

School Efficiency Review Program Protocol

**Virginia Department of Planning and Budget
Revised July 2009**

School Efficiency Review Program Protocol

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Changes to the School Efficiency Review Protocols

The following changes were made to the School Efficiency Review Protocol in July 2009:

- 1) Added a Table of Contents (TOC)
- 2) Formatted to achieve a standard look and feel throughout the document
- 3) Streamlined by reorganizing and eliminating duplicative and superfluous material
- 4) Facilities Use and Management was revised:
 - a. to include an examination of productivity reports
 - b. to include Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification data
 - c. to update the long-range facility master plan information to ten years, reflecting the new industry standard

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DIVISIONAL ADMINISTRATION

A division's governance structure, staff management, and planning process provide the foundation for effective and efficient education of students. The board and superintendent function as a leadership team to meet student needs. The board sets goals, objectives, and policies for school division operations and approves the plans and funding needed to achieve the division's goals and objectives. The superintendent manages division operations and recommends the staffing levels and amount of resources necessary to carry out the board goals and directives developed through the planning process.

The Divisional Administration chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 1.A. Division Management
- 1.B. Procedures
- 1.C. Planning and Evaluation

1.A. Division Management

While the board sets policy, the superintendent is responsible for carrying out that policy and managing the division in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible. The primary goal of division management is to facilitate and support the instruction of students by ensuring that every possible dollar and resource is directed into the classroom.

Data Needs

- Division wide organizational charts
- Administrative staffing reports, by location
- Division directory and division and departmental organizational charts
- Division budget broken down by fund, function, object and department for 3 years ()
- Salary information for central administration

Activities to Perform

- 1.A.1. Create or examine the organizational and staffing charts for the division and prepare a chart of job descriptions for key administrators. Interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the division and document if it has been changed recently or repeatedly in the recent past or is anticipated to change in the near future and explain the background for changes. Include any contracted individuals or services or committees that oversee cash management in the organizational chart

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and show the reporting relationship and who is responsible for monitoring the contracts.

- 1.A.2. Based upon the division's actual central office organizational structure and staffing, including support staff, prepare a written evaluation demonstrating whether the structure ensures:
- Appropriate spans of controls (giving particular attention to supervisory/staff ratios at all levels);
 - Clearly defined units and lines of authority that are reflected in both the division's organizational charts and job descriptions;
 - Minimal management layers that encourage communication and decision-making;
 - Direct and accessible support for all schools and auxiliary programs (including area supervision of feeder patterns of schools within larger divisions, as appropriate); and
 - Accountability at all levels within the organization.

Questions to Ask

Organizational structure

Does the division conduct periodic reviews to minimize administrative layers and processes?

Has the division clearly assigned authority to managers or administrators for the effective and efficient supervision of instruction, instructional support, and other assigned responsibilities, including consideration of the needs of schools throughout the division? How does the central administration support and facilitate the work of teachers and school administrators?

Is the approach used by the institution basically a centralized or decentralized structure? Why? What are the most likely reasons that have led to the approach being used? Is this the most appropriate, efficient, and effective method for this institution?

What authority is assigned to school administrators for the effective and efficient supervision of instruction, instructional support, including consideration of site-based decision-making, and other organizational alternatives?

Superintendent

Does the superintendent acknowledge his position as chief executive officer for the division by:

- Making recommendations for all personnel actions based on input from school administrators or other appropriate staff?

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- Making other recommendations to the board regarding operation of the division including an annual budget?
- Attending all meetings of the board?
- Recommending policies to the board?
- Implementing adopted board policies?
- Establishing a process to communicate regularly with the board to keep them informed of division activities?
- Delegating authority when appropriate?
- Coordinating the implementation of procedures regarding division operations?
- Identifying and sustaining division performance objectives, such as meeting annual progress expectations or balancing the budget?
- Does the superintendent actively participating in local, regional, and national school administration associations?

Administrative and Board Support

What is the board's role in decision-making? What is the superintendent's role? How and where are these roles and responsibilities documented? How does the division insure that everyone understands their role and responsibility in the process?

How do the board and superintendent strive to decentralize decisions to the school level and solicit the input of stakeholders in the decision making process?

Should some decisions be more centralized to support increased efficiency? How does the central office provide support systems to meet the diverse needs of the schools? What central systems are duplicative or unnecessary? How does the central office evaluate its effectiveness in facilitating the needs of school administrators and teachers?

How do area superintendents or other administrators between the central office and the schools fit into the decision making process?

How does the division insure that division- and school-level planning and decision-making includes:

- Professional staff
- Parents of students enrolled in the division
- Community members
- Business and industry representatives

What division and school policies and procedures are established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations? How frequently does the superintendent consult with the division- and school-level committees (if applicable) in the

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planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the division and school educational programs?

How are the school- and division-level planning and decision-making committees' if applicable, (and other committees) involved in:

- Planning?
- Budgeting?
- Curriculum?
- Staffing patterns?
- Staff development?
- School organization?

Was a division-level committee involved in establishing the administrative procedure that defines the respective roles and responsibilities related to planning and decision-making at the division and school levels?

How are the division- and school-level committees involved in the following:

- Developing an appraisal process and performance criteria for teacher appraisals
- Providing advice on a student code of conduct for the division
- Describing any waiver process
- Determining the use of the funds awarded to a school
- Developing and approving staff development related to achieving school performance objectives?

How do policies, procedures and practices ensure consistent compliance and commitment to:

- Legally established and staffed committees at each school and at the division level?
- Effective school and school division planning to improve student performance?
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities?
- Community and parental involvement in the school improvement process?
- Clearly established accountability parameters for student performance?
- Improved communication and information flow?
- Consensus-based, decision-making?
- Pervasive and long-range commitment to implementation?
- Flexibility at the school level in the allocation and use of both human and fiscal resources?

Does the decision-making process produce increased staff productivity and satisfaction and less teacher turnover?

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Does the decision making process have the support of both the school board and the superintendent? How much time is spent changing role definitions, training school division staff, educating the community, establishing objectives, developing and implementing programs and monitoring program success? Do schools have access to accurate information so that they can establish objectives and develop and implement programs to meet those objectives?

What differences exist between central office and school perceptions of how decisions are made? Are there instances where too much flexibility in decision-making was a detriment to operating efficiency (e.g., types of computers to buy, bus and lunch schedules)? If so, explain. What instances exist where central office exerted too much control over teaching methods and other operational matters and stifled creativity?

Do principals develop their respective school's decision-making policies and procedures as well as its school improvement plan? How do teachers, parents, students, and community representatives provide input for their respective school's decision-making policies and procedures and school improvement plan?

Are goals determined on a school level from a school needs assessment and outcome data?

Are activities based on goals and are they initiated and directed by the school staff with measurable outcomes? To what extent is budget development and allocation of resources school-controlled?

Are staff selection criteria guided by standards developed by a school within the context of state and division guidelines? Is the school organizational structure arranged functionally to encourage and facilitate shared decision-making and input?

To what extent do the division's policies and procedures support and sustain the capacity of the school site leadership and teachers to focus on academic achievement?

Is there a gap in perceptions about how decisions are made in the school system? How well does the division articulate where decisions are made? How is this communicated?

1.B. Procedures

Effective school management is built on sound, clearly written and legally valid policies. The Virginia Department of Education mandates that each school board adopt policies governing the operation of its schools and make them accessible to

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all school division employees and the public. Procedures on the other hand show division employees how to carry out the policies in their various organizational units.

Well-written and organized procedures:

- implement and assure compliance with board policies as well as documenting the intent of those policies;
- protect the institutional knowledge of an organization, so that as experienced employees leave, new employees have the benefit of the others' years of experience;
- provide the basis for training new employees; and
- offer a tool for evaluating employees based on their adherence to procedures.

Administrative procedures should be formally documented, with each administrator held responsible for creating and maintaining understandable, cross-referenced procedures.

Data Needs

- Any administrative procedures manuals for key functions of the division's operations
- Copies of handbooks, memos or other internal documents used by staff in key functional areas to carry out routine processes such as business operations, human resources functions, purchasing and the like.

Activities to Perform

- 1.B.1. Review the administrative procedures or regulations and prepare a chart by functional area showing which functions have procedures that are formally documented, are linked directly to board policy or state laws by reference, are current (show date of last update) and are complete (cover all key processes performed in the department or by the function. Note what processes are not included in the procedure. If a formal procedure manual is not available, show by functional area what is used by staff as a reference to ensure that all duties are carried out in compliance with the law and division policy.
- 1.B.2. Diagram the process used by the division to update and monitor division procedures including staff area responsible for each step along the way. Include a list of locations where procedure manuals are available.

Questions to Ask

How does management ensure that policies are translated into operating procedures and are adhered to? Do administrators review and update

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administrative regulations and procedures annually or on some other cycle? Who is responsible for ensuring that each department or operating unit develops procedures? How are documented procedures used to train new staff or cross-train existing staff on the processes?

What formal staff training is provided on division administrative regulations procedures?

Is there a process for procedure revision that is clearly defined and allows for staff input? What evidence exists to show that the system is working as it was intended? What internal or external audit findings have identified internal control weaknesses or violations of laws or policies? How have procedures been modified to insure that those instances do not recur?

How are revised policies incorporated into operating procedures? How frequently are employee, parent, and student handbooks revised to reflect changes in policy or procedure? How are users informed of changes in policy and consequently procedures (i.e., changes in purchasing procedures could impact school staff as well as vendors)?

1.C. Planning and Evaluation

The purpose of the division improvement plan is to guide division and school staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups and to attain state standards for the state academic excellence indicators. The division improvement plan must be supportive of the objectives of the school improvement plan and must, at a minimum, support the state goals and objectives for education that are identified in the Code of Virginia.

Each school year the principal of each school with the assistance of the school-level committee, must develop, review, and revise the school improvement plan. The purpose of this plan is to improve student performance on the state's academic excellence indicators for all student populations, as well as improve performance on any other performance measures for special needs populations. The school improvement plan must support the objectives of the division improvement plan and must, at a minimum, support the state goals and objectives for education. At least every two years, each division must evaluate the effectiveness of the division's decision-making and planning policies, procedures and staff development activities related to division- and school-level decision-making and planning to ensure that they are structured effectively to positively impact student performance.

A division with a strategic plan that has received broad-based input and has well defined goals will be better able to attain state standards in respect to academic excellence indicators. Evaluation of a division's programs allows the board and administrators to gauge the success of each program by determining if key

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objectives and results were obtained and if the benefits merit the costs. Planned programmatic changes can then be made based on those results.

Data Needs

- Division mission, strategic plan and goals
- Description of the strategic planning process
- Copies of all planning documents including Division owned sites and growth projections specific to each attendance area in the division
- Program evaluation schedule
- Copies of all external audits, reviews, reports, surveys and survey results submitted by outside consultants in the past three to five years.

Activities to Perform

- 1.C.1. Using copies of all division planning documents determine the nature and scope of each plan, the time frame of the plan, the individual or groups that prepared the plan and the process by which the plan was developed.
- 1.C.2. Using the compiled planning documents, create a chart to show whether each plan contains board approved goals, objectives, implementation strategies, assignments of responsibilities, links to the annual budget, annual monitoring activities and the like. In addition, evaluate how the goals, objectives, and strategies of each plan are linked to each other and the budget, the assignment of responsibility for implementation and the process by which the plan's implementation is monitored.
- 1.C.3. Diagram the process used to formally or informally evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, progress toward goals or the implementation of plans. Include in this the results of any external audits and how the board and administration have responded to any findings. Determine what staff performs specific evaluations, whether the evaluations are required by state or federal law, whether evaluation activities are prioritized and if so, by what methodology (e.g., board policy, student needs, etc.) and how the results are used to modify strategies and ultimately achieve division goals.

Questions to Ask

Strategic Planning

Are the goals of peripheral plans compatible with the Strategic Plan? Is the division improvement plan aligned with school improvement plan, if applicable? Does the Budget reflect Goals, Strategic Plan, Facility Plan, Technology Plan, etc.? (Facility Plan and Technology Plan should be addressed in more detail in their respective chapters.)

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Does the board establish annual goals and undertake a formal planning process? Do the board and superintendent conduct annual goal setting and planning sessions? Is the board involved in adopting annual goals to improve the division's programs and operations?

How are division plans and goals publicized? Is the division reviewing progress of goal achievement regularly, or at least once a year? Is a priority placed on instructional program goals and student achievement goals? Are essential resources dedicated for goal achievement?

Are the Board of Education, superintendent and other administrative staff involved in developing a multi-year strategic plan for the division? Does strategic planning include these components: general administration, education (including instruction), evaluation and student services, business operations, personnel operations, communications, and parent and community involvement?

Are demographic projections collected from verifiable sources? Do plans include full disclosure of the fiscal impact of policy or programmatic changes? Has the division done a future needs analysis and an evaluation of future capability in each functional area? Is there a documented process for measuring progress toward its goals? Are there direct ties to annual budgets? Does the system of annual reviews and updates keep pace with ever changing needs?

Division and School Improvement Plans

Is there a division improvement plan? Is there a school improvement plan? If so, how do they specifically address the following:

- Resources needed to implement identified strategies, including:
 - supplemental personnel attributed to state compensatory education and accelerated instruction?
 - supplemental direct costs attributed to state compensatory education?
- Identify staff needed to implement the plan?

How was the school-level committee involved in developing and approving the portions of the school plan that address school staff development needs?

Does each school have a school improvement plan? If not, why not (small divisions with only one school may not be required to have a school and a division improvement plan)? How is the state compensatory education program described in the school improvement plan, if the program is implemented at the school level? How is the program described in the division improvement plan, if the state compensatory education program is implemented division wide?

How effective is the division/school improvement plan in providing the primary record supporting expenditures attributed to the state compensatory education

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program, as required by law? What were the findings of the most recent external audit report on compensatory funds?

Evaluation

Does the division regularly review and use evaluation results to improve the performance and cost efficiency of its major educational and operational programs? Are these evaluations used when deciding to keep or replace educational programs?

How and when does the division provide to stakeholders school and division report cards, as required by federal law? How have state compensatory education resources been redirected when evaluations indicate that programs and/or services are unsuccessful in producing desired results for students at risk of dropping out of school?

How and when does the division distribute SOL test results to ensure that parents have the information before the beginning of the next academic year? Does the division identify those schools in need of improvement, based on the SOLs results and offer parents and students supplemental educational services, school choice and transportation as required under federal law?

When and how does the division provide to parents information about their student's teacher, including the teacher's qualifications, as required by federal law?

How and when does the board monitor the academic standing of schools in relation to federal requirements? Are plans in place to provide mandated technical assistance to schools identified for improvement? Are plans in place to provide mandated corrective actions for schools that have failed to improve after four years?

How are non-educational programs evaluated? Does the board conduct an annual self-evaluation? Does the division regularly evaluate the food service program based on established benchmarks and implement improvements to increase revenue and reduce costs? Does the division regularly monitor and evaluate its self-insurance program to ensure the feasibility of its self-insured coverage?

Do locally developed board policies require division management to conduct periodic program evaluations? Is a program evaluation schedule presented annually to the Board?

Are long-range plans for program evaluation reviewed and revised annually?

Is there a periodic review of all division programs? Are procedures for review and evaluation of division programs and services published and disseminated?

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Are evaluations of program and services reviewed with staff before the next year's planning process? Are program and services evaluation results shared with the Board and where appropriate, advisory committees? Is cost data reviewed and compared with program and service objectives and results?

What is the decision making process regarding the types and number of internal/external special audits completed each year? How does the board and administration ensure that they receive an annual external audit and use the audit to improve operations?

What reports have been prepared by external groups? How are the results tracked and reported? Has the division established and implemented strategies to continually assess the reliability of its data?

Are customer satisfaction (internal and external) surveys conducted by the division?

Does the division make itself accountable to parents and other taxpayers by:

Having clearly stated goals and measurable objectives for its major educational and operational programs?

Using appropriate performance and measures to evaluate its major educational and operational programs and using these in management decision-making?

Setting performance benchmarks for its major educational and operational programs that may include appropriate standards from comparable school divisions, government agencies, and private industry?

Reporting on the performance and cost efficiency of its major educational and operational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers?

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EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Above all else, school divisions must provide high quality educational services. Having adequate processes in place to identify student educational needs, providing for those needs, and measuring performance as a result of these programs represents the most vital mission for every school division. Educational service delivery includes the provision of programs for students with special needs as well as careful adherence to other state and federal mandates concerning curriculum.

The Educational Service Delivery chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 2.A. Organization and Management
- 2.B. School Administration and Decision-Making
- 2.C. Curriculum Policies and Management
- 2.D. Special Programs
 - 2.D.a Bilingual Education/ English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - 2.D.b Gifted and Talented Education

2.A. Organization and Management

For curriculum to be successfully delivered across all grade levels and to children with varied needs, the organization must be appropriately aligned. Staffing must be sufficient to provide services to the children at each grade level and area of need, but staffing must expand and contract based on student enrollments not only at the division level, but also within each grade and program. The system must recognize the need for support services for instructional staff, such as technical support and training for teachers i.e. technology used in the classrooms, as well as the need for resources to support specific courses and programs.

Data Needs

- Organizational chart for all educational delivery functions
- Division-wide list of instructional personnel by program
- School-level staffing by category of employee, for each school
- School budgets for current and preceding year including updates

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Activities to Perform

- 2.A.1. Examine the organizational and staffing charts and job descriptions for the curriculum and instruction functions and interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department(s). Include any contracted individuals, services or committees that oversee curriculum and instruction in the organizational chart and show the reporting relationship and who is responsible for monitoring the contracts.
- 2.A.2. Prepare a chart by school showing the number of principals, assistant principals, counselors, secretaries, clerks, and other school administrative staff. Compare the staffing levels by school and grade level with staffing standards, such as but not limited to those used in the SOQ. Identify variances and through interviews seek to determine the reason for those differences.
- 2.A.3. Create a chart of staff (including principals, assistant principals, counselors, teachers, librarians, teacher aides, and nurses) to student ratios including the division under review, their peer divisions, and statewide data. Examine staff allocations to determine if they are in line with their peers and/or the state.

Questions to Ask

Organization

How does the current organizational structure support instruction? Encourage cross-functional and interdisciplinary cooperation? Provide support for classroom teachers? Facilitate the needs of school-based staff? Where does the system break down? What efforts have been made in recent years to improve the structure? Are the responsibilities of central office staff clearly defined? Are the responsibilities of school-based personnel clearly defined? What evidence indicates collaboration between instructional and non-instructional groups with the technology function, to insure that technology supports the organization and its goals?

How does communication flow from the central office to the schools and vice versa? At what points in the process is communication hampered or enhanced? How could obstacles to communication be overcome? What formal and informal mechanisms exist to ensure good communication?

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Budgets and Staff Allocations

How is staff allocated to the schools including principals, assistant principals, counselors, teachers, librarians, teacher aides, and nurses? Does the division have a targeted student teacher and staff-student ratios for the division? For schools? For each grade-level? Are these ratios based upon a division goal or strategy? Are staffing ratios equitable between schools serving similar grade levels?

Is there a direct correlation between higher than average staffing levels at specific schools and higher than average numbers of special needs students? Is the staffing equitable from school to school? Are inequities explained by the special needs of the student population at those schools with higher allocations of resources?

Does the division have endorsed teachers for all courses and grade levels? When endorsed teachers are not available, how does the division fill the positions? Does the division have strategies in place to recruit and retain teachers in critical shortage areas?

Does the division assign extra days to administrators such as assistant principals or professionals such as diagnosticians? If so, what does this staff do on the assigned extra days (for example, sometimes assistant principals distribute textbooks during the summer as part of their extra days)? How does the division justify these extra assignments?

How are instructional supplies and materials (other than textbooks) allocated to schools? Do schools have an opportunity to give input about their needs? Does each school have Internet connectivity so that statewide databases such as encyclopedias and various catalogs of information can be easily accessed? If not, why not?

Do schools have flexibility in the use of budgeted funds? How are school employee salaries budgeted? Centrally? Or at the school level?

How are school budgets monitored? How are school administrators held accountable for their budgets? How are site-based decision-making committees used in the school budget planning process?

Teaching Loads

Does the division offer classes based upon expressed interest or needs of students, parents, or businesses in the community?

How do principals and central administration review teacher's schedules/assignments to ensure maximum use of instructional personnel?

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Substitute Teachers

Do board policies outline minimum requirements for long and short-term substitute teachers?

Does the division provide written notice to parents when long-term substitutes or non-endorsed teachers are in the classroom for longer than 30 days? How much is the division spending and/or budgeting annually for substitutes? Are substitutes tracked by school? How does the division procure substitutes? Do they have an automated or call-in system? Are there any difficulties getting substitutes?

2.B. School Administration and Decision-Making

Schools are the core of the educational process in a school division. The school is where instruction takes place and principals and teachers are the key to an effective instructional system. Principals must effectively and efficiently manage budgets, personnel, and instructional programs and are being held more and more accountable for improving student performance in a high stakes testing environment.

Each school division utilizes a division and school-level planning and decision-making process. This process involves professional staff of the division, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the division's and schools' educational plans, goals, performance objectives and major classroom instructional programs.

Data Needs

- School directories
- Division and school improvement plans
- Site-based decision-making team membership and membership criteria
- Policies, procedures, and training documents and committee operations, if applicable.
- A listing, if applicable of division and school committees and members showing each committee's configuration, members addresses and phone numbers.

Activities to Perform

- 2.B.1. Diagram the school-level budgeting process and identify components over which the school administrators and site-based committees have some oversight or control. Note areas of concern or strength in the process.

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- 2.B.2. Prepare a chart (or obtain a copy of any division documentation) showing the role of the board, superintendent, key administrators, area superintendents, or other that work with and between the central office and the schools. Determine whether these administrators exercise authority consistently and whether their authority is commensurate with their responsibility.
- 2.B.3. Compile a chart listing the decision-making (ers) policies, procedures, and handbooks. Show how and if each of these documents complies with state laws and if they are clear and understandable, provide guidance and direction to individuals at all levels of the organization and clearly establish accountability parameters for student performance. Through interviews, determine whether these policies, procedures, and guidelines are being consistently followed and are well understood.
- 2.B.4. Examine the role of site-based decision-making committees, principals, and central office staff. Examine division and school improvement plans to determine if they are being used as an organizational tool in this process. Show the timeframe for each step in the process and note any areas where delays are typically encountered, where communication has broken down, or where other problems have been encountered.

Questions to Ask

Budgets and Staff Allocations

How are budgets allocated to individual schools? How are instructional supplies and materials (other than textbooks) allocated to schools? Do schools have an opportunity to give input about their needs? How does the division ensure the equitable distribution of resources per pupil, grade level, and subject matter? Do the schools maintain an inventory of instructional materials and supplies?

