

3

Management Structures

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools needs to focus significant attention on strengthening management structures. Relationships between Board members and the superintendent should be strengthened and organizational relationships should be modified to support more cost-effective management.

Conclusion

Management structures within the Miami-Dade County Public Schools need to be strengthened both to ensure effective oversight by the Board and to enhance the management of the District’s internal operations. In particular, working relationships between the Board and the superintendent should be strengthened and increased attention should be focused on ensuring that all Board members receive the information they need to effectively oversee District operations. The strategic planning process should also be enhanced as part of an overall effort to clearly define District goals, objectives, and priorities and to facilitate efforts to hold the superintendent and District staff accountable for achieving these goals and objectives (within the constraints of existing budgets). The District’s overall organizational structure should be revamped to facilitate efforts to achieve these goals. On the positive side, school based management concepts have been effectively implemented in District schools. School administrators have significant budgetary authority and typically use that authority to tailor the resources available at their schools to meet the school’s individual needs.

During the course of this review, Berkshire Advisors identified a number of District accomplishments relating to management structures, some of which are included in Exhibit 3-1 below.

Exhibit 3-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Management Structures in the Last Three Years

- School principals have been granted the authority they need to manage their schools while also complying with District policies and procedures.
 - The District’s “money matters” program has provided school-based administrators with needed training relating to fiscal management.
 - One management position – the former Associate Superintendent who oversaw both the legal and labor relations function – has been discontinued.
-

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

Overview of Chapter Findings

Berkshire Advisors reviewed the District’s management structures using the Best Financial Management Practices adopted by the Commissioner of Education and associated indicators. The consulting team employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. For instance, Berkshire Advisors, Inc. conducted on-site interviews with District level managers and gathered information on the management structures activities

Management Structures

such as the District's management structures activities policies and procedures. All school Board members were also interviewed. In addition, visits were made to over 60 schools where interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, parents, and School Advisory Council members. Moreover, Berkshire Advisors, Inc., held four community forums at locations throughout the District where community members could provide input about District practices. Likewise, an e-mail address and 800 number were established so District stakeholders could provide input into the study. A survey was also administered to Board members. An additional survey was administered to a representative sample of employees from throughout the District.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Responsible Management of District

1. The roles and responsibilities of the Board and superintendent have not been clearly delineated, and Board members and the superintendent have not established procedures to ensure that they have effective working relationships. (Page 3-4)
2. The Board and superintendent have not established procedures to ensure that Board meetings are as efficient and effective as possible. (Page 3-8)
3. The Board and superintendent have not taken steps to ensure that all policies and procedures are routinely updated and that District staff follows them. (Page 3-13)
4. The District routinely obtains legal services to advise it about policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits; however, neither legal costs nor performance are systematically evaluated. (Page 3-14)

Effective and Responsible Operation

5. Although the District's organizational structure has clearly defined units and lines of authority, the current structure does not facilitate effective District management. (Page 3-18)
6. The District has focused little attention on improving operating efficiency. (Page 3-25)
7. Although the District employs a number of effective budget and financial management practices, Board oversight of budget and financial practices can be improved. (Page 3-26)
8. The District has clearly assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to District-wide policies and procedures. (Page 3-28)

Allocation of Resources

9. Although the District has a multi-year strategic plan, the plan plays only a limited role in setting an overall direction for the District and in providing a framework for achieving District objectives. (Page 3-30)
10. The District has a system to accurately project enrollment. (Page 3-33)
11. The District does not effectively link its financial plans and budgets to its priority goals and objectives, and staff tend not to be focused on achieving those goals and objectives. (Page 3-34)
12. The District has been diligent in identifying additional sources of revenue. (Page 3-35)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Two of the chapter's recommendations have a direct fiscal impact—the recommendation to modify the District's organizational structure and the recommendation to consider assigning some outside legal work to in-house counsel. Modifying the District's organizational structure will result in a net reduction of one position with associated annual savings in salaries and benefits over five years of \$600,000. Moreover, hiring additional in-house legal staff to handle work that is currently performed by more expensive outside counsel would save the District an estimated \$381,500 over five years if the recommendation is implemented. (As discussed in the body of this chapter, the District may not choose to implement this recommendation immediately.)

Exhibit 3-2

**Two Management Structures Action Plan
Recommendations Have Fiscal Impacts**

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan 3-12: Assign some work performed by outside counsel to in-house legal staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five-year savings in salary and benefits of \$381,500.¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan 3-13: Modify the District’s organizational structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five-year savings in salary and benefits of \$600,000

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

Background

A nine member elected School Board provides governance of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools.² School Board members serve four-year terms and are elected from individual single member Districts on a staggered basis. The School Board sets District policy and appoints a Superintendent, who in turns selects administrators to head the system’s administrative divisions and carry out the Board policy. In addition, the Board Attorney reports directly to the Board.

At the time this study was initiated the District was initiated the District was headed by a Superintendent who had ten positions reporting directly to him:

- Deputy Superintendent of Schools
- Deputy Superintendent – Personnel Management and Services
- Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability
- Deputy Superintendent – Education
- Deputy Superintendent – School Operations
- Deputy Superintendent – Federal Programs and Grants Administration
- Chief Financial Officer – Financial Affairs
- Chief Facilities Officer – Facilities Planning and Construction
- Chief Facilities Officer – Maintenance Operations
- Chief – School Police

¹ As discussed in the body of this chapter, the District may want to delay implementing this recommendation in the short-term.

² The Board moved from seven members to nine members as a result of a court order intended to ensure fair representation among Miami-Dade County’s ethnic groups.

Responsible Management of District

1 The roles and responsibilities of the Board and superintendent have not been clearly delineated, and Board members and the superintendent have not established procedures to ensure that they have effective working relationships.

The roles and responsibilities of the Board and superintendent are not clearly defined and are not consistently understood

The roles and responsibilities of the Board members are not clearly defined and must be inferred from the “Duties” and “Goals”, and sections of Chapter 8 of the School Board Rules. For example, the “Duties” section states that each school Board member should represent the entire District rather than a single residence area. The “Goals” section states that the Board can help the District achieve its goals by making many contributions including selecting and supporting the Superintendent, contributing to the Strategic Plan, and enacting policies to guide the professional staff. These roles and responsibilities would be much clearer if they were documented independently rather than being embedded in peripheral sections.

This lack of specificity has created some disagreement among Board members about the extent to which their roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined. Indeed, in a survey of Board members completed as part of this engagement, two Board members “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that “the District has developed written procedures that clearly delineate the responsibilities of the Board and the superintendent.” (Three of the remaining five Board members who responded to the survey “agreed” with this statement, one Board member was “neutral” and one Board member had “no opinion.”)

New Board members do, however, receive orientation training when they first come on the school Board³ and this training covers the roles and responsibilities of the Board and superintendent.⁴ However, there is no evidence that the delineation of superintendent and school Board roles and responsibilities are reinforced on an ongoing basis. Indeed, of the six Board members who completed the Board member survey, three Board members “disagree” and one Board member “strongly” disagreed that the “Board and the superintendent annually meet and assess their roles and responsibilities. It is insufficient, therefore, for the District to merely provide training on these roles and responsibilities as part of new Board member training; rather, if all Board members are to clearly understand their roles, the roles and responsibilities should be clearly documented in the School Board Rules and initial understandings must be reinforced on an ongoing basis.

Procedures have not been established to ensure effective working relationships between the superintendent and the school Board

The most telling evidence that the superintendent and the school Board have not established constructive working relationships is that the superintendent was recently dismissed and replaced by an interim superintendent. While undertaking an evaluation of the specific circumstances that led to the superintendent’s dismissal is not within the

³ This finding is supported both by interviews with District staff who coordinate the new Board member training and by the results of the Board survey. (Of the six Board members who responded to the survey only one “disagrees” that new Board members receive orientation training. However, this Board member may have come on to the Board after the most recent orientation sessions were held.)

⁴ Of the six Board members who responded to the Board survey, only one “disagreed” that new Board member training covers the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the superintendent.

scope of this Best Financial Management Practices Review, an examination of the structural and procedural shortcomings that may have contributed to the superintendent's dismissal is warranted as part of this review.

One key factor that may have contributed to the superintendent's dismissal, and certainly complicates effective District governance and leadership, is that no ongoing dialogue between the Board and the superintendent about District goals and objectives currently takes place. Although, to its credit, the District has established a strategic plan to guide its future direction, the District has not used this plan as a vehicle for setting annual performance objectives for the Superintendent nor for facilitating a discussion between the Board and District staff about how the District's strategic direction should be altered.⁵ In addition, the former superintendent's contract (which was approved by the Board) did not support a review of goals and objectives as part of the process of establishing expectations for the superintendent's performance nor did it facilitate a review of performance against goals (and other evaluation factors) as part of an annual evaluation of the superintendent. Instead, the superintendent's contract allowed individual Board members to review his performance but provided no mechanism for the Board as a whole to review his performance. Consequently, an opportunity for the superintendent and the Board to engage in a dialogue about District performance each year as part of the process for evaluating the superintendent's performance was lost.⁶ In the same way, because no system has been established for evaluating the Board's performance, an opportunity to facilitate a discussion about the Board's role in achieving District objectives and how constructive working relationships between the Board and the superintendent (and his staff) could be fostered is lost.

Effective working relationships between the Board and the superintendent (and his staff) have also suffered because procedures for handling controversial agenda items are generally not viewed as being effective. At present, an informal procedure is in place through which the superintendent directs staff to provide briefings for school Board members on agenda items that may be controversial. In addition, the superintendent has established a formal procedure through which school Board members may request briefings from appropriate staff through the committee chair. These efforts, however, are viewed as being insufficient by a number of Board members. Three of the seven Board members who responded to the Board survey "strongly disagree" with the statement that "the Board and superintendent advise each other when they become aware that an agenda item is likely to be controversial or that a controversial topic may arise at a Board meeting" and two of the remaining four Board members are "neutral" on this issue. Clearly, if controversial issues are not viewed as being handled effectively, working relationships between Board members and the superintendent will suffer.

