not all peer districts were responsive to all requests.

1.4 STAFF AND COMMUNITY INPUT

In addition to interviews and focus groups with specific district staff members, Prismatic provided all staff the opportunity to participate in an 80-question survey. Survey questions were reviewed and approved by district staff prior to survey launch. The survey was available to all district staff on-line September 10-24, 2010. For custodial and food service staff without district-assigned e-mail addresses, paper surveys were provided. All survey responses were held confidential and no individual survey result was shared with any district staff.

A total of 634 employees responded to the survey, a response rate of approximately 35 percent and a margin of error of three percent. Aggregated responses to the first 77 Likert-style questions are provided in Appendix A of this report. The open-ended responses to the final three questions were shared internally among Prismatic team members and used to inform and shape audit analyses.

To provide community members with an opportunity to provide input, the district placed a notice on its website, inviting all interested community members to provide send an e-mail with suggestions to a Prismatic-administered e-mail account. The option to provide input was available September 14-24, 2010. A few late responses, received between September 25th and October 5th, were not reviewed. All input was held confidential and no email addresses of respondents were shared with any district staff.

A total of 126 community members provided input via e-mail by the deadline. The compiled comments were shared internally among Prismatic team members and used to inform and shape audit analyses.

1.5 AUDIT LIMITATIONS

Overall, this audit was completed with few limitations. Because the district wished to have results in time for use in 2011-12 budget discussions, the timeframe of the audit was somewhat shorter than other comparable projects. While this did not impact the results provided in this report, it is possible that deeper analysis in some areas would have uncovered additional issues and concerns, requiring additional recommendations.

In a few limited areas, the district did not have information the team requested for analysis. In some cases, the team was forced to estimate using reasonable assumptions. While it would obviously be preferable to rely on solid, verifiable data, it is not likely that this methodological limitation impacted the team's overall conclusions. All assumptions necessary because of data limitations have been clearly outlined in subsequent chapters.

Because the FPS Board had already made a decision regarding middle school rezoning at the time this study was initiated, the Prismatic team did not undertake further analysis in this area. In addition, the district notified Prismatic that it separately contracted with a firm to review enrollment projections, educational specifications, and building utilization, so Prismatic did not undertake any work tasks related to those areas.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE FINAL REPORT

The remaining chapters of this report are presented in this order:

- * Chapter 2 – Overview of District Expenditures
- * Chapter 3 – Organization and Management
- * Chapter 4 – Technology
- * Chapter 5 – Financial Management
- * Chapter 6 – Human Resources
- * Chapter 7 – Facilities Use and Management
- * Chapter 8 – Food Services
- * Chapter 9 – Transportation
- * Chapter 10 – Safety and Security
- * Chapter 11 – Summary of Commendations and Recommendations
- * Appendix A – Staff Survey Results

It is important to remember that not all areas reviewed by Prismatic are included in this report. Only those areas where team members either identified an outstanding practice or one in need of improvement have been included. Findings regarding outstanding practices conclude with a commendation; those regarding practices in need of improvement conclude with a recommendation. District areas operating at an acceptable level are not included in the report, although the team may have had to investigate them deeply in order to determine their efficiency and effectiveness. Including information on district areas that did not have findings would have approximately tripled the size of this report.

It should be noted that the district is under no obligation to implement any recommendation in this report. FPS undertook this audit voluntarily, in an effort to identify areas for improvement. Moreover, as district staff works through the chapters of this report, they may find alternative ways to address the findings presented.

1.7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Prismatic gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following individuals in the performance of our on-site research, data analysis, and in the preparation of this report:

- * Dr. David Title, Superintendent;
- * Ms. Bonnie McWain, Director of Finance;



- * Ms. Margaret Mary Fitzgerald, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Leadership Development;
- * Ms. Anna Cutaio-Leonard, Director of Elementary Education;
- * Mr. John Ficke, Transportation Supervisor.
- * Ms. Joann Fitzpatrick, Manager of Food and Nutrition Services;
- * Mr. Dave Fryer, Maintenance Director;
- * Ms. Andrea Leonardi, Director of Special Education and Special Programs;
- * Mr. Sal Morabito, Facilities Director/Safety Manager;
- * Ms. Nancy Nash, Manager of Information Technology;
- * Mr. James Perner, Administrator for Pupil and Guidance Services at Fairfield Warde High School;
- * Mr. Mike Rafferty, Curriculum Leader;
- * Dr. Gary Rosato, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment;
- * Mr. Frank Tatto, Administrator for Student Support Services at Fairfield Ludlowe High School;
- * Mr. Karl von Hardenberg, Applications Analyst; and
- * Mr. Walter Wakeman, Curriculum Leader.

Prismatic also thanks the many other district staff who provided time, assistance, observations, and data for this review.

Overview of District Expenditures

This chapter provides an overview of Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) expenditures for the past several years. FPS is one of 169 school districts in the state of Connecticut. Five other Connecticut districts were selected as peer districts for this operational audit and are included in a number of exhibits for comparison purposes to Fairfield. They are:

- * Greenwich
- * Norwalk
- * Stamford
- * Trumbull
- * West Hartford

Exhibit 2-1 compares the district's expenditures by major objects of expense and enrollment between 2005-06 and 2009-10. While enrollment increased 9.1 percent between 2005-06 and 2009-10, total expenditures increased by 18.1 percent. All major objects of expense increased during the period except for maintenance services which decreased by \$538,776, a 17.1 percent decrease. The largest percentage increase was for tuition of 50.7 percent followed by student transportation of 32.3 percent and utility services of 24.3 percent. Salaries increased by 18.9 percent and the related expenses of health insurance and social security increased by 18.9 percent and 19.6 percent respectively.

Exhibit 2-1
Comparison of Enrollment to Major Objects of Expense
2005-06 and 2009-10

Enrollment and Major Objects of Expense	2005-06	2009-10	Change Between 2005-06 and 2009-10	
			Amount	Percentage
Enrollment	9,195	10,032	837	9.1%
Salaries	\$78,583,707	\$93,420,936	\$14,837,229	18.9%
Health Insurance	\$13,809,000	\$16,519,541	\$2,710,541	19.6%
Social Security	\$1,790,896	\$2,082,961	\$292,065	16.3%
Pupil Personnel Services	\$812,682	\$850,256	\$37,574	4.6%
Utility Services	\$4,042,513	\$5,025,618	\$983,105	24.3%
Maintenance Services	\$3,153,272	\$2,614,507	(\$538,766)	(17.1%)
Student Transportation	\$4,908,306	\$6,493,904	\$1,585,598	32.3%
Tuition	\$1,916,289	\$2,887,409	\$971,120	50.7%
Instructional Supplies/Materials	\$826,843	\$989,335	\$162,492	19.7%
Other Operational Expenses	\$8,379,042	\$8,678,893	\$299,851	3.6%
Total Expenditures	\$118,222,550	\$139,563,360	\$21,340,810	18.1%

Source: Fairfield's final summary statement by object, 2005-06 and 2009-10 and enrollments from budget documents.

Exhibit 2-2 shows the district's enrollment and number of staff positions for 2005-06 through 2009-10. During that period, enrollment increased by 837 students while staff positions increased by 56.4. Although enrollment increased by 9.0 percent between 2005-06 and 2009-10 and teaching staff increased by only 4.6 percent, the increase of 36.2 teaching positions indicates that the district added a teaching position for every 23.1 additional students. All classifications of staff increased during the period except for secretarial/clerical staff which decreased by 4.1 percent. Teaching positions had the largest increase in numbers at 36.2 FTE, while paraprofessional staff had the largest percentage increase at 11.3 percent.

Exhibit 2-2
Comparison of Enrollment to Staff Positions
2005-06 through 2009-10

Enrollment and Type of Position	Actual					Change	
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	#	%
Enrollment	9,195	9,424	9,709	9,880	10,032	837	9.0%
Teaching Staff	791.5	803.0	812.5	830.4	827.7	36.2	4.6%
Certified Support Staff	73.7	73.8	74.3	76.0	74.0	0.3	0.4%
School Administrating Staff	38.8	38.8	38.8	38.8	38.8	0.0	0.0%
Central Administration Staff	5	5.0	6.0	6.0	5.5	0.5	9.0%
Director/Supervisor/Manager	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.9	5.9	0.4	7.3%
Secretarial/Clerical Staff	82.5	82.8	82.2	83.0	79.1	(3.4)	(4.1%)
Paraprofessional Staff	160.5	165.3	166.4	179.6	178.7	18.2	11.3%
Custodial Staff	74	74.0	76.0	76.0	76.0	2.0	2.7%
Maintenance Staff	16	16.0	17.0	17.0	17.0	1.0	6.3%
Support Staff	60.6	60.6	63.6	64.6	61.8	1.2	2.0%
Total Number of Staff	1308.1	1,324.8	1,342.2	1,377.3	1,364.5	56.4	4.3%

Source: Fairfield's budget documents 2006-07 through 2010-11 and prior year's actual FTEs.

Exhibit 2-3 presents the percentage that Fairfield expended by function from 2004-05 through 2008-09. During that period the percentage expended for instructional programs, pupil and instructional support services, and general administration decreased while the percentage for school base administration, plant services, other, and transportation increased. Although the decrease in instructional programs was only a 0.67 percent decrease, it was the largest change of any function.

**Exhibit 2-3
FPS Expenditures – Percent by Function
2004-05 through 2005-09**

Function	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Change
Instructional Programs	58.21%	57.67%	57.15%	57.35%	57.54%	-0.67
Pupil and Instructional Support Services	13.96%	13.72%	13.87%	13.52%	13.78%	-0.18
School Based Administration	7.04%	7.04%	7.18%	6.75%	7.45%	0.41
General Administration	4.11%	4.23%	4.12%	4.33%	4.07%	-0.04
Plant Services	10.95%	11.59%	11.30%	11.43%	11.13%	0.18
Other	1.35%	1.23%	1.46%	1.42%	1.37%	0.02%
Total Transportation	4.37%	4.52%	4.92%	5.20%	4.65%	0.28%

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 2-4 compares the percentage expended by function in 2008-09. Fairfield expended the lowest percentage for instructional programs—more than four percentage points lower than the peer average. FPS expended a higher percentage than the peer average for all other functions except for general administration.

**Exhibit 2-4
Comparison of Percent of Expenditures by Function
2008-09**

District	Instructional Programs	Pupil & Instructional Support Services	School Based Administration	General Administration	Plant Services	Other	Total Transportation
Fairfield	57.54%	13.78%	7.45%	4.07%	11.13%	1.37%	4.65%
Greenwich	67.56%	8.78%	7.00%	2.66%	11.05%	0.00%	2.94%
Norwalk	62.39%	11.42%	7.76%	4.58%	9.36%	0.89%	3.61%
Stamford	60.79%	13.35%	5.74%	5.85%	9.49%	0.00%	4.77%
Trumbull	58.30%	12.70%	5.49%	6.24%	10.91%	0.86%	5.52%
West Hartford	59.57%	11.94%	8.40%	3.60%	11.13%	0.96%	4.39%
Peer Average	61.72%	11.64%	6.88%	4.59%	10.39%	0.54%	4.25%

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 2-5 compares 2008-09 expenditures per student for selected functions. Three peers expended more per pupil for instructional programs and two expended less, however Fairfield's per pupil expenditures are \$670 less than the peer average. Fairfield's expenditure per pupil for pupil and instructional support services was higher than all the peers and 20 percent greater than the peer average.

**Exhibit 2-5
Comparison Expenditure per Pupil for Selected Functions
2008-09**

District	Instructional Programs	Pupil & Instructional Support Services	School Based Administration	General Administration	Plant Services	Buildings and Debt Service	Total Transportation Per Resident Student
Fairfield	\$8,377	\$2,006	\$1,085	\$593	\$1,621	\$1,986	\$661
Greenwich	\$11,803	\$1,534	\$1,224	\$465	\$1,930	\$2,379	\$478
Norwalk	\$9,484	\$1,735	\$1,180	\$695	\$1,423	\$1,621	\$510
Stamford	\$9,604	\$2,110	\$907	\$925	\$1,500	\$2,903	\$743
Trumbull	\$7,004	\$1,526	\$659	\$749	\$1,310	\$906	\$654
West Hartford	\$7,340	\$1,471	\$1,035	\$443	\$1,371	\$713	\$515
Peer Average	\$9,047	\$1,675	\$1,001	\$655	\$1,507	\$1,704	\$580

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 2-6 shows Fairfield's per pupil cost for objects of expense for 2004-06 through 2008-09. During that period salaries increased by 8.99 percent while employee benefits increased by 31.75 percent, educational media supplies increased by 21.88 percent, and purchased services by 25.90 percent. Instructional supplies decreased by 7.20 percent and instructional equipment decreased by 64.44 percent.

**Exhibit 2-6
FPS per Pupil Cost by Object of Expense
2004-05 through 2008-09**

Object of Expense	Year					Change	
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Amount	Percent
Salaries	\$8,787	\$8,926	\$9,081	\$9,315	\$9,577	\$790	8.99%
Employee Benefits	\$1,688	\$1,942	\$2,073	\$2,093	\$2,224	\$536	31.75%
Instructional Supplies	\$236	\$242	\$206	\$230	\$219	-\$17	(7.20%)
Educational Media Supplies	\$32	\$31	\$34	\$47	\$39	\$7	21.88%
Instructional Equipment	\$45	\$42	\$12	\$14	\$16	-\$29	(64.44%)
Purchased Services	\$1,386	\$1,548	\$1,660	\$1,721	\$1,745	\$359	25.90%
Other	\$626	\$720	\$746	\$689	\$737	\$111	17.73%

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 2-7 compares expenditures per pupil by object of expense for 2008-09. Three districts expended more per pupil for salaries than did FPS; only Trumbull and West Hartford spent less. Fairfield's cost per pupil for employee benefits of \$2,224 was lower than three of the districts, higher than two districts, and \$124 less than the peer average. Three districts expended less per pupil for purchased services than does FPS. FPS spent well below the peer average on educational media supplies and instructional equipment. Overall, FPS spent less per pupil than the peer average and FPS's expenditure per pupil of \$1,745 is \$86 more than the peer average.

Exhibit 2-7
Expenditures per Pupil by Object of Expense
2008-09

District	Salaries	Employee Benefits	Instructional Supplies	Educational Media Supplies	Instructional Equipment	Purchased Services	Other	Total
Fairfield	\$9,577	\$2,224	\$219	\$39	\$16	\$1,745	\$737	\$14,557
Greenwich	\$11,791	\$2,840	\$376	\$30	\$0	\$1,954	\$479	\$17,470
Norwalk	\$9,832	\$2,952	\$149	\$25	\$29	\$1,560	\$655	\$15,202
Stamford	\$10,239	\$2,462	\$238	\$206	\$35	\$2,218	\$401	\$15,799
Trumbull	\$8,079	\$1,821	\$161	\$114	\$43	\$1,370	\$426	\$12,014
West Hartford	\$8,566	\$2,063	\$213	\$91	\$22	\$1,195	\$171	\$12,321
Peer Average	\$9,701	\$2,428	\$227	\$93	\$26	\$1,659	\$426	\$14,561

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 2-8 compares the percent of total expenditures that the district expended by object of expense for 2004-05 through 2008-09. Between 2004-05 and 2008-09 the percent expended for salaries decreased, as did the percent expended for instructional supplies and instructional equipment. The percent expended for employee benefits, educational media supplies, purchased services, and “other” increased.

Exhibit 2-8
Comparison of Selected Object of Expense Categories
2004-05 through 2008-09

Object of Expense	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Change
Salaries	67.50%	65.20%	64.45%	64.56%	64.15%	(3.35)
Employee Benefits	12.97%	14.19%	14.71%	14.51%	14.90%	1.93
Instructional Supplies	2.40%	2.30%	1.79%	2.01%	1.84%	(0.56)
Educational Media Supplies	10.65%	11.31%	11.78%	11.93%	11.69%	1.04
Instructional Equipment	21.00%	23.00%	23.00%	18.00%	17.00%	(4.00)
Purchased Services	1.48%	1.52%	1.74%	2.04%	2.32%	0.84
Other	4.84%	5.26%	5.30%	4.77%	4.93%	0.09

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 2-9 presents FPS and peer district net current expenditures per average daily enrollment. FPS’s net current expenditure per pupil of \$14,452 ranks 33rd among Connecticut’s 169 school districts. Three peer districts have a higher net current expenditure per pupil and two have a lower one.

Exhibit 2-9
Net Current Expenditures per Average Daily Enrollment
2008-09

District	Average Daily Membership	Net Current Expenditures	Amount per Pupil	Rank
Fairfield	9,960.92	\$143,958,769	\$14,452	33
Greenwich	8,760.93	\$154,775,042	\$17,667	9
Norwalk	10,806.39	\$165,498,634	\$15,315	24
Stamford	14,883.73	\$237,036,675	\$15,926	21
Trumbull	6,847.86	\$82,364,585	\$12,028	112
West Haven	7,335.32	\$83,943,257	\$11,444	144

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

This chapter reviews the organization and management of Fairfield Public Schools (FPS), and includes four major sections:

- 3.1 Management and Organization
- 3.2 Staffing
- 3.3 Instruction
- 3.4 Special Education

The organization and management of a school district involves cooperation between elected members of the board of education and staff of the district. The board's role is to set goals and objectives for the district in both instructional and operational areas, determine the policies by which the district will be governed, approve the plans to implement those policies, provide the funding sources necessary to carry out the plans, and evaluate the results of the plans.

Once the goals and objectives of the district are adopted by the board, it is the responsibility of the superintendent and staff to establish processes and procedures to achieve these end results. This achievement involves the hiring and retention of employees as well as ongoing communication with the community to ensure an understanding of those goals and the district's efforts to accomplish them.

3.1 MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

An effective central office organization structure is essential to the efficient and effective delivery of services in a school district. Efficient central office structures have the appropriate spans of control for effective leadership. Lines of authority should be clearly defined and shown in the district's organizational charts. Effective central office structures encourage communication at all levels.

Central office staff serves as the support system for the education that is provided in schools of any district and, depending on factors such as organization, staffing, communications, and processes, can either strengthen or impede progress towards high achievement for all students. A well-orchestrated, balanced relationship between school needs and central office support and coordination helps to ensure that financial and human resources are channeled toward increased student achievement for all students. Having the right people at the table to discuss district initiatives and determine and prioritize needs is essential for the district to accomplish its goals, build capacity in its employees, and continually improve its schools and students' achievement. Clearly articulated, measurable, and monitored goals set at the district level inform staff and the public of the district's priorities and guide decisions and actions at all levels of the system. Consequently, effective two-way communications systems, explicit guidelines and expectations, processes that streamline and reinforce district goals, and monitoring of district priorities are essential responsibilities of the central office.

An organization functioning at a best practices level exhibits these characteristics:

- * defines itself as a system and the organization’s stakeholders include its owners and staff, its suppliers, intermediate customers, the ultimate customers of the product or service, and the communities in which the organization operates;
- * has a strong sensing system for receiving current information on all parts of the system and their 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 it uses multiple structures, including 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, with information shared across functions and organization levels;
- * encourages and allows decisions to be made at the level closest to the customer, where all the necessary information is available;
- * has communication systems which are relatively open throughout the organization;
- * has reward systems designed to be congruent with the work and to support individual development—managers, supervisors, 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, and 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 guided by a strong manager employing a variety of work groups composed of individuals possessing appropriate skills and complementary traits.

The superintendent of a school district serves as the chief executive officer and is the person responsible for policy implementation and the day-to-day operation of the school district. Fairfield Public Schools’ superintendent, Dr. David Title, has been an administrator and superintendent in a number of districts but has recently come to FPS.

FINDING 3-1

Although he is new to the district, the Superintendent has already made several positive changes.

A 2009 Tri-State Consortium's review of FPS technology noted structural gaps in FPS's organization that created silos of decision-making within the central office. Prismatic found similar concerns in its survey of district staff, staff interviews, and on-site observations. Comments (paraphrased) about ambiguous roles and responsibilities among central office staff included:

- * *Central office job descriptions don't seem clear.*
- * *Among teachers, it is unclear what some administrators do, what their responsibilities are, and to whom they are accountable.*
- * *There seems to be some redundancy among responsibilities.*

Since arriving in FPS, the Superintendent has begun addressing organizational barriers to greater effectiveness. Recognizing that more clearly defining who is responsible for what at the central office contributes to a more efficient, effective central operation, he examined the sometimes overlapping roles and responsibilities of the Director of Elementary Education and the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. He then clarified their roles and separated their responsibilities to principals and for curricular areas and grades. Many staff interviewed stated that this singular change had increased a sense of support and cohesion among elementary principals.

Additionally, the Superintendent had all central office administrators write mutual expectations and commitments regarding their job responsibilities. These are to serve as guiding documents to be used for evaluations and to clarify their roles this year. The superintendent recognizes that, being relatively new to the district, there will likely be other areas to address.

COMMENDATION

The Superintendent has immediately made positive organizational changes.

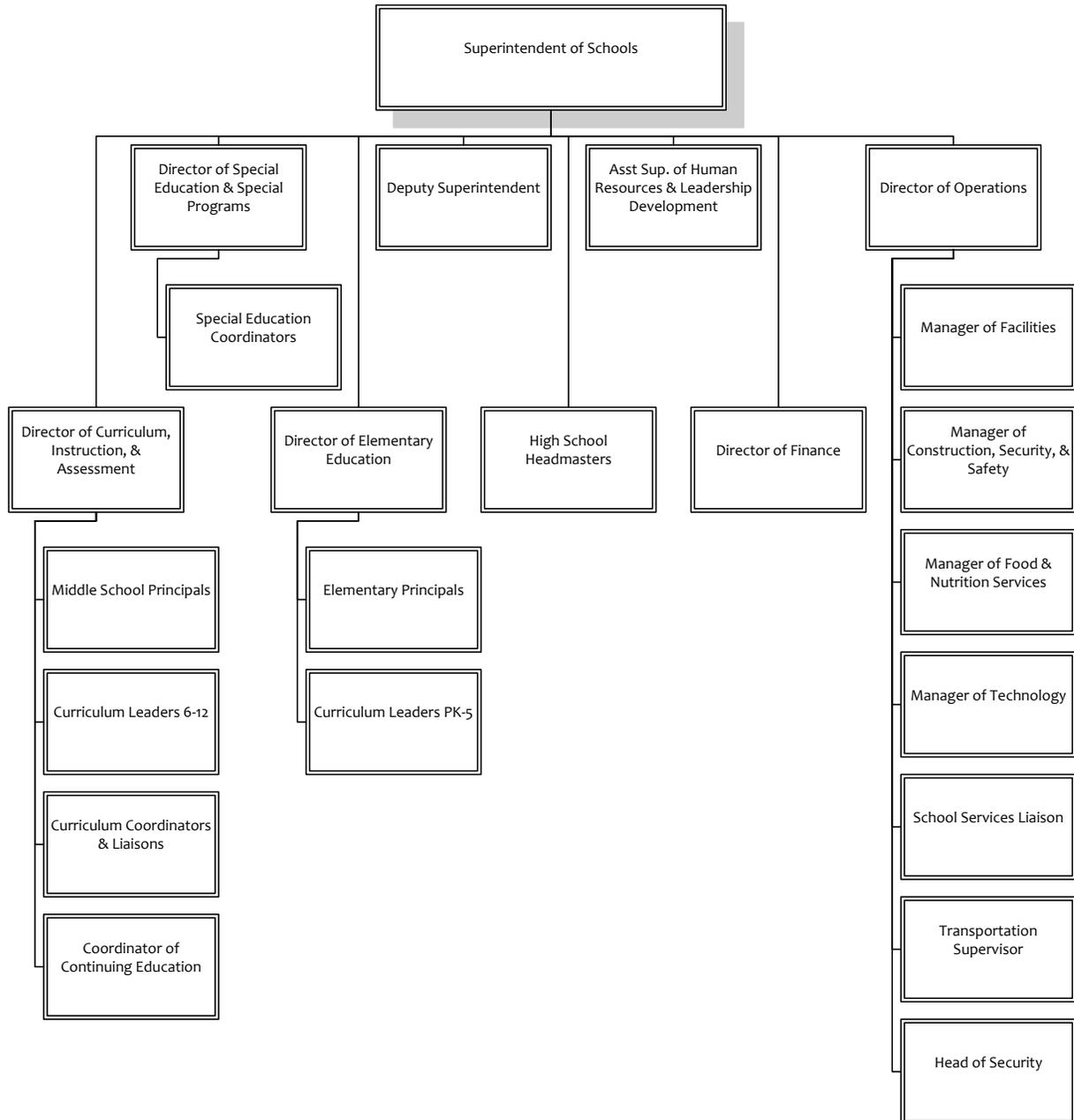
FINDING 3-2

The FPS Central Office structure could be further improved to better provide services and support to schools.

With the current organizational structure, there is no mid-level administrator through whom access to the Superintendent is filtered to allow him to focus on the key tasks of: district-wide day-to-day leadership; serving as the primary liaison with the board and public; and policy implementation. In addition to the high school principals, all district administrators report directly to the Superintendent rather than to an intermediary. **Exhibit 3-1** shows the current organizational structure of FPS. It shows that the Superintendent's current direct reports are:

- * Deputy Superintendent;
- * Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Leadership Development;
- * Director of Finance;
- * Director of Operations;
- * Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment;
- * Director of Elementary Education;
- * Director of Special Education and Special Programs; and
- * High School Headmasters (two).

**Exhibit 3-1
Current FPS Central Office Organizational Structure**



Source: Fairfield Public Schools, 2010.

The Tri-State Consortium study in April 2009 noted that the leadership structure recently changed. It also noted the importance of a unified structure in creating a single district vision as it relates to technology.

There is an FPS Assistant Superintendent for some operational functions, but all operational functions are not aligned under the office of the Assistant Superintendent. No parallel Assistant Superintendent position for academic roles exists, so all Directors report to the Superintendent.

There is no other district administrator with the authority to unify decisions and ensure fidelity of implementation of curricular and instructional programs and initiatives. The district currently lacks a structural, coordinated effort centered on curriculum and instruction.

There is a 0.45 Deputy Superintendent, a position which, in other districts, typically serves as the conduit between other executive positions and the Superintendent. In FPS, the position is parallel to the Assistant Superintendent, Directors, and high school headmasters.

Depending on their school level, principals report to one of three central office administrators:

- * elementary principals report to the Director of Elementary Education;
- * middle school principals report to the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; and
- * high school principals report to the Superintendent.

While this structure might be suitable in a district with a history of high consistency among and between school levels, many staff identified a multitude of areas where there is inconsistency within FPS schools at the same levels, from one level to another, or across the district's schools in general.

Although the majority of staff interviewed expressed the desire for technology to be more closely associated with instruction to reinforce its key role in student learning, the technology department currently resides under the Director of Operations. Technology staff does not routinely meet with instructional leaders to take part in and understand decisions impacting both technology and instruction. Staff in the technology department, instructional offices, and schools noted the need for better coordination and collaboration so that technology functions and decision-making could be well-integrated with instructional needs.

The review team found that FPS has an extremely active parent community. Currently, the Superintendent is often drawn into meetings with parents and community leaders that could be handled just as effectively by someone in a subordinate position. While parent involvement is essential to improving student achievement, the current structure does not have an intermediary position for members of the public to contact instead of going directly to the Superintendent. Time spent fielding individual parent concerns reduces the time the Superintendent has for his primary responsibility of leading district schools. In the same vein, the district lacks a position whose role it is to provide the public and the schools timely, frequent, accurate information regarding school issues and initiatives.

Three of the peer districts for this study provided organization charts. In comparing those, Prismatic found that:

- * The Norwalk Superintendent has just three direct reports: an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; a Chief Operating Officer; and a position titled "Human Relations."
- * The West Hartford Superintendent has three central office direct reports: an Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Curriculum; an Assistant Superintendent for

Administration; and an Executive Director of Human Resources. All 16 principals also report directly to the Superintendent.

- * The Stamford Superintendent has six direct reports: a Deputy Superintendent, a Chief Academic Officer, a Transportation Director, a Finance Director, a Public Affairs Officer, and a Chief Information Officer. All principals report to the Deputy Superintendent.

Recent research on central office organizational structure in North Carolina school districts found that for medium-sized districts (2,500 to 9,999) the most common structure was one in which principals reported directly to the Superintendent (n=37). In large districts (10,000 to 31,000), the most common structure was also one in which principals reported directly to the Superintendent (n=31).¹ To date, there has been little other published research on the typical organization structures of central offices.

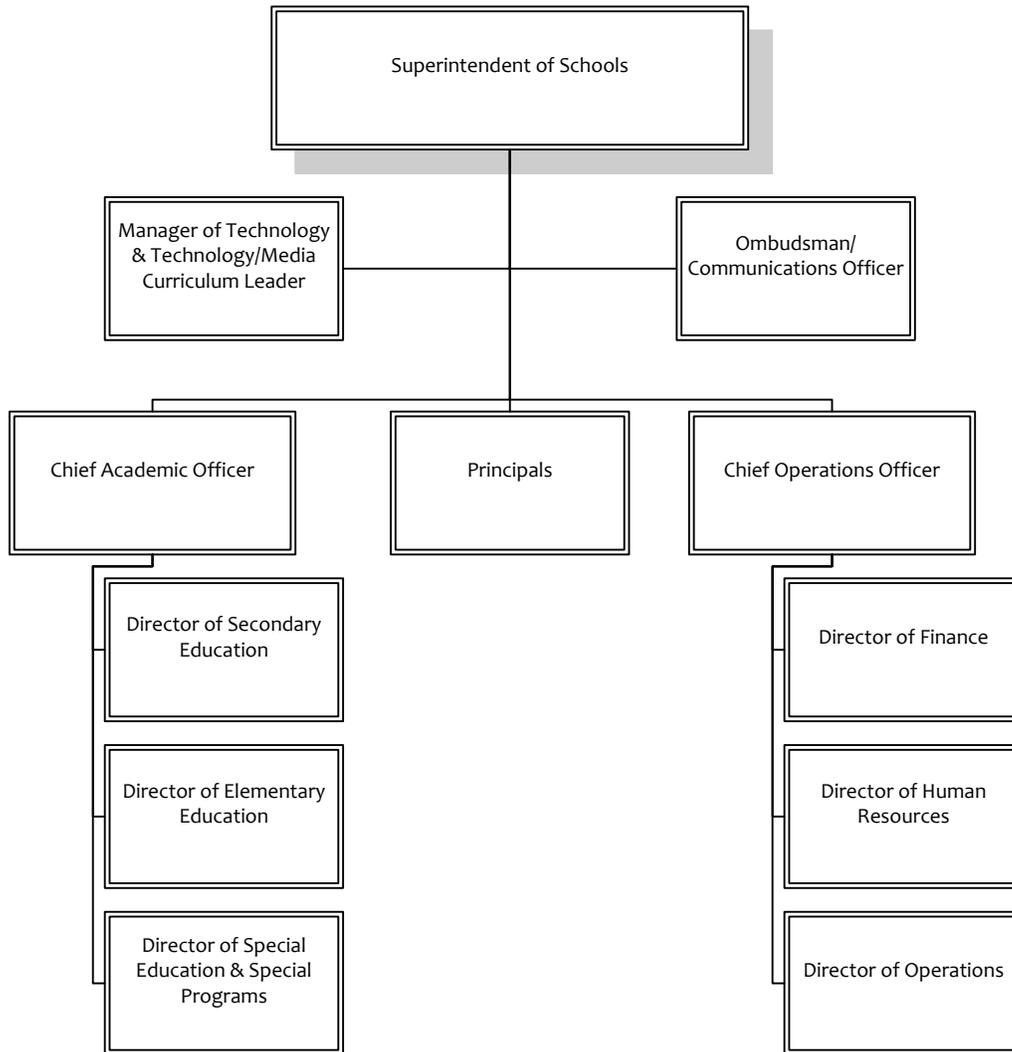
RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a new central office organizational structure.

Exhibit 3-2 proposes a revised organizational structure for the district's central office.

¹ Dunaway, D. & Ausband, L. An analysis of the organizational patterns of North Carolina school districts. *Academic Leadership*. (4) 3, accessed online September 16, 2010.

**Exhibit 3-2
Proposed FPS Central Office Organizational Structure²**



Source: Prismatic Services, 2010

It is essential for there to be clear lines of authority that reinforce accountability for district decisions and initiative rollouts. For that reason, Prismatic recommends that, for at least three years, principals report directly to the Superintendent for supervision and evaluation.

In order to unify the district’s focus on teaching and learning, the Directors of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Elementary Education and Special Education should report to the same high-level administrator who is over all instructional, curricular, and assessment departments.

The benefits of this structure include:

² Positions below Director have been omitted for clarity.

- * Two distinct organizational divisions separate instructional from operational functions but consolidate each in a distinct district arena. This reduces the number of direct central office reports to the Superintendent, providing more time for principal supervision.
- * Creating a Chief Academic Officer position enables the district to focus on its core functions of teaching and learning. This position should also be responsible for accountability and evaluation in instructional programs.
- * Adding a Chief Operations Officer position to oversee human resources, finance, and operations will consolidate all operational functions under a position reporting directly to the Superintendent.
- * Directors will report to one of those positions most closely related to their job function.
- * Creating an Ombudsman/Communications Officer position should provide a critical conduit of information to and from the community and should be closely associated with the Superintendent's office. Moreover, in today's educational arena, accountability plays a much broader role in school systems than merely student accountability as it relates to assessment and data analysis. This position should also play a central role in strategic planning and accountability, elevating those roles to the height they should have in the district.
- * Moving the Technology Department to report directly to the Superintendent will ensure that purchases, decisions, and services are aligned with the instructional as well as the operational needs of the district and that issues can be discussed and problems resolved at the appropriate level. The Technology Manager would lead this department and be responsible for meeting the needs of both administrative and instructional sides of the district. The Curriculum Leader for Technology/Media should also be assigned to this department to help ensure instructional technology needs are met.
- * With fewer direct central office reports, the Superintendent's time can be better leveraged to lead district initiatives.

FISCAL IMPACT

Prismatic is proposing that:

- * The new COO and CAO positions receive \$10,000 more than the average administrator's salary of \$155,730. The total cost including benefits would be (\$165,730) each.
- * A new Director of Human Resources position would cost the average salary and benefits of FPS Directors of \$155,730.
- * Eliminating the 0.45 Deputy Superintendent position would save the district \$76,821, the current salary budgeted, excluding benefits which could not be obtained from the district.
- * Adding a full-time Ombudsman/Communications position is proposed to cost the same as a Director's position, \$155,730 without benefits.

- * Eliminating the position of Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Leadership Development would save the district \$166,721, without benefits.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Add a Chief Academic Officer	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)
Add a Chief Business Officer	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)	(\$165,730)
Eliminate Deputy Superintendent position	\$76,821	\$76,821	\$76,821	\$76,821	\$76,821
Eliminate Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Leadership Development position	\$166,721	\$166,721	\$166,721	\$166,721	\$166,721
Add a Director of Human Resources position	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)
Add a Ombudsman/ Communication Officer position	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)
TOTAL*	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)

**in addition to the cost of benefits for the Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Director's positions which were not obtained from district staff.*

FINDING 3-3

Much administrative and clerical time is expended at the central office due to the district's long-standing custom of involving parents and community members in most decisions and activism on the part of community members. Examples of current community involvement include:

- * When new curricula are developed, they are reviewed by parent groups before moving forward to the School Board.
- * There is an active group of parents supporting change in the food service program.
- * Organized parents have presented to the Superintendent and the board regarding issues of concern or proposed changes in district practice.

Parental involvement has long been proven an essential characteristic of effective schools. However, on-site interviews revealed that, in some instances, waiting for a proposed change to wind its way through layers of informal community approval slows its implementation. The district does not appear to have a method for determining whether decisions need to be made with broad input and review or whether some are more properly made quickly, with less input.

Another potential impediment to more rapid progress posited by several staff interviewed was their observation that decisions the board makes are not always final. One noted that big initiatives are at least sometimes derailed by "the last person at the podium." This is a non-productive, inefficient use of valuable staff time which should always be focused on improving teaching and learning. It also likely negatively impacts staff morale. As a result of this culture, district administrators are often reluctant to immediately move forward after board decisions.

Another example of the lengths to which the district has gone in encouraging public input is the multi-hour length of board meetings, resulting from allowing members of the public each to speak two minutes on any topic. Allowing public comment at open board meetings is commendable. However, many other boards allow public input, but limit speakers to those who have new points to be made. This keeps the board open to soliciting input from the public, but prevents meetings from being redundant and overly lengthy. There is a hidden cost to overly lengthy board meetings when staff attends until 2 a.m., and then returns to work the next morning not fully rested to address primary responsibilities to students.

Several staff stated that FPS central office personnel respond to a myriad of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Although the board and Superintendent recognize that it is the public's right to make such requests, they take staff time away from their primary educational support roles. They require staff to locate documents, compile data, copy pages, audio or DVDs, and communicate with the requester to let them know the information is ready. The Superintendent's secretary tracks the FOI requests and related copying expenses. Staff reported that once initial data are provided, requesters often make follow-up requests, again reducing their effectiveness in accomplishing the jobs they were hired to do. Between January and October 2010 alone, 23 FOI requests were made. Initial requests ranged from one to 25 pages.

RECOMMENDATION

Schedule a board workshop to discuss ways to balance public input and the need to move the district's agenda for children forward as quickly as possible.

The board has attended training provided by the Connecticut School Boards Association on roles and responsibilities and has more planned for later this year. During some of their future training, they should make it a priority to discuss how they can involve the public when warranted, but set specific parameters and hold to them. They should explore ways to regularly solicit the input of all parents and community members, not just those of a vocal minority. In that way, the broad public will be involved in substantive issues that deserve public input, but critical timely decisions can be made when needed without layers of presentation and approval by the public that delays implementation. Agreements should be committed to writing, communicated to the public and staff, and adhered to consistently at board meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. It should save staff time and district resources, as well as expedite many initiatives.

FINDING 3-4

FPS has begun focusing on data analysis to drive decisions about student learning, although it is not consistent from school to school, nor yet used as a basis for program evaluation. Some schools have effective data teams which, when fully implemented, will give teachers the opportunity to examine student performance information and to make classroom, grade level, and Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) decisions. To date, though, data analysis and use are not consistent across FPS. District student programs also have the potential to provide meaningful information to guide decisions about students, teachers, and professional

development. However, many report that they are not as user-friendly or timely as desired to become a seamless part of decision-making processes.

The district's nascent focus on data analysis will help it become more specific in analyzing data. However, as in many other school districts across the nation, Prismatic found no evidence of systematic program or process evaluation to ensure that the programs and practices being used are those that have been deemed most effective. The district's move toward data analysis reflects recognition of the need to embed evaluation into its decision-making process to sharpen its focus on activities and programs that are most likely to improve student performance.

The Superintendent changed the focus of K-12 leadership meetings to professional development for district leaders. One of the topics they are studying in depth is development of a uniform data protocol. The Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment has developed a process and timeline for implementation, review, evaluation, and revision of curriculum that should become the way of work for the district as it adopts, expands, revises, or eliminates other types of programs or even district processes. Elementary Curriculum Leaders have begun integrating enrichment activities into curriculum documents to expand the learning of more academically talented students. Together, these are steps that may lead to a systemic program evaluation framework.

Effective schools research has demonstrated the importance of frequent monitoring of data, whether relating to student achievement or programs and processes for nearly four decades. Successful schools:

- * have a strategic approach for collecting, analyzing, reporting, and using data;
- * do so throughout the school year;
- * use the results to make sound instructional decisions about students;
- * employ assessments to design interventions and decide on individual and group instructional strategies;
- * are guided by data to locate gaps in curriculum and then identify related solutions;
- * internalize this activity as a part of the regular operation of the school; and,
- * use the system of data analysis to report data visually using graphs for planning purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

Expand the use of data to include evaluation of programs and processes to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of district activities.

Program evaluation is at the heart of all successful improvement efforts. With program evaluation, mid-course corrections can be made, the reasons for success can be identified, and continuous improvement can become an embedded practice. At every level of the educational enterprise, from the board room to the classroom, there are constant information and data needs. The legislative accountability requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* support a need

for immediate, accurate, and analysis-driven data and research reporting. An equally important and significant need (for what Michael Fullan and Rick Stiggins refer to as *assessment literacy* or the ability to make critical sense of data and knowing how to use it as a strategy for reform³) has emerged. This focus on data-driven decisions should extend beyond analysis of student performance to those programs and practices that affect performance as well.

Research and program evaluation are critical to creating high performance schools and a central office organized by principles of high performance management. One aspect of evaluation is the need to identify the match between programs being considered for district students and their academic needs and demographics. Additionally, programs in place should have formative evaluations conducted to determine the need for change and refine strategies for effectiveness. Without regular evaluations of all programs, the district puts itself in the position of funding programs that are not meeting the intent behind their adoption and/or spending time and dollars on ineffective programs. This may prevent it from implementing other programs that are effective. Use of an ongoing systemic means of continuous program improvement keeps many factors that affect student achievement at the forefront of staff's minds, and focuses resources and training in areas where they are most needed.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-5

It is uncertain whether links have been developed that tie elementary programs and secondary programs. Such links should provide a seamless transition between the foundation laid in the elementary years and students' continued success at the secondary level.

FPS curriculum leaders and central administrators noted that the district has developed processes for creating, implementing, and reviewing new elementary curricular roll-outs. The processes have entailed much stakeholder involvement to generate commitment to and understanding of the new curricula. They have also included extensive professional development to heighten fidelity of implementation. District leadership's five-year plan for writing and reviewing curricula is a strong first step in ensuring robust learning experiences for FPS students. Implementation guides also strengthen teacher ability to deliver the curriculum as intended. These specific initiatives have been designed for elementary schools.

Most interviews and FPS documents reflected discrete content area initiatives but little appeared to be happening cross-grade at school transitions or in interdisciplinary curricular planning. For curricula to be seamless preK-12, there needs to be planning and communication regarding how to re-teach, revisit, maintain and build on the skills students have already experienced. Concomitant with that is a need to define procedures and processes that provide preK-12 curricular expectations, provide tactical support, professional development, and systematic accountability for the curricular focus.

³ Stiggins, *Student Involved Classroom Assessment* (2001) and Fullan, *Accomplishing Large Scale Reform: A Tri-Level Proposition* (2001).

In the public comments received by Prismatic as part of this review, several parents noted a lack of seamlessness. They noted that as their children transitioned from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school they were unprepared in several specific areas.

Best practices demonstrate that district-wide curriculum is based on clear learning goals that are correlated to specific learning objectives, student learning experiences, and student assessments. In such districts, central office administrators and teachers have frequent conversations to determine if curriculum work is spiraling upward and students are meeting high expectations. Professional development is closely aligned with curricular initiatives to ensure that teachers have the requisite knowledge and pedagogical skills to maximize the learning of all students. Linkages across standards and grades are a necessary tool for that to happen.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop PreK-12 horizontal and vertical cross-curricular standards connection documents.

In conjunction with plans to develop, review, revise, and evaluate curricula and adoption of national standards, FPS should also develop and implement PreK-12 horizontal and vertical cross-curricular standards connection documents as part of a district-wide instructional plan. Developing cross-curricular connections between standards from different content areas facilitates the efficiency and effectiveness of the instructional process. The process integrates, coordinates, and structures learning that reflects real life. It also allows for the abandonment of isolated, siloed programs and initiatives.

This recommendation includes the examination of curricula from all programs and initiatives currently being implemented in the district. If there is unnecessary duplication, it is evidence for abandonment. High achieving school districts closely examine all curricula: after-school, supplemental, pull-out programs, workbooks, and textbooks, to ensure there are no siloed and disjointed programs and initiatives distracting from standards-driven instruction. Curricula must be examined to ensure there is common vocabulary in all content areas. Program and initiative content must not be so highly structured and scripted that students cannot recognize the instructional connections to the mainstream curricula.

This process is also beneficial in other ways. The cross-grade and cross-content curricular discussions contribute to the professional growth of teachers. These discussions formalize essential standards and those standards that must be continuously reinforced in future grades. It identifies standards that can be integrated and have cross-curricular themes. Horizontal and vertical curricular planning and discussions help strengthen teacher understanding of not only standards, but pedagogy, quality student work, and use of data to inform and guide instruction. If there are siloed, isolated, and disconnected initiatives still being implemented, it gives input for either connection or abandonment. Adopting new programs should be included in this process. This process can only be successful if there is strong representation and input from school stakeholders and facilitation and technical support from the central office. The results of the cross-curricular examination should be included in all instructional guides. The district should strive to have all content area curricula web-based and easily accessible to students, teachers, and parents. A web-based curriculum also allows for more efficient updates and changes to the curriculum.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-6

The Superintendent has begun to move the district toward a more learner-centered focus.

The Superintendent has recognized the need for administrative meetings to be more learner-centered for FPS instructional leaders. In response, he has eliminated the former meeting format. Beginning with a two-day training session in the summer, leaders began:

- * studying Connecticut's teacher competencies;
- * discussing a district data protocol; and
- * refocusing on effective teaching.

Principals requested a follow-up to the summer session and are now meeting on a monthly basis.

Meetings are still held to discuss business items, but, when the issues do not relate to the entire group, the Superintendent dismisses others and meets only with those who need to be involved. The Superintendent intends that schools will also restructure their faculty meetings to focus more deeply on issues affecting student learning.

COMMENDATION

The Superintendent has streamlined and re-directed the focus of administrative meetings from business topics to administrative development.

FINDING 3-7

The current staff evaluation process is time-consuming and likely could be improved.

During the on-site review, principals expressed frustration with the current instructional personnel evaluation process. They feel it misses the goals related to personal and professional growth that should be the foundation of staff evaluation. Although principals strongly want the staff evaluation process to be a meaningful opportunity for staff growth, the current system requires principals to spend hours writing extensive Status of Staff evaluations, often using text from documents that teachers have written in a cut and paste manner.

An effective annual evaluation system encompasses an ongoing dialogue of efforts and improvements throughout the year that culminates in a formal, but meaningful, performance appraisal. Effective evaluation systems are a key component of organizational success and should align organizational, team, and individual performance. Best practices indicate that effective performance evaluation systems have three components:

- * **Performance planning** - is a process whereby expectations are established linking individual with team and organizational goals. Care is taken to ensure goals at all levels are aligned and there is clear line of sight from performance expectations of individual

employees all the way up to organizational objectives and strategies set at the highest levels of the organization.

- * **Performance** – is the manner of demonstrating a skill or capacity.
- * **Performance feedback** – communicates how well people do a job or task compared to expectations, performance standards and goals. Performance feedback can motivate employees to improve performance.⁴

RECOMMENDATION

Revise the current staff evaluation process.

Human Resources staff noted that the state is currently developing new teacher and administrator competencies, so the district is waiting before revising its current staff evaluation forms. Regardless of the state’s ultimate guidance on form revision, the Superintendent should work with principals to revise the district’s staff evaluation process to be more aligned with best practices and to free principals to spend more time on true instructional leadership.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. However, it should also recoup some of the most important resource a school district has--human capital in its leadership team.

3.2 STAFFING

An effective way of viewing the efficiency of a school system is by benchmarking total staffing ratios. The intent of an efficient school system is to provide as much direct classroom instruction to students as possible, while keeping the overall ratios of total staff to students within an acceptable range. The level of effectiveness in reaching this goal can be determined, in a large part, by comparing the percentages of total staff and instructional staff in the system of interest to other peer school systems. A school system compares favorably by exhibiting a higher percentage of instructional staff and a lower percentage of overall staff.

FINDING 3-8

Although it is not universal perception in FPS, the central office administrative team has remained relatively small, even as student numbers have increased.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-3**, significant percentages of those who responded to the Prismatic staff survey believe that the central office organizational structure is efficient and that district administrators provide quality services to schools.

⁴ www.WorlDatWork.com

**Exhibit 3-3
Prismatic Employee Survey Resulted Related to Central Office**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The central office organizational structure is efficient.	4%	31%	31%	22%	11%
District administrators provide quality service to schools.	7%	44%	27%	17%	6%

Source: Prismatic Survey, 2010.

Nevertheless, many comments provided by staff in the open-ended section of the survey reflected a perception that the FPS central office is over-staffed with administrators. When asked for ideas to improve efficiency and effectiveness, staff comments regarding administration included a perception that the district could realize significant savings by eliminating most central office staffing.

Nationally, public perceptions of administrative staffing numbers generally mirror the concerns of some FPS staff regarding top-heavy central administrations. However, data regarding changes in enrollment and administrative staff in FPS tell a different story. **Exhibit 3-4** compares the number of administrator positions at the central office and schools of FPS between 2005-06 and 2009-10. It shows that, while student enrollment increased by 837, the number of central office administrators increased by 0.5. Considering the initial small number of central office administrators, this is essentially flat. School administrator numbers remained consistent through all those years. The number of positions of Directors, Supervisors, and Managers increased even less, showing a net gain of 0.4 FTE.

**Exhibit 3-4
Comparison of Enrollment to Administrative Staff Positions
2005-06 through 2009-10**

Enrollment and Type of Position	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Change	Percent
Enrollment	9,195	9,424	9,709	9,880	10,032	837	9.1%
School Administration Staff	38.8	38.8	38.8	38.8	38.8	0.0	0.0%
Central Administration Staff	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0	5.5	0.5	10.0%
Director/Supervisor/Manager	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.9	5.9	0.4	7.3%
Total Number of Administrators	49.3	49.3	50.2	50.7	50.2	.9	1.8%

Source: Fairfield's final summary statement by object, 2005-06 through 2009-10 and enrollment from budget document.

Exhibit 3-5 compares the number of administrator positions at the central office of FPS and its peers for the 2009-2010 school year. It should be noted that caution must be exercised in examining these positions. Districts often term similar positions by different names. Prismatic has attempted to identify positions that appear to be similar in responsibility. For a complete comparison, job descriptions would need to be examined for positions in each district.

Nevertheless, the data presented show that FPS is similar in central office to that of its peers.

**Exhibit 3-5
Comparison of Enrollment to Administrative Staff Positions**
Fairfield Public Schools and Peer Districts**

Position Title	Fairfield	Greenwich	Norwalk	Stamford	Trumbull	West Hartford	Peer Average
Deputy Superintendent	0.45	1	0	1	0	0	0.4
Assistant Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer	1	1	2	2	1	2	1.5
Executive Director	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.3
Director	5	6	6	11	1	5	5.7
Assistant Director	0	0	2	3	0	1	1.0
Coordinator, Including Special Education	8	15	6	1	4	5	6.3
Other Curriculum Position/Teachers on Special Assignments	5.9	1.5	0	12	4	5	4.7
Specialist, Program Manager or Administrator	0	5	3	4	3	3	3.0
Communications	0	0	1	2	0	0	0.5
TOTAL FTE	20.4	29.5	20.0	35.0	13.0	22.0	23.3

Source: Created by Prismatic Services, October 2010 from organization charts, emails, and conversations with peer district staff.

* Teacher on Special Assignment

** Titles vary so much from district to district that an attempt was made to identify positions at similar levels on the organizational chart

COMMENDATION

Fairfield Public Schools has only minimally increased its administrative staff, and at rates that compare favorably to the increase in student enrollment over the past five years.

The proposed staffing additions in Finding 3-2 (a net gain of 2.55 FTE central office) would still be within the comparable range of the peer districts.

FINDING 3-9

Current central office curriculum staffing is not sufficient to support curricular development and implementation in FPS schools.

The state of Connecticut does not provide curriculum documents to its school districts, so districts must develop documents and processes themselves. Currently, FPS has two full-time

Curriculum Leaders for grades K-5 at the central office, one in Math/Science, and one in Language Arts. The district has Curriculum Leader positions for grades 6-12, one each for Science, English/Language Arts, and Math. The Math Curriculum Leader position for secondary schools was vacant at the time of the on-site visit.

One additional Curriculum Leader wears two hats, serving 6-12 for Social Studies and K-12 for Library Media/Technology. Many staff noted that adding responsibility for technology to that position has made a tremendous stride toward beginning to integrate technology and instruction. It has also helped bring instruction into decisions about technology in the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the organizational structure for curricular leadership.

Prismatic recommends that the district:

- * divide the Social Studies/Library Media/Technology Curriculum responsibilities;
- * add an additional curriculum leader position for Social Studies;
- * fill the vacancy for 6-12 Mathematics; and
- * assign a Technology/Media Curriculum Leader to the Technology Department.