Do schools have flexibility in the use of budgeted funds? How are school employee salaries budgeted? What autonomy does the school principal have over non-personnel expenditures?

How are school budgets monitored? How are school administrators held accountable for their budgets? How are committees used in the school budget planning process?

2.C. Curriculum Policies and Management

For instructional systems to achieve their stated goals, the written, taught and tested curricula must be closely connected. Designing curriculum, guiding

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teaching, and maximizing student achievement is a challenge facing principals, curriculum directors, and classroom teachers because the basic curriculum design and alignment can and will impact student achievement.

Data Needs

- List of all board policies and internal procedures relating to instructional programs (originals made available for examination during on-site)
- Description of the curriculum development cycle
- School and district improvement plans as they pertain to curriculum management
- Long-range plans that address curriculum management or technology integration in the classroom

Activities to Perform

- 2.C.1. Examine the curriculum guide development and update schedule, if available and prepare a diagram or process flow chart showing the operational steps in the curriculum creation or update process.
- 2.C.2. Prepare a list of all board policy on curriculum management and development. Note areas of concern and attempt to identify how this may or may not have affected instructional activities.

Questions to Ask

Curriculum Development

Which teachers participate in scheduled curriculum updates? How are special population teachers or coordinators used in the development process? Is the curriculum regularly evaluated and updated by staff members who use the guides and by administrators responsible for curriculum management? If not, why not?

How are resources from the state or any other education service centers used to develop district instructional guides?

Does the curriculum align with the state Standards of Learning? How has this been verified?

What procedures does the district have in place for the creation or modification of curriculum? Is an advisory committee used to assist in this process?

Is the curriculum reviewed/revised as part of the annual planning and budgeting process? How are resource personnel such as the instructional staff used to provide input in their area of expertise?

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Curriculum Policy

Does the district have board policy on curriculum development and management?
When was it last reviewed?

How does the board ensure that district administrators adhere to the district's curriculum review schedule? How does the board policy and board as a whole ensure or verify that curriculum is aligned with the SOLs?

What training has the board or superintendent had in curriculum issues in the last two years?

Curriculum Management

Is periodic monitoring accomplished through reviews of lesson plans, regular meeting with grade level teams, observation, etc.? If not, why not?

Has the district provided for a master schedule for updating all curriculum guides?

Do building level administrators regularly observe teachers to monitor teaching of the approved curriculum? Are teachers given feedback regarding instructional progress? How is observation and monitoring of classroom instruction and student performance used to modify the curriculum or improve teaching techniques?

2.D. Special Programs

All divisions are faced with the challenge of providing programs for students with special needs. These programs allow a division to provide educational programs that are most beneficial for individual students in terms of instructional level, student interest, and/or identified need. Many of these programs may be combined with regular classroom programs (based on individual needs) that provide for a more complete education and integration with other students. The special programs examined here include:

- Special Education
- Bilingual Education
- Gifted and Talented Programs

Included in the examination are assessment programs, program monitoring, cost analysis, interface with regular programs, parental/community involvement and program evaluation.

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Data Needs

- Strategic, school and division improvement plans as they relate to special programs
- School and Division Report Cards
- Number of children served by each special program, for the last three years, as well as the academic performance of students in each program
- Budget information for each special program for last three years
- Staffing information for each special program for last three years
- Any division compliance reports issued in the last five years
- Program evaluations, either external or internal, done in the last three to five years

Activities to Perform

- 2.D.1. Chart the budgets and staffing of each special program. If available chart the budgets and staffing in each special program over time and show percent change as compared to percent change in student enrollment in each special program.
- 2.D.2. Examine special program strategic plans. Compare plans to any program evaluations done internally or externally to determine whether the strategic goals are consistent, appropriate and achieving the desired results.

Questions to Ask

Number and Type of Students Served

What special programs are growing in the number or percent of students served?
What special programs are declining in number or percent of students served?
Why is this happening? What special programs serve students that are demographically disproportionate to the overall student population of the division? Why? What is being done to ensure that students are served equitably in all special programs?

Organization

How does the current organizational structure support special programs?
Encourage cross-functional and interdisciplinary cooperation? Provide support for classroom teachers? Facilitate the needs of school-based staff? Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations? Where does the system break down? What efforts have been made in recent years to improve the structure and ensure that schools and particularly teachers have what they need to be successful?

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Budgets and Staffing

How are budgets and staffing allocations made to insure equity? How are budgets and staffing formulas linked to the actual number of students served?

2.D.a Bilingual Education/ English as a Second Language (ESL)

Data Needs

- ESL referral numbers
- ESL parent waiver/denial numbers
- Any program evaluation data
- SL grant applications and awards

Questions to Ask

What grade levels have more than 20 students that require services? Is the division complying with the requirements in law to provide services to these students? If not, why not? If the division has an enrollment of less than 20 children in any one grade level that require these services, what services are provided?

Are parents notified that they can remove their child from LEP programs at any time, as required by federal law? Has the division obtained the signed parental authorization. If not, why not?

What grade levels offer bilingual education? What grade levels offer ESL?

What percentage of bilingual/ESL students are also receiving special education services? How are these students served?

How do student assessment programs evaluate student needs for bilingual programs and services? How are community and home surveys completed to determine present and future student needs?

Are there specific criteria adopted for exiting students from bilingual programs? Are criteria consistently applied and do students regularly exit the programs in a timely manner? For students exiting from the bilingual program to the regular curriculum does the division review and monitor student's progress with:

- student exit data reviewed and evaluated?
- bilingual program objectives developed to ensure student success in English speaking classes?

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Does the division track bilingual student's academic performance over time to assess the programs effectiveness? Are bilingual students offered instructional programs that keep them on grade level expectations? Review exemption percentages for students in bilingual education.

How are parents involved with the bilingual programs? Is parent input solicited on the bilingual education program? Does the division have a bilingual advisory committee that includes parent representatives? How many parents request a waiver or deny student entry into BE/ESL programs when students qualify?

Are parents offered ESL classes or other services to allow them to help in their child's education? Does the division offer interpreters to non-English speaking parents to promote communication, especially during parent conferences? Are printed communications with parents provided in their home language, when feasible?

Do the bilingual program instructional materials meet the division's needs with the division maintaining an inventory of bilingual material?

What bilingual resources are available in the libraries? How are these resources allocated? What library resources are available to parents for check out and home use, if any?

Has the division established a plan to employ trained bilingual teachers to meet program needs by cooperating with a university and other staff development programs to train bilingual teachers? Does the division have a formalized recruiting process to hire bilingual teachers? Are stipends or other incentives paid to encourage teachers to seek certification?

Is there an ongoing staff development program for teachers in bilingual and regular classes impacted by bilingual students, as required by federal law? Does the division provide staff development in bilingual education for administrators, counselors, and teachers? Does staff attend staff development activities offered by professional associations and others?

2.D.b Gifted and Talented Education

Data Needs

- Documentation of administrator and teacher annual training hours
- Division's G/T plan
- Assessment instruments and procedures used for identification of gifted students
- GT curriculum K-12

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Questions to Ask

Are gifted and talented programs offered at each grade level in the division? Why or why not?

How does the division assess and identify gifted and talented students? Are students in the program representative of the ethnic population in the division? Do the division's criteria for student placement in the program support diversity? How are bilingual/ESL students assessed for gifted education? Are students in special education afforded G/T opportunities? Adequately represented?

Do the gifted and talented program instructional materials meet the division's needs with:

- instructional materials readily available to ensure success of the program?
- program staff available to present the purpose and planned use of special materials?
- an inventory of instructional material maintained and periodically updated?
- surveys to gather feedback?

How do librarians and teacher collaborate to meet gifted student's' needs? What resources are available in libraries that will challenge gifted students?

Has the division provided for advanced placement or international baccalaureate courses when justified by student enrollment? What is participation rate? What is success rate? To what extent does the division supplement program and testing costs for economically disadvantaged students?

Does the level of instructional staff in the gifted and talented program meet division needs? Does the division follow state guidelines for staff training and certification?

What mechanisms does the division use for parent outreach? Do parents have input into the gifted and talented program through:

- parent participation in the program advisory committee?
- parent meetings held to discuss the program?
- incorporating parent issues and concerns into future planning sessions?

Are gifted and talented programs evaluated with:

- an annual review and evaluation of programs?
- student progress assessed and analyzed?
- program revisions based upon evaluations?

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HUMAN RESOURCES

Elementary and secondary education is a labor-intensive undertaking. Labor costs consume approximately 80 percent of the average school division budget. Consequently, appropriately managing personnel is a critical function for a school division. To be effective and efficient, school divisions must hire the right number of employees with the right qualifications and credentials to fill each position in the division. Further, employees must be adequately compensated, given opportunities for training and must have access to benefits and services, including grievance and conflict resolution services, to insure that morale and productivity remain high.

The terms "*personnel*" and "*human resources*" are often used interchangeably. Personnel management was historically limited to the performance of administrative processes and procedures such as hiring and maintaining employee records. Today, personnel functions have evolved into a broader category of services that are provided under a wide variety of complex employment laws.

The Human Resources chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 3.A. Organization and Management
- 3.B. Policies and Procedures
- 3.C. Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention
- 3.D. Staff Development
- 3.E. Compensation and Classification Systems

3.A. Organization and Management

School divisions vary in how they organize and manage human resources functions. Some divisions have Staff Development and Benefits Departments within Human Resources, while others task them out to departments outside of Human Resources. In some divisions the superintendent and his or her secretary handle every function with only minimal assistance from school staff. Every division is different and the size and complexity of the division often dictates the organizational structure that works best for each division

The human resource function is generally responsible for recruiting employees; overseeing the interviewing, selection and processing of new employees; retaining employees; processing promotions, transfers and resignations; determining and maintaining compensation schedules; planning and forecasting personnel needs; maintaining complete employee records; developing and maintaining job descriptions; managing the employee evaluation process; handling employee complaints and grievances; developing personnel policies; and ensuring that related laws and regulations are followed.

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Data Needs

Current HR organizational and functional chart(s)
List of HR staff, showing classification, job title and salary
HR Strategic plan or department goals, objectives and mission statement
Performance measures

Activities to Perform

- 3.A.1. Diagram hiring practices and recruiting methods of the school division. Identify the departments, programs, or practices that are being successful and those where improvement may be necessary.
- 3.A.2. Create or review HR organizational and functional charts. Also note if there are vacancies and whether the turnover rate among HR staff is in line with other areas of the division's operation.
- 3.A.3. Prepare a chart showing the departmental budget for the last three years broken out by category and function where possible and identify trends. Where significant variances are identified, seek to locate the reason for the change through staff interviews.
- 3.A.4. Examine all HR planning documents or other documents that provide goals, objectives, and a mission statement for the department or function. Compile a list of the goals, objectives, and performance measures contained in those documents and determine whether the department or function's goals are clearly defined, applicable and whether the department is meeting its goals for HR.

Organization

Who heads the HR division? In smaller divisions, is there a position designated to coordinate and/or perform HR administrative duties? How and where are functions that relate to HR such as payroll, ADA, FMLA, EEO and benefits, aligned within the overall division organization? What is the staffing configuration of the HR division? What functions does HR support? How are other HR-related functions coordinated and administered by the division? What are some of the essential job duties performed by HR staff and management?

Who does the top level HR administrator, manager, or director report to? Are functions assigned to HR that do not directly related to personnel and HR services? If so what, and why? What HR-related functions does the business office perform? How is information related to leave, overtime, contracts, payroll, etc. communicated between schools and central office?

Which HR functions are centralized and which are decentralized, or partially decentralized? Are any of the existing HR functions in process of being centralized, or decentralized? What is the business reason(s) for the change in

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practice? How do the HR division and manager partner with administrators and other HR customers to provide services, administer programs, and add value?

What legal advice does the division receive relative to more complex and sensitive HR management issues and policies? Is the division's attorney experienced in public sector legal issues, education, and employment laws?

Departmental Staffing and Qualifications

Does the HR function have sufficient employees to get the job done? How do staffing levels within the HR office compare to those of peer divisions? To industry standards?

What special qualifications do employees in the HR office possess? How do the employees qualifications, education, and certifications make them uniquely qualified to do what they are doing? What skill sets are missing or are needed to round out the HR team?

Do job descriptions exist for all HR staff? If not, why not? Which job descriptions are outdated and which are current? What recent events could have impacted the accuracy of job descriptions?

Continuing Education

What training does staff in HR receive to better understand current and emerging developments in the HR profession? How does HR staff serve as resources to customer divisions in various HR matters? Are employees in the division cross-trained? Is staff familiar with the application document flow and procedures in order to prevent slowdown during employee absences?

To what extent do HR staff participate in workshops, conferences, seminars, read professional literature and interact with other HR staff in both public and private sectors to improve job performance and add value to the division?

Budgets

What is the HR division's current budget? How does the current budget compare to the three previous years? How are departmental expenditures planned and controlled? Does the funding allow for legally compliant HR programs and services?

Planning and Evaluation

What are the department's quality improvement initiatives? When was the last time that a user survey or other feedback mechanism was used to gauge the level of customer satisfaction with the function?

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3.B. Policies and Procedures

All school divisions and most employers are required to comply with various state, federal and local laws. Many employer policies and procedures are based on such laws.

Policies and procedures inform staff about workplace rules and employee rights and responsibilities. Without documentation, the division may be at risk of inequitably treating individual employees or employees may argue that they had no knowledge of the rules and regulations and therefore cannot be held accountable for their actions.

Data Needs

- Employee handbook(s) or on-line guides for employees
- Board policies relating to employees or human resource functions
- Copy of HR administrative procedures
- New-hire employee paperwork and required forms
- Copies of form created or used to administer HR functions

Questions to Ask

Policies

Are there written policies that staff requests for reasonable accommodation in employment under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA); staff discipline; Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA); and absenteeism? Do the policies designate or identify positions responsible for ADA, FMLA, and EEO coordination?

Is there a policy governing sexual harassment and other inappropriate workplace behaviors? Is there a defined and specific complaint procedure for staff to follow to report sexual harassment allegations and other allegations of inappropriate workplace behavior(s)?

How often does the local school? or state education board review personnel-related policies? What is the role of HR staff and division administration in the review and revision process? How are division policies communicated and distributed to staff? Do employees acknowledge signed receipt of division policies during the course of employment with the division?

Does HR provide any policy training for managers and employees? When were the divisions HR policies last updated and/or revised? Are policies available online? If policies are online, how does HR ensure that all employees, regardless of position function have access to a computer and the online policies?

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What process is in place relative to employee allegations of sexual harassment and/or other inappropriate workplace conduct? Is there a distinction of inappropriate workplace behavior that would not be considered sexually harassing conduct under the law? What are the consequences for non-compliance?

Are EEO Charges and employee requests for reasonable accommodation in employment included as part of HR's performance measures reporting?

What is the process for an employee to file a grievance and/or internal complaint? Is the process the same for sexual harassment allegations and complaints? Is there a timeline to final decision on employee grievances?

Has HR developed uniform correspondence for COBRA and FMLA notifications; how do both of those notifications to employees and former employees work?

What is the division's practice for any employee requests for co-worker representation during investigatory and/or fact-finding interviews?

HR Administrative Procedures

How do administrative procedures prevent the hiring of unqualified candidates? How are administrative procedures linked to applicable law or policy? What checks and balances exist within the department or function to prevent the release of confidential information?

Employee Policy or Procedure Manuals

How are employees provided a copy of the policies and procedures? Who is responsible for updating employee policies and handbooks? How are employees made aware of changes to HR policy? How is other HR news communicated regularly to staff?

Does the division maintain a staff directory (either electronically or in hardcopy)?

New Hire Materials

Does the division conduct orientation on HR policies for new employees? Are newly hired employees provided the opportunity to decline disclosure of personal addresses and phone numbers?

3.C. Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

Recruiting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified staff at all levels of the division's operations, particularly classroom teachers, is often a challenging task. Yet,

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highly qualified and experienced staff can positively impact productivity and student performance.

Data Needs

- Recruitment plans and strategies
- Recruitment budget for last three years
- Record of recruitment trips and results for last three years
- Benefits handout/packet used to recruit and hire
- Hiring policies and procedures
- New employee orientation schedule and agenda
- Sample orientation materials and/or packet
- Staff turnover by job category and school or department
- Exit interview reports, data and trend analyses
- Organizational health or other employee satisfaction surveys administered in the last three years
- List of any employee retention strategies being employed by the division
- Orientation materials and for teachers and substitute teachers
- Policies and pay scales for teachers and substitute teachers, and call in procedures for substitute teachers

Activities to Perform

- 3.C.1. Review the division's recruitment plan, practices, records, and budget. Show the timing of the events and, to the extent possible, determine how the personnel involved and the timing of the events contributes to or deters the division in recruiting highly qualified applicants. If different recruitment practices are used for different categories of employees, note the differences or if the practices vary extensively, prepare a separate diagram for each category.
- 3.C.2. Prepare exhibit showing employee turnover rates by functional area for the past three years by department or staffing category, as applicable. Explore and note the reason for any higher-than-average turnover rates.
- 3.C.3. Compile a list of the efforts being used in the division to retain employees, whether formal or informal (i.e., competitive salaries, organizational health surveys, absentee prevention programs, mentoring arrangements, etc.). Note how these strategies are impacting turnover, particularly areas identified above as experiencing higher than average turnover.
- 3.C.4. List key employee recognition programs administered and/or facilitated by the division and determine whether the programs recognize and/or reward safety, increased productivity, customer service, attendance, or otherwise add value to the division's business objectives.
- 3.C.5. Examine the procedures for teacher and substitute teacher recruitment, training, assignment (including daily call-in procedures for substitute teachers), and

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evaluation. Through interviews with both school and central office staff, determine what aspects of the process are working and what points in the process cause concern or disruption.

Questions to Ask

Recruitment

What are the division's primary recruitment sources? How are recruitment targets identified by HR? Is advertising used? What sources and resources are used for advertising? Is there a recruitment budget? Is there a written recruitment plan and/or a workforce plan? How are recruitment activities and/or programs financed? How does the division measure the success of its recruiting efforts? How does the division maintain professional relationships with placement offices, faculty members, and officials of colleges and universities? Does the division have strategies to address teacher shortages in specific areas such as math, science, bilingual, and special education? Do recruiters have the authority to extend offers to candidates on recruitment trips? Does the division hire to a pool of vacancies or is hiring done on a one-on-one basis? Do HR staff, including recruiters request and review documentation from applicants such as an employment application, transcripts and other documents that might reasonably establish an applicant's credentials, experience and qualifications for a position in the division?

Is there any college recruitment practice? Are recruitment incentives being used? Are there recruitment brochures and/or handouts in use? Is there an HR career or job Web page for the division? Are there formal programs or working relationships with teacher programs or colleges at Virginia institutions of higher education? Are there tuition loan abatement programs utilized to attract and retain prospective teachers?

How does the division market itself to prospective applicants? What is the most effective recruitment source for the division; for hard-to-fill positions? Are there any position shortages and/or skills shortages in the division? Does the division have a grow-your-own program for hard to fill positions? Does the division engage in succession planning to prepare administrative replacements? How does the division identify staffing needs? Does the division distribute written information to candidates for employment explaining the school system, employment requirements, and characteristics of the community?

Is the division using any long-term strategies to fill critical need positions such as targeting college students early in their careers and offering them some incentives for committing to work in the division upon graduation?

Are jobs posted online?

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What defines a full-time versus a part-time position? Is the definition in line with the Teacher Retirement System definition? What benefits apply to each category of position? How many hours does one have to work on a regular basis to be eligible for benefits? Do hiring practices differ for temporary or part-time employees?

What positions are considered hard-to-fill and why? What recruitment strategies are used for hard-to-fill positions?

Are school administrators involved in recruitment activities?

What written hiring policies and procedures exist? Has the divisions hiring policy, practice and/or procedure changed within the past year? Why? How does division document the hiring process to avoid possible litigation? Do the personnel policies of the division ensure that qualified applicants are screened and hired in a timely manner?

What is the role of the board, school administrators and supervisors in the hiring and selection process? Does board involvement in personnel matters support or hinder educational service delivery? Do school administrators have flexibility in the type of staff they hire?

Where does the division post job openings? Are all job postings consistent in form and format? How does the division use the Internet for posting jobs? How are internal and external postings treated differently? Does the division use a standard and consistent employment application form? Where is the application form available? Can an application be submitted electronically via the Internet?

How does the division select substitute teachers? Are appropriate background checks conducted on substitute employees? Is there a policy, practice, or procedure on this?

Does the division use temporary workers? Are there also temporary positions? What criteria are used to determine whether to make a position temporary, or regular status? What is the review and approval process in place for hiring temporary workers through external agencies? Is there a division temporary coordinator or administrator oversight function in the business office and/or HR?

How are employment applications tracked and by whom? Are resumes accepted in lieu of applications? How long are applications retained on file? Are applications accepted at all times, or only when positions are posted?

Retention

What percent of the divisions employees are eligible to retire now and in the next three years? What are the turnover trends in the division? Does the division

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analyze turnover by employee type? How does the division use turnover data to determine staffing needs? How does the division track the reasons why employees leave the division (voluntary separation, retirement, termination for cause and transfer to a different classification [e.g., teacher to administrator moving to another division])? Does the division conduct exit interviews to determine reasons for resignation, which are then systematically analyzed to determine strategies for reducing turnover? When are exit interviews conducted and by whom? How is the exit interview information used by HR and stored? How does the division use turnover data to develop employee retention initiatives?

Does the division keep turnover by school? What does the division consider to be a manageable level of turnover? How does the turnover rate compare to peer divisions?

Does HR track absenteeism of teachers? If so, how? What is the division's retention rate for teachers in the first year of employment; second year; and third year of employment? How do these rates compare to the peer divisions? Is there a retention concern for teachers? If yes, what is the division's action plan or strategy to overcome the retention concern?

How does the division track and deal with excessive absences with employees other than teachers? What is this costing the division in overtime? In productivity?

Are substitute records kept at each school or by the division as a whole? If kept individually, what schools are using more substitutes than others? Why?

What is the average teacher tenure?

What employee recognition programs does the division have; which are administered by the division, if any?

3.D. Staff Development

Training is essential if teachers are to improve their classroom skills and teaching effectiveness. The purpose of this section is to review the division's training program and to ensure that it is being properly administered.

