

# 4

## Performance Accountability Systems

*While the District has established generally effective performance accountability systems to support educational programs, for the most part no such systems are in place to support operations. Not only is the management infrastructure needed to support effective performance accountability in operational areas absent, but also most non-instructional managers (especially at the central office) lack the management perspective needed to aggressively manage performance on an ongoing basis.*

### Conclusion

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The District's performance with regard to performance accountability is decidedly mixed. In general, the District has done an effective job of using performance information to strengthen educational programs. For educational programs, performance objectives have been established that are linked to the District's overall goals, strategies for achieving performance goals are in place, performance against goals is tracked, and performance information is used to develop strategies to support ongoing improvement efforts. With regard to management of District support operations, however, performance accountability systems are, with few exceptions, not in place. Generally, information is not used as a tool for managing the District's non-instructional operations and quantifiable goals and objectives have not been established for operational programs. Likewise, the quantifiable performance indicators needed to monitor District performance on an ongoing basis have not been established in most operational areas. Perhaps the biggest barrier to strengthening performance accountability for support operations is that central office managers lack the management perspective needed to aggressively manage performance on an ongoing basis.

During the course of this review, Berkshire Advisors, Inc. identified a number of District accomplishments relating to performance accountability systems, some of which are included in Exhibit 4-1 below.

#### *Exhibit 4-1*

#### **The District Has Had Notable Accomplishments in Performance Accountability in the Last Three Years**

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- The District is in the process of establishing a Sterling Management process to establish goals for District performance and to drive performance improvement.
  - Educational programs have established generally effective performance management systems
  - A number of school-based administrators creatively manage their schools to achieve goals outlined in their school improvement plans.
  - Some isolated units – most notably, the Accounts Payable function – effectively use performance indicators as a management tool.
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Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

## ***Overview of Chapter Findings*** ---

Berkshire Advisors reviewed the District's performance accountability systems 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 reviewed policies and procedures relating to performance accountability. 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 the District's practices. Likewise, an e-mail address and 800 number were established so District stakeholders could provide input into the study process. A survey was also administered to board members. An additional survey was administered to a representative sample of employees from throughout the District. (Approximately 13,000 surveys were sent to employees of which 3,919 were returned.)

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

### **Accountability For Efficiency And Effectiveness**

1. While goals and objectives have been established for educational programs, little effort has been devoted to establishing goals for non-instructional functions. (Page 4-3)
2. While the District has established performance measures for educational programs, such measures have not been established for non-instructional programs and for neither educational nor operational programs are cost-efficiency measures used. (Page 4-6)
3. The District assesses the performance of educational programs but does not consistently evaluate the performance of operational programs. (Page 4-10)
4. The District evaluates the performance of its major educational programs and uses these results to improve program performance; however, little effort is devoted to evaluating operational programs and for neither educational nor operational programs is adequate attention focused on controlling costs. (Page 4-17)
5. The District reports on the performance of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers. (Page 4-19)

## ***Fiscal Impact of Recommendations*** ---

Over time, the recommendations to improve performance accountability systems presented in this chapter should yield significant savings in operational improvements. In the immediate term, however, implementation of these recommendations will not have any fiscal impact.

## ***Background*** ---

For the most part, the District does not have effective performance accountability systems in place to support non-instructional activities. A great deal of information on student academic performance, on the other hand, is used to diagnose opportunities for improvement and make decision to improvement instruction. The information collected includes the following:

- School Profile Data is provided by three comprehensive annual reports (Feeder Pattern Profiles, District and School Profiles and Statistical Abstract)

- Comprehensive analysis of student performance on Stanford Nine Achievement Test (Stanford-9) and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is completed each year
- A comprehensive system of summer school pre- and post- tests is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the summer school curriculum
- The District has developed and implemented systems for comparing student academic assessments to state accountability standards and student academic assessments in peer districts
- A systematic assessment is performed each year on the effectiveness of Title I programs
- Specific analyses of student performance data is provided to schools, regional offices and District departments to assist them in planning for curriculum and instructional modifications, remediation, and professional development

In addition, a range of non-academic indicators is also used to improve instructional performance.