The need for instruction and technology to be more closely tied together in FPS was a primary concern expressed at multiple levels during the review. Considering how great the needs of FPS are in the area of technology, the Technology/Library Media position needs to be made a full-time curriculum leader position, playing a vastly expanded role in district planning and decision-making regarding instructional technology. All building techs supporting technology in the schools should report to the Curriculum Leader for Library Media/Technology.

FISCAL IMPACT

The budget currently contains funding for the Math Curriculum Leader. The addition of a new Curriculum Leader to take over the Social Studies content area would cost the district the average salary of administrators, including benefits, for a total of \$155,730.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Add a Curriculum Leader for Social Studies	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)

FINDING 3-10

District allocation of staff to schools, particularly elementary, includes many positions that are assigned part-time. This causes multiple challenges to them, their schools, and district staff trying to coordinate meetings or provide communications to appropriate staff. Some interviewees stated that, when resource staff are shared between elementary and secondary schools, the secondary school dictates when staff are available for the elementary school, further complicating their ability to provide students services and to schedule meetings such as Planning

and Placement Team (PPTs) meetings. When staff who need to be part of the team making decisions about student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) for placement in special education programs are only in schools two days, or in some cases, only one morning a week, it exacerbates the ability to pull appropriate staff together for that decision. In regard to staffing, sometimes two staff members are both assigned part-time to two schools; in one case, they requested that they be assigned more fully to one school instead of both serving two schools part-time.

When asked to explain the rationale behind these part-time positions, district staff only noted that it was due to budget constraints. In many cases, resource staff has a dual reporting and supervision relationship between the building principal and an administrator at the central office. This makes their jobs, in one person's words, "messy" and contributes to a lack of consistency in their use across the district. That, along with remnants of site-based management, in turn, leads to diversion of their time from their intended job responsibilities and, consequently, wastes district resources. Technology building techs experience the same variability in their job assignments and roles but are addressed separately in **Chapter 4**. The same is true of social workers and psychologists who are discussed in a later finding in this chapter.

One person interviewed observed that there is "no strategic deployment" of staff to schools because it depends on the principals rather than district intent. Many reinforced that observation.

Instructional Improvement Teachers were, by all accounts, assigned to elementary schools to provide quasi-administrative support to the principals. Their job descriptions, however, state that they are to provide direct student intervention. At the time of the visit, the Director of Elementary Education was collecting weekly schedules to determine exactly how their time is actually being used.

Staff interviewed often stated that they as well as other resource personnel assigned to schools performed responsibilities dependent upon their own principal's leanings. Although most resource staff positions are district employees, there is a category of resource teachers, Early Literacy Tutors, whose positions have been in the district for an estimated 10 years but are considered hourly employees, not FPS staff.

RECOMMENDATION

Review the intended assignment of district-allocated positions to schools.

The Superintendent should schedule discussion of intended uses of school resource positions at a Cabinet meeting to specify purposes for which each position can and cannot be utilized. This will help ensure that their time is focused only on their explicit job responsibilities.

When specific positions are deemed essential enough for job descriptions to be developed and staff hired and assigned to perform those responsibilities, it is incumbent upon the district to develop processes that ensure the staff are used as intended. Allowing assigned staff to be used according to the individual predilections of principals undermines the intent behind creation of those positions and is not a cost-effective use of personnel. Once district level administrators identify relevant assignments, they should be discussed with principals, possibly revised, reduced

to writing, and disseminated to people in those positions and school administrators. This should help to identify and better standardize key decisions and processes that will provide uniformity of programs and curricula across the district.

This recommendation may also require examination of current job descriptions or, in some cases, descriptions of responsibilities since they are on the teacher salary schedule, regarding the specificity of job tasks and responsibilities which could:

- * reduce duplication of effort;
- * improve staff morale because they know what is expected of them;
- * strengthen accountability for work production; and
- * provide the district a means of tying annual evaluation to the duties outlined.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-11

Many staff interviewed in numerous positions within FPS stated that the part-time positions create multiple challenges for schools. Some staff members are only in a school one morning a week. Others are there two days. When there is a need for a team to meet either to discuss in-classroom interventions for a specific student in a general education classroom or for a PPT meeting, staff responsible for scheduling and coordinating the meetings have great difficulty finding a time when all necessary staff are in the school.

Curriculum leaders report the effectiveness of implementation of the reading program that was achieved through lengthy professional development supported by the Language Arts Consultants. Having those full-time Consultants in each school enabled them to become trusted peers for teachers to comfortably approach when they encountered challenges in implementation. Their positions in the schools also provided teachers the opportunity both for regular professional development by a resource person knowledgeable about the needs of teachers in the school and for classroom modeling, coaching, co-teaching, and timely technical assistance and guidance. Those interviewed noted that an essential obstacle to effective implementation of any new program in the district is the inability to move it forward without adequate support personnel and time for professional development, to introduce it, have all teachers familiar with its backbone, and then support it so that they strengthen their knowledge and skills as they implement it.

At the time of the on-site visit, the district was beginning implementation of a math program along the same lines of the reading initiative. It is, however, handicapped in that there are only 0.4 Math Resource Teachers at each school in contrast to the full-time Language Arts Consultants.

Furthermore, the district is beginning to develop a long-range curriculum implementation, review, evaluation and revision process for its curricula. It will need staff at the schools who are

knowledgeable both in content and, more importantly, in pedagogy, to effectively lead that process and move the paper documents to classroom practice. By many accounts, the Instructional Improvement Teachers were placed in schools for quasi-administrative purposes instead of instructional support. Although recent documents report their daily contact with students, a more effective approach to meaningful school teacher leadership and support would be the creation of a cadre of well-trained full-time staff.

Exhibit 3-6 shows the number and types of part-time staff assigned to elementary schools. It depicts the variability in time that the majority of resource positions are assigned to schools and demonstrates the challenges their allotments present to those schools. Those positions represent 82.1 instructional staff, but only two position types--Language Arts Consultants and Library Media staff--have any consistency of full-time dedicated staff apportionment to schools.

**Exhibit 3-6
Elementary Resource Staff
Fairfield Public Schools**

	Burr	Dwight	Holland Hill	Jennings	McKinley	Mill Hill	North Stratfield	Osborn Hill	Riverfield	Sherman	Stratfield	TOTAL
Language Arts Consultant	1	1	1.5	1	1.5	1	1	1.5	1	1	1	12.5
Math Resource Teacher	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	4.6
Instructional Improvement Teacher	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	6
Art	0.8	0.7	0.75	0.75	1	1	1	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.9	9.8
General Music	1	0.8	0.9	0.85	1.35	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.1	1	1.2	11.8
Physical Education	1.1	0.9	1	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.2	12.7
World Language**	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	8
Gifted Teacher	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	5.7
Library Media	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Early Literacy Tutoring Hours*	680	680	680	680	680	680	680	1372	680	680	1030	8522

Source: FPS Human Resources Department, October 2010.

*hourly employee paid \$38/hr.; number of hours per year

**World Language teachers teach 4th and 5th grade students 25 minutes per day four days per week.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve district allocation of resource positions to elementary schools.

Prismatic recommends that the district:

- eliminate the Instructional Improvement positions; and
- increase the math positions to full-time at each elementary school.

The district also needs to train the Math and Language Arts resource teachers in differentiation, SRBI, core content, and instructional delivery methodologies. Concurrently, the district needs to complete a deeper study of the allocation of part-time resource teachers in the remaining areas.

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the impact that schedules of the myriad part-time resource positions is having on the schools as they try to manage their support to students and, more importantly, their effectiveness in changing teacher practice and improving student achievement. The goal of improving teacher pedagogy in the elementary schools cannot be achieved with so many staff coming and going. Nor can initiatives, curricular revision, and deep student learning occur when the district approach to teacher support is fragmented as it is with the current multitude of part-time support staff.

Prismatic is suggesting that, at least for the next three years as the district implements its elementary math program, it replace the Instructional Improvement positions with full-time math resource staff. During that time, they can mirror implementation of the reading initiative as the district rolls out the math program.

At the same time, the district should plan long-term to create coaching positions that transcend content areas for teacher support in each elementary school. Instead of having a myriad of resource positions many of whom work with the same students, but with different instructional foci, it would be a better use of district funds to create a strong core of resource people assigned full-time to each school. This would enable schools to use them as coaches, model teachers, and trainers for all teachers on the schools' schedule rather than a fragmented part-time schedule. They could deliver training throughout the day during teachers' planning periods as well as before or after school and on professional development days. A requisite part of this recommendation must include expanding elementary teachers' planning time beyond 20 minutes a day.

Teachers across subjects often discuss the same or similar concepts with the same student population, but a lack of common vocabulary and procedure confuses students. While most teachers agree that good student-centered pedagogy works for all types of learners across multiple disciplines, too often teachers introduce different strategies and different vocabularies for each discrete subject, making it seem for many students that each set of concepts is domain specific with little or no connection. While it is important for coaches to have content knowledge, it is even more important for them to have the skills to facilitate small teacher groups in inquiry, prepare and deliver demonstration lessons, and perform teacher observations with regular follow-up and debriefing.

As in effective schools, the cadre could institutionalize the process of using curricula of the prior grade to inform receiving teachers of student weaknesses and strengths. Data about class performance should also inform teachers of strengths and gaps in their own instruction. Coaches could guide and monitor progress for teachers and students.

FISCAL IMPACT

Eliminating the six Instructional Improvement Teacher FTE would save the district \$569,520 (6 x \$94,920 including benefits).

Converting the Math Resource Teacher positions from 0.4 positions to 1.0 positions would cost the district slightly more since it would increase those positions from 4.6 to 11 (11 - 4.6 = 6.4) for a total cost of \$607,488. The resulting difference in cost of the additional 0.4 teaching position would be \$37,968.

Phasing down resource positions by the year 2014-15 to only one well-trained coach per school would result in additional annual cost of \$1,044,120 (11 x 94,920). Prismatic recommends that the district commit an additional \$20,000 over three years to develop and implement an intensive training program for the one full-time resource position at each school.

Eliminating 22 coach positions would save \$2,088,240 (22 x \$94,920).

Savings over five years would total \$1,868,400. Additional savings could accrue to the district once it fully examines its allocation of other part-time positions and addresses them.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate six elementary Instructional Improvement Teacher positions	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520
Convert .4-.6 Math Resource Teacher positions to 1.0 (6.4 FTE)	(\$607,488)	(\$607,488)	(\$607,488)	(\$607,488)	(\$607,488)
Develop an intensive training program for resource teachers	(\$10,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0
Eliminate 22 Math and Language Arts positions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,088,240	\$2,088,240
Place Coach positions in 11 elementary schools	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,044,120)	(\$1,044,120)
TOTAL	(\$47,968)	(\$47,968)	(\$47,968)	\$1,006,152	\$1,006,152

FINDING 3-12

In terms of paraprofessionals, FPS is staffed more richly than its peers. Moreover, between 2005-06 and 2009-10, paraprofessional staffing grew by 11 percent while FPS student enrollment grew by nine percent.

Many FPS staff noted that paraprofessionals are considered to be instrumental in providing instructional support for students. However, one reason interviewees gave for having so many paraprofessionals is that they are used to cover lunch, common planning time, and recess—not instructional periods.

In January 2010, the district received a Paraprofessional Study focused on special education paraprofessionals which found that between 2003 and 2008, with an increase of 84.8 percent, FPS had the largest increase in number of special education paraprofessionals of eight districts identified as comparable. FPS also ranked first among peer districts in special education paraprofessionals but ranked sixth in the number of special education teachers.

The January 2010 study also concluded that 57.5 percent of classroom aide time was spent in direct instructional support. However, a significant portion of their time, 39.4 percent, was spent in activities that were neither related to instruction nor to other roles defined in their job descriptions. In contrast, resource room aides spent 89.5 percent of their time on instructional support.

Exhibit 3-7 compares the growth in student enrollment with that of paraprofessional staffing. It shows that, although enrollment grew by nine percent paraprofessional staffing grew by 11 percent. Recently, the district has added paraprofessional positions with the inception of in-district programs for students with significant autism. Prismatic believes these programs were added after the Paraprofessional Study, but are reflected in the data in this exhibit.

Exhibit 3-7
Comparison of FPS Enrollment to Paraprofessional Positions
2005-06 through 2009-10

Enrollment and Type of Position	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Change	Percent
Enrollment	9,195	9,424	9,709	9,880	10,032	837	9.0%
Paraprofessional Staff	160.5	165.3	166.4	179.6	178.7	18.2	11.3%

Source: Fairfield's final summary statement by object, 2005-06 through 2009-10 and enrollment from budget document.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve paraprofessional deployment.

Prismatic recommends that the district implement the recommendations of the January 2010 study to clarify roles of paraprofessionals assigned through the IEP process and rationale for their assignment. The district should also reduce the number of paraprofessionals to numbers more comparable to peer averages.

The January 2010 study's recommended changes in organization and use of paraprofessionals were targeted toward greater assurance that their time is focused on active instructional support. The study suggested:

- * restructuring staff and reviewing it annually;



- * creating an aide “pool” and better identify in lesson plans how they will be used for instructional support, noting the task labor intensive, but better serving students as they work toward independence and the district’s bottom line; and
- * availing students of “new technologies suitable to meet the needs of special education students” which could replace “the need for a paraprofessional’s time in some instances,” again encouraging independence.

Although the numbers in the above exhibits do not reflect it, these findings and recommendations are aligned with the district Special Education Director’s insistence that, when human resources are written into IEPs, there be a plan for weaning the student from that personal assistance toward independence.

Alternative models that might be considered to address the findings of the study include:

- As TA positions are eliminated, the district could use those captured resources to create positions of special education liaisons to serve multiple grades;
- The liaisons could spend a portion of their day co-teaching in general education classrooms;
- Assign TAs to a liaison instead of a classroom teacher so that they can be deployed throughout the day where students need them most, depending on individual needs and classroom activities; and/or
- Creating a transitional paraprofessional pool where TAs provide students assistance for short periods of time, for example, when new to the district, during implementation of a new behavior plan, or for short-term, focused periods of intervention.

The benefits of co-/team teaching are that two teachers share planning, curriculum development, identification of appropriate resources, and classroom instruction. The joint activity builds the skills and knowledge of both, expanding their repertoire of strategies and further strengthening FPS’s SRBI initiative.

An essential foundation of exploration of alternative models and reallocation of resources is the clear definition of the role of the TA so that resources can be best allocated and staff deployed for targeted student support. This includes not only paraprofessional roles, but also those of the general and special education teachers. Undertaking this critical task will better ensure that in every classroom throughout the district, the needs of all learners are being most effectively met.

Training for all staff, paraprofessionals, teachers, both special and general education, and principals as well as examining the school schedule should lead to more opportunities for consultation and team teaching, use paraprofessionals when and where they are most needed, and support the development of a team model in which liaisons schedule and assign them based on IEP compliance and daily needs. Creating or strengthening a pool of liaisons would increase teacher capacity to differentiate instruction for a range of student learning styles more effectively.

FISCAL IMPACT

Differences in programs certainly impact the number of staff used to support students in special education. However, the disparity between growth in special education teachers and paraprofessionals certainly demonstrates a need to carefully consider the paraprofessional study's recommendations to move toward more teacher support and less paraprofessional support for students with special needs. As the district moves toward co-teaching, savings experienced through elimination of paraprofessional positions will create additional funds for the needed additional teachers.

Reducing the number of paraprofessionals from 158.9 even halfway to the peer average of 128 would eliminate 16 paraprofessional positions and save the district \$551,040 (16 x \$34,440 average salary and benefits). Reducing the number of paraprofessionals by close to 39 percent, the amount of time the study found to be spent on non-instructional tasks, would save the district even more.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate a minimum of 16 paraprofessional positions	\$551,040	\$551,040	\$551,040	\$551,040	\$551,040

3.3 INSTRUCTION

Successful school systems have established guidelines and expectations that underlie a sound, challenging curriculum designed to foster the success of every student. They extend beyond state standards, providing enrichment and remediation opportunities for students based upon individual needs. Regularly collected and analyzed data guide ongoing instructional and programmatic decisions. Grounded in research-based strategies, curricular documents and processes define the realization of clear learning goals. The curriculum encompasses relationships between goals, specific learning objectives, instructional activities, and student assessments. The curriculum also identifies a scope and sequence in which information, skills, and concepts are taught and reinforced throughout the years to inculcate learning into the students' knowledge base.

Effective curricular guiding documents build in assessments and periodic monitoring of both student achievement and the effectiveness of the documents themselves. Materials can then be identified and purchased that assist in teaching concepts and knowledge not otherwise addressed in district curricular resources and that provide for student remediation and enrichment.

Efficient and effective educational processes promote the highest possible levels of student achievement at the classroom level when a school district:

- * is organized with procedures that are conscientiously aligned;
- * systematically communicates them to employees and constituents; and
- * monitors them regularly.

Personnel in the central office must have expertise in their area of responsibility. Processes that allow them time to direct that knowledge toward improved student achievement must be in place. Effective districts identify key educational elements on which to focus actions and resources, and use them as filters for decision making. Sufficient staff members are employed to ensure that time is able to be devoted to functions the district has determined essential. School and central office personnel systematically analyze available sources of data for information they can provide relating to curricular and instructional adjustments. Data analysis also informs them about individuals and groups of students who either require additional enrichment or remediation to achieve at their highest capability. Clear and frequent communication between schools and the central office enable district leaders to ensure consistency of procedures and policies. Ongoing communications also help the district to focus on core activities it has identified as critical for high levels of student achievement.

FINDING 3-13

In recent years, FPS has opened the gate to students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses, allowing students beyond those traditionally considered “high achievers” to take those courses. **Exhibit 3-8** shows while student enrollment in AP courses has increased since 2000, so has the number of students taking the tests and those who scored three or more. Students who score three or more are granted course credit at many colleges.

**Exhibit 3-8
FPS Advanced Placement Enrollments, Tests Taken and Passed, and Scores
2000-2010**

District Numbers	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
AP Enrollment	314	343	392	398	671	783	892	933	920	1034	1255
# AP Tests Taken	227	310	397	424	612	676	709	748	812	911	1142
# Students Who Took Tests	122	164	195	219	295	342	388	424	439	481	544
# of Tests Scoring 3+	188	264	335	369	504	519	543	609	675	803	1003
Total Students in Grade 12	420	391	461	465	510	521	571	567	618	609	681
% Tests Taken With Scores 3+	83%	85%	84%	87%	82%	77%	77%	81%	83%	88%	88%

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

FPS has demonstrated its commitment to expanding opportunities for students to challenge themselves academically. Data demonstrate that it has equipped teachers, likewise, to challenge their students with impressive success. The district may also want to consider strategies other districts use to even further expand the capacity of its teachers and students. Some districts use teachers who plan to teach AP courses in the future as facilitators for on-line AP courses to familiarize them with content and procedures. In order to offer more advanced coursework for students, many schools also combine advanced courses with other related courses in one class

period. This practice not only offers advanced students opportunities to benefit from courses that strengthen their preparation for college, but also stimulates other students to higher levels of learning.

COMMENDATION

FPS has opened Advanced Placement classes to all students, resulting in more students taking and passing AP tests and earning college credit while still in high school.

FINDING 3-14

Connecticut requires districts to identify but not serve Gifted and Talented students and provides districts no funds for programs. FPS has, though, in the past, identified and served 11.5 percent of its students as Gifted.

FPS students are identified in the 4th and 5th grades and roll up into the middle schools where populations of Gifted and Talented students are as high as 20 percent. This contrasts markedly with both state percentages and peer districts selected for this study. Percentages of students identified as Gifted and Talented in the state and peers are shown in **Exhibit 3-9**.

**Exhibit 3-9
Percentages of Students Identified as Gifted and Talented, 2008-09**

District	% Students Identified
Fairfield	11.5%
Greenwich	10.9%
Norwalk	7.4%
Stamford	0.0%
Trumbull	1.4%
West Hartford	9.1%
Peer Average	5.8%
State	4.0%

Source: Strategic School Profiles 2008-09, State of Connecticut.

District leaders in FPS recognize that they have far over-identified students for the program. There has also been community concern as a result of elimination of one level of secondary courses, raising the issue of a more meaningful program for FPS students who are Gifted and Talented. In response to both concerns, curriculum administrators have been meeting to fine-tune identification procedures with a professional and researcher at the University of Connecticut as well as to plan for a more comprehensive program for those students who are eligible. New criteria being piloted seem to be identifying close to the average percentage as the state rate.

Services were formerly enrichment with itinerant teacher support, offering students such opportunities as seeing drama troupes, musical performances, and scientists. This year’s focus has been on better identifying students and support for teachers with differentiation of curriculum by a Gifted and Talented teacher. Plans for the future are to offer a differential model for students to investigate areas of interest to them with enrichment at the middle school. This approach is supported by research findings that using student interests and related rewards and

incentives are strong motivators for learning. Once the new program is fully developed, district leaders hope to add a layer of enrichment below services to identified students so that there will be a more comprehensive continuum of services.

COMMENDATION

Fairfield Public Schools is commended for working to ensure that identification procedures more accurately identify students who are truly Gifted and Talented and for developing programs targeted to their needs and interests.

FINDING 3-15

The district is not concertededly focusing on developing strategies for those students who are largely in one elementary school, McKinley. This school has a more diverse student population, higher proportion of English Language Learners (ELL), and higher rate of Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility than other elementary schools in the district.

The district has created a Cultural Diversity Task Force as a part of its Strategic Plan. Its goal is to begin to identify issues and develop strategies to address them. They also stated that a proposal to re-district the elementary schools to have a more equitable balance of students in all elementary schools prompted a legal battle. The Task Force is filing compliance reports, but has not to date presented substantive recommendations to address the imbalance in district elementary schools. The district has put a Preschool program at Burr Elementary, a higher socioeconomic school, to begin the process of integrating students early in their school experiences.

Exhibit 3-10 shows that the achievement of those students while in McKinley is lower than other FPS elementary schools. As shown, the achievement scores at McKinley are 9.8 to 27.1 points behind the district average. In five years, McKinley's scores on reading, writing, and math have been the lowest in the district every year, with the single exception of math in 2009. To attempt to address this issue, the district has:

- * allocated additional resource staff to McKinley;
- * placed a Preschool program there;
- * supported summer and after-school programs; and
- * provided ELL support.

Despite these measures, the achievement gap remains at McKinley. One person interviewed noted that, when scores come out, there is a "lot of hoopla" but then it dies down, perhaps because the achievement of students in one school has no impact on those in other FPS schools.

**Exhibit 3-10
Grade 3 Connecticut Mastery Test Results, Percent At/Above Goal, 2006-2010**

	Reading					Writing					Math				
	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10
McKinley	56.8	46.3	48.6	58.7	52.9	62.5	67.2	54.2	66.7	50.0	58.8	61.2	55.6	71.0	58.6
District Average	78.2	69.2	75.7	73.0	76.2	80.8	77.6	76.0	78.2	72.1	74.7	76.7	79.9	80.8	80.5
McKinley, points below district average	21.4	22.9	27.1	14.3	23.3	18.3	10.4	21.8	11.5	22.1	15.9	15.5	24.3	9.8	21.9
Remaining Elementary Schools															
Burr	85.5	67.4	75.7	87.0	86.0	88.0	76.3	79.7	87.3	82.8	76.3	76.3	83.8	79.7	91.2
Dwight	85.5	86.5	93.5	76.4	82.4	83.6	92.3	88.5	76.8	77.8	85.5	88.5	95.2	83.6	88.2
Holland Hill	77.4	59.3	79.7	76.9	83.6	80.8	78.0	84.7	77.8	93.4	81.1	79.7	84.7	92.5	85.2
Jennings	71.7	69.0	71.7	68.7	71.9	73.1	72.4	71.7	77.6	60.9	67.9	74.1	88.7	82.1	78.1
Mill Hill	85.1	80.9	79.7	73.9	80.8	83.6	88.1	74.7	84.1	74.1	80.6	87.0	78.5	85.2	84.8
North Stratfield	76.4	68.0	71.4	73.4	71.4	80.6	74.7	65.1	72.2	70.3	72.2	84.2	77.4	86.1	86.8
Osborn Hill	85.3	80.7	78.7	66.3	78.5	86.7	86.4	84.3	80.2	70.2	77.3	79.5	80.9	72.1	73.1
Riverfield	82.1	76.3	71.1	62.6	76.9	86.6	75.0	75.0	78.9	71.3	79.1	77.5	78.9	69.9	82.3
Sherman	79.7	70.1	86.7	71.7	76.5	81.4	80.6	80.0	73.8	76.7	81.4	64.7	81.1	85.0	80.0
Stratfield	82.6	59.8	75.3	89.5	88.9	89.1	68.8	79.2	80.2	78.2	67.4	74.2	79.5	88.5	88.2
District Average	78.2	69.2	75.7	73.0	76.2	80.8	77.6	76.0	78.2	72.1	74.7	76.7	79.9	80.8	80.5
State Average	54.4	52.3	52.1	54.6		61.1	60.8	63.5	62.6		56.3	59.4	60.2	63.0	

Source: FPS Director of Elementary Education, October 2010.

*Row Added by Prismatic Services.

Karin Chenoweth, in her book, *It's Being Done*, summarized the differences she found in two years of research among schools that were high-achieving despite high rates of poverty, non-English speakers, and minorities. Not surprisingly, one of the key differences was not additional funding. Instead, she found 25 traits that these schools all exhibited to a much higher degree than low-performing schools with similar demographics. These traits are:

1. *They teach their students.*
2. *They don't teach to the state tests.*
3. *They have high expectations for their students.*
4. *They know what the stakes are.*
5. *They embrace and use all the data they can get their hands on.*
6. *They use data to focus on individual students, not just groups of students.*
7. *They constantly reexamine what they do.*
8. *They embrace accountability.*
9. *They make decisions on what is good for kids, not what is good for adults.*
10. *They use school time wisely.*
11. *They leverage as many resources from the community as possible.*
12. *They expand the time students—particularly struggling students—have in school.*
13. *They do not spend a lot of time disciplining students, in the sense of punishing them.*
14. *They establish an atmosphere of respect.*
15. *They like kids.*
16. *They make sure that the kids who struggle the most have the best instruction.*
17. *Principals are a constant presence.*
18. *Although the principals are important leaders, they are not the only leaders.*
19. *They pay careful attention to the quality of the teaching staff.*
20. *They provide teachers with the time to meet to plan and work collaboratively.*
21. *They provide teachers time to observe each other.*
22. *They think seriously about professional development.*

23. They assume that they will have to train new teachers more or less from scratch and carefully acculturate all newly hired teachers.
24. They have high-quality, dedicated, and competent office and building staff who feel themselves part of the educational mission of the school.
25. They are nice places to work.

Robert Marzano’s work has given teachers instructional strategies that have the highest probability of enhancing student achievement in all subject areas and all can be adapted to all grade levels. Many of his strategies can be either teacher or student directed. Marzano advocates writing as a very powerful tool to use in all content areas. It is often forgotten that students must be explicitly taught how to organize their learning. For student learning to be retained and for retrieval of learning from long term memory to occur, teachers must equip students with thinking and specific learning skills.

Exhibit 3-11 displays Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack’s research-based teaching strategies that have high impact on long-term learning. These strategies improve student learning across all grade levels and in all content areas. The percentage of gain represents the degree to which the strategy increases student achievement.

Exhibit 3-11
Strategies that Increase Student Achievement

Strategy	Percent Gain
Identifying similarities and differences	45%
Summarizing and note taking	34%
Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	29%
Homework and practice	28%
Nonlinguistic representations	27%
Cooperative learning	27%
Setting objectives	23%
Generating and testing hypotheses	23%
Questions, cue, and advance organizers	22%

Source: *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* Marzano, Pickering and Pollock, 2004.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a new approach for McKinley Elementary School and its students.

For the past five years, McKinley students have not been given equitable educational opportunities. Without the will either to re-structure the current elementary school configuration to provide more equity for the McKinley students or a plan to better focus district attention on McKinley, McKinley students’ achievement will continue to languish.

As noted in many examples throughout Chenoweth's book, turning around low-performing schools is an intensive effort, requiring the devotion of a skilled principal and teachers with a 'can do' attitude. It requires district support, commitment, and 'can do' as well.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, assuming likely re-allocation of existing district resources.

FINDING 3-16

The district's original intent for having two models for kindergarten has been defeated with this year's blending of the vast majority of kindergarten classes. Now, both extended and full day students attend together, in what is called a blended model.

In full-day kindergarten, students attend five days a week with the same school start and end times as all other elementary students, which includes a shortened day on Wednesday. In extended day kindergarten, students attend class two days a week, in addition to the shortened day on Wednesday. Different groups of extended day students attend on an alternating two day schedule so that only half are in class each day, with all students attending on Wednesdays. The blended model arose from offering parents a choice of program, which resulted in the placement of full-day and extended day students in the same classroom.

Extended day kindergarten was two short, but longer than half, days of class two days a week. Extended day students receive instruction in core academic subjects and art, music, and PE once a week. Full-day students receive the same instruction in core academic subjects and art once a week. They receive music and physical education twice a week. As currently configured, full-day students only attend 168 hours more than the extended day students (941.5 hours vs. 1109.5).

Exhibit 3-12 shows the current reality of most classes being blended and no longer extended day classes. That results in more students staying in the afternoon with classes only slightly reduced from morning numbers. Twelve (12) of 41 classes across the district are pure full day with the rest being blended. There are no pure extended day classes remaining.

**Exhibit 3-12
FPS Kindergarten Class Composition, 2009-10**

School	Type of Class	# Full Day Students	# Extended Day Students	Total # Students	School Total
Burr	Full	22	0	22	66
	Full	21	0	21	
	Blended	15	8	23	
Dwight	Full	16	0	16	48
	Blended	15	1	16	
	Blended	14	2	16	
Holland Hill	Blended	9	9	18	54
	Full	18	0	18	
	Full	18	0	18	
Jennings	Blended	10	5	15	45
	Full	14	0	14	
	Blended	9	7	16	
McKinley	Full	19	0	19	95
	Blended	18	1	19	
	Blended	17	2	19	
	Blended	16	3	19	
	Blended	16	3	19	
Mill Hill	Blended	10	7	17	72
	Blended	11	7	18	
	Blended	13	5	18	
	Blended	11	8	19	
North Stratfield	Blended	6	13	19	76
	Full	19	0	19	
	Full	19	0	19	
	Full	19	0	19	
Osborn Hill	Blended	14	5	19	89
	Blended	14	2	16	
	Blended	15	4	19	
	Blended	13	5	18	
	Blended	12	5	17	
Riverfield	Blended	13	8	21	67
	Blended	12	11	23	
	Full	23	0	23	
Sherman	Blended	17	5	22	64
	Blended	18	3	21	
	Full	21	0	21	
Stratfield	Full	17	2	19	94
	Full	17	1	18	
	Full	17	2	19	
	Full	16	2	18	
	Full	18	2	20	
TOTAL		632	138	770	770

Source: FPS Office of Elementary Education, October 2010.

Instructionally, teachers observed that, in the blended model, they now have to pick and choose what they can teach after the extended day students leave. They are put in the position of sometimes having to teach the same content twice, but trying to do it in two ways. In that way, it is not repetitive for the students who were exposed to it in the afternoons, but reinforces those lessons in new ways as extended day students learn it the first time. One disadvantage of the blended model they identified is that students do not have as many opportunities for the number of hands-on learning experiences they did with the smaller groups in the pure extended day model. Teachers said that their classes were supposed to receive additional paraprofessional time with the blended approach; however, Prismatic found that varied in practice from school to school.

Testimony from staff knowledgeable about instruction, impact on students, schedules, and pros and cons of all three class configurations (full-day, extended day, and blended) agree that the model most beneficial to students is the extended day approach. Teachers testified that the extended day model had been, in their consensus, “topnotch” and that other districts had looked to FPS’s program as a model for their own. Most stated that the extended day model gave them more time to provide smaller group and individual attention. With the current blended model, students who are enrolled in the extended day, but blended with full day students must be taken to their buses in the middle of what could be instructional time for the “full” day students. This is costly to the district, as they noted, buses go to the schools to pick up extended day students even when it means three buses are there to pick up six students.

A January 2010 Research Brief from the American Institutes for Research offers some recommendations for improving student learning in kindergarten and specifically references class size. It cites a longitudinal study on full-day kindergarten by The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K) in identifying ways to structure days to improve students’ early reading skills:

- * Children in kindergarten programs that devote a larger portion of the school day to academic instruction, and to reading instruction in particular, make greater gains in reading over the school year than children who spend less time in such instruction;
- * Children tend to make optimal gains in reading when teachers use an equal balance of discrete literacy skills and comprehension skills instruction, and
- * Class size interacts significantly with some instructional practices to increase or decrease children’s average reading gains in kindergarten.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt extended day as the only option for all kindergarten students.

Consensus among those who work most directly with FPS’s kindergarten students clearly and enthusiastically endorsed the instructional merits of extended day classes for students. Eliminating bus runs for very few students would make transportation more cost-effective as well.

Much research on the benefits of full day kindergarten versus shorter instructional days reveals that a positive association with higher student achievement among full day kindergarten students disappears by third grade. Research on the impact of full day kindergarten on students of poverty is mixed in its impact on their long-term achievement.

FISCAL IMPACT

It is difficult to estimate savings on transportation as buses currently run for extended and full day students. Each extended day bus results in a \$43.50 charge per day to the district and each is needed four days a week. District data indicate that the district budgets \$1,087.50 per day for extended day runs. At four days a week, this is an annual cost of approximately \$150,000. However, moving all kindergarten students to extended day may not increase this cost and may decrease the need for buses later in the day at the regular school dismissal time. Based on district data, if only four single tier buses are eliminated from regular dismissal because all kindergarten students ride extended day buses, the cost of extended day transportation becomes a cost savings.

Reducing the kindergarten day to the extended schedule will reduce the number of sessions of music and physical education students receive by one session of each in every kindergarten class, currently 41. That would reduce the need for music and PE teachers. The teacher contract states that one FTE for each type of teachers is 43 classes. Using the contract figures of 0.9=38 classes would conservatively allow the district to eliminate one PE and one music teacher. At the average teacher salary of \$94,920, that results in an annual savings of \$189,840.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate one music and one PE teacher position	\$189,840	\$189,840	\$189,840	\$189,840	\$189,840

FINDING 3-17

Of the multiple resource teachers who have been employed to provide one-on-one or small group instruction for students in the greatest need of additional support for their achievement, in most schools, those teachers do not work with kindergarten students. As a part of unifying district goals across the system, in many schools, teachers have been told that their personal goal for the year is to have all kindergarten students proficient at the 90 percent level. However, with multiple approaches to kindergarten classes, teachers are challenged to achieve this goal with many students who have come in at the equivalent of zero percent.

While testimony varied among kindergarten teachers, in many cases, they stated that resource teachers for Language Arts and Early Intervention did not serve their students. Additionally, their experiences differed with respect to the training their paraprofessionals have been provided to assist them with direct student instruction. In some cases, Language Arts teachers were intentional in providing specific training for paraprofessionals. In others, teachers noted that training fell on their own shoulders. In one case, the principal only hired teachers looking for jobs as paraprofessionals, so they need no training.

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure that the same level of instructional support is available for all kindergarten students.

The foundation that students receive in kindergarten is the building block upon which teachers in subsequent grades can improve student learning. Besides deploying resource teachers to support kindergarten students, the district should ensure that all paraprofessionals have a baseline of skills and knowledge if they are to be used for student instructional responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-18

Students in the three FPS middle schools are provided extensive opportunities for music instruction, beyond any that the Prismatic team has seen before. These middle school musical opportunities come on the heels of elementary band and strings instruction, which reportedly have been available to elementary students for at least two decades.

Woods Middle School has two band teachers. One teaches both seventh and eighth grade band with each of those classes meeting three times a week--a total of six classes in all. The other instructor teaches three classes of sixth grade band a week and one section of beginner's band for five students. The rest of their schedule, they teach lessons to far smaller groups of students. The Woods schedule shows that maximum seats available for some lessons are between two and three on three days of the week. For example, one teacher's rehearsal schedule for the week is:

- * 94 students one period on Monday;
- * 84 one period on Tuesday;
- * one period of seven students on Wednesday;
- * one period of 52 students on Thursday because 36 band students attend Chorus that day; and
- * seven students on Friday.

The rest of that person's teaching load is lessons. So, of 50 possible periods of instruction for the two teachers in a week, nine are large group instruction and the rest are small group lessons. The small group lessons were termed "private lessons for public students" by some staff. Although an enrichment opportunity and obviously valued by the community, they have a large fiscal cost. The 41 periods of small group lessons are the equivalent of 1.64 FTE (\$155,669 at average FPS teacher salary and benefits). In other words, one teacher would be more than sufficient to teach all Woods band classes with time left over if he/she were not giving essentially private lessons.

Woods students are also able to take chorus or orchestra or a combination of classes. Teachers for those classes have similar schedules.

At Tomlinson, all students participate in chorus, band, orchestra, a combination of those, or music technology. The school has 2.8 FTE band teachers. The school has a band for each of the three grades, ranging in size from 95 to 128 students. The school also offers an option of music technology for about 75 students. Altogether, there are 4 periods for each teacher each week that are band rehearsals and all of the rest are lesson groups. Lesson groups contain 5-6 students each.

The music schedule at Ludlowe is:

- * the Choral Director teaches 24 rehearsal periods a week with no lessons;
- * the 6th grade Band teacher has four rehearsals a week and 21 periods of lessons;
- * the 7th grade Band teacher has four rehearsals a week and 21 periods of lessons;
- * the 8th grade Band teacher has seven rehearsals a week and 18 periods of lessons;
- * the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Orchestra teacher has 10 rehearsals a week and 15 periods of lessons;
- * the two Orchestra support staff (0.1 FTE each) teach only lessons for half a day apiece; and
- * the part-time Music Technology teacher teaches 12 classes of Keyboarding/Guitars (data on student counts for those classes were not clear).

Excluding the Keyboarding/Guitar lessons, this amounts to 77 lessons provided in small groups in contrast to only 49 traditionally sized music classes at Tomlinson.

In some districts, private music lessons are offered through the middle school, but not by district teachers. Rather, in those districts outside tutors contract directly with middle school parents to provide true private lessons and the school provides a meeting space. Private lessons are offered in a pull-out fashion from the regular music class (where band/orchestra is offered multiple days a week), or immediately after school. Tutors are background checked and subject to district approval. They typically work closely with the district teacher to ensure coordinated instruction.

RECOMMENDATION

Re-configure music schedules in the middle schools.

The configuration of middle school music lessons is a part of the tradition of FPS. While it is a wonderful benefit to students attending FPS schools, it has resulted in inequitable teaching loads and increased costs. Clearly, the vast majority of most music teachers' schedules is consumed with small group lessons rather than large musical group instruction. This reduces the teaching load of middle school music teachers compared to teachers in other content areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

Of 266 total instructional music hours currently offered at FPS’s middle schools, 196.8 of them are used teaching small group, semi-private lessons to students. That leaves only 69.2 hours of instruction spent in traditional middle school music lessons, which would equate to 1.6 FTE. Among the three middle schools, there are currently 16.3 FTE music teachers. The cost differential between 1.6 and 16.3 FTE teachers is \$1,395,324 annually (14.7 FTE x \$94,920 average teacher salary including benefits). Prismatic recommends that the district reduce the offering of private lessons by at least 20 percent. This would yield a savings of \$279,065 (0.2 x \$1,395,324).

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Scale back private middle school music lessons by 20%	\$279,065	\$279,065	\$279,065	\$279,065	\$279,065

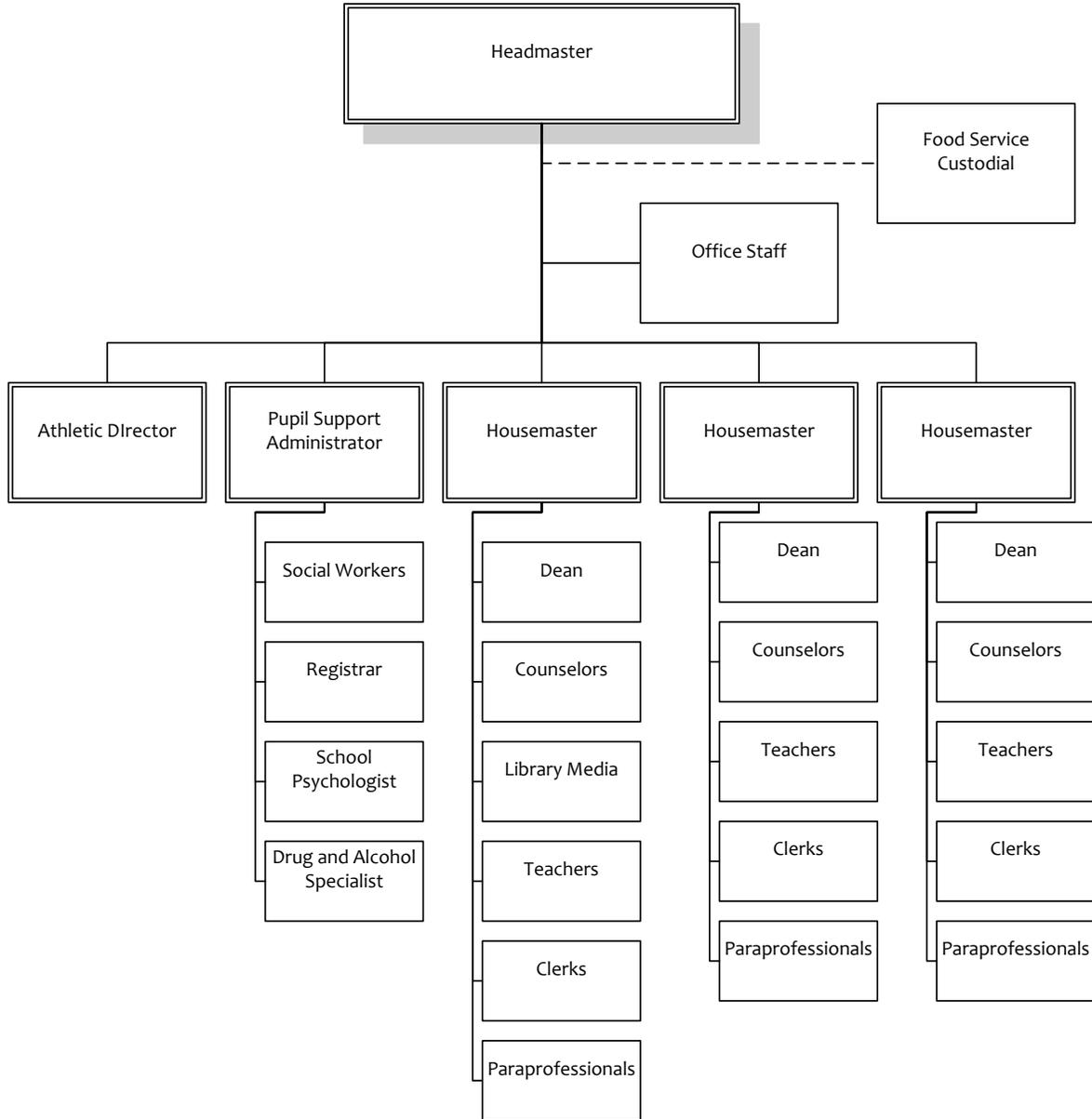
FINDING 3-19

Both high schools of the Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) continue to implement an organizational structure known as “The House Plan.” This structure has high personnel costs and lacks a research-based connection between it and student success.

FPS has two high schools which are the academic homes to some of Connecticut’s brightest and most academically-successful secondary students. The results of statewide achievement and performance testing show that students at both Fairfield Warde High School (FWHS) and Fairfield Ludlowe High School (FLHS) traditionally score above the statewide averages. Both schools offer comprehensive co-curricular programs that afford students opportunities for leadership, community service, and an expansion of talents and interests. Students also enroll in elective courses that offer real life, authentic learning experiences as well as opportunities to expand their learning experiences through internships, activities, and courses outside of the school campus and school day. Student achievements are celebrated in both the schools’ communities, but there is no valid or empirical research available that ties directly or attributes the House Plan concept, as an organizational structure, to the achievement and academic success of their students.

The two high schools, as they now exist, were created in August, 2003, as the result of a decision to split Fairfield High School (FHS), because of its burgeoning enrollment, into two with much-smaller enrollments. The 2003 redistricting was an attempt to manage overcrowding at the Town’s single high school. As a result, the first-year enrollment at both of the “new schools” was about 41 percent less than what FHS had been in its last year of operation. Both FWHS and FLHS retained the “House Plan,” the organizational structure of their predecessor. The concept of “schools within a school” came into discussion prominently in the USA in the 1990s. This discussion, and some related reconfiguration, was a result of trying to improve education in the large, mainly urban, secondary schools, by creating more personalized, smaller units within the larger school. These smaller units became known as “houses.” Fairfield High School was among the first to implement the House Plan. **Exhibit 3-13** provides the current structure. To date, there is little research available on the effect of this organizational structure on student learning and outcomes.

**Exhibit 3-13
FPS High School House Plan**



Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

In the classical sense, a school-within-a-school is a separate and autonomous unit formally authorized by the board of education and/or superintendent. It plans and runs its own program, has its own staff and students, and receives its own separate budget. Although it must negotiate the use of common space (gym, auditorium, playground) with a host school, and defer to the building principal on matters of safety and building operation, the school-within-a-school generally reports to a district official instead of being responsible to the building principal. Both its teachers and students are affiliated with the school-within-a-school as a matter of choice.

The House Plan implemented at both FWHS and FLHS does not function in the classical school-within-a-school concept. Although students, teachers, and counselors are assigned to “houses,” occasionally by choice, the work of both students and teachers are not restricted to specific houses. Students are assigned to both the same home room teachers and counselors for the duration of their high school careers, but yet they attend classes conducted by teachers in different houses. If students have disciplinary or attendance problems, their housemasters address them. The student activities in which they participate are not house-specific.

It was claimed in accreditation studies by the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, FWHS, October, 2009, and FLHS, March, 2008) and in Prismatic interviews, focus groups, and public input that small class sizes, not only desirable but manageable teaching loads, daily homerooms, highly favorable ratios of adults to students, and the house structure do permit teachers and support staff members to pay individual attention to students. However, these comments do not consider whether these specialties and this special structure are operationally efficient. Beyond the high personnel costs, the district has not made a connection between its House Plan and student achievement. One community respondent to Prismatic’s public input option noted that the funds expended during the annual “Battle of the Houses” at homecoming and at similar school spirit events throughout the year could perhaps be better used elsewhere.

As a result of the House Plan, the two high schools have proportionately more personnel assigned than the number that most other regional, state, and national high schools have. **Exhibit 3-14** provides statistics that show the current make-up and staffing organization and assignments at both high schools.

**Exhibit 3-14
FPS High School Enrollment and Staffing Statistics**

Data Type	Category	FWHS	FLHS
Students (as of 10/01/10)	Grade 9	371	407
	Grade 10	317	387
	Grade 11	331	357
	Grade 12	307	353
	TOTAL	1,327	1,504
Staff	Clerical	14	14
	Paraprofessional	16	15.1
	Technical Support	6	3
	Computer Technicians	2	1
	Classroom Teachers	113.3	121
	Deans	3	3
	Counselors	9	8
	School Psychologists	2	2
	Social Workers	2	2
	Library Media Teachers	3	3
	Administrators	6	6
	TOTAL	183	185
Statistics	Ratio Staff to Students 1 :	7	8
	Ratio Teacher to Students 1 :	10	11
	Average Teacher Load 2010-11	93	74
	Average Class Load 2010-11	18	15
	Ratio Administrators to Students 1 :	221	250
	Ratio Counselors to Students 1 :	147	188
	Ratio Student Support Staff to Students 1 :	70	84
	Ratio Library Media Teachers to Students 1 :	442	501

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

Despite the plethora of additional staffing afforded by the House Plan, there remain organizational concerns. After their accreditation visits to both schools, the report of the NEASC visiting committee reflects for each of these schools the concern of teachers that teachers seldom have opportunities to meet as a discipline (e.g., all English teachers meeting and planning together). NEASC reported that teachers expressed a need for a department-chair structure to lead them in their curriculum development and implementation efforts. The accreditation report for FWHS states:

... some teachers feel that not all subject areas have sufficient subject matter leadership within the school that would provide support for collaboration between and among departments. ... Many teachers ... see the insufficient subject matter leadership structure at the school level coupled with the lack of scheduled co-planning time as impediments to effective inter- and intra- departmental collaboration on teaching strategies and interdisciplinary connections.

Prismatic found the same expressions of these needs in some responses to the open-ended questions on its staff survey. Input from focus groups held on site affirmed these beliefs.

These same NEASC reports praised the low counselor to student ratio while pointing out that the ratio was far richer than that found at other high schools. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends that the optimum ratio for secondary counselors should be 1 : 250. A US Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics (NECS) study for 2008-09 reported a Connecticut ratio of 1 : 507 for both elementary and secondary schools. The ASCA further reports the national average for 2008-09 to be 1 : 457, using data furnished by the NCEC *Common Core Data*. The 2010-11 FPS ratios are 1 : 147 at FWHS and 1 : 188 at FLHS.

When compared with a high school structured in a more traditional way, the Headmasters at FWHS and FLHS perform essentially the same functions as a Principal does. They supervise and evaluate administrators assigned to the schools as Housemasters and Administrators for Pupil Support Services. Similarly, the Housemasters' work is essentially the same as assistant or vice principals – their work is primarily monitoring student behavior and determining student discipline, including meetings with parents of students, but an equal amount of time is spent observing and evaluating the performance of teachers assigned to their House. They theoretically are responsible for monitoring the implementation and delivery of curriculum and instruction, but the assignment of Curriculum Leaders from Central Office as well as the assignment of one Dean in each of the Houses precludes the Housemasters' need to become involved at any significant level. The Deans are classified and paid as teachers but work in the House Office to assist the Housemaster.

The NCEC School and Staff Survey (SASS) Comparison of the number of pupils per FTE librarian media teachers in 2007-08 in Connecticut public schools was 1 : 714. At FWHS, the ratio is 1 : 442 and at FLHS the ratio is 1 : 501.

House offices at each of the high schools occupy space that was originally used primarily as classrooms. Focus group interviews and other data indicate that some teachers are required to “float” because of a shortage of classroom space.

RECOMMENDATION

Reorganize both FPS high schools to eliminate the House Plan.

Given the lack of a research base to support its concept and the fragmented implementation of the House Plan, Prismatic recommends a new organizational structure for FPS high schools. This plan includes:

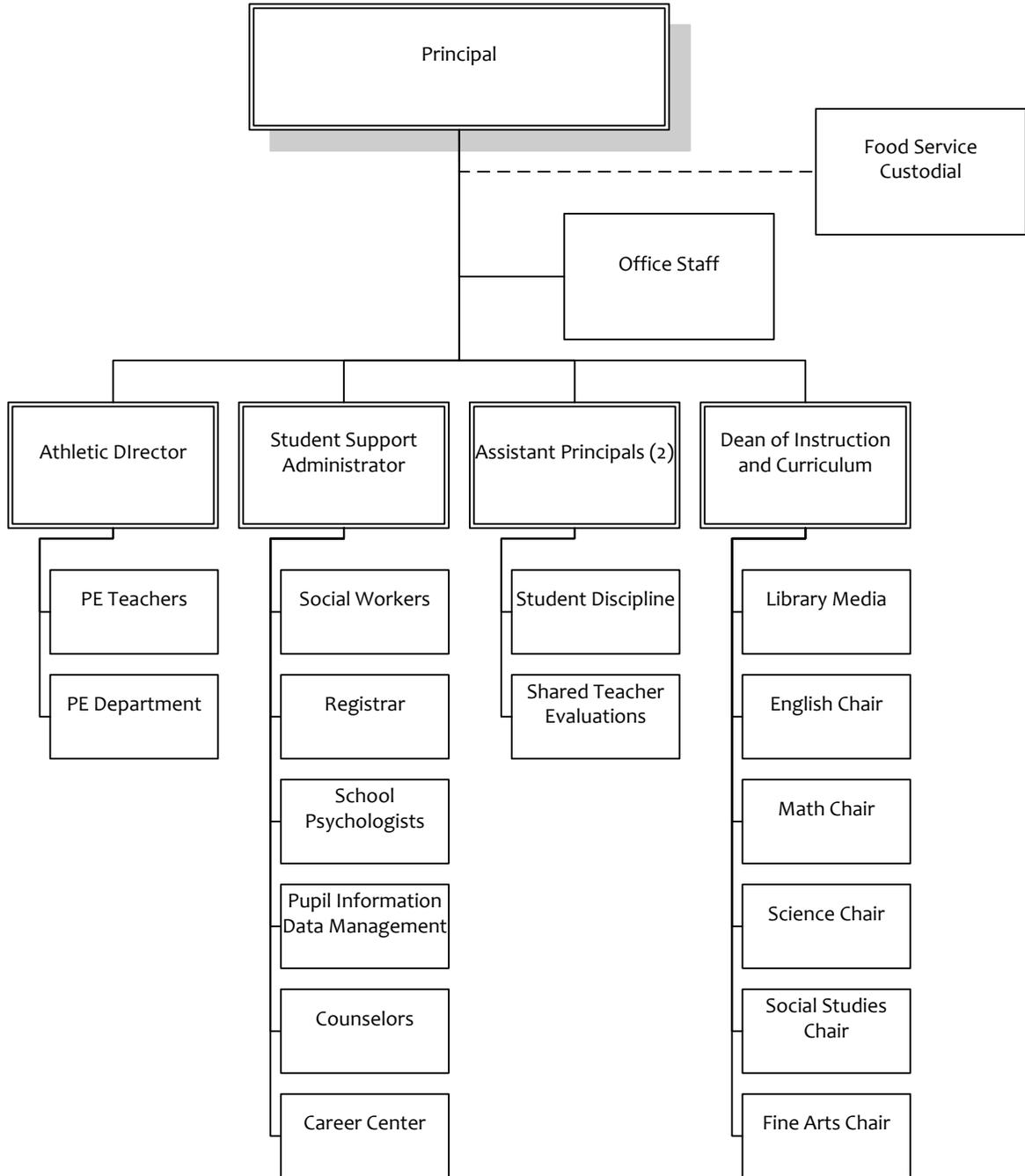
- * redesignating the position known as Headmaster as Principal;
- * eliminating the positions of Housemaster;
- * eliminating the positions of Dean of the House or Dean of Students;
- * eliminating the positions of House Secretary;
- * reducing the number of Guidance Counselors;

- * reducing the number of Guidance Secretaries;
- * adding the positions of Assistant Principals; and
- * adding the position of Dean of Curriculum and Instruction.