Data Needs

- Training calendar for coming year
- Documentation on staff development programs to help orient new teachers or other instructional staff (i.e., assigned mentors, substitute teachers)
- Staff development budgets (central and school-based) for last five years

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- Number of in-service training days observed in the last five years
- Number of substitute hours used over each year of the last five years to relieve individuals for in-service training

Activities to Perform

- 3.D.1. Document process for tracking any required and optional staff development hours. Randomly check personnel files for record of staff development hours - both any required hours and optional hours. Through interviews, determine how supervisors or principals use these records when evaluating instructional staff.
- 3.D.2. Chart the staff development budgets (central and school-based) for the last five years, the number of full-time employees assigned to staff development activities, the number of teacher in-service days observed during each of the last five years, the number of substitute hours used for in-service training in each year of the last five years and total number of class hours attended in each year of the last five years. Identify trends and comment on the appropriateness of the changes identified.

Questions to Ask

Staff Development Delivery System

What training is provided to teachers and substitute teachers?

Who is responsible for ensuring that staff development supports current curriculum? What is the role of site-based decision-making committees in the staff development process?

How is staff development planned? What relationship exists between new textbook adoption and staff development needs? Are surveys of staff development needs conducted on a scheduled basis? How is staff development linked to student performance or needs? How is staff development related to specific content areas that are taught? Is there a process for evaluation of the quality of staff development activities? Are teachers and building level administrators involved in planning staff development programs? Are teachers used as instructors for staff development programs? How frequently are teachers and librarians given an opportunity to attend professional conferences?

Are new and beginning teachers provided mentors to help them assimilate into a school? Are new graduate teachers provided an intense mentorship program during their first year of teaching? Are there staff development opportunities available through shared service arrangements with local area colleges or universities?

Does the district have a training calendar? If yes, is it also online? Is there any online and/or distance training provided in the district?

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Does the district set minimum continuing education or training hours for instructional staff? Are there state-mandated hours of training? If so, how are these hours integrated into any district-required minimums (i.e., gifted and talented education requirements)?

Is an in-depth supervisory training program offered? Is attendance mandatory or optional? What are the ramifications of failure to attend?

Does the institution have a partnership with a nearby community college or university for training? Does the institution pay any of the costs for the pursuit of additional certification or degrees? Does the pursuit of additional certification or degrees qualify for mandatory staff development hours?

Are staff development goals linked to district-wide goals? How many days for staff development does the institution allow?

Documentation and Use of Participation Data

How does the district or the human resources division collect feedback from trainees on training received? How does the human resources division use this feedback to develop and refine training? Does the district evaluate the usefulness of training periodically?

Does the board or community recognize outstanding teacher(s)? How are opportunities for improvement and possible training identified during teacher's evaluations? Are teacher appraisals used individually or collectively to develop in-service/staff development programs and services and in the improvement of instructional delivery?

Who oversees contractors that provide training? How are contractors evaluated? How are purchasing guidelines adhered to when contracting for training services? How is feedback on these training classes used to determine which vendors to ask to return and which ones to discontinue using?

Budgets and Staffing

Are staff development resources allocated based on prioritized needs? Is training scheduled to be least disruptive to an employee's job schedule? Does the institution provide incentives for training outside regular hours? What training opportunities are provided in summer months?

What contracted services does the district use? Why is the district contracting for services rather than providing the training in-house? What train-the-trainer opportunities are used to decrease overall costs?

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3.E. Compensation and Classification Systems

Compensation plans not only set up a system for equitable salaries and hourly wages for employees currently on the payroll, but a system for placing new-hires on a pay scale based on years of experience, promotions, transfers and merit pay for performance. While there is sometimes a variance in pay between large and small, urban and rural divisions, each division must know what businesses or school divisions are in competition with them for employees and must be prepared to adopt a compensation plan that recognizes the competition and contains strategies to ensure that the division is able to recruit and retain good employees at all levels.

Data Needs

- Wage surveys
- Salary structure and ranges for all positions in the division (career ladders)
- Wage and salary reports for all employees for the current year including information regarding stipends and extra duty pay by employee and group of employees
- Division policies governing starting salaries for new hires, promotions, transfers, demotions, position classification and salary increases based on performance
- Policies concerning stipends and extra duty pay as well as overtime and compensatory time, if applicable
- Budget and actual information regarding overtime by department and school

Activities to Perform

- 3.E.1. Compare average salary levels with peers and the state average and compare to salaries in neighboring divisions and to competing positions in the private market. Note: Be sure to account for differences in experience levels of teachers when averaging salaries for the division.
- 3.E.2. Prepare a chart showing the years of experience for teachers and compare the experience level of teachers in the division to the average for peers or neighboring divisions, the region, and state. Determine through interviews how the experience level of teachers is impacting the average salaries of teachers in the division. Examine salary surveys and list any hard-to-fill positions and industry and area trends.
- 3.E.3. Examine overtime and compensatory time records and to the extent possible, chart the amount for overtime/compensatory time being accumulated, budgeted, and expended by school and department. Identify areas with inordinate amounts of paid overtime or accumulated compensatory time. Also determine to the

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extent possible whether the division is appropriately accumulating compensatory and overtime hours worked in compliance with FLSA requirements.

Questions to Ask

Compensation

What is the local school, board of supervisors, or state board's role in hiring, firing, promotion, or other salary actions for positions other than the superintendent? Does the local board of supervisors or state board or division administration have a compensation strategy to align the division's salaries?

What are the pay systems in the divisions for various position designations such as teachers and other staff?

How have salaries changed over the past three years? How do salaries compare with similarly sized divisions for similar positions? How do salaries compare with similar positions in the division's market?

Does the division use salary bonuses and/or merit pay systems? How do employees become eligible for either? Are there career ladders developed by HR and/or customer departments for any position categories?

Does the division actively manage payroll costs through balancing the numbers of staff at all experience levels? When was the last time that the division offered any incentives for early retirement or early contract renewal?

Which position(s) decides starting salary for the successful candidate(s)? What input does HR provide to starting salary determination and exceptions?

What forms does the division use to document salary increases, decreases and other personnel or employee status changes?

Classification System

Which position is responsible for position classification? What are the steps and methodology of position classification in the division? Who recommends that a position be reclassified and what is the review and final approval process? What records and documents are created and/or result from a position classification review?

Overtime and Compensatory Time

Does the division uniformly comply with all requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding overtime and compensatory pay? When is the FLSA designation assigned to positions in the division? Does the division keep weekly

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time records on all nonexempt personnel? Does the division classify exempt and nonexempt personnel in payroll records? How is overtime documented, recorded and communicated to central office? Does the division have any open Department of Labor complaints and/or inquiries from the department of labor related to wage and hour practices and administration?

Contracts

Which classes of division employees have contracts? How are contract renewals handled?

Does the division give contracts with renewal rights to staff members who are not entitled to such contracts by law? What length are teacher and administrator contracts? Does the division use term or continuing contracts? Why?

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FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Facility planning and management of construction and renovation projects are significant activities for most divisions. Planning for facilities based on student growth, programmatic needs, aging facilities, and legislative requirements are essential to provide for student needs without overcrowding, use of substandard facilities, or use of costly portable alternatives. Active management of construction and maintenance projects and procedures can provide cost control, ensure quality of workmanship, and help ensure timely completion and facility operations. Facilities also must be maintained and cleaned on a routine basis to insure a safe and healthy environment for students, teachers, and staff.

The Facilities Use and Management chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 4.A. Organization and Management
- 4.B. Plans, Policies and Procedures
- 4.C. Maintenance Operations
- 4.D. Custodial Operations
- 4.E. Energy Management

4.A. Organization and Management

This module provides the basis for assessing the facilities management program in the division from a global perspective including both the management of construction and maintenance functions, which can be extremely different. Yet, despite the different skill sets and priorities within each area, construction, and maintenance functions must be coordinated to ensure that facilities meet the needs of the staff and students who occupy those facilities. Facilities represent significant capital investments and proper management can preserve and enhance the value of the division's investments. Facilities management and construction can be extremely expensive and wasteful if not properly managed. The differences between facilities construction management and facilities maintenance management must be identified and distinguished.

Data Needs

- Organizational charts for all sections involved directly or indirectly with the facilities functions.
- Budget information for all aspects of the facility construction management and facility maintenance management operations.
- Budgets and reports for bond programs.
- Roles/responsibilities of outside architects and other contractors.
- Contracts for any facility construction management and facility maintenance management outsourced services.

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Activities to Perform

- 4.A.1. Create or examine the existing organizational and staffing charts and interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department. Include any contracted individuals or services or committees that oversee facilities in the organizational chart and show the reporting relationship and who is responsible for monitoring the contracts.
- 4.A.2. Prepare a chart showing the staffing and budgets of facility and facility related functions showing the ratio of total staff to staffing within the function. Determine whether the budget and staffing levels compare favorably to industry standards.

Questions to Ask

Has the division assigned specific staff to manage the facilities construction and maintenance programs? How is management and control of the division facilities program accomplished? How are construction and renovation projects coordinated with facilities maintenance and other related departments? What internal resources are available to support staff, such as an in-house architect or construction supervisor, or maintenance and operations leadership?

How are the roles and reporting relationships of any outside architects and contractors defined and documented? Does the organizational structure support the monitoring of architects, design team, contracts, and contractors?

Is the reporting relationship of facility construction and maintenance related staff aligned? Are there departments or functions that have duplicative roles or responsibilities? How does communication flow between the various departments and the school staff to prevent conflicting schedules or projects (i.e., installing carpet in an office that is scheduled for tile during renovation, scheduling major renovations or maintenance during test weeks, etc.)? How are warranty issues on construction projects coordinated between facilities and maintenance?

Are specific staff assigned responsibility for various functions to develop and review the division facility master plan on an annual basis including:

- Enrollment projection by grades for each school for a period of five years?
- Class size requirements standards by school?
- Special education special facility requirements?
- Federal, state, and local construction requirements?
- Projected bonding capacities?
- School capacity projections?
- Maintenance and Operations needs.
- Equipment replacement schedule

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Is training provided to facilities construction, maintenance, and operations management staff on an annual basis? Is staff cross-trained so that tasks are completed even when specific staff is absent? Is in-service training provided to staff regarding changing laws, regulations, and procedures (federal, state and local)? What budget funds are available to ensure staff can attend state and local seminars on facilities planning, construction, and financing? How is division staff (principals, site administrators, custodians and maintenance staff) provided in-service training on inspection, evaluation, and identification of facility needs on a regular basis?

Does the division have in-house staff to project student population and division growth or does the division contract for these services? Does this staff report to the Facilities Department or another division? What are the reporting relationships to ensure the accuracy of projections?

4.B. Plans, Policies and Procedures

Effective management is built upon sound planning practices. The board adopts policies governing the division's facility operations as well as policies that are directed at other programs but have an indirect impact on the facilities operation. Procedures show division employees how to carry out the policies in their various functional areas. Taken together, planning is reinforced through well-documented policies and procedures.

Data Needs

- Facilities Master Plan
- Student enrollment and student project information
- Budgets and reports on bond programs
- Master planning procedures
- Roles/responsibilities of outside architects and contractor
- Long range financial planning for facility improvement
- Staff input into facility planning
- A list of new facilities or major renovations completed in the last five years, or as available
- Facility use data
- Regulatory compliance documentation

Activity to Perform

- 4.B.1. Compare major elements of the division's planning documents (facility master plan if available) to determine whether the division long-range facility master plan contains a 10 year projection of needs with a corresponding financial plan.

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Chart the major component of both and discuss how the division's plans meet any applicable guidelines for each component.

Questions to Ask

Plans

How do the division's planning documents address the following components:

- The history and 10-year projection of student enrollment by grade and site (including special education)?
- The history and 10-year projection of school capacities by grade?
- The history and 10-year projection of community growth?
- A 10-year projection of additional school sites required?
- A 10-year projection of excess sites or facilities?
- A 10-year projection of special facilities required for special education students?
- A 10-year projection of available revenue sources?
- A 10-year priority listing of facility needs?
- A 10-year assignment of funds in accordance with the priority listing?

Has the division allocated adequate resources to develop and implement a realistic long-range master plan for educational facilities? Will the plan meet the projected needs of the division as anticipated through demographic study? Was a standing committee comprised of a broad base of school division employees and community members involved in the planning process?

Does the division use a system to select and acquire proper school sites, in a timely manner, using school site selection criteria to ensure schools are located to serve the proposed attendance area economically, with maximum convenience and safety? Is there a system to assess sites that also evaluates fair market value? Is there a process to systematically determine the student capacity and educational adequacy of existing facilities and evaluate alternatives to new construction? Does the division seek donated land from developers?

Does the master plan, board policy, or other construction facility-planning document identify short term and long-term construction and facilities needs, which are included in the division's master plan? Does the division conduct an annual review and revision of the facilities master plan?

How are staff/community involved in the review and evaluation of division's progress in implementing and updating the facility master plan?

Does the division have a board approved construction and facilities management financial plan? Are funds budgeted for short term and long-term projects on an annual basis in accordance with an approved construction and facilities master plan? Are funds budgeted for contingency or emergency construction and facility

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needs? What, if any, external sources of financing have been identified to meet construction and facility needs?

Do facility plans recognize the importance of selecting material and equipment that contribute to efficiency in custodial operations as well as low maintenance costs? Do plans include standardized building components such as wall covering, tile, etc.? Standardized equipment such as HVAC units? Do plans address the quality of equipment and material used in construction projects while complying with state competitive procurement laws?

Is the Director of Maintenance and Operations a member of the facility planning committee (or building committee) to provide input on material and equipment and provide review of architectural plans and specifications?

What are the challenges in developing and maintaining a current and accurate Facilities Master Plan?

Policies

Does the division have board approved construction and facilities management policies? Does board policy provide for a board approved construction and facilities master plan?

What provisions exist for the publication and dissemination of policies and the construction and facilities master plan to staff and community members?

Do guidelines for determining the priority needs for construction and facilities include but are not limited to:

- health and safety of students (are restroom facilities equipped to promote high levels of hygiene)?
- handicapped accessibility?
- health and safety of employees?
- instructional needs?
- efficiency of operation?
- cost effectiveness?

Does the division policy provide a methodology that addresses emergency construction and facility needs?

Procedures

What formal and fully documented procedures exist for the maintenance, custodial or construction management functions of the division? What informal documentation exists to guide the day-to-day operations of these functions?

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How do procedures prevent violations of purchasing policies when procuring supplies or services? Who has access to petty cash funds? To credit cards? Blanket purchase orders? Why are these privileges necessary? Is there another way that these kinds of purchases could be handled more effectively and efficiently?

What internal control weaknesses in the facilities or maintenance operations process have external or internal auditors identified in the last three years? How are identified deficiencies communicated to the relevant administrator in charge? How have procedures been modified when control weaknesses are identified?

Does the accounting system generate event and periodic management reports to alert maintenance, custodial or construction staff to irregularities or productivity trends?

How do procedures address the need for the authorization and methodology for selection of architects and other professional service firms required in facilities planning and construction?

Does the division have approved construction and facilities management procedures that are published and disseminated to appropriate staff? Does the division have written Technical Design Guidelines to convey division construction standards to external architects and engineers?

Does the division have current written educational specifications detailing the programmatic space requirements for elementary, middle and high school?

Does the division have a Hazardous Materials Management Plan for items such as asbestos, lead paint, mold, etc.?

Does the division have a plan or guidelines for maintaining acceptable levels of indoor air quality?

4.C. Maintenance Operations

Maintenance operations in Virginia school divisions generally include repair and renovation services, equipment installation, grounds care, custodial functions and control and oversight of Regulatory Compliance issues. Efficient maintenance programs provide routine maintenance and preventive and emergency maintenance services for all school facilities along with maintaining regulator compliance programs and training. The range of services provided may vary from minor tasks such as hanging chalkboards to more skilled tasks such as replacement of plumbing or electrical fixtures. Staffing patterns may include skilled artisans as well as general and grounds maintenance personnel. Custodial

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services usually include cleaning services, minor maintenance functions, and performing special tasks as assigned by the building staff.

This module encompasses operational aspects including work order system, time reporting, and inventory control, control of tools and equipment and purchasing procedures. Also examined are staffing levels, training programs and coordination of repairs, renovations, and new construction activities.

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures
- Work order reports
- Maintenance budgets for the last three years
- Organizational and staffing charts
- Maintenance records
- Information system reports used by management to monitor productivity, etc.
- Purchase orders and invoices
- Staff training reports
- Customer satisfaction responses
- Warranty adjustments
- List of any outsourced maintenance functions and copies of contracts, if applicable
- List of maintenance software applications and related hardware

Activities to Perform

- 4.C.1. Create or examine existing organizational and staffing charts and job descriptions for maintenance to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department. If some or all of the functions are contracted for, show the reporting relationships and organizational structure as well as staffing charts established for contract management.
- 4.C.2. Diagram the maintenance process by examining operating procedures, conducting school site visits, riding along with maintenance crews, and interviewing maintenance and school staff. Differentiate between processes used for emergencies, preventive maintenance, capital projects, and normal work orders. Note customer satisfaction levels and attempt to the extent possible to identify those points in the process that are strong and those that could be contributing to customer concerns, as applicable.
- 4.C.3. Prepare a table of sample work orders and determine average completion times for emergencies, preventive maintenance activities, capital projects, and normal work orders.

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- 4.C.4. Compile a list of software applications and related hardware, showing the purpose of the system, major components of the system, whether all components or modules available to the division are being used, and the effectiveness of automated processes.

Questions to Ask

Management

How does the department's plan link to the master planning documents of the division? How does this department or function contribute to the educational goals of division? How is success measured?

Does the organizational structure of the maintenance department have a structure that is clearly defined? Does the structure provide for effective supervision without unnecessary layers of management? Is the span of control or ratio of supervisors to workers appropriate? Does the structure provide for use of crews on a centralized division-wide basis or decentralized site basis as appropriate?

Do the personnel procedures for the maintenance department:

- Provide for the selection process to include personal interviews with line managers who determine technical competence?
- Provide a competitive compensation program to attract skilled employees with special training and qualifications?
- Require personnel to participate in in-service programs on a regular basis?
- Limit overtime to 5-10 percent of total maintenance work hours available?
- Provide for maintenance personnel to have identification as division employees such as badges and/or uniforms?
- Provide for recognition of personnel for their accomplishments (such as employee of the month, perfect attendance for the year)?
- Designate employees who will perform emergency repairs and define the basis for additional compensation to be paid for these call-outs?
- Provide for training opportunities for maintenance staff and support such efforts through tuition reimbursement or reduced costs at division technical schools?

Does the division budget provide the necessary resources to carry on a planned program of maintenance services? The approved staffing levels? A reserve fund or insurance coverage for catastrophic or unforeseen needs? Normal and preventive maintenance activities and all planned replacement programs? Does division compare per capita maintenance slots with other comparable divisions and document the division methodology used in the comparison?

How does the maintenance department control costs? Do purchasing procedures for the maintenance department:

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- Require purchases to be made through the central purchasing system of the division?
- Limit petty cash purchases in dollar volume (e.g. \$50.00) and number?
- Limit open purchase orders by designating time and monetary limitations?
- Stress bulk purchasing for volume discounts?
- Provide for proper security of all items that are purchased and expensed?
- Purchase off state or local contracts with vendors?

Has the division engaged in any inter-local agreements or memorandums of understanding agreements for providing service to or obtaining services from neighboring school divisions? Universities or colleges? City or county governments?

How does the department determine whether a good or service can be delivered by businesses outside the division at a lower cost and/or at a higher quality? Are cost comparisons made with fully-loaded costs for providing the services in-house, such as salaries, benefits, overhead or indirect costs, materials and supplies and the like?

What input does the maintenance director have in the budget preparation and administration processes?

Is there a differentiation between maintenance and capital outlay projects with maximum monetary limits set for construction of new facilities by the maintenance department (e.g. \$50,000 - \$75,000)? A clear definition of capital outlay expenses versus normal operating expenses? Indirect cost allocation to aid in determining the full cost of all capital projects?

Training and Educational Programs

Are personnel sufficiently trained through staff development programs? Is staff given opportunities for participation in a planned program of in-service training to enhance functional skills? How is staff trained on or informed of policies, procedures, and operating practices? Does staff participate in a comprehensive safety training program? How much is budgeted for internal and external training for staff? Is staff cross-trained to promote job enrichment and ensure that daily tasks continue when staff is absent?

Community Use of Facilities

What written rules and regulations exist regarding the use of school facilities by community groups? Are they uniform and effectively enforced? Is one person designated to be responsible for assigning and monitoring the use of school facilities or is this left to individual school administrators? Who is responsible for recovering costs for damages to facilities by outside groups from the user? How are after-hour custodians scheduled for cleaning and monitoring facilities when community groups use facilities? How are costs recovered for use of facilities

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that were not related to public education purposes, such as rental charge for use by religious organizations?

Tools and Equipment

Who maintains maintenance equipment? Supply inventories? How is personal use of tools or equipment monitored? When equipment or tools are missing, how does the division deal with the loss? How are employees held accountable for the safekeeping of tools, machinery, and equipment?

Does the division have established procedures regarding tools and equipment including:

- Budget allocation for purchases of tools and equipment that support operational needs?
- A policy prohibiting use of tools or equipment for personal projects?
- A replacement policy for lost or broken tools?
- A full inventory of all tools with periodic "spot" checks?
- A regular schedule of maintenance for equipment such as mowers, edgers, compressors, etc.?
- A regular planned replacement schedule for equipment?

Preventive Maintenance

Is there a planned or preventive maintenance program that provides schedules for servicing all equipment including heating, ventilation, and air conditioning? Are periodic and documented evaluations made of the condition of buildings and grounds of each school? How often? By whom? Is a physical inventory and periodic updates of the condition and age of roofs, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) equipment, etc? used to develop a planned replacement program?

Does the division use maintenance agreements for some equipment? How does the division ensure that warranty repairs are not inadvertently charged to the division?

Work Orders

Is there a system of work orders that provides complete cost data on labor and material costs for each job? Reports all time of each employee including unassigned time and travel time? Requires work orders to be completed accurately and in accordance with written standards? Allows for prioritization of projects? Defines initiators of work orders and provides complete instructions on requests for service? Allows timely communication with the initiator regarding status of work order and/or quality of work completed? Tracks timely completion and any backlog of work?

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Has the division developed a record of all maintenance performed by location and within the school division? Does the division have computerized programs to track work orders by location and type of work performed? How does the division use this information to budget for future repairs? To plan for equipment replacement, etc.?

Does the division have maintenance management procedures? Are there clear instructions and site-maps for emergency utility cutoffs? Does the division have clearly defined operational methods for each craft or function, including custodians and grounds? Are there guidelines defining the types of construction/reconstruction projects, which can and should be completed by the staff? How does management ensure that projects are completed in a timely manner and according to the standards established by the department? What minor repairs or maintenance do custodians perform?

Is maintenance scheduled to avoid excessive peaks in the workload and disruption to the educational process by scheduling a majority of inside activities, such as painting, when school is not in session? Scheduling major roofing, flooring, ceiling, and etc. repairs when school is not in session, or the facility is vacant?