## ***Accountability for Efficiency and Effectiveness*** —

**1** While goals and objectives have been established for educational programs, little effort has been devoted to establishing goals for non-instructional functions.

### **The extent to which information is used as a tool for managing the District varies significantly by program area**

The effective operations of any organization and especially school Districts requires making effective use of information to evaluate operations and to inform decision making. The extent to which information is used as a tool for managing the Miami-Dade County Public Schools varies considerably by program area. With regard to educational programs (e.g., basic education, exceptional student education, vocational/technical education, and English for Speakers of Other Language) managers monitor performance goals and modify operations based on performance results. In particular, at the school level, principals use school improvement plans to drive performance improvement efforts. With some exceptions, however, the District's approach to managing the performance of non-instructional operational areas (e.g., facilities construction, facilities maintenance, personnel, asset and risk management, financial management, purchasing, transportation, food services, and safety and security) is not "data driven."<sup>1</sup> In all but a few of these operational areas key indicators of performance that are linked to overall District goals and objectives have not been established. In addition, relatively few central office managers of operational units appear to have the management perspective needed to drive performance improvement against specified goals and objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> Facilities construction, for example, monitors the percentage of projects completed within budget, the average duration of "new construction," and the average duration of "additions and renovations." In addition, measures for evaluating performance have been established relating to the accounts payable function and investment management. It is also worth noting that the Chief of Police has implemented new systems for capturing performance data and is beginning to use this information to manage operations. Moreover, while some management information is collected in the food service areas (e.g., information on labor hours and dollars by school, summaries of food purchases by schools, and sales data) this information is unreliable and difficult to use to inform management decision-making.

## Goals and objectives have been established for key educational programs but not for operational programs

**Educational programs.** Goals and objectives have been established for each major educational program and these objectives have been linked to the overall goals articulated in the District’s strategic plan (see Exhibit 4-2).

### Exhibit 4-2

## Instruction Goals And Objectives Are Directly Linked To Strategic Plan Goals

Program	Program Goal or Objective	Strategic Plan Goal(s)
Specific School Improvement Plans	To increase student performance on FCATS in each area by defined percent over the current baseline	School To Career
K-12 Educational Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve student achievement emphasizing reading, writing skills, mathematics and science</li> </ul>	School To Career
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease the number of schools receiving “D” and “F” grades and increase the number of schools receiving “A” and “B” grades on the State’s School Accountability Report</li> </ul>	School To Career
Exceptional Student Education	Improve graduation rates of students with disabilities, including the number of students who graduate with a standard diploma	School To Career
English for Speakers of Other Languages	Increase the number of students who are bilingual and biliterate	School To Career
Adult Education	Enhance vocational/technical programs and adult education programs to meet the demands of business and industry	School To Career
Alternative Education	Strengthen counseling and academic programs for all at-risk students located at alternative schools and juvenile justice centers	Effective Learning Environment

Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

**Operational programs.** While the District has done a commendable job of establishing goals and objectives for educational programs, the same cannot be said for its efforts in establishing goals and objectives for non-instructional programs and activities. Indeed, other than investment management, accounts payable, and some aspects of facilities construction quantifiable goals and objectives have not been established in any non-instructional program area. To the extent goals and objectives have been established for non-instructional functions at all they tend to be quite general in nature and lack the specificity needed to drive improvement efforts.

## Goals and objectives identified in the District’s strategic plan could be more useful in helping managers identify and focus on the key activities central to improving the District’s performance

From a theoretical perspective a strategic plan should be designed to help an organization focus its efforts on the key initiatives and activities that are central to its success. The District’s strategic plan, however, has so many objectives and initiatives, that its use as a tool to help managers focus on the most important challenges facing the District is limited. The plan established three major goals and 23 distinct objectives. As discussed, the objectives defined for each educational programs are linked to one of the three goals established in the plan – school to career, effective learning environment, and efficient management practices. However, these goals are so broad that it is difficult to imagine any educational program initiative that could not be linked to one of these overall goals.