Processes and procedures for managing Board access to District staff and constituent inquiries are not consistently adhered to

The District has established a well-defined procedure governing how Board members are to access District staff or direct staff to respond to constituent inquiries. The District office administrative staff is responsible for coordinating the educational programs to support the policies established by the Board. The line of authority from the District office to the schools is through the region superintendents, region directors, and principals. All personnel who work in the school are responsible administratively to the principal, and all contacts with employees in the school are made through the principal's office. Surveys of employees and Board members strongly suggest that these procedures are not consistently adhered to. Four of the seven Board members who responded to the Board survey "strongly disagree" that procedures for how Board members are to access District staff or direct staff to respond to constituent inquiries are adhered to and one Board member was "neutral." In addition, in interviews at both the District and school level staff complained about the time they are required to spend responding to inquiries from Board members or their staff. These interview findings are reinforced by the results of the employee survey. While three out of five survey respondents (60.1 percent "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "the District has

⁵ Four of the seven Board members who responded to the Board survey "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the statements that "the Board and the superintendent annually meet and assess the District performance on its goals and objectives." One of the three remaining survey respondents was "neutral" about this statement. In addition, three of the seven Board members who responded to the survey "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the statement that "the Board and the superintendent annually meet and assess their future plans for improving District performance." Two Board members were neutral about this statement.

⁶ It should be noted that the District has begun to address this issue. The Board has asked that an superintendent evaluation process be prepared.

Management Structures

established procedures for how Board members are to access District staff or direct staff to respond to constituent inquiries” fewer than two out of five respondents (38.5 percent) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “Board members and their staffs adhere to these procedures.” Likewise, a relatively small percentage of survey respondents (15.3 percent) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that procedures for how Board members are to access District staff are in place but almost double this number of survey respondents (29.8 percent) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that Board members and their staffs adhere to these procedures.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District strengthen the ongoing training of Board members to ensure they have a consistent understanding about their roles and responsibilities and to ensure a shared understanding of how they work effectively with the Superintendent and staff; as part of this process we recommend that the Board attain Master Board status.*

Action Plan 3-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-1

Strengthen Board Member Training	
Strategy	Strengthen the ongoing training of Board members to ensure a consistent understanding about their roles and responsibilities and how they should work with the Superintendent; as part of this effort the Board should take steps to attain Master Board status.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review Board rules and policies to clearly summarize the roles and responsibilities of Board members. Step 2: Meet with each individual Board member to discuss their understanding of their roles and responsibilities; how they work with the superintendent, and procedures for contacting District staff. Step 3: Meet with the Superintendent and a cross section of District administrators and staff to understand, from their perspective, issues and problems relating to Board member roles and responsibilities. Step 4: Design Board member training program to address the issues identified. Step 5: Hold training program. Step 6: Seek Board approval for requirement to attain Master Board status. Step 7: Repeat steps 1 through 5 on an annual basis.
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and Board Chair
Time Frame	June through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District establish a formal process for evaluating the performance of the superintendent.*

Action Plan 3-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-2

Establish A Formal Process For Evaluating The Superintendent	
Strategy	Establish a formal process for evaluating the Superintendent.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish a task force to develop recommendations and alternatives for evaluating the superintendent’s performance.</p> <p>Step 2: This task force should collect information on the approaches other large school Districts use to evaluate the performance of their superintendents.</p> <p>Step 3: The task force should develop a range of measures that might be used to evaluate performance.</p> <p>Step 4: The task force should develop methodologies for evaluating performance against potential performance measures.</p> <p>Step 5: The task force should recommend to the Board an approach to evaluating the superintendent’s performance along with alternatives (the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative should be clearly documented).</p> <p>Step 6: The Board should select a desired approach to evaluating superintendent performance.</p> <p>Step 7: Processes for measuring performance should be put in place.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Board Chair
Time Frame	March through June 2002 ⁷
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommended that overall priorities for the District be formally approved by the Board each year and related performance expectations be incorporated into the process for evaluating superintendent performance.*

Action Plan 3-3 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-3

Formally Establish District Priorities And Superintendent Performance Expectations	
Strategy	Establish an annual process for developing District priorities and formally setting Superintendent performance expectations.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Hold annual Board workshop at which District priorities will be summarized and quantified.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish annual performance expectations for the Superintendent that reflect and consistent with District priorities.</p> <p>Step 3: Meet with the Superintendent at least once very six months to informally review progress in achieving District priorities and personal goals established for the Superintendent.</p> <p>Step 4: Using the performance expectations for the Superintendent, the Board should evaluate his or her performance each year.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Board Chair
Time Frame	June through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

⁷ This process is already underway.

Management Structures

- *We recommend that the District revise its procedures for handling controversial Board items to ensure controversial Board items are identified well in advance, that Board members receive needed information to evaluate these items, and to ensure that these items are discussed in committee meetings (or other public settings) prior to being considered by the entire Board.*

Action Plan 3-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-4

Modify Procedures For Handling Controversial Board Items	
Strategy	Revise procedures for handling controversial Board items to ensure controversial Board items are identified well in advance, that Board members receive the information they need to evaluate these items, and to ensure these items are discussed in committee meetings (or other public settings) prior to be considered by the entire Board.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review Board agendas for the past year to identify Board items that were “controversial”.</p> <p>Step 2: Meet with Board members to discuss the information they would have appreciated receiving to evaluate these items.</p> <p>Step 3: Meet with Board members to understand perceived shortcomings in how the controversial items were handled.</p> <p>Step 4: Meet with Board members to discuss for what types of controversial items additional discussion in committee meetings would have been helpful.</p> <p>Step 5: Meet with Board members to discuss for what types of controversial items additional input from the public would have been helpful and what forum would have been most appropriate for soliciting this public input.</p> <p>Step 6: Use the information developed in Steps 1 through 5 to categorize general types of controversial items.</p> <p>Step 7: Develop Board policies for handling each type of controversial item.</p> <p>Step 8: Implement these policies.</p> <p>Step 9: Repeat steps 1 through 4 for at least three years to ensure policies are effective and make modifications as appropriate.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Superintendent and Board Chair
Time Frame	June through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

2 The Board and superintendent have not established procedures to ensure that Board meetings are as efficient and effective as possible.

The Board and superintendent have taken appropriate steps to comply with sunshine law requirements

The District has taken appropriate steps to ensure compliance with sunshine law requirements. A review of public notices for each Board meeting over the past 12 month reveals that public notification requirements relating to the sunshine law are adhered to. In addition, the District has been proactive about training Board members about sunshine law requirements. Indeed, the District has prepared a training video for Board members that provides information about the sunshine law.

Moreover, in interviews, many Board members referred to sunshine law requirements and these Board members are aware of their restrictions. Interview findings were also confirmed by the survey of Board members conducted as part of this engagement. Five of the seven Board members who completed the survey “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that “Board members are trained about sunshine law requirements regarding meetings.”⁸ Likewise, five of the six Board members who expressed an opinion “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that “Board members adhere to sunshine law requirement.”⁹

Some steps the District has taken to ensure productive Board meetings are not completely effective

The District has taken a number steps to help to ensure that Board meetings are productive and make effective use of staff, public, and Board member time. For example, a master calendar has been prepared showing the dates of major events, contract expirations, and Board actions needed to meet legal requirement and uses is calendar to ensure that these matters are placed on the Board agenda in a timely manner. In addition, because Board agendas do not limit the time Board members have to discuss agenda items sufficient time is available to discuss even the most controversial and complicated items. A committee structure has also been established to facilitate the discussion of controversial and complicated issues prior to the Board meeting. Likewise, procedures have been established so that items about which neither the public nor Board members wish to comment can be approved without discussion. Moreover, Board meeting are held once a month at the same time (1:00 p.m.) and location (the District headquarters building) both to ensure Board meetings do not extend too late in the evening and to provide a consistent location for the public to attend meetings. Finally, Board agenda are currently organized around who proposes an item (e.g., the Board or the administration). If a Board member wishes to move an item earlier in the agenda, he or she can do so if this step is approved by a vote of the Board.

While these steps to ensure productive Board meetings are well meaning, with the exception of establishing a master calendar and not limiting the time for debate on specific items, these steps have not ensured productive Board meetings and, in some cases, may have unintended negative consequences.

Use of committees. Board committees can provide a useful mechanism for discussing complex or complicated issues prior to a meeting of the full Board. Although Board committees have been established some of these committees do not meet frequently enough to play a meaningful role in reducing the time spent discussing complicated or controversial meetings prior to Board meetings. As Exhibit 3-3 shows, some committees (Elementary and Secondary Education, Personnel Management and Services, Financial Affairs, Management and Accountability, Facilities Planning and Construction, and Personnel Management and Services) meet frequently (eight to ten times over a 10 month period) while other committees (e.g., School Operations) have rarely met during this period.

⁸ Two Board members were “neutral” about this statement.

⁹ One Board member was “neutral” about this statement and the seventh Board member has “no opinion.”

Exhibit 3-3

Some Board Committees Meet Infrequently

Committee	Number Of Meetings (10 months starting January 2001)
Elementary and Secondary Education	10
School Operations	0
Personnel Management and Services	8
Federal Programs and Grants Administration	6
Financial Affairs	10
Community and Alternative Education and Student Support Services	6
Management and Accountability	10
Facilities Planning and Construction	10
District Office Operations, Labor Relations, and Legislative Programs	3

Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

In addition, in interviews, some Board members expressed their opposition to discussing issues in committee meetings because they feel it is important that their voice be heard and on record about issues discussed in committee. Clearly, if Board members feel it is important to have their position stated on each item discussed in committee, the value of having committees at all is significantly reduced.