This recommended organization (**Exhibit 3-15**) would provide:

- * no change in the number of teachers or the list of course offerings or assignment of teachers to course;
- * the assignment of counselors to the supervision of the Student Support Administrator;
- * the assignment of Dean of Curriculum and Instruction who supervise departments and teachers;
- * the assignment of assistant principals who have the responsibility of student discipline as well as sharing teacher performance evaluations with the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction;
- * the assignment of teachers to departments by teacher certification area, headed by department chairs who report to the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction;
- * the designation of a master teacher as department chair with release time from teaching for conducting departmental affairs and professional development and curriculum planning and implementation;
- * the assignment and evaluation of physical education teachers to the Athletic Director (who is an administrator in FPS);
- * current students retain their same homeroom teachers and guidance teachers;
- * new and incoming students to be assigned to homeroom teachers and guidance counselors by the Administrator for Student Support, using same criteria as before;
- * assistant principals are assigned students for disciplinary reasons alphabetically by student's last name; and
- * the responsibility for maintaining and reporting staff attendance to be assigned to Receptionist in Principal's office.

**Exhibit 3-15
Recommended High School Structure**



Source: Created by Prismatic.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation includes these personnel changes:

- * eliminating six Housemaster positions (three at each high school), with an approximate salary and benefits rate of \$155,730 each;
- * eliminating six Dean of Students positions (three at each high school), with an approximate salary and benefits rate of \$94,920 each;
- * eliminating six House secretary positions (three at each high school), with an approximate salary and benefits rate of \$56,560 each;
- * reducing five Guidance Counselor positions (two at FLHS and three at FLHS), with an approximate salary and benefits rate of \$94,920 each;
- * reducing five Guidance secretary positions (three at FLHS and two at FLHS), with an approximate salary and benefits rate of \$56,560 each;
- * adding four Assistant Principal positions (two at each high school), with an approximate salary and benefits rate of \$155,730 each; and
- * adding two Deans of Instruction positions (one at each high school), with an approximate salary and benefits rate of \$155,730 each.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate Housemaster positions	\$934,380	\$934,380	\$934,380	\$934,380	\$934,380
Eliminate Dean of Student positions	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520
Eliminate House secretary positions	\$339,360	\$339,360	\$339,360	\$339,360	\$339,360
Reduce Guidance Counselor positions	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600
Reduce Guidance secretary positions	\$282,800	\$282,800	\$282,800	\$282,800	\$282,800
Add Assistant Principal positions	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)
Add Deans of Instruction positions	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)
TOTAL	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280

FINDING 3-20

The number of English teachers currently assigned in FPS high schools exceeds the number needed because English teachers have reduced teaching schedules.

At both district high schools English teachers teach classes during four of the eight instructional periods per day while all other core content teachers teach five periods. According to a visiting committee report for FWHS (October 2009), this unique teaching arrangement allows English teachers to meet with their individual students who need additional help in writing for at least three additional times per year.

To date, the district has not evaluated the effectiveness of a reduced English course load and the additional time English teachers have to provide remediation on student performance. Central office staff noted that such an evaluation is scheduled to be developed as a component of the 2010-11 English Department’s Program Improvement Plan.

The current data collection regarding program implementation is poor. All students in English classes are required to attend at least three tutoring sessions for each academic year, but no provisions or time is made or scheduled in the individual students’ semester or yearly schedules to meet this requirement. At the end of each semester, each English teacher submits a list of students that they have tutored. Other than this list, the degree of adherence to this tutorial arrangement by teachers and the students’ meeting their requirement to attend three sessions could not be substantiated from information that was provided.

The district could not provide a rationale for why English teachers as a group are treated differently in class load from any other group of teachers. The FPS Board of Education guidelines set class size for 2010-11 for teachers in Grades 9 – 12 at “no more than 28.” The average class size in both high schools for English teachers is 23 (**Exhibit 3-16**). In all other teaching disciplines in both high schools, the average class size is also less than 28, even with five periods of teaching each day. For example, math teachers, according to the Master Schedule for both high schools, have an average class size of 20.

**Exhibit 3-16
FPS High School English Teacher Data**

School	# of English Teachers Assigned	# of Students Assigned to All English Classes	Average English Teacher Load	Average Class Size (All English Classes) Four Periods
FWHS	17	1,577	93	23
FLHS	18	1,686	94	23

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

Although there exists in the literature of best practices for teaching writing a link between individual student tutoring (i.e., the National Writing Project and the National Writing Project at Fairfield University), FPS has not conducted any research nor reported any results that has been completed specifically for FPS high schools that affirms that this instructional structure is effective in impacting the writing achievement and performance of students as measured by various writing assessments (such as the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) or SAT). Moreover, based on the current lack of internal data, there are concerns as to whether the program has been truly implemented as intended.

RECOMMENDATION

Require high school English teachers to teach five periods a day, which is the same as other core teachers.

Increasing the number of instructional class periods for each English teacher from four to five would retain the average class size for English teachers at 23. The average annual teacher load

would increase to 155 students, which is more in keeping with the loads of teachers in other content areas in the FPS high schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

As a result of this recommendation, FPS will need fewer high school English teachers. Based on current enrollments:

- * There are 1,577 FWHS students in English classes. At an average class size of 23, the school needs 69 periods of English. Dividing this by five yields a need for 14 English teachers. FWHS currently has 17.
- * There are 1,686 FLHS students in English classes. At an average class size of 23, the school needs 74 periods of English. Dividing this by five yields a need for 15 English teachers. FLHS currently has 18.

The average annual salary plus benefits for teachers in FPS is \$94,920.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Reduce HS English teacher positions by six	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520

3.4 SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education provides supplemental or extended support for students and their families and enhances student performance and academic achievement. Special education is provided to supplement, accommodate, or modify the general academic course of study, and is intended to provide adequate support to ensure the academic success of students with disabilities. The student support role is to provide supplemental or extended support for students and their families that contribute to enhanced student performance and academic achievement.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) mandates that special education services be provided to students with disabilities in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible. *No Child Left Behind* reinforces that goal with its express expectation that all students will be proficient by 2013-14. Toward that end, for years many districts have provided training and encouragement to help regular classroom teachers learn how to accommodate the needs of special education students in their classes.

While cost containment should always be a consideration in all school district departments, special education departments are often hampered more than other departments in that effort and a balance must be maintained between cost and quality. Federal laws related to special education which impact the bottom line of special education spending require:

- * that districts provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students with disabilities;



- * that students be served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) so, as much as is feasible and meets their needs, they should be included in general educational experiences and classes;
- * that students be evaluated regarding their needs and together with parents, a team of educators and other specialists develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student placed in the special education program;
- * that, at each annual review Assistive Technology be a required area of assessment and discussion; and
- * that students have access to the general curriculum and state frameworks.

The *Federal Rehabilitation Act: Section 504* extended opportunity and access to all people with disabilities, including those in regular, not special, education programs. Furthering equitable treatment for all people, the 1990 *Americans with Disabilities Act* extended the goal of eliminating discrimination against individuals with disabilities even more. More students than ever are now eligible for services most frequently offered through or supported by special education departments. Those laws, along with advances in medical technology, have opened opportunities for more students than ever to receive their education in public schools. Other factors increasing the need for and concomitant costs of special education, early intervention, and prekindergarten include:

- * deinstitutionalization of special needs students who can now receive services through public schools;
- * a rise in advocacy for students with disabilities and related attorney intervention;
- * students who had birth weights below 3.3 pounds have increasingly higher survival rates to age 5, but often require special services;
- * alternative privatized services for those students;
- * an epidemic of students identified as autistic;
- * consequences related to a higher percentage of students in poverty; and
- * an increase in the number of families experiencing social and economic stress.

FINDING 3-21

The district has a very active parent group. In the area of special education, this can be an asset or, often, if not handled properly, can be a costly detriment. In FPS, they have chosen to create a partnership with parents of special needs students. A parent group has initiated a Special Education PTO. They provide grants to teachers for projects or to attend national conferences.

In partnership with the district, this PTO spent \$10,000 for Michelle Garcia Winner to spend two days training teachers and parents, then paid two people from the district to attend training with her in California so that they could return to FPS to support implementation of her work in the district. While the PTO paid for the fees, the district paid for substitutes, materials, and supplies

to put it into operation. Ms. Winner is renowned for developing social thinking for the treatment of individuals with social-cognitive deficits: those with diagnoses such as autism, Asperger syndrome, ADHD and nonverbal learning disorder (NLD).

COMMENDATION

District special education leaders and parents are commended for instituting a strong partnership that benefits both children and educators.

FINDING 3-22

The district runs an Early Childhood Center that has an exemplary educational program for preschool children with disabilities, but also provides instruction to non-handicapped children at no charge.

In line with the district's philosophy of fully integrating all children into its classes, one means it uses to integrate students with disabilities into this preschool setting with non-disabled students is to issue an "all call" inviting children without disabilities to attend. This is, in a sense, reverse mainstreaming, bringing general education students into classes of special education students.

The ratio of general and special education students is around 50:50. The majority of FPS students attending are developmentally delayed, but other disabilities include autism, hearing impairment, other health impairment, and speech and language. Enrollment figures for 2010-11 show that 103 disabled students attend, ranging in age from two to five.

Non-handicapped students who wish to attend and meet the district's criteria for language and play abilities are included in classes at the Center. They are currently charged no tuition. They pay only an activity fee that covers supplies.

RECOMMENDATION

Charge non-handicapped students a fair tuition for preschool.

The average cost for pre-school in Fairfield ranges from \$300 to \$500 per month, according to district sources. Charging a lower fee than the average in the district area would compensate for the benefits the teachers and FPS students receive from the attendance of the other students. However, having those students in the classes has a related cost beyond just supplies, that of personnel. The district should develop procedures to create a sliding scale for parents with lower financial means so that no student interested in attending the program is turned away.

FISCAL IMPACT

Prismatic estimates that charging a modest fee of \$250 for tuition for an estimated 40 non-handicapped students who attend would result in \$10,000 in monthly revenue. Thus, revenues realized annually for the ECC's 11-month program would be \$110,000. Prismatic recommends that the district implement a half fee in 2011-12 to ensure continued participation.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Charge a fee to non-disabled students at the Early Childhood Center	\$55,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000

FINDING 3-23

The FPS special education department has successfully taken numerous steps to creatively and cost-effectively either defer legal costs or provide high quality local services to students who would not, even five years ago, have been able to be integrated into public educational settings. The department has done this despite the fact that state and federal laws prevent cost containment in many ways.

When a district and parents disagree over services related to a disability that are needed for students to have a FAPE in a LRE, procedures are available to resolve those differences. Those procedures frequently entail legal costs as well as administrative time preparing for hearings, mediation, and due process challenges. FPS is ranked fifth in the state for the number of complaints, mediations, and hearing requests (the districts ranked third, fourth, and fifth were nearly tied). Of the top five, four are in Fairfield County and the other is in a city. Four of them are peer districts chosen for this review. This provides evidence of the environment in which the FPS special education department operates.

Staff testified that, although special education legal costs last year were over projection, when they take a case to due process, the district usually wins as they are well-prepared with sound evidence and will not take it to due process unless they think they will win. They stated that there is a lot of risk in going to a full-blown process as the outcome is never certain and the hearings last an average of 30 days and include not only legal fees but the cost of contracting with outside experts.

Exhibit 3-17 shows that, despite last year’s projections for legal fees in special education being over budget, they have decreased annually since a high of \$237,653 in 2006-07 to last year’s \$139,676. These reductions over time likely reflect the department’s careful stance before taking cases to due process.

**Exhibit 3-17
FPS Special Education Legal Fees**

Expense	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11 (through October)
Legal fees	\$237,653	\$112,611	\$148,428	\$139,676	\$78,826

Source: Fairfield Public Schools Special Education Department, October 2010.

One of the related outgrowths of today’s social trends is the number of students whose tuition in private settings is often paid by public schools, either through agreement or through legal processes. A document provided Prismatic by the special education department shows that 2010-2011 tuition costs as of October 14, 2010 for 61 student outplacements or settlements totaled \$4,827,375. In numerous instances, settlements were reached in which the district and parents

agreed to a compromise regarding which party was responsible for fees such as total/partial tuition or transportation. A breakdown of tuition for those 61 student shows:

- * 13 were under \$50,000;
- * 32 were between \$50,001 and \$100,000; and,
- * four were over \$200,000. The tuitions for those four students alone totaled \$1,144,207 with an average tuition of \$286,052.

Based on the belief that students are best served in settings in which they are integrated into general education classes and closest to home, the district has created in-district Student Support Centers for students who, five years ago, would have been out-placed, as well. Three district elementary schools have specialized programs for intensive need autistic students. The programs have a heavy emphasis on applied behavioral analysis (ABA). Much staff training has been delivered those faculties to build their capacity to understand and serve those children. Each school has been strengthened with that expertise and clinical support for those children. Two staff have since become board certified behavioral analysts. The district has also created a corps of specially trained “special education trainers” to serve these students. They discovered that they had been training general paraprofessionals extensively in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), but that, once they were trained they could make an estimated triple a regular paraprofessional salary and many were leaving the district. The district decided to create a new position for people trained in those skills in order to retain staff. Eligibility is open to all district paraprofessionals as well as other individuals. Admission is rigorous with all candidates having to take both written and performance tests demonstrating their abilities with students. The salaries are more than double the average paraprofessional salary, but have contributed to greater staff retention.

The annual tuition for an FPS Student Support Center student is, on average \$85,000, including transportation and extended year services. The student’s year is extended during a six-week summer program. The average tuition for a student with similar needs placed in a private special education setting, including transportation and extended year services, is \$130,000 on average. Although no data were provided Prismatic, district staff stated that the data on long-term outcomes is also significantly better academically, socially, and with respect to factors of independence and functional skills for students who remain in district and have access to a wide range of programming and peers.

Through a state provision called ‘excess cost provision,’ some outplacement tuitions will be reimbursed to the district. The provision provides state reimbursement when a student’s program costs more than 4.5 times the district per pupil expenditure. District staff tracks individual costs for students, taking into consideration variables such as staff seniority, paraprofessional support, and transportation and report to the state throughout the year. If the district over-projects, the town loses funds; if they under-project, the town receives some reimbursement at the end of the year. Over the past few years, the legislature has capped the fund. Last year the district anticipated receiving \$3,107,380, which would have been 100 percent of the state reimbursement under the excess cost provision. Instead, FPS received \$2,610,199, or an 84% reimbursement rate.

In the area of Assistive Technology (AT), the district has adopted an innovative approach. Formerly evaluations to determine a student's need for AT cost the district between \$1,500 and \$2,000. Those evaluations frequently resulted in recommendations for ongoing consultation with the evaluator to purchase and "try" different devices and strategies. With FPS's approximately 1,000 students with disabilities, the Special Education Director decided to develop internal capacity to do all but the most complex AT evaluations. The district trained a team of district staff (i.e. special education teachers, Speech and Language Pathologists). That team now conducts 200-300 evaluations per year and provides ongoing support and professional development to each school and student team. In 2010, a private AT evaluation can cost as much as \$3,500 with ongoing consultation at a rate of \$200/hour. The current team costs 0.6 FTE, a small amount for ongoing training. Clearly this capacity has saved and continues to save district funds. Additionally, the district has collected an array of AT equipment in-house so that, when equipment is recommended, it is often available immediately for the student to try. This reduces the potential situation where the district invests in a particular technology for a student to try but it is ultimately not adopted. This situation is often prevented with the current inventory.

As student populations and their needs change and more students have more complex needs for support, there is an increasing need for Behavioral Analysts to serve them. The Special Education Director is beginning a cohort of FPS staff to become certified Behavioral Analysts so that they can provide support for students significantly impacted by autism. The teacher contract allows for a level of tuition reimbursement. She plans to develop a contract they will sign to commit to work in the district if the district pays the rest of their tuition for the program.

COMMENDATION

The Special Education Department has increased direct services to students by building capacity in FPS staff while, at the same time, working diligently to contain expenditures.

FINDING 3-24

There is ambiguity in assignments and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of social workers and psychologists that has affected their workloads. Although there is naturally some overlap, even with students they serve, in some schools the lines between the types of work in which they engage is not clear.

FPS psychologists, for the most part, have assumed responsibility for all clerical preparations for PPT meetings. This means, in some cases, that they are the school staff who actually prepare the paperwork, invitations, make phone calls, and check that all appropriate paperwork is ready before the meeting. This can be time-consuming, since it also involves trying to arrange meetings for Occupational or Physical Therapists or other part-time staff who are only in the school on specific and often different days. As a group, most of the psychologists estimated they spend 4-5 hours a week on related administrative tasks. At some schools, secretaries or paraprofessionals have taken care of much of that activity. Using trained professionals is an inefficient use of psychologists' education and salary grade.

Social workers are part-time at most schools, so sometimes the lines between their responsibilities and that of psychologists blurs. Nothing in either job description references supervision of students, administrative tasks, or a line that states, "all other tasks assigned," so

job descriptions do not provide a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, either. With the district's focus on SRBI and their global understanding of student needs, psychologists will be critical to effective implementation of those processes. However, their role needs to be purposefully discussed, agreed upon, and adhered to across the district.

Currently, each group meets on a more or less regular basis either with each other or staff in the special education department. They do meet with the special education department as a whole but did not always feel those meetings were relevant to their roles. They all expressed the desire for more regular meetings with special education leaders but also acknowledged that their time was filled with more pressing issues. One meets during the school day and one after school, so less frequently. They do not feel that they have a district-provided opportunity for training or to meet and problem-solve or share as a group. Both groups said that, if they wanted to attend professional development, they often paid for it themselves. On choice day, the options for them are few and far between.

Principals supervise and evaluate those based at their schools, but consensus of both groups was that, without a clear understanding of their potential contributions to the school's students, principals either do not fully utilize their strengths or know how to effectively evaluate them. At some schools, social workers reported they are used for recess, lunch duty, coverage when teachers are pulled for other meetings, CMT coverage, and bus duty because a school does not feel it has enough other staff to fill those roles. Some even stated that disciplinary issues end up in their laps whereas other schools have plans for handling those situations. District staff observed that often students are referred for consideration for special education as a result of behavior issues, for which general education classroom teachers have few professional development opportunities to learn. Having inconsistent processes and assignments from school to school does not capitalize on the potential synergies of the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve utilization of district psychologists and social workers.

Since the individuals in these positions are the primary providers of mental health services to the student population in FPS, the district should have clear descriptions of their roles, responsibilities, and areas on which it is important for them to focus in the daily execution of their jobs. It is essential that their functional responsibilities are clearly understood and protected in schools across the district. The positions were created to meet specific needs of the student population. Tasks they are currently performing that detract from the important role they play in student support should be eliminated.

The issue of time spent with PPT responsibilities has arisen before without resolution. It needs to be addressed as it is not a cost-effective use of professional staff's time. The following strategies would help resolve this finding:

- * A thorough review of the skill sets of the individuals in these positions should be undertaken with respect to current tasks they are engaged in. The goal should be increased direct student contact. An examination of student-related needs in concert with the responsibilities each of these highly skilled professionals should provide higher

levels of service to students and assign responsibilities more closely aligned to each of their intended roles.

- * A special education coordinator should meet with social workers and psychologists to discuss specific job-related responsibilities relating to direct student contact. They should identify other responsibilities that would be more cost-effectively performed by clerical staff. They should then develop a checklist of clerical tasks that must be done in preparation for meetings. It should be presented to and discussed with principals. Once understanding and agreement are reached, a clerical staff member should be assigned PPT responsibilities and be trained to perform them at each school.
- * Each group should have a designated coordinator with whom they meet regularly as singular groups (psychologists or social workers alone).
- * District leaders should use job descriptions to identify key job responsibilities of positions that will be protected in all schools.
- * Gleaning information from both groups, some schools appear to have developed effective procedures, but they have not been shared with others or made consistent throughout the district. This discussion needs to occur in meetings with principals so that best FPS practices can be shared and duplicated in all schools for consistency.
- * The district should analyze referrals for placement by teacher to identify teachers that may benefit from training in classroom management.
- * Periodic staff meetings will keep district staff focused on key tasks, provide opportunities for ongoing professional development, sharing of best practices, and problem-solving among staff with similar responsibilities.
- * Principals should receive training in facilitation of PPT meetings, conflict management, use of data as a basis for PPT decision-making, and special education legal issues that might arise in them.
- * In concert with previous recommendations, the Professional Development Council should include plans for low incidence professionals in the district such as social workers and psychologists.

One suggestion the district might consider is that other districts assign special education team leaders in each school to organize and lead PPT meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, but should result in more efficient and effective use of social workers' and psychologists' time, resulting in additional services to more students and increased prevention activities for those students.

FINDING 3-25

Staffing of psychologists and social workers in Fairfield Public Schools is higher than ratios recommended by the American School Health Association (ASHA). That organization recommends a staffing ratio of 1: 1,000 students for school psychologists and 1:800 for social workers.

FPS staffing of psychologist and social workers is shown in **Exhibit 3-18**. As shown, the district has 19.3 psychologists and 12.4 social workers. Based on a 2010-11 enrollment of 10,109, ASHA staffing guidelines would provide 10.1 psychologists and 12.6 social workers. Thus, per ASHA staffing guidelines, the district is overstaffed in psychologist positions but understaffed in social worker positions.

**Exhibit 3-18
FPS Staffing of Psychologists and Social Workers, 2010-2011**

Psychologists		Social Workers	
Assignment	FTE	Assignment	FTE
Fairfield Ludlowe High School	2.0	Central Office	3.4
Fairfield Warde High School	2.0	Fairfield Ludlowe High School	2.0
Early Childhood Center	0.5	Fairfield Warde High School	2.0
Fairfield Woods Middle School	1.0	Roger Ludlowe Middle School	1.0
Roger Ludlowe Middle School	2.0	Tomlinson Middle School	1.0
Tomlinson Middle School	1.0	Holland Hill Elementary School	1.0
Burr Elementary School	1.0	Jennings Elementary School	1.0
Dwight Elementary School	1.0	McKinley Elementary School	1.0
Holland Hill Elementary School	1.0		
Jennings Elementary School	1.0		
McKinley Elementary School	1.0		
Mill Hill Elementary School	1.0		
Alternative School-PAL	1.0		
North Stratfield Elementary School	1.0		
Holland Hill Elementary School	1.0		
Holland Hill Elementary School	0.2		
Roger Sherman	0.6		
Holland Hill Elementary School	1.0		
TOTAL	19.3	TOTAL	12.4

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Bring FPS psychologist and social worker staffing ratios closer to those recommended by ASHA.

The district should examine its staffing in those two personnel areas and bring staffing closer to ASHA recommendations. It is likely that, once the district has implemented previous

recommendations in this chapter and identified key tasks for each position to play, it will be better able to focus fewer staff members on the key tasks identified.

FISCAL IMPACT

Using the average teacher salary of \$94,920, and assuming that, with some of the intensive special education programs in FPS, the district will not be able to reduce psychologist positions by the full 9.2 it is overstaffed, Prismatic estimates savings for the district with a reduction of staff of 5.0 FTE. Savings with such a reduction would be \$474,600 annually. The cost of an additional 0.2 FTE social worker would be \$18,984.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate five psychologist positions	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600
Add 0.2 social worker positions	(\$18,984)	(\$18,984)	(\$18,984)	(\$18,984)	(\$18,984)
TOTAL	\$455,616	\$455,616	\$455,616	\$455,616	\$455,616

This chapter reviews technology in Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) and includes four sections:

- 4.1 Technology Planning
- 4.2 Organization, Management, and Staffing
- 4.3 Technology Professional Development
- 4.4 Instructional Technology

Education Week's annual Technology Counts survey for 2009 assigns grades to states in three indicator categories: use of technology, capacity to use technology, and access to technology. Connecticut earned a grade of D+ in use of technology, a B in capacity to use technology and a B- in access to technology. That compares to corresponding national grades of B, C+, and C respectively. **Exhibit 4-1** compares the Connecticut school technology environment with national averages. This information provides a backdrop against which to assess technology issues within FPS.

Exhibit 4-1
Overall Connecticut School Technology Environment Compared Nationally

Technology Environment	Connecticut Average	National Average
Access to Technology		
Number of students per instructional computer	3.8	3.8
Number of students per high-speed Internet-connected computer	3.5	3.7
Percent of students with access to computers (4 th grade)	95.0%	95.0%
Percent of students with access to computers (8 th grade)	92.0%	83.0%
Use of Technology		
Student standards include technology	Yes	50 states
State tests students on technology	No	13 states
State has established a virtual school	No	29 states
State offers computer-based assessments	No	26 states
Capacity to Use Technology		
State includes technology in its teacher standards	Yes	46 states
State includes technology in its administrator standards	Yes	37 states
State includes technology in its initial teacher license requirements	Yes	21 states
State includes technology in its initial administrator license requirements	No	10 states
State includes technology in its teacher recertification requirements	Yes	10 states
State includes technology in its administrator recertification requirements	No	7 states

Source: *Technology Counts, Education Week, 2009.*

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), an internationally recognized non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the effective use of technology in K-12 education, has developed a Technology Support Index rubric to assist school districts in determining their needs in a variety of technology support areas. In the most recent release of the Index (Version 2.4), school districts are ranked into one of four categories for various aspects of technology usage and support.

These categories are:

- * **Low Efficiency** - a strategy or domain that needs attention and improvement. Low efficiency strategies result in duplication of effort or other costs that ultimately produce unsatisfactory results in terms of technology support.
- * **Moderate Efficiency** - these strategies address major technical support issues, but with incomplete implementation or inadequate resources. While moderately efficient strategies may allow a lower short-term commitment of resources or greater flexibility in technology use, over time these benefits must be weighed against long-term expenditures and the effects of lower levels of support on teacher and student productivity.
- * **Satisfactory Efficiency** - these strategies are generally effective in sustaining the technology infrastructure and promoting the integration of technology in teaching and learning. However, savings in time and effort and improvements in service are still possible. Some districts may choose this level of efficiency as optimum for some domains, accepting a certain amount of redundancy as the price of flexibility in technology use.
- * **High Efficiency** - these strategies make the most of available technology support resources, emergent problems are rapidly detected, solutions are quickly implemented, and problem sources are identified and corrected. Emergent problems are rapidly detected, solutions are quickly implemented, and problem sources are identified and corrected. High-efficiency systems tend to be simple and structured and may offer less flexibility than alternatives. However, depending on the domain, these strategies may result in substantial savings in time and money.

The complete Index can be found at <http://tsi.iste.org/techsupport/> and provides expectations for four areas of technology support: equipment standards, staffing and processes, professional development, and enterprise management.

4.1 TECHNOLOGY PLANNING

Successful technology planning is the foundation for successful technology implementation and development. School district technology is not just a standalone program; it is a long-term, ongoing effort that affects every aspect of district operations. The technology planning process is complicated. There are many factors to consider, including instructional integration, legislated data reporting, funding, training, and staffing for support.

Technology plans should cover between three to five years. By analyzing current trends in district demographics and available technology, planners can predict what the needs of the district will be and what technology will be available to best fit those needs. Technology, however, is the fastest changing segment of our society, so frequent updates and revisions of any technology plan are required.

Current *No Child Left Behind* legislation sets the expectation that districts will make data-driven decisions, that students will achieve technological literacy before ninth grade, and that teachers

will effectively integrate technology into the classroom. Meeting these mandates requires that districts have a seamless plan tying instruction, technology, professional development, scheduling, and budgetary considerations together to support increased effective use of technology in their classrooms.

FINDING 4-1

Fairfield Public Schools does not have a guiding, functional long-term plan for technology. Statements from staff in and out of technology report that:

- * technology has not been purchased based on instructional needs;
- * a chasm exists between the two branches of district offices;
- * no structure or communications process has linked administrative and instructional technology so that the technology staff understands the instructional intent or impact of technology purchases; and,
- * there is no vision for technology or instructional technology.

The Five Year Technology Plan for FPS is, in essence, a budgetary planning document without details as to the instructional need behind the intended purchases. A district strategic plan also identifies technology as one of six strands, but Prismatic found that some activities reported complete are not.

Furthermore, many FPS staff remarked that, when budget cuts are necessary, technology was the first area to be reduced. As shown in the 2009-10 Technology Capital Plan (**Exhibit 4-2**) the requested budget was reduced by \$813,405, more than half the total the requested.

**Exhibit 4-2
Fairfield Technology Capital Plan
2009-10**

Capital Plan Initiatives*	Budget Request 2009-10	Actual Funding 2009-10
Instructional Initiatives		
Smart Boards (65 per year, total of 647 classrooms)	\$298,300	
New PCs for designated curricular need		
FWMS presentation stations	\$ 74,000	\$74,000
Computer Replacement Plan	\$777,715	\$470,050
Network Initiatives		
Wireless Plan years 2-3	\$100,000	
Document Retention	\$30,000	
Disaster Recovery	\$50,000	\$50,000
Unified Communication	\$100,000	
Items not Projected		
Sound installation for FLHS projectors		\$12,960
Additional Work Stations for CAD lab FWHS		\$9,600
TOTAL	\$1,430,015	\$616,610

Source: Fairfield Public Schools Technology Department, October 2010.

* Some funding through USF grants

Exhibits 4-3, 4-4, and 4-5 provide budgetary evidence of FPS's former lack of commitment to technology as an essential teaching tool for its students. That, and the lack of a forward-looking planning document that provides a vision of what technology's effect can be on student interest and learning at a deep level, differentiated according to student ability and interest, and stimulating curiosity and inquiry, stand as mute testimony to the disconnect between instruction and technology to which many FPS staff testify. **Exhibit 4-3** shows that, between 2004-05 and 2008-09, while spending per pupil increased in many areas, funds for instructional equipment decreased by 64.44 percent. According to district staff, some technology purchases may also be coded as either educational media supplies or purchased services, instead of instructional supplies. Both of those categories had increases that may have offset to some extent the decrease in instructional equipment spending.

**Exhibit 4-3
FPS per Pupil Cost by Object of Expense
2004-05 through 2008-09**

Object	Year					Change from 2004-05 through 2008-09	
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Amount	Percent
Instructional Supplies	\$236	\$242	\$206	\$230	\$219	-\$17	(7.20%)
Educational Media Supplies	\$32	\$31	\$34	\$47	\$39	\$7	21.88%
Instructional Equipment	\$45	\$42	\$12	\$14	\$16	-\$29	(64.44%)
Purchased Services	\$1,386	\$1,548	\$1,660	\$1,721	\$1,745	\$359	25.90%
Other	\$626	\$720	\$746	\$689	\$737	\$111	17.73%

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 4-4 compares the same expenditures by their percentage of the overall budget for each. This also shows an overall decrease in expenditures for technology. Combining all three possible categories into which technology could be coded (educational media supplies, instructional equipment, and purchased services), the result is a net decrease.

**Exhibit 4-4
FPS Comparison by Object of Expense
2004-05 through 2008-09**

Object	Year					% Point Change from 2004-05 through 2008-09
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Amount
Instructional Supplies	2.40%	2.30%	1.79%	2.01%	1.84%	(0.56%)
Educational Media Supplies	10.65%	11.31%	11.78%	11.93%	11.69%	1.04%
Instructional Equipment	21.00%	23.00%	23.00%	18.00%	17.00%	(4.00%)
Purchased Services	1.48%	1.52%	1.74%	2.04%	2.32%	0.84%
Other	4.84%	5.26%	5.30%	4.77%	4.93%	0.09%

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Exhibit 4-5 compares FPS expenditures in selected areas with peer districts. Its expenditures for instructional equipment were \$10 per pupil lower than the peer average and second lowest overall. Its expenditures for educational media supplies were \$54 lower than the peer average and third-lowest overall. Its expenditures for purchased services were higher than the peer average but it is unlikely that technology comprises the majority of purchases in this category.

**Exhibit 4-5
Expenditures per Pupil – FPS and Peers
2008-09**

District	Salaries	Employee Benefits	Instructional Supplies	Educational Media Supplies	Instructional Equipment	Purchased Services	Other
Fairfield	\$9,577	\$2,224	\$219	\$39	\$16	\$1,745	\$737
Greenwich	\$11,791	\$2,840	\$376	\$30	\$0	\$1,954	\$479
Norwalk	\$9,832	\$2,952	\$149	\$25	\$29	\$1,560	\$655
Stamford	\$10,239	\$2,462	\$238	\$206	\$35	\$2,218	\$401
Trumbull	\$8,079	\$1,821	\$161	\$114	\$43	\$1,370	\$426
West Hartford	\$8,566	\$2,063	\$213	\$91	\$22	\$1,195	\$171
Peer Average	\$9,701	\$2,428	\$227	\$93	\$26	\$1,659	\$426

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education website.

Since original development of the Technology Plan, the district has initiated its FPS Strategic Plan. The over-arching technology strategy is to “fully integrate technology into our learning and work environments.” Results anticipated from achievement of the action steps are:

1. All stakeholders will be proficient in the use of technology (Note: one goal to be complete by 6/2012 and the rest by 6/2011);

2. Fully integrate information and technology literacy into all curricula (Note: goals for action steps to be completed by 6/2011);
3. Implement the Educational Technology Plan (Note: by coordinating it with the budget— reported completed 5/2009); and
4. Provide appropriate leadership and support for the integration of Information and Technology Literacy throughout the district (Note: reported complete 4/2010).

Regarding each result, Prismatic found:

- * Result 1: district staff reports that they have only recently begun identifying a core skills checklist and common literacies that will provide a foundation to achieve cross-district and staff proficiency. Once the list is completed, they will be embedded in core area curricula so that Curriculum Leaders can ensure they are taught along with core skills and competencies.
- * Result 2: Until the core competencies are identified, they cannot be integrated into all curricula.
- * Result 3: The Education Technology Plan, as it is, has been undermined by district budget cuts. Without a prioritized, integrated instructional and technology plan, there can be no basis upon which proponents can argue successfully for technology expenditures to remain in the budget.
- * Result 4: Although Action Step 4 for this Result states, “Ensure oversight and accountability for the integration of technology into curriculum and instruction” and reportedly was completed on 4/2010, there is too much testimony six months later during Prismatic’s site visit that technology and instruction are not yet integrated even at the administrative level, much less the curricular and instructional for this goal to have been achieved.

The National Center for Educational Statistics released the National Education Technology Plan in January 2005. This plan outlines seven action steps that school districts should take to prepare today’s students for the technology challenges of tomorrow. These action steps are:

1. Strengthen Leadership
2. Consider Innovative Budgeting
3. Improve Teacher Training
4. Support E-Learning and Virtual Schools
5. Encourage Broadband Access
6. Move toward Digital Content
7. Integrate Data Systems

These seven steps are supported by a district technology plan that is long-range, realistic, and strategic in nature. In districts operating at a best practices level, the technology plan is integrally tied to the district’s overall strategic plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommit the district to technology.

The district needs to re-commit itself to the goals, strategies, and intended results in the Technology component of the Strategic Plan. It then needs to develop a meaningful, systematic long-range technology plan and budget accordingly.

An essential part of this recommitment will be to develop budgetary guidance related to technology. Technology cannot continue to be seen as something “nice to have” if there is enough extra funding in the budget. Thoughtfully deployed technology reduces the need for staff to continue to complete paper-based processes. It opens doors to deep analysis regarding student achievement and whether current teaching practices are supporting student learning.

The Massachusetts Education Technology Advisory Council has developed a School Technology and Readiness Chart (StAR Chart) that is designed to promote best practices in the use of technology in schools. Among other items, their StAR Chart identifies districts as operating at an advance technology level when their budget allocated for technology is \$425+ per student.¹ In comparison, fully funding the FPS 2010-11 proposed budget for technology (including capital outlay) would have left the district \$1M short of the advanced technology level.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. However, Prismatic anticipates that significant fiscal resources will be necessary to bring FPS up to date on technology, likely beginning in 2012-13. Prismatic anticipates that the district will need most of 2011-12 as a planning year for a significant recommitment to technology.

4.2 ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFFING

Today, technology is a foundational aspect of almost every organization. Technology drives efficiencies and analysis in school districts. The requirements of *No Child Left Behind* include that school districts make data-driven decisions, that students achieve technological literacy before 9th grade, and that teachers effectively integrate technology into the classroom. Meeting these mandates depends heavily on a district’s technology implementation.

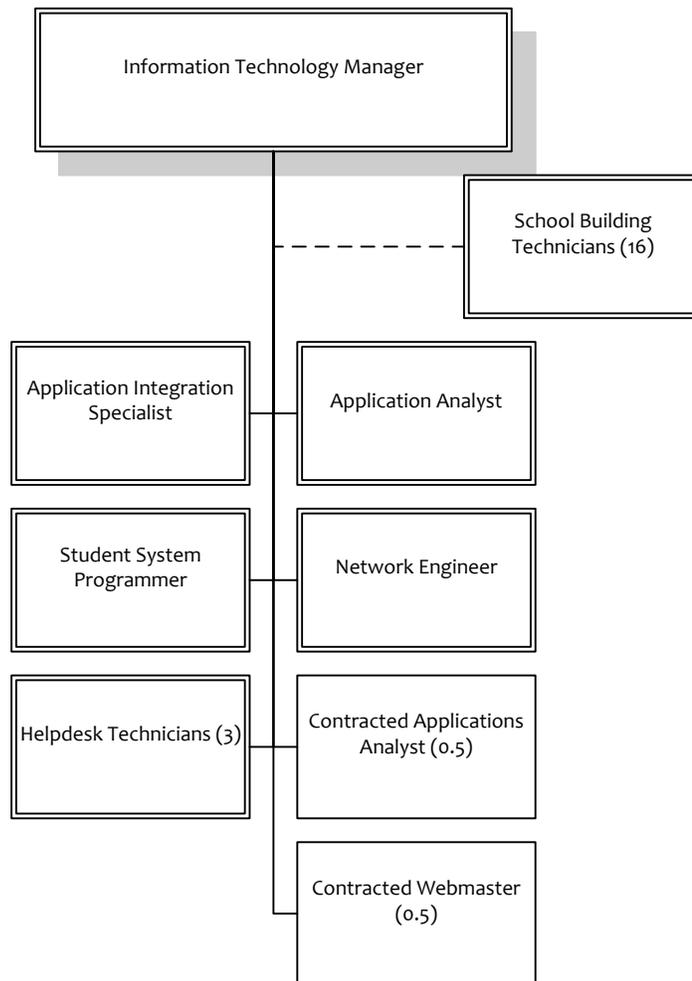
Ideally, technology is one area of a school district that supports all administrative and instructional personnel in a positive manner. Organizing technology resources to effectively achieve this outcome can be challenging.

FINDING 4-2

¹ Considering total cost of ownership.

Exhibit 4-6 provides the organizational structure for FPS which, at present, does not reflect the equal importance of administrative and instructional technology. As shown, the Technology Manager has seven direct reports that are also district employees. Additionally, there are two half-time contracted positions--an applications analyst and a webmaster. These seven positions under the Technology Manager are intended to support FPS administrative technology efforts. The Technology Manager also has the district's 16 building technology specialists reporting indirectly to her. These positions are intended to support FPS instructional technology efforts.

**Exhibit 4-6
Organizational Structure of FPS Technology Department**



Source: Fairfield Public Schools, 2010.

The ISTE Technology Support Index identifies districts functioning at high efficiency as those with an organizational structure where all of the technology functions report through the same unit in the organization, providing for a logical chain of command and communication structures. This is not the current organizational structure of the FPS technology department.

Currently, challenges exist that stand in the way of FPS's technology department meeting criteria beyond low efficiency. Despite desires to support staff in administrative offices and schools, the department's training, reporting, and budget stand in the way. Many staff in and out of the technology department stated that when FPS faced budget cuts, the technology budget was often first reduced. There has not yet been a purposeful professional development plan for technology staff developed or implemented, placing staff in the uncomfortable position of trying to support technology for which they have no training.

Although the results on the first part of the Prismatic staff survey reflected a relatively positive opinion of technology implementation and support in the district, FPS staff comments on the open-ended questions reflected a need to re-organize the technology department for closer communications with instructional staff.

Moreover, interviewees stated that the instructional side of the district is not being heard or provided the technology support they need. Currently, the building level technology contact people report indirectly to the Manager of Technology, but meetings revolve largely around technology issues and not instructional ones.

RECOMMENDATION

Realign the technology department.

As a part of the recommendation in Chapter 3 to develop a new central office organizational structure, the Technology Manager should report directly to the Superintendent and the Superintendent should assign the Curriculum Leader for Technology/Media to the technology department.

The location of the technology department apart from instruction creates barriers to understanding among technology staff of the impact of their work on teaching and learning and prevents integrated planning for effective curriculum delivery. Placing the department in direct reporting position to the Superintendent elevates its visibility and ability to address both administrative and instructional technology.

While some functional areas of a district may be highly effective operating in relative isolation from other areas (such as food services), the pervasive nature of technology, as well as its comparatively high cost per unit, dictate that all technology assets be leveraged cohesively from one central direction.

It is also imperative that structural alignment ensure that instruction is well-integrated into planning and decision-making. Placing technology directly under the superintendent ensures that neither administrative nor academic concerns dominate technology support. Likewise, this placement ensures that neither administrative nor academic technology needs are neglected. Building technicians should meet monthly with the Technology/Media Curriculum Leader jointly with the Manager of Technology. This recommendation also aligns with the district's strategic plan goal to fully integrate technology into the learning and work environments.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING 4-3

A review of school inventories of administrative and instructional technology shows inequities among FPS schools in numbers and types of technology. For example, according to an inventory sheet provided Prismatic, Stratfield has no computers in classrooms, but 151 mobile laptops. Other schools range in numbers from as low as 125, excluding the alternative school, to a high of 998. Of course, different levels of schools will have varying numbers of computers, but there appears to be no consistency among schools at the same levels.

Differences in principal philosophies and priorities as well as differences in socio-economic neighborhoods of schools have contributed to disparities in technology among schools. Principals receive school budgets but have much flexibility in how they spend the funds. Also, parents in some have donated technology, but others have not been so fortunate. Still other schools have Title I resources that are not available to all FPS schools. This practice has led to some schools having up-to-date technology and lab experiences available for their students while others do not.

The Superintendent has already recognized the disparity not only in resources, but in the differences in educational experiences that means for students depending upon the schools they attend in the district. To begin to level the playing field for teachers and students, he is developing a plan to address this disparity in the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Address technology disparity among FPS campuses.

The Superintendent has recognized and begun addressing inequities in educational opportunities through technology for its students. However, much work remains to be done. Implementing this recommendation will likely mean developing policies guiding technology donations and disposal of outdated equipment. It will also likely require multiple discussion among principals to determine whether school-level philosophy is guiding technology implementation (or lack thereof) or whether budget constraints on technology are holding back instructional goals.

FISCAL IMPACT

The impact of this recommendation cannot be quantified as it depends on the specific action steps the district takes.

FINDING 4-4

Several sources of problems with help desk responsiveness were identified during the site visit. The district has not yet created either a system for referral of specific types of technology issues to individuals best able to address them, nor has it created a written document that identifies the specific technicians to be called depending on their strengths. Another contributing factor the review team identified is the lack of training provided either building technicians or district staff. Staff interviewed reported that they could not take the time away from their job responsibilities to attend, for instance, five days of training. Additionally, help desk staff are not cross-trained so that they all have comparable skills and knowledge regarding existing district technology. When

FPS decided to purchase Macs, help desk technicians did not receive training so that they could provide necessary support for that platform.

A district survey regarding the help desk reflects inconsistency in numerous areas that are essential for keeping the technology used by the district's teachers and administrators accessible for instructional and administrative purposes. There is first of all, inconsistency between the Likert scale responses and the associated comments that were extensions. In those comments, respondents reported inconsistent courtesy and respect shown toward those asking for help, timeliness, and/or ability or willingness to provide the assistance the help desk is intended to offer. Many noted that it took numerous attempts before their problems were resolved. Responses also indicate an apparent failure on the part of the technicians to understand the support function that technology plays with respect to instruction. Frequent observations from central staff in interviews were very positive about the helpfulness and responsiveness of help desk staff. Others noted that those characteristics depended on the individual handling them.

Multiple respondents stated that, rather than receiving the needed assistance from central office staff, building technicians provide the final resolution. Interviews at the central office and with school staffs also reflect a variance in successful resolution of problems, with some central staff speculating that their success is because of their proximity to technology department staff. Responses also indicate that success is dependent upon the technician they have contacted, either because of accessibility, customer service orientation, or individual skill and knowledge.

A review FPS requested in October 2009 by Sarcom reinforced findings discussed above. That report noted that "Help Desk controls and process are not in place and are not consistent across all locations providing different service levels to end users." The report recommended that "Employees should possess adequate knowledge of their job requirements to effectively perform their daily tasks" and assigned it a priority level of P1 ("Recommend this be addressed within 30 days"). This recommendation remains to be completely implemented.

Another concern expressed by many interviewed staff was slow responsiveness, particularly as it related to the use of SharePoint for communicating requests for technical assistance. The Sarcom report came to a similar conclusion, stating, "The SharePoint site used for Help Desk entries should be used more consistently and incorporated as a change management tracking system." Although this was rated a P3 priority ("recommend this be addressed within 90 days"), it has apparently not yet been adequately addressed. This finding also indicated another concern, that the technology department is not modeling the use of technology in its work practices. Even though SharePoint is intended to facilitate assistance for staff with technology challenges, most staff reports that a phone call or email is quicker and more effective.

The Superintendent has assigned the Deputy Superintendent to oversee implementation of Sarcom recommendations. At the time of the on-site review, the Deputy Superintendent, the Manager of Technology, and the Director of Operations were meeting weekly to discuss needs and actions.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve customer service levels through the Help Desk.

The district should develop an immediate plan to respond to inconsistent customer responsiveness by the Help Desk and use ongoing user groups to monitor its effectiveness.

User groups should be a part of implementation and monitoring of this recommendation to ensure and assess intended outcomes. The concerns expressed in the Sarcom report, the district survey, and the interviews and surveys conducted by Prismatic are too pervasive and deep not to be immediately addressed. Issues of particular concern that must be addressed are:

- * attitude of customer service;
- * understanding of the link between technology and the district's core function—educating students;
- * training for Help Desk staff;
- * prioritization of needs that guides deployment of technical assistance;
- * use of technology in responding to requests for assistance;
- * prioritization of requests in responses; and
- * identification of skills and knowledge each Help Desk staff member possesses and assignment of related needs for assistance to individuals accordingly.

A technology department response to the Sarcom report reveals that employee training funds were requested in the 2009-10 budget in order to address the P1 recommendation, but they were not included in the final budget. It is self-defeating and not cost-effective for the district to expect a Help Desk to support district technology without providing them the requisite training to enable them to be effective in that goal.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-5

Almost universally, staff outside the technology department reported that there are tremendous needs and gaps with respect to technology decision-making, purchasing, and support. Decisions appear to be made with few stakeholders involved, rather than through an integrated, instructionally based systemic approach.

Some examples of this issue include:

- * Macs were purchased for the library at Burr despite an apparent awareness that software would not be compatible. The software change cost the district an additional \$6,000.
- * The special education department used ARRA funds to purchase \$500,000 worth of netbooks and selected a suite of software. Working with the technology department, the department collaborated to select models, memory, and other factors that would

prevent the netbooks from becoming quickly outdated. The purchase took place more than 18 months before the Prismatic on-site review. Yet a number of people in FPS stated that they were not all up and running due to a number of technology and support issues.

- * Only the two high schools are wireless campuses.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop procedures to ensure that the Technology/Media Curriculum Leader has a strong voice in instructional technology decisions.

Purchasing technology for students is a sizable investment for a school district. Groundwork should be laid prior to the purchase to identify and address potential barriers to its use before the purchase is made. Once obstacles have been overcome and the purchase made, the equipment or software should be expeditiously moved into the hands of trained teachers so that students will immediately benefit from the district's investment.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING 4-6

The district is employing a number of procedures by which technology forms a foundation for increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Examples of paperless processes in FPS include:

- * A partial online registration system has reduced the paperwork burden on staff and improved customer service to parents and students. It enables a parent to pre-register all of his/her children online at home, provide emergency contact information, and guardian status. The data is uploaded nightly so that when they arrive at the school, the information can be confirmed and the registration completed. Having the data entered ahead of time is also likely to reduce error rates, as staff would no longer be completing data entry from handwritten forms.
- * The Food Service Horizon system automates student use and funds, enabling parents to check their balances and the foods that their children eat from home. It is also integrated with the Student Management System (SMS).
- * Follett's Destiny library system enables students and parents to browse catalogs, and check-out, renew, and reserve books at all FPS secondary schools and one elementary.
- * Although its use is reportedly not universal, the Web-based Edline serves as a parent portal for communications between homes and schools and, again, is integrated with the SMS. The district also uses ProTraxx which is networked throughout the state for professional development and certification purposes.

- * Applitrak is a web-based application process used by district administrators and job applicants for viewing vacancies, applying for jobs, and reviewing applicants.
- * Central office staff is also working on development of a teacher website that will allow teachers to collaborate and share lesson plans to easily promulgate best practices used in FPS schools.

COMMENDATION

FPS has begun implementing technology to streamline procedures and begin to reduce paper processes.

FINDING 4-7

Although the district has adopted some effective online procedures, Prismatic found that adoption of more efficient and effective technology-based processes has been slowed by resistance, a lack of clear administrative support or directive, and a desire of staff who have been in the district many years to hang on to old processes or duplicate paper and electronic records. Examples include:

- * although the human resources department uses MUNIS for many functions, they do not require teachers to use the online feature in order to receive credit for earning continuing education units but instead process paper;
- * schools fill out a form that they send to HR where absences and leave data are hand entered into MUNIS and Phoenix, the payroll system;
- * there is no preventive maintenance software program yet as a part of MUNIS;
- * the ethnicity report is not accurate so staff goes to the registrar who looks the information up on a hard copy;
- * the maintenance work order program developed in-house is 10 years old and not state-of-the art, with very limited reporting capability;
- * the only preventive maintenance program the maintenance department uses is a paper-based process for HVAC systems;
- * the event planner uses an in-house developed program for scheduling and invoicing events;
- * there is no document retention and organizing system yet; and
- * the K-12 system allows parent to update their contact information and cell phones electronically and for schools to view them electronically, but some staff still print them.

Manual processing of tasks that can easily be computerized is time-consuming, inefficient, and wasteful of resources.