It is also worth noting that, for the most part, strategic plan objectives cannot be used as proxies for goals and objectives for operational functions. Indeed for some operational program areas, the strategic plan lists no relevant objectives (see Exhibit 4-3).

**Exhibit 4-3**

**Strategic Plan Goals And Objectives have Not Been Established For Some Operational Program Areas**

Program Area	Strategic Plan Objective
Facilities Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce school overcrowding (Strategic Plan Objective IIc)</li> <li>• Decrease the average duration of new construction additions, and renovations and ensure that Capital Outlay programs/projects are completed within budget (Strategic Plan Objective IIIb)</li> </ul>
Facilities Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the delivery of services such as maintenance, classroom materials, and transportation (Strategic Plan Objective IIIc)</li> </ul>
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase skills, knowledge, and professionalism of school staff (Strategic Plan Objective II d)</li> </ul>
Asset and Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the financial planning and management process to ensure that resources are allocated and expended according to District needs and priorities (Strategic Plan Objective IIIa)</li> </ul>
Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the delivery of services such as maintenance, classroom materials, and transportation (Strategic Plan Objective IIIc)</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the delivery of services such as maintenance, classroom materials, and transportation (Strategic Plan Objective IIIc)</li> </ul>
Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Safety And Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the percentage of incidents related to violence, weapons, drugs, vandalism, and truancy. (Strategic Plan Objective IIa)</li> </ul>

Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Where strategic plan objectives are in place for operational programs these objectives tend to focus on specific initiatives rather than overall goals that could be used to drive overall improvement efforts.

**Recommendations**

- *We recommend that quantifiable goals and objectives be established for each organizational unit and that these goals and objectives be linked to the overall goals and priorities articulated in the District’s strategic plan and other operational plans.*

Action Plan 4-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

**Action Plan 4-1**

<b>Establish Quantifiable Goals And Objectives For Each Organizational Unit</b>	
Strategy	Establish quantifiable goals and objectives for each organizational unit and link these goals and objectives to the strategic plan or other operational plans.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Articulate the role of each organizational unit in achieving overall District goals and objectives.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish performance measures that can be used to assess the extent to which each organizational unit is achieving its goals.</p> <p>Step 3: Assess the strengths and shortcomings of each organizational unit is achieving its goals.</p> <p>Step 4: Set priorities based on a systematic assessment of where improvement is needed most.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability
Time Frame	April 2002 to February 2003
Fiscal Impact	No immediate impact.

**2 While the District has established performance measures for educational programs, such measures have not been established for non-instructional programs and for neither educational nor operational programs are cost-efficiency measures used.**

**Performance standards have been established for educational programs but not for operational programs**

**Educational programs.** Program goals, by themselves, are of little value unless performance against these goals can be objectively evaluated. As Exhibit 4-4 shows, the District has done a credible job of ensuring that for each educational program goal or objective a quantifiable measure has been established.

**Exhibit 4-4**

**A Quantifiable Measure Has Been Established For Each Educational Program Goal Or Objective**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Program Goal or Objective</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
Specific School Improvement Plans	To increase student performance on the FCAT in each area by defined percent over current baseline	FCAT scores
K-12 Educational Service Delivery	To improve student achievement emphasizing reading, writing skills, mathematics and science	FCAT scores SAT I Scores Number of students enrolled and the percent completing Level III courses in Math and Science
	Decrease the number of schools receiving “D” and “F” grades and increase the number of schools receiving “A” and “B” grades on the State’s School Accountability Report	Number and percent of schools receiving each grade on the state’s School Accountability Report Comparison of current year grades to those received in