Approval of items by consent. Because the Board does not use a consent agenda each agenda item about which neither the public nor a Board member wish to comment must be brought up and voted on individually. This practice takes somewhat more time than if a single consent agenda (consisting of all items for which it has previously been determined no discussion is necessary) was voted on by the Board.

Organization of the Board agenda. One of the most important factors that should be considered when organizing a Board agenda is whether or not the Board agenda is structured to ensure Board members (as well as the staff and community members attending the Board meeting) are able to focus their time and attention on the most critical issues facing the District. District can take a variety of approaches to achieving this objective, however, the current approach to organizing Board agendas in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools – an organization that is based on who proposes an agenda item – while logical, may not ensure that Board members, the public, and staff attending Board meetings make effective use of their time. Organizing Board agendas around who proposes an item rather than, for example, by the importance of the item being addressed may lead to a situation where relatively minor items are discussed at the beginning of a meeting when Board members are fresh and extremely important items are discussed at the end of a meeting when Board members are more fatigued. In addition, under current practices, if an item is moved to the beginning of the agenda members of the public who were hoping to address the issue may not yet have arrived at the meeting.

Time and location of meetings. While there is some appeal to having Board meetings at the same time and location each month to provide consistency, this practice inconveniences members of the public who work during the day (and therefore cannot discuss items that occur early in the meeting) or who live or work a significant distance from the school headquarters building.

The timeliness and quality of information Board members receive about agenda items also compromises the effectiveness of Board meetings

When Board members do not receive the information they need to evaluate agenda items well in advance of Board meetings, they will not have enough time to prepare for a constructive discussion at the Board meeting. When Board members are not prepared for meaningful discussions and debate, the efficiency and effectiveness of Board meetings will suffer. Although District staff recognize the need to provide needed information to Board members their efforts have not been sufficient. The District’s standard that materials be provided to Board members five days

prior to meetings is not consistently achieved. (A review of Board information packets for the past 12 month revealed that for an average of 22.75 agenda items per month were revised, replaced or otherwise modified less than five days prior to Board meetings.) In addition, the District does not try to identify complex or controversial items and provide information on these items more than five days before a meeting. That the District does not consistently provide Board members with timely information about agenda items is confirmed by the Board member survey. Four of the seven Board members who responded to the survey “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement that “the Board receives agenda materials in sufficient time to review them prior to Board meetings” and one Board member was “neutral” on this issue.

In addition, the quality of information provided to support agenda items does not consistently meet Board member needs. The supplemental information provided to Board members for agenda items for three Board meetings did not include the following: an executive summary; a description of how the item supports the District’s goals and objectives; an explanation of how the action will be accomplished; a description of desired results; a discussion of alternatives; a discussion of persons who will be affected and how they have provided input on the proposed actions; a discussion of how the proposed action will affect students and parents; information on what policy or law applies to the item; an analysis of whether the items complies with, duplicates, modifies, or affects existing policies or procedures; a statement as to whether a new policy is needed to implement the proposed action; a delineation of the time frame required to implement and complete the proposed action; and an assignment of responsibility for evaluating the proposed action. In some cases, however, the reason for the recommended action and a delineation of needed resources was provided. (It should be noted that much of this supplemental information dealt with contract approvals for which such detailed may not be needed.)

This analysis of the adequacy of the information provided to support Board agenda items is supported by the results of the Board survey. Five of the six Board members who expressed an opinion “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement that “for each major agenda item, District staff prepare a clearly written executive summary that describes how the item supports the District’s goals and objectives and what impact it has on the budget.” One Board member was “neutral” on this issue and a sixth Board member expressed “no opinion.”

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District start Board meetings sufficiently late in the day to allow persons who work during the day to attend Board meetings and rotate the location of Board meetings across the District to facilitate access to these meetings by the public.*

Action Plan 3-5 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-5

Change The Time Board Meetings Start And Rotate The Location Of Board Meetings

Strategy	Make it easier for the public to attend Board meetings by changing the time at which Board meetings start and rotating the location of Board meetings around the District.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Survey a random sample of persons who currently attend Board meetings as well as a sample of citizens from the community as a whole to determine what Board meetings times would be most conducive to public participation at Board meetings.</p> <p>Step 2: Use this information to determine at what time Board meetings should start (or whether some Board meetings should be held on weekends).</p> <p>Step 3: Pass Board resolution changing the time Board meetings start.</p> <p>Step 4: Pass a Board resolution approving the rotation of Board meetings around the District.</p> <p>Step 5: Identify suitable locations for Board meetings.</p>

Management Structures

	Step 6: Schedule future meetings at these.
Who Is Responsible	Board Chair
Time Frame	June through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that a Board workshop be convened to discuss the roles of Board committees and to ensure a common understanding of the role committees can play in ensuring items receive appropriate attention from Board members and that the time spent in Board meetings is as productive as possible.*

Action Plan 3-6 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-6

Review Role Of Board Committees

Strategy	Convene a workshop to discuss the role of Board Committees.
Action Needed	Step 1: Convene workshop. Step 2: Reach a consensus among Board members about the role of committee meetings. Step 3: Reach a consensus with regard to the frequency with which Board committees should meet. Step 4: Summarize the results of these discussion for future Board members.
Who Is Responsible	Board Chair
Time Frame	June through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the process for setting the agenda for Board meetings be modified to establish a consent agenda and to ensure that important items are discussed early in the meeting when Board members (and the public) are fresh.*

Action Plan 3-7 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-7

Establish Consent Agenda

Strategy	Modify the process for setting the agendas for Board meetings and establish a consent agenda.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review approaches other school Boards use for establishing consent agendas. Step 2: Reach agreement on the type of information that should be included on consent agendas. Step 3: Reach agreements on the process for removing items from the consent agenda, as needed. Step 4: Modify Board policies, as appropriate, to implement this.
Who Is Responsible	Board Chair and Superintendent
Time Frame	June through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- We recommend that District staff meet with each Board member to discuss their expectations for information that should be included for each Board item and when this information needs to be received and modify approaches to developing this information to ensure the needs of Board members are met.

Action Plan 3-8 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-8

Ensure Board Members Receive All The Information They Need To Make Informed Decisions	
Strategy	Develop approaches to ensure Board members receive the information they need to make informed decisions about all agenda items.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review a sample of recent Board agendas with Board members to discuss Board member information needs for each agenda item. Step 2: Discuss the best format for providing this needed information. Step 3: Discuss the time frame for providing this information to Board members Step 4: Establish procedures to ensure Board members receive the information they need to make informed decisions in a timely manner.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent And Board Chair
Time Frame	June through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

3 The Board and superintendent have not taken steps to ensure that all policies and procedures are routinely updated and that they are followed by District staff.

The District has not taken steps to ensure that all policies and procedures are updated on a routine basis

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools has established numerous policies and procedures to guide District operations and has also established procedures for handling District-wide administrative matters. These policies and procedures are reviewed by the Board attorney to ensure that they are in compliance with state requirements. However, no procedures are in place to ensure that these policies and procedures are updated on a routine basis. For example, no Board committee has been charged with developing, updating, and evaluating policies. Likewise, no process has been established to systematically review all policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to be complete and relevant. Rather, policies and procedures are updated on an “as needed” basis based on a review by District staff. While this practice ensure that many policies and procedures will be updated, because the District does not perform a systematic assessment of all policies and procedures on a pre-determined schedule there is no guarantee that all policies and procedures are updated.

The District has done an effective job of ensuring policies and procedures are widely disseminated and available to District employees

The District has taken a number of appropriate to ensure that policies and procedures are widely disseminated and available to District employees. For example, District policy and procedure manuals are distributed to appropriate Bureaus, Departments, and Offices as well as to region offices and school sites. In addition, the District maintains

Management Structures

an updated web site that contains all school Board rules and relevant contact information. (Because all District employees have access to the web, this information is available to them.)

Employee survey results suggest that the District has done an effective job of disseminating information on policies and procedures and encouraging staff to use this information to guide their work. More than three-fourths of the survey respondents (78.0 percent) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I am familiar with District policies and procedure” and about the same percentage of survey respondents (78.6 percent) “agree” or “strongly agree” that “I know where to access District policies and procedures with which I am not familiar.” Moreover, over four out of five survey respondents (81.4 percent) “agree” or “strongly agree” that “I use District policies and procedures to guide my day-to-day activities.”

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District establish procedures to ensure policies and procedures are formally evaluated each year to ensure they reflect the District’s current needs.*

Action Plan 3-9 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-9

Ensure Polices And Procedures Are Formally Evaluated Each Year	
Strategy	Establish procedures to ensure that policies and procedures are formally evaluated each year.
Action Needed	Step 1: Assign responsibility to Board Committee(s) for ensuring policies and procedures are formally reviewed each year. Step 2: Assign responsibility to a staff person in each major organizational unit who will be chartered with ensuring that policies and procedures for that unit are updated on a regular basis. Step 3: Develop a schedule for reviewing and revising policies and procedures. Step 4: Board Committee(s) should review revised policies and procedures each year. Step 5: Board should adopt revised policies and procedures each year.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and Board Chair
Time Frame	August through December 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

4 The District routinely obtains legal services to advise it about policy and reduce the risk of lawsuits; however, neither legal costs nor performance are systematically evaluated.

The District uses available legal resources to receive advice about policy and lawsuits

The school Board employs in-house general counsel and legal department, consisting of nine full time attorneys (including the Board Attorney). These in-house staff are supplemented by outside counsel who are retained by the

Board to provide legal services for the District. In addition to representing the District and the Board on legal matters, the Board attorney and his staff participate in the staff agenda preparation meeting prior to each Board meeting. The Board attorney and his staff are also available to provide legal advice to the Board as a whole and to individual Board members. In the same way, the Board attorney provides legal advice to the superintendent and his staff.