4.D. Custodial Operations

Custodial services usually include cleaning services, minor maintenance functions, and performing special tasks as assigned by the building staff.

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures relating to custodial operations
- Organizational and staffing charts
- List of custodial assignments by facility
- Staffing allocation formulas in use by the division, if applicable
- Custodial budget for the last three years, including the cost of personnel and supplies
- Management reports that monitor productivity, etc.

Activities to Perform

- 4.D.1. Create or examine the organizational and staffing charts to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department.
- 4.D.2. Prepare a chart showing the number of custodians assigned to each facility in the division and the square footage of the facilities at each school, including portables.

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- 4.D.3. Analyze productivity reports to determine if productivity levels of part-time custodial staff are acceptable - above 90%. If not available, observe their work to determine if they are acceptable.

Questions to Ask

Staffing and Management

Given the age and use rates of the facilities, how are custodians assigned to clean a standard square footage? Is a staffing formula approved and adopted by the division? How does the current system insure that staffing is equitably distributed throughout the division? Are deviations directly linked to special needs?

Supplies

Are custodial supplies and equipment adequate to ensure efficient and effective cleaning? How are cleaning supplies and equipment controlled? Who does the ordering and who determines what supplies are ordered? Are supplies delivered to a central warehouse or just in time to the schools or other sites? Are cleaning supplies ordered and delivered to facilities in a timely manner? In a quantity that can be easily stored on the school?

Training

Are custodians provided any training in the proper methods to complete their tasks? Are they trained on the use of any equipment or machinery employed in custodial activities?

Privatization

Has the Division considered outsourcing the custodial function and done a cost benefit analysis for this proposal?

4.E. Energy Management

The goal of energy management is to keep operating costs down by reducing energy waste while providing a safe, comfortable environment for learning. Reaching this goal is complicated. Divisions are required to meet federal, state and local rules and regulations regarding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) facility modifications, student-teacher ratios and a laundry list of local priorities that can impact a division's operating budget.

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Data Needs

- Policies and procedures on energy use and management
- List of all buildings with square footage, years built and renovated, number of students, daily hours of operation and months in use during the year.
- List of positions assigned to energy management with job descriptions
- Organizational and staffing charts for energy management function
- Budget for energy management function for the last three years
- Table of total utility expenditures by type for the last three to five years
- Utility bills for the last year
- Information on school-based conservation initiatives
- Energy audit reports
- Staff training reports
- Energy management practices in new construction
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification information by certification level and by school for existing and new construction (pre-certification efforts)

Activities to Perform

- 4.E.1. Examine division utility bills by location for the last year and create a chart showing the facilities square footage, utility use rates, and utility costs. Determine each facility's energy use per square foot and energy cost per square foot. Compare the charges against industry standards (less than \$1.00 per sq. ft) and note deviations.
- 4.E.2. Compile information regarding all division energy management activities including any energy retrofits, energy conservation programs, or utility rate reduction programs. Determine what benefits or savings have been achieved because of participation. Also note any programs approved by the board or planned for implementation in the near future.
- 4.E.3. Compile Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification information by certification level and by school for existing and new construction (pre-certification efforts) to determine the division's progress with LEED.
- 4.E.4. For larger divisions, prepare a chart showing the staffing, budget and scope of the energy management function of the division, as applicable. If no distinct function exists, attempt to determine who in the division is directly or indirectly involved in managing energy consumption, verifying utility bills and the like.

Questions to Ask

Has the division identified high-energy use equipment and systematically targeted it for replacement? Have cost benefit analyses been given to the board or administration to show how expenditures for new equipment will save money and

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improve operations? Does the division have a procurement policy requiring that new equipment must be energy efficient, such as EPA-DOE's Energy Star Products?

Is the energy purchased by the division regulated or unregulated? What billing problems is the division experiencing?

If the division has an energy management policy, how does the policy statement address the following elements:

- A realistic energy-saving goal?
- Make energy-saving goals and strategies applicable to all?
- Designate an energy manager?
- A plan that keeps the program visible, relevant, and responsive?
- Maintain interest in the program by sending newsletters and memos noting the latest accomplishments?
- Link the budget to the plan?

Does the division review its utility bills? Who is assigned to review division utility bills on a monthly basis? Have significant errors or discrepancies been noted and adjustments sought? Does a review of bills show taxes paid which should not have been?

Does the energy or maintenance department maintain a spreadsheet of utility use rates so that spikes in service or notable deviations can be researched? How does the division encourage energy conservation? Are rewards given to schools or facilities that actively pursue energy conservation activities? Does the division have a board approved Energy Conservation Plan? Has the division obtained a utility billing audit? Are the audits done every five years?

Does the division conduct energy conservation training programs for school staff and students? Does the division have stated policies or procedures for temperature controls? Does the division have programmable thermostats or other energy controlling devices that ensure that division policies or procedures are adhered to?

Have energy retrofits ever been done using low interest loans through the state or external vendors? What current deferred facility improvements could be accomplished as part of an energy saving program? Has the division received grant funds for energy retrofits?

Does the division have any schools with LEED certification? If so, what level of certification? What initiatives i.e. convenient locations for bike racks and preferred parking for low-emitting, fuel efficient vehicles to alleviate automobile traffic and pollution, are being incorporated into new schools for LEED certification? What level of certification are they seeking for new schools?

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Where is the division in the LEED application process with new schools? How has the division done in ensuring that new construction will be models of energy efficiency?

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

School divisions must practice sound financial management in order to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources and to plan for future needs. Effective financial management ensures that internal controls are in place and operating as intended, technology is maximized to increase productivity and that reports are generated that help management reach its goals.

The division is required to manage its financial operations in conformity with the regulations and requirements of the Virginia State Board of Education in conjunction with Auditor of Public Accounts, the Code of Virginia and to report their data in compliance with the Uniform Reporting Manual published by the Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts.

The Financial Management chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 5.A. Organization, Management, and Staffing
- 5.B. Financial Performance
- 5.C. Planning and Budgeting
- 5.D. Administrative Technology
- 5.E. Review and Evaluation of Contracting Process

5.A. Organization, Management, and Staffing

Financial management is most effective when a division properly aligns its business services functions, establishes strong systems of internal control, and properly allocates staff resources to achieve the best results.

Data Needs

- Organizational chart(s) and job descriptions for the business services functions
- Any cooperative agreements, whether the division is the fiscal agent or a member, if applicable
- Division budget broken down by fund, function, object and department for 3 years
- Budget preparation instructions and calendar
- School budgets for current and preceding year including updates
- Summary of functions and activities for each business services function
- Listing of the number and type of employees for each section of the business services function including coaches, principals and teachers in specialized areas
- Related policies and procedures manual sections
- Contracts for any contracted services, as appropriate

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Activities to Perform

- 5.A.1. Create or examine existing organizational and staffing charts and job descriptions for the financial management functions and interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department and document if it has been changed recently or repeatedly in the recent past or is anticipated to change in the near future and explain the background for changes. Include any contracted individuals or services or committees that oversee cash management in the organizational chart and show the reporting relationship and who is responsible for monitoring the contracts.
- 5.A.2. Calculate the division's administrative cost ratio for the last three years and compare to the numbers used by the Virginia Department of Education. Evaluate any upward or downward trends including but not limited to the number of administrative positions being counted and the salaries and benefits being paid. Assess the trend in relation to the student enrollment growth or decline.
- 5.A.3. Compile a chart showing the financial management staffing budget for the last two years and determine where and why changes have occurred within the organization.
- 5.A.4. Compile a chart showing the division's historical administrative spending and staffing levels to state, peer and regional averages.
- 5.A.5. If the division is a fiscal agent for a cooperative, such as special education, or a member of a cooperative, prepare a list of all member divisions and describe in detail the organization and management of the cooperative and how funding flows to and from member divisions for services. Additionally, identify key staff that are fully or partially dedicated to the cooperative and show how the division recovers the administrative costs for this service.

Questions to Ask

Organization

How are the business services functions organized? What is the reporting relationship between the superintendent and board? What is the board's role in financial management? How are financial decisions made? Who are the decision makers? What written documents clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the board and administration? Is the chain of command followed? If not, why not?

Are there one or more financial standing committees of the board that regularly reviews the work of the finance area or specific functions of the finance area?

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Who represents the administration on these committees? Is the administrative representation on the committee adequate and appropriate?

How has the organizational structure changed recently? Over the last two years? If so, why?

Is the organization the most effective way to carry out the functions? Is staff dedicated to specific business functions?

Are there any business services functions that are better aligned with another division department? Are there any functions that are centralized in the business office that would be better handled in the schools and/or departments?

Are there any functions in the schools and/or departments that would be better centralized in the business office? Do the positions and titles of staff accurately describe their functions and responsibilities? How many levels of supervision exist and what is the reporting structure?

If an outside vendor performs some or part of the business function, what are those services? What are the advantages and disadvantages to this organizational arrangement?

Administrative Costs

Is the division taking measures to minimize central office expenditures? Do reductions in central office expenditures reflect actual reductions or reclassifications to other functions?

Does the division central office effectively and efficiently support the schools? How does the administration decide what positions add value to classroom instruction? Are surveys or informal discussions held with school staff to determine what they want and need from the central administration? Is the central office attitude one of controlling schools or one of facilitating and supporting schools? What evidence is there to support this position as being the right one?

Staffing and Budget

How appropriate is the current management span of control? How has the budget for the financial management functions of the division changed over the last two years? What new functions or responsibilities have been added to the division or individuals who handle this function? Are staffing levels sufficient to get the job done in a timely manner?

Is staff cross-trained to perform different business functions? Is staff shared in different functions during peak operating times? Is there any overlap among functions being performed by one or more units? How much is being allocated

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each year to insure that staff are properly trained and remain current with the most recent law and rule changes? Where does most of the training come from? What functions are performed in-house that could be out-sourced? What functions are currently contracted out that might be done better in-house?

What qualifications do the individuals who perform the financial management functions possess?

Shared Services/Cooperatives

What major cooperatives such as special education is the division a member of? A fiscal agent for? What staff are paid for by the cooperative? How are payments to and from the cooperative managed? How are personnel needs handled? Who is the division is responsible for oversight of the arrangement?

How does the division manage these arrangements? What types of reports are generated by the cooperative to ensure that funds are being spent appropriately? That the fund balance is not inappropriately high or low? Who sits on the managing board (executive committee) of the cooperative?

Are payments to the fiscal agent for administrative services comparable to other similar divisions in shared services arrangements? How are the fees arrived at?

5.B. Financial Performance

School division financial management involves the effective use of limited resources to support student achievement. For comparison of actual revenues and expenditures, the most current information available for all divisions is the current year reports through the Virginia Department of Education and the Comparative Cost Report published by the Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts. The Comparative Cost Report includes information from the audited financial reports for all funds in each division.

Data Needs

- Division wide budget for current year and prior year
- Audited financial statements for the last two years (have available on-site for review – do not copy)
- Budget policies and procedures
- List of staff involved with the budget planning process

Activities to Perform

- 5.B.1. Review the division's budget for the by fund, function and object code. Analyze the data to determine trends or specific areas where division spending is out of line with any Virginia Department of Education or Code of Virginia guidelines.

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- 5.B.2. Analyze the differences between budget and actual data for both revenues and expenditures for the two most recent fiscal years and identify significant variances. Use data from the audit schedules, taking into account policy and personnel changes that occurred during the review period. Through interviews, determine the reason for the variances and the consequences, if any, of failing to more accurately budget in these areas.
- 5.B.3. Review and compare fund balances for the past two years and explain any significant variances.

Note: VA Code Section 22.1-100. Unexpended school and educational funds. All sums of money derived from the Commonwealth which are unexpended in any year in any school division shall revert to the fund of the Commonwealth from which derived unless the Board of Education directs otherwise. All sums derived from local funds unexpended in any year shall remain a part of the funds of the governing body appropriating the funds for use the next year, but no local funds shall be subject to re-division outside of the locality in which they were raised.

Questions to Ask

Budget Review and Monitoring

Is the annual adopted budget published and disseminated to the Board of Education, superintendent, directors and supervisors, principals, teachers, staff, decision makers, or team, budget committee (if one exists), community, employee organizations, county clerk, mayor/city offices, local libraries?

What controls are in place to ensure that expenditures do not exceed appropriated funds? Does the budget process include monthly and quarterly reviews to determine the status of the annual spending plan (income, expenditures, encumbrances and balances) with a provision for necessary adjustments?

Are budgets distributed to schools and departments monthly? Do users trust the budget distributed from the central office or do the schools and departments keep their own manual ledgers because they do not trust the figures distributed from the central office?

Does the budget system provide a procedure for budget amendments (increases or decreases)? Are budget amendments signed and pre-approved by appropriate administrators? Are budget amendments distributed to board, staff and other interested parties?

What major initiatives have been undertaken to control costs or increase revenues? Were these initiatives successful and how did they impact the delivery of education within the division? Were budget reductions done equitably throughout the division?

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What are the major budget drivers in the division (i.e., growing or declining student enrollment, rising or declining property values, changes in program delivery procedures and the like.) What advance planning has been undertaken to lessen the impact of these situations? This is a crossover question with facilities planning.

When is the board brought into the planning process? How does this ensure that the board can have an impact on needed changes? What decisions are administration driven? In what way has the community been involved in helping the division deal with budget needs? Are they made aware of needs well in advance so that they can offer suggestions and participate in the decision-making process?

Are there any informal procedures or related activities to monitoring financial performance that are not documented in policy or procedure manuals?

What is the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the division for the year being reviewed? How is ADA going to impact state funding formulas in the future?

How accurate is the division's data submission? Are there any missing submissions or reports? What corrected reports have been submitted?

Is revenue and expenditure information compiled for analysis, evaluation and planning purposes? Is financial data used for program evaluation? Are revenues and expenditures tracked in a timely manner? Are disbursements made in a timely manner? Are available payment discounts taken advantage of? Are penalties incurred for late payments?

Fund Balance

Has the board adopted a fund balance management policy? Is the policy informal or documented in writing? What is the fund balance trend? What are the major driving factors impacting the fund balance in the division today?

How does the division manage its fund balance? Describe the process. What staff are involved in the daily management?

When was the last time that the division had a negative fund balance? Why? When, if ever, has Virginia Department of Education or the Auditor of Public Accounts become actively involved with the division's fund balance management activities? How often over the last two years has the division had to borrow money to meet current obligations?

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5.C. Planning and Budgeting

Budget preparation and administration are important aspects of overall division operations. Providing adequate resources for programs within the restraints of available funding sources presents administrators with a significant challenge. State law mandates that the superintendent prepare, or cause to be prepared, the budget. Thus, the superintendent is responsible for preparing and presenting the preliminary budget to the board. The board's role in approving the budget is critical, however, because it is through the budgets that the priorities of the board are funded. Planning and budgeting must be closely linked if plans are to be implemented and the goals of the division are to be accomplished.

Sound budgeting practices benefit the division by:

- establishing a documented method for budget development, adoption and administration;
- providing administrative controls for expenditure of funds within approved allocations; and
- assuring school and community involvement through a "bottom up" budget approach.

This area evaluates existing policies and procedures supporting the budget process, operational practices, and expenditure control, spending plans, program budgeting, and long term budget planning.

Accurate planning and budgeting is especially critical for small divisions, because the target is smaller so errors are magnified.

Data Needs

- Division budget broken down by fund, function, object and department for 3 years
- Budget preparation instructions and calendar
- School budgets for current and preceding year including updates
- Budget planning section of policies and procedures manual
- Division and school improvement plans
- Instructions provided to decision-maker(s) for preparation of the division and school improvement plans and school budgets
- Previous year's budget planning document
- Description of software and planning tools used by the division for the budget planning process
- Staffing standards used to prepare budget
- Budget expenditure and revenue projections
- Actual expenditures and revenues
- Copy of guidelines or policies for performing budget revenues and expenditure projections

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- List of staff typically involved in the budget process and their roles
- Internal and external audit reports
- Annual financial and compliance reports

Activities to Perform

- 5.C.1. Compile budget planning documents including such things as budget calendars, budget training documents, staffing or other allocation formulas used to prepare school and departmental budgets. Compare the division's process and documents with Virginia Department of Education's recommended budget process and documents. Briefly describe how each document contributes to the budget development process. Briefly discuss how the comprehensive budget development system complies with local policy and state law. Discuss the differences and discuss the reasons for the variances.
- 5.C.2. Review staffing levels currently used by the division for budget purposes and compare to current staffing levels in peer school divisions. Compare them with any Virginia Department of Education or industry standards and describe differences in a chart or table.
- 5.C.3. Review and note any significant variances between the original budget and actual amounts that were reported in the Budget to Actual schedule and attempt to determine the reason for the variance through interviews with the individuals that were responsible for making the original projections.
- 5.C.4. Determine what areas of the budget that schools have direct control over. If possible, show how the decision-making (ers)? Committees? are used in the process and how division or school improvement plans are linked to the budget. Examine any external or internal audit reports relating to school or division improvement plans or budgeting process (particularly compensatory education funds) and note any major findings.
- 5.C.5. Examine the division's budget process and how direct costs, special activities, payroll, and overtime is charged to division budgets. Note whether the processes used comply with prescribed standards and discuss any deviations.

Questions to Ask

Budgeting

How is the budget linked to the various planning documents in the division? How are planning documents linked back to the budget? How are goals and priorities identified in the budget? What budget documents such as budget calendars, instructions and training materials support the linking of budget to the goals and objectives contained in division plans?

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Does the board consider how and if to use its flexibility under federal law to transfer funds among programs identified in No Child Left Behind as eligible for flexibility? How does the Board communicate such decisions? Based on what criteria and performance data?

Budget Planning

How does the division use an adopted budget development timeline or calendar? When is the budget calendar published and disseminated? How is the board alerted to ongoing activities that must be performed to create the budget?

How are budgets tied with academic performance improvement goals for all sub-populations of students, the division improvement plan, and the school improvement plan(s)? Do increases in annual budget allocations evidence priority for activities that support accomplishment of academic performance goals?

What board-approved policies directly impact the budgeting process? What budget procedures are published and disseminated to appropriate staff and committee members?

Do the budgeting procedures identify roles and responsibilities in the budget process including the Board of Education, superintendent, directors and supervisors, principals, teachers, staff, site-based decision making team, the community, budget committee (if one exists)?

How is community input into the budget obtained? public hearings? program advisory committees and school committees? When is this input gathered? How does the community view the budget preparation process?

How does the budget process address long-term (three to five years) budget implications including, but not limited to:

- Enrollment and ADA projections?
- Staffing requirements?
- Salaries?
- Facility needs?
- Long-term liability requirements?
- Staff development?
- Debt retirement obligations?
- Salary and benefit projections?
- Transportation needs?
- Maintenance needs?
- Capital expenditures for equipment and vehicles?
- Income projections?
- Revenue collections?

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How does the division evaluate budgets and expenditures to identify trends inconsistent with the division's mission, strategic plan, goals, and objectives?

How are budget planning adjustments handled; specifically what is the procedure and how are the key staff involved with the process? What is the decision-making process for the mid-year budget adjustment?

What annual planning process does the administration and board use to establish priorities? Improve budgeting procedures? determine improvement goals?

Does the division use multi-year budgeting? How could multi-year budgeting assist the board or administration to realize the long-term impact of decisions?

Does the division have a memorandum of understanding or inter-local agreement for providing any planning and/or budgeting services?

What, if any, informal procedures or related activities are not documented in policy or procedure manuals?

Is there a budget advisory committee? If so, is the representation appropriate and effective? At what point does the budget advisory committee provide recommendations to the superintendent? In what form are recommendations made?

Budget Staff

What budget responsibilities do staff perform? Who is responsible for ultimately gathering together budget information for various departments and schools and compiling it into a single document? Does the division have a designated budget staff that is comparable to divisions of similar size? What services do external vendors or if applicable the education centers? provide to the division during the budget preparation process?

Which staff are responsible for making enrollment projections and generating proposed budgets for the general fund, special revenue fund, capital projects fund, debt service fund, fiduciary funds and enterprise or internal service funds.

Which department(s), key staff or school staff are responsible for verifying enrollment projections, trends, comparative analysis and multi-year planning?

Revenue and Expenditure Projections

How are projections of inflationary costs for energy (heat, electricity, etc.), insurance and other fixed expenditures included in the budget?

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What formalized forecasting methods are used in the budget development process? How are these documented?

What multi-year comparisons are performed? How are these comparisons used to identify trends? To better understand the impact of certain decisions? Other?

How do budgeting procedures provide a methodology for controlling full time equivalent (FTE) positions and part-time positions? Does the division have a position control system for budgeting and controlling staff allocations and hiring?

What trends and ratios in the growth of staff and students are prepared and presented with budget information during budget adoption hearings? How far back do these trends go back?

Are the variances reasonable between original budget and actual amounts that were reported in the Budget to Actual schedule in the Annual Financial and Compliance Report? Do the variances indicate significant issues involving projections of revenues and expenditures?

What informal procedures or other budget-related activities are currently being performed, that are not documented?

School-Level Budget Projections

What specific spending plan for non-salaried expenditures do all principals and other administrators have? Who at the school level prepares the budget projections? Explain the process. What is the role of the principal in this process? Site-based decision-making committee? Teachers? Librarians? Support and auxiliary staff?

What types of expenditures does the school have direct control over? Staff? Supplies? What flexibility is built into the system that allows the school to allocate staff from one type of position to another? Supply and other budgets?

What happens if the projected enrollment at a school does not materialize? If enrollments are greater than expected? How often are school projections updated? What is the update process? What areas of the budget does the school not have control over, but have a direct impact on the school' performance?

What, if any, informal procedures or related to school-based budgeting activities are being performed that are not documented?

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Budget Development

Are accurate budget reports produced from the system and provided to the board and staff members? Are budget reports simple and clear in explaining the division's budget status?

How does the budget process address evaluating and prioritizing division needs (including but not limited to) for:

- Classroom instructional materials?
- Staffing requirements?
- Expenditure allocations?
- Facility needs?
- Staff development?
- Special services?
- Transportation requirements?
- Maintenance and operational needs?

How does the budgeting process take into account prior year budgets and expenditures? Who is provided training in budget development and monitoring procedures? What other personnel might need training or be involved in budget development?

What staff attend state and area budget seminars?

Does the budget provide a reserve for contingencies? Does the budgeting process allow for evaluating and prioritizing the special needs of the division?

How is the budget process formally documented? Is there a budget manual? Does it contain all relevant forms, instructions, and other data?

Has the division implemented program budgeting? Are all direct costs charged directly to program/department budgets? Are special activities and other program costs charged to program/department budgets? Is overtime charged to program/department budgets? Are part-time employees charged to program/department budgets?