Program	Program Goal or Objective	Performance Measure
		previous years
Exceptional Student Education	Improve graduation rates of students with disabilities, including the number of students who graduate with a standard diploma	Graduation rate Percent of ESE students obtaining standard vs. special diploma
	Improve timeliness of initial evaluations	Timelines report
English for Speakers of Other Languages	Increase the number of students and adults who are bilingual and biliterate	Percent of LEP students scoring at or above Level 2 on the FCAT Reading and Writing Number of schools participating in Extended Foreign Language Programs
Adult Education	Enhance vocational/technical programs and adult education programs to meet the demands of business and industry	Survey of critical equipment, curriculum and facility needs as to whether or not meeting industry standards  Percent of applied technology students employed  Number and percent of applied technology students who complete job preparation vocational programs
Alternative Education	Strengthen counseling and academic programs for all at-risk students located at alternative schools and juvenile justice centers	Number of plans addressing transition issues submitted by schools to the Division of Student Services  Number of "school-within-school" academies at middle and senior high schools

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

The fact that performance measures have been established for District educational programs is confirmed by the results of the employee survey. More than three-fourths (76.7 percent) of certificated administrators "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "I am familiar with performance measures and benchmarks the District has established to evaluate its major educational and operational programs."<sup>2</sup> In addition, almost two-thirds (63.4 percent) of certificated non-administrators "agree" or "strongly agree" with this statement.

**Operational programs.** Quantifiable performance standards that can be used to drive improved performance have not been established for most District operational programs. The District has established performance expectations for individual programs in a small number of areas. For example, the accounts payable function has established a number of specific performance indicators as has the investment management function. In addition, the percentage of projects completed within budget, the average duration of "new construction," and the "average duration of "additions and renovations" are used to assess the performance of the facilities construction function. Moreover, some performance indicators have been established to monitor warehouse operations and safety and security operations are beginning to benefit from an analysis of performance information. Furthermore, while some information is collected to support food service operations (e.g., information on labor costs and hours, information

<sup>2</sup> Only certificated staff would likely be familiar with educational programs.

on food purchases by school) this information is not consistently reliable and is difficult to use to inform management decision making.

The fact that performance measures have not been established for many District operational programs is also confirmed by the results of the employee survey. Fewer than two out of five (38.4 percent) of non-certificated administrators “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I am familiar with performance measures and benchmarks the District has established to evaluate its major educational and operational programs.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, only about one third of non-certificated non-administrators (35.4 percent) “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement.

### **Some of the performance standards incorporated in the strategic plan focus on process and do not set sufficiently specific expectations for performance**

While the District’s strategic plan includes some quantifiable performance goals the expectations for performance tend to lack specificity. (For example, the strategic plan sets the expectation that there “will be an increase in the percentage of students at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade scoring at Level 2 or above on the FCAT reading test” without setting expectations for how many schools should improve their performance and by how much performance should improve.) In addition, even within the strategic plan linkages between individual action steps (detailed in the plan) and overall performance expectations are not well defined. The strategic plan seems to assume that completing each action step will result in improved performance without providing a mechanism for evaluating these assumptions. (A more detailed analysis of the strengths and shortcomings of the District’s strategic plan is presented in Section 9 of the Management Structures Chapter (page 3-30 to 3-33).

### **Existing performance standards do not reflect the need to control costs**

While the District does collect information on program cost and clearly collects a great deal of information on program performance, little if any attention appears to be focused on linking this information and evaluating the cost-effectiveness of program operations.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the fact that little attention is focused on controlling the costs associated with educational service delivery is reflected in the program objectives that have been established for educational service delivery programs (presented earlier in this section). Not one performance objective is related to cost.

Moreover, while one of the three goals articulated in the strategic plan is to establish “efficient management practices” virtually none of the criteria that are used to evaluate success on this goal consider costs. Indeed, only 8 of the 121 action steps included in the plan (6.6 percent) have the potential to reduce costs. Moreover, surprisingly only 8 of the 32 action steps included under the goal “efficiency management practices” (25.0 percent) will result in reduced costs when implemented.