The STaR Chart from neighboring Massachusetts defines districts with advanced technology implementation as having school and district leaders who display these characteristics:

- * *promote exemplary use of technology in instruction;*
- * *model and use technology in daily work in communication, presentations, online collaborative projects, and management tasks;*
- * *develop a school culture that expects all teachers to use technology;*
- * *advocate in the community for the integration of technology in instruction; and*
- * *expect all teachers to use technology well.*

RECOMMENDATION

Prioritize paper-based processes for review, reengineering, and elimination.

During the course of the review, Prismatic noted a number of paper-based processes still existent in FPS central offices. While Prismatic does not recommend the elimination of all paper-based processes just because they are paper-based, they should be reviewed for continuing need. It may well be that a previously paper-based process can be reduced, modified, or eliminated by existing and new software tools. Prismatic recommends that FPS central office staff systematically identify all major paper-based processes, including those where staff generates hard copy files from computer files as a backup, to assess the need for continuing them.

One example of an effective school maintenance department program is one that SchoolDude has developed with a state of the art web-hosted program. Such a program could replace all three of the antiquated maintenance systems and improve productivity. All five peer districts in this evaluation are currently using SchoolDude for work orders and/or preventive maintenance.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Although there will likely be some costs in transitioning paper-based processes to online processes, the district will undoubtedly recoup at least some of its most valuable asset—staff time.

FINDING 4-8

Fairfield Public Schools has adopted a variety of technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its school management, but much of it has been either “home-grown” or commissioned for FPS specifically. Reports indicate that people in the schools have, for the most part adapted to the challenges these systems present. Staff believing the programs were effective and user-friendly were somewhat divided along the lines of technology staff or proponents and other users. Those involved in the technology side of the district saw the programs, for the most part, as user-friendly. End users differed. The number of concerns indicates a need for FPS to review its programs with respect to best serving district needs.

The Student Curriculum Assessment Database (SCAD) enables teachers to enter student assessment data and develop reports on their classes. It has been in the district approximately nine years, but has not migrated in extensive use beyond the elementary level. One explanation provided for that limited usage was that FPS is a very union-controlled system and that directing teachers to use a system they saw no benefits in was not a part of the culture. The Leadership Team also has access to SCAD data and uses it for data books for meetings with school staffs, but can only access data through the sixth grade.

SCAD integrates with the Student Achievement and Record Solution (STAARS) program that has been in use in the district for a little over a year. An external consultant developed STAARS for FPS. STAARS is generally a reporting and query tool. It is intended to import information from SCAD and the Student Management System (SMS) to build more robust reports. It also includes assessments for both seventh and eighth grades. It originated with FPS staff recognizing that teachers liked a state reporting site and speculating that a similar district-specific site might be beneficial to FPS teachers and administrators. Benefits identified were that it enables the district to have total control of its data and is flexible, allowing district staff to customize reports as users deem warranted. However, several interviewees used the word “clunky” to describe it, and noted that it is not as polished as commercial products. Staff also reported that it is not easy to use. One school administrator reported that it has evolved into a more user-friendly system, although scheduling is still “laborious.” Multiple people stated that, although technology staff can and does develop customized reports for schools using STAARS, it takes “forever” to get them and that “response time is often very lengthy to add a new query.”

The SMS has been in FPS in various forms for around a decade. Several years ago, FPS investigated the possibility of purchasing a more functional system but decided not to spend the \$25,000 it would take. High school teachers use the SMS as a snapshot of grades, demographics and a variety of formal or standardized tests from multiple sources. One person noted that they understood that STAARS would be used to create reports from SMS. Another, though, noted that teachers were trying to use the SMS as STAARS and it was not intended for that purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

Include in planning and budgeting the purchase of integrated student management data collection and reporting systems and require universal use.

Instead of having three systems that are not designed from inception to integrate data and that require staff to learn three different processes for using them, Prismatic strongly recommends that the district move in the direction of having a single, integrated system for inputting data and creating reports. It should be used by staff at all levels of the district. When FPS leaders make a decision to either design or purchase an assessment system, it is only effective and cost-efficient when all teachers in all schools use it. Training in its use must precede introduction into FPS.

FISCAL IMPACT

The exact fiscal impact will depend on the system selected. Prismatic strongly recommends that the district consider implementing an off-the-shelf system with a proven track record. The district should shop competitively for a unified system that best meets its needs and its budget. An estimate of a first-year license fee is \$15 per student for purchase and an additional \$15 per student for implementation, data conversion, and staff training as well as consulting and trouble-

shooting. Subsequent annual fees would drop to approximately \$5 per student and would include updates each year as they became available. Costs for the first two years are estimated to be \$298,830 (9,961 students x \$15 x 2). Fees in subsequent years would be an estimated \$5/student for a total of \$49,805. As the district evaluates this recommendation, it should consider both existing and projected fiscal and HR costs in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Purchase an integrated Student Management System	\$0	(\$298,830)	(\$49,805)	(\$49,805)	(\$49,805)

FINDING 4-9

FPS lacks a formula-driven plan for technician staffing. **Exhibit 4-7** provides a breakdown of the computer inventory for 2010-11. Planned increases included in the Five-Year Technology Plan are no indication of additional computers to consider support needs for, since the technology budget has historically been cut from proposed expenditures in the plan.

**Exhibit 4-7
FPS Computer Inventory**

Location	Number
Dwight Elementary School	147
Jennings Elementary School	159
Mill Hill Elementary School	169
N. Stratfield Elementary School	167
Osborn Hill Elementary School	187
Sherman Elementary School	208
McKinley Elementary School	219
Stratfield Elementary School	203
Riverfield Elementary School	186
Burr Elementary School	226
Holland Hill Elementary School	125
R. Ludlowe Middle School	818
Tomlinson Middle School	540
Fairfield Woods Middle School	446
Fairfield Ludlowe High School	998
Fairfield Warde High School	845
Alternative School	69
Total	5712

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

Within the technology department, three primary Help Desk positions provide technical support. However, the Network Engineer and Application Integration Specialist provide occasional troubleshooting and technical assistance.

The district also employs building technicians at most schools. Their staffing is as follows:

- * three 12-month positions that serve the district's two high schools;
- * one 12-month position that serves one middle school;
- * two 12-month positions that serve the other two middle schools; and
- * 10 10-month positions who serve the district's 11 elementary schools.

The Alternative High School does not have a building technician. With the recent loss of one elementary position, two schools now share one building technician position.

Thus, 19.0 FTE provide the vast majority of technical support within the district. In the Sarcom study, several recommendations focused on consolidating services to heighten customer service, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. Pertinent recommendations are:

- * Create a centralized service desk to reduce labor requirements in the field and reduce overall costs to the business. Sarcom estimates that 50 percent of the field support could be reduced and repurposed.
- * Move all low touch incidents to the centralized service desk and reduce field touches to break-fix and software support desk side visits.
- * Create a smaller specialized field that can cover several remote locations per day to ensure business buy-in and end user support and satisfaction is not harmed due to non-dedicated full time resources being in place.
- * ...Align skill sets in the field and central office with job responsibilities and customer and business needs.

In the peer districts of Norwalk and Trumbull, school support positions are centrally located for deployment to schools according to need. The two districts respectively have 7.0 and 6.0 FTE for that responsibility.

In this area, because technology and methods of deployment are changing constantly, standards are difficult to assess. One yardstick for measuring necessary technology staffing is the ratio of computers to support personnel. The ISTE Technology Support Index includes a rubric for determining staffing needs for information technology technicians. **Exhibit 4-8** shows the ISTE Index for technical staffing ratios. Based on that ratio, the current levels of FPS technician staffing are only at low efficiency (a ratio of one technician per 300 computers). However, this portion of the ISTE Index was developed in 2008 and does not reflect the quantum leaps in technology and ease-of-use of the past two years. The ISTE ratios also fail to consider the technological competence of the district staff using the technology, the specific manner in which the technology is deployed (some methods are significantly easier to support), or the daily use of technology by district staff (some computers may be barely used each day, indicative of a lower need for technical support).

**Exhibit 4-8
ISTE Technology Support Index Rubric for Staffing Ratios**

Index Area	Efficiency of Technology			
	Low	Moderate	Satisfactory	High
Technician Staffing to Computer Ratio (# of computers : technician)	250:1	150:1 to 250:1	75:1 to 150:1	Less than 75:1
Formula-Driven Technology Staffing	Staffing formulas are not used or considered.	Formulas for staffing are considered but are limited in scope and are not used to drive staffing.	Comprehensive formulas have been developed, considering multiple dimensions of the environment but are only used as a guide and do not drive staffing.	Comprehensive formulas have been developed and drive staffing as a normal part of operations. Formulas include multiple dimensions of the environment.

Source: www.iste.org, 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a formula-driven technician staffing ratio.

The Sarcom report and peer data suggest that a formula-driven technician staffing ratio could lead to a reduced number of technicians. Prismatic suggests that the district consider a formula that provides for 0.5 FTE per elementary/alternative school and 1.0 FTE each per middle and high school, in addition to the 3.0 FTE Help Desk positions, for a total of 14.0 FTE.

Once a ratio is determined, the district should set uniform requirements for technical support staff, hire or train to those standards, identify strengths of each staff member and assign tasks accordingly.

FISCAL IMPACT

A reduction of five field staff positions (from 16.0 to 11.0) would result from implementing Prismatic’s suggested staffing formula. Each position has an average salary of \$37,453. To implement the second portion of this recommendation, Prismatic estimates that the district will need to spend an additional \$10,000 per year in training for technician staff.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate five field technician positions	\$187,265	\$187,265	\$187,265	\$187,265	\$187,265
Provide technical training	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)
TOTAL	\$177,265	\$177,265	\$177,265	\$177,265	\$177,265

4.3 TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training in the use of technology is the most critical factor in determining whether that technology is used effectively or even used at all. All district staff must be able to use effectively the technology available to them. The role of district support staff in using technology is increasingly critical for effective school management. Training must be ongoing; the technology environment is continuously evolving, and districts must keep pace with the evolution. The building level and central office staff who support administrative and instructional technology must be well-trained in the technologies the district has selected so that they increase staff efficiency and effectiveness and ensure that processes used in the district are cost-effective.

ISTE's Technology Support Index rubric identifies highly efficient school districts as having these staff development practices related to technology:

- * A comprehensive staff development program is in place that impacts all staff. The program is progressive in nature and balances incentive, accountability, and diverse learning opportunities.
- * Online training opportunities are provided for staff both onsite and remotely, and represents a diversity of skill sets.
- * A process and delivery system has been established for just-in-time training and is used consistently.
- * Expectations for all staff are clearly articulated and are broad in scope. Performance expectations are built into work functions and are part of the organizational culture.
- * Technical staff receives ample training as a normal part of their employment, including training towards certification.
- * Basic troubleshooting is built into the professional development program, and is used as a first line of defense in conjunction with technical support.

FINDING 4-10

Fairfield Public Schools lacks explicit competency expectations for its technology support staff. The district has not yet identified or required training to equalize expectations and abilities across all technology staff with the same job responsibilities. As a result, the level of technical competency varies among support staff, impacting efficiency and effectiveness in several school management areas and, most importantly, on equitable opportunities for student learning.

Numerous FPS staff stated that there was great variance in the technical skills and knowledge individual technicians possessed. Several noted that people had moved into their positions as "legacy" employees moving up from other positions so did not necessarily have a base level of knowledge and skills needed for the positions they now hold. To date, the district has neither created a technology staff development plan nor integrated technology into any district professional development plans or documents.

District staff report that building technicians are supposed to provide a certain level of support before requests for assistance move up the channels to the central office help desk. However, the district has not yet offered a baseline of training or created explicit expectations to enable all building technicians to have the knowledge and skills for all troubleshooting needs. Furthermore, uniform procedures have not yet been established to systematize a catalog of individual's expertise among technicians.

Sarcom's study of the FPS technology department and operations found that "skill sets in the field are not fully capable of fulfilling the job requirements needed to support the business." They further observed, "Break-fix is supported by field and central office due to lack of skills for some resources in the field." Sarcom's analysis of tickets, incident volume, and type by school reflected great variance in the numbers and types of issues that are likely related to training and knowledge of individual building technicians.

District level technology staff noted that much of their training is either self-taught or peer-taught rather than being a part of any formal training experience. They also noted that they did not believe they could take time away from their desks in order to attend training.

The ISTE Technology Support Index identifies exemplary school districts as ones where technical staff receives ample training "as a normal part of their employment, including training towards certification."

RECOMMENDATION

Develop rigorous technology expectations for FPS technology support staff.

Developing explicit and rigorous expectations for technical expertise should ensure that all support staff is maximizing the district's technology resources. Once expectations are clearly delineated, FPS should provide sufficient training to enable support staff to meet expectations within six months.

Prismatic recommends that the district require a summer training opportunity similar to TechCamp for all central office and school-based support personnel. FPS should require monthly meetings during the school year for all school-based support staff co-led by the FPS Technology/Media Curriculum Leader and the Technology Manager.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation has already been included in the Fiscal Impact in Finding 4-9.

FINDING 4-11

FPS has invested in technology without putting in place a strategic professional development plan for teachers and staff regarding technology, much less one that is integrated into an instructional professional development plan so that technology becomes "a pencil instead of an event"—meaning a typical classroom occurrence and not something akin to a field trip. Without such a plan there is no assurance:

- * that staff is using it for its intended purpose;
- * that the district is receiving the return it sought on its investment; or
- * that it is being used as a tool to stimulate student learning.

When used appropriately, instructional technology serves as a means to an end, not generally as a separate subject for students to be taught. It should be an integral part of teaching as well as student demonstration of learning. It takes many forms in today's classes and offers both students and teachers many opportunities to become engaged in the teaching and learning enterprise. The foundation for all of that is training and opportunities to experiment with the power and versatility of various technologies.

As in districts across the nation, FPS interviewees stated that integration of technology into instruction runs the gamut from those who very interactively use SmartBoards with their students to those whose skills do not go much further than being able to turn them on. One clear message came out in interviews, though—there has been little systemic district-wide effort to ensure teacher capacity to integrate technology into their instruction. Teachers expressed the desire to use as much current and age-appropriate materials as possible, but are frustrated by the lack of a clear vision for technology in the district supported by consistent, tiered teacher training.

Although SmartBoards are distributed in schools across FPS, many staff revealed that training for the SmartBoards had not necessarily taken place before their distribution. Reports varied as to how, when, and for how long training occurred for technology such as SmartBoards, depending on the building and the Library Media Specialist. Having technology deployed to buildings without the requisite training for teachers to be facile in its use is an ineffective, costly practice.

Similarly, FPS does not use online professional development opportunities. There are many sophisticated, cost-effective communications software packages available today to conduct business in the global marketplace. The cost of those communications systems are declining as the technology becomes more and more common. At the same time, the economic and communications benefits to FPS by maximizing instructional time and enhancing curriculum and instruction, creating virtual tools for training, and minimizing the travel time for teachers and administrators across FPS could be substantial.

As a part of new teacher hiring, the district is currently developing a technology survey to assess baseline knowledge. They plan to start a district technology professional development program with basic computing skills and then move into integration of technology into teaching. Some are hopeful that the district will set minimum expectations for technology use and train teachers initially in those skills as well as provide other types of training for more proficient teachers. Others stated, however, that there has been no universal training so that all teachers are proficient enough to perform a certain amount of troubleshooting on their own. This training would serve as a first step to a cohesive system of tech support and enable technical support staff to focus on more complex levels of support for the district's technology.

Although the state of Connecticut has integrated technology competencies in its expectations for teachers and administrators since 2001, FPS does not yet have them as an integral part of

staff evaluations. Encouraging facility with technology as an expectation for performance as an educator in FPS is essential for moving technology into classrooms and leadership’s offices.

Districts where teachers are highly literate with technology and seamlessly integrate technology into instruction for enrichment, remediation, and differentiation often have one common characteristic: administrators who embrace technology and expect teachers to use it. Several tools exist for assessing the level of teacher technical literacy. One such tool is Dr. Moersch’s Levels of Technology Implementation (LoTI) Framework. The Framework, in use in a number of districts across the country, focuses on the use of technology “as a tool within the context of student-based instruction with a constant emphasis on higher order thinking.” The LoTI Framework provides district administrators with an analysis of the current professional development needs of their teachers. Outlined in **Exhibit 4-8**, the framework has been validated and is aligned with state frameworks, including the national framework from ISTE.

Exhibit 4-8
LoTI Framework for Assessing Teacher Technical Proficiency

Level	Description
Level 0 Non-use	A perceived lack of access to technology-based tools or a lack of time to pursue electronic technology implementation. Existing technology is predominately text-based.
Level 1 Awareness	The use of computers is generally one step removed from the classroom teacher (e.g. integrated learning system labs, special computer-based pull-out programs. Computer literacy classes). Computer-based applications have little or no relevance to the individual teacher's operational curriculum.
Level 2 Exploration	Technology-based tools generally serve as a supplement to the existing instructional program. The electronic technology is employed either as extension activities or as enrichment exercises to the instructional program and generally reinforces lower cognitive skill development (e.g. knowledge, comprehension, application).
Level 3 Infusion	Technology-based tools include databases, spreadsheet, and graphing packages, multimedia and desktop publishing applications, and Internet use augment selected instructional events (e.g. science kit experiment using spreadsheets/graphs to analyze results, telecommunications activity involving data sharing among schools). Emphasis is placed on higher levels of cognitive processing (e.g. analysis, synthesis, evaluation).
Level 4a Integration (Mechanical)	Technology-based tools are integrated in a mechanical manner that provides rich context for students' understanding of the pertinent concepts, themes, and processes. Heavy reliance is placed on prepackaged materials and outside interventions that aid the teacher in the daily operation of their instructional curriculum. Technology is perceived as a tool to identify and solve authentic problems perceived by the students as relating to an overall theme/concept. Emphasis is placed on student action and issues resolution that require higher levels of student cognitive processing.
Level 4b Integration (Routine)	Teachers can readily create Level 4 (Integrated Units) with little intervention from outside resources. Technology-based tools are easily integrated in a routine manner that provides rich context for students' understanding of the pertinent concepts, themes, and processes. Technology is perceived as a tool to identify and solve authentic problems relating to an overall theme/concept.
Level 5 Expansion	Technology access is extended beyond the classroom. Classroom teachers actively elicit technology applications and networking from business enterprises, governmental agencies (e.g. contacting NASA to establish a link to an orbiting space shuttle via Internet), research institutions, and universities to expand student experiences directed at problem-solving, issues resolution, and student involvement surrounding a major theme/concept.
Level 6 Refinement	Technology is perceived as a process, product, and tool toward students solving authentic problems related to an identified "real-world" problem or issue. Technology, in this context, provides a seamless medium for information queries, problem solving, and/or product development. Students have ready access to and a complete understanding of a vast array of technology-based tools to accomplish any particular task.

Source: www.loticonnection.com, 2006.

The developers recommend a target technology level of at least Level 4b.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement a professional development plan for technology integration.

The district should identify professional development topics that are essential to achieve its goals related to integration of technology into instruction. It should then develop procedures to ensure that all appropriate personnel are able to apply the related knowledge and skills.

The district is currently expending resources on technology tools for teachers and students that are meant to enhance learning. By identifying a limited number of critical topics, requiring attendance, scheduling when few conflicts exist, and establishing consequences for non-attendance, more staff will attain the skills and knowledge that are more likely to make the expenditures pay off in terms of student achievement. Principals should also be expected to attend training in order to observe technology use in classrooms and provide meaningful support and guidance to their teachers.

Connecticut administrator standards and teacher competencies should be immediately integrated into performance evaluations for FPS educators so that effective use of technology in the classroom is a component of annual evaluations.

Studies indicate that it may take several years to achieve a high level of technical competence among all staff. Therefore, training must be ongoing. It cannot be a “one shot” round of training concurrent with a new software introduction or program implementation. Participation in ongoing training directly related to the technological systems that staff members use on a regular basis should be considered as a component in personnel evaluations.

One district in Florida provided incentive for teachers to receive technology in their classes by not distributing it until the teachers had voluntarily taken a certain number of hours in its use. This provided strong motivation for teachers to learn how to use new technologies without any additional cost to the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4.4 INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

In a recent webinar, the nation’s director of education technology called on schools to replace textbooks with mobile learning devices, and the head of the Federal Communications Commission recently said his agency would be voting on whether to lift some restrictions on the use of federal e-Rate funds to help deliver broadband access to more students.

Investments in broadband access and mobile learning devices are essential to helping students learn the skills they’ll need to compete on a global scale, said panelists during “Back to School: Learning and Growing in a Digital Age,” hosted by Common Sense Media, the Children’s Partnership, PBS Kids, and the University of Southern California’s Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy.

The conference identified three imperatives for U.S. education today:

- * every child should be digitally literate before graduating from high school;
- * all parents must be informed about their children's digital media lives; and
- * every classroom needs to be a 21st Century learning environment.

FINDING 4-12

FPS has not leveraged the potential of distance learning for its students. As a result, its students are more limited in their course choices and are also missing opportunities to learn to use technology, leaving them at a disadvantage compared to students in other districts.

Although distance-learning technologies have been available for student instruction for literally decades, Connecticut has only just launched a virtual school with 300 spots available for state students. FPS staff reports that a few high school students are doing well in virtual classes and that it is particularly effective for homebound students. Education Week recently noted that a 2009 Sloan Consortium report found that 70 percent of school districts had one or more students enrolled in a fully online course.

FPS does not avail itself of distance-learning opportunities for students from other sources. Other options are available for FPS students to access a broad array of courses that could expand their course options for AP courses and low-enrollment subjects such as Russian, but FPS has not yet taken advantage of them for most students. Two special education students are taking some online courses, and it is being used for some credit recovery in the afternoons at the alternative school, but general education students do not yet have access to online courses. Virtual schools also offer courses not just to high school, but also middle and elementary school students. At the time of this report, 61 Connecticut schools were members of the Virtual High School Global Consortium.² That Virtual High School offers middle school gifted and talented coursework, pre-AP courses, and AP courses (including AP Art History, a course not currently available at either FPS high school). FPS is not a member.

Virtual schools as a means of student learning have recently been augmented by other technologies that hold the promise of expanding students' horizons, enabling them to conduct real-time research with experts in a field, or simply learn via technological channels. FPS has begun moving to students' ability to access curricula through minibooks, iPads, and iTouches, among other technologies. It has remained largely tied to one textbook per student, however, in most of its courses rather than exploring the possibility of e-books for student texts. Several interviewees stated that had resulted from public pressure for concrete textbooks in students' hands. Other schools and districts across the nation have moved away from textbooks to the use of technology for exploration of topics, connecting to learners in other parts of the world, linking with post-secondary professors or classes conducting research on topics of interest to students.

² www.govhs.org

Considering the cost of textbooks, e-books also present value for the investment as an alternative to individual textbooks for each course.

As technology has exploded in the past two decades, school districts have taken different approaches to maximizing its potential impact on student learning. Among many possible examples of best practices in this arena, several stand out. The Mooresville Graded School District (MGSD) in North Carolina is one such example, where a fundamental redesign of technology deployment has resulted in a number of gains. Called the “Digital Conversion,” MGSD has distributed 4,500 laptops to teachers and students in grades 4-12 since 2007 (the district has approximately half the enrollment of FPS, with a 40 percent free and reduced lunch rate). Students use laptops (in school and at home) throughout the year for assignments, homework, projects, and research. The laptops provide constant access to timely information through the Internet and multimedia tools to supplement textbooks and teacher provided information.

MGSD students in grades K-3 learn in classrooms equipped with SmartBoards, Slates, and Response devices. The level of technology integration in the schools has made students more aware of their global citizenship and made research, project-based learning, and inquiry second nature to MGSD students. The district has re-thought delivery of professional development and teachers are supportive, with 85 percent attending three and four day summer institutes the first two summers. This has equipped teachers to model what it is to be a 21st Century learner. MGSD has funded this metamorphosis through grants and local, state, and federal funds to develop a comprehensive ten-year financial plan to fund future endeavors. And it only appears costly--the district ranks 101st out of 115 North Carolina districts in per pupil spending. Thus far, the district has reported increases in student attendance, decreases in discipline issues, and academic gains.

Like Mooresville, Glen Cove School District in New York decided to transform their way of thinking about education and technology’s role in it. They first articulated a clear instructional philosophy and vision to chart their course. Knowing that resources were scarce, they made strategic resource allocation decisions. They began by considering what impact they wanted technology to have on students’ interest and learning, knowing that the use of technology, used by well-trained teachers and supported by a visionary leadership, had the potential to make it easier to teach for understanding, differentiate instruction and encourage higher order thinking skills among students. Instead of continuing their tradition of distributive allocation of resources on a per pupil basis, they decided to tie distribution to its relationship to curricula and student interests.

Glen Cove professional development was two-tiered, with technology available for current teachers only as they received training in its appropriate use; and, a three year new teacher program with the first year being intensive integration of technology into instruction. Despite budget constraints, in three years, Glen Cove had instituted a new TV studio at a middle school, an internet radio station at its high school, and digital language labs at both schools. Students use a Moodle system 24/7 to discuss content and videoconferencing equipment to connect with students around the world. Administrative technologies, too, have been updated and increased partnerships within the community.

Learning is enriched with technologies such as Geometer’s Sketchpad, Discovery Cove, access to more than 50 electronic databases, and new courses to stimulate problem-solving and inquiry

among students. All Glen Cove students, K-12, are required to write research papers using age-appropriate skills outlined in the American Library Association's Big6 model that FPS also uses.

Results Glen Cove reports include:

- * positive collegial discourse;
- * a clear link between technology and instructional goals;
- * strategic allocation of resources;
- * improved student attendance, graduation, and college acceptance rates;
- * improved test scores in English/Language Art and Math; and
- * heightened student interest.

As a final example, the Mecklenburg County School Division in Virginia faced a challenge similar to one FPS faced and employed a creative technological solution. That school division, about half the size of FPS, also determined that it needed to open a second high school. However, rather than duplicate all course offerings, particularly among low enrollment courses, Mecklenburg County installed distance learning technology in both high schools so that one teacher could teach courses at both schools simultaneously. At one end, the certified teacher instructs live, while being projected to the distance education site. At the other end, a classroom assistant ensures that the technology is operating and maintains order. The teacher rotates between the sites on a schedule to provide an on-site presence. This technology and system was in common use in 2007, when review team members observed classrooms. Review team members observed similar uses of distance learning across geographically dispersed schools in an Alaska school district as well, allowing all students to benefit from courses that would otherwise not be available.

RECOMMENDATION

Re-think technology's potential for FPS students and teachers.

Although still early for conclusive research studies, successfully integrating technology does appear to show significant potential for improving academic success. The above-mentioned districts are only examples of school systems that have transformed education by weaving technology into every aspect of systems processes and curricula. They have achieved these ground-breaking opportunities for students and enriched learning for teachers by creative re-allocation of resources and democratic processes of envisioning possibilities among staff. FPS has the same opportunities with its new leadership and awareness of the importance of a clear, direct link between technology and instruction. FPS must re-examine its prioritization of technology in instruction. These models hold promise for FPS of maximizing their investment as they re-commit to technology. Some of the strategies used in Glen Cove and Mooresville could be almost immediately incorporated into FPS's plans for its Gifted and Talented program.

FISCAL IMPACT

Without knowing to what extent and in what direction FPS might choose to implement this recommendation, it is impossible to estimate the fiscal impact.

This chapter reviews financial management of Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) and includes five sections:

- 5-1 Organization and Financial Management System
- 5.2 Financial Operations
- 5.3 Budget
- 5.4 Purchasing
- 5.5 Fixed Assets

Exhibit 5-1 shows the results of the staff survey conducted by Prismatic pertaining to business services. As shown, approximately half of respondents to each question either didn't know or had no opinion. Compared to those who disagreed or strongly disagreed, somewhat larger percentages of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that site-based budgeting is used effectively, that funds are managed wisely, that administrators have access to needed financial data, and that the Finance department provides good value to our schools compared to 11 percent who disagreed. Respondents were more negative than positive about financial reports readability and the purchase order process.

Exhibit 5-1
Prismatic Staff Survey Related to Business Services

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	4%	29%	44%	17%	5%
Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school district.	4%	32%	34%	23%	7%
The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	3%	16%	55%	19%	7%
School and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	4%	23%	62%	8%	3%
Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	4%	25%	68%	2%	1%
The school district purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	3%	21%	52%	19%	5%
The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	3%	23%	41%	23%	10%
The Finance department provides good value to our schools.	5%	21%	64%	8%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey, 2010.

5.1 ORGANIZATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

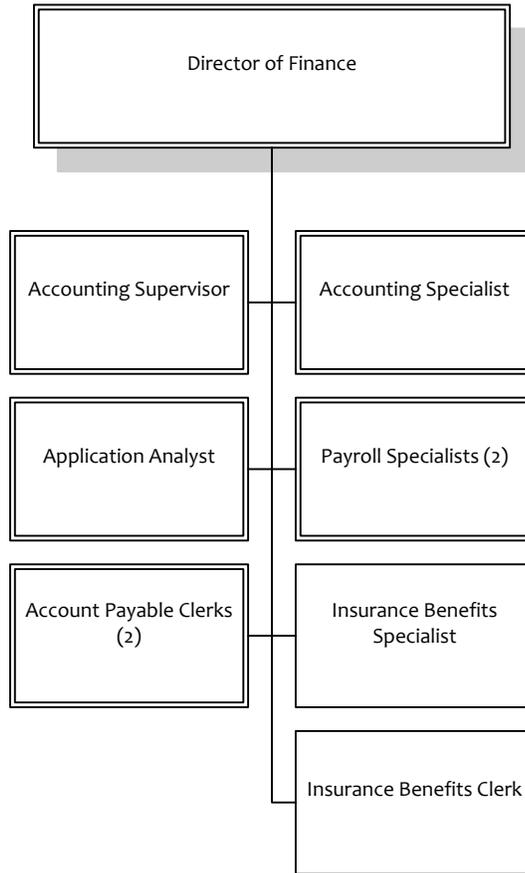


Financial managers collect, analyze, and provide financial information for decision-makers. Successful financial operations require qualified personnel with an adequate separation of duties, as well as an accounting system that provides timely, useful, and accurate information to support operating decisions. Comprehensive policies and procedures that ensure proper management of financial resources are important as well.

Effective financial management in school districts involves well thought out planning, budgeting, and overall management of the district's resources to maximize financial performance. Internal controls must be in place and should be operating as intended. Financial information should be provided in a timely manner and presented in a format that is easily understood by all audiences.

The FPS Director of Finance manages the accounting, budgeting, payroll, accounts payable and insurance functions at FPS and reports directly to the Superintendent. The Director of Finance position is filled by an extremely experienced and competent individual who has been employed by the district for more than 22 years. The financial duties carried out under the direction of the Director of Finance are done so with a very limited and efficient staff. For clarity, this report refers to the staff and functions under the Director of Finance are referred to as the Finance Section of Business Services. Although the district expends in excess of \$140 million a year, the financial functions are performed with a staff of only nine employees, excluding the director (**Exhibit 5-2**).

**Exhibit 5-2
FPS Finance Section of Business Services Organization**



Source: *Fairfield Public Schools, 2010.*

The district uses the Munis financial management system. Prior to Munis, the district and Town of Fairfield both used a financial management system called Phoenix. Substantial enhancements had been made to the Phoenix system by the district over the years that provided customized processes and reports that district staff felt were needed. When the company providing the Phoenix software decided to not support the version that the town and district were using, a decision was made to acquire a new financial management system for both entities. After two requests for proposals, the Munis system was purchased. The district implemented the Munis financial module that includes purchasing, general ledger, and budget on July 01, 2006 and began using the payroll and human resources modules on January 01, 2008. It was reported that the Town of Fairfield has implemented all modules needed for their operations, including a fixed asset module.

A couple of additional enhancements for district needs are still being designed by Munis and are expected to be operational in the next couple of months. The district controls payroll cost and manages its budget for FTEs using a position control system that interfaces with human resources, payroll, and budget. The district is still using portions of the Phoenix system until the

additional enhancements in Munis are completed and properly tested. Additional reporting capabilities using Munis for the district are also being developed.

FINDING 5-1

The Finance Section of Business Services implemented a conversion to the new Munis payroll, purchasing, and accounting modules with very little if any negative impacts to district employees and operations. Adequate testing of new systems must be done to ensure that employees can be paid accurately and timely, orders can be placed with vendors, vendors can be paid, and financial transactions can be recorded prior to switching to a new system. Switching the district's payroll was accomplished with all employees being paid accurately and when paychecks were due. In addition, purchasing and vendor payment transactions continued after switching to the new Munis system. Although some purchases and vendor payments were delayed, these are normal due primarily to the large number of school and department staff involved in the processes that have to learn the new system. Overall, the transition to the new Munis system for payroll, purchasing, and accounting was successfully completed with little negative impact that many other districts have not been able to achieve.

COMMENDATION

Fairfield Public Schools is commended for successfully implementing the Munis payroll, purchasing, and accounting modules with little negative impact on operations.

FINDING 5-2

Although the district has positions titled Director of Operations and Director of Finance, there is not corresponding departments or offices. The structure is confusing and does not provide a clear distinction for the operations under their management and control. Budgets are combined for the unit titled Business Services and positions are also combined although each director is responsible for a portion of combined budgets and staff.

Organizationally, the financial operations managed by the Director of Finance are referred to as Business Services. Business Services also includes the Director of Operations and the operations that he manages that includes construction, security, safety, facilities, food and nutrition services, school services liaison, technology, and transportation. The structure referred to as Business Services is a continuation of a structure that existed prior to about five years ago when the district had a position titled Director of Business Services and was assigned the duties currently assigned to both the Director of Operations and Director of Finance. When the Director of Business Services retired, the position was eliminated and the Director of Operations and Director of Finance positions were established, however two separate departments or offices have not been established.

RECOMMENDATION

Create separate finance and operations departments organized under a Chief Operations Officer, as noted in Chapter 3.

Establishing distinct departments for the Director of Finance and Director of Operations will allow for budgets and staffing to properly be assigned to each. It will reduce the confusing overlap that exists as to who has responsibilities associated with the unit called Business Services.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation has been calculated in Chapter 3.

5.2 FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

School districts play a critical role in educating children and preparing them to become productive members of society. Strong, cost-effective financial operations are required to support school districts if they are to succeed in their educational role. Efficient financial management ensures a school district maintains a record of its financial decisions and budget allocations; issues timely, accurate, and informative financial reports; and maintains adequate internal controls. Payroll is a major part of any district, since it normally represents the bulk of the expenses.

Financial managers collect, analyze, and provide financial information for decision makers. Successful financial operations require qualified personnel with an adequate separation of duties, as well as an accounting system that provides timely, useful, and accurate information to support operating decisions. Comprehensive policies and procedures that ensure proper management of financial resources are important.

FINDING 5-3

The Finance Section of the Business office staff performs a number of monthly analyses and reviews that help ensure that major budgets are adequately monitored. Utilities, self insurance costs, maintenance costs, and transportation costs are analyzed each month to provide assurance that these high dollar budgets are not exceeded and are staying within budget projections. In addition, positions referred to as full-time equivalents are closely monitored so that the district knows the cost of salaries and that authorized positions are not exceeded, including the cost and number of substitutes.

COMMENDATION

FPS is commended for closely analyzing and monitoring high dollar budgets and authorized full-time equivalent positions.

FINDING 5-4

The Finance Section of Business Services developed and uses a Payroll Run Sheet containing over 45 blocks that are checked as specific processes are completed. Payrolls are completed weekly for a limited number of employees and bi-weekly for all other employees. For each payroll run, payroll specialists complete the Payroll Run Sheet indicating what processes have been completed. The steps include verifying changes to ensure correctness, running a variety of reports, and distribution of final payroll reports and employee checks. Completing the Payroll

Run Sheet helps ensure that all necessary processes have been completed prior to finalizing a payroll.

COMMENDATION

Fairfield Public Schools is commended for development and use of a Payroll Run Sheet for each payroll to ensure completeness and accuracy of payrolls.

FINDING 5-5

A number of employees in the Finance Section of Business Services are cross-trained to perform primary duties assigned to other employees. Employees performing critical payroll and vendor payment duties are cross-trained in each other's duties, which helps ensure that these important functions can be completed uninterrupted when an employee is absent. In addition, the accounting specialist is also cross-trained in both payroll and vendor payments to provide additional back-up.

COMMENDATION

Fairfield Public Schools is commended for cross-training employees in the critical functions of processing employee payrolls and vendor payments.

FINDING 5-6

Except for an accounting/purchasing manual that contains limited information, departments and schools are not provided with detailed user manuals to guide them in completing duties related to finance and budget responsibilities. In addition, staff in schools and departments receives little training on how to complete their duties pertaining to financial operations.

School and department staff must follow specific processes and complete a number of finance-related documents accurately and timely. A variety of processes must occur in order to help ensure employees are paid timely and accurately, materials and services are ordered and received when needed, vendors are paid timely and accurately, and activities such as those relating to travel reimbursement are completed.

Processes related to financial activities are often difficult for staff who do not perform those functions on a continuous basis and who are also required to perform a variety of other duties. An easily understood reference manual for financial duties and processes greatly reduces errors and reduces the amount of time required by Business office staff to explain processes repeatedly.

Training was provided to school and department administrative staff prior to implementing the Munis financial management system. No formal training has been conducted since the initial implementation training. Interviews with school and department staff indicated that many are having difficulty completing assigned duties, especially those pertaining to purchasing and vendor payments. Staff in the Finance Section of Business Office also indicated that they must spend considerable time answering questions, providing guidance, and following up on inaccurate and incomplete transactions.

The district does however provide an accounting/purchasing manual to school and department staff. The manual has nine sections with a certain level of guidance to those staff required to complete related duties. Guidance includes:

- * information on when to complete certain financial related processes;
- * how to process purchases including purchase requisitions, quotes/bids, and general reimbursements;
- * copies of pages from the Munis procedures manual;
- * one page of instructions on when budget adjustments should be made;
- * one page of instructions for student activity accounts, and
- * information on vendors to use for certain supplies.

The Munis financial management system has good technical manuals on how to process data in the automated system but there are not sufficient guidelines on the actual steps and what needs to be done prior to accessing the system. This includes how to process budget documents, travel reimbursement, purchasing, time and attendance, and payroll. Although Business office staff is ready and willingly help with specific problems, additional or periodic training is needed for some staff to help ensure they can confidently complete their responsibilities.

The Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) school division's finance department compiled a manual called *No Employee Left Behind – Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Finance... but were Afraid to Ask* to assist school and department staff in better understanding how the finance department operates, as well as to provide a good reference for finance-related and other activities that impact employees and administrative staff duties. The manual presents explanations on more than 80 topics for employees and administrative staff. The topics are listed in alphabetical order in the table of contents for easy reference, and include explanations on:

- * Employee and vehicle accidents
- * Purchasing policy and procedures
- * Payroll activities
- * Leave types
- * Fixed asset inventory processes
- * Mail delivery
- * Travel
- * Workers' compensation

- * Many other topics that impact division employees and administrative staff duties

The manual is discussed at orientation for WJCC employees. The manual is a useful tool for administrative staff to better understand the processes and requirements for various finance-related topics that impact their responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a user manual for school and department staff to assist them in completing finance and budget related duties and provide periodic training.

Useful manuals not only provide detailed steps on how to complete a particular form, but also include policies such as delegated purchasing and the associated penalties for not following the policies. Manuals should also be made available on the Website and training sessions should be routinely offered where processes covered in the manual are discussed and questions answered. Manuals should be continually updated to be more useful and informative.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-7

The Finance Section of Business Services does not have comprehensive procedures manuals. The Munis financial management system has user manuals for processing information in the system including, procurement, payment process, and payroll; however, there are not written procedures for processes prior to entering data into the automated system.

Although staff in the Finance Section of Business Services is very experienced and knowledgeable regarding the processes that must be performed on a daily basis, without approved up-to-date comprehensive procedures the district's internal control structure is weaker. Documented procedures are necessary for the processes performed by staff in the finance section of Business Office.

Districts with effective, comprehensive procedure manuals update them regularly to ensure that staff has accurate information. They clearly convey acceptable and unacceptable practices as well as the consequences of violating the provisions. To ensure its availability to staff, many districts also put the manual on their Website. The manual identifies roles and responsibilities and controls to be observed; and identifies areas for secondary review and approval

RECOMMENDATION

Identify all critical functions performed by finance section of the Business Office staff and document procedures in a comprehensive procedures manual.

A comprehensive finance procedures manual will assist staff in their duties and help ensure that the processes are being performed in the approved manner. When staff perform their duties without the benefit of up-to-date written procedures they many times fail to perform those

functions in a manner that complies with office policies due to being uninformed or misinformed of what the appropriate process actually is.

At minimum, the manual should include:

- * Budget policies and procedures
- * Payroll policies and procedures
- * District Accounts payable processing
- * Activity fund policies and procedures
- * District procedures governing approvals for checks and journal vouchers
- * Procedures for travel reimbursements
- * Grants management
- * Textbook management
- * District purchasing processes
- * District procedures governing distribution of financial reports

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-8

Although the district has employees in the Finance Section of Business Services who are cross-trained in performing payroll and vendor payment duties, staff has not been cross-trained in other important processes. In addition, the steps to perform the important functions have not been documented in desk procedures.

Desk procedures are necessary to help ensure that critical processes are uninterrupted when a key staff member resigns, retires, or is absent from work. Also, for internal controls to operate effectively, employees need a documented reference source detailing how to perform their assigned duties. An employee desk manual is in much more detailed than a formal comprehensive district-wide financial management procedures manual and is basically a step-by-step written document approved by management that describes how employees are expected to complete their individual assignments. Detailed desk procedures facilitate cross-training of employees and training new employees, and increases internal control by ensuring processes are performed correctly.

Without written directions, employees complete their duties based on verbal directions, often received some time ago, that may be stale. Once time has passed after verbal directions are provided, employees often begin to perform their duties differently than what management

expects and employees also often improvise and develop their own ways to do a certain process. Processing transactions in an unapproved manner often leads to errors.

Some Business Offices have developed excellent detailed desk procedures to use when completing their assigned duties. Desk procedures are many times placed on the office's server with individual folders containing procedures for each staff member, but all employees of the office has access to them. Each staff member has detailed explanations on a step-by-step basis of how to complete the numerous duties that must be completed accurately and timely. For example, a desk procedure for a payroll process called "cobra-changes" details steps that include:

- *Receive from benefits, yellow form with the box next to cobra marked and the change reflected.*
- *Pull file. (It will either be in the file cabinet or cobra basket.)*
- *Ask XXX if individual on cobra has paid anything.*
- *Make a copy of the payment sheet or check.*
- *Run calculator tape of what individual has paid.*
- *Go to Excel, Payroll Server, open health insurance folder, health calculation 2003, cobra and cobra-newchgehealthcal03. (Enable macros.)*
- *Complete spreadsheet. (Referring to yellow form and individuals file.)*
- *Next to number of payments, enter number of months going to have coverage. (Will be based on effective date until the end of the year.)*
- *Note: If individual is an employee, next to employee, enter yes. If not, enter no and next to employee, in the next cell, enter employee's name.*
- *Note: Next to coverage for, the start date would be based on the effective date. The end date remains the end of the year.*
- *Enter the amount the individual paid next to less amount paid.*
- *New monthly payment date will always be the first of the month. (The individual pays monthly.) Also adjust the number of pays.*
- *Next to total payment due by, give the individual 5 to 10 days.*
- *The bottom of the spreadsheet may not need to be hid depending on if they owe us any money.*
- *Print two copies of the calculation sheet. One copy will go to XXX, one copy is put in individual's cobra's file and the original is mailed.*

- *If the individual owes us money, a letter needs to be sent.*
- *Go to Word, Payroll Server, health insurance and health letters.*
- *Use the information from the calculation sheet to complete the letter.*
- *Make two copies of letter. One copy goes to XXX, one copy goes in individuals file and the original is mailed.*

RECOMMENDATION

Document desk procedures for all finance processes within the Business Office.

Documenting the actual steps that must be taken in completing critical financial functions will help ensure that the processes can be continued should the staff assigned those functions be absent for an extended period of time. Cross-training staff will also limit the possibility that critical function can continue with little interruption.

Once documented, the **district should place the desk procedures on the office server for easy reference, and cross-train staff on all critical functions including those of the finance director and accounting supervisor.**

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-9

FPS does not have a formal policy to track the status of recommendations included in audits and other reports to ensure appropriate recommendations are timely implemented. Various types of reviews and audits are performed on school districts and reports prepared for the reviews and audits contain recommendations for needed improvements.

Audits of the district's financial processes are performed by certified public accountants each year as they audit the comprehensive financial report of the Town of Fairfield which contains financial information for the school district. External auditors issue a management letter in conjunction with the annual audit where comments on noncompliance issues and internal control weaknesses are addressed. Although recent audit reports reviewed indicated very limited noncompliance issues for the district, a process does not exist to ensure the ones reported are timely corrected.

The review team was informed that the normal district practice for responding to audit management letter comments is for the Business Office to address the findings independently within the office and coordinate responses with the town. No formal process is completed or status reports prepared to ensure processes are changed to eliminate a reoccurrence.

Without a system to track and report on the status of recommendations, FPS runs the risk of failing to take needed action. Board members and district administrators need periodic

information on the current status of recommendations in order to hold district personnel accountable and to ensure needed improvements are made.

Critical components of a tracking system for report recommendations include:

- * assigning responsibility for initial identification of recommendations;
- * frequency and format for reporting to administrators and the Governing Board;
- * management responsibilities for implementing recommendations; and
- * assigning responsibility for periodically reporting the status of recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a formal policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of report recommendations made.

By adopting a policy for tracking and periodically reporting the status of report recommendations, the district will help ensure that corrective actions are addressed in a timely manner. Reports to the School Board will enable them to monitor the completion of action steps needed to improve processes.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-10

A weekly payroll is processed for a number district employees. The district's contract with the Fairfield Custodial-Maintenance union states "Employees will be paid on a weekly basis. Other payment for overtime, etc., will be continued to be paid on a bi-weekly basis."

Processing payrolls is an extremely time-consuming process. As noted earlier in this chapter, many steps must be completed before actual pay checks can be printed. Payroll specialists in the Finance Section of Business Services performs over 45 steps for each payroll to ensure they are processed accurately and all reports can be produced pertaining to employee pay including reports for taxes and other deductions.

Limiting the number of payrolls processed each month reduces the administrative work of staff in the Business Office, schools, and departments.

RECOMMENDATION

Eliminate weekly payrolls for all employees not required to be paid weekly per union contracts and attempt to eliminate the requirement in future negotiations when contracts are renewed.

The district should review the employees who are paid weekly and eliminate those who not required to be paid weekly by union contracts. In future union contract negotiations the district should attempt to obtain agreement to pay all employees bi-weekly.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and will result in a savings of staff time.

FINDING 5-11

Business relationships between the district and private vendors are not always documented. A private vendor is allowed to use district facilities to conduct a business for profit but is not covered by a written contact or agreement.

A concession stand located at Ludlowe High School is operated by a private vendor with only a verbal understanding between the vendor and the district. The vendor purchases merchandise that is sold during district athletic events. A number of times a year the vendor distributes a portion of the concession stand's earnings to the district. Money is given to the athletic director who takes the money to the high school bookkeeper with directions on what athletic accounts within the high school's activity funds to deposit the monies.

Administration at the high school, including the head master and bookkeeper, had little knowledge of the arrangement. The bookkeeper was only aware that monies were provided to the athletic director and were deposited into the activity funds. The head master, who is new to the school, had only heard of the arrangement but had no other knowledge. The district has processes for the use of district facilities; however the use of the concession stand has not used that process.

Good business practices require that activities with private vendors be covered by written agreements. Verbal agreements open the district to liabilities which could prove to be harmful to the district and provide opportunities for employees to get into trouble. Private vendors using district facilities without formal agreements also provide the district with liability should the vendor or his employees become injured while working on district facilities. Also, without a formal agreement delineating the financial arrangement, the district cannot be sure it is receiving the revenues that it is due.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a policy that requires all arrangements with private vendors that use district facilities to be delineated in written, approved contracts.

Requiring written contracts between the district and private vendors will help ensure that the district's interests are protected. Written contracts that contain specifics including financial and insurance requirements will reduce the district's risks and also ensure that monies due the district are received when due and in the correct amounts.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5.3 **BUDGET**

A budget is one of the most important documents a district prepares because it identifies the funding for programs and how they are to be expended. Effective budgeting provides a district with a solid financial foundation. Costs must be reported accurately and controlled effectively. A district's budget is most effective when it is useful to district staff, board members, and the community at-large in understanding the district's inner workings.

FINDING 5-12

The district widely distributes its annual budget document to many stakeholders in order to provide them with an opportunity to understand how tax money is expended for education.

An excel spreadsheet is used to identify and track distribution of budget documents. Distribution of the district's annual budget document includes copies to members of the board of education, board of finance members, board of selectman, central office staff, principals, PTA presidents and budget representatives, and housemasters. Copies are also distributed to school libraries and school administrative offices and are made available on the district website. Making budget documents readily available helps ensure that all staff involved in the budget process and other interested parties are provided with budget information

COMMENDATION

Fairfield Public Schools is commended for making budget information readily available by distributing widely copies of its annual budget document.

FINDING 5-13

The board does not receive monthly or quarterly financial reports during the year. Timely, accurate, and easily understood reports are necessary for board members to effectively monitor the district's financial activity, status of funds, and budgets.

Although the district's budget approved by the board includes extensive detailed information on expenditures and positions, the board does not receive routine reports to keep them informed on how the district is progressing on staying within expenditure and staffing limits. Information is not provided during the year that indicates what the financial position of the district is expected to be at the end of the year, except that beginning in January when the budget process begins limited data are provided on specific issues as budget needs for the next year are being discussed. An indication of the district's financial condition at the end of the year requires informed staff to analyze expenditures made and to make estimates of what revenues and expenditures will be for the remainder of the year using various criteria. Staff in the finance section of business services performs significant analyzes each month for budget monitoring but the information is not condensed into a report for the board.

Financial information needs to be submitted to board members routinely to enable them to make informed decisions. **Exhibit 5-3** provides a general description of routinely provided reports to board members.

**Exhibit 5-3
Examples of Basic Board Reports**

Sample Contents	Frequency
Comparison of budgeted expenditures by department and related variance. Budgeted amounts should show beginning budget amounts and adjustments that are made during the year.	Monthly or Quarterly
Notes explaining significant variances (5 percent or more) in the budgeted categories.	Monthly or Quarterly
Bar graphs and pie charts depicting comparative expenditure information.	Monthly or Quarterly
Summary of monthly grant activities, including number and dollar value of grants submitted, number and dollar value of grants awarded, and the ratio of grants awarded to grants submitted - all compared to prior years.	Monthly
Summary reports for enterprise funds such as food services and adult education showing a simplified balance sheet and operating statements.	Quarterly

Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

Many school districts and other governmental entities use the format similar to the one shown in **Exhibit 5-4** for providing budget information to board members. The format is used both when reporting revenues and expenditures by object for the entire fund and also by department. Many reports also include comparisons to the previous year.

**Exhibit 5-4
Example of Budget Documents**

Description	Current Year				
	Budgeted	Current Month Expended	Year to Date Expended	Projected to End of Year	Projected Remaining Balance
Expenditures					
XXXXXX	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000
XXXXXX	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000
XXXXXX	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000
XXXXXX	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000
Total Expenditures	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000	\$0,000

Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

For management reports to be useful they must be formatted in a way that the data are easily understood, are consistently accurate, and the users are trained sufficiently to enable them to interpret the data. Executive level reports need not be extensive, but should provide basic summary-level financial and program-related information in an easy to understand format to enable efficient decision-making by the board members.

Without timely budget information the board is unable to adequately monitor the financial condition of the district. Although the finance section of business services monitors school and department budgets, unless these data are provided to the board they are unable to assess the expenditure trends from the board's perspective and are limited in their ability to provide timely assistance in developing corrective actions before a financial situation escalates.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop summary and easily understood financial reports for the Board and train board members on how to interpret the information.

Requiring monthly budget status reports will provide the board and executive administration better oversight to the district's budgets. Should funding for the district become more restricted, closer oversight could prove to help identify problem areas more timely or where savings could be obtained.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-14

FPS's expenditures do not show strong financial support for instruction. In 2008-09 FPS expended only 57.4 percent of its total expenditures on instruction.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-5** FPS expends the smallest percentage of total expenditures on instruction compared to its peer districts and four percentage points lower than the peer average. Three peers spend more per student and two spend less per student than does Fairfield.