Do the budgeting hardware and software systems meet the needs of the division? Is budget data automated and accessible to appropriate division staff and management? Does the budget system have automated features that facilitate the budget preparation process?

Can the budget hardware and software accommodate changing budget requirements?

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Does the budgeting process provide training to budget staff on changing budget requirements and procedures?

Are all funds included in the division's budgeting system with procedures clearly designating the budget manager's responsibility for all funds (General fund, Special revenue funds, Debt service funds, Capital projects, Fiduciary funds, Enterprise funds (including Internal service funds) and Student activity funds.

5.D. Administrative Technology

Although technology is a major issue for school divisions, much of the emphasis centers on instructional technology, while the most basic administrative applications are left to paper, pen, and pencil. The failure to invest in technology at the administrative level stunts instructional programs by diverting vital resources to labor-intensive manual processes. Fully automated and integrated administrative functions can help divisions to eliminate some of the paper shuffling and labor hours from the process and improve the accuracy of the data gathered and reported.

Data Needs

- Description of financial and administrative hardware and software systems
- List of functional areas of the division's operation that are served by hardware/software
- List of frequent system users
- Flow chart(s) showing interaction between financial, cash management and payroll systems

Activities to Perform

- 5.D.1. Compile a list of the administrative hardware and software used in the business office. Briefly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current system including any division needs.
- 5.D.2. Flowchart the process by which the division ensures that the board-approved budget is adhered to and accounting and payroll process are carried out, including computerized systems, data entry, internal control mechanisms and the like. Identify any weaknesses that might result in errors, redundant entry, or expenditures that exceed appropriated funds.

Questions to Ask

Are all aspects of the division's electronic financial system used to the fullest extent possible? What components or modules are not currently used and why?

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How and when are staff trained to make full use of the system? Are procedures reviewed to incorporate electronic means whenever possible? What training or user manuals are available to users? Who supports the administrative hardware and software? How well does this level of technical support work? How often are systems down? How long does it take technical support to respond to a call?

Does the accounting systems create the following documents: General ledger (monthly and year-to-date); Subsidiary ledgers (cash disbursements, cash receipts, capital assets, payroll, etc., as appropriate); Budget-to-actual expenditure reports (monthly and year-to-date); Various special reports (list of expenditures for period, outstanding encumbrances, etc.)?

Is program and department accounting information readily available? Are budget detail reports, including expenditures, encumbrances, and budget balances provided monthly to program managers, principals and directors? Do accounting hardware and software systems meet the needs of the division?

Are the division's accounting systems automated, when appropriate for the division size and integrated to supply consistent information? Does the division's accounting system allow for the development of required analysis and reports on a regular and as-needed basis? Do payroll hardware and software systems meet the needs of the division?

Are payroll systems automated, when appropriate for the division size, to provide accurate and timely information on salaries and benefits? Is the payroll system automated and integrated with personnel, accounting, and budget systems? Does the payroll system provide for efficient adjustment to changing requirements? Does the payroll system provide for efficient maintenance of historical payroll records? Is the budget system integrated with financial, cash management and payroll systems?

Does the payroll system provide for efficient accounting for both 10 month and 12-month employee salaries? Are the payroll and personnel systems integrated to provide necessary financial data and reporting? Do the payroll and personnel systems share a common database with appropriate security measures employed?

Can the payroll and personnel systems generate management reports showing leaves, balances, overtime, special stipends, etc.? Does the accounting system provide for program cost accounting? In the accounting system, are special activities and other program costs charged to the proper program/department budgets? In the accounting system, are overtime, part-time, substitute and other incidental salaries and benefits charged to program/department budgets?

How are funds, capital asset records, and long-term liability records integrated in the central accounting system (including the general fund, special revenue funds,

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debt service funds, capital projects, enterprise funds (including internal service funds), and fiduciary fund types (including student activity funds)?

Do the accounting systems support capital asset and depreciation reporting requirements in financial statements and notes in the Annual Financial and Compliance Report? If not, why not? When is the feature expected to be available?

Does the accounting system generate event and periodic alert reports? Are alert reports generated for potential violations of the division's policies and procedures, unreasonable variances between purchase order and invoiced amounts, unusual accounting transactions and other critical exceptions? What are the communication procedures for various alert reports?

What type of expenditure control system does the division use for controlling expenditures and allocations? Does the expenditure control system have an interrelationship between purchasing, accounting, and the budget office?

Does the expenditure control system provide for a written request and approval process for exceeding expenditure allocations? Does the financial system allow users to view the current status of their budgets on-line? If not, what is preventing this from happening?

5.E. Review and Evaluation of Contracting Process

Division management functions such as staff development and legal services can be purchased or contracted for through private companies or inter-local agreements with neighboring divisions or other governmental entities. It is important to regularly evaluate whether there are goods or services that can be obtained from the private sector at a lower cost, higher quality, or both. It is equally important to continually evaluate existing contracts to determine if the division is getting the best value possible through the contracting arrangement.

Data Needs

- List of all service contracts
- Division policies and procedures
- Cost benefit analyses
- Performance data
- Copies of Memoranda's of Understanding (MOUs)
- Copies of shared services or inter-local agreements
- Pertinent internal audit reports

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Activity to Perform

- 5.E.1. Review and document the bidding and contracting process used by the division for various types of contracts, such as consulting, professional services and the like. Note points in the process where signoffs are required, points where user divisions and purchasing staff confer to insure compliance with laws and policies, points of legal compliance such as postings in newspapers, the time lapse between each step in the process, where paperwork is entered into or produced from computerized systems and how and where computer systems interact.

Questions to Ask

Make versus Buy Decisions

How are decisions made to outsource services? If any services performed or contracted for through private companies or inter-local agreements, was a cost benefit analysis and feasibility study performed prior to bidding the service and entering into the contract? Is there reasonable thought given to in-house provision and its cost versus the costs of outside services? Who reviews cost justifications? If specific work being performed by a vendor that once was performed in-house, what has become of the positions once dedicated to that duty? Have savings actually been realized, and how is this documented?

Contract Management

Does the division dedicate correct and sufficient contract management resources to contracts? Who is responsible for managing the contracts in the division? Who has authority to change contracts and authorize additional work? Does this person have the authority to enforce the contract? What mechanisms are in the contract for providing the vendor with feedback on its performance? Does the vendor have to account for any cost changes to the division? If so, how? Are there definite contract periods and plans to review contract terms, language, and necessity prior to renewal or solicitation?

Vendor Performance Evaluation

Are there quantifiable performance criteria for vendor performance? Do contracts specifically outline minimum and preferred performance standards? Can the division measure the standards objectively? How is performance measured relative to payment? What types of options does the division have in remedying poor performance or terminating contracts? Are performance measures related to quality and quantity of activities performed by the vendor?

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TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a vital support service that requires sound management. Capital investments in bus fleets and annual expenditures required for maintenance and operation are substantial. But, the goal of any school transportation operation is to timely transport students safely to and from school and other school related activities. Although numerous state regulations govern transportation services, divisions have the flexibility of establishing procedures that can enhance operations such as setting bell schedules, designing efficient routes and establishing sound maintenance procedures.

This module examines the transportation program focusing and evaluating factors affecting transportation, bus replacement and vehicle maintenance programs, driver recruitment and training, driver and passenger safety, service evaluation and purchasing procedures.

The Transportation chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 6.A. Organization and Staffing
- 6.B. Planning, Policies and Procedures
- 6.C. Routing and Scheduling
- 6.D. State Reporting
- 6.E. Training and Safety
- 6.F. Vehicle Maintenance and Bus Replacement Schedules

6.A. Organization and Staffing

Of paramount importance to a school division's transportation function is safety and timeliness. The manner in which the department is organized and staffed can and will have a direct impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the operation and its ability to meet these primary goals.

Data Needs

- Organizational chart showing number of positions by job category
- Position control report showing filled and vacant positions and personnel on leave of absences
- Job descriptions for each job category
- Number of regular and special, extracurricular and other routes driven daily and information pertaining to other transportation services provided on a non-routine basis that would impact staffing needs
- Number of personnel by job category hired during previous school year
- Copy of transportation department employee handbook and departmental procedures

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- Statistics on job turnover for drivers and attendants over the last three years
- Number and frequency of use of substitute bus drivers for the last school year
- Annual transportation report
- Division budget for transportation for current year, division expenses for transportation for last five years

Activities to Perform

- 6.A.1. Create or examine existing organizational and staffing charts and review job descriptions for all transportation related functions including vehicle maintenance and parts ordering and warehousing. Show the actual number of staff in each position including substitute drivers. Interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department and document if it has been changed recently or repeatedly in the recent past or is anticipated to change in the near future. Explain the reasons for any changes.
- 6.A.2. Use the information compiled above, as well as ridership and fleet information, to develop a chart showing the staffing ratios within the function, such as mechanics to total buses in the fleet, drivers to supervisory staff, etc. Compare the division's ratios to those of peer divisions or to published industry standards. Through interviews, determine the reason for any variances.
- 6.A.3. Prepare a chart showing the budgets of transportation and transportation related functions for the last five years. Include enough detail to identify budgeted overtime expenditures, extracurricular travel, and expenditures for regular, special education, career, and technology transportation. Calculate the percent of change in budgets and determine through interviews the reason for budget growth above the average student enrollment or ridership rates over the same time period.
- 6.A.4. Prepare a chart showing actual overtime worked by each position type stated in hours and dollars and if available, show trends for the last three years. Calculate whether overtime is increasing or decreasing and identify any areas where consistent, excessive overtime is being worked and why.

Questions to Ask

Organization and Staffing

Who are the key staff members who manage the department? What is the delegation of authority? Is the division's staffing level comparable to divisions of similar size and linear density? What staffing formulas does the division use to ensure the efficiency of staff?

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How many substitute drivers are there? Are they guaranteed a certain number of hours per week? How many? Are they considered full-time or part-time? Receive benefits?

How many filled driver positions does the division currently have? What is the peak requirement for drivers? Does the division have an adequate number of drivers to run regular routes? Is the number of backup drivers sufficient to cover the average number of absent drivers? What other staff are licensed to drive buses and how often are they called upon to run routes? How does that impact their ability to do their normal work? How does this practice impact overtime rates?

Do drivers and mechanics receive adequate supervision? What is the span of control? Who is responsible for evaluating drivers? Do the evaluators ride with the drivers to assess performance? How often? Are surveillance cameras used in buses to observe driver performance? Does the supervisor follow drivers periodically to observe driving skills and adherence to division policies and procedures? How often? When drivers are having problems, whom do they turn to for help? When a mechanic is uncertain of how to proceed with a repair, to whom can they turn for assistance?

Who drives for extracurricular trips? Who schedules extracurricular trips? If a trip requires a driver to drive more than 10 hours or be at work for more than 15 hours total in a day, does the division allow for eight hours of sleep? Do drivers earn the same wage for driving extracurricular trips? Are drivers paid for "wait time" during the extracurricular event or just for the time they are driving?

Are mechanics required to drive buses? Why? How often (on average)? How has this practice impacted the division's ability to adequately maintain the buses? Who supervises the mechanics?

6.B. Planning, Policies and Procedures

Effective management is built upon sound planning and clearly written and legally valid policies. The department implements plans and policies that the board adopts governing the operations of school transportation functions as well as policies that are directed at other programs but have an indirect impact on the delivery of student transportation services. For example, school start and end times that are set in policy impact the transportation function. An effectively managed department will have procedures that show division employees how to carry out the policies in their various functional areas.

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Data Needs

- Copy of transportation planning documents, budget development schedules and goals and objectives for transportation program
- Copy of an annual "report card" on the transportation department's performance for the last school year
- Documentation for performance monitoring system; performance and cost-efficiency measures and benchmarks
- Copy of board policies impacting or directly related to transportation such as bell times and waiver days, school bus fleet procurement and replacement, ride time limitations, co-curricular and extracurricular transportation, use of bus attendants (monitors), security or discipline management on buses
- Internal operating procedures

Activities to Perform

- 6.B.1. Prepare a list of a performance measures used by the department and the actual performance levels achieved as of the last point of measurement. Include the results of any recent customer or parent surveys. Determine if the measures provide a sufficient system of monitoring and, through interviews, determine if the process contributes to a system of continual improvement.
- 6.B.2. Compile a list of all board-approved transportation policies or policies that relate to transportation, transportation personnel or transportation routes and schedules. Show the basic content of each policy and determine if they are comprehensive and, to the extent possible, discuss what impact these policies have on the department's effectiveness and efficiency.
- 6.B.3. Compile a list of all formally documented operating procedures used by transportation staff. Compare the list to key functions in the transportation area and determine what procedures are complete, partially complete, missing, or outdated. For those functions where a documented procedure is not available or is only partially complete or outdated, through interviews note how the department insures that the work is completed in a consistent manner and how this practice has impacted the effectiveness or efficiency of the operation.

Question to Ask

Planning, Budgeting and Program Evaluation

How are transportation services evaluated to determine overall effectiveness and efficiency? Does the division review routing, loading and scheduling annually looking for ways of increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness?

Does the division formally monitor and report on performance indicators like on-time performance, accidents per 100,000 miles, breakdowns per 100,000 miles,

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preventive maintenance or safety inspections performed on-time, cost per mile, cost per student rider by program? How does the division measure service quality and safety? When was the last time that the transportation office conducted a user survey to determine rider satisfaction? Parent satisfaction? School staff satisfaction?

How does the division plan for and monitor factors affecting transportation costs such as increases in enrollment? Decreases in enrollment? Closure of schools? Opening of school(s) in new attendance area(s)? Number of new students in a geographic area without a school? Boundary changes? Organizational changes (i.e., addition of middle schools)? School-to-school transportation due to over enrollment in a building?

Do attendance zones change frequently? How is the transportation department involved in planning for attendance zones?

Policies

When new policies are being considered, who performs an analysis of costs? How were transportation costs considered when choosing sites for new schools? When redrawing attendance zone boundaries? When setting bell times for schools? When opening magnet school programs? When considering open enrollment or school choice policies? When setting or changing extracurricular trip budgets?

By policy, what children are transported to and from school in the division? What types of service by category are not reimbursed by the state?

Are any students in the division charged for transportation costs? If so, who? Under what circumstances? What is the charge? Does the charge match the cost of transportation? Is this process documented in division policy?

Does the division allow external groups, such as non-profit organizations, to use or charter school buses? If so, who? Under what circumstances? What is the charge? Does the charge match the cost of transportation? Is this process documented in division policy?

Does the division have a policy that allows drivers to take buses home? What are the benefits of letting drivers take buses home?

What locally developed and approved policies does the division use for handling student or parent complaints? How many complaints are received per week or month?

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Procedures

How are internal operating procedures developed for the department? When was the last time that the transportation procedure manual was updated? Who is responsible for verifying that procedures are consistent and reflect daily operations? How does the department insure that transportation procedures reflect validated industry best practices? Are all practices defensible if a school board member or a key administrator asks a question? By a parent? How does your school division's transportation policy and procedure manual measure up to industry recommendations?

How is staff kept knowledgeable about changes in procedures? How are new employees trained or oriented to departmental procedures? Who is responsible for training and orientation?

Would the current practices and procedures protect the division or place it at risk in the event of an accident or legal action? If not, why not? What should be changed?

What procedures are in place for children with special needs? How are procedures for dealing with children with special needs agreed to by the special education department? Have all transportation procedures and written manuals for students with special needs been reviewed by risk management personnel in your school division prior to providing in-service training and disseminating materials?

6.C. Routing and Scheduling

Standard miles and riders do not include miles or riders for alternative, bilingual, desegregation, magnet, parenting, pre-kindergarten regular transportation, or hazardous area service. Each group is eligible to receive a maximum per mile allotment and allotment rates are based on the previous year's linear density. Consequently an effective routing and scheduling system not only will help the division to control costs, but can maximize the state's reimbursement rate for miles driven.

Data Needs

- School bell times
- Board policies regarding student eligibility, hazardous routes, ride times and the like that could impact routing and scheduling requirements
- List of bus routes (regular, special, career and technology, extracurricular) showing average number of riders and grade level of students or school served

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- Copies of annual reports and supporting documentation as submitted to the Virginia DOE
- Description of automated routing and scheduling program, if applicable
- Description of extracurricular trip scheduling program, if applicable
- Procedures for reviewing and modifying routes as student enter and leave the system
- Route schedules or average rider trip time per bus route
- Records to report and measure on-time performance

Activities to Perform

- 6.C.1. Prepare a chart showing the school start and end times by grade level or by school if bell times are not coordinated. Note any special circumstances, such as individual schools that impact schedules or magnet schools that draw students from across the division, schools with a zero hour or after hour schedule that require special activity routes and the like.
- 6.C.2. Compile a list of all routes showing the average ridership and the number of miles driven per route. Note where a single bus and driver make second or third runs in the same period and where opportunities exist for a driver and bus to make multiple runs.
- 6.C.3. If the division is not using routing software, diagram the current routing process and show how routes are established and continually modified due to changes in ridership. Discuss how the division uses this manual system to maximize revenues from the state and control costs.
- 6.C.4. Based upon route sheets and interviews, chart the ride time for regular program and special program students. If the division has a special programs, such as a magnet program, determine the average ride time for magnet students. Note specific routes or schools where ride times are long and determine why and what measures have been taken to decrease ride time, if possible.
- 6.C.5. Prepare a series of charts using transportation data reported to the VA Department of Education to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of regular routes, including, but not limited to linear density and reimbursement rates, cost per regular program rider, cost per regular program mile, regular program riders per mile, regular program riders per bus and regular program per bus. Compare against peer data for the same period and show performance trends over five years within the division. Note areas of improvement or concern and through interviews, determine the reason(s) for both.
- 6.C.6. Prepare a series of charts using transportation data reported to the VA Department of Education to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of special education routes, including, but not limited to cost per special program rider, cost per special program mile, special program riders per mile, special program riders per bus and special program per bus. Compare against peer data for the same

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period and show performance trends over five years within the division. Note areas of improvement or concern and through interviews, determine the reason(s) for both.

Questions to Ask

School Schedules

Is each bus and driver dual or triple routed? Are bell schedules staggered sufficiently to provide for multiple uses of buses and drivers? What activities has the division used to improve its linear density group for regular routes and thereby increase the state's reimbursement rates?

Routing

Does the division do its routing manually or with an automated system? How does the system in use by the division improve efficiency and cost effectiveness?

If the division has uses a computerized routing and scheduling system, has it been fully implemented? How long has the division had it? What training have the routing and schedule personnel received to operate the automated system? Does the division use the automated system to conduct any type of route efficiency analysis? Is the division making use of all of those capabilities? If not, why not?

On average, how many students ride the bus per trip? What is the largest route currently run? Does the division have any policies on limiting number of students per trip?

Does the division mix students of different ages (elementary, middle, high school) on the bus?

How does the current system of routing impact on time arrivals? What situations have caused buses to be late to school or in bringing children home? What is being done to correct those situations?

Who is responsible for designing new routes/modifying existing routes? Does the division periodically review routes for efficiency? How are changes decided? How often are changes made?

How are buses assigned to routes? Any effort to keep the number of miles balanced among buses?

How are bus stops determined? Does the division use cluster stops or any other routing tool to improve operating efficiency?

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What special routes are provided on a regular schedule, such as activity routes? Why?

How does the division group special program routes to achieve efficiency?

Does the division use a system of bus transfers to improve efficiency? Where are students transferred from and to? Who makes the decision to transfer students, rather than busing them straight through to their school? How does the division support the transfer program as being effective and efficient? How do parents feel about the transfer program? What changes could be made to improve the program?

Ride Times

How long are average travel times, including waiting and transferring?

Do any policies or procedures establish a maximum amount of time that regular education students should be on a bus? Special program students? Does policy or procedure prescribe when an aide is provided on a bus?

Special Education

Describe the process for determining the eligibility of special program students to receive special transportation. Who determines eligibility? What policies are in place to guide the decision-making process?

If bus attendants (monitors, aides) are employed, which department compensates them?

How does the division provide transportation of special program students to and from locations where they receive special services, such as transportation to and from physical therapy?

Are drivers of special education students receiving training in the needs of the special students? Bus attendants (monitors, aides)?

6.D. State Reporting

The Virginia Department of Education requires each school division to submit certain transportation reports each year. Division must submit these reports on a timely basis with accurate information.

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Data Needs

- Policies and procedures that direct or impact state reporting and funding, including policies for hazardous routes.
- Methodology for collecting and reporting data to the state
- Forms and procedures used to collect student count information
- DOE Transportation Route Services and Transportation Operation Reports for past five years
- Copy of any internal or external audits pertaining to transportation reporting or funding

Reimbursements

What evidence exists to show that the division is claiming and receiving maximum reimbursements for transportation services provided? When the gap between reimbursements and costs is widening, what measures have been taken by the division to maximize reimbursements? Control costs?

6.E. Training and Safety

The goal of any school transportation function is to safely transport student to and from school. To achieve this simple goal requires training and a strong safety awareness program.

Data Needs

- Staff development schedules
- List of staff development participants, by position, for each offering in the last three years
- Driver training curriculum
- Training requirements by staff category, including any mandatory requirements before a driver is allowed to take a route
- Incentive programs to encourage staff development by drivers and mechanics and summary of participants
- Accident records for the last three years
- Documentation on frequency, content of division safety meetings for bus drivers and mechanics
- Safety programs outside of employee training (for example student training)
- Copy of transportation department employee handbook
- Student injuries while riding on bus due to accidents

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Activity to Perform

- 6.E.1. Chart all school bus or other division vehicle accident reports for the three years and determine whether trends exist. If trends are discovered, interview staff to determine what action the division has taken to reverse those trends.

Questions to Ask

Training

How many hours of initial training do newly hired bus drivers receive? How many hours of ongoing training do established bus drivers receive per year? What types of training are provided and how does it compare to that suggested in the Code of Virginia

What training does the division provide to mechanics? How does the division encourage mechanics to obtain ASE certification? What benefits do mechanics receive for being ASE certified? Certified school bus inspector? Other?

Does the division offer any awards to drivers to encourage good performance?

Accidents

What is the division's post accident drug and alcohol testing policy?

With regards to safety, how many accidents have division buses been involved with during the previous school year? What percentage of these accidents did the division classify as preventable and/or non-preventable? How does the division track and monitor accidents? What procedures exist for dealing with drivers involved in preventable accidents? Are drivers with multiple accidents terminated or retrained?

What is the accident rate per 100,000 miles?

6.F. Vehicle Maintenance and Bus Replacement Schedules

School bus replacement is expensive and inevitable for divisions. As a result, keeping a given division's existing fleet in superb operating condition is a paramount component of an effective transportation department. Routine and preventive maintenance, accurate records, and qualified mechanics are just some of the factors to consider when examining a division's maintenance department.