The District would benefit from a more systematic analysis of its legal expenditures

The District does a reasonable job of managing its legal costs. The Board Attorney’s salary is somewhat higher (\$162,000 for the year ending June 30, 2001) than comparable salaries in other Districts but is not unreasonable given the level of the position responsibilities. Moreover, fees paid to outside counsel are informally checked periodically with fees paid by other organizations to ensure compensation paid to outside counsel is not excessive.

In some areas, however, taking a more systematic approach to evaluating legal costs would be beneficial. In many cases, all that is required is to more rigorously evaluate issues that are already considered from a qualitative perspective. For example, the Board attorney currently decides what services should be provided in-house based on a number of factors including:

- The level of expertise needed to handle a particular type of case
- The volume of legal work requiring this expertise that is expected
- The legal skills and expertise of in-house staff
- Anticipated fluctuations in workload demand

Based on the Board Attorney’s assessment of these issues cases involving general litigation, special education, personnel, real estate, contracting, finance (not including serving as bond counsel) and zoning in-house are typically handled by in-house staff while construction litigation, desegregation litigation, FCC council, bond counsel, workers compensation, eminent domain litigation, and personal injury work is contracted out. While the work performed by in-house versus outside counsel generally seems appropriate, in one area – personal injury litigation – assigning all work to outside counsel does not seem appropriate. As Exhibit 3-4 shows, the amount of payments to outside legal counsel for personal injury litigation has been both significant and consistent.

Exhibit 3-4

Payments To Outside Counsel For Personal Injury Litigation Has Been Both Significant And Consistent

Year	Legal Costs For Personal Injury Litigation	Hours (at \$90 per hour)
2000	\$839,337	9,326
1999	\$859,124	9,545
1998	\$1,282,109	14,245

Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Given that the hourly rate of two Senior Assistant Board Attorneys (one of which who is paid near the top of the salary scale) and one Assistant Board Attorney (including benefits) is \$70.90 hiring additional in-house staff to handle a portion of the personal injury litigation seems worth considering. Indeed, hiring two Senior Assistant Board Attorneys and one Assistant Board Attorney to handle approximately 60 percent of the personal injury workload has the potential to reduce costs by over \$76,000 per year (although these potential savings would be offset somewhat by the cost of providing needed secretarial support.)¹⁰ It should be noted that these potential savings, while not insignificant, may not justify disrupting relationships with external law firms that have provided

¹⁰ In addition, space for additional staff would need to be identified before implementing this recommendation can be considered.

Management Structures

high quality services to the District over a number of years. Before implementing this recommendation the cost of this disruption should be weighed against the potential cost savings.

Additional information is needed to further analyze the cost-effectiveness of legal operations. For example, legal staff has not been required to track the time, by activity, for case related and other work. Without this information there is no way to analyze whether the legal unit has the right mix of professional and support staff and whether the mix of professional and paraprofessional staff is in place. For example, discussions with legal managers suggests that hiring additional law clerks and paralegals might be cost-effective, however, at present there is no information available to quantify the additional work that might be performed by these clerks or the cost savings that might result.

The District has established an informal process for evaluating legal performance

At present, the District does not formally evaluate the overall quality of legal services provided and no system exists to evaluate the legal unit's performance. It should be noted that the Board Attorney's performance is evaluated each year, but this evaluation is typically performed by each Board member individually. Consequently, unless the Board chooses to hold a public meeting after the individual evaluations to review his performance as a group, the District cannot use the performance of the Board attorney as a proxy for the evaluation of the legal department as a whole.

In addition, the Board Attorney should be commended for following up with outside counsel to discuss whether "favorable outcomes" have been achieved and to ensure that billing practices are appropriate.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District develop the management infrastructure needed to evaluate the cost of legal services on an ongoing basis.*

Action Plan 3-10 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-10

Develop Systems Needed To Evaluate The Cost Of Legal Services On An Ongoing Basis	
Strategy	Develop the management infrastructure needed to evaluate the cost of legal services on an ongoing basis.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop procedures for billing time on cases. Step 2: Determine hourly rates for each staff members. Step 3: Work with the Office of Information Technology to develop a system to track time expended per case. Step 4: Use information from this billing system to evaluate the costs of in-house legal services.
Who is Responsible	Board Attorney
Time Frame	April through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	Office of Information Technology staff will need to devote time to developing the recommended system to track expenditures.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the Board attorney establish a formal process for determining what legal services should be provided by in-house counsel and what legal services should be provided by outside attorneys.*

Action Plan 3-11 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-11

Develop Evaluation Framework For Determining What Legal Services Should Be Provided By Outside Counsel	
Strategy	Establish a formal process for determining what legal services should be provided by in-house counsel and what legal services should be provided by outside attorneys.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Review and document informal evaluation criteria currently used to determine when to “outsource” legal work.</p> <p>Step 2: Formalize these informal evaluation criteria into an assessment framework.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop systems and procedures to capture information needed to evaluate the need for outside counsel using this framework.</p> <p>Step 4: Use the framework to systematically evaluate the mix of in-house and outside legal work performed.</p> <p>Step 5: Modify the mix of in-house and outside legal work performed, as appropriate.</p> <p>Step 6: Review analysis on an annual basis.</p>
Who is Responsible	Board Attorney
Time Frame	April through August 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District should explore hiring additional in-house attorneys to handle work that is currently assigned to more expensive outside counsel that does not require significant expertise and for which the demand for the work does not vary substantially.*

Action Plan 3-12 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-12

Explore Hiring Additional Attorneys To Handle Work Currently Assigned To Outside Counsel	
Strategy	Explore hiring additional in-house attorneys to handle legal work currently assigned to more expensive outside counsel.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Estimate the costs associated with hiring two Senior Assistant Board Attorneys and one Assistant Board Attorney to handle approximately 60 percent of the personal injury cases currently performed by outside counsel.</p> <p>Step 2: Estimate the secretarial support needs of these additional staff.</p> <p>Step 3: Determine how the space needs of these staff can be met.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop a list of the type of disruption, if any, that would be caused by implementing this recommendations and the potential impact of this disruption.</p> <p>Step 5: Weigh the savings associated with assigning additional work to in-house staff against the impact of the potential disruption that will be caused.</p> <p>Step 6: Use the analyses developed in Steps 1 through 5 to assess the appropriateness of increasing the volume of personal injury cases handled in-house.</p> <p>Step 7: Hire additional Board attorneys, as appropriate based on the results of this analysis.</p>

Who is Responsible	Board Attorney
Time Frame	April to August 2002
Fiscal Impact	Legal costs will be reduced by approximately \$76,300 each year.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

Effective and Responsible Operation

5 Although the District’s organizational structure had clearly defined units and lines of authority when the study was initiated¹¹, the structure did not facilitate effective District management.

Lines of authority and unit responsibility were clearly defined in the organizational structure that was in place when the study was initiated

At the time the study was initiated, the District had done a reasonably effective job of delineating the responsibilities of individual units within the organizational structure and clearly defining unit roles and responsibilities. District organizational charts were current and reflected existing organizational arrangements.¹² In addition, in interviews staff indicated a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their units and of the roles and responsibilities of the units which with they worked on a regular basis. Survey results relating to this issue are, however, mixed. While more than half (53.9 percent) of the survey respondents who expressed an opinion “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that “I have a clear understanding of the District’s organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities of each organizational unit,” more than a quarter (25.9 percent) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. These findings suggest that the District needs to focus additional effort on ensuring organizational roles and responsibilities are understood by all District employees.

Organizational arrangements that were in place when the study was initiated appear to have evolved over time rather than to have been developed based on an assessment of management needs

While it is important that organizational relationships be clearly articulated, understood, and documented in organizational charts, it is more important that organizational structure facilitate an organization’s efforts to achieve its objectives cost-effectively. As will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent subsections of this section, neither the overall organization of the District nor the organization of several individual units within the District were effective when the study was initiated. This appears to have resulted in large part because organizational structure had been allowed to evolve over time. Rather than systematically evaluating organization structure on a regular basis and making organizational changes to streamline operations and improve operational efficiency, organizational changes had been made on a more *ad hoc* basis. Over time this resulted in a structure in which some key functions did not report to the units to which they were aligned operationally (for example, at the time this study was initiated responsibility for energy management was organizationally separate from the maintenance function.)¹³

¹¹ A fundamental restructuring of the organization of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools is currently under way.

¹² It is worth nothing that having accurate organizational charts in a District of the size and complexity of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools is no small feat. Many much smaller and less complex organizations the consultants have studied do not have accurate organizational charts.

¹³ One of the first initiatives of the new superintendent was to assign this function to the maintenance unit.

Because organizational arrangement evolved over time, rather than being based on an assessment of management needs, coordination and oversight of the District at the time the study was initiated was more complicated than necessary. The next two subsections discuss the need for organizational realignment at the time the study was initiated. The first subsection discusses problems associated with the overall organization of the District at that time. Problems associated with the organization of individual units at the time the study was initiated are discussed in the second subsection.

At the time the study was initiated, the District's overall organizational structure did not strike an appropriate balance between the need for the superintendent to directly oversee critical operations and the need for him to have sufficient time to focus on issues of greatest concern to the District

Two organizational imperatives should provide the basis for the organizational structure of any large school District.