Exhibit 5-5
FPS Percentage of Expenditures for Instruction
2008-09

District	Instructional Expenditures as % Total Expenditures	Amount per Student Spent on Instruction
Fairfield	57.54%	\$8,377
Greenwich	67.56%	\$11,803
Norwalk	62.39%	\$9,484
Stamford	60.79%	\$9,604
Trumbull	58.30%	\$7,004
West Hartford	59.57%	\$7,340
Peer Average	61.72%	\$9,047

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education Reports, 2008-09.

A review of percentage of expenditures for instruction from 2004-05 through 2008-09 shows that there has not been an improvement in the percentage of total expenditures spent on instructional programs. As shown in **Exhibit 5-6**, FPS's percentage of expenditures for instruction has actually decreased by 0.67 percent between 2004-05 and 2008-09.

Exhibit 5-6
FPS Percent Expenditures for Instructional Programs
2004-05 through 2008-09

Function	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Change
Instructional Programs	58.21%	57.67%	57.15%	57.35%	57.54%	(0.67)

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education Reports, 2008-09

The district does not effectively analyze historical expenditure trends when developing the annual budget. The breakdown of expenditures over the last five years indicates that the district is not evaluating its expenditures in terms of what proportion of total expenditures are going to programs outside the classroom.

It is important to review historical expenditures when developing the budget and identify any trends that should be monitored or reversed. In reviewing the actual expenditure trends, any misallocation of monies can be identified and corrected. District management with the assistance of school administrators and department heads should review all historical expenditures to determine where any cuts can be made without having a negative impact on programs.

RECOMMENDATION

Annually analyze historical expenditures early in the budget process and establish budget targets to increase the funding percentage for instruction.

If the emphasis on spending is not on instruction, academic performance will suffer. The district should review historical expenditures, not only the dollar amount of the expenditures, but also the dollar amount as a percentage of the total. If one category is out of line, such as extra-

curricular activities, the district should make an adjustment. The priority has to be classroom education and the students.

The district should establish a budget target for each category of expenditures. The target should involve two components: the percentage of the total budget that should be allocated to each function, and the percent increase over time allocated to each function. If the district closely monitors the targets, it can manage its expenditures and ensure that the dollars are going where they are most needed, the classroom.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-15

Although the district's budget document provides a significant amount of useful information pertaining primarily to expenditures and positions, improvements can be made to make it more user friendly and informative. The 2010-11 budget document contains over 300 pages of which most present data that are produced directly from the financial management system.

The budget document, which has remained basically the same for at least the last five years, is separated into 29 sections plus a cover letter and table of contents. The budget document is composed of:

- * an introductory page;
- * a table of contents;
- * a nine page executive summary containing power point screen prints presenting a variety of summary information;
- * a section titled benchmarks and comparative data presenting a good amount of useful information including what changed from the previous budget, historical enrollment data, and revenues to the Town of Fairfield;
- * a section titled budgets by object of expense presents detailed schedules from the financial management system that shows extensive detail on where positions are budgeted and types of expenditures;
- * a section titled budgets by school and departments presents positions by locations and related objects of expense;
- * 11 sections detailing positions and expenditures for the 11 elementary schools;
- * three sections detailing expenditures and positions fro the three middle schools;
- * two sections detailing expenditures and positions for the two high schools;
- * a section detailing information for the alternative high school;

- * a section detailing information for the ECC/Pre-School;
- * a section detailing information for instruction;
- * a section detailing information for pupil personnel;
- * a section detailing information for business services;
- * a section detailing information for technology services;
- * a section detailing information for personnel services;
- * a section detailing information for the superintendent's office;
- * a section detailing information for the board of education;
- * a section containing information pertaining to capital outlay, salary schedules, maintenance projects, and food service programs, and
- * the district's strategic plan for 2008-13.

Although the document contains over 300 pages, much of the data presented are duplicated a number of times. Each section for a school or department contains from one to 11 pages of definitions for position titles or expenditure objects that are for the most part duplicated for each school. The definition pages total 78 and could be replaced by a single definition section that would total probably 15 pages, thus reducing at least 60 pages from the 200+ budgets that are printed and distributed.

Many districts' budgets include multi-year comparative data in easy-to-understand formats that provide useful information to readers. Schedules are included for each department and school that present budgeted amounts by summarized categories such as salaries, benefits, operating and capital with comparisons shown for the budget year to the previous two to three years so that a reader can easily see the trends for a limited number of major categories and the changes from previous years. Budget documents also often contain summarized schedules showing positions by departments and schools for the current year compared to the previous four or five years and comparative schedules for revenues by source.

The FPS budget document provides a tremendous amount of detail which is needed to compile and support budgeted dollar amounts and FTE counts; however, it is very difficult to obtain an understanding of the district's total budget and resources available from the data presented. A school district's budget is most effective when it is useful to both district staff and the community at-large in understanding the district's inner workings. A budget document has three major purposes: a communications device, a policy document, and a financial plan.

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) are two national organizations that promote excellence in the form, content, and presentation of budget documents. The following is a list of sample criteria for ASBO-certified budget documents:

- * table of contents that identifies major budget sections;
- * executive summary that presents an overview of key initiatives and financial priorities;
- * background and current information about the district, its mission and its goals;
- * organization charts;
- * overview of the budget process; and
- * graphs and charts to facilitate understanding and illustrate key financial information.

Many school districts across the country use the criteria to apply for awards these organizations grant, but some use it primarily to improve their budget document's content, format and presentation. School districts have an opportunity to “tell their story” when their budgets communicate what is behind and beyond the numbers. ASBO promotes excellence in the school business management profession through entity award and recognition programs, and it provides an excellent source for training materials in developing budgets and financial reports.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the district’s budget document and submit it for review to the Association of School Business Officials and the Government Finance Officers Association for continued improvement.

Improving the district’s budget document to include summary comparative information by departments and schools, summary comparative information for positions and other useful information will enable the board and community to better understand how taxpayer dollars are being used in educating students. Submitting the budget document to either the GFOA or ASBO for review and comment will enable the district to continue to make the district’s budget document a more useful tool.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-16

Principals’ accounts are used for costs under the discretion of schools and included in school budgets. The district has not analyzed the amounts allocated to principals’ accounts to determine minimum needs. Although per student allocations to the schools have not increased in the past several years, some additional funding has been provided by funding the costs centrally such as costs for interns above a set level.

District schools are allocated funds each year based on an amount per student for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. The amount per student is multiplied by the projected number of students in each of the schools. **Exhibit 5-7** shows the allocations for 2010-11.

**Exhibit 5-7
Principals' Account Allocations
2010-11**

Schools	Enrollment	Per Student Allocation	Allocated
Elementary Schools	4,748	\$152	\$723,216
Middle Schools	2,475	\$245	\$606,375
High Schools	2,779	\$583	\$1,620,157
Alternative High School	48	\$583	\$27,984
TOTAL	10,060	\$296	\$2,977,732

Source: Fairfield 2010-2011 Budget Process document.

Schools have the discretion of budgeting in any or all of the program areas for books, supplies, and materials. In addition, schools budget for non-contractual salaries that are under the purview of the principals. The areas include substitutes, interns, extra hourly clerical help, tutors, lunch aides, bookroom attendants, and liaisons. Additionally schools have the discretion over budgets that include:

- * Elementary level:
 - conference/staff development,
 - professional books,
 - dues and fees,
 - toll calls,
 - extra curricular transportation, and
 - student activities.

- * Middle school level:
 - text rebinding,
 - sports costs,
 - intramural costs,
 - drama and musical production costs,
 - conference/staff development,
 - commencement, printing,
 - professional books,
 - dues and fees,

- toll calls, and
- extra curricular transportation.
- * High school level:
 - text rebinding,
 - sports facilities rentals,
 - sports costs,
 - intramural costs,
 - drama and musical production costs,
 - internal suspension expenses,
 - conference/staff development;
 - commencement,
 - printing,
 - professional books,
 - dues and fees,;
 - freshman orientation,
 - toll calls, and
 - extra curricular transportation.

Although inflation over the last several years has had an impact on the amounts that have been allocated to schools for the principals' accounts, the amounts seem to be above minimal needs. With the current situation of likely reduced revenues, every dollar provided in discretionary funds needs to be analyzed to determine if they are needed or whether they can be reduced without a negative impact on student performance.

To help control costs school districts continually analyze budget needs for all categories of expenditures. In addition, budgets for many expenditure categories are budgeted to central accounts for specific needs for the entire district. Budgeting expenditures centrally instead of providing discretionary funding to schools in addition to improving cost control helps to provide equitable funding for all schools for similar costs. During the review district staff indicated that a process was being completed to adjust what costs are included in allocations to principals' accounts and what costs would be budgeted centrally in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

Analyze school needs for funding provided to principals' accounts, centralize budgets for specific costs, and reduce budgeted amounts for amounts above minimal needs.

Analyzing the needs for costs provided through allocations to principals' accounts to determine minimal needs will enable the district to reduce funding for unnecessary expenditure. In addition, centralizing budgets for specific costs will also reduce costs and also provide a more standard and equitable distribution of those costs to individual schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact for this recommendation is based on an estimated percent reduction in funding needed for costs previously allocated to principals' accounts. Funds allocated in 2010-11 to principals' accounts totaled \$2,977,732. Analyzing minimal needs and centralizing budgets for specific costs should conservatively reduce funding needs by a minimum of 10 percent, or \$297,773.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Reduce funding for Principals' Account	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773

5.4 PURCHASING

An effective purchasing program provides districts with quality materials, supplies, services, and equipment, in a timely manner at the lowest price. The purchasing process also includes activities involved in the procurement and evaluation of services.

Purchasing policies and operating procedures help ensure a district complies with local board requirements while performing purchasing functions in an efficient and timely manner. Policies should clearly establish purchasing authority, methods required for each type of purchase, provisions for conflicts of interest, and penalties for violating purchasing laws and policies. Purchasing procedures implement policies by documenting the steps taken by user schools, departments, and purchasing staff when goods or services are procured.

Efficient purchasing requires management processes in place to ensure that supplies, equipment, and services vital to the school system's education mission are purchased from the right source, in the right quantity, at the lowest price and are properly stored and promptly delivered to the appropriate location. These criteria should be met for each purchase without sacrificing quality and timely delivery.

Oversight of purchasing functions and establishment of purchasing policies and procedures for FPS are provided by the purchasing department of the Town of Fairfield and is managed by the Director of Purchasing. The purchasing support provided by the Director of Purchasing is at no cost to the district.

FINDING 5-17

The purchasing procedures that district employees are required to follow is inefficient. All district purchases must follow a purchasing process whereby all purchases, regardless of the dollar amounts, must have a purchase order prepared and approved before a purchase can be made.

The district must follow purchasing guidelines established by the Town of Fairfield. At the beginning of each year the Town's Director of Purchasing sends a summary of the purchasing guidelines to all department managers, including school district managers. **Exhibit 5-8** presents the basic purchasing guidelines for purchasing that was distributed for use during 2010-11.

Exhibit 5-8 FPS Purchasing Guidelines

Transaction Size	Requirement
From \$1 to \$1,000	Shall be awarded prudently, using known sources and sound value guidelines.
\$1,000 to \$7,500	Written competitive quotes must be obtained for all orders of goods and services.
\$7,500 and more	Legal advertisement for sealed bids is required for goods and services. There are not exceptions for foods that are sole-source, patented, proprietary and/or locally supplied – all must be bid.

Source: Town of Fairfield, Director of Purchasing, August 2010.

District purchasing procedures further require schools and departments to prepare a purchase requisition for purchases of any dollar amount. Needed materials or services that cannot be obtained from established state contracts, contracts established by the Town of Fairfield, or through cooperative contracts where bidding was completed when establishing the contract must follow an approval process prior to obtaining the materials or services. The procedure that must be followed is:

- * a request for purchase must be prepared for every purchase, and approved by a principal or other account owner which normally is a manager or director;
- * a hard copy of the request for purchase must be approved by a principal or account owner including and a batch cover sheet is also required for multiple requests;
- * an electronic request for purchase must be entered into the MUNIS financial management system and must have all needed back-up documentation attached;
- * a completed request for purchase with all necessary attachments is sent to the Business Office. This includes both an electronic version with attachments and hard copies with batch cover sheets;

- * the Business Office reviews all requests for purchase for accuracy and sufficient funding and forwards them with attachments and batch cover sheets to the appropriate central office administrator for approval;
- * after approval by the central office administrator, the requests are electronically forwarded to town hall for approval by the Director of Purchasing;
- * after approval by the Director of Purchasing , the request is converted to a purchase order by the Business Office;
- * after the request is converted to a purchase order and printed by the Business Office an email is automatically generated providing the purchase order number back to the school or department that initiated the purchase requisition; and
- * the Business Office completes the purchase process by mailing the purchase order to the vendor.

Exhibit 5-9 reflects the number of requisitions processed by the Town Director of Purchasing for the school district for 2009-10 and 102 that were waiting to be processed on October 14, 2010. Records indicate that 6,616 purchase requisitions were processed for the school district in 2009-10. The 102 requisitions were manually distributed to categories by dollar amounts. Data are not routinely maintained that tracks requisitions by dollar amounts, so Prismatic estimated the distribution of purchase requisitions for 2009-10 based on the distribution of the 2010-11 data.

During 2009-10 it is estimated that there were 843 requisitions that were less than \$100 and 2,400 that were between \$100 and \$500. Approximately 3,243 requisitions were processed in 2009-10 that were less than \$500 and were not purchased via state-bid or town-bid contracts.

Exhibit 5-9
FPS Requisitions Processed by Town Purchasing Department

Categories	2010-11 (through 10-14-10)		2009-10
	#	Percent of Total	# ¹
Requisitions less than \$100	13	12.8%	843
Requisitions \$100 to \$500	37	36.3%	2,400
Purchased via State-bid contract over \$500	29	28.4%	1,881
Purchased via State-bid contract less than \$500	8	7.8%	519
Purchased via Town-bid contract over \$500	10	9.8%	649
Purchased via Town-bid contract less than \$500	5	4.9%	324
Total Requisitions	102		6,616

Source: Town of Fairfield Director of Purchasing, October 2010.

¹ Distribution estimated.

Many school districts and other governmental entities have found that following a very rigid preapproval process for small dollar purchases is inefficient and not cost effective. The amount of administrative time required to complete detailed processes adds significant cost to the items purchased. In addition, due to the time required to complete all the steps in the detailed process makes it difficult for schools and departments to obtain needed items in a timely manner. In some instances when staff feels items are urgently needed they may be tempted to violate policies and procedures by acquiring the items before getting purchase requests prior approved.

RECOMMENDATION

Work with the Town of Fairfield to develop purchasing procedures that allow principals and department heads to purchase small dollar items without preapproval.

Establishing purchasing procedures that allow small dollar items to be acquired without being preapproved will provide efficiencies to both Town of Fairfield and the district. By allowing principals, department heads, and selected managers to acquire needed materials and services up to a set limit will reduce the administrative time to process paperwork associate with those types of purchasing and also decrease the amount of time to obtain the needed items. Many districts establish delegations of authority of \$500 or up to \$1,000. Procedures should also include specific guidelines as to what can be acquired and establishing penalties for non-compliance.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should result in a savings of staff time.

FINDING 5-18

The district makes limited use of credit cards to pay for purchases. Only six district employees are allowed to take advantage of the use of credit cards.

The Town of Fairfield has a procurement card contract (“Town of Fairfield Procurement, (Credit) Card Program”) that is available for town and district employees to use pay for materials, travel, and services. **Exhibit 5-10** shows the six school district staff members that have been issued credit cards.

**Exhibit 5-10
FPS Credit Card Holders**

Employee	Per Transaction Limit	Per Month Limit
Superintendent	\$1,500	\$5,000
Director of Finance	\$1,000	\$5,000
Director of Operations	\$1,000	\$3,000
Manager - Information Technology	\$5,000	\$12,000
School Support Services Liaison	\$1,000	\$5,000
Executive Assistant	\$1,000	\$5,000

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

Procurement cards are designed to maintain control of expenses, while reducing administrative costs associated with authorizing, tracking, and paying specific small, recurring purchases. Procurement cards are similar to debit cards but are designed to provide a high level of control while streamlining and simplifying the process for making low-dollar, high-volume purchases. Cards can be controlled at several levels, including by department and by employee. Card limits can be set by individual employee; by single purchase limits; with monthly, weekly, or daily limits; or some combination. Merchant category codes can also be established with each card so that employees can only make purchases through pre-approved vendors.

Districts can set spending limits for each card at issuance and place restrictions on the types of purchases made. An effective procurement card program centralizes the approval of cardholders, restricts cardholders to employees or job positions specifically approved by the board, lists examples of appropriate types of transactions and imposes limits based upon particular positions

Procurement card expenditures are paid monthly to the issuing bank in the form of one lump-sum payment. Card holder payments can be reviewed daily, weekly, or monthly by both the cardholder and accounts payable staff. Using procurement cards significantly reduce the number of purchase orders and payments processed annually. Procurement card policies normally state that violations can result in revocation of the card and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

District information indicates that it processes more than 6,600 purchase orders per year. Although neither the district nor the Town of Fairfield tracks the dollar amount of each purchase order, Prismatic estimated that more than 50 percent were under \$500 amount and even more that are under \$1,000 which many districts use as the limit for use of procurement cards.

Using procurement cards can significantly reduce the number of purchase requests and payments processed. Procurement cards have produced savings by reducing the number of purchase orders and payments, and in some instances by obtaining lower prices from their suppliers due to faster payments. Norfolk Public Schools in Virginia implemented a procurement card program that drastically reduced the number of purchase requisitions processed and number of vendor payments that have to be made. In addition, Norfolk Public Schools receives over \$150,000 annually in rebates from its procurement card contract.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider expanding the use of the purchasing card program to increase efficiencies in the purchasing and payment processes.

Use of procurement cards will provide the district with a more efficient process to obtain small dollar purchases and make subsequent payments to vendors. Time savings in the accounts payable process could be significant depending upon the procurement card limits and provisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should result in a savings of staff time.

FINDING 5-19

Purchasing processes are not always complied with by school and department staff. District purchasing guidelines require all ordering to be completed using a purchase request and approved prior to an order being placed.

Purchasing procedures are included in the district's Accounting/Procedures Manual which is distributed to schools. Instructions in the manual state:

- * all ordering must be done on a requisition;
- * requisitions must be approved prior to an order being placed;
- * only designated account "owners" that includes principals, headmasters, superintendent, deputy superintendent, assistant superintendent Resources/Leadership Development, Director of pupil and special education services, Director of Operations, director of school and program improvement, Director of Finance, director of food services, manager of facilities, supervisor of transportation, manager of information technology, coordinator of continuing/vocational education as well as grant managers may approve requisitions;
- * requests for materials to be purchased by schools must be approved by the appropriate administrator in central office prior to an order being placed; and
- * back-up documentation including bid quotes are to be attached electronically to the purchase request.

Interviews with district staff indicated that many purchases are made prior to requisitions being completed and approved. Staff in the finance section of business services responsible for processing payments to vendors stated that many invoices received from vendors reflect that purchases are made prior to a requisition being processed and approved. A department manager told the review team that they do not always follow purchasing guidelines due to not being able to obtain needed materials when needed if they did follow the current overly detailed time-consuming process.

Purchasing processes pertaining to attaching documentation to purchase requisition are also not always followed. Purchasing requests are prepared electronically by schools and departments. After all approvals have been obtained the electronic purchase requisitions are sent to the Town Director of Purchasing for a purchase order to be completed. The purchase order is the official document that is used to obtain needed materials from vendors. Before the Town Director of Purchasing can approve the purchase request and produce a purchase order, prescribed documentation must be attached to the electronic purchase request, including bid quotes.

Discussions with business office staff indicate that a large number of purchase requisitions received from schools and departments do not include all required documentations, primarily bid quotes. When purchase requests are received without required documentation attached it not only takes business office staff and school and department staff additional time to obtain the needed documents but also delays the purchase.

Tracking non-compliant purchases and incomplete purchase requests is not performed by business office staff. This makes it difficult to determine the extent of non-compliance and where most infractions are occurring. There are also no records kept of when or if any district staff have been disciplined for infractions.

RECOMMENDATION

Require compliance with purchasing procedures.

The district should emphasize the necessity to comply with purchasing procedures, track non-compliance, provide needed training where necessary and provide penalties for non-compliance.

Tracking non-compliance and incomplete purchase requests will provide the district with the information needed to improve the purchasing process. It will provide data showing where possible additional training is needed and for issuing penalties when staff fails to follow procedures.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5.5 FIXED ASSETS

An effective fixed asset management system accounts for district property accurately and safeguards it against theft and obsolescence. Fixed-asset records should designate who is responsible for the custody and maintenance of individual items and assist the district in estimating future requirements. Separate accountability for fixed assets is a specific legal requirement of many federal programs.

The most important reasons for keeping and maintaining accurate accounting records of fixed assets include:

- * it provides taxpayers with information about their investments in the district for operations;
- * it provides accurate and complete data for financial reports;
- * it provides the basis for adequate insurance coverage;
- * it allows the district to assess the need for repair, maintenance or replacement of assets;

- * it establishes a system of accountability for custody of individual items;
- * it helps determine future budgeting requirements; and
- * it helps identify lost or stolen items so that insurance claims can be filed, additional controls instituted, and accounting records adjusted to reflect the losses.

FINDING 5-20

FPS does not track its investment in fixed assets and does not complete comprehensive physical inventories to determine if fixed asset items that belong to the district are still in the custody of the district. FPS does not have any formal policies or guidelines to direct the management of its investment in fixed assets.

The Town of Fairfield compiles a list of fixed assets that cost over \$10,000 for inclusion in the comprehensive annual report, in order to depreciate them for reporting purposes. When the school district processes a purchase through the purchasing system for an item that costs over the \$10,000 limit, the town adds it to the fixed asset listing. In addition, the town receives information on construction projects so that buildings and construction in progress can be updated for inclusion in the comprehensive annual report. **Exhibit 5-11** shows that the total value of school district fixed assets as of June 30, 2009 was almost \$344 million. The value of school district fixed assets increased during 2008-09 by over \$4 million as shown in **Exhibit 5-12**.

**Exhibit 5-11
Fixed Asset Totals
2008-09**

Description	Value
Land	\$8,206,000
Construction in Progress	\$2,346,000
Buildings	\$331,606
Vehicles	\$15,075,000
Office and Other Equipment	\$1,350,000
Infrastructure	\$112,000
TOTAL	\$343,940,000

Source: Town of Fairfield's Comprehensive Annual Report, June 30, 2009.

**Exhibit 5-12
Fixed Asset Changes
2008-09**

Description	Value
Balance July 1, 2008	\$338,385,000
Additions	\$202,115,000
Deletions	\$196,560,000
Balance June 30, 2008	\$343,940,000

Source: Town of Fairfield's Comprehensive Annual Report, June 30, 2009.

In addition, fixed asset transactions are not identified and tracked during the year. FPS does not have a complete listing of its fixed assets where additions and deletions are made as they occur. The district does not have a complete listing of the fixed assets acquired from school district funds nor does the district have a policy that directs a physical inventory to be conducted. The Town of Fairfield provides the school district with a listing of its fixed assets that are tracked by the town, however; there is no validation of the listing to determine its accuracy. The district also does not have a policy that addresses individual accountability for fixed assets. There are no guidelines that require reimbursement for items lost due to negligence or what approvals are required for lost or stolen items, such as a requirement for a police report or employee affidavit.

Policies normally address many issues pertaining to an entity's investment in fixed assets. Policies include guidelines for all fixed assets and typically address:

- * who is responsible for accounting for the district's investment in fixed assets and the system that is used for the accounting;
- * responsibility and accountability for the property and equipment owned;
- * a requirement for annual physical inventories;
- * capitalization thresholds for property, equipment, land, and infrastructure;
- * depreciation methods, salvage value, and a schedule of estimated useful lives;
- * capitalized improvements versus maintenance expenses;
- * reporting junked, stolen or missing property, and what approvals are required to delete these items from the inventory;
- * receiving donated property; and
- * transferring assets between schools and departments.

To protect its investment in fixed assets, school districts track their assets and have policies that provide direction on how the assets are to be managed. As items are acquired, they are immediately added to the listing and when the district disposes of an item through normal processes it is taken off the listing. When an item cannot be found, the situation is reviewed and appropriate action taken. Normally all deletions are required to be approved by the school board. In addition, school districts typically perform annual physical inventories to ensure that the listing of fixed assets is accurate and items have not been lost or stolen.

RECOMMENDATION

Track fixed assets acquired with district funds, and develop fixed asset policies.

The school board should adopt a detailed fixed asset policy to provide guidance on how district fixed assets are to be managed. A physical inventory should be performed, and the results used to create an inventory listing of all items over an established threshold using the fixed assets

module available in Munis. For control purposes, the threshold is normally set between \$2,500 and \$5,000.

A system to track fixed assets and a set of fixed asset policies should help ensure that the district's investment in fixed assets is being managed as desired by the school board. The system should protect investments by assigning accountability and holding staff accountable for the proper care and protection of district assets. It will also help ensure that the school district's fixed asset data reported in the Town of Fairfield's comprehensive annual report is accurate.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

This chapter reviews human resources, continuing education, and professional development in Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) and includes three sections:

- 6.1 Organization and Management
- 6.2 Continuing Education
- 6.3 Instructional Professional Development

Elementary and secondary education is a labor-intensive undertaking: personnel costs typically consume approximately 80 percent (or more) of the average school district budget. Consequently, effective school systems place a major emphasis on human resources management.

The employees of any school district are its most valuable asset. The recruitment, selection, orientation, training, salary, and benefits provided to the workforce contribute greatly to the effectiveness of the district. The FPS human resources office is responsible for managing these essential functions for over 1,400 staff, who in turn, provide services to just over 10,000 students.

Although not the responsibility of the FPS human resources department, findings related to instructional professional development are included in this chapter. To comply with state and federal laws and to maintain a high-quality and effective workforce, a school district must ensure the appropriate licensing of professional staff and a well-planned professional development program tied to the goals and objectives of the district.

6.1 HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Human resources management includes staffing analysis, recruiting, hiring, salary and benefits administration, and performance evaluation. Effective personnel management requires compliance with equal employment opportunity statutes and other applicable federal and state laws. Establishing fair and workable policies, procedures, and training programs are important to recruiting and retaining competent staff.

A well-organized personnel department can help a district meet the needs of its employees and the data needs of district administration. By assigning clear responsibilities to human resources staff, the district can effectively and efficiently deliver the services the district needs to ensure the sound management of human resources.

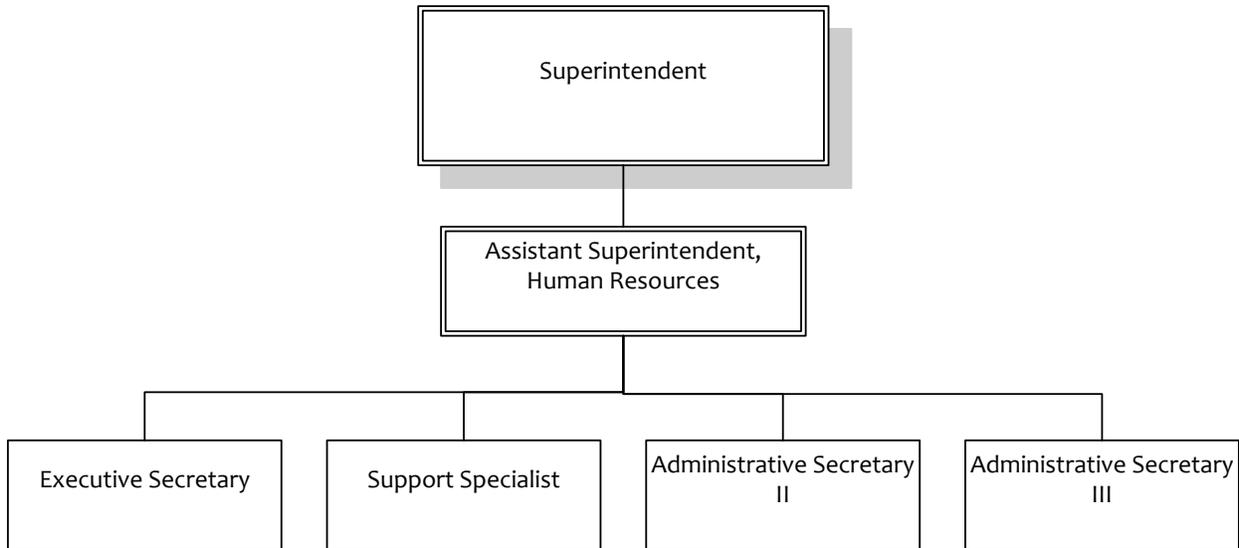
FINDING 6-1

In its function as the “Personnel Office,” the human resources department (HR) of FPS is successful in all its responsibilities, and various metrics attest to this success.

HR operates under the supervision of an Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, the only professional assigned to the department, and four secretarial support staff members, a total of 5.0 FTEs (**Exhibit 6-1**). One secretarial or clerical vacancy remains unfilled. All HR staff occupy offices or modular work stations together in the Central Office of the FPS which is relatively close

to the main visitor or employee reception area for the district. The space assigned to HR for work is well appointed and functional for the variety of tasks that each staff member must perform. In accordance with the various Federal and Connecticut laws pertaining to privacy, employee personnel records are secured in file cabinets under lock and key in a special room designated as “HR Records.” Access to these files is restricted to HR staff only.

**Exhibit 6-1
FPS Human Resources Organization Chart**



Source: *Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.*

When compared to peer Connecticut school districts (**Exhibit 6-2**), the ratio of all staff in the Fairfield HR office is less than those in peer school districts, except for Norwalk. FPS has just 0.35 FTE HR staff assigned per 100 employees. The peer average is 0.39.

**Exhibit 6-2
Comparison of HR Department Staffing**

School District	Total Employees (FTE)	Employees Assigned to HR	Ratio HR : Employees
Fairfield	1,418	5	0.35 or 284
Greenwich	1,506	8	0.53 or 188
Norwalk	1,618	4	0.25 or 405
Stamford	2,119	8	0.38 or 265
Trumbull	1,062	4	0.38 or 266
West Hartford	1,585	7	0.44 or 226
Peer Average	1,578	6.2	0.39 or 254

Source: Total Employee FTE from Strategic School Profile 2008-2009, Connecticut State Department of Education. HR Employee counts as per HR staff listing on district website. The number does not include benefit personnel or mailroom clerks.

The Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) earlier this year released a set of findings from recent research containing both statistical and analytical methods to determine the conditions and effectiveness of an organization’s HR operations. To a large extent, these findings used the standards and recommendations of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), an international professional organization for HR executives. By analyzing data from over 850 organizations, including some public school systems with both large and small student enrollments, i4cp devised a model which determines the normative ratios of HR FTE’s to number of workers based on organization size for high versus low performing companies and public organizations.

Using the i4cp model for an organization of similar size and functioning at a high level of performance, the FPS ratio of HR staff to number of employees should be 0.70 or one HR FTE for every 142.7 employees. With 1,418 employees in FPS, this would result in an HR staff of 9.9 FTE. On the other hand, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) benchmark for HR-to-Employee ratio is 0.79 for an organization of FPS’ size. The SHRM benchmark would assign one HR person for each group of 127 FPS employees, or a total of 11 HR FTEs. By either measure, the FPS HR department is staffed lightly.

Included in a recent study by SHRM titled *SHRM® Human Capital Benchmarking Study* are detailed metrics for benchmarking the effectiveness and efficiency of an HR organization. Using data provided by FPS staff and applying the SHRM matrices, Prismatic concludes the following:

- * HR Expense to Operating Expense Ratio: This metric depicts the amount of HR expenses as a percentage of the total operating expenses of FPS, indicating the amount of dollars FPS invests in its HR function. The percent of HR expense to Fairfield’s overall operating expense for the past two years was 0.355 percent, or less than 1.0 percent. Although SHRM does not suggest a specific percentage of budget to spend on HR functions, FPS’s spending is obviously low. The 2010-11 budget is for 0.32 percent, a slight reduction resulting from losing a secretarial support position. Generally speaking, the more HR functions are out-sourced to other providers, the more the HR operating expenses. The fact that no personnel function of HR in FPS is outsourced contributes to this low ratio.

- * HR Expense per FTE: This metric shows the amount of HR dollars spent per FTE in FPS. For 2009-10, this cost was \$353 in FPS. The SHRM Benchmarking Study reports that this rate in 2007, the most recent year available, remained relatively stable at a median of \$1,176. Another report from The Hackett Group, an international firm which concentrates its efforts on process improvement for rapid cost reduction and business transformation strategies to achieve operational excellence, last year reported that companies it defined as “world class” – the top 25 percent of companies among the thousands that Hackett studies – spend \$ 1,390 per employee annually, 27 percent less than median companies.
- * Annual Turnover Rate: This metric shows the rate at which employees enter and leave a company or organization in a given fiscal year. Typically, the more loyal employees are to a firm or business, including a school district, the lower the turnover rate. As an example, a 100 percent turnover rate from year to year means that as many employees left the district as were hired. The average turnover rate for FPS for the past three years is 2.8 percent. SHRM has established a turnover figure that should be considered best practice; instead, SHRM recommends that businesses structure their HR functions and employee engagement programs to achieve the lowest annual turnover rate possible. In comparison to other districts Prismatic has studied, FPS’s 2.8 percent rate is extremely low.
- * Annual Salary Increase: In budget year 2004-05, salaries paid to all employees by FPS totaled \$78,583,707. In budget year 2008-09, the amount of salaries paid increased to \$93,420,936. This is an 18.9 percent increase in a period of four years.

As part of this study, Prismatic asked FPS staff members to complete an online, anonymous survey. This survey included several questions related to the district’s human resources department. **Exhibit 6-3** provides the percentages of respondents who *strongly agree* or *agree* with each survey statement, as well as the percentages who *disagree* or *strongly disagree*. Overall, a majority of respondents had positive opinions in these areas of HR:

- * job satisfaction;
- * district loyalty;
- * new employee orientation;
- * staffing projections;
- * employee recruitment;
- * employee evaluations; and
- * HR’s providing good value for the district.

Staff were neutral and/or had no opinion in these areas:

- * discipline of teachers; and
- * discipline of other staff.

The only areas where staff was more negative than positive were:

- * speed at which vacancies are filled;
- * lack of rewards for competence and other recognitions; and
- * not enough professional development for teachers.

**Exhibit 6-3
Prismatic Staff Survey Related to Human Resources**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with my job in the school district.	34%	52%	4%	9%	2%
I am actively looking for a job outside the school district.	1%	5%	11%	27%	55%
Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	3%	20%	46%	23%	8%
Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	3%	24%	43%	23%	8%
The district has a good orientation program for new employees.	12%	43%	28%	13%	4%
The district accurately projects future staffing needs.	5%	35%	34%	20%	6%
The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	6%	28%	55%	8%	2%
Open positions are filled too slowly.	5%	15%	38%	35%	6%
District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	20%	59%	13%	6%	2%
The district rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	4%	21%	31%	30%	14%
There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	14%	27%	24%	30%	6%
There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	4%	8%	74%	12%	3%
The Human Resources department provides good value to our schools.	16%	47%	29%	6%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey, 2010.

COMMENDATION

The FPS HR department is commended for its exemplary work in the areas of personnel, employee records, and employee staffing.



In virtually all areas of its responsibilities, given that only five employees complete all the human capital-related tasks and functions of an HR office, the staff assigned to HR office of FPS fully exceed expectations, especially when the sheer volume of HR functions and operations are considered.

FINDING 6-2

Considering the cost to FPS, the HR Intern Program provides neither savings on the cost of substitute teachers nor an effective or needed recruitment incentive.

In the current school year, FPS is liable to pay three area universities to partially cover the tuition and fees for some 41 graduate level students who agree to work as interns in various FPS schools for one year. The FPS human resources department administers, manages, and fiscally monitors the internship program. **Exhibit 6-4** identifies both the universities and the amount of fees expected to be paid in 2010-11 per intern.

**Exhibit 6-4
Intern Program Participation by University**

University	FPS Pays Per Intern	Number of Interns	2011 FPS Obligation
Fairfield University	\$13,500	2.5*	\$33,750
University of Bridgeport	\$12,300	2.5*	\$30,750
Sacred Heart University	\$ 13,530	36	\$487,080
Total		41	\$551,580

Source: FPS HR department, October 2010.

* Two interns are assigned for only one semester.

According to various sources of information, the rationale for the district’s participation in this collaboration is two-fold:

- * interns can be used as substitute teachers at their assignment sites; and
- * the district and the principals are able to “field test” the potential teacher’s abilities and performance in the classroom or some other school work in a campus setting.

Neither of these reasons justifies the district’s cost of participation.

Interviews, university brochures, and individual internship contracts show that interns enrolled in these university programs are seeking minimally a master's degree with accompanying Connecticut certification in teaching or some other educational field. Some interns have previously completed undergraduate, non-teaching degrees, and are working on initial teaching certification. Depending on their career planning at the university, graduate work and internship in FPS will lead to certification in teaching, administration, guidance counseling, or some other educational certification area or a combination of any of these disciplines.

Exhibit 6-5 shows the FPS schools participating this budget year and the number of interns assigned.

**Exhibit 6-5
FPS Schools Participating in Intern Program – 2010-11**

Name of School	Number of Interns
Burr Elementary	3
Dwight Elementary	2
Holland Hill Elementary	3
Jennings Elementary	2
McKinley Elementary	2
Mill Hill Elementary	3
North Stratfield Elementary	3
Osborn Hill Elementary	2
Riverfield Elementary	2
Sherman Elementary	3
Stratfield Elementary	3
Fairfield Woods Middle	2
Roger Ludlowe Middle	3
Tomlinson Middle	2
Fairfield Warde High	3
Fairfield Ludlowe High	3
TOTAL	41

Source: FPS human resources department, October 2010.

The district allows no more than three interns to be assigned at any one campus. The actual number of interns at each school (either one, two, or three) is determined by each principal who commits to budget from their discretionary funds the costs per intern that FPS pays to the universities. Although it is generally understood that most interns will function some of the school year as substitute teachers, when needed, an individual principal uses his or her discretion to decide if the work of the interns involves substitute teaching or simply shadowing the work of a teacher, an administrator, a media specialist, or a guidance counselor. Prismatic did not find any directive that all interns are required to substitute teach. For example, a candidate for certificate in guidance counseling or administration could spend the internship year shadowing professionals assigned to these positions at the school.

In October 2009, the Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, sent an inter-office correspondence to K-12 administrators which contained “Standards for Budgeting for Substitutes for 2010-2011 Fiscal Year.” This memorandum contained the following information specific to a principal’s decision to have interns assigned:

*Interns **designated** for substitute work **may be** used [emphasis added] in lieu of one hundred (100) substitute days. Thus, 100 substitute days provided by an intern can be used to offset the total number of required substitute days needed at your site. ... Substitutes will be budgeted at a per diem rate of \$86.*

Prismatic found a misconception regarding how the amount that FPS pays per intern to the participating university is determined. To wit, if an intern actually substitute teaches for 182 days

in a teacher's contract year, the school is saving on the cost of paying a regular substitute teacher. For example, 182 days times \$86 per day equals \$15,652 minus \$13,110 (the average cost per intern) equals a savings of \$2,542 per year in substitute costs. Contrary to that belief, interns may be used for only 100 days as a substitute teacher as stated in the memorandum to principals from the assistant superintendent for HR (cited above) concerning how to budget for substitute teachers. Prismatic believes that this 100-day maximum was a district decision. Thus, the calculation becomes 100 substitute teaching days times \$86 per day, which equals \$8,600. But the average cost per intern is \$13,110 for the same 100 days or a difference of \$4,510. And the school must still theoretically pay for an additional 82 days for another substitute, which would equal \$7,052.

Ideally, each of the interns working in the 2010-11 school year will be hired in the FPS in the next year. However, there is no guarantee that these interns will ever work in FPS schools for two reasons: first and foremost, predictably there will not be enough vacant positions for them to fill; and second, there is no contractual arrangement or implied consent that the interns will accept any FPS position even if they are offered one. For example, the average number of teacher vacancies in the FPS at all instructional levels for the past three years was 17. The average number of administrator vacancies in the same time period was five. The FPS has no binding requirement in either the contracts it makes with the intern or the agreement with the universities that interns will fill any vacancies.

Statistics obtained from the online application system for employment, AppliTrack, used by HR to identify and establish a pool of teachers to fill vacancies, show that there are considerably more qualified applicants with the same credentials as the interns than the number of interns. Also, Curriculum Leaders, who assist HR and principals in identifying specific applicants for vacant positions, and the HR leadership team, note that there is an extremely large number of applicants who are given interviews during the annual Teacher Recruitment Fair for the very few expected vacancies.

RECOMMENDATION

Discontinue the funding and participation in the Intern Program after the current year.

There are insufficient to determine to what extent interns are used to defray substitute costs. However, it does not appear that they are a cost-effective substitute option. Moreover, the district has developed an intern program that far outstrips any potential needs it may have for new hires.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the amount that FPS has contracted and budgeted to pay to participating universities in 2010-11 for a total of 41 interns assigned to schools, the district will save \$551,580 in 2011-12 once the program is discontinued.

The daily rate for a per diem substitute is \$86. Assuming that all 41 interns provided 100 days each of substitute teaching, the district will need to budget \$352,600 in new substitute costs once the intern program is discontinued. Prismatic believes this to be an aggressive assumption and that in all likelihood the actual additional substitute costs will be lower.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Discontinue participation in the Intern Program	\$551,580	\$551,580	\$551,580	\$551,580	\$551,580
Hire per diem substitutes as needed	(\$352,600)	(\$352,600)	(\$352,600)	(\$352,600)	(\$352,600)
TOTAL	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980

6.2 CONTINUING EDUCATION

FINDING 6-3

The Continuing Education section is assigned to the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. A half-time Continuing Education Coordinator (0.52 FTE) manages and operates an extensive program of enrichment, cultural enlightening, and recreational courses which are designed primarily for adults living in the Town of Fairfield. The Continuing Education Coordinator determines:

- * the need for basic education courses, such as GED preparation and ESOL classes;
- * the courses to be offered;
- * the instructors for the courses; and
- * the amount of fees, if any, to be charged for tuition and instructional supplies.

The Coordinator also collects and reports these fees to the Director of Finance. Assigned also to this office is one full-time secretary (1.0 FTE) and one FTE clerk (0.8 FTE) who assist the half-time Coordinator. All FPS expenditures and costs for salaries, printing, paying instructors, etc., related to continuing education are paid from the fees collected.

The Continuing Education section produces two catalog schedules each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Both are available in print versions and on-line through the FPS website. Typically included in each catalogue are courses for:

- * remedial and enrichment activities for children;
- * enrichment classes and activities for adults;
- * recreation, crafts, and sports;
- * program for senior citizens;
- * career education;
- * community service and volunteer programs;
- * early childhood and family education programs;

- * adult basic education;
- * health and human service programs; and
- * literacy programs.

The Continuing Education section is also responsible for arranging adult basic education courses, especially GED preparation and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for non-English speaking adults in the community. Offerings of these courses are included in the same catalogues.

COMMENDATION

FPS is commended for supporting continuing education.

The efforts of the Fairfield School Board to extend its role as purveyors of education to citizens in the Town of Fairfield beyond those who are enrolled in Fairfield schools and the range of these community education course offerings is impressive and is to be commended. Going forward, the district may wish to consider renaming this section “Community Education,” as this title this would more accurately describe the responsibilities and activities of this office.

6.3 INSTRUCTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teacher preparation and ability to apply lessons learned during professional development experiences are essential to effective instruction. Teachers’ abilities to differentiate instruction for all students, not just those who are identified in need of special support, is also the foundation for school systems’ abilities to reach the lofty goals of 100 percent proficiency for all students envisioned in *No Child Left Behind*.

In 2001, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) developed a set of standards for professional development that support the whole school improvement effort. These standards are organized around the context, processes, and content necessary for teachers to focus their expertise on improving instruction and student learning at all levels of a school district. Context standards involve:

- * organizing adults into learning communities in which goals are aligned with those of the school and the district;
- * deploying skilled school and district leaders to guide continuous instructional improvement; and
- * allocating resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

Powerful professional development creates conditions in which school stakeholders can have honest and open conversation about quality and excellence. In a system focused on learning, participants develop a level of trust that allows them to:

- * share their instructional strengths and weaknesses;

- * look at student work together as a way to create working definitions of rigor, creativity, and excellence; and
- * ask the questions necessary to improve their practice.

Schools and districts must work to cultivate the facilitative leadership necessary to develop learning communities as well as honor the in-house expertise of the participants. There will be times when outside experts can offer valuable content knowledge, but, often, teachers and administrators working together become their own best consultants. Research has shown that teachers tend to implement what they help design. A supportive context will provide the space and time for them to meet regularly; apply new learning; and get feedback from colleagues on which to reflect, learn, and implement.

Process standards important for ongoing improvement in teaching and learning revolve around data collection, data use, and tools for collaboration in which educators:

- * use knowledge about how people learn;
- * are given the knowledge and skills for collaboration;
- * use multiple sources of information for data collection and analysis; and
- * develop data-driven, research-based decisions making focused on outcomes.

Content standards are broad and must be flexed to match the particular projects undertaken by a learning community. The standards may relate to content about students, a particular academic discipline, or community issues:

- * understand and appreciate how all students learn;
- * understand how to create supportive learning environments for students;
- * hold high expectations for achievement;
- * deepen teacher subject area content knowledge;
- * deepen teacher pedagogical and assessment knowledge; and
- * provide teachers with knowledge and tools for involving community stakeholders in the education process.

When school and district leaders attend to these broad context, process, and content standards for professional development and integrate them with their school improvement goals, administrators and teachers join their students as learners, and the energy of whole school improvement begins to transform individuals and institutions.

FINDING 6-4

There are models of effective professional development occurring in the district. At the elementary level, the curriculum coordinators have thoughtfully planned the training and rollout

of a new instructional math program modeled after a literacy program implemented earlier. They have done this despite constraints on professional development time in FPS.

The Reading/Language Arts Curriculum Leader has focused on K-2 and the Math/Science Leader on grades 3-5. This enables teachers at both levels to only have to receive training on one instructional model at a time, which is more likely to result in embedding the practice into instruction. Both the math and reading/language arts instructional models are similar, too, strengthening and reinforcing teacher skills and knowledge and providing students consistency in learning. Using data and conversations with principals, schools were selected to pilot the program. Support and ongoing communications occurred to ensure that it was being implemented with fidelity.

The Director of Special Education and Special Programs has undertaken a number of professional development initiatives to build capacity within staff in her department. She has created a well-trained cadre of about 23 staff trained in Assistive Technology (AT). These central and school-based staff now evaluate students for AT as well as serve as consultants to teams to determine the AT needs of students. Five years ago, in collaboration with non-public schools in the community, she used flow-through funds for professional development. The result has been job-embedded learning supported by observation and coaching by a trained staff member.

COMMENDATION

District leaders have begun developing professional development models that are most likely to result in fidelity of implementation of programs, a more uniform approach to instructional programs, and potentially save the district funds.

FINDING 6-5

Although high quality professional development models exist, they are more the exception than the rule in FPS. There is no district-wide professional development plan that is based on data, student achievement, a district-wide strategic plan, or the identified needs of teachers for professional growth. There is a pressing need for an organized means of planning for and delivering professional development that is aligned with the district's instructional initiatives and strategic goals. However, a number of impediments stand in the way.

Currently, many tasks related to improving curriculum and instructional delivery and related professional development are overseen through informal conversations and monthly meetings among logically convened personnel, and are achieved, in essence, due to the personalities and commitment of the individuals who hold positions of responsibility. Interviews with district staff did not reveal that data, student or teacher needs, and the strategic plan were systematically the basis of decisions about professional development provided for district staff.

An examination of the school calendar for FPS shows that the vast majority of planned time allocated for professional development occurs at the beginning of the school year. Additionally, there are two days during the school year that are designated district professional development days and two allotted for building level training at the discretion of those at the site. However, like many districts, staff noted that little of the time set aside for training at the beginning of the year is actually spent on training, but more on meetings and "administrivia." Others stated that

the teacher contract and the way time is currently organized for training are also issues that interfere with embedded, consistent, and supported professional learning.

Additionally, there are no longer two true district-determined professional development days. District teachers, wanting more input into professional development options, were given the opportunity to vote on how one of the days is to be used. Consequently, one of the district days is now called a “choice” day. Leaders stated that, with only two professional development days designated as district days, this further hampers the district’s ability to provide the training necessary to implement programs well. Without district days, for example, when the math instructional model is rolled out, there will be no district day to follow-up implementation to address challenges or concerns. In response to district concerns about needing to meet the needs of students at both ends of the ability continuum, curriculum leaders plan to extend instruction to higher ability students through curriculum documents, but, again, are handicapped by a lack of professional development time. The district does offer training, such as a three day summer institute on differentiation that 25 teachers attended, but there is little opportunity to follow-up to support teachers as they experiment with the practice. With the district’s and state’s focus on SRBI as a means of better individualizing instruction for each and every student, much professional development is needed for all teachers to grasp the strategies it requires.

The choice day planned not long after the site visit was organized with teachers submitting plans for training they would deliver. It was organized around five strands identified by a newly active professional development council. The weaknesses identified in discussion with district staff include:

- * there is currently no quality control oversight to ensure that the training will be meaningful for teachers attending;
- * curriculum leaders frequently have to design training, sometimes at the last minute when attendance warrants additional options;
- * their delivering training prevents them from dropping in to view other training taking place so that they know what teachers are exposed to;
- * having a multitude of offerings dilutes district focus; and
- * when teachers from one school attend various trainings, administrators and resource staff are not in the position of being able to follow-up the training to ensure that the learning results in changed practice.

The secondary school calendars provide extensive planning time for teachers instead of direct instructional time for students. This is in contrast to elementary teachers’ 20 minutes of planning time a day.

When discussing professional development, many district staff used the term “infancy.” The district has important curricular initiatives it is working to embed in its schools besides the reading and math instructional models. As a part of re-authorization of IDEA in 2004, Response-to-Instruction (RTI) uses a tiered approach of specialized intervention to identify disability and investigate the effectiveness of alternative instructional approaches. Its methods have the potential to influence not only how and when a disability is identified, but also the nature of early

intervention and instruction. Its potential benefit to all students, not just those with learning disabilities, supports the proficiency goal for all students contained in NCLB. Consequently, the state of Connecticut has created a framework for RtI called SRBI to facilitate success in general education classes for a broad spectrum of students and re-define its approach to identifying students with learning disabilities. This requires a district-wide push to equip all teachers with related skills and knowledge so that they are better able to serve students in their own classrooms. Yet, the district is handicapped by essentially being limited to one district designated day in the year to provide that training.

No money is spent on professional development for FPS non-instructional staff such as transportation. Teachers in low incidence areas such as social workers and psychologists have little opportunity for training specific to their area of expertise.

A 2005 synthesis of research about the influence of standards on K-12 teaching and student learning by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning *McRel Insights: Professional Development Analysis* found a lack of alignment between what is known about high-quality standards-based professional development and common practice. Many of its conclusions are relevant to FPS's needs. In particular, it notes that "deep changes in teacher instruction... take considerable time" requiring follow-up and coaching throughout the year. Its study would be instructive to FPS leaders as a prelude to developing a long-range professional development plan. Considerations it suggests in designing professional development include:

- * the professional development proposed is of high quality (the study gives examples);
- * teacher instruction is examined as an outcome with descriptions of how instructional change is measured;
- * a reliable and valid achievement measure is used to assess impact on student learning; and
- * the evaluation design can attribute changes to the effect of the professional development.

Research shows that, when five components are scientifically incorporated into a comprehensive professional development process, up to 95 percent of the participants transferred the skill into classroom practice. Those components that should be considered in designing training are:

- * Imparting knowledge,
- * Demonstrating or modeling the new strategy or skill,
- * Initial practice in a protected or simulated setting,
- * Promptly providing structured and open-ended feedback about performance of the practice, and
- * Coaching—providing follow-up attention to help with the at-home implementation.

All five are essential for transfer of skills or new behaviors into classroom practice. Integrating

them into FPS staff training planning processes will ensure that teachers use them to change their delivery. Joyce and Showers have suggested that teachers need many repetitions of a new behavior with supportive follow-up for real change to occur. Thus, principals should be required to attend specific identified professional development opportunities that their teachers attend so that they can reinforce it or suggest modifications during classroom observations. In that way, they, as well as resource coaches, will support the behaviors the training was intended to elicit.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a comprehensive instructional professional development plan.