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Data Needs

- Preventive maintenance schedules
- Procedures for controlling access to fuel
- Information on methods used to purchase parts and services (state contracts, telephone bids, sealed bids, etc.)
- Description of automated vehicle maintenance information systems (VMIS) records (if applicable)
- Inventory of school bus fleet including date of purchase, vehicle manufacturer, model, size (number of student seats), service miles to date, average miles per year, fuel type, auxiliary equipment (air-conditioning, cameras, radios, lifts, etc.)
- Inventory of general service fleet (non-school bus), including description of primary use of vehicle, departmental assignment, date of purchase, vehicle manufacturer, model, service miles to date, average miles per year, average miles on business per year
- Copy of board policy on the replacement of school buses; fleet procurement and replacement plan
- Five-year history of school bus purchases for regular and special transportation, including year of purchase, manufacturer, model, size (number of student seats), price paid and source or basis for purchase (state contract, division)
- Documentation on all vehicles disposed of in last three school years and revenues gained at sale

Activities to Perform

- 6.F.1 Prepare a table showing the current fleet inventory by year, make, and model; fuel use type; capacity; date of purchase; purchase price (if available); and current mileage. This should include all vehicles owned by the division including buses, police vehicles, maintenance vehicles, and the like.
- 6.F.2 Chart the average number of buses purchased each year and the average amount budgeted for bus replacement. Also chart the bus replacement schedule in practice and compare it to any stated policies for bus replacement in the division and/or state recommended guidelines for replacement. Based on annual mileage data, determine an appropriate replacement cycle for the division and compare to the actual cycle.

General Services Fleet

How large is the general services fleet? Does the division include budgeted funds specifically for the general services fleet? If not, how does the division recover the cost of parts and labor for maintenance for the general services fleet? What percent of mechanic labor is dedicated to maintaining the general services fleet?

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Fleet and Equipment Replacement Schedule

Does division policy establish a replacement policy for school buses? How often, or at what intervals are buses to be replaced in the division?

How does the division decide on the types of vehicles needed and purchased annually to determine the most efficient and effective type for the division? What purchasing process is used when purchasing buses that ensure that the division is getting the best price? Does the division purchase buses through the ?General Services Commission contract?

How does the division determine which buses should be retired? Is the decision based solely on age? On cost to maintain? On mileage? What analyses are conducted to choose buses for retirement or replacement?

At what age or miles of service does the division retire buses? What does the division do with retired buses? If they are sold, who sells them and how much does the division get for them? Are there any buses in an inactive (surplus) fleet?

Does the division have a program for rehabilitating buses instead of replacing them?

What is your peak bus requirement? What is the spare ratio for the fleet and why at this level? How do extracurricular trips affect this bus requirement?

Does the division maintain a bus replacement schedule with:

- future needs for transportation identified in relationship to available equipment?
- bus replacements meeting existing federal and state codes?
- a set schedule and methodology for bus replacement?

Maintenance and Inspections

How many division vehicles other than buses does the division own? How many miles does each vehicle log each year?

Describe your preventive maintenance program. Who handles preventive maintenance on vehicles? How does the division ensure preventive maintenance is performed on time?

What method is used to record, monitor, and evaluate maintenance costs for each vehicle, each year? Are maintenance costs used to determine when to retire buses? When to refurbish buses?

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How many maintenance facilities? How long have they been open? Location?
How many bays for maintenance and repair of vehicles? How many vehicles per maintenance bay?

Vehicle Maintenance Information System

Does the department have a vehicle maintenance information system (VMIS)? If so, how long has the division had it? What is the information captured? Labor hours, labor cost, parts, fuel? What is the process for entering the data in the system? Who is responsible? Is data entered in a timely manner? Is the system used to produce maintenance or fleet performance reports? If so, explain.

How are parts managed? Does the division use the VMIS system to help manage parts? If not, how does the division keep track of inventory?

Fuel Usage

What fuels are used in buses? When does fueling occur? How is fuel use tracked? How are fuel sources selected? How are prices established?

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TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Use of automation has enabled school divisions to enhance operational, instructional and business programs. Technological advances in hardware and software, combined with affordable pricing, allow divisions of all sizes to use information systems to perform vital functions.

An information technology system provides a number of benefits including more efficient operations through speed of processing and increased information; integration of programs; and communication networks.

This module assesses all aspects of information technology including information system planning, operational and organizational controls, system applications, system acquisition, user input and program evaluation.

The Technology Management chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 7.A. Organization and Staffing
- 7.B. Staff Development
- 7.C. Instructional and Administrative Technology
- 7.D. Technology Planning and Budgeting
- 7.E. Technology Policies and Procedures
- 7.F. Inventory and Control
- 7.G. Systems Infrastructure and Integration
- 7.H. Technical Support and Help Desk Operations
- 7.I. Technology Acquisition, Donation and Surplus Practices

7.A. Organization and Staffing

To achieve its technology-related goals, a school division must have an organizational structure that creates an environment for using and supporting new technologies.

Data Needs

- Organizational charts for all information technology operations, including instructional and administrative technology
- Technology staffing by position
- Job descriptions for all technology-related positions
- Contracts for services or technical support
- Technology salary schedule or compensation plan
- Turnover rates by employee class
- Exit interview or employee satisfaction survey results
- Technology budget for the last three years

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People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Chief information officer or director
Chief financial officer or business manager
Human Resources director
Instructional Technology director
Curriculum and Instruction director
Technical Support Staff (administrative and instructional)
Teachers
Principals
Information Technology Director
Data Management Director
E-rate Coordinator
Contract Staff
Instructional Television
Production Staff (web developers, media production)
Library Media Specialist
Information Technology Resource Teachers

Activities to Perform

- 7.A.1. Create or examine the existing organizational and staffing charts and job descriptions for technology and interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, determine whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department. If instructional and administrative technology are organized separately, prepare charts for both functions and show any interactions or staffing shared by both groups. Document if the organization has been changed recently or repeatedly in the recent past or is anticipated to change in the near future and explain the reasons for changes. Note any contracted services or employees, as well as any stakeholder technology committees and show to whom they report in the overall management structure.
- 7.A.2. Chart the staffing of instructional and administrative technology and technology-related functions. Determine the ratio of total staff to staffing within the technology function and to pupils. Compare the budget and staffing levels to levels in peer divisions and to industry standards. Compare staff/tech, computer/tech and user/tech ratios to better determine total technology effort in the division.
- 7.A.3. Prepare a table comparing the salaries of technology staff in the division by employment category to salaries in peer divisions, regional averages and/or industry competitors. Note variances by category.

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Questions to Ask

Organizational structure

Who heads the technology organization in the division? How involved and supportive is upper management of the technology function in the division? What is the role of the board in technology operations of the division? How does the current organizational structure contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the technology function? Is the organizational structure basically centralized or decentralized? Why is this the best approach for the division?

How autonomous is the technology department? How does upper management provide appropriate controls and supervision? Do they understand the technology function and have high expectations of the technology department? How does the board make contractual decisions for major contracts for technology? Do they rely on the recommendations of division technical staff?

Are instructional and administrative technology support handled in one department or are the technical support functions decentralized? What opportunities exist for improving the management of the functions?

Communication flow

How does the current organizational structure promote communication? What are the primary means of communication between technology staff and users? Verbal? Memos? via email? How is the division Web site or intranet used for communication? How does the current arrangement provide support to users?

How does communication flow to upper management? Stakeholders? Lower-level employees? What level of authority for decisions do technology staff have? Or need?

Instructional technology

How are educational technology staffing linked to enrollment, program needs, number of users to support, number of computers to support, average resolution response times and comparative division data? Who heads the educational technology division? Are functions that relate to instructional technology efficiently aligned within the overall division organization? What is the staffing pattern of the educational technology division? What are the functions supported by the educational technology division? Does the total school community participate in technology plan development? Is the division technology plan used to guide school technology operations? Are the instructional technology equipment and software in use compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act? How are instructional technology initiatives aligned with the division's mission statement and student's academic needs? How often are instructional technology policies and guidelines reviewed and updated? Is a Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

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model utilized? How is the return on investment (ROI) for instructional technology analyzed and determined? Does the school currently employ Instructional Technology Resource Teachers? What are their duties? Who do they report to – instruction or technology?

How are related functions coordinated within the division? How does the division use its user committees to assist in determining needs and establishing system priorities? How is communication assured between educational technology staff, teaching staff, library staff to determine overall needs of school and division? How does the current organizational structure ensure that technology is integrated into all areas of curriculum?

How does the board interact with the educational technology department? Formally? Informally? How does the administration interact with the technology? Formally? Informally? What is the relationship between purchasing and educational technology? How are technology standards communicated to support organization such as parent organization, for purchasing technology? Is there an approval process in place for the purchase technology? Who is responsible for coordinating the purchasing of instructional technology?

How does the educational technology department meet the curriculum and instructional needs of the division? What evidence is provided that ensures that educational technology and curriculum staff members work together to meet the curriculum and instructional needs of students?

What is the relationship between the educational technology department and school based staff? How are the needs of individual schools met? Are there teams of school - based staff that support technology? What are their specific responsibilities? What is their reporting relationship within the technology function? What is the communication link with technology?

Technology advisory or user committees

Where does the technology committee fit into the overall division organization? What advisory or decision-making authority does the committee have? How does the division technology committee have adequate representation from various stakeholder groups? Explain. How does the committee meet on a regularly scheduled basis with a well-planned agenda and activities? Are parents and community members aware of technology plans, expenditures and benefits of use?

Has the division developed a segregation of functions between the Information Technology Department and user departments and internally within the Information Technology Department as possible? How does the division's central information technology/data processing staff function separately from technology staff in accounting, payroll, educational technology and other departments? Why? Are the duties and responsibilities of the division's information technology staff clearly separated to ensure

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checks and balances on input and output data? Why? What is the percent of staff time spent on such functions as user support, hardware or software installation, network or infrastructure support, telecommunications, administrative support, planning and the like. How effective is this approach? How does the division's size impact the division of time?

7.B. Staff Development

School divisions must provide staff development in technology. This training needs to be part of the division's overall training program and must be focused on the needs of the end user.

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures related to optional or required technology-related staff development
- Information technology training goals or plans for technology staff, support staff, teachers and administrators
- List of technology-related training offered in the last year
- List of planned training opportunities in the next three to six months
- Staff development evaluation forms or results gathered from participants
- Technology training manuals
- Technology training budget for the last three years

People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Chief information officer or director
Staff development coordinator
Director of Instructional Technology
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Technical Support Staff (administrative and instructional)
Teachers
Principals
Library Media Specialist

Activities to Perform

- 7.B.1. Examine policies and procedures pertaining to required or optional technology-related staff development. Create a chart by position classification showing the training requirements and to the extent possible, determine whether the requirements are being met and note who in the organization is responsible for monitoring compliance.

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- 7.B.2. Prepare a list of technology-related staff development opportunities and show the target audience; the provider, whether internal or external; the frequency of the training; the length of the staff development sessions; the ongoing follow-up opportunities; the format of the staff development (face to face, videoconferencing; video programming; online staff development, etc.); organization of the sessions (train the trainer, end user training, one-on-one mentoring, etc.); the number of attendees; the collaborative efforts to plan and implement staff development across curriculum areas and grade levels; and the summary results of any evaluations received concerning the effectiveness of the staff development on classroom practices.
- 7.B.3. Prepare a list of teacher training and support activities that facilitate the integration of technology into classroom instruction, including technical and instructional assistance from fellow teachers, technicians, external providers, and the like. Examine curriculum guides, published procedures, and teacher survey and focus group comments to determine the frequency of use and how each component is evaluated for effectiveness.
- 7.B.4. Chart the staff development budget for technology training for technology staff and for user departments or schools for the last three years. Determine what percent training is of the total technology budget for the division and compare that percentage to peer divisions and to the federal No Child Left Behind recommendation of at least 25 percent of total budget.
- 7.B.5. Examine division and school improvement plans and other planning documents and list the goals and objectives pertinent to technology-related staff development. Compare the identified goals and objectives to the types of staff development courses offered and note how identified needs are being met. If not all needs are being met, through interviews with individuals who coordinate staff development, determine the reason.

Questions to Ask

Staff development requirements

What, if any, staff development is mandatory for staff, including teachers? Which training is routinely required for new staff regarding the educational technology program and system? What is the basic structure of the division training plan and how are required training programs addressed in the plan? What measures are taken to assure that professional development is high-quality? How does the division determine if instructional staff have met TSIP?

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Staff development offerings

Which training is routinely given to teachers and non-management staff? How often?
Which training is routinely given to administrative or management staff? How often?
Which training is routinely given to technical support staff? How often?

Training need assessments

How are users consulted about the needs of new staff development? How often? What are the training requirements for teachers and for technical support staff? What is the level of commitment to meet Virginia's Computer/Technology Standards for k-12 standards? Is documentation collected to ensure that educators receive training in the integration of technologies into curriculum and instruction as specified in No Child Left Behind? Is staff development provided in isolation or integrated as an important part of improving teaching and learning, research, etc.? How often are the training sessions evaluated?

How are the technology training needs for administrator identified? What courses are specifically designed to help administrators become more technologically proficient?

Teacher Training and Support

What evidence exists to show that educators are becoming technology literate as specified in No Child Left Behind? How are teachers trained to use technology in the classroom? How are teachers encouraged to integrate technology into the curriculum? Does the division include the use of technology as an evaluation component in curriculum delivery during classroom teacher observations? What kind of support do teachers receive for the use of technology in the classroom? Hardware support? Curriculum and lesson planning support?

Training technology staff

What training does staff in the technology division receive to better understand current and emerging developments in technology? How do technology staff members serve as resources to other division administrators in technology matters? Are employees in the division cross-trained? To what extent does technology staff members participate in workshops, conferences, seminars, read professional literature and interact with technology administrators in both public and private sectors to improve job performance?

How is this documented, reported and/or disseminated to division staff?

How are organizational training plans monitored? Are educational delivery methods available after work hours? Are needed technology skills identified for all job categories? Are technology competencies defined?

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Are there local incentives for educators to take advantage of continuing education and to pursue additional teaching certificates or other credentials?

How were these competencies defined, e.g. research based on other educators, business, support personnel? What reward/compensation system is in place for reinforcing training? Are technology certifications considered as part of the staff development plan? Is training “just in case” or “just in time” – is training available at anytime, anywhere, at the moment of need?

7.C. Instructional and Administrative Technology

Instructional and administrative technologies have become critical parts of a school division's educational programs and general operations. Computers in the classrooms, computers in labs and automated reporting systems are no longer the exception, but often the norm.

Data Needs

- Division, school and technology plans pertaining to instructional technology
- Policies and procedures, including acceptable use policies
- School and program computer availability patterns
- Copies of contracts from any outsourced technology support or maintenance
- Job descriptions for technology staff
- Grant funding applications and documentation of awards
- Number of students taking courses via distance learning by course
- Number of teachers meeting Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel

Activity to Perform

- 7.C.1. Establish a pupil to computer ratio by school and program for all computers regarding of usability. Calculate a pupil to computer ratio based upon computers that can support grade-appropriate programs and Internet access and compare this to the statewide and national goals.

Questions to Ask

Availability of Computers

How does the division compare to state and national goals in the number of computers available to students? How old are these computers? What is the capability of the computers? Can they run, for example, complex programs and

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software? How many of the computers can access the Internet? How does the division insure that older computers are retired and replaced on an ongoing basis? How does the division insure that the computers placed in the classrooms can support the technology needs at each grade level and for specific courses? How do parents, students, and teachers feel about the availability of computers?

What types of special programs make technology available to parents and students? For example, can parents or students check out laptops for home use? Is the library open after the school day to accommodate community needs? What types of configurations, such as learning labs and portable computer stations, are used to provide computer access, without having to buy as many computers?

Is a policy or procedure in place for handling controversial printed and Internet-based materials? What board policy is in place to address questioned resources in the library or classroom?

Reporting

What attendance and other school-level administrative tasks are automated? What redundant data entry must be done either from manual forms to the computer or from one computerized system to another?

Distance Education

How is the division using distance education? What benefits are being achieved for students through distance education offerings? What savings or efficiencies are achieved through distance education operationally? What is annually budgeted for distance learning or other electronic or online programs for students that expand learning? Is distance education used for staff development?

How are distance education opportunities publicized to students and parents? Who is actively searching for new distance education opportunities for the division? How is distance education addressed in technology plans and budgets? What types of partnering arrangement exist for distance education? How are the partnerships documented? What is the division's role in the partnership?

7.D. Technology Planning and Budgeting

The most effective technology plans contain clear goals, objectives and action plans for technology projects. They assign individual responsibility for implementation steps and set deadlines.

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Data Needs

- Long-range technology plan
- Division and school improvement plans
- Architectural Guidelines compliance at high, middle and elementary schools.
- School Readiness Certification (for On-line Testing)
- Information Technology and Division Disaster recovery plan
- New school facilities plans (what is being installed as the schools are built)
- Technology equipment maintenance and replacement plans, if separate from other plans
- Strategic plan
- Any division analysis or evaluation report of current equipment and future hardware needs (including assistive technology)
- List of grants and external technology funding sources and amounts for the last five years including such things as E-rate, Web-based SOL Technology Initiative, NCLB Title II, Part D Grant, etc.
- Information regarding the amount of technology allotments for the last five years and its uses
- Administrative and technology-related budgets for the last five years.
- Virginia Consortia Memberships
- NCLB Title II, Part D Competitive Grant Consortia

People to Interview

Administrator(s) with responsibility for instructional technology
Administrator(s) with responsibility for administrative technology
Curriculum and Instruction director
Chief information officer
User departments
Technology Staff
Technology Planning Committee

Activities to Perform

- 7.D.1. Compile copies of all plans that relate to technology including but not limited to the division's long-range technology plan, strategic plan, disaster recovery plan, school and division improvement plans as they relate to technology and the division's budget. Prepare a list of the plans, briefly describe the scope of the plan, the individuals or groups involved in creating the plan, the dates covered by the plan, the frequency of the plan's update, who is responsible for monitoring progress and state whether the goals and objectives of the plan are linked to other plans and the budget. Note any inconsistencies between the plans.
- 7.D.2. Prepare a list of a performance measures used by the department and the actual performance levels achieved as of the last point of measurement. Determine if the

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measures provide a sufficient system of monitoring and, through interviews, determine if the process contributes to a system of continual improvement.

- 7.D.3. Prepare a list of all grants and other external funding obtained by the division for technology. Determine how this funding is directly related to implementing the technology plans of the division and discuss the decision-making process used to determine which grants to apply for and who applies for and monitors compliance with the grant terms and conditions.
- 7.D.4. Create a table showing the instructional and administrative technology budgets including hardware and software budgets for the last five years. Include both revenue sources as well as expenditure budgets and to the extent possible, include school-based budgets for technology in the mix. Identify trends and by examining the division's technology plan and interviewing staff, show how the budget addresses the goals and objectives for technology in the division.
- 7.D.5. Examine the disaster recovery plan and any other documents that show how the division has prepared for the event of a disaster. List the major components of the plan and how the plan ensures business continuity following a disaster. In the absence of a formal plan, determine what elements of a plan are in place and what still remains to be done.

Questions to Ask

Technology planning

How is the technology department's mission statement or understanding about how the department works, linked to the overall division mission and goals? How does the department monitor and measure success? How does the department know they are meeting their customers' needs? Who are their customers? How is quality of services ensured? How is this reported and to whom? Is the division technology plan part of the division six-year improvement plan?

Has the division developed a technology plan that realistically meets the projected demographic needs and academic goals of the division within budget constraints and policy guidelines?

What is the date of the most recent revision to the division's technology plan? How often is the plan updated? Is there a information technology security policy and plan in place?

What areas should your school and division focus on to improve their level of technology integration to ensure the best possible teaching and learning? How does the division align the technology plan to state and federal plans for educational technology? How does the division align the technology plan to e-rate requirements?

How does the division's long-range technology planning process include input from representatives of the division administration, school-based personnel and support

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personnel? Is the division's current and future technology requirements considered when planning for system upgrades or replacements? How is the plan shared with stakeholders?

Performance evaluations

Does the division formally monitor and report on performance indicators like on-time maintenance and repairs, cost per computer, cost per student and the like? If the division does not track performance measures, how does the division know if you are doing a good job? How does the division measure service quality? When was the last time that the technology office conducted a user survey to determine user satisfaction? Student satisfaction? School-based staff satisfaction? Is a needs assessment performed?

Are performance standards in place for each technology support area? For example? Are customer follow-up to service requests sent after the service is performed? Are customer surveys sent to customers periodically? Are performance standards in place to regularly monitor performance and methods in place to collect information about performance?

How often do user groups attend regular review and planning sessions? How often does the management personnel attend regular review and planning sessions? How is technology staff involved in user division planning that relates to technology?

How does the division provide a system for determining accounting, instructional, student records, curriculum, budgeting and other departmental information needs? How does the division provide a formal prioritization process for analyzing division wide needs?

How and when does the division conduct scheduled reviews, analysis and evaluation of educational technology software/hardware? Do these scheduled reviews consider changing user requirements? Are any user committees involved in conducting reviews, analysis and evaluation of information technology software? Explain. How does the division regularly review current equipment and future hardware needs on an annual basis? Explain. How does the division have an obsolescence plan?

Budgeting

Has the board adopted an annual spending plan for educational technology with use of operating funds and bond funds as appropriate? Are spending plans tied into technology plans? Is there a plan for use of state technology funds, E-rate funds, NCLB formula grant funds, NCLB competitive grant funds? Do technology plans have detailed implementation schedules and timelines? Is information on progress reported to the board?

Has the board approved multi-year spending plan to provide hardware, software and all peripheral requirements? Funding for use of outside consultants to assist regular staff

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with system planning, requirement definition or system implementation if the need exists?

How aggressively has the division sought grant funding to support the technology plans of the division? Who is responsible for grant writing? What goals, objectives or strategies are being met through grant funding or other external funding sources? How is this funding strategy reflected in the division's plans? Is there a sustainability plan after the grant funds end?

Disaster recovery planning

How is disaster and recovery planned? Evaluated? Tested? Is data regularly stored offsite in the event of disasters involving flood, tornado and fire? Has the division developed appropriate physical safeguards and backup provisions? What off-site storage is used? Has the division developed a disaster recovery plan? How does the division maintain its backup schedule? Are there other areas that should be backed up? Have the recovery procedures been tested?

How does the current disaster recovery plan address:

- Immediate Response?
- Incident control/evaluation?
- Notifications?
- Environmental Restoration?
- Functional Restoration?
- Resumption of Critical Business Functions?