- The superintendent should have access to and/or oversight over the functions that are most crucial to improving the District's performance
- The number of functions and units reporting directly to the superintendent should be kept to a reasonable level to ensure he has time to focus on issues of greatest concern to the District

The organization of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools at the time the study was initiated did not strike an appropriate balance between these imperatives. At the time the study was initiated, the Superintendent had ten key positions reporting to him:

- Deputy Superintendent of Schools
- Deputy Superintendent – Education
- Deputy Superintendent – Personnel Management and Services
- Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability
- Deputy Superintendent – Federal Programs and Grants Administration
- Deputy Superintendent – School Operations
- Chief Facilities Officer – Facilities Planning and Construction
- Chief Facilities Officer – Maintenance Operations
- Chief – School Police

While, without question, each of these functions is important not all of these functions need the direct attention and oversight of the superintendent. For example, the school police and federal programs and grants administration do not require the direct supervision of the superintendent – especially in an organization as large and as complicated as the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Other functions, for example facilities planning and construction, maintenance operations, and financial affairs are of sufficient importance to report to the superintendent, but require so much management time and attention that it is difficult for the superintendent to effectively oversee these functions while also performing the myriad other responsibilities for which he is responsible. In other cases – most notably education, school operations, and federal programs and grants administration – having three separate administrators report to the superintendent complicates efforts to ensure that these essential functions are effectively coordinated. (This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the next subsection).

The organizational placement of a number of District functions hampered organizational effectiveness at the time the study was initiated

Three of the primary factors that should be considered when determining what functions should be assigned to the same organizational units are whether the same types of management skills and expertise are needed to manage the functions, whether a single entity needs to be accountable for related activities, and whether functions need to work

Management Structures

closely together if they are to be effective. The current assignment of a number of functions within the District at the time the study was initiated were inappropriate because they failed to take into account these central organizational precepts.

- Business and operations support functions were spread throughout the organization
- Responsibility for maintenance related activities were assigned to several organizational units
- The management and accountability unit included a number of disparate functions
- Responsibility for financial controls and records were not consistently under the control of the Chief Financial Officer
- Management of the education, school operations, and federal programs and grants administration are organizationally separate

Business and operations support functions were spread throughout the organization. At the time the study was initiated, responsibility for key business and operations support functions was widely dispersed throughout the District. In particular:

- Food services reported through an Assistant Superintendent to the Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability
- Print Shop operations reported through an Assistant Superintendent to the Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability
- Transportation reported through an Assistant Superintendent to the Deputy Superintendent – School Operations
- Procurement reported to the Chief Financial Officer
- Facilities Maintenance reported to the Superintendent of Schools
- Facilities Planning and Construction reported to the Superintendent of Schools

As discussed previously, these organizational arrangements contributed to the Superintendent's excessively broad span of control. Equally important, however, spreading these operational functions among so many organizational units hindered the District's efforts to appropriately leverage the business and operational expertise needed to appropriately manage them. Effectively managing business and operational functions requires a mindset and expertise that most school District managers do not have. Organizational arrangements at the time the study was initiated, however, required that a relatively large number of District managers share this operational mindset and expertise. Moreover, because responsibility for business and operational functions was diffuse, advocacy for business and operational issues within the District was diffuse as well.

Responsibility for maintenance related functions is divided among a number of organizational units. In addition to the Maintenance Department, a number of units within the District have responsibility for maintenance related activities. For example, at the time this study was initiated responsibility for energy management reported to the Deputy Superintendent for Schools. In addition, responsibility for the maintenance of the District's central office was assigned to the District Office Operations unit rather than to the Maintenance Department.

The management and accountability unit include a number of disparate functions. At the time this study was initiated the Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability oversaw a number of disparate functions, many of which had little to do with management or accountability. While a logical case can be made for the Office of Evaluation and Research, the offices responsible for pre-qualifications and educational facilities compliance and equal educational and employment opportunity, and the Office of Business Development and Assistance Minority/Women Business Enterprises reporting to this unit, the organizational rationale for other functions reporting to this unit – the Bureau of Community Services, Food and Nutrition Services, Hospitality and Dining Services, and Office of Public Relations – is not clear. It appears that these responsibilities were assigned to this unit to even out workload among the Deputy Superintendents despite the fact that the organizational skills and expertise needed to oversee these functions is quite different. In addition, while it may have been appropriate for the District's auditing function – the Office of Management and Compliance Audits – to report to this unit on administrative matters, the unit's direct reporting relationship should have been to the school Board.

Responsibility for financial controls and records were not consistently under the control of the Chief Financial Officer. A single individual – the Chief Financial Officer – should be responsible for overseeing financial controls and records and should be held accountable for integrity of these operations. At the time the study was initiated, however, there were a number of instances where basic financial controls and records were not under the direct organizational authority of the Chief Financial Officer. For example, project and construction accounting was not under the direct responsibility and authority of the Controller. Moreover, while General Ledger control accounts were maintained by the Controller’s office, school level accounts were maintained by the facilities organization. Consequently, the Controller was not able to provide detailed construction or project costs by school location. In addition, work order accounting systems were maintained and controlled by operations departments (such as Transportation and Maintenance) and were not under the direct responsibility and authority of the Controller.

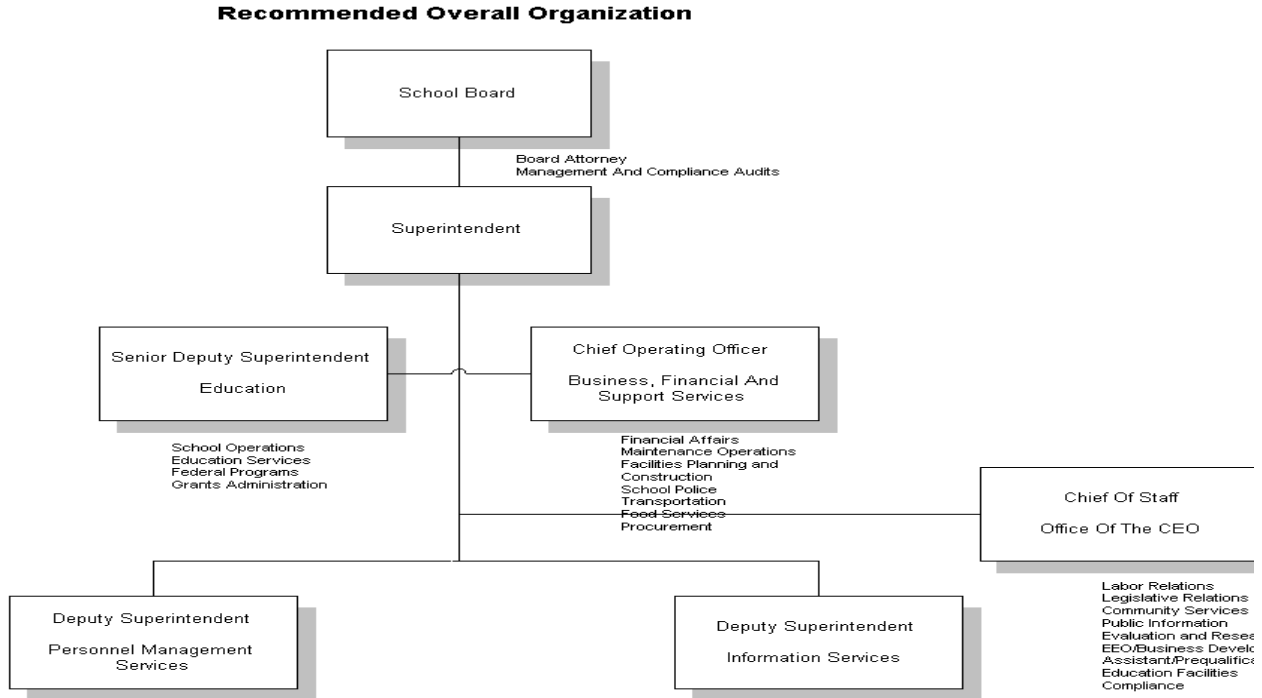
Management of the education, school operations, and federal programs and grants administration were organizationally separate. As discussed, at the time the study was initiated management of the education, school operations, and federal programs and grants administration functions were assigned to separate units reporting directly to the superintendent. Because these activities are so inextricably linked, however, this organizational separation complicated efforts to provide coordinated services and support to schools. In addition, the Education Department itself was divided into a complicated array of discrete programs and services. Organizing around individual programs and services rather than organizing around school support generalists (who can access individual programs and services to help address the needs of individual schools) limits the effectiveness of these programs. Finally, in some cases, the organizational placement of selected functions made little sense. For example, assigning the staff person responsible for coordinating the 21st Century Schools Program – a program that provides before and after care services to students – to the Office of Adult Education had no justification.

Prior to the recent reorganization of the school District, establishing an organizational structure in which five key staff would report to the Superintendent was suggested

The new Superintendent should have the full authority to determine how best to organize the staff reporting to him to facilitate efforts to achieve District goals. One organizational option that is suggested by the consultants, and that the District may want to consider in the long run, is presented in Exhibit 3-5.

Exhibit 3-5

One Organizational Approach Would Have Five Key Managers Report Directly To The Superintendent



Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

This structure would achieve an appropriate balance between the imperative that the Superintendent have direct access to and oversight of key functions and the imperative that the number of functions reporting to him be kept to a reasonable level. In this structure, the Superintendent would have direct oversight over the key functions that are most important to the District’s success and would directly supervises the senior managers responsible for these functions.

- **Education.** Developing curriculum, managing schools to deliver instruction, and holding staff accountable for ensuring high student achievement are the core activities of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. All other activities are either ancillary to or support these central tasks. Clearly, these important functions should report to the Superintendent.
- **Business, Financial and Support Services.** Business, financial and support services while not core District services are, nonetheless, essential to its success. The COO who leads this unit should oversee all operational units and functions including: financial affairs, maintenance operations, facilities planning and construction, school police, transportation, food services, and procurement.
- **Personnel Management Services.** People are the District’s most important asset. The success of the District’s efforts to improve performance will depend, to a great extent, on the quality and commitment of staff at all levels. Consequently, it is important that the human resource function report directly to the Superintendent.
- **Information.** Information is of crucial importance to all organizations and will be of special importance to the District as efforts to use information to improve performance increase. The person selected to serve as CIO must have a strategic vision for how information can be used to improve organizational performance and a technical understanding of information systems. One of the key roles the CIO will play will be to understand and interpret the needs of the Superintendent, the Senior Deputy Superintendent – Education, the Chief

Operating Officer, and the Deputy Superintendent – Personnel Management Services. One of the position's primary responsibilities will be to ensure the District's information systems seamlessly address these needs.