The district should use the National Staff Development Council (NSCD) standards and guidelines as a basis for a comprehensive instructional professional development plan. It should also expand the professional development committee to include non-instructional and low incidence staff members.

A guiding document that takes into account student performance data, varying levels of teacher skills and knowledge, and student characteristics will focus FPS professional development. FPS has multiple goals encompassing student achievement, technology, teacher performance, and school leadership. Each goal is connected to a complex of strategies and initiatives, and each strategy needs an action plan for building stakeholder knowledge and skills to achieve the goal. An effective comprehensive professional development plan connects the local action plans and uses the NSDC context, process, and content standards to ensure the plan's quality, coherence, and effective implementation.

Changing the staff development calendar to stagger training opportunities throughout the school year and considering embedding elements of coaching into professional development is one means of increasing the amount of professional development and monitoring application. Coaching entails support and feedback for teachers as they apply the learning in their classrooms. Research by Bush (1984) examined the effect that individual components contributed toward transfer of skills or new behaviors into classroom practice. He found that, when teachers were provided the first four of the components identified, only 16-19 percent of teachers transferred the knowledge into practice. It was the fifth element, coaching, that resulted in 95 percent of teachers incorporating the skills and knowledge into their classroom practice. Thus, in order for district funds spent on professional development to reap their intended purpose and be cost-effective expenditures, the school calendar should be changed to offer opportunities throughout the year for teachers to receive feedback, and practice and discuss what works and barriers to effective application. Monitoring of application of professional development from the classroom to the central office should also be included as a district-wide commitment to professional growth.

The district must make professional development a higher priority if it is to change student learning. It must base its offerings on a data-based analysis of student needs and identify core *required* professional development geared to address those needs. An annual needs assessment should also inform district planners of teacher needs. Using internal "experts" who have successfully taught students with the particular needs that data show is a need would build a cadre of "resident experts" who can serve as resources to others.

Elements the district should also consider to make professional development dollars provide the return the district intends on its investment include:

- * create accountabilities that link professional development offered with intended outcomes for teachers and students;
- * in the application process, link professional development being proposed with projected student performance outcomes and require written plans for on-the-job follow-up after the training.
- * when the district pays for travel to a conference, dictate what must be done to earn professional credit so that more employees benefit from the new knowledge; and
- * in order to earn continuing education units, participants must complete assignments tied to the training.

A 2000 Virginia state study of effective practices found that in successful schools, time is set aside for learning activities based on improving the instructional program (Peterson [1997]; Wohlsletter and Mohrman [1996]). Time is based on school instructional goals and student learning needs (Canaday and Rettig [1995]; Cawelti, [1999]; Fitzpatrick, [1998]). Skill-building activities are delivered over time to allow time for practice before re-assembling for de-briefing and more learning. During the interim, technical assistance is provided. Teachers are also provided time for collaboration and team planning within and across grade levels.

Finally, the district's approach to professional development must recognize that teachers have different needs and abilities depending on their own experiences and backgrounds and develop a tiered approach to training rather than a "one size fits all." This takes into consideration the needs of adult learners and develops the specific skills and knowledge needed by each teacher, much like differentiating instruction for students.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

This chapter reviews the facilities use and management of Fairfield Public Schools (FPS).

Well-planned facilities are based on the educational program and on accurate student enrollment projections. The design process should have input from all stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, security specialists, parents, students, and the maintenance and operations staff. The selection of building materials, hardware, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and of other major building components, should be made according to life cycle cost analyses for an optimum total cost of construction, operations, and maintenance. The maintenance and operation of the facilities must be accomplished in an efficient and effective manner in order to provide a safe and secure environment that supports the educational program, and efficiently utilizes the school system's resources. Efficiencies and economy of management and operation are critical to ensuring that resources for direct instruction are maximized.

FPS consists of two high schools, three middle schools, 11 elementary schools, an alternative high school, the district administrative (central) office, the district maintenance office and compound, a district warehouse and a district transportation compound. The oldest school is Tomlinson Middle School (**Exhibit 7-1**), originally constructed in 1917, and the newest school is Burr elementary school (**Exhibit 7-2**), occupied in 2004.

Exhibit 7-1
Tomlinson Middle School



Source: Google®Maps, November 2010.

Exhibit 7-2
Burr Elementary School

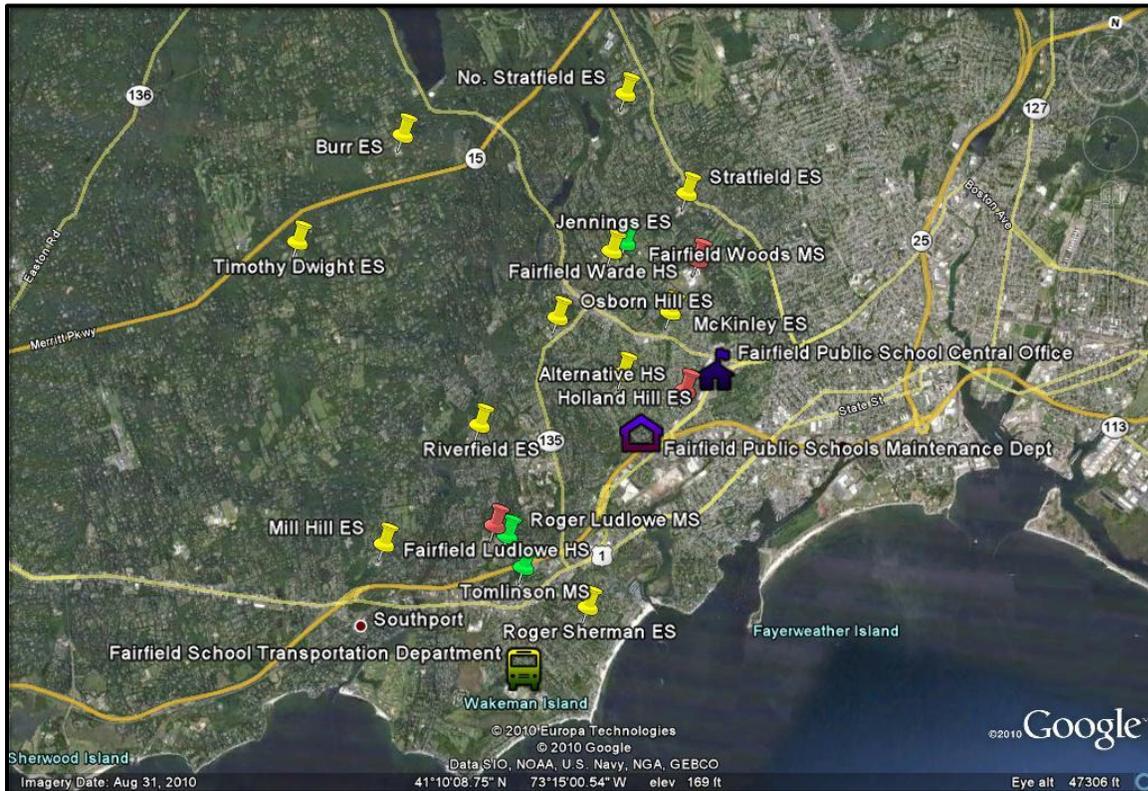


Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

All of the buildings are either owned or leased by the city of Fairfield. They are for the use and occupancy by the public school department. The facilities are maintained by the district maintenance department which consists of both maintenance personnel and custodial personnel.

Exhibit 7-3 shows the location of each of the buildings within the Town of Fairfield, Connecticut.

Exhibit 7-3
Fairfield Public School Building Locations



Source: Prismatic Services and Google® Earth, September, 2010.

Exhibit 7-4 shows the responses on Prismatic’s staff survey related to facilities use and management. As shown, staff largely agrees that:

- * schools are well-maintained;
- * repairs are made in a timely manner;
- * facilities are open for community use;
- * emergency maintenance is handled promptly; and
- * the district encourages staff to minimize utility costs.

**Exhibit 7-4
Prismatic Staff Survey Related to Facilities Use and Management**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	6%	35%	35%	19%	6%
Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	3%	28%	11%	41%	17%
Schools are well-maintained.	22%	53%	9%	12%	4%
The process for requesting a facility repair is inefficient.	7%	22%	36%	30%	5%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	7%	43%	24%	21%	5%
District facilities are open for community use.	19%	55%	25%	1%	0%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	12%	49%	33%	4%	1%
The district effectively encourages staff to minimize utilities costs.	8%	52%	23%	14%	4%

Source: Prismatic Survey, 2010.

Exhibit 7-5 tabulates FPS facilities, year of construction, year of remodeling, gross square footage, and other facility data.

**Exhibit 7-5
FPS Elementary School Facilities
2009-10**

School	Year Built	Year Update	Classrooms	Bldg. Capacity	Enrollment 10/01/2009	Main Bldg. Sq. Footage	Construction	Stories	Annex Bldg Sq. Footage	Construction	Stories	Relocatables	Relocatable Sq. Footage	Facility Gross Sq. Footage	Site Acreage
Burr	2004	N/A	27	504	419	70,794	Concrete/Block/Glass	2				-	-	70,794	17.44
Timothy Dwight	1962	1960, 2000	21	378	316	41,000	Brick/Masonry	1				-	-	41,000	31.13
Holland Hill	1956	1978, 2001	23	315	335	42,732	Brick/Masonry	1				3	2,504	45,236	12.50
Jennings	1967	2000, 2002	24	357	352	45,300	Brick/Masonry	1				1	800	46,100	7.03
McKinley	2003	N/A	30	504	451	73,425	Brick/Masonry	2				-	-	73,425	13.54
Mill Hill	1955	1978, 1991, 2000	25	378	478	43,229	Brick/Masonry	1				5	4,431	47,660	9.70
No. Stratfield	1961	1996, 2000	26	483	478	61,110	Brick/Masonry	1				-	-	61,110	9.60
Osborn Hill	1958	1969, 1981, 1997, 2000, 2009	27	504	551	49,146	Brick/Masonry	1	5,730	Brick/Masonry	1	-	-	54,876	10.77
Riverfield	1959	1971, 2000	26	399	466	45,140	Brick/Masonry	1				5	4,000	49,140	30.00
Roger Sherman	1963	1977, 2001, 2009	26	504	474	40,387	Brick/Masonry	1	6,590	Brick/Masonry	1	1	8,000	54,977	9.70
Stratfield	1929	1948, 1972	25	399	492	49,357	Brick/Masonry	2				4	3,200	52,557	6.76
Elementary School Subtotals			280	4,725	4,812	561,620		14	12,320			19	22,935	596,875	158.17

Exhibit 7-5 (continued)
FPS Middle School, High School, and Other Facilities
2009-10

School	Year Built	Year Update	Classrooms	Bldg. Capacity	Enrollment 10/01/2009	Main Bldg. Sq. Footage	Construction	Stories	Annex Bldg Sq. Footage	Construction	Stories	Relocatables	Relocatable Sq. Footage	Facility Gross Sq. Footage	Site Acreage
Fairfield Woods	1954	1961, 1972, 1995	46	650	672	134,487	Brick/ Masonry	2				-	-	134,487	15.53
Roger Ludlowe	2003	N/A	68	875	966	200,450	Brick/Wood/ Glass	3				-	-	200,450	19.00
Tomlinson	1917	1942, 1958, 1976, 2006	51	700	773	167,000	Brick/ Masonry	3				-	-	167,000	10.78
Middle School Subtotals			165	2,225	2,411	501,937		8				-	-	501,937	45.31
Fairfield Ludlowe	1950	1963, 1972, 1995, 2005	90	1,400	1,437	295,069		3				-	-	295,069	23.00
Fairfield Warde	1955	2003,2006	90	1,400	1,279	317,827	Brick/ Masonry	2				-	-	317,827	39.70
Alternative HS	Lease	N/A	9	75	35	22,188	Brick/ Masonry	3				-	-	22,188	Lease
High School Subtotals			189	2,875	2,751	635,084		8				-	-	635,084	62.70
ECC	2003	N/A	6	84	58	12,573	Brick/ Masonry	1				-	-	12,573	-
Maintenance Department	Lease	N/A	N/A	20	N/A	6,120	Concrete/ EFIS	2				-	-	6,120	Lease
Central Office	2002	N/A	N/A	75	N/A	21,500	Brick/ Masonry	4				-	-	21,500	Lease
Other Facility Subtotals				179	58	40,193		7				-	-	40,193	-
TOTAL			634	10,004	10,032	1,738,834		37	12,320			19	22,935	1,774,089	266.18

Source: FPS, property maps, Google® Maps and Prismatic Services Site Visit, October 2010.

FINDING 7-1

The money that FPS spent on operations and maintenance (O&M) related activities during the school year 2008-09 was \$15,761,000 (**Exhibit 7-6**). This was a 6.3 percent increase over the district's 2007-08 O&M expenditures. FPS expenditures are in line with the average expenditures of the peer school districts (**Exhibit 7-7**).

**Exhibit 7-6
Comparison of Operation and Maintenance Expenditures
2008-09**

District	2000 Pop.	1990 – 2000 Growth	# Public Schools	Per Capita Income	Enrollment 2007	Enrollment 2008
Fairfield	57,340	7.3%	16	\$43,670	9,776	9,953
Greenwich	61,101	4.6%	15	\$74,346	8,968	8,867
Norwalk	82,951	5.9%	19	\$31,781	10,591	10,744
Stamford	117,083	8.4%	20	\$34,987	14,884	14,861
Trumbull	34,243	7.0%	9	\$34,931	6,883	6,934
West Hartford	63,589	5.8%	16	\$33,468	9,990	10,082
Peer Average		6.3%		\$41,903	10,263	10,298

District	2007-08 Plant Operation & Maintenance	2008-09 Plant Operation & Maintenance	Change	2007-08 Land, Building, Debt	2008-09 Land, Building, Debt	Change
Fairfield	\$14,815,000	\$15,761,000	\$946,000	\$19,788,000	\$19,537,000	(\$251,000)
Greenwich	\$21,422,000	\$17,057,000	(\$4,365,000)	\$21,685,000	\$16,747,000	(\$4,938,000)
Norwalk	\$14,350,000	\$14,956,000	\$606,000	\$17,347,000	\$21,161,000	\$3,814,000
Stamford	\$20,372,000	\$21,179,000	\$807,000	\$46,879,000	\$36,456,000	(\$10,423,000)
Trumbull	\$8,515,000	\$8,456,000	(\$59,000)	\$5,960,000	\$6,508,000	\$548,000
West Hartford	\$13,466,000	\$15,951,000	\$2,485,000	\$7,947,000	\$8,601,000	\$654,000
Peer Average	\$15,625,000	\$15,519,800	(\$111,200)	\$19,963,600	\$17,894,600	(\$2,069,000)

Source: Connecticut Department of Education and Prismatic Services Calculations, October, 2010

Exhibit 7-7
Comparison of Operation and Maintenance Expenditures
2008-09

District	O&M Expenditures Per Enrollment	Land, Bldg., Debt Expenditures Per Enrollment	O&M Expenditures Per Public School	Land, Bldg., Debt Expenditures Per Public School
Fairfield	\$1,584	\$1,963	\$985,063	\$1,221,063
Greenwich	\$1,924	\$1,889	\$1,137,133	\$1,116,467
Norwalk	\$1,392	\$1,970	\$787,158	\$1,113,737
Stamford	\$1,425	\$2,453	\$1,058,950	\$1,822,800
Trumbull	\$1,219	\$939	\$939,556	\$723,111
West Hartford	\$1,579	\$853	\$995,063	\$537,563
Peer Average	\$1,521	\$1,678	\$983,820	\$1,089,123

Source: Connecticut Department of Education and Prismatic Services Calculations, October 2010.

COMMENDATION

FPS maintains its facilities in very good condition. All of the schools are attractive, pleasant-looking, and appear to be conducive to learning.

FINDING 7-2

FPS has a work order system which was built by the FPS technology department several years ago. The system is limited in its ability to track maintenance actions conducted by individual maintenance technicians. It is also limited in its ability to generate reports regarding the activities of the maintenance technicians. Additionally, the only preventive maintenance system in use within FPS is a set of written three ring binders that detail the maintenance actions required for the HVAC and control systems within the school buildings.

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, the condition of restrooms and other facilities, as well as occupant safety, all impact how students and 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 districts have adopted rigorous preventive maintenance programs and maintain a record of the performance of equipment and the costs of regular maintenance by which they measure the effectiveness of these programs.

A very good guide for planning and designing a maintenance program is the *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* by the School Facilities Task Force, National Forum on Education Statistics and the Association of School Business Officials International.¹ Included in the guide are topics such as: maintenance check lists, preventative maintenance, job descriptions, employee training, managing supplies, and employee evaluations.

¹ <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003347.pdf>

In addition to that, the maintenance director should develop a documented preventive maintenance program. As noted in *The Real Cost of Deferred Maintenance*:²

Facilities problems in ... schools that aren't addressed may seem to disappear but they don't go away—like molds and mildew they just multiply out of sight. Poor conditions can affect the health and safety of everyone who uses the facility, damage the morale of students and teachers, impair their ability to teach and learn, and threaten the facility itself.

Proper maintenance of ... schools is vital not only because facilities are often old, and have suffered deferred maintenance for years or even decades, but because the consequences of improper and inadequate maintenance are so serious. If a leak in the roof isn't repaired, it can—like the leak in the fabled dike in Holland—wash away the entire structure. If the district doesn't allocate funds to fix such leaks, or do other necessary preventive work and if state policies are predisposed to new construction, deferring maintenance may force the closure of a good rural school. Therefore, a thorough program of preventive maintenance with regularly scheduled inspections is critical.

In surveying the peer districts with regards preventive and corrective maintenance systems, Prismatic found that all five peer districts use a system offered by the company SchoolDude.³ This system offers a comprehensive preventive maintenance module, a work order system, and many other features that may be of interest to FPS. The system is web-hosted by SchoolDude, thus freeing up the district's servers for other software systems directly applicable to education. As all five peer districts currently use one or more modules of SchoolDude, it would be advisable for FPS to discuss the benefits and applicability of this system to the FPS suite of tools.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a computerized maintenance management system.

The district should explore procurement of a state of the art computerized maintenance management system, with an eye toward a comprehensive facilities management system. One possible option would be to explore the system in use by all five peer districts—SchoolDude.

A well-planned and executed computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) project can yield a maximum return on your investment (ROI). This return is realized through increased efficiency, productivity, and profits. However, a poorly planned and executed project can result in a loss of revenues. These losses can be measured in terms of the overall investment in the project, as well as from wasted time, and lost projected revenue forecast upon the successful installation and implementation of a CMMS.⁴

² Barbara Kent Lawrence, Ed. D., with The Rural School and Community Trust, June 2003.

³ <http://www.schooldude.com/>

⁴ A very good article describing the planning of a CMMS can be found at <http://www.facilitymanagement.com/articles/maintenance1-1010.html>.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation to explore procurement of a computerized maintenance management system can be implemented with existing resources. The decision to procure any one system should include a determination of cost savings in technology maintenance and server memory savings, cost savings in maintenance and custodial operations, and the cost savings of performing preventive maintenance.

As an example, Prismatic obtained a price quote from SchoolDude, which is shown below. The first year cost includes a one-time training cost. The district may choose to implement a different system that would likely have a different price.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Implement a computerized maintenance management system	(\$7,943)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)

FINDING 7-3

Non-school groups are allowed to use school facilities on a “not to interfere basis” with school activities. However, the process for accommodating these requests is paper-based and time-consuming.

FPS employs a full-time reservations clerk to schedule outside groups, and when within guidelines, invoice those groups for use of the facility and the time consumed for custodial services. Not all groups are invoiced, including continuing education classes and PTAs. The process for booking reservations and invoicing relies on an outdated computer system and paper.

The reservations clerk report shows that during the 2009-10 school year, there were 1,404 reservations. These reservations resulted in 30,348 separate uses of FPS facilities. Of the 1,404 reservations, there were 78 bookings that were for groups that were invoiced. The 2009-10 income to FPS for these invoices was \$89,422.64, or, an average of \$1,146.44 per paid reservation.

The reservations clerk invoices outside organizations in the arrears. In the invoicing procedures, the reservations clerk must wait for a custodian report from the maintenance department to find out which custodian provided cleaning and setup services for the outside activity. The rate of pay for the specific custodian(s) on duty during the outside group’s activity must be determined so that the amount to invoice based on these data can be determined. This procedure results in differing amounts being invoiced to a single group for an identical activity (e.g., a church worship service that occurs every Sunday) because of a different custodian being assigned on different days.

Among several alternatives, SchoolDude is one software package that offers a web-hosted module for event management. This module can improve events program efficiency and ultimately save the district money by reducing the number of hours required to manually schedule, track, and invoice customers. Additionally, an event scheduling system can be programmed to automatically notify food service, maintenance and custodial services of the event set up, cleaning and food requirements. The peer district of Greenwich Public Schools has used the SchoolDude event management module since 2005.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a technology solution for event management.

The district should evaluate the SchoolDude event management module. District staff should discuss with Greenwich and the other peer districts their experiences with the system and determine if the system would be suitable for FPS.

In addition, there may be a significant amount of revenue available to the district if it invoiced more organizations for the use of its facilities. The district may wish to review its invoicing guidelines.

FISCAL IMPACT

As an example, Prismatic obtained a price quote from SchoolDude, which is shown below. The first year cost includes a one-time training cost. The district may choose to implement a different system that would likely have a different price.

Additionally, once an event management module is implemented, it is feasible that the reservations clerk time spent in event management responsibilities can be reduced by up to 50 percent. If this reduction in workload is achieved, the savings to the district would be \$33,525 per year, using the average 12-month secretarial salary and benefits of \$67,050. The district may determine that the newly freed time of the reservations clerk can be spent on other district business, rather than reducing the position.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Implement an event management system	(\$8,018)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)
Reduce clerk position to half-time	\$33,525	\$33,525	\$33,525	\$33,525	\$33,525
TOTAL	\$25,507	\$27,232	\$27,232	\$27,232	\$27,232

FINDING 7-4

There are 75.5 custodians working in the maintenance department of FPS. This level of staffing is in line with industry standards.

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)⁵ bases custodial staffing on an expected productivity of 2,500 square feet per staff-hour of work, equaling 20,000 square feet per custodian per eight-hour day. The American School and University 38th Annual Study reported a major increase to approximately 34,000 square feet per FTE custodian.⁶ Prismatic applies a 22,500 square feet per custodian measure as an equitable median between the two reported “standards,” based on experience in school districts across the United States. Applying these standards to EPS, the district is at 96 percent of the national standard for custodial staffing to adequately clean the school and maintain the spaces in an acceptable level of sanitation.

⁵ Association of School Business Officials International, found at <http://www.asbointl.org>

⁶ American School and University, 38th Annual Maintenance and Operations Cost Study for Schools.

As shown in **Exhibit 7-8**, some of the assignments are greater than that national standard, whereas others are less than the national standard. This is due to the varying footprints of the facilities. However, on whole, the number of custodians generally approximates the national standard. The eight custodians assigned to the maintenance department are considered to be floaters. These custodians fill in for positions that are vacant for a number of reasons, including “call-in,” planned annual or sick leave, and absence due to injury or other illnesses. According to the maintenance secretary, unplanned call-ins can range between 10 and 22 per day.

**Exhibit 7-8
FPS Custodial Staff Deployment**

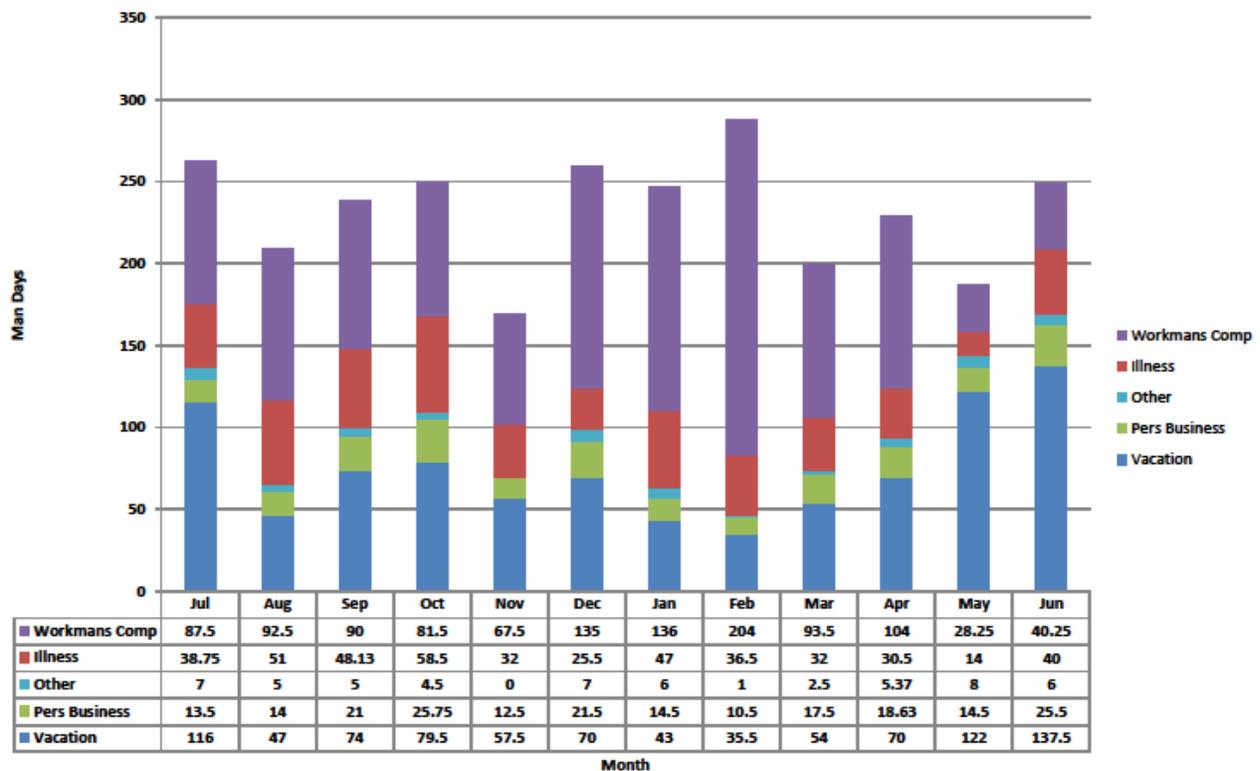
School	Sq. Ft.	Custodians Assigned	Sq. Ft. / Custodian	% of National Standard ⁷
Burr	70,794	3	23,598	105%
Timothy Dwight	41,000	2	20,500	91%
Holland Hill	45,236	2	22,618	101%
Jennings	46,100	2	23,050	102%
McKinley	73,425	3	24,475	109%
Mill Hill	47,660	2	23,830	106%
North Stratfield	61,110	2.5	24,444	109%
Osborn Hill	54,876	2.5	21,950	98%
Riverfield	49,140	2	24,570	109%
Roger Sherman	54,977	2	27,489	122%
Stratfield	52,557	2	26,279	117%
Elementary Schools Total	596,875	25	23,875	106%
Fairfield Woods	134,487	5.5	24,452	109%
Roger Ludlowe	200,450	7	28,636	127%
Tomlinson	167,000	6.5	25,692	114%
Middle Schools Total	501,937	19	26,418	117%
Fairfield Ludlowe	295,069	11	26,824	119%
Fairfield Warde	317,827	11	28,893	128%
Alternative HS	22,188	0.6875	32,273	143%
High Schools Total	635,084	22.6875	27,993	124%
ECC	12,573	0.8125	15,474	69%
Maintenance Department	6,120	8	765	3%
Central Office	21,500	0.825	26,061	116%
Grand Total	1,774,089	75.5	23,498	104%

Source: Fairfield Public Schools Department and Prismatic Services Calculations, October 2010.

⁷Based on the blended standard of 22,500 square feet per custodian per day.

The review team conducted an analysis of absenteeism within the maintenance department for the 2008-09 school year (**Exhibit 7-9**). As of July 1, 2010, custodian vacation time credited was 1,033 days and maintenance vacation time credited was 300 days. All vacation time is required to be taken during the year credited in accordance with the union contract. Therefore, management must plan to lose these numbers of work days during the 2010-11 school year. With 75.5 FTE custodians in the department, working 260 days each per year, the custodial work force has 19,630 work days, minus 1,033 days for vacation, or 18,597 days of available work. Each custodian earns 10 sick days per year, and up to 120 days can be carried on the books. Assuming a rate of illness equal to that experienced in the previous year, 454 more days will be lost.

**Exhibit 7-9
Custodian Absences 2009-2010**



Source: Fairfield Public Schools Department and Prismatic Services Calculations, October 2010.

Total workman’s comp days lost for the custodial work force was 1,160 which equates to 4.5 FTE. Therefore, the custodial workforce is reduced to a constant 71.0 FTE, which yields approximately 25,000 square feet of cleaning per custodian. This somewhat exceeds the Prismatic standard of 22,500 square feet per cleaning custodian.

During the site visit, the facilities member of the review team visited six elementary schools (Burr, Dewey, Holland Hill, Jennings, North Stratfield, and Stratfield), two middle schools (Fairfield Woods and Roger Ludlowe) and one high school (Roger Ludlowe). As observed during the visits, cleanliness of the facilities was judged based on the experience of the review team member in other reviews of like facilities. FPS facilities were found to be acceptably clean.

COMMENDATION

FPS employs a number of custodians that is able to maintain satisfactory levels of cleanliness and sanitation in its facilities, and is in consonance with national standards.

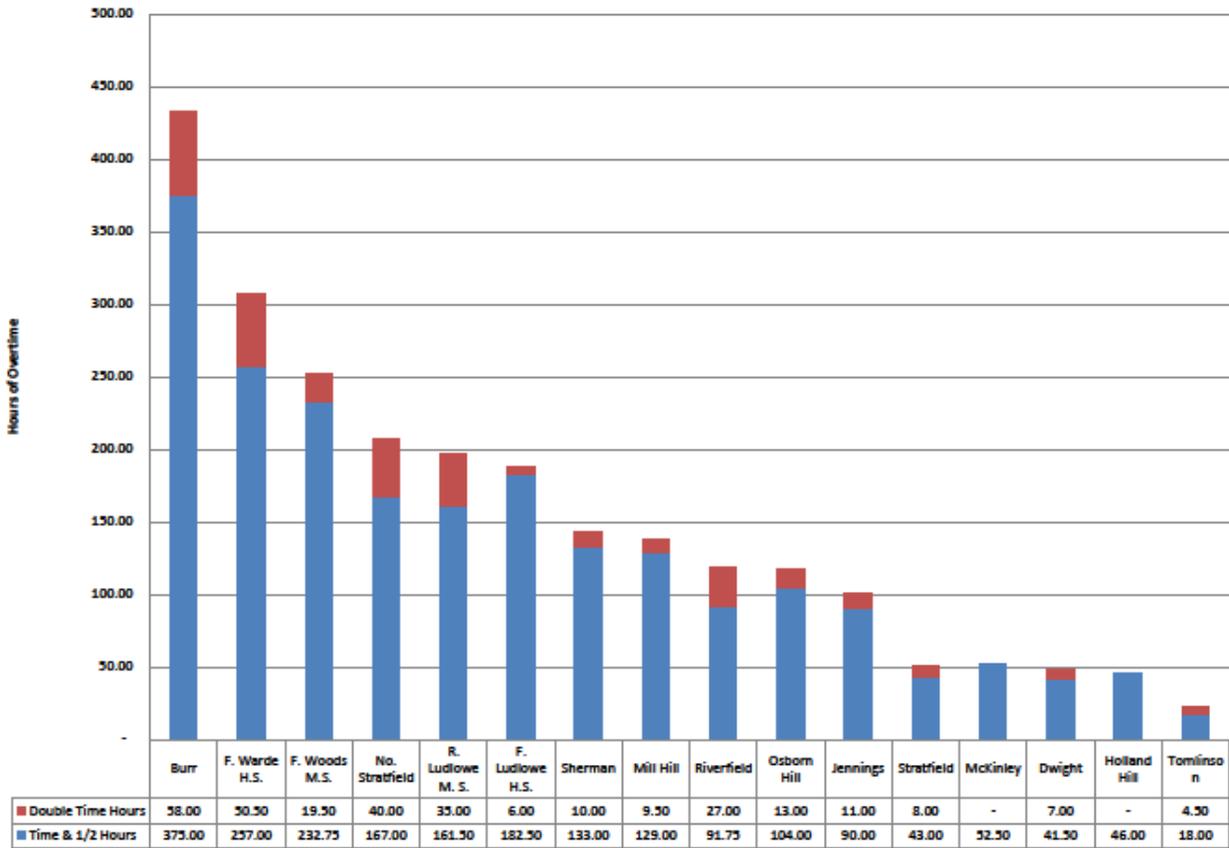
FINDING 7-5

The review team conducted an evaluation of custodian time and attendance in the maintenance department, including overtime, for the period July 1, 2009 through September 17, 2009. Prismatic noted several practices of questionable value to the district.

Time sheets reviewed in the maintenance department have no signature of an approving supervisor, even though the forms have specified blocks for review. The maintenance secretary receives the timesheets which are faxed from the schools with only the employee's signature. The maintenance secretary then loads the time and attendance information into the computer to generate the time and overtime reports, and then submits them to the human resources department. Often, the maintenance secretary signs for the maintenance director without his review.

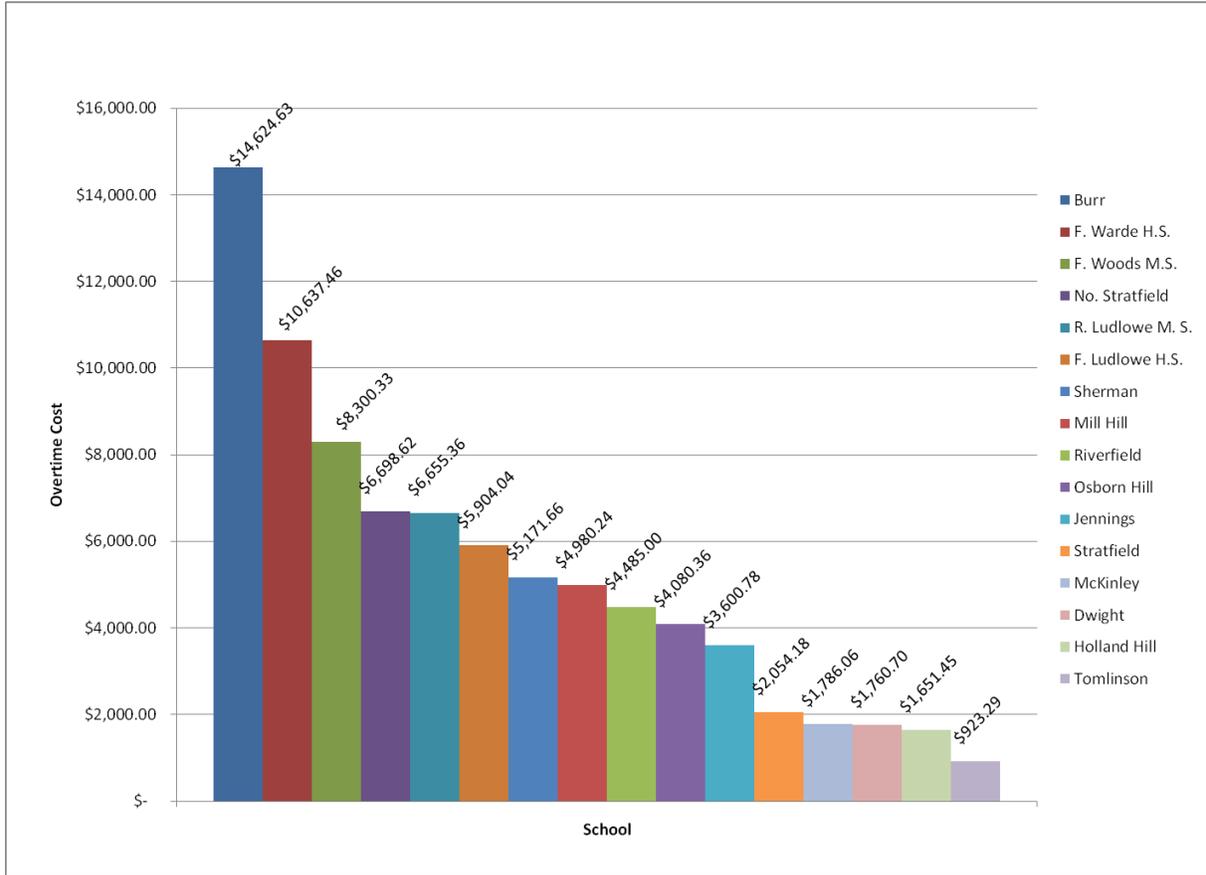
Custodians worked overtime 2,124.50 hours at time and one-half, and 299.00 hours at double time in order to conduct "summer cleaning" (**Exhibit 7-10**). FPS expended \$83,314.16 on overtime pay to custodians for "summer cleaning" between July 1, 2009 and September 5, 2009 (**Exhibit 7-11**).

**Exhibit 7-10
Fairfield 2010 Summer Cleaning Overtime Hours by School**



Source: FPS Custodian Overtime Data and Prismatic Services calculations.

**Exhibit 7-11
Fairfield 2010 Summer Cleaning Overtime Cost by School**



Source: FPS Custodian Overtime Data and Prismatic Services calculations.

The review team noted some specific documented overtime activities that might require review:

- * Two employees documented overtime “summer cleaning” hours at Burr Elementary School on Saturday, August 29 for a total of 20.5 hours each at time and one-half, and then continued working Sunday, August 30 for a total of 21 hours each, at double time. Each employee garnered in overtime the equivalent of one-third of a month’s pay in less than 36 hours.
- * Burr Elementary School, one of the two newest schools in the system, required 433 hours of overtime summer cleaning to prepare it for resumption of fall classes.
- * One employee documented 2.5 hours of overtime on September 2, 2009 for a “custodial meeting.” No other employee documented attendance at the meeting.
- * One employee worked at R. Ludlowe Middle School on Thursday, September 3, 2009 for three hours of overtime and was compensated at his time and one-half rate of \$28.47 per hour. Then, the same employee worked three hours of overtime at F. Ludlowe High School on the following Monday, September 7, 2009 and was compensated at his double time rate of \$37.96 per hour.

- * One employee worked five hours of overtime on Saturday, September 2009 to “fill absence,” yet there are no employees regularly assigned to work at the middle schools on Saturdays.
- * One employee worked one hour of overtime at Dwight Elementary School on Sunday, August 23, 2009 conducting “summer cleaning.” This employee did not document any other work on that Sunday, so it appears that this employee was allowed to come to the school on a Sunday to accomplish one hour of “summer cleaning.” On Sunday, August 16, 2009, the same situation occurred with another employee, who worked just one hour of “summer cleaning” at Stratfield Elementary School.

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct a thorough review of policy and procedures as they are actually employed in the time and attendance program for custodians, with a view toward eliminating all “summer cleaning” overtime.

In conducting this review, the district should focus on the policy versus the practice of the following:

- * the review of time sheets prior to submission to human resources;
- * the practice of the maintenance secretary signing the time sheet reports prior to submission to human resources;
- * the need to have custodians work overtime for “summer cleaning;”
- * the need for an up-to-date time and attendance system that will minimize paperwork and provide an audit trail for time and attendance; and
- * the procedures for allocating time and one-half and double time rates to employee overtime.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation to explore procedures for time and attendance can be implemented with existing resources. Further, with prudent scheduling of work load, summer cleaning overtime potentially can be reduced to either zero, or near-zero, resulting in an annual gain of approximately \$83,314.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate “summer cleaning” overtime	\$83,314	\$83,314	\$83,314	\$83,314	\$83,314

FINDING 7-6

Custodian assignments in current practice do not result in effective supervision.

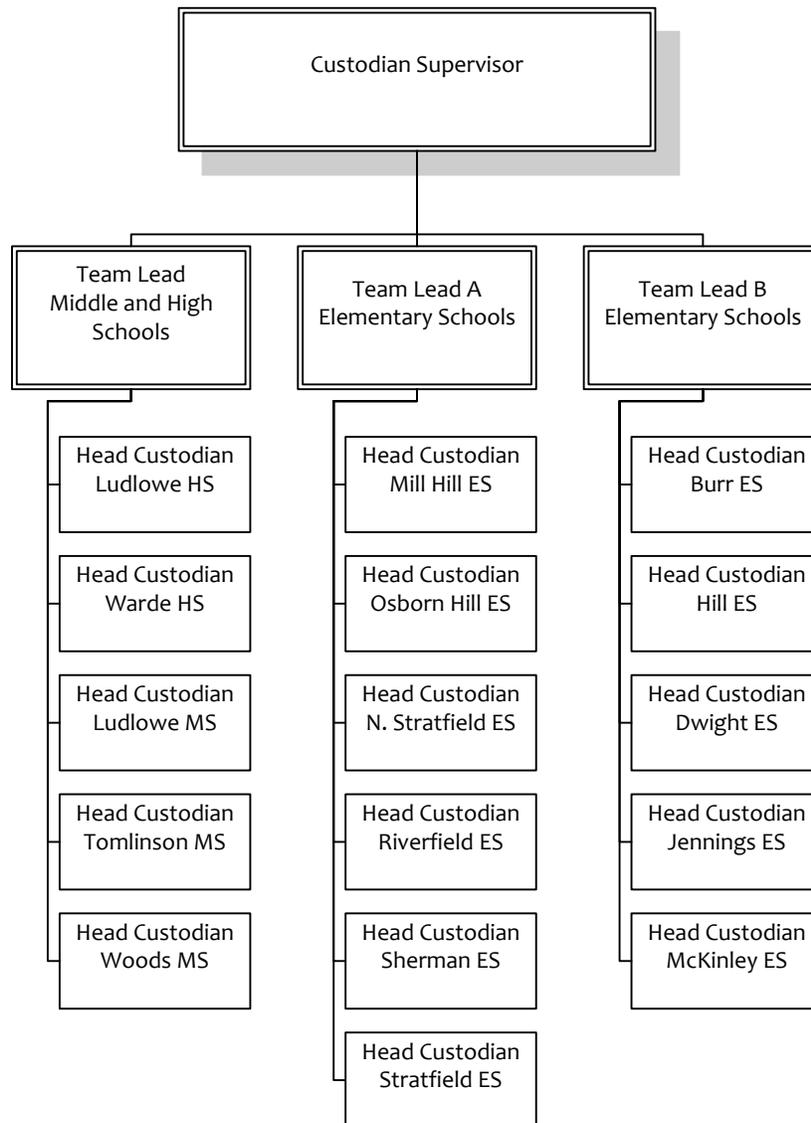
Time sheets are not being reviewed by the head custodians or the principals prior to their submission. Annual evaluations are not consistently written or reviewed by the principal. Eight “floater” custodians are assigned to the maintenance department and are assigned and reassigned to schools on a daily basis as needed to fill in for vacancies due to illness or vacations. At least one principal refuses to sign the annual evaluations of the custodians assigned to his school because he states that he never knows where the custodians are or what they are doing.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the day-to-day supervision of custodians.

One possible solution to the assignment and supervision of custodians might be to promote three head custodians to a higher step and designate them as “team lead” custodians. One team lead custodian would cover the two high schools and the three middles schools, and the other two would cover approximately half each of the elementary schools. The duties of the team lead custodians would be to manage the overall assignment and reassignment of custodians as necessary to ensure coverage in the schools when required. A possible organization is shown in **Exhibit 7-12**.

Exhibit 7-12
Possible Organization of Custodians under the Team Lead Concept



Source: Prismatic Services, November 2010.

The advantages of reorganization in a manner similar to the one presented above are:

- * Improved span of control
- * Increased flexibility in assignments and reassignments
- * Improved lines of communication
- * Increased oversight and supervision

The district should also consider implementing a regular survey of principals to assess satisfaction with custodial work. This would help identify any problems.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation to “promote” three head custodians to “Team Lead” status would possibly result in a pay raise for the selected individuals. Assuming a pay increase of 10 percent each, using the average salary of the head custodians of \$54,721.75, and a benefits factor of 48.3 percent for custodians, the annual cost of implementation per custodian would be \$8,115.24, for a total of \$24,345.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Create Custodial Team Leads	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)

FINDING 7-7

FPS custodians are currently cleaning the dining areas in all schools. It is permissible for the food service fund, which is separate from the general fund, to pay for this expense.

Based on district data, Prismatic calculated the total square footage of FPS dining rooms. In schools where the dining room is also used for other activities (an “all-purpose room,” or APR), Prismatic reduced the square footage in order to account for cleaning related to activities other than lunch. As shown in **Exhibit 7-13**, the calculated area used as dining area in FPS buildings is 40,442 square feet. At a national average of 22,500 square feet per custodian, this equates to 1.8 FTE.

**Exhibit 7-13
FPS Dining Room Square Footage**

School	SqFt Dining	Cafeteria (C) or APR (A)	% Utilized as Dining	Calculated SqFt Utilized as Dining
Burr	3,322	C	100%	3,322
Timothy Dwight	2,795	A	25%	699
Holland Hill	2,706	A	25%	677
Jennings	2,704	C	100%	2,704
McKinley	2,707	C	100%	2,707
Mill Hill	1,959	A	25%	490
North Stratfield	3,135	A	25%	784
Osborn Hill	2,678	A	25%	670
Riverfield	2,288	A	25%	572
Roger Sherman	2,790	A	25%	698
Stratfield	2,502	C	100%	2,502
Elementary School Total	29,586			15,823
Fairfield Woods	3,435	C	100%	3,435
Roger Ludlowe	4,595	C	100%	4,595
Tomlinson	4,154	C	100%	4,154
Middle School Total	12,184			12,184
Fairfield Ludlowe	6,835	C	100%	6,835
Fairfield Warde	5,600	C	100%	5,600
Alternative HS	-	C	100%	-
High School Total	12,435			12,435
Grand Total	54,205			40,442

Source: FPS Data and Prismatic Services Calculations, October, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Seek reimbursement from the food service fund for the cost of providing custodial services in the dining rooms.

FISCAL IMPACT

The average FPS custodial salary is \$65,800 per year, including salary and benefits. Based on dining room square footage, the district should seek reimbursement for 1.8 FTE custodians, or \$118,440 per year.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Obtain reimbursement for dining room custodial services	\$118,440	\$118,440	\$118,440	\$118,440	\$118,440

FINDING 7-8

FPS is not receiving reimbursement for the utilities consumed in the food service operation. It is permissible for the food service fund, which is separate from the general fund, to pay for this expense.

Based on district data, Prismatic prorated the 2009-10 budget for each school’s utilities over each school’s kitchen and dining room square footage. In schools where the dining room is also an all-purpose room, Prismatic reduced the square footage in order to account for utilities related to activities other than lunch.

The calculated area used as food service area in FPS buildings is 65,956 square feet. The total cost of utilities consumed in the food service operation is \$160,761 (**Exhibit 7-14**).

**Exhibit 7-14
FPS Food Service Share of Utilities**

School	SqFt Bldg	SqFt Kitchen	SqFt Dining	Cafeteria (C) or APR (A)	% Utilized as Dining	Calculated Food Service SqFt	Budgeted Utilities 2009-10	Food Service Share of Utilities
Burr	70,794	883	3,322	C	100%	4,205	\$204,675	\$12,157
Timothy Dwight	41,000	1,252	2,795	A	25%	1,951	\$112,959	\$5,375
Holland Hill	45,236	726	2,706	A	25%	1,403	\$114,678	\$3,557
Jennings	46,100	1,527	2,704	C	100%	4,231	\$98,141	\$9,007
McKinley	73,425	1,440	2,707	C	100%	4,147	\$196,617	\$11,105
Mill Hill	47,660	865	1,959	A	25%	1,355	\$110,419	\$3,139
North Stratfield	61,110	1,507	3,135	A	25%	2,291	\$104,471	\$3,917
Osborn Hill	54,876	1,201	2,678	A	25%	1,871	\$122,236	\$4,168
Riverfield	49,140	831	2,288	A	25%	1,403	\$127,640	\$3,644
Roger Sherman	54,977	1,337	2,790	A	25%	2,035	\$99,608	\$3,687
Stratfield	52,557	948	2,502	C	100%	3,450	\$124,397	\$8,166
Elementary School Total								\$67,922
Fairfield Woods	134,487	1,751	3,435	C	100%	5,186	\$319,011	\$12,301
Roger Ludlowe	200,450	3,068	4,595	C	100%	7,663	\$521,219	\$19,926
Tomlinson	167,000	1,867	4,154	C	100%	6,021	\$376,190	\$13,563
Middle School Total								\$45,790
Fairfield Ludlowe	295,069	2,296	6,835	C	100%	9,131	\$661,372	\$20,466
Fairfield Warde	317,827	4,013	5,600	C	100%	9,613	\$878,881	\$26,583
Alternative HS	22,188						\$19,127	
High School Total								\$47,049
Grand Total								\$160,761

Source: FPS Data and Prismatic Services Calculations, October 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Seek reimbursement from the food service fund for the cost of kitchen and dining room utilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation has a net gain to FPS of \$160,761 per year of operation.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Obtain reimbursement for utilities costs	\$160,761	\$160,761	\$160,761	\$160,761	\$160,761

FINDING 7-9

During the site visit, it was reported at various times that the epoxy coating on the concrete flooring systems in Burr Elementary School began to bubble and lift. It took the Maintenance Director and the Construction Officer a significant amount of time to convince the Construction Committee to allow the Maintenance Department to install vinyl composite tile (VCT), which has eliminated the problem.

It was also reported that at Fairfield Ludlowe Middle School, another flooring system lifted and had to be replaced.

And, during the site visit, custodians were quickly attending to two gymnasium flooring systems that had been recently resurfaced by contractors. These resurfacing projects resulted in exceedingly slippery surfaces. The maintenance department took it upon itself to completely remove the contractor applied finish and replace it, at a loss of four days for each of the two gymnasiums.

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure specifications are appropriate and enforced.

FPS should ensure that specifications for flooring systems are appropriate to the surface being surfaced. It should monitor contractors during application to ensure a quality product, and if problems develop, the district should hold contractors accountable for repair or replacement of the defective system.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation to ensure specifications are followed and that contractors be held accountable can be implemented within existing resources. The savings in manpower in the two resurfacing projects would be four custodians each times four lost days each for a total of 16 man days of work. At an average of \$253 per day per custodian, a one time savings of \$4,050 could have been realized.

FINDING 7-10

During the recent spring storms (2010), FPS schools suffered approximately \$20,000 in damage to several roofing systems. The district has already secured funding from FEMA and repairs have been accomplished. Contributing factors to the speed with which FEMA funds for roof repairs have been obtained are:

- * The excellent facilities databases maintained by the construction manager allowed rapid access to the roofing data necessary for filing with FEMA.
- * The construction manager completed numerous FEMA courses which afforded him the knowledge necessary to submit reimbursement requests.

- * The construction manager works very closely with the emergency manager for the Town of Fairfield.

COMMENDATION

The construction manager was able to put together the required forms for FEMA funding in minimal time. As a result of his knowledge and documentation regarding FPS facilities, the response from FEMA was in minimal time.

This chapter reviews food services in Fairfield Public Schools (FPS).

School meal programs began with the Child Nutrition Act of 1946, which authorized the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) 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. FPS participates in the NSLP, the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Child Nutrition Commodity Program. Districts that participate in these federal programs receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each eligible meal they serve. In return, the district must serve its students meals that meet federal guidelines for nutritional values and offer free or reduced-price meals to eligible students.

Students in the lowest socioeconomic bracket qualify for free lunches, while others qualify for reduced price lunches. All meals served according to federal guidelines receive some level of reimbursement, including those served to students who pay full price. School districts do not receive federal reimbursement support for teacher or guest meals. **Exhibit 8-1** shows the applicable 2009-10 and 2010-11 federal reimbursement rates for breakfast and lunch.