How does the immediate response section of the plan address evacuation, missing/damage reports, calls for official help? How does incident control/evaluation section of the plan address establishing a command center, security of physical plant and data and damage assessment? How will staff, students, vendors and other customers be notified of the disaster?

What pre-planning measures have been taken to restore critical business functions? Where will the administration establish its new location if the administration building were destroyed or unusable? Where will supplies and office equipment come from?

How does the division intend to restore lost transactions or recreate critical paper documents such as student records? How will the remaining data be validated? Are data usage and security plans in place?

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7.E. Technology Policies and Procedures

Policies, procedures and standards are the bedrock of effective technological change. Divisions need clear policies and procedures for the purchase of technology, its acceptable use, the application of copyright laws and the control of software and hardware inventories.

Data Needs

- Board policies impacting technology, both instructional and administrative
- Division acceptable use policies
- Internal operating procedures

People to Interview

Chief Information officer
Technology Staff
Library Media Specialist
Data Staff
Finance department staff
Private sector providers
User departments
Internal auditor, if applicable

Activities to Perform

- 7.E.1. Compile a list of all board-approved technology policies or policies that relate to technology, technology personnel or technology standards, Internet or other technology use policies for students and/or staff and security policies to protect the privacy of student data. Show the basic content of each policy and determine if they are comprehensive and, to the extent possible, discuss what impact these policies have on the department's effectiveness and efficiency.
- 7.E.2. Compile a list of all formally documented operating procedures used by technology staff. Compare the list to key functions in the technology area and determine what procedures are complete, partially complete, missing or outdated. By those functions where a documented procedure is not available or is only partially complete or outdated, through interviews note how the department ensures that the work is completed in a consistent manner and how this practice has impacted the effectiveness or efficiency of the operation.

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Questions to Ask

Policies

Are technology policies published and disseminated to appropriate staff, parents and committee members and updated on a scheduled basis?

How does the board approve an Acceptable Use Policy? How does the board policy include copyright/appropriate use of resources? How does the division provide procedures for establishing user committees for system planning and feedback? Are accounting and other user department personnel actively involved in the design of new systems and selection of administrative software packages? What is the selection criteria for instructional materials?

How does the division provide standards for technology that promote acquisition of some technology while discouraging or preventing the purchase of other technology? Are these standards distributed to schools? How does the division ensure compliance with standards? How does the technology department support unauthorized hardware or software? Have standards improved the division's ability to support the software or hardware purchased? Are software purchases tied to curriculum integration plans?

What division policies are in place to restrict access to data files, programs and documentation to authorized personnel? What type and quantity of instructional materials are provided by ITV Stations? What is the division input into the process? What policies for this selection are in place?

How frequently are policies and procedures reviewed and updated? Are policies available in an electronic portal, with searchable selection criteria? If not, why not?

Procedures

How are internal operating procedures developed for the department? When was the last time that the technology procedure manual was updated? Who is responsible for verifying that procedures are consistent and reflect daily operations? How does the department ensure that technology procedures reflect validated industry best practices? Are all practices defensible if a school board member or a key administrator asks a question? By a parent? How does your school division's technology policy and procedure manual measure up to industry recommendations?

How are staff kept knowledgeable about changes in procedures? How are new employees trained or oriented to departmental procedures? Who is responsible for training and orientation?

Would the current practices and procedures protect the division or place it at risk in the event of an accident or legal action? If not, why not? What should be changed?

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Are technology procedures that implement board-approved policies published and disseminated to appropriate staff, parents and committees?

Does the division have published guidelines (procedures) for application system development and acquisition and maintenance controls? Are there policies or procedures in place to ensure that information technology and user department personnel adequately test new application systems before they are acquired? Are development projects sublet to vendors? Are contractors used? Does the division use project managers? How are they trained?

What division procedures or practices are in place to restrict access to data files, programs and documentation to authorized personnel? How is access restricted? How does the division restrict access to hardware to authorized personnel?

What input controls ensure that only properly authorized and approved input data is accepted for processing? What significant codes are used to record data to be verified (e.g., employee numbers or vendor numbers)?

What procedures ensure that maintenance (updating and changing) of application programs is adequately controlled? What standards are in place for system documentation? Who is responsible for ensuring that standards for documentation are followed? Which programs are fully documented? How does the division fully use control features that are built into the hardware and operating system?

What procedure is in place for purchasing software/hardware? Are state, regional or national (MICTA, for example) contracts (DGS) used? Does the division actively participate in the Schools Interoperability Framework process for standardizing data input and output? Does the division utilize data warehousing?

What virus protection measures are taken? How does the division use firewalls? How does the division secure desktop computers to prevent unauthorized changes?

7.F. Inventory and Control

Technology hardware and software inventories can be extensive in a school division, yet ensuring that these tools are available to the right staff and at the right location is challenging. Protecting the assets of the division by accurately accounting for both the hardware and software of the division is a primary responsibility of the technology department.

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Data Needs

- Policies and procedures pertaining to inventory control
- Inventory of instructional and administrative computers and other hardware by school showing date purchased and a general description of the equipment such as the type of processor, RAM and hard drive
- Inventory of specialized software being used in the division and highlights of instructional programs being used by the division. (For example, the division might use Edulog in transportation or Bon Appetit in food services, etc. For instructional programs list major programs. Common word processing and spreadsheet packages are not required.)
- Inventory of on-line subscription services

People to Interview

Chief information officer

Purchasing and other business office staff responsible for inventory and capital assets

User departments

Technical staff

Instructional Technology Director

Inventory Control Specialist (often in Finance)

Activities to Perform

- 7.F.1. Obtain or create a summary list of computers, other hardware and specialized software for all schools and programs by facility, type and capacity of computer and location (whether classroom, lab, office, etc.). Establish a student to computer ratio by school and program based upon computers that can support grade-appropriate programs and Internet access (exclude unusable equipment). Establish a staff and pupil to computer ratio for administrative and/or instructional computers.
- 7.F.2. Diagram the inventory control systems for hardware and software and compare the documented policies and procedures with practices to determine the effectiveness of the controls.

Questions to Ask

Availability of computers

How does the division compare to state and national goals in the number of computers available to students? How does the division allocate computers to administrative staff in the division? What areas of the division, or classes of employees do not have adequate access to computers, but should have? To the Internet? To email? How does the division determine when to replace technology?

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How old are these computers? What is the capability of the computers? Can they run, for example, complex programs and software? How many of the computers can access the Internet? How does the division ensure that the computers placed in the classrooms can support the technology needs at each grade level and for specific courses? How do parents, students and teachers feel about the availability of computers? How do administrators feel about the availability of computers?

What types of configurations, such as learning labs and portable computer stations, are used to provide computer access, without having to buy as many computers?

Availability of other hardware

What additional technological capabilities are available in the division (i.e., distance learning equipment, teleconferencing equipment, wide area networks, local area networks, servers) that are designed to support instruction in the division? How is the division using these capabilities? Are the capabilities of each of these systems being used to full capacity? If not, why not? What is missing that would improve the overall infrastructure and add value to instruction?

Availability of Bandwidth/Connectivity

What is the current division bandwidth? School bandwidth? Is it adequate? Why is bandwidth limited? Geography, cost? What measures have been included to increase bandwidth? LANs, WANs, Wireless towers, wireless carts, Bandwidth table utilization.

Availability of software

What instructional software is available to teachers and instructional staff? What would they like to have and can't get? Why can't they get it?

What software is used to run major administrative systems? How were these systems chosen? What pieces or modules of these systems are not being fully used? Why?

Inventory control

How does the division control hardware inventories? How frequently does the division inventory technology assets? How does the division ensure the accuracy of its technology inventory? How are computers and components treated when the value is below the division's capitalization threshold for capital assets? What is the division's depreciation methodology for its technology assets?

How does the division value technology assets? At what point are acquisitions recorded in the inventory? When are donations recorded in the inventory?

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Does the Board approve all capital asset disposal in advance? How does the division handle the disposal of assets purchased with federal funds? How are capital assets acquired with federal project funds identified in the capital asset inventory?

Does the school division have a central receiving service center to receive and tag all newly acquired technology equipment before distribution or installation?

Is each piece of hardware tagged with an inventory number? Are computers/hardware physically locked/secured either by cabling/lock systems or secured rooms? Are computers virtually protected by theft deterrent/tracking software?

Are computers and other items of technology included in the capital asset inventory or are they kept on a control ledger for inventory purposes? Is an annual inventory conducted? How does the division deal with discrepancies in the inventory? Are individuals held accountable for lost or stolen items? Are individuals assigned responsibility for every item of inventory? Are the police or proper authorities notified when equipment is missing? Are insurance claims filed for stolen equipment? Are insurance coverage adjusted to reflect the current inventory?

What standard does the division use to determine what is unusable/end of life cycle? Is this standard updated yearly? How does the division remove an item from inventory when it becomes obsolete or damaged? How does the division dispose of obsolete equipment?

How does the division ensure that all software on all computers is properly licensed? That copyrights are honored? How does the division view "shareware"? When unauthorized software is found on a computer, how does the division deal with the problem? How does the division use site-licenses for software that is used on multiple machines? Who is responsible for maintaining the software inventories? Is there a school board approved policy for software licenses, copyright and acceptable use?

7.G. Systems Infrastructure and Integration

Technology infrastructure is the underlying system of cabling, phone lines, hubs, switches, routers and other devices that connect the various parts of an organization through a wide area network (WAN) and through a series of local area networks (LANs). Maintaining a strong infrastructure and integrating these systems is critical to increased staff productivity, fewer costly data errors and better customer service to the students, parents and the community served by the division.

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Data Needs

- List of specialized administrative and instructional software
- Description of the system architecture of the division (platforms, documentation on WANs, Virtual Private Networks (VPN), LANs, operating systems, etc)
- List of system documentation, operational manuals and reports
- List of external infrastructure system or technical providers

People to Interview

Educational Technology director

Information Technology director (Data Processing Management/Technical Services)

Purchasing staff

User departments

Help desk supervisor and staff

Webmaster

Technical staff

Assessment Staff

Guidance Counselors

Activities to Perform

- 7.G.1. Prepare a list, or diagram the division's telecommunications infrastructure including routers, servers, the mainframe, WANs, VPNs, LANs as well as the wiring (such as T1 or fiber optic lines) that connect the sites showing the type and capacity of each and the location, where applicable. Note any areas where the infrastructure is lacking and determine if the division's plans are addressing these issues.
- 7.G.2. Compile a list of specialized administrative software and major instructional programs being used by the division. Determine when these systems were installed and/or upgraded, whether they are standalone or integrated with other systems, whether the divisions or departments are experiencing any major problems with the system and if any are scheduled for replacement or upgrade in the near future.

Questions to Ask

Are all schools in the division connected to the Internet? Are the connections in every classroom, or are connections only to certain computers or certain locations within the school? Has the division applied for the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund (E-Rate) administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)? Has E-Rate funding produced discernable results? Can library resources be accessed from the classrooms? Are the school offices connected to the business office? How does the current level of technology allow for electronic communication between schools and

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among schools and the central administration? Does the division use a phone, security system, printers, etc, tied into the division network?

Are there nonstandard or limited use instructional software programs being used in the division? How do nonstandard or limited use instructional software programs impact overall support requirements?

Are administrative systems integrated to allow for exchange of information? Is the exchange of information immediate, or does information update periodically, such as over night? What processes are not integrated? How does this lack of integration contribute to redundant data entry? To errors or omissions?

How is student information such as attendance and grade data collected and transmitted to the central office? What student information system is being utilized at the division and school level? Are other administrative software packages used for special education data, personnel data, etc. Who is responsible for data input? Teachers, administrators, contract staff? Can teachers enter the data directly into the system from the classroom? Are attendance clerks used to enter data that teachers pass to them manually? Is manual data collected at the school level and entered at the central office? How is the accuracy of manually compiled data ensured? What improvements would be possible if these systems were better integrated or connected?

What form of communication exists between the classrooms and the school offices? Between schools and the central office? How can a teacher or school administrator call for help? Are there phones in every classroom? Are there opportunities for using existing lines to improve communication with the classrooms? Central Office and DOE?

7.H. Technical Support and Help Desk Operations

Technical support significantly influences how effectively technology is used in the classroom or the business office. Teachers, students and administrators, even those who are experienced computer users, may encounter technology-related difficulties that interrupt their planning or activities. Unless they receive quick responses to their questions, their effectiveness can be diminished.

Data Needs

- Equipment maintenance/replacement plans
- List of technical services currently supported by the private sector
- Staffing chart showing all of the levels of technical support provided within the division
- Staffing chart showing the level of technical certification of each staff member that also identifies a plan for ongoing technical training and certification.
- Work orders and completion statistics reports

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- Diagram of the troubleshooting process

People to Interview

Chief information officer
Data Processing Management/Technical Services
User departments
Help desk supervisor and staff
Webmaster
Technical staff

Activities to Perform

- 7.H.1. Prepare a staffing chart showing all of the levels of technical support provided within the divisions including support provided by schools-based personnel, central office personnel, external entities including service contracts, maintenance agreements, warranty services and the like. Define the number of employees within each group, the role of each group, the type of technology that is supported such as MACs, PCs, software, etc., and attempt to the extent possible, to determine the ratio of technician to users or the ratio of technicians to usable computers. Compare to industry or peer division standards.
- 7.H.2. Review work orders and completion statistics for a period and determine whether responses meet customer expectations and needs. Compare the statistics to industry standards and note areas where improvements might be needed. What product would you expect from this?
- 7.H.3. Diagram the troubleshooting process, including the help desk operations and determine if the levels of technical support are appropriate and effective.

Questions to Ask

Do customers feel that they are getting the level of technical support they need to get their jobs done? Are there times when the productivity of staff is impaired due to major breakdowns? What activities has the division performed to reduce productivity losses?

Are the information technology operations performed in a controlled, orderly manner that provides good customer service? Who is responsible for prioritizing requests and scheduling of work assigned to designated staff? Are technical staff required to document how and where they have spent their time?

Are school and administrative user staff that have an interest in technology used effectively to train and troubleshoot for fellow employees?

Is there a centralized support structure where help desk calls are channeled? Are help desk/support calls analyzed and plans set forth to provide training where needed, based

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on the type of help desk/support calls submitted/processed. Is there a mechanism to assure problem resolution?

7.I. Technology Acquisition, Donation and Surplus Practices

Data Needs

- Purchasing policies or guidelines as they pertain to technology purchasing, donations and surplusing
- Published standards for technology purchases
- Internal operating procedures as they deal with technology purchases
- Donation guidelines for technology hardware and software
- Long-range technology plan concerning technology acquisitions
- Technology-related purchasing records for the last year and any recently released requests for proposal

People to Interview

Chief information officer
Purchasing director
Information Technology project leaders
Grant writers
Instructional Technology Directors

Activities to Perform

- 7.I.1. Prepare a list of a sample of purchases made in the last year or currently pending and determine the amount of the purchase, the funding source for the purchase, purchasing process used, compliance with state purchasing laws and, to the extent possible, whether prices were competitive.
- 7.I.2. Diagram the process used to acquire technology including the initial needs assessment, stated goals for the acquisition, planning for installation or implementation, authorization of purchases, competitive procurement process, receipt of goods, installation or implementation.

Questions to Ask

When making a decision to buy technology does the division first assess its current programs and systems? Are user divisions asked what they need and what they hope to achieve with the new technology? How does the division or department develop a vision for the future that anticipates how the new technology will improve the way the division does business? How does the division quantify the improvements it expects to achieve with the purchase? How does the division write specifications for meeting needs or have

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vendor products been allowed to dictate the division's processes? How does the board monitor the benefits achieved through the purchase of technology to determine if the decisions to purchase were appropriate?

How does the division acquire new technology? How does the division obtain hardware or software through state or local purchasing cooperatives or catalog purchasing arrangements? How is the purchasing department involved in the purchasing of technology?

How are expenditures controlled? How does the division ensure that all technology purchases are made following state purchasing guidelines? How does the division competitively bid technology purchases? What purchasing cooperatives or catalog purchasing arrangements does the division use when purchasing technology? How does the division consider the financial stability of potential vendors? For each technology project, does the division perform a feasibility study and cost benefit analysis that evaluates costs, risks and benefit of each project? What are the major challenges to overcome in performing feasibility studies in this division?

How does the division attempt to locate alternative funding sources such as grants, donations and the like to pay for or defray the costs of anticipated purchases? Does the division participate in group buying or buying through consortia? How does the division use lease purchase arrangements to acquire technology? When making decisions to lease or purchase technology outright does the division factor in the cost of implied interest? Do the terms and conditions of the lease purchase agreement allow the division to upgrade technology at appropriate intervals?

How does the division negotiate on purchases and software licenses? How does the division have teams used to negotiate software licenses? Is software tested prior to purchase?

How does the division involve community members to assist in the analysis of appropriate technology? Has total cost of ownership (initial purchase cost, maintenance, service and support costs) been considered prior to the actual purchase?

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FOOD SERVICES

The food services review category examines the efficiency and effectiveness of school districts food services programs. Effectiveness in this area is measured by the level of service provided to school children and compliance with federal, state and local policies. Efficiency is measured by the division's cost per meal and staff productivity performance measures. The main goal of a successful food services operation is to provide nutritious and delicious meals to students each day school is in session and to do so at a breakeven cost.

Food service programs are funded by revenues from the sale of meals, a la carte sales and by federal funding for free and reduced-price meals. Districts must subsidize the food service operation through their operating budget if revenues fail to cover costs. Factors contributing to operating deficits can include poor operational decisions, competition from outside food sales or low economies of scale.

The Food Services chapter evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of this function in the following areas:

- 8.A. Organization and Staffing
- 8.B. Policies, Procedures, and Compliance
- 8.C. Planning and Budgeting
- 8.D. Management and Facility Operations
- 8.E. Qualifying Students for Free and Reduced-Price Meals
- 8.F. Student Participation
- 8.G. Nutrition and Nutrition Education Programs
- 8.H. Purchasing, Warehousing and Contracting

8.A. Organization and Staffing

Labor efficiency is a product of employing people with the right skills to do an assigned job, or the ability to learn that skill and having the right number of workers to do the job when it needs to be done. To achieve full productivity, managers must have a plan for handling employee absences, adequately supervising the activities of the kitchen and creatively filling all necessary positions for the hours needed.

Data Needs

- Organizational and staffing charts, that include number of departmental employees by category
- Injury and accident statistics by cafeteria
- Safety training plans or a description of the division's efforts to improve the safety of kitchens and cafeterias
- Division staffing standards

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- Job descriptions
- Management reports used to measure productivity, such as meals served per labor hour
- Employee salary schedules and hourly wages
- Employee turnover and hiring statistics for the last two years
- List of school cafeterias or other kitchen facilities used by the school division showing the meal preparation type and serving capabilities by location

People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food Service director
Business manager (particularly in small division)
Cafeteria manager/s
Principals/school-based personnel
Cafeteria staff

Activities to Perform

- 8.A.1. Create and/or examine existing organizational charts and job descriptions for the food service operations, including specific counts of employees by category and total employees at each cafeteria. Interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, determine whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department and whether job descriptions accurately reflect the actual duties performed. Document if the organization has been changed recently or repeatedly in the recent past or is anticipated to change in the near future and explain the reasons for changes. Note any contracted services or employees, as well as any advisory committees and show to whom they report in the overall management structure.
- 8.A.2. Chart the average number of meals served and the average number of labor hours used, by job category, at each school. From this information calculate the meals per labor hour (MPLH) by school and compare the result to any division standard or to peer districts and industry standards, taking into account the type of meal preparation and delivery system used in the division and the age and condition of kitchens and equipment. The Virginia standard is calculated annually and is composed of the federal per meal free lunch reimbursement rate plus the state per meal free lunch reimbursement rate plus the federal commodity reimbursement rate.
- 8.A.3. Compile a list of salary rates and ranges for each position within the food service function. Compare salary rates to peers and local business competitors. and note areas where the salary range is helping or deterring employee recruitment and retention efforts.

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- 8.A.4. Determine the absentee rates and vacancies over the last year for food services.. Note whether substitute workers are meeting the division's needs and through interviews, determine what actions the school division has taken to reduce absenteeism and promote staff retention. If results are available from these efforts, provide an analysis of the effectiveness of these programs.
- 8.A.5. Examine safety records for the food services staff and prepare a chart comparing the injury or accident rate for food service staff with those of other categories of employees within the division and with peer districts, as applicable. Through interviews, determine what efforts are made formally or informally to reduce the number of employee injuries or accidents and discuss the effectiveness of these activities.
- 8.A.6. Review the safety records and summarize the results and any efforts to formally or informally reduce the number of employee injuries or accidents for the food service staff.

Questions to Ask

Organizational structure

Who heads the food service organization in the division? How involved and supportive is upper management of the food service function of the division? What is the role of the board in food service operations of the division? How does the current organizational structure contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the food service function? Is the organizational structure basically centralized or decentralized? Why is this the best approach for the division?

How autonomous are the kitchens? How does management provide appropriate controls and supervision? Does management understand the food service function and have high expectations of the food service department? How does the board make decisions for major contracts or policies impacting food service? Do they rely on the recommendations of the food service director or staff?

What opportunities exist for improving the management of food service? How does the current structure ensure that employees are adequately supervised to ensure productivity standards are met?

Staffing and productivity

How does the division allocate staff to each kitchen? How are the number of supervisors or cafeteria managers determined? How many people does it take to prepare the meal, wash the dishes, serve the meals and track and monitor the meals served and collect money for paid meals? Are there times during the day when all the people are not kept busy?

Are food service staff assigned specific duties and responsibilities that:

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Are supported by current, accurate and approved job descriptions?

Provide essential specialization in areas such as nutrition, sanitation, menu preparation, automation, etc.?

Given operating procedures that detail daily functions of their respective job duties?

Does the food services have an incentive program to encourage attendance? Can the division quantify the success of any incentive programs? What are the procedures in the event there are not enough workers to cover the cafeterias?

Is there a pool of substitutes in-house or on-call? Or are substitutes available through a temporary service? Are substitutes trained and productive? Do absences cause other employees to work overtime, delay meal service or affect the quality of food served?

Is supervision provided food service staff during all working hours? Who has keys to open the food service facility and lock it up? Who provides maintenance and custodial services in the cafeterias? Who repairs kitchen equipment when it breaks down?

How does the current level of food service staffing compare to the division's staffing standards? To peer districts? To industry standards? Describe any factors of the cafeterias that contribute to lower than average food service productivity? What schools are less productive than others? Why? How could productivity be improved?

Salaries and wages

Have there been any recent changes in wages and salaries in food services department, such as a change in salary schedule? Any change in hours paid? How does the current wage or salary range impact recruitment and retention of food service employees?