### **The District uses benchmarks to evaluate its educational programs but does not use benchmarks to evaluate non-instructional programs**

The District has done some benchmarking over the past three years to compare itself to other Districts. Benchmark studies have been performed in the following areas:

- Principal (and Assistant Principal) to pupil ratios
- Principal (and Assistant Principal) to teacher ratios
- Classroom teacher to pupil ratios

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<sup>3</sup> A “non-certificated administrator” is one who is not required to have educational certification to hold their job. Essentially, these are administrators who are not educators.

<sup>4</sup> For example, reading and math allocations by schools are calculated by schools and reported with FCAT scores (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test Enhancement Program; Distribution to Schools Based on Services Generated By The Number of Student Scoring At FCAT Level 1 In Reading And/Or Mathematics).

- Salaries for school-based administrators and teachers
- Expenditures per student
- Standardized test (FCAT) results
- Student performance on SAT/ACT/AP tests

In addition, reports have been prepared analyzing the approaches other Districts use to establish ethical standards (*Policies and Procedures Regarding Ethical Standards in Districts Other than Miami-Dade County* [July 2000]), comparing Miami-Dade County to other Florida counties on various indicators of child well-being, and comparing the proportion of administrative staff across 11 different industries (including education). In addition to these specific studies, the District has developed and implemented systems for comparing student academic assessments to the state accountability standards and to student academic assessments in peer districts. (The District identifies as its peers for benchmarking Broward County, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; Los Angeles, California; and Clark County, Nevada.)

Little benchmarking has been performed to assess the performance of non-instructional programs, however.

## Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District establish quantifiable performance indicators for each organizational unit and that these indicators be linked to the goals and objectives for the unit (which in turn should be linked to the goals and priorities identified in the District’s strategic plan and other operational plans)*
  - *Action Plan 4-1 (in the preceding section) presents the steps needed to implement this recommendation.*
- *We recommend that management information systems be modified so that information on performance indicators can be tracked on an ongoing basis.*

Action Plan 4-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

### Action Plan 4-2

#### **Modify Management Information Systems To Facilitate The Tracking Of Information On Performance Indicators**

Strategy	Modify management information systems so that information on performance indicators can be tracked on an ongoing basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify performance indicators developed in Action Plan 4-1.</p> <p>Step 2: Determine the information needed to track performance against those indicators.</p> <p>Step 3: Work with the Office of Information Technology to modify systems to track performance using these indicators.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop procedures for recording information on performance indicators.</p> <p>Step 5: Implement system and procedures.</p>
Who is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent – Management And Accountability
Time Frame	April 2002 to February 2003
Fiscal Impact	No immediate impact.

- *We recommend that benchmark comparisons be performed for non-instructional programs on an ongoing basis to help calibrate the level of performance that should be provided by each organizational unit.*

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

**Action Plan 4-3**

<b>Perform Benchmark Comparisons For Non-Instructional Programs</b>	
Strategy	Perform benchmark comparisons for non-instructional programs on an ongoing basis to help calibrate the level of performance that should be provided by each organizational unit.
Action Needed	Step 1: Identify high performing organizations in each non-instructional area. Step 2: Identify data needed for comparison. Step 3: Develop data collection templates. Step 4: Contact other organizations to gather data. Step 5: Summarize data and assess implications. Step 6: Identify “lessons” learned from benchmark organizations. Step 7: Develop plans to implement lessons. Step 8: Implement improvement plans. Step 9: Repeat this process every two to three years.
Who is Responsible	Unit heads for each operational unit
Time Frame	June 2002 to September 2002
Fiscal Impact	No immediate impact.