- **Chief of Staff.** Other functions are also important to the District's success but it is not necessary that the Superintendent directly oversee these functions on a day-to-day basis. These functions include: labor relations, legislative relations, community services, public information, evaluation and research, and EEO/Business Development. Rather than have these important functions report directly to the Superintendent, a Chief of Staff should coordinate these functions. Having these functions grouped as part of an Office of the Superintendent will facilitate Superintendent access when he needs to directly oversee these functions. The Chief of Staff should work with the managers of these important functions on a day-to-day basis to address issues that do not require the Superintendent's direct attention.

The Organizational Structure That Is Being Put In Place By The New Administration Is Similar In Most Respects To The Suggested Organizational Structure

Like the suggested organizational structure presented previously, the organizational structure being put in place has five positions reporting to the Superintendent:

- Deputy Superintendent of Education
- Chief Business Officer
- Chief of Staff
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Personnel Officer

In most important respects this organizational structure is identical to the one presented in the previous subsection. Two important differences should be noted, however. First, in the structure that has been recently implemented the Chief Financial Officer reports directly to the Superintendent instead of reporting through the COO (Chief Business Officer in the new structure). Where the Chief Financial Officer position reports in an organization such as this will vary depending on the experience and desires of the chief executive and having the Chief Financial Officer reporting directly to the Superintendent is certainly reasonable. Second, responsibility for Information Technology reports to the Chief Financial Officer in the new organizational structure whereas the suggested structure recommends that a Chief Information Officer position be established. While it may be worthwhile for the District to consider establishing such a position in the long-term it should be stressed that implementing the suggested organizational structure presumes that a person with the desired skills and abilities (e.g., someone who understands education, technology, and information from a management perspective) can be recruited and hired. Another organizational placement for the technology function is certainly warranted until the District identifies someone with the needed skills and experience and feels the time is right for establishing an information function.¹⁴

The District Is Undergoing National Searches To Ensure The Most Qualified Managers Possible Fill All Key Positions Within The Organizational Structure

The District's new leadership is undertaking national searches to ensure the most qualified staff are employed to fill key positions within the new organizational structure. While undertaking a national search by no means precludes the selection of existing District staff to fill key positions – the District has many outstanding staff who may be qualified to fill these positions – this step ensures that the best candidates possible will be selected to serve the Miami-Dade County Public Schools and its students.

¹⁴ Given the substantial level of change that the District is undergoing at the present time, even if senior managers agree that a Chief Information Officer position may be needed in the future, effectively integrating such a position in the current structure may not be appropriate given the degree of change the District is currently undergoing.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the overall organization of the District be revised to reduce costs and facilitate more effective operations.*

Action Plan 3-13 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-13

Revise The District's Overall Organizational Structure	
Strategy	Revise the District's overall organization to reduce costs and facilitate more effective operations.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review the organizational recommendations presented in this chapter. Step 2: Make modifications to these organizational recommendations, as appropriate. Step 3: Develop position descriptions for all new positions. Step 4: Conduct a search for these positions. Step 5: Select leaders and implement organizational structure.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent
Time Frame	Steps 1 through 3 of this recommendation have already been completed and Step 4 is underway.
Fiscal Impact	Implementing the recommended organizational structure will reduce costs by approximately \$120,000 per year.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the organization of a number of units within the District be revised to reduce costs and facilitate more effective operations.*

Action Plan 3-14 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-14

Systematically Review The Organization Of All Major Units	
Strategy	Revise the organization of all major units to reduce costs and facilitate more effective operations.
Action Needed	Step 1: Define organizational principles to guide the development of revised organizational structure in each unit. Step 2: Review organizational structures to identify unnecessary positions, excessive management layers and inappropriate spans of control. Step 3: Identify other factors that hinder the effectiveness of current organizational arrangements. Step 4: Develop recommendations to modify organizational recommendations. Step 5: Develop plan to implement organizational recommendations. Step 6: Implement organizational recommendations. Step 7: Review organizational arrangement on an ongoing basis.
Who is Responsible	Superintendent and the leaders of each organizational unit.
Time Frame	July to November 2002
Fiscal Impact	Fiscal impact will depend on the results of the analysis. For some units, the financial implications of reorganizations are presented in other chapters of this report.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

6 The District has focused little attention on improving operating efficiency.

Improving operating efficiency has not been a District priority

Although the District has taken some modest steps to improve operating efficiency – for example, discontinuing the Associate Superintendent position that previously oversaw the labor and legislative functions – at least until recently improving operating efficiency has not been a District priority. (Quite recently the District has begun the process of reviewing the roles and responsibilities of teachers on special assignment and has begun to initiate the Sterling approach to improving organizational performance.) While the District has done some limited benchmarking – for example, benchmark comparisons of salaries for administrative and school-based administrators, classroom teacher to pupil ratios, classroom teacher to pupil ratios and expenditures per student – the results of these benchmarking initiatives have not been used in any systematic way to adjust staffing levels.

The lack of emphasis the District has placed on improving operating efficiency and reducing administrative staffing levels is reinforced by the results of the employee survey. Fewer than two out of four survey respondents (38.3%) who expressed an opinion (and 52.0% of management and supervisory staff) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I am familiar with District efforts to streamline administrative staffing levels.” In addition, the number of survey respondents who “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement is high (38.6% of all respondents and 28.9% of administrative staff). Even fewer respondents – 19.7% of all respondents and 24.2% of management and supervisory staff – “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that “I have provided feedback on District efforts to streamline administrative staffing levels and a very high percentage of respondents (59.5% of all survey respondents and 57.3% of administrators) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement.

There are two primary reasons why the District currently focuses little attention on reviewing administrative staffing and controlling costs. First, as discussed, controlling costs (while ensuring District objectives are achieved) simply has not been a management priority. In interviews, almost no staff raised issues relating to controlling expenditures as one of their primary concerns. Improving operational efficiency is simply not part of the management mindset of District administrators. Second, the management infrastructure needed to effectively manage staff and other resources is not in place. As will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, performance expectations relating to cost are rarely articulated and systematically tracked. However, without needed information on performance against goals managers have little basis for refining staffing levels to reflect needs and priorities.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District create the management infrastructure needed to improve District management.*

Action Plan 4-1 (presented in Chapter 4) provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

- *We recommend that the goals and objectives of each manager in the District be modified so that controlling costs (without compromising service) are included in their performance expectations*

Action Plan 4-2 (presented in Chapter 4) provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

7

Although the District employs a number of effective budget and financial management practices, Board oversight of budget and financial practices can be improved.

The District employs a number of effective budget and financial management practices

On a number of dimensions the District’s budget and financial management practices are strong. For example, the budget process begins by considering the needs of individual schools. In addition, a reserve fund balance is maintained (the reserve fund has averaged 1.42% of the total budget over the past five years) and a contingency fund is provided (the contingency fund has averaged 6.2% of the total budget over the past five years). The fund balance and contingency reserves for each of the past five fiscal years are presented in Exhibit 3-6.

Exhibit 3-6

The District Maintains A Fund Balance And A Contingency Fund

Fiscal Year	Total Budget (millions)	Fund Balance (millions)	Fund Balance As A Percent Of The Total Budget	Contingency Fund (Millions)	Contingency Fund As A Percent Of The Total Budget
1996-97	\$1,999.25	\$14.56	.73%	\$90.19	4.51%
1997-98	\$2,056.36	\$43.09	2.10%	\$117.06	5.49%
1998-99	\$2,181.38	\$44.39	2.03%	\$154.72	7.09%
1999-00	\$2,240.38	\$35.81	1.58%	\$162.92	7.27%
2000-01	\$2,373.05	\$38.50	.62%	\$167.20	7.05%

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

In addition, key financial indicators such as the reserve fund balance, the debt ratio, inventory levels are monitored on an ongoing basis. Moreover, limits of \$10,000 have been established for how much various staff can spend without approval and the Board approves purchases that exceed that amount.

In addition, the District has received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Award. This program has been established to encourage governments to prepare budget documents of the highest quality to meet the needs of decision-makers and citizens. Eight criteria are examined when considering an application for the award: local significance and value, technical significance, transferability, documentation, the cost/benefit analysis, efficiency, originality, and durability. The District has received this award each year for the past seven years and, according to District staff, the Broward County Public Schools is the only other Florida District that has received this award.

The information and training Board members receive may be insufficient in some cases to provide effective budget and financial oversight

Board member perspectives on whether they receive sufficient training and information to effectively oversee the District’s budget and financial affairs is mixed. As the Exhibit 3-7 shows, there is significant diversity of opinion among Board members on these issues.

Exhibit 3-7

Board Members Have Diverse Opinions About Whether They Receive Adequate Training On Budget And Financial Related Issues

Survey Item	Number Who “Strongly Disagree”	Number Who “Disagree”	Number Who Are “Neutral”	Number Who “Agree”	Number Who “Strongly Agree”
School Board members receive training in school District budget and financial practices	2	2	2	1	
The proposed budget is presented to the Board in an easy-to-read, understandable, and concise format that Board members can understand	2	2	1	2	
The District provides the Board with information about revenue and expenditures by major function over the past two to three fiscal years for use in evaluating budget proposals	2	1		4	
The Board established procedures for how to handle budget reductions and, when necessary, implements these procedures	2	1		4	
The District has a procedures for informing, in a concise and easily understood format, the Board about the short- and long-term fiscal implications of proposed budgets or budget amendments	2	2	1	1	
Requests for budget increases are made in easy-to-read, understandable, and concise formats and are tied to priorities established in the Board’s long-term plan for the District	2	1	2	1	1

Source: Berkshire Advisors Board Member Survey.