How many hours a week are cafeteria workers guaranteed? What is the average number of hours actually worked? Chart the overtime by each food service employee and describe the source of the overtime. Discuss the reasons why some overtime is considered typical for food service employees, if applicable.

Absenteeism

Are food service employees afforded counseling?

How does the employee handbook address the topic of absenteeism? Do leave policies contribute to excessive absences? If so, how?

Overtime

Is scheduling done so as to minimize overtime costs? How does the food service employee handbook address the topics of absenteeism and overtime?

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Is all food service overtime authorized and how and how is overtime controlled and monitored? What types of overtime reports are given to the board or key administrators?

Employee safety

Review the number of workers' compensation claims with the associated costs for food services have been filed in the last two years. What efforts have been made to address employee safety in food services?

How effective have the safety programs been in reducing injuries or accidents in food services?

8.B. Policies, Procedures, and Compliance

The board adopts policies governing the operations of school cafeterias as well as policies that are directed at other programs but have an indirect impact on the delivery of food services. For example, closed or open schools, vending machines and even school start times are often set in policy, yet the impact is felt directly by the division's cafeterias. Procedures guide division employees on how to carry out the policies in their individual departments.

Data Needs

- Division policies and procedures, as they pertain to foods service operations
- Compliance/audit reports
- Health department inspection reports

People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business manager (particularly in small division)
Cafeteria manager/s
Principals/school-based personnel
Cafeteria staff

Activities to Perform

- 8.B.1. Summarize all board policies relating to food service and the impact of each policy on the operation and noting any that have a detrimental impact on the operation's profitability or management processes. Show whether the policy implements or complies with major federal guidelines for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program and state standards. Briefly discuss how the food service management team is involved in policy development and in costing out the impact of decisions being considered by the board.

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- 8.B.2. Prepare a list of key federal guidelines for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program and state standards and through on-site inspections, review of health department reports and DOE compliance visits, assess the school division's degree of compliance with regulations and show how the division monitors compliance.

Questions to Ask

Policies

How do division board-approved policies address the following components of the food service operation:

- Student and adult meal prices?
- Open or closed schools?
- Nutrition education programs?
- Competitive food sales?
- Concessions?
- Catering services?
- Exclusive beverage/vending contracts?
- Others?

How do these policies impact the way that food service does business? How do policies impact the profitability of the food service operation? Who is responsible for reporting the fiscal and nutritional impact of policy options to the board? Are policies with regards to pay, benefits and leave fair and competitive with the market and other districts in the region?

Procedures

How are internal operating procedures developed for the food service?

When was the last time that the food service procedure manual was updated? Who is responsible for verifying that procedures are consistent and reflect daily operations?

How are food service employees kept knowledgeable about changes in procedures? How does food services provide training and orientation for its new employees? Does it include procedures and instructions written in other languages, if necessary, for non-English speaking food service workers?

How are procedures that implement board-approved policies published and disseminated to appropriate staff and committees?

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How do procedures address:

- a la carte menus and prices?
- food preparation, centralization or decentralization?
- define roles of food service personnel and building principals?
- monitoring competitive food regulation?
- assigning costs to the food service operation?

Compliance monitoring

What state (including the Virginia Department of Health inspections) and federal laws must be complied with in food services and child nutrition? Rules? Guidelines? Is the food services in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and /or guidelines? Describe any noncompliance incidents and how the division is addressing identified deficiencies.

8.C. Planning and Budgeting

Effective management is built upon sound planning and budgeting practices. This section evaluates the various planning documents used by the food service operation and discusses the budget process and the links between plans and budgets.

Data Needs

- Food Service strategic plan, mission and goals
- Facility plans as they pertain to kitchens and cafeterias
- Department preventative maintenance schedule or plan
- Cafeteria capital improvement plans
- Budget planning documents
- Budgets for food service for the last five years
- List of student and staff meal prices
- Paid and reduced price meal participation rates for the last three years
- Standard operating and management reports for the last two years, including profit and loss statements, budget variance reports and other financial reports used regularly for financial management
- Annual budgets and financial records showing budgeted and actual costs and revenues for food service for the last three years and showing the fund balance
- Any recent Food Service Department customer survey instruments and results

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People to Interview

Area superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food Service Director
Business manager

Activities to Perform

- 8.C.1. Review the food service department's planning (long and short-range) documents and briefly describe whether the plans are comprehensive in nature; contain clearly defined goals, objectives and strategies for accomplishing those goals; are tied to the departmental or division budgets; assigns responsibility for implementation of strategies; and is annually updated and modified based upon some performance criteria.
- 8.C.2. Chart the division's food service goals, strategies and performance measures against actual performance and financial data and discuss the reasons for variances.
- 8.C.3. Chart school-level profit and loss reports by cafeteria and create a table that shows which are operating at a profit, loss or break-even. Through interviews with management and staff, determine what conditions are impacting profitability at both profitable and unprofitable schools.
- 8.C.4. Prepare a list of current and historic meal prices for paid and reduced price student meals by grade level and paid staff meals. Compare the current cost per meal served to the current prices and discuss the methodology used by the division to monitor costs and set meal prices at all levels. The Virginia Department of Education School Nutrition Program operates a database called SNIPWEB that contains all the necessary data for each school division – historic meal prices, 5 year revenue and expenditure reports, and annual financial reports.
- 8.C.5. If the food service department surveys their customers, make an exhibit that shows general survey results and a sample of responses to key questions asked by the department. Through interviews, determine how the survey results are being used to improve service delivery and the types of meal items offered and discuss any changes that have been made in response.
- 8.C.6. Prepare a diagram of the department's planning and budgeting processes, both long and short-range. Note the approximate timeframe for major activities, points in the process where decisions are made and by whom, where performance is monitored and when and if adjustments are made to improve overall performance. If there are points in the process where communication or decision-making breakdown, through interviews determine the reason for the breakdown.

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- 8.C.7. Prepare a table showing the food service revenue and expenditure budgets for the last three to five years showing sufficient detail to determine what cost and revenue drivers in the operation. Through interviews, determine the reasons for significant variances.
- 8.C.8. Create a chart showing the food service department's fund balance for the last three years and compare the fund balance to three months average operating expenditures for that year. If the division has been operating at a deficit, determine the cost drivers that are affecting the operation adversely. If the division has a fund balance, determine if the balance exceeds the three month maximum and if so, the division's plan for reducing the fund balance to levels that meet federal guidelines.

Questions to Ask

Planning and budgeting process

Does the department have a mission statement or have an understanding about how the department fits into the overall division mission and goals? Does the department have a five-year capital expenditure plan? How does the department monitor and measure success, such as quality of service? How does the department know they are meeting their customers' needs? Who are their customers? Interview some of the students.

How frequently are management planning sessions held to:

- Review evaluation reports?
- Review menus?
- Review cost control procedures?
- Plan training sessions?
- Review staff assignments (hours and costs)?
- Review inventory levels?
- Review profit/loss statements for the previous month?
- Review maintenance plans and capital plans?

Discuss how the food service team provides input to the food service budget. How are goals established for the coming year? For the next five years? How is progress toward these goals measured? Who is responsible for tracking and reporting progress toward these goals? Who is responsible for drafting the original plan?

How does food services establish equipment needs? How does food services plan for training? Budget for training?

Discuss how revenues are projected for food services including the accuracy of the revenue projections been over the past two years? How are the meal prices for students and staff and how are a la carte meal prices set? Do meal and a la carte prices cover the total costs for providing the meals?

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How are food service facility repairs and renovations planned for? Budgeted? What process is used to project enrollment and participation trends in the coming year? How are enrollment and meal participation rates used to determine food service employee levels and equipment needs by school?

How are food preparation techniques factored into the budget for the food service operation? How are nutrition needs factored in to the budget and planning processes?

Performance measures

How does the division measure the performance of the food service operations? How does the department monitor and measure its own performance? What types of regular reports are given to the food service management? To cafeteria management? How and when are plans modified when goals and objectives are not being met?

How are profit and loss statements and reports used to identify areas of concern in the food service operation? How are they used to pinpoint cafeterias that are not operating profitably? What measures are taken to improve the performance of unprofitable kitchens? What are the physical or operational barriers to correcting the problems in these locations? What are the long and short-range solutions that could make the cafeterias more profitable? Better equipment? Improved serving lines? Etc.?

Budgeting

Who makes the final staffing decisions for food services? What flexibility is contained in the staffing budget for differences in the food services facilities, grades being served, equipment and serving conditions?

What method is used to allocate overhead to the food service budget? How much is the allocation for overhead? How does this allocation method compare to federal and state guidelines for overhead allocation?

Describe how meal participation rates are projected including who makes the meal participation projection as well as any strategies used to project the costs and revenues associated with increases or decreases in participation?

Fund balance

Is the division's food service operation operating at a profit or loss? What precautions or measures have been implemented to ensure that the total fund balance does not exceed the three-month maximum? Is the division's general operating budget is being used to supplement the food service program? If so, how much has been used for each of the past three years?

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8.D. Management and Facility Operations

This section includes review and evaluation of productivity standards, such as meals per labor hours; staffing patterns; food and labor costs; cash management policies and procedures; inventorying and warehousing of food products (cold and dry); and revenue and expenditures controls including the management and use of the fund balance.

Data Needs

- Health Department or other kitchen inspection reports for the last two years
- Current monthly profit and loss reports
- Breakfast and lunch serving times by school
- Data on average number of students served per breakfast and lunch period by school
- Latest audits
- Inventory of vending machines by school and physical location, the group or organization benefiting from the sales and the type of snacks or beverages offered
- Policies or procedures addressing vending machines or nutrition content of items offered for sale to students
- Copy of any exclusive vendor contracts
- Menus showing nutritional content, cost and any instructions for preparation
- Pre- and post-costing data for menus
- Information on how meal costs are calculated for the division and the average cost per meal
- Division's meal equivalent calculation standard
- Description of Point of Sale (POS) or other software programs used by the food services operation
- Description or inventory of computer equipment, wiring and communication infrastructure for food service

People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business or finance director or manager
Purchasing department
Technology director
Cafeteria managers

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Activities to Perform

- 8.D.1. Tour the kitchen and cafeteria facilities during meal preparation and service, noting any processes that appear to inhibit efficient service as well as any issues that limit the quality of the food.
- 8.D.2. Chart the number of students served and the serving times at each school, both for breakfast and for lunch. Note if there is some uniformity of serving times in the division or whether each principal sets serving times or if specific policies or procedures impact serving times. Discuss the implications of very early or very late serving times or the absence of or overuse of staggered times on the flow of children through the serving lines.
- 8.D.3. Briefly summarize the technology and all software programs including the purpose of each used by the food service department. Examine any manual processes being carried out by the food services department and determine whether the current or another automated system could streamline or enhance the process.

Questions to Ask

Facilities and equipment

What type of kitchen facilities (i.e., centralized/decentralized; central warehouses, freezers, baking centers; dishwashers) exist in the division? What records are kept on equipment purchases and repairs that assist in future equipment purchases? Are equipment repairs and replacements made part of the annual budget? If not, why not? Are kitchen facilities in compliance with OSHA and health department standards? If not, why not?

What procedures exist for the use of cafeteria facilities including:

- use of cafeteria facilities by student and parent organizations?
- use of cafeteria facilities by community groups?
- centralized accounting for funds received from special activities relating to the food service operations?

What future kitchen construction and renovation projects will impact food service management in the near future? How was the food service department involved in decisions that would impact the delivery and preparation of food in the cafeteria and kitchens?

How are work orders for maintenance and equipment repairs tracked? Are repairs made quickly and efficiently? If not, why not?

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Compliance reporting monitoring

What systems are in place to ensure the accuracy of meal counts and the reports to the state?

Vending machines and competitive food sales

Are school administrators complying with Virginia law on competitive food sales? (No competitive food sales between 6am and the end of breakfast and during all of the lunch periods). Does the division have adequate controls over nutrition content of the items offered for sale in the vending machines? Any competitive food sold during this time must meet minimum nutrition standards and the revenue must go to the school nutrition account.

Cash and financial management

Does the division have written policies and procedures for the counting and depositing money? Are there sufficient controls in place to deter theft or embezzlement? Who audits cash on a periodic basis and how frequently are these audits performed? Discuss any findings relative to cash shortages and describe any actions taken by the division to correct deficiencies.

Are individuals that handle and prepare cash for deposit bonded for theft? If not, why not?

Technology

Does the food service department have the technology infrastructure in place to support all cafeterias? List the cafeterias that are wired and networked for computerized management information systems including POS and which are not? How does this affect the quality and timeliness of reporting and protection of student confidentiality?

How does the division's information system (POS, child nutrition software, other software program):

- Track meal eligibility?
- Track meal receipts?
- Track student information?
- Create a menu history used to forecast future food purchases?
- Determine the amount of food served versus the amount prepared?
- Assist in the purchase of food and supplies?
- Track inventory?
- Process free and reduced-price applications?
- Assist with menu planning?
- Perform nutritional analysis of menus?

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If the division has a POS system, describe the POS operation including whether the students enter a PIN number, use a swipe card or scan their thumb print? What are the pros and cons of this type system?

Does the division use a free and reduced-price application processing software? Are food service staff properly trained on new programs and the use of technology?

8.E. Qualifying Students for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

Identifying those students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches and breakfasts through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program is a tedious and time-consuming process. Some parents are reluctant to fill out the necessary forms. Changes to federal law require that all school divisions use household applications starting in 2005-06. So families will only have to apply once instead of for each child.

What many school division officials forget, however, is that federal Compensatory and Title I funding flows to a school division based on their number of economically disadvantaged students. And, economically disadvantaged is one way to define students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. These funds are funneled to districts so that they can provide additional services to students at risk of dropping out of school. While not all economically disadvantaged students are considered at risk, the number of economically disadvantaged students closely tracks the number of at-risk students. The federal government, therefore, uses this figure as one of the criteria.

Data Needs

- Procedures for qualifying families (division and school)
- Software programs used to qualify
- Point of Sale (POS) reports

People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business or finance director or manager
Technology director
Cafeteria managers

Activities to Perform

- 8.E.1. Diagram the process for qualifying students and siblings for the free and reduced-price meal program. Identify who is responsible for each step in the process and note areas where follow-up is done to ensure that non-responsive parents are contacted or where incentives are used to encourage applications and where family identification, direct certification or other methods are used to qualify

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students who might not otherwise be identified. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses in the current system.

- 8.E.2. Calculate the amount of Compensatory Education funding the division receives for each student identified as economically disadvantaged over the last three years and if the identification processes diagramed above show signs of weakness, create an exhibit showing the impact on funding by increasing the number of students qualified by 1, 2 or 3 percent.

Questions to Ask

What is the division's process for identifying families (student and their siblings) who are eligible to participate in free and reduced-price meal programs? What safeguards are in place so that no child falls through the cracks?

What follow-up is done for non-responsive students or families? How are principals involved in the identification process? What efforts are used to ensure that the identity of students participating in free and reduced-price meals is kept confidential? What mid-year activities occur to ensure continual eligibility?

What advertising campaigns does the division use to encourage participation? What is the division's approach to getting non-English speaking or illiterate parents to apply for the free and reduced-price meal programs?

8.F. Student Participation

Students will eat in the cafeterias if the food looks and tastes good, it is easy and convenient to get food, the price is right and their peers also eat in the cafeteria. Participation rates can directly impact the profitability of the food service operation.

Data Needs

- Student meal participation rates by school and breakfast or lunch (free, reduced-price, paid and overall)
- Information about special meal programs (breakfast carts, grab-and-go bags, etc.), Catering programs, or other revenue generating endeavors.
- Menus and recipes
- Survey results

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People to Interview

Food Service director
Cafeteria managers
Teachers
Principals
Students

Activity to Perform

8.F.1. Examine existing student surveys, interview students and staff about the quality, quantity, taste, and appeal of the food being served and summarize the results (if survey data is not available, prepare a brief survey, collect the data, and summarize).

Questions to Ask

General

What type of meal programs does the division offer to students? If 80 percent or more of the students are eligible for the free and reduced-price meals, does the division participate in the federal Provision 2(universal feeding) program? If not, has the division conducted a feasibility study?

What type of meal programs have increased meal participation?

What types of breakfast programs have proven successful in elementary schools? Secondary schools? What type of cafeteria surroundings have been implemented that encourage students to eat in school? Are plants, posters, artwork and any elements of school spirit used? What special events have been implemented to encourage nutrition and meal participation?

Policies

Does the division have an open or closed school policy? What other policies might impact student participation in the breakfast program? In the lunch program? How is food service involved in the policy-making process? offer to students? If 80 percent or more of the students are eligible for the free and reduced-price meals, does the division participate in the federal Provision 2(universal feeding) program? If not, has the division conducted a feasibility study?

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8.G. Nutrition and Nutrition Education Programs

The most successful districts and their supporting communities understand the intimate relationship between adequate nutrition and student performance. It is important that school division food services serve nutritious food, perform nutritional analysis on recipes to ensure the nutritional content of food and educate students and staff to the importance of good nutrition in their lives. To get the nutrition message out often involves educating teachers, principals, administrators, parents and students. Some school districts have nutrition education programs to help students and parents understand why they need foods from the basic food groups and the effects of excessive fats and sugar in the diet.

Data Needs

- Menus
- Nutritional analysis of menus
- Nutrition education plans used by the division for student instruction
- Nutrition curricula
- USDA Nutrition Education and Training support programs
- Materials used to promote nutrition and special events

People to Interview

Food service director
Cafeteria managers
Teachers
Principals
Students

Activity to Perform

8.G.1. Identify and summarize all nutrition education efforts in the division, including the nature of each effort, the target audience, the people involved in delivery of the program, if applicable, the frequency of the effort and judged effectiveness. Determine, to the extent possible, how the current programs have impacted the nutrition awareness of teachers, principals, administrators, parents and students.

Questions to Ask

Nutrition analysis

Describe the qualifications (nutritionist, registered dietician) of the person who performs nutrition analysis for the division? If analysis is done on a contract basis, what does this

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service cost the division? How do the current nutrition analysis procedures ensure compliance with federal requirements for nutrition analysis?

How are these analyses used to improve recipes and menus? Who is responsible for monitoring the menus and recipes to ensure nutritional content is consistent and maintained?

Nutrition education

What type of nutrition education efforts are currently being used by the division? What posters, brochures or other printed materials are distributed to students? Staff? Parents?

Does the food service operation provide support of the educational program by providing nutritional education to teachers and students when called upon? If not, why not?

8.H. Purchasing, Warehousing and Contracting

This section involves the evaluation of the food service purchasing process including the use of inter-local agreements and purchasing cooperatives; processing and storage of food, supplies and commodities; and product specification, price and quality.

Data Needs

- Copies of all service contracts
- Status reports on services performed
- Feasibility studies
- Cost benefit analyses
- Performance data
- Procedures and specifications for purchasing or cooperative purchasing

People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility

Food service director

Business or finance director or manager

Purchasing department

Cooperative administrator (if the division belongs to a food purchasing co-op)

Activities to Perform

- 8.H.1. Describe the food service department's purchasing practices both for regular and emergency purchases and determine if the purchasing practices are in compliance with purchasing laws and division procedures is maintained and followed. Note

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both strengths and weaknesses in the current process and discuss any actions planned or implemented to improve the process.

- 8.H.2. Prepare a list of all contracts and inter-local agreements for cooperative purchasing, service and maintenance, management or total outsourcing of all or part of the food service operation. Note the effective dates of the contracts, the type of agreement or contract, the procurement method used to enter into this contract, the types of goods or services being provided, the annual cost of the contract and major terms and conditions.
- 8.H.3. Through interviews with neighboring districts, prepare a list of opportunities for cooperative food service purchasing or commodity processing or pre-processing and compare the list to the division's current practices to determine whether the division is missing any possible opportunities for savings or improved services. If possible, create an exhibit that shows a sample of what the division actually pays for various product services versus what they would pay from a cooperative and determine if the division could benefit from joining other cooperatives.
- 8.H.4. Conduct a site visit of the food service warehouse(s) and summarize the general condition of the facility and the inventory, any amenities such as cold storage or built in freezers, staffing levels and major equipment such as forklifts and delivery trucks used to support the facility. To the extent possible, discuss inventory tracking and rotation methods used in the facility, the adequacy of the space and any factors that might impact the total cost of food and supplies.

Questions to Ask

General purchasing practices and procedures

What purchasing practices or strategies do food service staff currently use to ensure that food and supplies are purchased at the best price and highest quality:

- Competitive bidding?
- Provision of adequate dry and freezer storage space to facilitate bulk purchasing?
- Adherence to all division central purchasing practices and procedures?

How are food service purchases initiated at each school? What published guidelines or procedures are available to staff at the school level to ensure compliance with all state and local purchasing laws and policies? Does the division have procedures to handle emergency and/or special orders?

How are products routinely evaluated for quality and cost?

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Contracting

What major contracts are in place for the food service operation? Discuss how food services manages these contracts including monitoring of the terms and conditions, performance standards, and the paying of invoices. Who is responsible for compliance for food service contracts?

What procurement methods were used to secure the contracts? How did the process ensure high value at the lowest possible cost?

Cooperative purchasing

Does the division have any cooperative purchasing arrangements for food services? If the food service department has entered into cooperative purchasing agreements, what does it buy cooperatively through each arrangement? How does the division track its savings?

What, if any, difficulties has the department had in dealing with the cooperative? Do the number of deliveries and delivery locations satisfy participating districts? If not, why not? Where does the division store its commodities? What, if any, of the commodities are processed or preprocessed? If commodities are processed or preprocessed, who does this? How was this service obtained? Through a cooperative arrangement? Is it a private company that does processing and preprocessing of commodities? Or is it a cooperative?

Warehousing, delivery and inventory management

What type of storage facilities does the division have for food and supplies? How much does it cost the division to maintain these storage facilities? If the division used just in time delivery what portion of the storage space could be eliminated? When, if ever, has the division put out a bid for food or supplies to be delivered on a just in time basis? What additional food and supply costs would be incurred if the division went to a just in time delivery system?

Do food vendors make just-in-time deliveries to individual schools? Or, does the division make its own deliveries? If so, how are deliveries made? Does the division have its own delivery trucks and enough drivers to make timely deliveries?

How is inventory secured for control purposes to avoid pilferage? How frequently are inventories physically counted?

What written procedures exist on how to deal with food waste, leftovers and expired food products?

How does the department use other types of controls such as bar code readers, security cameras, and spot check inventories to control inventories?

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Does the division participate in the USDA's surplus commodity program? If so, how does the division:

- Ensure compliance with federal guidelines for ordering, receiving and storing of commodity products?
- Provide for inventory controls consistent with other food service inventory?
- Provide for efficient and cost-effective use of a majority of items received?