Exhibit 8-1
School Meals: Federal per Meal Reimbursement Rates
2009-10 and 2010-11

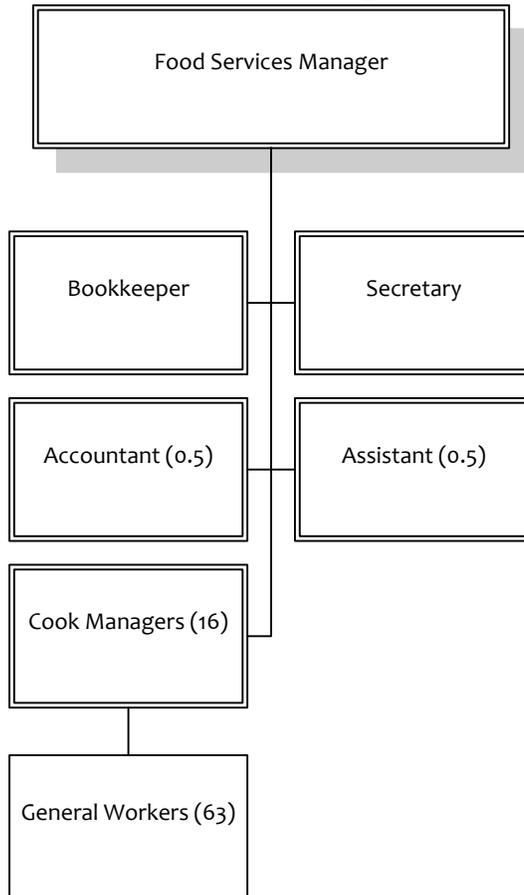
School Breakfast Program		
Student Category	2009-10	2010-11
Free	\$1.46	\$1.48
Reduced Price	\$1.16	\$1.18
Paid	\$0.26	\$0.26
National School Lunch Program		
Student Category	2009-10	2010-11
Free	\$2.68	\$2.72
Reduced Price	\$2.28	\$2.32
Paid	\$0.25	\$0.26

Source: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/notices/naps/NAPs.htm>.

FPS offers lunch meals to students in all of its schools. It offers a breakfast meal to students at McKinley Elementary School. To accomplish this, it has the organizational structure shown in **Exhibit 8-2**. The FPS Food Services Manager leads a staff of two dedicated personnel at the central office. The Accountant is assigned to the Director of Finance but provides accounting support for food services. At the time of the onsite review the part-time assistant position was vacant.

Each school has a Cook Manager who works 6.0 to 7.0 hours per day, depending on the school. General cafeteria workers work between 3.0 and 6.0 hours per day, again depending on the school and work assignment.

**Exhibit 8-2
FPS Food Services Organization**



Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

The food services fund operates separately from the district's general fund. From sales to students, federal and state reimbursements, catering, rebates, and interest on deposits, the FPS food services fund earns slightly more than \$3 million each year. From this, department pays for all the associated food, labor, and equipment needed to provide daily student meals. For the most recently completed year, 2009-10, the department had an operating loss of \$87,713.

Exhibit 8-3 shows the responses on Prismatic's staff survey related to food services. As shown, staff largely agrees that:

- * the food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals; and
- * the food services department provides good value to our schools.

The area of largest concern is how long students wait in line to get lunches. On that statement, 43 percent agreed that students wait five minutes or longer in line. Staff was also concerned as to whether cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat. On that statement, 38 percent of staff disagreed. The third largest area of concern was the availability of vending machines. Depending on what is stocked in vending machines, this could contribute to poor student

nutrition at lunch time. That 39 percent of staff agrees that students often bring lunch from home could be an additional concern if students are doing so to avoid cafeteria options.

**Exhibit 8-3
Prismatic Staff Survey Related to Food Services**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	7%	44%	18%	24%	7%
Vending machines are available to students during lunch periods.	3%	27%	33%	21%	15%
Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	4%	38%	20%	31%	7%
Students often wait in line longer than five minutes to get their lunches.	11%	32%	34%	20%	3%
Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	4%	35%	49%	12%	0%
The Food Services department provides good value to our schools.	11%	47%	28%	9%	4%

Source: Prismatic Survey, 2010.

Successful administration of the food services program depends on consistent program organization, strong financial reporting, and precise personnel management. All of these administrative areas must align and support the district's goals for student achievement.

FINDING 8-1

With the 2010-11 school year, FPS has joined the state's Healthy Food Certification program.

The Connecticut Healthy Food Certification program applies to food issues beyond the cafeterias. In addition to all a la carte items sold in school cafeterias meeting healthy food standards, districts must apply similar standards in its:

- * vending machines;
- * school stores;
- * fundraisers, regardless of whether they are sponsored by the school or an outside group;
- * any other sources of food sales to students;
- * food provided in classroom parties or other activities, if a fee is collected from students;
- * food provided as part of student group activities if a fee is charged, such as charging a student participation fee for a sport and then providing meals before games; and

- * any student rewards that are redeemable for food.

Districts participating in the Healthy Food program agree to meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards, which are more stringent than USDA standards. In return for agreeing to participate in the program, districts are compensated at a rate of 10 cents per reimbursable lunch served in the previous school year. In 2009-10, FPS served 593,196 reimbursable lunches, which means the district will receive additional revenue of \$59,319.60 in 2010-11.

Participation in this program will potentially require substantial changes in some areas of the district, including many areas outside the school kitchen. Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile endeavor to reduce the availability to students of foods with low nutritional value.

In comparison to the peers, FPS is ahead of several on this issue. Among the five peers, two joined the Healthy Foods program in 2006-07 and remained in it (Norwalk and West Hartford). One joined in 2006-07 but dropped out in 2008-09 (Trumbull). The remaining two have not yet joined (Greenwich and Stamford).

COMMENDATION

FPS is commended for joining the Connecticut Healthy Food Certification program as part of its continuous efforts to improve its meal program.

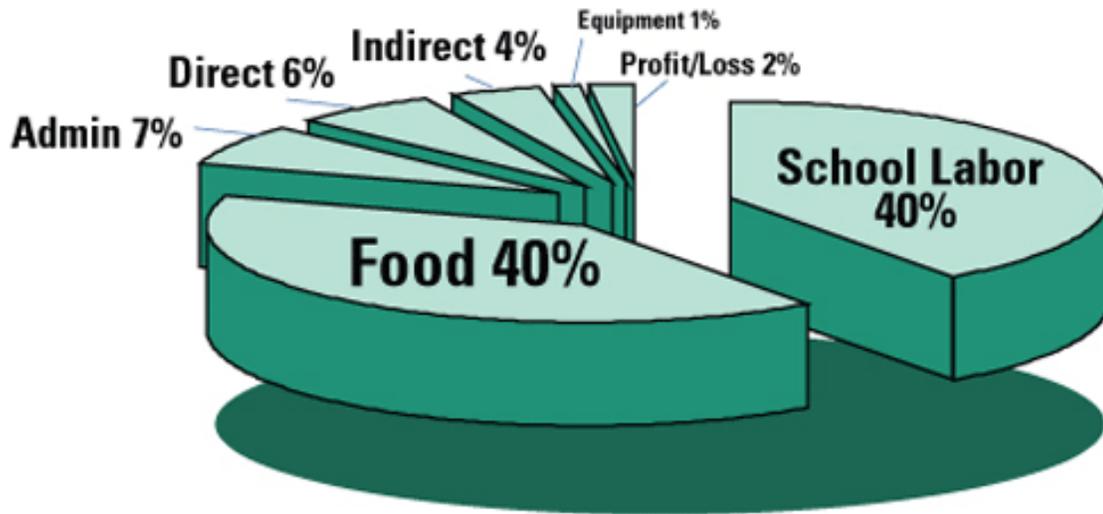
Participating in this program is an important support for student health that also will generate approximately \$60,000 in revenue each year.

FINDING 8-2

In reviewing the food services department, Prismatic found a number of areas where operations are efficient and effective.

- * **Carryover Funds** – A school food services program is allowed by USDA regulation to maintain an amount equal to three months' operating expenses in a carryover fund. To maintain an amount as close as possible to this limit is considered a best practice because food services programs often experience time lags in receiving federal reimbursements but must continue to pay workers and food vendors timely. For the past two years, FPS has maintained a carryover fund equal to at least 2.87 months of expenses.
- * **Financial Stability** – Although the food services department has made a number of significant changes in the past two years, it has been able to keep its operating losses at a manageable level. The food services program had an operating profit of \$95,059 in 2008-09 and an operating loss of \$87,713 in 2009-10. Management staff has been implementing measures to try to curb further operating losses and return the program to at least a breakeven status.
- * **Food Expenditures** – The National Food Service Management Institute's (NFSMI) recommends a distribution of food services costs as shown in **Exhibit 8-4**. Based on 2009-10 data, FPS is spending at least 42 percent on food, indicative of the higher quality food being served.

Exhibit 8-4
Distribution of Food Service Expenditure Industry Standards



Source: NFSMI Financial Management Information System.

- * **Food Variety** – Each day FPS secondary students have six different choices for a reimbursable meal:
 - Bagel/Yogurt Plate
 - Cereal/Yogurt Plate
 - Deli Bar – turkey breast, lower sodium ham, deluxe roast beef, buffalo chicken, tuna, egg salad, chicken salad, or cheese with up to three vegetable sides served on a choice of eight breads the week of October 25-29
 - Deluxe Meal -- pizza, salmon with roll, beefy nachos, or brown rice and beans, each with two vegetable sides on Monday and Friday the week of October 25-29; yogurt parfait and chef salads are available every day
 - Specialty Bar – General Tso chicken, orange chicken, Asian BBQ chicken with two vegetable/fruit sides on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the week of October 25-29
 - Traditional Hot Lunch – vegetarian chilli, tuna melt, breaded baked chicken, homemade minestrone soup, or bosco pizza (one item available each day), each with several vegetable/fruit sides the week of October 25-29

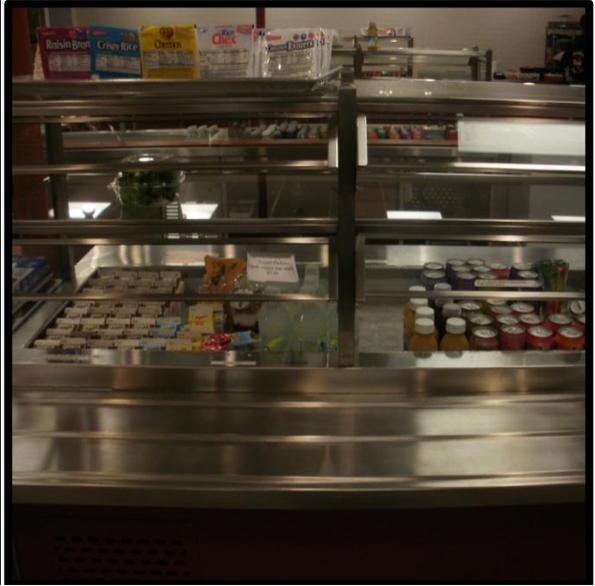
Some secondary schools are also equipped with vending machines that offer healthy reimbursable meal options as well. **Exhibit 8-5** shows a portion of this daily food variety at Fairfield Warde High School.

FPS elementary students have four choices each day:

- Bagel/Yogurt Plate

- Cereal/Yogurt Plate
- Chef Salad/Bread
- Sandwich – either turkey, roast beef, ham, or tuna
- Traditional Hot Lunch -- vegetarian chilli, tuna melt, breaded baked chicken, homemade minestrone soup, or bosco pizza (one item available each day), each with several vegetable/fruit sides the week of October 25-29

Exhibit 8-5
Sample of FPS Daily Food Variety



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

- * **Well-Maintained Kitchens** – In on-site observations, Prismatic noted that FPS kitchens are well-maintained and equipped (**Exhibit 8-6**). In the focus group, FPS Cook Managers concurred and also noted the equipment and kitchen repairs are timely.

Exhibit 8-6
Sample of Well-Maintained and Equipped FPS Kitchens



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

- * **Clean State Review** – The district’s most recent Coordinated Review Evaluation (CRE) and School Meals Initiative (SMI) was completed in February 2010. These reviews are completed by staff from the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services. Of the 13 areas reviews, there were only two with findings and those were minor. The state reviewer noted:

The food service director is very well informed. She demonstrates an excellent knowledge of the program requirements and regulations. The kitchens were well maintained...the cafeteria had materials displayed promoting good nutrition. Overall, the child nutrition program is very well run and organized.

- * **Low Staff Turnover** – Cafeteria staffing is generally stable. The district did not have to hire any new Cook Managers for the last two years and few new general cafeteria workers.
- * **ServSafe Certification** – All FPS Cook Managers are ServSafe certified, as well as many of the cafeteria general workers. The ServSafe Food Safety Program was developed by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF). It is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-Conference for Food Protection (CFP). Some of the elements taught in the ServSafe program are shown in **Exhibit 8-7**.

Exhibit 8-7
Instructional Modules of the ServSafe Certification Course

<p>Unit 1 The Sanitation Challenge</p> <p>Section 1 Providing Safe Food The Dangers of Foodborne Illness Preventing Foodborne Illness How Food Becomes Unsafe The Keys to Food Safety</p> <p>Section 2 The Microworld Microbial Contaminants Classifying Foodborne Illnesses Bacteria, Viruses, Parasites, Fungi</p> <p>Section 3 Contamination, Food Allergens, and Foodborne Illness Biological Contamination Chemical Contamination Physical Contamination The Deliberate Contamination of Food Food Allergens</p> <p>Section 4 The Safe Food Handler How Foodhandlers Can Contaminate Food Diseases Not Transmitted through Food Components of a Good Personal Hygiene Program Management's Role in a Personal Hygiene Program</p> <p>Unit 2 The Flow of Food through the Operation</p> <p>Section 5 The Flow of Food: An Introduction Preventing Cross-Contamination Time and Temperature Control Monitoring Time and Temperature</p> <p>Section 6 The Flow of Food: Purchasing and Receiving General Purchasing & Receiving Principles Receiving and Inspecting Food</p> <p>Section 7 The Flow of Food: Storage General Storage Guidelines Refrigerated Storage Frozen Storage Dry Storage Storing Specific Food</p> <p>Section 8 The Flow of Food: Preparation Thawing Food Properly Preparing Specific Food Cooking Food Storing Cooked Food Reheating Food</p>	<p>Section 9 The Flow of Food: Service General Rules for Holding Food Serving Food Safely Off-Site Service</p> <p>Section 10 Food Safety Management Systems Prerequisite Food Safety Programs Active Managerial Control Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Crisis Management</p> <p>Unit 3 Sanitary Facilities and Pest Management</p> <p>Section 11 Sanitary Facilities and Pest Management Sanitary Facilities and Equipment Designing a Sanitary Establishment Materials for Interior Construction Considerations for Specific Areas of Facility Sanitation Standards for Equipment Installing & Maintaining Kitchen Equipment Utilities Cleaning and Sanitizing Cleaning Agents Sanitizing Machine Dishwashing Cleaning and Sanitizing Equipment Cleaning and Sanitizing the Premises Tools for Cleaning Storing Utensils, Tableware, and Equipment Using Hazardous Materials Developing a Cleaning Program Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Denying Pests Access to the Establishment Denying Pests Food and Shelter Identifying Pests Working with a Pest Control Operator Using and Storing Pesticides</p> <p>Section 12 Food Safety Regulation and Standards Government Regulatory System for Food The FDA Food Code The Inspection Process Self Inspection</p> <p>Section 13 Employee Food Safety Training Initial and Ongoing Employee Training Delivering Training Training Follow Up Food Safety Certification</p>
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Source: www.servsafe.com, 2007.

- * **Promoting Fruit Consumption** – The food services department actively promotes fruit consumption. Fruit options are attractively displayed in FPS serving lines (**Exhibit 8-8**). In lunch visits, Prismatic observed cafeteria workers verbally prompting students to take a fruit addition, even when the student already had all required components for a reimbursable meal. Based on separate observations, the state reviewer on the CRE noted, “The staff also encouraged the children to take milk, fruits, and vegetables even if they had the minimum for a reimbursable meal.” In one research study, such verbal prompting resulted in nearly double the rate of fruit consumption.¹

Exhibit 8-8
Fruits Available at a Sample Elementary and High School



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010

COMMENDATION

The FPS food services department is an efficient and effective operation in a number of areas.

FINDING 8-3

The food services department includes a great variety of information available through the district website, including:

- * the results of the most recent state review of the program (the CRE and SMI);
- * the district’s Wellness Policy;
- * the results of the Health Department inspections of each school kitchen;
- * ideas for schools to offer non-food rewards to students; and
- * elementary and secondary menus.

¹ Schwartz, M. (2007). The influence of a verbal prompt on school lunch fruit consumption: a pilot study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 4:6.

The department also provides detailed nutrition labels for many of the items served in its cafeterias, as shown in **Exhibit 8-9**. Posting this information has required a significant effort by staff.

Exhibit 8-9
Sample Nutritional Information Available on District Website

Dreamfields Rotini

Nutrition Facts
 Serving Size: 2 oz (56g / 3/4 cup) Dry
 Servings Per Container: About 6.5

Amount Per Serving		Calories From Fat 10	
		% Daily Value*	
Calories	190		
Total Fat	1g		2 %
Saturated Fat	0g		0 %
Trans Fat	0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat	0.5g		
Monounsaturated Fat	0g		
Cholesterol	0mg		0 %
Sodium	10mg**		1 %
Total Carbohydrate	41g		14 %
Dietary Fiber	5g		20 %
Soluble Fiber	3g		
Insoluble Fiber	2g		
Sugars	1g		
Protein	7g		
Vitamin A	0%	Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	0%	Iron	10%
Thiamin	40%	Riboflavin	15%
Niacin	20%	Vitamin B₆	4%
Folate	40%	Pantothenic acid	2%
Phosphorus	8%	Zinc	6%
Copper	8%		

* Percent daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
 Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

** Without added salt in cooking water

Carbohydrate Facts
 Total Carbs: 41 g
 Fiber: -5 g
 Protected Carbs: -31 g
 Digestible Carbs*: 5 g

* Count 5 grams of carbohydrates per each 56 g serving when controlling carbohydrate intake and blood sugar levels to promote good health and weight control. Dreamfields offers significant health benefits, and has been clinically tested to establish digestible carbohydrate levels.

Ingredients
 Enriched Semolina, [Semolina, Iron (Ferrous Sulfate), and B Vitamins (Niacin, Thiamine, Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Folic Acid)], Inulin (Vegetable Fiber), Wheat Gluten (Plant Protein), Xanthan Gum (Food Fiber), Pectin (Fruit Fiber), Potassium Chloride.

CONTAINS WHEAT INGREDIENTS

Pasta Cooking Directions

- 1) Bring 4 quarts of water to a rapid boil.
- 2) Add 1 box (13.25 oz) of Dreamfields Rotini into water and return to boil.
- 3) Cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Do not overcook.
- 5) Drain well. Enjoy.

Source: www.fairfieldschools.org, accessed October 2010

COMMENDATION

The FPS food services department makes an abundance of information available through the district website.

FINDING 8-4

All FPS elementary schools provide their students with recess before lunch. This is consistent with best practices.

A 2004 study conducted by the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) Division of Applied Research found that schools that allowed students to have recess before, rather than after, lunch experienced reduced waste. Specifically, students with recess before lunch:

- * ate 24 percent more food by weight;
- * wasted 30 percent less food by weight;



- * ate eight percent more calories;
- * consumed 35 percent more calcium; and
- * consumed 13 percent more vitamin A.

COMMENDATION

FPS elementary schools are adhering to best practices by providing recess before lunch.

FINDING 8-5

The district has not raised student lunch prices in five years. Given the district’s emphasis on healthy foods, which in some cases are significantly more expensive than lower quality alternatives, this is a concern.

Exhibit 8-10 provides the lunch meal prices for the last 10 years. As shown, lunch prices were increased incrementally each year from 2001-02 through 2006-07. That year, the food services department introduced a deluxe student meal in all middle and high school cafeterias. The deluxe meals are also eligible for federal reimbursement, but are priced higher to reflect the higher cost of producing and serving them. After 2006-07, the district implemented a price increase for 2008-09, but rolled it back the following year. Thus, this year’s lunch prices are the same as they were in 2006-07. For the same time period, some government estimates show an increase of 8.3 percent in the cost of food.

**Exhibit 8-10
FPS Lunch Price Trends**

Meal Type	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Elementary	\$1.60	\$1.60	\$1.70	\$1.80	\$1.90	\$2.10	\$2.10	\$2.20	\$2.10	\$2.10
Middle	\$1.65	\$1.65	\$1.75	\$1.85	\$1.95	\$2.15	\$2.15	\$2.25	\$2.15	\$2.15
High	\$1.70	\$1.70	\$1.80	\$1.90	\$2.00	\$2.20	\$2.20	\$2.30	\$2.20	\$2.20
Deluxe (MS/HS)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$3.50	\$3.50	\$3.60	\$3.50	\$3.50
Adult	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.50	\$3.75	\$4.00	\$4.25	\$4.25	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.

FPS lunch prices are also low in comparison to peer districts. As shown in **Exhibit 8-11**, FPS has the lowest high school lunch price of all the peers and is 66 cents below the peer average. The peer with the lowest high school price charges 30 cents more than FPS. FPS also has the lowest middle school price and the second-lowest elementary school price.

Exhibit 8-11
Type A Lunch Prices
2010-11

District	High School	Middle School	Elementary School
Fairfield	\$2.20	\$2.15	\$2.10
Greenwich	\$3.15	\$3.05	\$2.00
Norwalk	\$3.00	\$2.50	\$2.20
Stamford	\$2.95	\$2.85	\$2.60
Trumbull	\$2.70	\$2.55	\$2.45
West Hartford	\$2.50	\$2.50	\$2.25
Peer Average	\$2.86	\$2.69	\$2.30

Source: FPS and websites of each of the peer districts, October 2010.

According to menus for the high schools in the peer districts, Greenwich also offers a premium lunch option each day. It is priced from \$4.20 to \$4.45, depending on the item offered.

In observing secondary lunch periods, Prismatic found little difference in the size of the lines for the lower-priced meal and the deluxe meal. In several cases, the deluxe lines were noticeably longer.

The 2010-11 federal reimbursement for a lunch meal for a student who qualifies for a free meal is \$2.72. Although USDA regulations do not require school districts to charge at least this price for the meals sold to full-pay students, neither do USDA regulations specifically state that the reimbursement for free meals is intended to subsidize the full-pay meals.

Finally, the district's audited financial statements for 2009-10 showed a net operating loss of \$87,713.27. Food services funds are operated separately from the general fund in a school district. Revenues accrued to the food services fund can only be used for operations within that department. However, when the food services fund does not operate on at least a breakeven basis, the district must provide money from the general fund to cover operational costs, unless the food services fund has a reserve. In the case of FPS, the food services department was able to cover its operating loss with money from its reserve fund, but this is obviously not sustainable long-term.

RECOMMENDATION

Increase regular student meal prices.

In order to support the district's growing emphasis on healthier foods, as well as recommendations made elsewhere in this report, the district should increase its Type A lunch meal prices. The district should also consider making regular small adjustments to the meal price each year.

FISCAL IMPACT

In 2009-10, the district served a total of 362,234 Type A lunches at the elementary level, 17,460 at the middle level, and 8,609 at the high school level.² Raising lunch prices by 15 cents at each level would result in additional revenue of approximately \$58,000 each year. Meal prices at each level would still be below the peer average. Subsequent small increases each year would further increase food services revenues.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Increase lunch prices	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$58,000

FINDING 8-6

FPS secondary students do not have sufficient access to daily lunch meals. Access to food is reduced through unusual scheduling, overly long line waits, insufficient line supervision, and undersized seating areas.

Both district high schools engage in the questionable practice of allowing students to take an academic class instead of a lunch break. **Exhibit 8-12** shows the daily breakdown of students who have been allowed to take a class each of the four possible lunch periods (it varies on a day-of-week basis because of the way classes are scheduled). As many as 32 percent of students are not taking a lunch.

Exhibit 8-12
FPS High School Students Without a Lunch Period
Second Marking Period, 2010-11

School	Day	# Students Without Lunch	% of Total Enrollment
Fairfield Ludlowe High School	Monday	432	29%
	Tuesday	408	28%
	Wednesday	466	32%
	Thursday	456	31%
	Friday	321	22%
Fairfield Warde High School	Monday	341	26%
	Tuesday	301	23%
	Wednesday	346	26%
	Thursday	305	23%
	Friday	255	19%

Source: FPS and websites of each of the peer districts, October 2010.

According to some FPS staff, this issue was studied several years ago. At that time, staff estimated that 18 percent of Fairfield Ludlowe students did not have a scheduled lunch period.

² The district data for high school Type A lunches served are unclear and this figure may be instead be an estimate.

In observing lunch periods at Fairfield Warde High School, Prismatic made several observations:

- * The current lunch periods are too long for the number of students served. All students scheduled for a lunch period had substantial time left after obtaining and consuming a meal. This suggests the lunch period could be shortened without negatively impacting student nutrition.
- * Some students without a scheduled lunch obtained a meal and then took it with them to class, so they could eat in class. While this may be a solution for some, this cannot be allowed in classes such as laboratory science.
- * Only a handful of students without a scheduled lunch came into the cafeteria for a meal to take with them.
- * When questioned as to why they did not have a lunch period, two students noted it was because the class they wanted to take was only offered at a time that eliminated lunch for them. This indicates that at least some of the high school scheduling process could be improved to be more student-centric.

Among the peers, at least two, Stamford and Trumbull, do not allow students to schedule themselves out of lunch. West Hartford follows the same practice as FPS. Data for Norwalk and Greenwich were not available.

Line waits at some schools are too long. Prismatic observed line waits to be as much eight minutes, but this in itself was a misleading statistic, as large numbers of students at the school observed did not join the line until shortly before the end of the lunch period. At Ludlowe Middle School, in the 12:40 – 1:10 pm lunch period, Prismatic observed the last student served at 12:58 pm. That student did not originally queue until 12:55 pm because the line was too long before then; instead, the student remained seated at a table and conversed with friends. That student did not finish eating before the lunch period ended and threw away a substantial portion of his meal. In conversations with students at the same school who brought lunch from home, several noted they did so because the long lines made it impossible for them to purchase lunch. Many of the students who brought their own lunch had exactly the same items as were available for purchase in the cafeteria.

National studies have shown that students who have inadequate time to eat lunch tend to throw away a larger portion of their food than students who have a longer lunch period. Thus, the problem becomes not that students are rejecting the components of the school-provided lunch, but that they have so little time to eat that they are forced to throw away food they would otherwise eat. Other national studies have shown that the minimum reasonable length for a lunch period is 20 minutes, although this can be greatly influenced by the wait time in the serving line, holding students at tables, clean up time, etc.

The review team also found insufficient supervision in a number of cafeteria lines. More than a few students were observed cutting in line. Two Cook Managers acknowledged that there is likely some student theft of food. Because Cook Managers do not compare daily production records with POS information, the extent of this theft could not be quantified. While serving

students, restocking lines, and collecting payment, cafeteria staff cannot also supervise waiting lines. This is typically the responsibility of other school staff, such as teachers and administrators.

At Ludlowe Middle School, Prismatic found a significantly undersized seating area for students. Ludlowe has one lunch period per grade. In prior years, the school had eight seats around 40 round dining tables, for a total seating capacity of 320 students. The tables appeared to be designed to seat eight. This year, at least one lunch period exceeds 320 students. For 2010-11, the Ludlowe 6th grade class was projected to be 337 and the 7th grade to be 355. In response, school leaders added a ninth chair to every table, raising the seating capacity to 360. When the review team observed the 7th grade lunch, every chair appeared to be occupied. Moreover, book bags and books were piled on floors around the already crowded tables, making navigation between them difficult.

According to a representative of the Town's fire department, the Ludlowe Middle School cafeteria has a safe occupancy of 307 students (based on a square footage of 4,595 and a minimum requirement of 15 square feet per student). Given the current layout of the lunch tables and the wide aisle left empty to one side, this figure may actually be somewhat lower. While students endured a crowded lunch room, the adjacent faculty dining room was seen to be unused (**Exhibit 8-13**).

Exhibit 8-13
Overcapacity Cafeteria Seating Area and Adjacent Unused Faculty Dining Room



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

Due to on-site time constraints, the review team could not observe lunch times at every FPS school, so it is unknown to what extent these problems are pervasive in the district. Based on focus group data however, these do not appear to be isolated issues.

In 2000, the USDA and five medical groups formed a partnership to address concerns about the increasing incidence of childhood obesity in the United States. One result of this partnership was the development of *Prescription for Change: Ten Keys to Promote Healthy Eating in Schools*, a guide for schools to improve students' diet and health. Of the 10 keys, the ones related to lunch periods are:

- * *All students will have designated lunch periods of sufficient length to enjoy eating healthy foods with friends. These lunch periods will be scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.*
- * *Schools will provide enough serving areas to ensure student access to school meals with a minimum of wait time.*
- * *Space that is adequate to accommodate all students and pleasant surroundings that reflect the value of the social aspects of eating will be provided.*

RECOMMENDATION

Address secondary access issues.

High school students should not have to choose between a lunch break and a needed class. All students should have a minimum of 15 minutes to consume their lunch after purchase. Students should not have to climb over each other to reach a lunch table, nor should they be placed in a potentially dangerously overcrowded cafeteria.

These access issues can be addressed in a number of ways, such as:

- * Line flows at some schools can be improved through the use of airport-style cordoning and improved adult supervision.
- * At Ludlowe Middle School, the unused faculty dining room can be repurposed to provide additional student seating.
- * The high school scheduling policy can be changed. The district could decide that it will no longer allow students to overschedule themselves out of lunch.
- * The high school schedules can be changed. Lunch periods at the high schools are currently the length of a class period. They do not need to be. For example, Stamford High School runs three lunch waves of 22 minutes each between 11:59 and 1:11 pm. The remaining portion of that time students take their sixth period class. Thus, some students go to lunch then report to sixth period, some go to sixth period and take a break in the middle for lunch, and some complete sixth period and then go to lunch.

FISCAL IMPACT

Most of this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, although the district may choose to expend fiscal resources to address the size of seating areas. The primary benefit of this recommendation will be assuring students have sufficient time to eat a healthy lunch at an appropriate lunch time. However, while not the intent of this recommendation, removing access barriers for secondary students should also result in an increase in revenues.

Currently, an average of 363 high school students per day do not have a lunch period. Assuming that half of them would purchase lunch through the cafeteria once they do have a lunch period, this would result in additional \$515.85 in revenue per day (using a price of \$2.85--the average of

the \$2.20 traditional and \$3.50 deluxe lunch). Over the course of the year, the additional revenue would be \$92,853. The district would also receive a federal reimbursement of at least \$8,145.

Prismatic estimates that at least 50 Ludlowe Middle School students do not purchase a lunch through the cafeteria because of overly long lines. On a daily basis, creating an environment where they have time to purchase and consume a cafeteria meal would result in an additional \$142.50. Over the course of the year, the additional revenue would be \$25,650. The district would also receive a federal reimbursement of at least \$2,250. If the access issues exist equally at the other middle schools, this figure could be higher.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Address secondary access issues	\$128,898	\$128,898	\$128,898	\$128,898	\$128,898

FINDING 8-7

The food services department is not evaluating its staffing and cafeteria-level efficiency using Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH), which is a commonly used method of assessing efficiency in school cafeterias.

In order to determine MPLH productivity, school food services operations must first determine the number of meal equivalents (ME) that have been served. One lunch is considered one meal equivalent. Breakfasts and snacks, because they require less work than lunches, are typically figured at some percentage of a lunch. Likewise, the dollars received from a la carte sales are converted into meal equivalents according to a set ratio. The FPS food services department uses these ratios:

- * \$2.10 in a la carte at the elementary school level equals one ME;
- * \$2.15 in a la carte at the middle school level equals one ME;
- * \$2.20 in a la carte at the high school level equals one ME; and
- * tTwo breakfasts equals one ME, although breakfast counts are relatively insignificant in the district.

Once the number of meal equivalents has been determined, a food service manager divides ME by the total number of labor hours required to produce those meals to arrive at a MPLH figure.

Exhibit 8-14 provides the industry standard for meal production and productivity in base kitchens, which is the configuration of FPS schools. While both types of preparation systems are shown, FPS primarily relies on the conventional system. So, a high school serving 650 meal equivalents per day in a conventional systems should be able to achieve MPLH productivity ranging from 16 to 18. Industry guidelines typically recommend allocating 2.5 hours of a Cafeteria Manager’s time for administrative tasks, so ideally this hypothetical kitchen would be staffed at no more than 38.5 daily hours.

**Exhibit 8-14
Staffing Guidelines for On-Site Meal Base Kitchens**

Meals Per Labor Hours (MPLH) for Low and High Productivity				
# of Meal Equivalents	Conventional System³		Convenience System⁴	
	MPLH		MPLH	
	Low	High	Low	High
Up to 100	8	10	10	12
101 – 150	9	11	11	13
151 – 200	10-11	12	12	14
201 – 250	12	14	14	15
251 – 300	13	15	15	16
301 – 400	14	16	16	18
401 – 500	14	17	18	19
501 – 600	15	17	18	19
601 – 700	16	18	19	20
701 – 800	17	19	20	22
801 – 900	18	20	21	23
901 Up	19	21	22	23

Source: *InTeam Cost Control Manual, 2006.*

Staff from the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services noted that the state does not have officially adopted MPLH guidelines, as many other states do. However, they often refer district managers to the NSFMI guidelines in this area.

Using data from March 2010, Prismatic completed a sample MPLH comparison for the district (**Exhibit 8-15**). As shown, most schools are well above the industry guidance, indicative of the staff's longevity and efficiency. Nevertheless, monthly comparisons of this type would serve to highlight trends and identify areas for potential improvement among the school cafeterias.

³Conventional system is preparation of some foods from raw ingredients on premises (using some bakery breads and prepared pizza and washing dishes).

⁴ Convenience system is using maximum amount of processed foods (e.g., using all bakery breads, prefried chicken, and preportioned condiments and washing only trays or using disposable dinnerware).

**Exhibit 8-15
Staffing Guidelines for On-Site Meal Base Kitchens**

School	Daily ME	Daily Labor Hours	MPLH	Above or Below Guidance?
High Schools				
Fairfield Ludlowe	893.27	47.00	19.01	Within
Fairfield Warde	1,010.86	48.50	20.84	Within
Middle Schools				
Fairfield Warde	795.82	31.25	25.47	Above
Roger Ludlowe	1,037.00	39.00	26.59	Above
Tomlinson	854.82	40.50	21.11	Above
Elementary Schools				
Burr	188.41	10.50	17.94	Above
Dwight	200.00	10.50	19.05	Above
Holland Hill	223.23	10.50	21.26	Above
Jennings	214.50	10.50	20.43	Above
McKinley (excluding breakfast)	340.91	17.00	20.05	Above
Mill Hill	243.09	10.50	23.15	Above
North Stratfield	273.36	12.00	22.78	Above
Osborn Hill	297.95	16.00	18.62	Above
Riverfield	229.86	10.50	21.89	Above
Sherman	229.82	12.00	19.15	Above
Stratfield	231.00	12.25	18.86	Above

Source: FPS data with Prismatic calculations, October 2010.

The FPS Food Services Manager is knowledgeable regarding MPLH calculations and sometimes completes them in her analyses. However, these analyses are not shared with Cook Managers so that they might analyze their own operations.

RECOMMENDATION

Distribute monthly MPLH comparisons to Cook Managers.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 8-8

In addition to completing regular MPLH analyses, the FPS food services department could be doing more to evaluate measures of cafeteria efficiency and discuss those results with school Cook Managers.

At the central office, staff prepares monthly analyses of each school’s financial status and compares it with the same month in the previous year, it is not routinely communicating that information to cook managers. Staff rarely calculates MPLH. There are a number of additional measures commonly used in school food services operations. These are shown in **Exhibit 8-16**.

**Exhibit 8-16
Common Food Services Performance Indicators**

Performance Area	Performance Indicator
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen accidents per number of meals served • Workers' compensation claims
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing based on internally or externally established MPLH rates • Hours of training provided to cafeteria workers and managers • Labor costs as percentage of total costs • Administrative staffing costs as percentage of total costs
Cost Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food costs as percentage of total costs • Per meal costs • Labor costs as percentage of total costs
Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures of student satisfaction with menu items • Number of new food items introduced • Student participation rates by meal type • Cafeteria worker absentee rate • Annual turnover rate of cafeteria staff • Average student line wait time in minutes • Average student eating period (from tray receipt to end of allotted lunch time) • A la carte revenues

Source: Prismatic Services, 2008.

Developing internal productivity indicators and regularly assessing operations against those indicators can provide valuable information for improving operations. Highly efficient school districts allocate cafeteria staffing on the basis of the meal equivalents they expect to serve. They regularly assess cafeteria productivity compared to established staffing guidelines and adjust staffing as necessary. They assess the acceptance of menu items among students and seek to introduce new items on a regular basis. They continually work to improve line wait times and the overall dining experience for school district staff and students.

RECOMMENDATION

Evaluate the food services program relative to selected performance indicators.

Prismatic recommends that FPS establish performance measures in MPLH, profit/loss, menu variety, and line wait times at a minimum. Given the strong community support for healthy meals, the district should also establish a performance measure that includes a comparison of the nutritional content of meals served to USDA and Connecticut Healthy Meals standards.

Then, the district should regularly assess performance against those indicators on at least a monthly basis for some measures. Such a regular review of its operations should provide the district with assurances that operations are up to standards, and will serve to highlight solid performance and areas in need of improvement.

Given the strength of the current operation, Prismatic also recommends that the department consider pursuing recognition as a District of Excellence through the School Nutrition Association. This program would provide guidance in benchmarking the FPS food services



operation and could lead to national recognition as a District of Excellence. Further details can be found at www.schoolnutrition.org.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 8-9

The food services department only offers direct deposit of paychecks to school Cook Managers.

All food services employees are paid every two weeks. At some point, direct deposit of paychecks was offered as a perk for Cook Managers. It was not offered to general cafeteria workers.

According to the central office staff member who processes payroll, it would not take any longer to process payroll if all employees were moved to direct deposit. Doing so would allow employees to be paid more quickly.

RECOMMENDATION

Offer direct deposit to all food services employees.

The district should offer the option of direct deposit to all cafeteria workers, regardless of position.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 8-10

The district lacks menu planning software. Although the district is currently working with a dietician and producing a variety of healthy meal options for students, menu planning software could provide additional functionality and information.

As of September 2010, the USDA had approved 14 different software programs for use in planning menus. Some are available as traditional software packages that must be installed on a local computer, while others are available as an internet subscription. Pricing and options vary, but several include modules that provide functionality beyond menu planning, such as:

- * point-of-sale;
- * free and reduced applications;
- * food production;
- * inventory;

- * precosting of recipes and menus;
- * procurement;
- * personnel management; and
- * financial management.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement menu planning software.

The Food Services Manager should review available software packages and select one in consultation with the FPS Technology Manager. Implementation of adequate menu planning software would also allow the district to move from traditional menu planning to nutrient standard planning, which allows greater flexibility in menu selection.

FISCAL IMPACT

The exact fiscal impact would depend on the package selected. One potential web-based option is available for \$200 per month and includes phone and internet-based support from registered dietitians and nutritionists. Some training and installation costs would be required in the first year. While not the intent of this recommendation, it is likely that using menu planning software will result in some food cost savings.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Implement menu planning software	(\$2,500)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)

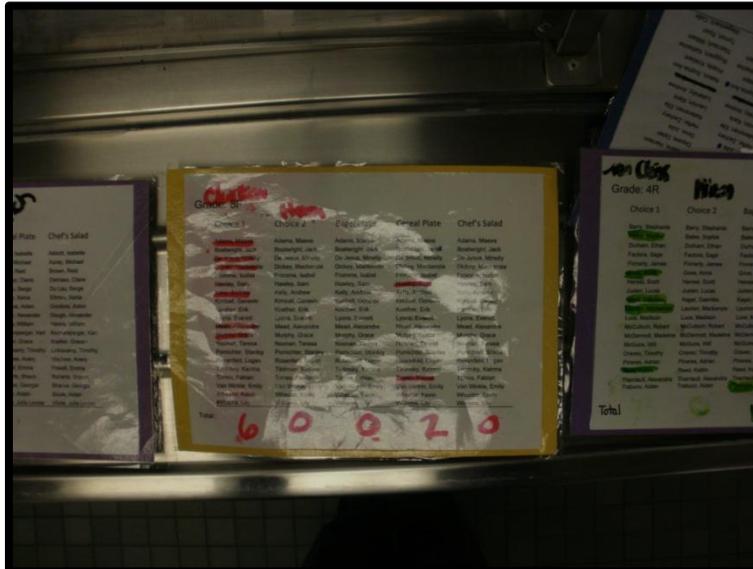
FINDING 8-11

Even though the food services department is operating at an exemplary level in a number of areas, it could further improve by providing more training opportunities and on-site reviews.

In the cook manager focus group, FPS staff noted that they have few opportunities for training, other than two days at the beginning of each school year that largely covered non-food specifics, such as sanitation and customer service. Staff also noted that they believe not everyone is strictly following district recipes, perhaps because of a lack of understanding. Providing time throughout the school year for cook managers to cross-train and share ideas would be invaluable, particularly since the district recently joined the Connecticut Healthy Meals program and recipes may change.

It would also potentially lead to greater operational efficiencies among the schools. For example, the process used at Dwight Elementary School to indicate daily meal choices is exemplary. Laminated sheets are color-coded by grade and students mark their choice for the day on it (**Exhibit 8-17**). The sheets are turned into the cafeteria each morning, so that production can be tailored to what was selected. Based on focus group feedback and on-site observations, it is unclear if other elementary schools follow a similarly efficient procedure.

**Exhibit 8-17
Dwight Elementary School Daily Meal Selection Forms**



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010

Cook Managers indicated that they receive few reports from central office staff that would help them analyze their operations. They do not receive reports showing financial performance, meals served, or MPLH. Such data would allow Cook Managers to assess themselves and perhaps implement improvements.

Cook Managers and other cafeteria staff questioned by the review team noted that they are rarely visited on-site by central office food services staff. Such regular visits would provide additional opportunities for staff training and improvement.

The food services department of the Pittsburgh School District (PA) maintains an exemplary evaluation process for its cafeteria managers. Their process is detailed and targeted to critical job responsibilities. The Pittsburgh food service department conducts regular on-site performance reviews at all school cafeterias. A team of food service supervisors visits each cafeteria and evaluates the managers using a common form—one for elementary managers and a different one for secondary managers. **Exhibit 8-18** shows the areas evaluated. Once the Pittsburgh supervisors complete the on-site review, they share the results with the evaluated manager via e-mail and provide detailed feedback, both positive and negative, as they assist cafeteria managers in pursuing the highest levels of customer service, quality food, and financial performance.

Exhibit 8-18
Pittsburgh Cafeteria Manager Evaluation Criteria

At the elementary level, the Pittsburgh School District rates whether the cafeteria manager is satisfactory, below average, or unsatisfactory in these areas:

1. Ability to follow ordering procedures for milk/dairy items, breakfasts/lunches, supply orders, and bagged lunches.
2. Ability to follow verbal/written instructions:
 - a. elementary manager's verbal instructions
 - b. CLA procedures manual
 - c. Weekly memos
3. Ability to meet paperwork deadlines
4. Ability to manage lunch aides
5. Organizational skills
6. Ability to plan and implement accountability procedures
7. Ability to follow and enforce safety and sanitation procedures
8. Ability to complete timesheets
9. Ability to prepare cash reports and make deposits
10. Ability to count rosters and prepare edit check sheets
11. Overall rating

At the secondary level, the Pittsburgh School District rates each cafeteria manager in these areas:

- Written collection procedures:
 - Is a copy of the written procedure describing the counting and money collection system available on site?
 - Is the counting procedure used at the site the same as that described in the written procedure?
 - Does this system agree with the system approved by the state agency?
- Meal counting system:
 - Is the meal count taken at that point in the food service operation where a determination can accurately be made that an appropriate price meal has been served to an eligible child?
 - Does the system provide an accurate count of the number of reimbursable free, reduced price and full price meals served to eligible children on a daily basis?
 - Are adequate procedures in place to prevent the claiming of more than one reimbursable lunch per day per child?
 - Does the system prevent overt identification?
- Meals served:
 - Do all the meals served and claimed contain all required food items?
 - Is each child allowed to make his/her own selection of the food items required under the Offer versus Serve provision to be counted as a reimbursable meal?
 - Were portion sizes provided that meet the requirements as indicated in the meal pattern?
 - Were both unflavored low-fat milk and whole milk offered at each serving line throughout the entire serving period?

Once the secondary on-site review is completed, Food Services supervisors also analyze these data as part of the cafeteria manager's overall evaluation:

- cafeteria workers' performance;
- school's increase or decrease in participation;
- projects/promotions; and
- future needs/recommendations.

Source: Food Services Department, Pittsburgh School District, April 2005.

RECOMMENDATION

Promote more training, sharing of ideas, and central office oversight.

The Food Services Manager should promote regular internal training opportunities and sharing of ideas among Cook Managers. The department should promote internal school-level trainings as well. Central office staff should regularly visit and evaluate all school cafeteria operations, based on a standardized list checklist.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 8-12

The food services department is not fully utilizing the support of parents and students to improve.

There is strong community support for healthy meal options for students. Some FPS parents formed the Fuel for Learning Partnership organization several years to advocate for healthier food choices in school meals. In time, the organization became a standing PTA committee. It is now part of the district's Wellness Committee, which is a federally-required committee. According to one of the Fuel for Learning Partnership leaders, there is at least one liaison per school.

Part of the advocacy of the Fuel for Learning Partnership has been for healthy fruit and vegetables choices. While admirable, the food services department must balance a desire for ever-healthier food with what students will actually eat. To continue to serve foods students simply do not eat is a waste of resources and a loss of nutrition for students. Prismatic observed one elementary school where 4th grade students were served cooked zucchini as part of their meal. Of the 32 students served zucchini, no more than five even tried it.⁵ All but one of those left most of it on the plate. The results were similar with raw chopped peppers. As a result, for those meals those students consumed a less nutritious meal than they would have if another more palatable vegetable had been available.

In interviews with Prismatic, Cook Managers acknowledge that a number of the vegetable items on the menu are unpopular, but they lack quantitative data, such as that available through plate waste surveys, to show that certain items should be eliminated. No matter how healthy a food item is, if it is uneaten it is not nutrition. **Exhibit 8-18** shows a sample for a plate waste survey. Such a survey is typically taken by an impartial observer at the point where students drop their trays at the end of lunch. The data gathered provide support for retaining or eliminating food items on the menu.

⁵ The other meal items, chicken and potatoes, were very popular and nearly all students ate most of those.

**Exhibit 8-18
Sample Plate Waste Survey Form**

Food Item, Portion Size	Amount Discarded				
	All Discarded	$\frac{3}{4}$ Discarded	$\frac{1}{2}$ Discarded	$\frac{1}{4}$ Discarded	None Discarded
First Item					
# of Trays and % of Trays Sampled					
Second Item					
# of Trays and % of Trays Sampled					

Source: Developed by Prismatic.

Similarly, the district is not running student tasting panels regarding potential new items. Student tasting panels are typically run at all school levels, since tastes change as student mature. The panels provide the district with valuable data regarding which new items might be most acceptable to students and are most cost-efficient than rolling out an untested item on a large scale.

Currently, the food services department lacks the staffing to complete either plate waste surveys or student tasting panels. The Fuel for Learning Partnership leadership has expressed an interest in supporting the food services department.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a parent advisory committee at each school to complete plate waste surveys and tasting panels.

Working with Cook Managers, the advisory committee should support the goals of all stakeholders in continuously improving the nutrition of students. Committee members could be tasked with plate waste surveys when new items are introduced. They could also handle the logistics of running student tasting panels when new food items are being considered for adoption.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

This chapter reviews transportation in Fairfield Public Schools (FPS).

The primary objective of school transportation is to provide safe, timely, and efficient transportation services to the students. School districts collectively operate the safest form of transportation in the country, and school buses are safer than any other form of public or private mode of transportation.

Connecticut provides support for student transportation on an expense reimbursement basis; however, the reimbursement is nowhere near 100 percent, particularly for wealthier districts. As **Exhibit 9-1** shows, for FPS, the state transportation reimbursement provides less than one percent of the funding needed to operate its transportation program. Only the reimbursement rate for Greenwich is lower. Thus, every dollar saved in the FPS transportation program can instead be spent in other district programs, including classroom activities.

Exhibit 9-1
State Reimbursement of District Public and Nonpublic Transportation
2010-11

District	State Transportation Reimbursement Percent	Public Transportation Entitlement	Nonpublic Transportation Entitlement
Fairfield	0.79%	\$22,955	\$5,460
Greenwich	0%	\$366	\$0
Norwalk	7.15%	\$69,198	\$10,775
Stamford	29.80%	\$758,816	\$397,190
Trumbull	8.34%	\$82,682	\$24,617
West Hartford	35.76%	\$353,905	\$104,739
Peer Average	16.21%	\$252,993	\$107,464

Source: Connecticut Department of Education and Prismatic Services Calculations, November 2010

Exhibit 9-2 shows the increase in transportation costs from 2005-06 to 2009-10. While student enrollment increased by nine percent, transportation costs increased by 32 percent. Overall district expenditures rose by a comparatively modest 18 percent.

Exhibit 9-2
Change in Transportation Costs

Enrollment and Major Objects of Expense	2005-06	2009-10	Change	
			Amount	Percentage
Enrollment	9,195	10,032	837	9.1%
Student Transportation	\$4,908,306	\$6,493,904	\$1,585,598	32.3%
Total Expenditures	\$118,222,550	\$139,563,360	\$21,340,810	18.1%

Source: FPS final summary statements by object, 2005-06 and 2009-10; enrollments from budget documents.

Exhibit 9-3 shows the responses on Prismatic’s staff survey related to transportation. As shown, staff largely agrees that:

- * there are sufficient buses for extra-curricular activities;
- * buses rarely break down;
- * the field trip process is efficient and effective;
- * students feel safe riding buses;
- * the transportation department provides good value to the schools.

The only potential area of concern identified in the staff survey was the timeliness of buses to and from schools.

**Exhibit 9-3
Prismatic Staff Survey Related to Transportation**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	6%	21%	21%	44%	8%
There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	5%	37%	51%	5%	2%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	1%	5%	46%	41%	8%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	6%	43%	42%	7%	2%
Students do not feel safe riding school district buses.	1%	4%	48%	35%	12%
The Transportation department provides good value to our schools.	8%	49%	39%	3%	1%

Source: Prismatic Survey, 2010.

FINDING 9-1

The FPS transportation department uses technology and contractor oversight to provide responsive, timely transportation services to students.

As shown in the staff survey results, district staff sees few issues with the transportation department. A majority agreed that the department provides good value to the schools. There were some concerns over the timeliness of buses, but this may be due to a lack of communication. For example, late buses at some schools are scheduled to depart at 4:05 pm on certain days. Afterschool activities end at 3:50 pm; therefore, some staff see the scheduled departure time at “late.”



The transportation department maintains solid oversight of its transportation contractor, First Student. Often, once a district contracts out for a service it eliminates its ability to properly oversee the contractor by reducing in-house expertise. FPS has not done this. Its Transportation Supervisor fully understands school bus operations and maintains regular oversight of all aspects of the district's contract with First Student.

The transportation department is located on the site of the bus parking lot (**Exhibit 9-4**), which itself is built on a Town landfill. In addition to being a low-cost facility, it allows transportation staff to readily observe and manage daily operations.

Exhibit 9-4
FPS Transportation Department Facility



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010

The transportation department has implemented Edulog, which is a software program for bus routing and scheduling. This product is widely used throughout the nation, not only for transportation but attendance boundary planning as well. The transportation department used Edulog to dynamically change routes, both at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year as circumstances change.

COMMENDATION

The FPS transportation department is a responsive, effective organization.

FINDING 9-2

Overall, student ride times are short.

Exhibit 9-5 shows the average one way ride times for students, by school. Depending on the routing, a student may have a shorter ride time in the morning than in the afternoon, or vice versa. The times shown are the average of total ride time divided by two.