A number of factors may explain these divergent perspectives. For example, a Board member who has a strong business or financial background may be able to interpret information provided to Board members (and need less training) more easily than a Board member who does not have a business or financial background. Alternatively, new Board members may have a steeper learning curve than Board members who have been on the Board for a long period of time. Moreover, some Board members may have come on the school Board after budget training was provided. Whatever the reasons, the fact that some Board members do not feel they receive the information they need to make provide sound budget and financial oversight, by itself argues for the need to address these deficiencies.

Recommendations

- We recommend that Board members receive additional individualized training relating to budget and financial management that is tailored to their needs.

Action Plan 3-15 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 3-15

Supplement Budget and Financial Management Training Board Members Receive	
Strategy	Take additional steps to ensure Board members receive needed and individualized training relating to budget and financial management.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Meet with Board members individually to assess their needs for budget and financial management related training</p> <p>Step 2: Supplement budget and management training currently provided to address the needs of each Board member</p> <p>Step 3: Review training success with Board members and provide additional training as necessary</p>
Who is Responsible	Chief Financial Officer
Time Frame	April to May 2002
Fiscal Impact	None

8 The District has assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to District-wide policies and procedures.

The District has effectively implemented school-based management practices and procedures

Interviews with District level and school-based managers and administrators clearly indicate that the District has assigned school principals the authority they need to effectively manage their schools while adhering to District-wide policies and procedures. Most notably, school principals have significant budgetary authority. As long as District established parameters are adhered to (for example, standards relating to student teacher ratios) school principals have the authority both to vary the mix of staff at their schools (for example, by hiring teachers instead of counselors) and to move resource among personnel and non-personnel accounts. It is worth noting that not only do school-based administrators have the authority to make these changes but also use that authority to tailor the resources available at their schools to meet the school's individual needs. Creative approaches using resources were observed at many of schools visited by the consultants including the following:

- Implementation of inclusion model at Kensington Park Elementary Schools which includes co-teaching models to serve ESE, ESOL and Title One students
- Implementation of an inclusion model at Miami-Palmetto High School that resulted in 97% of ESE students receiving standard high school diplomas versus special diploma
- Implementation of specialized ROTC programs at the MAST Academy
- Tailored use of FCAT enhancement moneys and EESAC lottery funds to develop school specific programs to improve student performance

- Collaboration between all instruction departments within many schools to incorporate FCAT remediation strategies and objectives into all subject areas (i.e. Music, Art, Social Studies, Physical Education and Vocational Areas) rather than eliminate electives for FCAT remediation classes
- Establishment of a wide range of internship programs in several high schools to provide students career experience and incentives for high performance

The results of the interviews and school visits performed by the consultants were confirmed by the results of the employee survey. As the Exhibit 3-8 shows, the percentage of school-based administrators who “agree” or “strongly agree” to items relating to school-based authority are consistently high while the percentage who “strongly disagree” is low.

Exhibit 3-8

School Administrators Have Been Granted Significant Authority

Survey Item	Number Who “Strongly Disagree”	Number Who “Disagree”	Number Who Are “Neutral”	Number Who “Agree”	Number Who “Strongly Agree”
I have sufficient flexibility in managing my staff to achieve school, District, and state education goals	4.3	14.3	10.6	45.2	25.6
I have sufficient flexibility in managing my budget to achieve school, District, and state education goals	7.0	19.4	14.4	43.5	15.7
I have sufficient authority over the operations of my school to achieve school, District, and state education goals	4.0	12.1	12.4	47.9	23.6
I have a clear understand of the authority I have been granted to improve my school’s performance	1.9	4.2	4.9	35.9	53.0

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc. Employee Survey.

In addition, sufficient oversight is provided to ensure that school-based administrators do not misuse the authority they have been granted. Through the District’s “money matters” initiative school-based administrators receive training on how to manage the schools’ resources and school-level audits are performed to ensure District financial requirements are adhered to. In addition, region staff closely monitor school operations paying closer attention to schools that are struggling than schools who are meeting performance expectations.

Allocation of Resources

9 Although the District has a multi-year strategic plan, the plan plays only a limited role in setting an overall direction for the District and in providing a framework for achieving District objectives.

The District has established a five-year strategic plan that has a number of good features

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools has invested significant time and effort into developing a strategic plan to guide the District over a five-year period (2000 to 2005). This plan has a number of good features including the following:

- **The number of overall goals included in the plan is limited.** The plan establishes goals in three areas: School to Career; Effective Learning Environment; and Efficient Management Practices.
- **Specific objectives and actions are identified for each overall goal.** Ten objectives, with a total of 58 action steps, have been identified for the School to Career Goal. Seven objectives, with a total of 31 action steps, have been identified for the Effective Learning Environment goal. Five objectives, with a total of 32 actions steps, have been identified for the Efficient Management Practices goal.
- **Responsibilities and time frames for completing each action step are identified.** For each of the 121 action steps included in the strategic plan a start date and completion date is specified. Likewise, the individual and office responsible for completing the action step is clearly specified.
- **The resources needed to implement each action step are specified.** The strategic plan also indicates the financial resources that will be needed to complete each action step.
- **Criteria that will be used to determine whether an action plan has been completed are articulated.** For each action plan step a statement detailing what must be done to prove completion of the action plan is specified.

In addition, the process of developing the strategic plan was extremely inclusive. Findings from four surveys were used to develop the goals and objectives incorporated into the plan:

- A telephone survey of approximately 800 Miami-Dade County residents
- A survey of approximately 500 public school stakeholders representing various groups including community-based organizations, businesses, parent/citizen groups, students, public school unions/employee organizations, school principals, and teachers
- A school Board climate survey to appraise the opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of District administrators toward the performance of the Board was completed by approximately 200 administrators including supervisors, managers, directors, and assistant/associate/deputy superintendents in the downtown administrative offices
- A school climate survey which included responses from approximately 40,000 parents, 46,000 students, and 14,000 staff.

Despite the plan's good features, it has a number of short-comings as well.

Although the District's 2000-2005 strategic plan has a number of sound features it also has a number of short-comings that prevent it from becoming a completely effective tool for setting an overall direction for the District,

establishing priorities, and driving improvement. In some cases, these shortcomings are closely linked to the good features of the strategic plan that are described in the preceding subsection.

- **The most important issues facing the District are not consistently reflected in the strategic plan.** When evaluated independently each of the action steps included in the strategic plan seem worthwhile. However, when viewed from the perspective of the District's greatest needs, it is not clear that the action plan steps consistently focus on the District's highest priorities (although without question in a number of cases the action plan steps focus on crucial needs). For example, the objectives and action steps incorporated into the strategic plan relating to efficient management practices, while worthwhile, will do relatively little to significantly reduce costs. In the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, personnel related expenditures account for by far the greatest share of District costs (86% of general fund expenditures and 70% of total expenditures) yet none of the action steps included in the strategic plan identify activities that will reduce personnel costs (by, for example, taking steps to improve management or improve employee productivity).
- Too many objectives are incorporated in the strategic plan to focus management and employee attention on the most important issues facing the District. Strategic plans are useful documents not only for specifying what objectives an organization will focus on during the period covered by the plan but also for specifying what activities will receive less focuses attention during the strategic planning period. There are so many objectives incorporated in the District's strategic plan, however, that to a significant extent the plan's ability to encourage managers and staff to focus on a small number of objectives is lost.¹⁵
- **The plan reflects a programmatic rather than a systemic approach to addressing issues.** For the most part, the action steps and strategies incorporated in the strategic plan, reflect a "programmatic approach" to strengthening the District's performance. Many of the action steps identify programs which should be implemented. Again, while these programs may be worthwhile, the emphasis on establishing programs to address the District's needs diverts attention from identifying more systemic approaches to addressing core problems (for example, using information more effectively to manage District operations and improve performance). None of the action steps included in the strategic plan appear to address systemic issues, however, in some cases the programmatic action plans incorporated into the plan together address broad issues (e.g., improving student performance and making effective use of technology) facing the District.
- **The overall goals that provide a framework for the plan are too broad to provide to drive improvement efforts.** The goals that are articulated in the strategic plan – school to career, effective learning environment, and efficient management practices – are useful in defining the areas on which the District will focus during the five years the strategic plan is in place. However, as currently articulated, these goals are so broad they cannot by themselves be used to drive improved District performance. Indeed, while progress against specific objectives linked to each goal can be evaluated using criterion provided in the strategic plan at the end of the plan's five year period there is no way of determining whether a goal was achieved or not.
- The quantifiable criterion used to assess performance for individual strategic objectives do not specify the levels of performance improvement expected. For many of the objectives included in each goal area of the strategic plan, the District has identified quantifiable measures that can be used to evaluate performance. For example, the criterion measure that is used to evaluate performance in improving student achievement in reading is the "percentage of 4th, 8th, and 10th grade students scoring at Level 2 or above in reading." Likewise, one of the criterion measures that will be used to assess the District's efforts to "reduce the percentage of incidents related to violence, weapons, drugs, vandalism, and truancy" (one of the objectives included under the goal – Effective Learning Environment) is the "percentage of incidents related to violence, weapons, drugs, vandalism, and truancy." In the same way, the criterion measure for one of the objectives included under the goal Efficient Management Practices – improve the delivery of services such as maintenance, classroom materials, and transportation – is the percentage of work order closed. While the District should be commended in each of these cases for identifying quantifiable criteria measures, the fact that specific expectations for the level of improved performance desired are not specified limits the effectiveness of these measures as a tool for improving performance. As stated, any increase (no matter how small) in the percentage of 4th, 8th, and 10th

¹⁵ It should be noted that just because an issue is not included in a strategic plan that does not mean the issue is unimportant and performance related to the issue should not be evaluated. Rather, the strategic plan identifies areas on which special emphasis will be placed during the period covered by the strategic while more of a "maintenance" effort should be devoted to other areas.

grade students scoring at Level 2 or above in reading; any reduction (no matter how small) in the percentage of incidents related to violence, weapons, drugs, vandalism, and truancy; and any increase (no matter how small) in the percentage of work order closed would be considered success. A much more effective approach to driving improved performance would be to establish specific performance thresholds that must be achieved each year during the five year duration of the strategic plans before declaring success in achieving an objective.

- **Linkages between actions plan steps and improved performance are not articulated as well as they could be.** Although the action steps incorporated in the strategic plan taken individually appear to be worthwhile, the linkages between action plan steps and the associated objectives are not articulated as well as they could be. The strategic plan appears to assume that successfully completing each action step will result in improved performance on the associated objective but do not specify why improvement is expected.¹⁶ Because the linkages between actions steps and objectives are not specified evaluating whether the approaches to achieving each objective that are incorporated in each action plan step is difficult. Consequently, making “mid-course adjustments” if the action plans steps are not having the desired affect will be extremely difficult.

The strategic plan is not consistently used as a vehicle to drive District improvement

The extent to which the District uses the strategic plan to drive District improvement appears to be mixed. On the positive side, Accountability Reports are prepared to assess progress against the strategic plan.¹⁷ Likewise, in the Educational Services area progress against objectives outlined in the strategic plan are reviewed on at least an annual basis. In addition, at least some Board members are of the opinion that an annual assessment of the progress the District has made against the strategic plan is performed. (Of the six Board members who completed the Board survey, two “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement “the Board annually assesses the progress the District has made toward achieving objectives outlined in the District’s strategic plan,” three Board members “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement, and one Board member was neutral.¹⁸) Moreover, most survey respondents (62.6 percent) “agree” or “strongly agree” that they are “familiar with the District’s strategic plan and its overall goals and objectives.”

These positive findings notwithstanding, at least in some areas the role of the District’s strategic plan in driving District improvement is limited. For non-instructional areas in particular the specific objectives outlined in the strategic plan do not focus on key improvement needs.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District’s approach to strategic planning be modified so that a limited number of truly strategic objectives are identified and to facilitate evaluating the strengths and shortcomings associated with the District’s approach to achieving these objectives.*

Action Plan 3-16 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

¹⁶ This finding should in no way be interpreted as indicating that action plan steps are not related to strategic objectives or that the selection of action plan steps is in any way haphazard. Rather, the problem identified is that the logic behind the selection of individual action plan is not sufficiently articulated.

¹⁷ In two of the years between 1995 and 2000 the accountability reports were not prepared. During one of these years, the District was in the process of developing a new strategic plan.

¹⁸ Differences of opinion among Board members on this issue may reflect both their tenure on the Board (they may not have been a member of the Board the last time an accountability report was issued) or may reflect differences of opinion about the quality of the assessment performed.

Action Plan 3-16

Modify Approach To Strategic Planning	
Strategy	Modify the District’s approach to strategic planning that the strategic plan so that a limited number of truly strategic objectives are identified and so that an evaluation of the strengths and shortcomings associated with the District’s approach to achieving these objectives is facilities.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Interview Board members to understand the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the strategic plan as a tool for both setting the District’s overall direction and evaluating its success in achieving goals.</p> <p>Step 2: Interview District level, region, and school-based staff to understand their perspectives on the strengths and shortcomings of the strategic plan.</p> <p>Step 3: Through the interviews performed in Step 1 and Step 2 to determine the extent to which the strategic plan focuses attention on the most important issues facing the District.</p> <p>Step 4: Also use the interviews performed in Step 1 and Step 2 to determine the extent to which the strategic plan can be used to assess the strengths and shortcomings of the approaches currently used to achieve strategic objectives.</p> <p>Step 5: Develop an approach to identify a small number of areas on which the District must focus to fulfill its mission and achieves its overall objectives.</p> <p>Step 6: Develop an approach to identifying the strategies and approaches that should be put in place to improve performance in these areas.</p> <p>Step 7: Develop an approach to objectively assessing whether performance in these areas has improved.</p> <p>Step 8: Develop an approach to using the performance measures established in Step 7 to assess the efficacy of the strategies and approaches used to improve performance in the high priority area.</p> <p>Step 9: Develop a strategic planning process that incorporates the activities performed in Steps 5 through 8.</p> <p>Step 10: Implement strategic planning process.</p> <p>Step 11: Use strategic plan goals and objectives to drive budgetary and resource allocation decisions.</p> <p>Step 12: Specify strategic goals and objectives in District budget documents.</p> <p>Step 13: Detail, as part of the budget document, how resources have been allocated to implemented the strategies reflected in the strategic plan.</p>
Who is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability; Chief Financial Officer
Time Frame	August 2002 to August 2003
Fiscal Impact	None

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

10 **The District has a system to accurately project enrollment.**

The District has established an effective system to project enrollments

The District’s approach to projecting enrollments is sound. A number of approaches are used to project enrollments including cohort survival (ten year and five year weighted), linear regression based on a ten-year history, and straight-line projections using three assumptions (current growth will be maintained, average growth over the past

Management Structures

two years, and average growth over a three year period.) In addition, demographic information from Miami-Dade County is accessed, when necessary, to support the enrollment projection process. Likewise, District staff discuss relevant issues with representatives of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and read articles on political instability in Latin American countries to stay current on issues that may affect District enrollment.

The effectiveness of the District's approach to projecting enrollments is reflected by the fact that enrollment projections are generally quite accurate. As the Exhibit 3-9 shows, District projections are on average within .46% of actual enrollment and the differences between actual enrollment and estimated enrollment have ranged from 123 students to 3,080 students over the past five years.

Exhibit 3-9

District Enrollment Projections Are Quite Accurate

Year	Actual Enrollment	Estimated Enrollment	Difference	Percentage Difference
2000-01	360,877	361,000	(123)	(.03)
1999-00	352,507	352,000	507	.14
1998-99	345,100	343,500	1,600	.46
1997-98	338,399	341,000	(2,601)	(.77)
1996-97	333,420	336,500	(3,080)	(.92)

Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools

In addition, the District works to improve the enrollment projection process on an ongoing basis. When enrollment projects are not accurate (for example, for school year 1996-97 enrollment projections were off by a total of 3,080 students), the District reviews the assumptions it incorporates into the enrollment projection process. In the past, when enrollment projections have not been accurate there has been a qualitative shift in the factors that affect enrollment and the assumptions that previously were appropriate may no longer be adequate. (For example, District staff speculate that the most recent enrollment projections may not be accurate because Miami-Dade County is becoming "built out" and there is much less room for growth within the County.) In the five years between 1996-97 and 2000-01 the percentage difference (on an absolute basis) between actual and projected enrollments has declined each year.

At the school level, school based administrators are involved in reviewing the enrollment projections of their schools. Eighty nine percent of the school-based administrators who responded to the employee survey "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "I review annual enrollment projections for my school."

11 The District does not effectively link its financial plans and budgets to its priority goals and objectives, however, staff generally are familiar with the plan and focused on achieving those goals and objectives.

The link between the District's budget and its strategic plan is tenuous.

As previously discussed, the costs associated with completing selected action steps in the District's strategic plan are delineated. As currently constructed, however, budget priorities are not systematically set to help support implementation of the strategic plan. Indeed, the plan's programmatic agenda provides little guidance for how budget priorities should be established.

For the most part, District employees are familiar with strategic plan goals and work to achieve those goals

While the District’s strategic plan may not be the primary focus of improvement efforts in non-instructional areas, the plan is helpful in supporting improvement objectives. Survey findings suggest that not only are employees familiar with the plan but work to achieve those goals. More than two in five respondents expressing an opinion (62.6%) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I am familiar with the District’s strategic plan and its overall goals and objectives” while 18.9% of survey respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. An even higher percentage of District employees (70.3%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that “the goals and priorities established by the District influence my day-to-day work. In addition, a high percentage of employees (74.3%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that they understand how their work contributes to the District achieving its goals and objectives. While these findings, in themselves, do not obviate the criticisms of the strategic plan presented previously in this section, they do speak to the District’s success in communicating the strategic plan and its goals and objectives to staff. In addition, these results suggest that the District has an extremely strong foundation from which to leverage an improved strategic planning process to drive improvement efforts.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that District budgets formally reflect the goals and priorities articulated in the strategic plan.*

Action Plan 3-15 (presented previously) provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

12

The District generates significant revenue from external sources.

Although the District generates significant revenue from external sources, relatively little attention has focused on increasing revenue from local sources

The Miami-Dade Public Schools actively seeks sources of revenue from outside sources. Exhibit 3-16 summarizes the grant revenues that have been received during the most recent fiscal year. These revenues constitute 11.2 percent of the District’s total budget.

Exhibit 3-10

The District Receives Significant Revenue From Grant Sources

Source	Total Revenue
Federal	\$ 8,309,709
Federal Through State	186,716,787
State	11,732,461
Foundations	1,217,963
Local	1,021,819
Federal Through Local	2,463,266
Total	\$211,462,005

Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Management Structures

In addition, the District has taken steps to facilitate the efforts of District staff to access grant revenue. For example, the District maintains a web site and produces a grant writing manual that provides information on grant opportunities from private, state, and federal sources.

The District does not, however, actively pursue opportunities to increase local revenues. While the District may, from a theoretical perspective, consider pursuing various local options to increase revenues the fact that the last successful election for raising local revenue was 13 years ago reflects a reluctance to seriously pursue such options. This was also the last time that the voters had the opportunity to vote to increase revenues to schools.