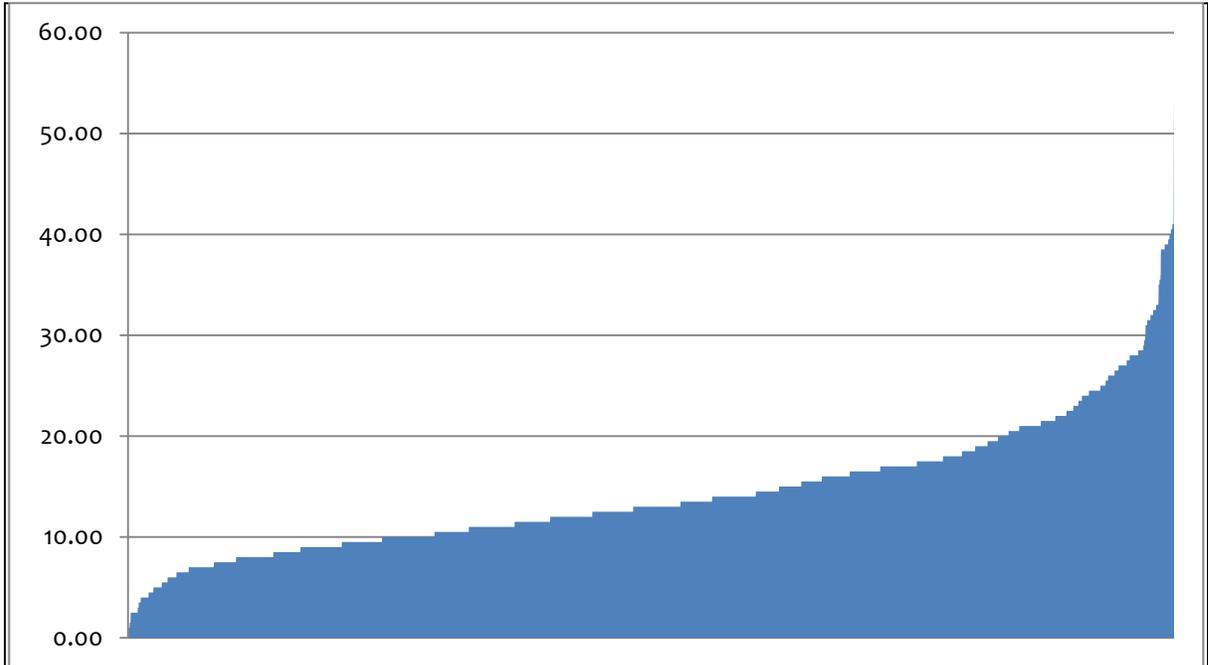
**Exhibit 9-5
Average One Way Student Ride Times**

School	Average One Way Ride Time, Minutes
Burr	15.7
Timothy Dwight	14.8
Holland Hill	9.9
Jennings	14.7
McKinley	9.6
Mill Hill	10.5
No. Stratfield	13.6
Osborn Hill	9.2
Riverfield	11.4
Roger Sherman	10.9
Stratfield	9.4
Fairfield Woods	17.6
Roger Ludlowe	15.7
Tomlinson	16.3
Fairfield Ludlowe	13.5
Fairfield Warde	19.7
Alternative HS	8.4
OVERALL AVERAGE	14.3

Source: FPS transportation department, October 2010

Exhibit 9-6 provides the one way ride time for every FPS student in graphical form. As shown, only a small portion of district students have ride times greater than 20 minutes.

**Exhibit 9-6
All One Way Student Ride Times**



Source: FPS transportation department, October 2010

COMMENDATION

The FPS transportation department provides students with short ride times.

FINDING 9-3

Although the district has implemented Edulog, it has not provided sufficient training for FPS staff. In interviews, staff noted a number of areas where their skills were not at the advanced level.

Using Edulog, transportation staff makes numerous route modifications throughout the year. Given more advanced skills, staff could likely be more efficient in this task. Staff would also be more prepared to conduct “what-if” analyses and respond to administrative questions regarding efficiency of proposed boundary changes.

The department recently purchased the field trip module for Edulog. At the time of the on-site review staff was still using its older process for field trips while working out the “kinks” in the Edulog module.

Edulog provides customized training for clients. The company also hosts regional conferences each year that provide opportunities for hands-on training. The next Northeast conference is tentatively scheduled for June 2011.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide additional training in Edulog.

FISCAL IMPACT

Prismatic recommends multiple days of Edulog training and conference attendance for the Transportation Supervisor and the Transportation Secretary. Follow-up training as new module versions are released should be provided every other year at a minimum.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Provide advanced Edulog training	(\$10,000)	\$0	(\$2,500)	\$0	(\$2,500)

FINDING 9-4

As is common in many school districts, a number of FPS parents elect to drive their children to school even though bus transportation is available. Holding empty seats for these children all year is a waste of district resources.

The transportation department does not currently track attendance on school buses. It uses Edulog to determine initial routes each year based on the residences of students. In planning, the department fills each bus to capacity, less 10, to hold seats for new students. It then works with the transportation contractor in the first several weeks to determine where buses are either overcrowded or underfilled. If underfilled, the district offers courtesy transportation to students who live within the walk zone.

For 2010-11, the transportation department is offering a bus ride to 3,186 elementary students. Considering just the 390 who are offered transportation to and from Burr Elementary School, the district's daily cost is \$3.21 per student, or \$577.80 on an annual basis.

The transportation department provides on the district website an "opt-out" form for students who do not need transportation. The agreement is non-binding and allows parents to opt back into bus transportation if home circumstances change. According to district staff, only a few students a year opt out and they are typically elementary students.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a "use it or lose it" policy regarding bus transportation.

The district should begin implementation of this policy at the elementary level. It should notify parents prior to the start of the school year that if their child does not ride the bus at least once in the first five days of school, the district will assume that the parent is opting out of bus transportation for the year. Then, after the first week of school, the transportation department should reconfigure routes to account for the lower number of students to be transported. Where possible, the department should consider route consolidations before it offers courtesy

transportation. As the department develops this process it should consider repeating it each semester and including the middle and high schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should result in a significant savings. Assuming that just two percent of the students for whom a seat is being held are identified as opting out, the district will realize annual savings of nearly \$37,000:

- * 3,198 elementary students x 2% x \$3.21 in daily savings x 180 days = \$36,956

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Implement use it or lose it transportation policy	\$36,956	\$36,956	\$36,956	\$36,956	\$36,956

FINDING 9-5

The district currently runs high school routes as if all eligible high school students will ride the bus, although it also provides more than 600 parking spots for high school students who drive themselves to school.

As shown in **Exhibit 9-7**, the district currently spends \$4,507.25 per day for the transportation of its high school students. Annually, this is a cost of more than \$800,000.

**Exhibit 9-7
High School Bus Routes
2010-11**

Route	Daily Rate Per Tier
Fairfield Ludlowe	
4	\$117.14
14	\$157.28
15	\$157.28
20	\$117.14
25	\$157.70
27	\$157.28
32	\$157.28
36	\$157.28
48	\$157.28
52	\$157.28
53	\$157.28
56	\$157.28
64	\$117.14
67	\$157.28
78	\$157.28
83	\$157.28
91	\$117.14
Fairfield Warde	
5	\$157.28
8	\$157.28
16	\$157.28
17	\$157.28
18	\$303.69
31	\$157.28
34	\$157.28
44	\$157.28
61	\$157.28
80	\$157.28
84	\$117.14
92	\$157.28
5	\$157.28
TOTAL	\$4,507.25

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010

Fairfield Ludlowe High School has seats for 1,002 students on its bus routes; Fairfield Warde has seats for 717. With student enrollments of 1,491 and 1,288 respectively, the district is providing seats for 67 percent of Ludlowe students and 56 percent of Warde students. Based on the daily cost of \$4,507.25, each bus seat for a high school student costs the district \$2.62 per day, or \$471.60 per year.

At the same time, Ludlowe has 298 parking spaces for students who drive to school. Warde has 305. Currently, high school students who obtain a parking spot are not required to notify the transportation department that they will no longer need bus transportation.

RECOMMENDATION

Require high school students to opt out in order to obtain a parking spot.

The district should notify students that if they wish to drive themselves to school and use a school parking spot, they will need to officially opt out of bus transportation. The district will need to allow students to opt back into bus transportation if a student’s situation changes. The student will need to give the transportation department reasonable notice when switching back, perhaps three days.

FISCAL IMPACT

Assuming that the percentage of student drivers who would otherwise ride a school bus is in the same proportions as the school overall (67% at Ludlowe and 56% at Warde), requiring them to opt out of school bus transportation in order to obtain a parking spot would reduce the need for 371 bus seats in this manner:

- * 67% x 298 Ludlowe spots = 200 bus seats not needed; and
- * 56% x 305 Warde spots = 171 bus seats not needed.

At the average cost of \$2.62 per seat per day, the district would realize daily savings of \$972.02 and annual savings of \$174,963.

Depending on which specific seats can be eliminated and how the reduced need for seats impacts routes overall, the district may experience a different level of savings.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Require students with parking spots to give up bus seat	\$174,963	\$174,963	\$174,963	\$174,963	\$174,963

FINDING 9-6

The transportation department is highly responsive to parent requests for stop changes and stop additions.

The current district walk policy includes these maximum walking distances from home to school or from home to a “prescribed point of embarkation:”

- * elementary - ¾ mile;
- * middle - 1 mile; and



- * high - 1 ½ miles.

Subsequent portions of FPS policy spell out exceptions to these distances to reduce hazards to students.

Staff has not analyzed the distance between each student’s home and their bus stop. Anecdotally, staff reports that most parents want the bus stop at the end of their driveway. While this may be desirable for both parents and FPS in some areas, it is likely not the most cost-effective option for FPS in all situations.

RECOMMENDATION

Reduce door-to-door stops.

The Transportation Supervisor should develop an analysis of all bus stops in relation to student residences. This could perhaps start by identifying all bus stops that are within 1/8 of a mile of each other and determining whether they could be consolidated without violating district policy or creating hazardous situations. This could then be expanded to all bus stops within ¼ of a mile of each other.

Reducing the number of stops reduces the overall route time. As the route time shrinks, it becomes possible to consolidate routes. Alternatively it frees time for a bus to make multiple trips in the same amount of time.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should result in a reduced need for buses.

FINDING 9-7

The district has not quantified the cost of its school start times and considered other options.

Exhibit 9-8 shows the start and end times for FPS schools, excluding extended day kindergarten. There is little staggering of start times.

**Exhibit 9-8
FPS School Start and End Times**

School	Start Time	End Time
All elementary schools except Holland Hill	8:55 am	3:30 pm
Holland Hill	8:10 am	2:45 pm
All middle schools	8:10 am	2:50 pm
Fairfield Ludlowe HS	7:40 am	2:20 pm
Fairfield Warde HS	7:50 am	2:30 pm

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010

To achieve the highest possible efficiency, bus routes are “tiered.” Rather than use one bus to pick up one group of students and deliver them to one school (a “run”), efficient districts stagger their start/end times sufficiently to allow one bus to make multiple runs. FPS has implemented some tiering, but currently cannot do more with the existing start/end times. As shown in **Exhibit 9-9**, FPS has currently triple tiered just 19 buses. The bulk of its buses are double tiered and 18 are only single tiered.

Exhibit 9-9
FPS Bus Tiering and Costs*
2010-11

Tier	# Buses Per Day	Daily Cost Per Bus	Daily Cost Per Run
Single Tier	18	\$303.69	\$303.69
Double Tier	95	\$314.56	\$157.28
Triple Tier	19	\$351.43	\$117.14

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010

**Public student runs only*

In addition to adding significant, non-value added transportation cost, the district’s current start times are not aligned with research. A 2005 study published in the journal *Pediatrics* noted the relatively poorer academic performance of high school students who started school early in the morning. Another study, by Wolfson and Carskadon (1998), determined that a teen’s natural time to fall asleep may be 11:00 pm or later. Since teen’s need as much as nine hours of sleep a night, earlier school start times lead to chronic sleep deprivation.

A school district in Kentucky that moved its high school start time from 7:30 am to 8:30 am reported an increase in the average hours of nightly sleep and a significant reduction in the crash rates for teen drivers. The teens did not report significant reductions in the amount of time spent on homework, school sports, etc. The study did not assess academic performance.¹

RECOMMENDATION

Review bell times.

The district’s current bell schedule is inefficient from a transportation perspective and not in keeping with research on the benefits to high school students on later start times. The Superintendent should direct the Transportation Supervisor to develop several models of differing start times that minimize transportation expense. The Superintendent should then consider these for possible implementation and present at least two options for Board consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The exact savings would depend on the options selected by the district. For example, if the district were to adopt bell

¹ Danner, F. and Phillips, B. (2008). Adolescent sleep, school start times, and teen motor vehicle crashes. *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 4 (6).

times that allowed all 132 bus route for FPS students to a triple tier system, the district could save nearly \$2 million a year, as shown in **Exhibit 9-10**. This would be at the high end of the potential savings for the district. Moving just the single tier buses to triple tier would save approximately \$600,000 per year.

**Exhibit 9-10
FPS Savings from Triple Tiering all Buses**

Recommendation	Old # of Buses	# Buses Eliminated	New # of Buses	Old Daily Cost	New Daily Cost	Daily Savings
Move all Single Tier to Triple Tier	18	12	6	\$5,466.42	\$2,108.58	\$3,357.84
Move all Double Tier to Triple Tier	95	31	64	\$29,883.20	\$22,491.52	\$7,625.86
TOTAL	113	43	70	\$35,349.62	\$24,600.10	\$10,749.52

Source: FPS transportation department

FINDING 9-8

A large portion of the district’s transportation expenses is for nonpublic students. It appears that these costs are in excess of twice the expense required for public school students, which would allow the district to reduce its provisions of nonpublic transportation.

Exhibit 9-11 shows the 2010-11 bus routes for nonpublic students, the schools served, and the associated daily cost. As shown, the district operates 31 routes either exclusively or partially for nonpublic school students. In total, the district spends \$7,278.55 per day on the transport of nonpublic students. Other district documentation shows a daily nonpublic cost of \$7,287.71. The district also provides late buses and summer school transportation for some private schools, at a cost of \$27,251.72. Combined, this is a total annual cost of \$1,339,038.52.

Exhibit 9-11
Nonpublic Transportation Costs
2010-11

Route	Nonpublic Schools Served	Daily Cost
3*	Notre Dame HS	\$117.14
23*	HFS	\$157.28
24	Fairfield County Day	\$303.69
25*	Fairfield County Day	\$152.70
28*	Notre Dame HS	\$117.14
33*	St. Thomas	\$117.14
41	Fairfield County Day	\$303.69
42	Fairfield Prep	\$303.69
43	Fairfield Prep	\$303.69
45*	St. Thomas	\$157.28
46	St. Thomas, Fairfield County Day	\$314.56
47*	St. Thomas	\$157.28
49*	HFS	\$157.28
50*	St. Thomas	\$152.70
51	St. Thomas	\$303.69
53*	Fairfield Country Day	\$157.28
54*	St. Thomas	\$157.28
55*	St. Thomas	\$157.28
56*	Unquowa School	\$157.28
57	Fairfield Prep	\$303.69
63	Eagle HS	\$303.69
65	Eagle HS	\$303.69
66	Fairfield Prep	\$303.69
67*	Assumption School	\$157.28
69	St. Thomas, Fairfield County Day	\$314.56
70	St. Thomas	\$303.69
75	Fairfield Prep	\$303.69
82	Unquowa School	\$303.69
85	St. Thomas, Fairfield County Day	\$314.56
89	St. Thomas	\$303.69
90	St. Thomas, Assumption School	\$314.56
TOTAL DAILY COST		\$7,278.55

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010

*Serves public and nonpublic students; cost shown is apportioned nonpublic share.

Considering just the district's costs for daily routes to and from school, it appears that the costs to provide nonpublic transportation greatly outpace public school transportation (**Exhibit 9-12**). On a per student basis, FPS spends \$618 per year for each public school student who is given a seat on daily route bus. It pays nearly three times that amount for each nonpublic school student.

Exhibit 9-12
Regular Daily Transportation Costs by Student Type
2010-11

# Students	Annual Regular Transportation Cost	Per Student Cost
6,941	\$4,294,059	\$618.65
730	\$1,311,788	\$1,796.97

Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010

These costs do not include personnel. The district allocates 10 percent of the time of the Transportation Supervisor and 10 percent of the transportation secretary to managing nonpublic transportation. The 2010-11 proposed FPS budget shows a reimbursement from the Town of Fairfield in the amount of \$12,641 for the transportation of non-public students to cover these personnel costs. This amount serves to offset less than one percent of the regular daily transport of nonpublic students.

Connecticut Statute 10-281 speaks to the transportation on nonpublic school students. It states, in part:

In no case shall a municipality or school district be required to expend for transportation to any nonpublic school, in any one school year, a per pupil transportation expenditure greater than an amount double the local per pupil expenditure for public school transportation during the last completed school year.

RECOMMENDATION

Seek legal counsel regarding reduction of nonpublic student transportation.

Based on the data presented, it appears that FPS may be able to reduce its nonpublic student transportation costs by at least one-third. However, because the statute leaves unstated how the nonpublic student transportation cost is to be calculated and to which regular student transportation cost it is to be compared, Prismatic recommends that the district seek advice from the Connecticut State Department of Education on this matter.

FISCAL IMPACT

If the issue is ultimately interpreted using the costs presented, the district will have the right to reduce nonpublic student transportation to a level that is only double that of its costs for public school students. This would be an annual per student savings of \$559.67 ($\$1,796.97 - (\$618.65 \times 2)$). With 730 nonpublic students, this would result in overall annual savings of \$408,559.10 ($\559.67×730).

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Reduce nonpublic student transportation	\$408,559	\$408,559	\$408,559	\$408,559	\$408,559

FINDING 9-9

A significant portion of the district's transportation expenses are for nonpublic students, who are transported at a cost that is roughly three times that of public school students. However, the current budget presentation does not clearly identify this expense that, while statutorily required, does not benefit FPS students.

The 2010-11 proposed FPS budget includes a number of items related to transportation. It notes that "move forward" costs related to transportation are expected to increase by \$440,483 over 2010-11. It notes that transportation costs are expected to be five percent of the total budget. However, it does not appear to state anywhere the budget burden created by the transportation of nonpublic school students.

As presented, the FPS budget does not specifically outline the additional costs borne as a result of transporting nonpublic students. To someone unfamiliar with the budget and district operations, it might seem reasonable to assume that the 730 nonpublic students can be easily accommodated on existing bus routes and that they add little cost to the overall operation. The reality is that they are a significant additional cost. As shown previously, 30 bus routes this year provide transportation for nonpublic students. Of those, 14 only transport nonpublic students. In other words, if the district did not have to provide nonpublic student transportation, it could immediately eliminate 14 bus routes, at an annualized savings of \$937,118. It could then potentially consolidate the remaining public/nonpublic routes to save even more. While the district cannot stop providing all nonpublic transportation, it can highlight this expense which does not benefit its students.

RECOMMENDATION

Separate the budget for transportation of nonpublic students from the regular FPS budget.

A budget document should clearly identify which monies are intended to be spent to benefit which students. Nonpublic students are part of the Fairfield community and therefore a concern of the Town. However, they are not part of FPS, even though they are provided transportation free of charge through FPS. It is important the Town officials clearly understand that portion of the FPS budget which has no impact on FPS students. If possible, Prismatic recommends that the budget for transportation of nonpublic students be completely removed from the FPS budgeting process and reviewed separately by the Town.

FISCAL IMPACT

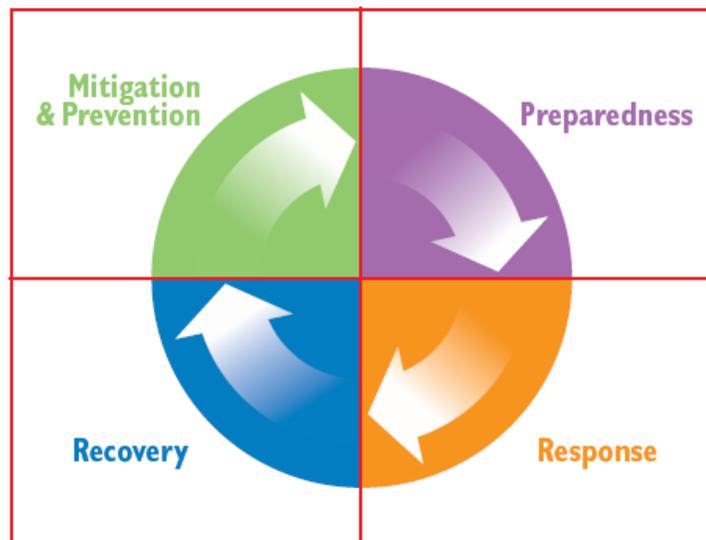
This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Today, more than ever, school districts are expected to provide a safe and secure environment for their students and staff. While districts are largely insulated from violent crime, it is incidents of violence at schools that draw national attention. School districts must take proactive measures in safety and security even in incident free schools. Students, teachers, and other district employees deserve a safe school environment in which to learn and work.

In 2003, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) initiated the development of a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and requires its use by public sector agencies, including school districts. The intent of this system is to provide a common template and language for responding organizations to work together in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from incidents. As noted by FEMA, “NIMS represents a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes that enables effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management.”¹

NIMS emphasizes that true preparedness requires a commitment to continuous review and improvement. Most districts understand the continuous nature of emergency management, as well as the four phases that comprise the process circle (shown in **Exhibit 10-1**).

Exhibit 10-1
Continuous Process of Emergency Management



Source: *The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools' Practical information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities, January 2007.*

A website specifically designed for K-12 schools and school systems can be found at <http://rems.ed.gov/>. This website provides schools with valuable resources in the area of readiness and emergency preparedness, including application information for annual federal

¹ http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS_core.pdf

grants for REMS implementation projects, online training in emergency preparedness for teachers and administrators, and a host of additional safety information.

Unlike other functional areas included in this report, Prismatic did not undertake a comprehensive review of district safety and security. To do would have required site vulnerability assessments of each school, which was beyond the scope of this study. However, the findings included here were found in the course of the team's other operational audit analyses and are provided as a courtesy. The reader should not assume that other safety and security issues do not exist simply because they are not included in this chapter.

FINDING 10-1

There is no formal training program within the maintenance department.

FPS custodians received training this past year in lockdown procedures, security and safety, but there is no documentation that supports required CONN-OSHA safety instruction, specific workplace hazard training, or required emergency preparedness training.

The Connecticut Department of Labor's Division of Occupational Safety and Health is referred to as CONN-OSHA. CONN-OSHA administers Connecticut's Public Employer Only State Plan and enforces occupational safety and health standards as they apply to all municipal and state employees. As a State Plan state, CONN-OSHA adopts and enforces standards that are at least as effective as the federal requirements.

In addition to having enforcement responsibilities in the public sector, CONN-OSHA provides on-site consultations to both public and private sector employers. The mission of the Connecticut Consultation Program is to provide timely, courteous, and professional service to Connecticut employers to help them recognize and control workplace hazards and prevent work-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. The consultants also provide assistance in developing and implementing effective safety and health programs. These consultations are provided at the request of the employer and are free of charge.

CONN-OSHA offers comprehensive training and education programs covering all aspects of occupational safety and health. Provided at no charge, these programs are designed to be utilized in conjunction with both consultation and enforcement activities.

The state-funded Occupational Health Clinics Program is also administered by CONN-OSHA. This program provides grants-in-aid to occupational health clinics and auxiliary occupational health clinics located in Connecticut.

The Occupational Safety and Health Statistics Unit publishes information on workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities that occur in Connecticut. Through the OSHA Data Initiative (ODI), this unit also collects data for USDOL-OSHA targeting and program evaluation purposes.”²

² <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/aboutosh.htm>

RECOMMENDATION

Implement OSHA required training for maintenance and custodial staff to ensure worker and workplace safety.

The district should work with CONN-OSHA to address this issue.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation to implement OSHA required training can be implemented with existing resources.

One excellent resource for employee training specifically is J. J. Keller's "5-Minute Workplace Safety Talks," a compendium of literally hundreds of topics directly applicable to the maintenance and custodian work forces in the schools. These topics cover all required OSHA training in addition to hazard specific training where needed. This publication can be obtained from J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. for an annual subscription of \$229.00 at www.jjkeller.com.

FINDING 10-2

During the site visit, Prismatic found several fire extinguishers in the buildings to be out of date.

The new contractor had not found and inspected all that were required. Out of date fire extinguishers were found in the warehouse (all fire extinguishers), Holland Hill Elementary School (one location), F. Ludlowe Middle School (one location), and F. Ludlowe High School (two locations). In addition, one of the fire extinguishers at F. Ludlowe high school had been marked last year that it was due for a "hydro," a requirement every five years by the Life Safety Codes (**Exhibits 10-2 and 10-3**).

A review of the bid specifications for the new FY2010 fire extinguisher maintenance contract revealed that the district specified neither the number of fire extinguishers nor the locations of the fire extinguishers for which potential bidders would be responsible. The bidding documents left it up to the contractors to conduct a site visit and locate the fire extinguishers for themselves.

Exhibit 10-2
Out of Date Fire Extinguisher at
Holland Hill ES



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

Exhibit 10-3
Out of Date Fire Extinguisher at Fairfield
Ludlowe HS



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a database of all fire safety equipment.

FPS should implement a preventive maintenance program similar to that found in SchoolDude which would allow it to quantify and log the exact location of each fire extinguisher and every other fire safety device (e.g., fire exit signs, egress lighting, fire pumps, fire doors, smoke barriers, fire and smoke dampers, etc.). Having the fire safety equipment logged in such a preventive maintenance system would allow the district to issue bid specifications that would detail the number and locations of all devices that were required in the contract so that potential bidders would be basing their bids on a level playing field.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of a previous recommendation in Chapter 7, to implement a preventive maintenance program, would also likely provide the capability to track all safety equipment. For example, the SchoolDude program includes a module for tracking safety equipment.

FINDING 10-3

The construction manager also serves the district as the safety and security manager. He has completed numerous FEMA independent study programs. He works with the emergency manager from the city and coordinates with the Red Cross in surveying for usable shelter locations. In addition, he works with Citizen Corps to set up kennels for animals etc. during emergencies.

The construction manager is a professional engineer with a degree in structural engineering. The district currently has construction projects which include three new school and three renovation projects.

The district employs a retired state trooper to act as the security coordinator for the two high schools. He also conducts “residency” investigations for the district. He oversees the activities of two contract guards who are stationed at the two high schools for security, and he coordinates with the SRO (school resource officer) assigned by the county sheriff’s office.

With the amount of oversight of construction activities required in the district, the construction manager does not have the time to attend to the safety, security, and emergency management duties that should be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION

Shift safety, security, and emergency management duties from the construction manager to the high school security coordinator.

The construction manager is well-qualified to complete safety, security, and emergency management duties, but should not be pulled from his primary responsibilities for these tasks. The high school security coordinator is also qualified to perform these duties and they fit more appropriately with his primary duties. The advantages to this shift are:

- * It frees the construction manager’s time so that he can focus on construction and renovation projects and can become more involved in contracting for construction and maintenance services.
- * It focuses attention onto the needs of the district with regards safety, security, and emergency management into one position so that the person occupying that position can better assist the district in preparing for and responding to emergency situations and conditions.

FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

FINDING 10-4

Approximately three years ago when the district presented its annual budget request to the town, money was requested for a contract to maintain the two storm water retention ponds on school properties. The town public works department offered to maintain the ponds so that the town could save that money and the line item was eliminated from the budget.

Since then, the town has not maintained the two ponds, and weeds have grown to nearly five feet tall with trees sprouting (**Exhibits 10-4** and **10-5**). The pond at Burr Elementary School is close enough to the side of the building that the overgrowth is considered a security hazard in that someone could easily hide in the weeds undetected. Additionally, the playground at Burr Elementary School is immediately adjacent to the pond.

Exhibit 10-4
Storm Water Retention Pond
Burr ES



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

Exhibit 10-5
Playground Adjacent to Storm Water
Retention Pond at Burr ES



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Request that the town public works department maintain the two storm water retention ponds as previously agreed.

Proper maintenance of storm water ponds is essential. As stated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection³, typical maintenance activities for stormwater ponds include monthly mowing and periodic inspection to remove invasive species (**Exhibit 10-6**).

³ 2004 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual published by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, available from http://www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/water_regulating_and_discharges/stormwater/manual/CH_11P-1.pdf.

**Exhibit 10-6
Typical Maintenance Activities for Stormwater Ponds**

Activity	Schedule
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If wetland components are included, inspect for invasive vegetation. 	Semi-annual inspection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect for damage. Note signs of hydrocarbon build-up, and remove if detected. Monitor for sediment accumulation in the facility and forebay. Examine to ensure that inlet and outlet devices are free of debris and operational. 	Annual inspection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair undercut or eroded areas. 	As needed maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean and remove debris from inlet and outlet structures. Mow side slopes. High grass along pond edge will discourage waterfowl from taking up residence and serve to filter pollutants. 	Monthly maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetland plant management and harvesting. Drain pond in fall and let frost kill plants, then dredge in spring. 	Annual maintenance (if needed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of sediment from the forebay. 	5 year maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove sediment when the pool volume has become reduced significantly, or when significant algal growth is observed. 	10 year maintenance; more frequent dredging in developing watersheds with significant sediment loads

Source: Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, November 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 10-5

At least several district schools lack sufficient separation between walkers, bus riders, and car riders. This has created potentially dangerous situations.

Prismatic noted these issues while visiting schools:

- * Burr Elementary School – This school has well-designed physical separation of bus and car rider traffic. The bus line shares a path with staff parking, but that was not observed to be a problem. The car rider line is supervised by school staff until the start of school. However, Prismatic observed at least a dozen parents dropping off their children after the start of school, when there is no supervision.
- * Tomlinson Middle School – This school has a parking lot loop for buses. Car riders follow a straight path from the front of the schools to an exit at the back of campus. There is overlap between buses and cars which could be alleviated by staggering the dismissal times of the two. While Prismatic observed good staff supervision of bus riders, no supervision of car riders was observed.

- * Ludlowe Middle School – Three late buses serve this school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays to provide transportation home from after-school activities. They pick up students at the front of the school, leaving at 4:05 pm. Prismatic observed cars, adults, and apparently a student cross-country team weaving in and out of the bus area. One of the parent cars nearly hit one of the student runners (**Exhibit 10-7**).
- * Mill Hill Elementary School – At dismissal, buses for this school park in the circular drive in the front of the school. Parents of car riders also park on an adjacent street that is uphill from the circular drive and walk in between and around buses to collect their children (**Exhibit 10-8**). Some parents park in the parking lot that is in the path of leaving buses. Parents stand outside of classroom doors, and receive their children directly from their classrooms. While Prismatic observed school staff walking groups of students to their buses, no such oversight of students released to parents directly from classrooms was observed. At this school, the circulatory overlap, the number of adults milling about on campus prior to dismissal, and the lack of confirmation regarding parent pick-up of students released from classrooms are safety concerns.
- * McKinley Elementary School – This school lacks separation of parent drop-off and bus traffic (**Exhibit 10-9**). During the morning period observed, students and parents darted in front of cars and buses, parent cars darted in and around buses, and one car and bus nearly collided. Prismatic observed no staff supervision.

Exhibit 10-7
Late Bus, Parent Cars, and Runners at Ludlowe MS



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

Exhibit 10-8
Bus and Parent Car Overlap at Mill Hill ES



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

Exhibit 10-9
Bus, Parent Car, and Pedestrian Overlap at McKinley ES



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

Due to on-site time constraints, the review team could not observe start and dismissal procedures at every FPS school, so it is unknown to what extent these problems are pervasive in the district.

Best practices dictate that all circulation around a school is separated by type. Where this has not been part of the original design, the school must create it through temporary physical means such as cones or through staggered start/end times. In some districts, bus riders are dismissed 15

minutes before car riders. Parents who choose to pick up their children are corralled into an area well away from bus traffic.

RECOMMENDATION

Require separation of traffic circulation around every FPS school.

Student safety must be a paramount concern, particularly during busy start and dismissal times at schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, although the district may choose to reconstruct some areas to ensure separation of traffic types.

FINDING 10-6

At least several district schools had unsafe practices related to kitchen security. This has created potentially dangerous situations.

Prismatic noted these issues while visiting schools:

- * At one school, the door leading directly into the kitchen was propped open with cardboard. As this was observed prior to the start of school, before any cafeteria staff reports, it was likely unsecure all night. From the kitchen, the entire school was accessible.
- * At another school, after school start but before cafeteria staff reported, Prismatic found an unsecure kitchen, an unsecure knife drawer, and an unsecure terminal (**Exhibit 10-10**). The door leading directly into the kitchen was unlocked, so that someone could enter the school unobserved. The unsecure terminal is troubling because someone could access student accounts and potentially falsely add money to one.

Due to on-site time constraints, the review team could not review kitchen safety at every FPS school, so it is unknown to what extent these problems are pervasive in the district.

Exhibit 10-10
Unsecured Knives and Computer Terminal at One Elementary School



Source: Prismatic Services, October 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve kitchen security.

Unsupervised doors to the exterior of the school should always be locked. Kitchen areas should be secured when cafeteria staff is not present.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

In this report, Prismatic awarded 25 commendations, highlighting exemplary processes and practices in Fairfield Public Schools (FPS). Prismatic also made 74 recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of district operations.

Of the 74 recommendations, Prismatic developed fiscal impacts for 27. For the remaining 47 recommendations, Prismatic developed no fiscal impact for one of two reasons:

- * In some cases, the anticipated outcome from a recommendation is not one with a fiscal impact, such as developing a board workshop to balance public input with other district needs that will improve effectiveness—this will not have a directly quantifiable impact on board operations or expenditures.
- * In other cases, the exact fiscal impact will depend on the specific path chosen by the district, such as rethinking technology’s potential for FPS students—the district could take many routes in implementing this recommendation, each with a dramatically different fiscal impact.

In such cases, Prismatic has not provided a specific fiscal impact.

Consequently, Prismatic has only developed fiscal impacts for those recommendations where the most likely implementation path is clear and direct costs or savings can be estimated from that implementation. In all cases, we have endeavored to be conservative in estimating savings and aggressive in estimating costs. While Prismatic has used the best data available in determining fiscal impacts, it should be remembered that these are estimates. It should also be remembered that it would be erroneous to total up all fiscal impacts presented and later seek to compare actual impacts with these estimates. Prismatic has provided to the district a menu of options from which to seek greater efficiency and effectiveness, not a mandate. The district is under no obligation to implement any of the recommendations presented. Moreover, several recommendations will likely have an effect on other areas where we have made a recommendation, so fiscal impacts cannot cleanly be aggregated.

Prismatic recognizes that it would be unlikely the district would be able to implement all recommendations immediately. Some can, and should be, implemented immediately. Others will take months or years to implement. Prismatic has made no assumptions regarding the priority order into which the district will place the recommendations of this operational audit. For that reason, all costs and savings are shown as being realized beginning in 2011-12. As the district develops its action plan in response to this report, it will need to shift the costs/savings associated with recommendations identified for later implementation to later years.

As a first step in implementing report recommendations, Prismatic recommends that district leaders review all report recommendations to identify which (in whole or in part) can be implemented immediately or within the next three months. From there, district leaders should then develop a prioritized action plan with accompanying deadlines and metrics. Individuals or small teams within the district should be assigned to spearhead each effort and should be held accountable for producing results.

The remaining pages of this chapter provide a by chapter summary of commendations and recommendations. It is important to note that fiscal impacts are provided in constant 2010 dollars and are incremental in nature. It is also important to note that Prismatic has not considered the impact of unemployment requirements where it has recommended the elimination of district positions. This is because how unemployment obligations are determined will depend on whether the district is able to accomplish reductions through attrition and which collective bargaining agreements apply.

11.1 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

In this chapter, Prismatic gave seven commendations and made 18 recommendations. The commendations were:

- * The Superintendent has immediately made positive organizational changes.
- * The Superintendent has streamlined and re-directed the focus of administrative meetings from business topics to administrative development.
- * FPS has only minimally increased its administrative staff, and at rates that compare favorably to the increase in student enrollment over the past five years.
- * FPS has opened Advanced Placement classes to all students, resulting in more students taking and passing AP test and earning college credit while still in high school.
- * FPS is commended for working to ensure that identification procedures more accurately identify students who are truly Gifted and Talented and for developing programs targeted to their needs and interests.
- * District special education leaders and parents are commended for instituting a strong partnership that benefits both children and educators.
- * The special education department has increased direct services to students by building capacity in FPS staff while, at the same time, working diligently to contain expenditures.

The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-1**.

**Exhibit 11-1
Recommendations in Organization and Management**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Adopt a new organizational structure.	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)	(\$399,738)	(\$1,998,690)
2	Schedule a board workshop to discuss ways to balance public input and the need to move the district's agenda for children forward as quickly as possible.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3	Expand the use of data to include evaluation of programs and processes to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of district activities.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Develop PreK-12 horizontal and vertical cross-curricular standards connection documents.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5	Revise the current staff evaluation process.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6	Improve the organizational structure for curricular leadership.	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$155,730)	(\$778,650)
7	Review the intended assignment of district-allocated positions to schools.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8	Improve district allocation of resource positions to elementary schools.	(\$47,968)	(\$47,968)	(\$47,968)	\$1,006,152	\$1,006,152	\$1,868,400
9	Improve paraprofessional development.	\$551,040	\$551,040	\$551,040	\$551,040	\$551,040	\$2,755,200
10	Adopt a new approach for McKinley School and its students.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
11	Adopt extended day as the only option for all kindergarten students.	\$189,840	\$189,840	\$189,840	\$189,840	\$189,840	\$949,200
12	Ensure that the same level of instructional support is available for all kindergarten students.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
13	Re-configure music schedules in the middle schools.	\$279,065	\$279,065	\$279,065	\$279,065	\$279,065	\$1,395,325
14	Reorganize both FPS high schools to eliminate the House Plan.	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$8,331,400
15	Require high school English teachers to teacher five periods a day, which is the same as other core teachers.	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$2,847,600
16	Charge non-handicapped students a fair tuition for preschool.	\$55,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$495,000
17	Improve utilization of district psychologists and social workers.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
18	Bring FPS psychologist and social worker staffing ratios closer to those recommended by ASHA.	\$455,616	\$455,616	\$455,616	\$455,616	\$455,616	\$2,278,080
Subtotal		\$3,162,925	\$3,217,925	\$3,217,925	\$4,272,045	\$4,272,045	\$18,142,865

11.2 TECHNOLOGY

In this chapter, Prismatic gave one commendations and made 11 recommendations. The commendation was:

- * FPS has begun implementing technology to streamline procedures and begin to reduce paper processes.

The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-2**.

**Exhibit 11-2
Recommendations in Technology**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Recommit the district to technology.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2	Realign the technology department.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3	Address technology disparity among FPS campuses.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Improve customer service levels through the Help Desk.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5	Develop procedures to ensure that the Technology/Media Curriculum Leader has a strong voice in instructional technology decisions.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6	Prioritize paper-based processes for review, reengineering, and elimination.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7	Include in planning and budgeting the purchase of integrated student management data collection and reporting systems and require universal use.	\$0	(\$298,830)	(\$49,805)	(\$49,805)	(\$49,805)	(\$448,245)
8	Develop a formula-driven technician staffing ratio.	\$177,265	\$177,265	\$177,265	\$177,265	\$177,265	\$886,325
9	Develop rigorous technology expectations for FPS technology support staff.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10	Develop and implement a professional development plan for technology integration.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
11	Re-think technology's potential for FPS students and teachers.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal		\$177,265	(\$121,565)	\$127,460	\$127,460	\$127,460	\$438,080

11.3 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In this chapter, Prismatic gave five commendations and made 15 recommendations. The commendations were:

- * FPS is commended for successfully implementing the Munis payroll, purchasing, and accounting modules with little negative impact on operations.
- * FPS is commended for closely analyzing and monitoring high dollar budgets and authorized full-time equivalent positions.
- * FPS is commended for development and use of a Payroll Run Sheet for each payroll to ensure completeness and accuracy of payrolls.
- * FPS is commended for cross-training employees in the critical functions of processing employee payrolls and vendor payments.
- * FPS is commended for making budget information readily available by distributing widely copies of its annual budget document.

The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-3**.

**Exhibit 11-3
Recommendations in Financial Management**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Create separate finance and operations departments organized under a Chief Operations Office, as noted in Chapter 3.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2	Develop a user manual for school and department staff to assist them in completing finance and budget related duties and provide periodic training.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3	Identify all critical functions performed by finance section of the Business Office staff and document procedures in a comprehensive procedures manual.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Document desk procedures for all finance processes within the Business Office.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
5	Adopt a formal policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of report recommendations made.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6	Eliminate weekly payrolls for all employees not required to be paid weekly per union contracts and attempt to eliminate the requirement in future negotiations when contracts are renewed.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7	Develop a policy that requires all arrangements with private vendors that use district facilities to be delineated in written, approved contracts.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8	Develop summary and easily understood financial reports for the Board and train board members on how to interpret the information.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
9	Annually analyze historical expenditures early in the budget process and establish budget targets to increase the funding percentage for instruction.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10	Improve the district's budget document and submit it for review to the Association of School Business Officials and the Government Finance Officers Association for continued improvement.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
11	Reduce funding for Principals' Account.	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$1,488,865
12	Work with the Town of Fairfield to develop purchasing procedures that allow principals and department heads to purchase small dollar items without preapproval.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
13	Consider expanding the use of the purchasing card program to increase efficiencies in the purchasing and payment processes.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
14	Require compliance with purchasing procedures.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
15	Track fixed assets acquired with district funds, and develop fixed asset policies.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal		\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$297,773	\$1,488,865

11.4 HUMAN RESOURCES

In this chapter, Prismatic gave three commendations and made two recommendations. The commendations were:

- * The FPS HR department is commended for its exemplary work in the areas of personnel, employee records, and employee staffing.
- * FPS is commended for supporting continuing education.
- * District leaders have begun developing professional development models that are most likely to result in fidelity of implementation of programs, a more uniform approach to instructional programs, and potentially save the district funds.

The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-4**.

**Exhibit 11-4
Recommendations in Human Resources**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Discontinue the funding and participation in the Intern Program after the current year.	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$994,900
2	Develop a comprehensive instructional professional development plan.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal		\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$198,980	\$994,900

11.5 FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

In this chapter, Prismatic gave three commendations and made seven recommendations. The commendations were:

- * FPS maintains its facilities in very good condition. All of the schools are attractive, pleasant-looking, and appear to be conducive to learning.
- * FPS employs a number of custodians that is able to maintain satisfactory levels of cleanliness and sanitation in its facilities, and is in consonance with national standards.
- * The construction manager was able to put together the required forms for FEMA funding in minimal time. As a result of his knowledge and documentation regarding FPS facilities, the response from FEMA was in minimal time.

The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-5**.

**Exhibit 11-5
Recommendations in Facilities Use and Management**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Implement a computerized maintenance management system.	(\$7,943)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)	(\$6,293)	(\$33,115)
2	Implement a technology solution for event management.	\$25,507	\$27,232	\$27,232	\$27,232	\$27,232	\$134,435
3	Conduct a thorough review of policy and procedures as they are actually employed in the time and attendance program for custodians, with a view toward eliminating all "summer cleaning" overtime.	\$83,314	\$83,314	\$83,314	\$83,314	\$83,314	\$416,570
4	Improve the day-to-day supervision of custodians.	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)	(\$24,345)	(\$121,725)
5	Seek reimbursement from the food service fund for the cost of providing custodial services in the dining rooms.	\$118,440	\$118,440	\$118,440	\$118,440	\$118,440	\$592,200
6	Seek reimbursement from the food service fund for the cost of kitchen and dining room utilities.	\$160,761	\$160,761	\$160,761	\$160,761	\$160,761	\$803,805
7	Ensure specifications are appropriate and enforced.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal		\$355,734	\$359,109	\$359,109	\$359,109	\$359,109	\$1,792,170

11.6 FOOD SERVICES

In this chapter, Prismatic gave four commendations and made eight recommendations. The commendations were:

- * FPS is commended for joining the Connecticut Healthy Food Certification program as part of its continuous efforts to improve its meal program.

- * The FPS food services department is an efficient and effective operation in a number of areas.
- * The FPS food services department makes an abundance of information available through the district website.
- * FPS elementary schools are adhering to best practices by providing recess before lunch.

The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-6**.

**Exhibit 11-6
Recommendations in Food Services**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Increase regular student meal prices.	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$290,000
2	Address secondary access issues.	\$128,989	\$128,989	\$128,989	\$128,989	\$128,989	\$644,945
3	Distribute monthly MPLH comparisons to Cook Managers.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Evaluate the food services program relative to selected performance indicators.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5	Offer direct deposit to all food services employees.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6	Implement menu planning software.	(\$2,500)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$2,000)	(\$10,500)
7	Promote more training, sharing of ideas, and central office oversight.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8	Develop a parent advisory committee at each school to complete plate waste surveys and tasting panels.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal		\$184,489	\$184,989	\$184,989	\$184,989	\$184,989	\$924,445

11.7 TRANSPORTATION

In this chapter, Prismatic gave two commendations and made seven recommendations. The commendations were:

- * The FPS transportation department is a responsive, effective organization.
- * The FPS transportation department provides students with short ride times.

The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-7**.

**Exhibit 11-7
Recommendations in Transportation**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Provide additional training in Edulog.	(\$10,000)	\$0	(\$2,500)	\$0	(\$2,500)	(\$15,000)
2	Implement a "use it or lose it" policy regarding bus transportation.	\$36,956	\$36,956	\$36,956	\$36,956	\$36,956	\$184,780
3	Require high school students to opt out in order to obtain a parking spot.	\$174,963	\$174,963	\$174,963	\$174,963	\$174,963	\$874,815
4	Reduce door-to-door stops.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5	Review bell times.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6	Seek legal counsel regarding reduction of nonpublic student transportation.	\$408,559	\$408,559	\$408,559	\$408,559	\$408,559	\$2,042,795
7	Separate the budget for transportation of nonpublic students from the regular FPS budget.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal		\$610,478	\$620,478	\$617,978	\$620,478	\$617,978	\$3,087,390

11.8 SAFETY AND SECURITY

In this chapter, Prismatic gave no commendations but made six recommendations. The recommendations are shown in **Exhibit 11-8**.

**Exhibit 11-8
Recommendations in Safety and Security**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
1	Implement OSHA required training for maintenance and custodial staff to ensure worker and workplace safety.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2	Develop a database of all fire safety equipment.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3	Shift safety, security, and emergency management duties from the construction manager to the high school security coordinator.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Request that the town public works department maintain the two storm water retention ponds as previously agreed.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5	Require separation of traffic circulation around every FPS school.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6	Improve kitchen security.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Employee Survey

The Fairfield Employee Survey was made available to all district staff on-line September 10-24, 2010. For custodial and food service staff without district-assigned e-mail addresses, paper surveys were provided. All survey responses were held confidential and no individual survey result was shared with any district staff.

A total of 634 employees responded to the survey out of approximately 1,825, for a response rate of 35 percent and a margin of error of three percent. Based on the review team's experience, this response rate is typical for a survey of this nature.

Aggregated responses are shown below for the first 77 questions of the survey. Because responding to each question was optional, the percentages shown may be based on less than 634 responses. In no case, was a response to the first 77 questions based on less than 585 responses.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The district's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	4%	44%	37%	13%	3%
2. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the district's strategic plan.	10%	54%	25%	9%	1%
3. School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school district.	3%	30%	29%	29%	9%
4. School board members know and understand the operations of the school district.	2%	31%	31%	27%	9%
5. The district administration supports the educational process.	15%	59%	11%	12%	3%
6. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the district.	10%	36%	18%	27%	9%
7. Most administrative practices in the school district are highly efficient and effective.	5%	33%	19%	33%	10%
8. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	4%	31%	22%	33%	9%
9. School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	8%	45%	17%	23%	7%

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	2%	13%	49%	26%	9%
11. Bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	11%	37%	35%	15%	2%
12. The central office organizational structure is efficient.	4%	31%	31%	22%	11%
13. District administrators provide quality service to schools.	7%	44%	27%	17%	6%

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. The district uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	6%	37%	38%	16%	3%
15. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	6%	40%	30%	20%	4%
16. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	6%	42%	17%	28%	6%
17. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	7%	31%	26%	24%	11%
18. Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	35%	59%	5%	1%	0%
19. The Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment department provides good value to our schools.	10%	42%	28%	13%	7%
20. The district has effective special programs for the following:					
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	6%	37%	34%	19%	4%
b. Special Education	18%	57%	15%	9%	1%
c. Advanced Placement	13%	42%	41%	3%	1%
d. Alternative Education	8%	37%	48%	5%	1%
e. English as Second Language (ESL)	7%	36%	36%	16%	6%
f. Career and Vocational	7%	24%	55%	12%	3%

HUMAN RESOURCES

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. I am satisfied with my job in the school district.	34%	52%	4%	9%	2%
22. I am actively looking for a job outside the school district.	1%	5%	11%	27%	55%
23. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	3%	20%	46%	23%	8%
24. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	3%	24%	43%	23%	8%
25. The district has a good orientation program for new employees.	12%	43%	28%	13%	4%
26. The district accurately projects future staffing needs.	5%	35%	34%	20%	6%
27. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	6%	28%	55%	8%	2%
28. Open positions are filled too slowly.	5%	15%	38%	35%	6%
29. District employees receive annual personnel evaluations.	20%	59%	13%	6%	2%
30. The district rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	4%	21%	31%	30%	14%
31. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	14%	27%	24%	30%	6%
32. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	4%	8%	74%	12%	3%
33. The Human Resources department provides good value to our schools.	16%	47%	29%	6%	2%

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
34. The district regularly communicates with parents.	16%	55%	21%	6%	1%
35. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	19%	45%	33%	3%	0%
36. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	23%	55%	16%	5%	1%

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. Most parents do not know what goes on in our schools.	3%	14%	21%	48%	15%
38. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	8%	42%	31%	17%	3%
39. Few local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	5%	26%	52%	14%	3%

FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff, and the board provide input into facility planning.	6%	35%	35%	19%	6%
41. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	3%	28%	11%	41%	17%
42. Schools are well-maintained.	22%	53%	9%	12%	4%
43. The process for requesting a facility repair is inefficient.	7%	22%	36%	30%	5%
44. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	7%	43%	24%	21%	5%
45. District facilities are open for community use.	19%	55%	25%	1%	0%
46. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	12%	49%	33%	4%	1%
47. The district effectively encourages staff to minimize utilities costs.	8%	52%	23%	14%	4%

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
48. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	4%	29%	44%	17%	5%
49. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school district.	4%	32%	34%	23%	7%

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
50. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	3%	16%	55%	19%	7%
51. School and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	4%	23%	62%	8%	3%
52. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	4%	25%	68%	2%	1%
53. The school district purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest cost.	3%	21%	52%	19%	5%
54. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	3%	23%	41%	23%	10%
55. The Finance department provides good value to our schools.	5%	21%	64%	8%	3%

TRANSPORTATION

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
56. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	6%	21%	21%	44%	8%
57. There are sufficient buses to meet extracurricular needs of students.	5%	37%	51%	5%	2%
58. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	1%	5%	46%	41%	8%
59. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	6%	43%	42%	7%	2%
60. Students do not feel safe riding school district buses.	1%	4%	48%	35%	12%
61. The Transportation department provides good value to our schools.	8%	49%	39%	3%	1%

FOOD SERVICES

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
62. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	7%	44%	18%	24%	7%
63. Vending machines are available to students during lunch periods.	3%	27%	33%	21%	15%
64. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	4%	38%	20%	31%	7%
65. Students often wait in line longer than five minutes to get their lunches.	11%	32%	34%	20%	3%
66. Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	4%	35%	49%	12%	0%
67. The Food Services department provides good value to our schools.	11%	47%	28%	9%	4%

TECHNOLOGY

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
68. Students regularly use computers and technology.	32%	56%	7%	4%	1%
69. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	28%	60%	10%	2%	1%
70. Teachers do not know how to use technology in the classroom.	3%	15%	21%	51%	11%
71. The district Web site is a useful tool.	8%	56%	22%	10%	4%
72. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	26%	50%	6%	13%	5%
73. The school district provides adequate instructional technology.	9%	51%	14%	20%	5%
74. The school district provides adequate administrative technology.	5%	29%	53%	10%	4%
75. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	14%	59%	6%	15%	5%
76. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are still paper-based.	3%	23%	54%	18%	2%
77. The Technology department provides good value to our schools.	19%	54%	20%	6%	2%

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

For questions 78 through 80, Prismatic reviewed all responses provided, using them to inform its on-site work and project research.

78. Where could the district be more efficient (spend less resources to get the same result)?
79. Where could the district be more effective (get better results, perhaps by spending the same resources)?
80. The Operational Audit will be looking at all areas of the district. Are there any areas to which you feel the review should pay special attention?

DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your current position category?

- 2% Central Office Administrator
- 5% Central Office Non-Certified Staff
- 3% School/Program Administrator
- 72% Certified Staff
- 18% Non-Certified Staff

How long have you been in your current position in the school district?

- 28% 1-5 Years
- 35% 6-10 years
- 18% 11-15 years
- 7% 16-20 years
- 12% 20+ years

How long have you worked in the school district?

- 21% 1-5 Years
- 29% 6-10 years
- 23% 11-15 years
- 10% 16-20 years
- 17% 20+ years