**3 The District assesses the performance of educational programs but does not consistently evaluate the performance of operational programs.**

**Performance data is used to evaluate educational programs but not operational programs**

**Education programs.** The District does an effective job of tracking performance of educational programs against goals. As Exhibit 4-5 shows, performance against most goals is tracked on an annual basis and in some cases a more frequent assessment of performance is performed. In only a small number of cases are no mechanisms currently in place to track performance against goals.

**Exhibit 4-5**

**For Educational Programs, Performance Against Goals Is Tracked At Regular Intervals**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Program Goal or Objective</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Specific School Improvement Plans	To increase student performance on the FCAT in each area by defined percentage over current baseline	FCAT scores	Annual
K-12 Educational Service Delivery	To improve student achievement emphasizing reading, writing skills, mathematics and science	FCAT Scores SAT I Scores Number of students enrolled and the percent	Annual 3 times per year Each semester

Program	Program Goal or Objective	Performance Measure	Frequency
	Decrease the number of schools receiving “D” and “F” grades and increase the number of schools receiving “A” and “B” grades on the State’s School Accountability Report	completing Level III courses in Math and Science Number and percent of schools receiving each grade on the state’s School Accountability Report Comparison of current year grades to those received in previous years	Annual Annual
Exceptional Student Education	Improve graduation rates of students with disabilities, including the number of students who graduate with a standard diploma  Improve timeliness of initial evaluations	Graduation rate Percent of ESE students obtaining standard vs. special diploma Timelines Report	Annual Annual Monthly
English for Speakers of Other Languages	Increase the number of students and adults who are bilingual and biliterate	Percent of LEP students scoring at or above Level 2 on the FCAT Reading and Writing test  Number of schools participating in Extended Foreign Language Programs	Annual Annual
Alternative Education	Strengthen counseling and academic programs for all at-risk students located at alternative schools and juvenile justice centers	Number of plans addressing transition issues submitted by schools to the Division of Student Services  Number of “school-within-school” academies at the middle and senior high schools	Annual Annual

Source: Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Not only are performance results evaluated for educational programs, but also staff within each major program area can demonstrate that information on program performance is used to assess program and develop strategies for improvement. A discussion of steps that are currently taken to use information to strengthen program performance in each major educational service delivery area follows:

- Exceptional Student Education.** Many steps are taken to strengthen ESE programs at the school regional and District levels due to the many regulations and agencies that influence the delivery of these services and the ever-changing expectations of service delivery in this program area. At the school level, SACs address ESE programs through the School Improvement Planning process. At the District and region level many structures are in place to monitor compliance with federal and state regulations regarding evaluation, Individual Education

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Plan (IEP) completion, least restrictive environment, participation in standard and alternative assessments. Some of specific steps taken to strengthen program performance at the region and District levels include:

- Providing training to principals and assistant principals related to their responsibilities in insuring “least restrictive environments” are provided for ESE students within their school
- Designing a “boot camp” program to provide pre-service training to new non-certified teaching staff
- Working to convert “Child Study Teams” to “School Study Teams” to reduce inappropriate referrals to ESE as well as increase timeliness of initial evaluations
- Providing training to ESE and general education staff related to state and federal criteria for student participation in standard vs. alternative assessment
- **Vocational Education.** The steps taken to strengthen vocational education programming occur primarily at the school level as part of the School Improvement Planning process. However at the District level, leadership in setting direction for vocation initiatives and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness and marketability of vocational training program occurs in cooperation with Miami-Dade business partners. A comprehensive system of determining community employment needs through the One Community-One Goal program has developed to ensure the District is preparing students to meet the vocational demands and needs of their community. A structured evaluation process for vocational programs has been also developed which includes stakeholders with expertise in their given vocational/career areas. Based on feedback provided through this process, the District has been working to shift the focus of many of its senior high school academies and vocation training programs.
- **English For Speakers of Other Languages.** The steps taken to strengthen ESOL performance occur at both the school and District level. At the school level, ESOL program performance is addressed as part of the School Improvement Planning process. At the District level, an annual report and self-assessment (as required by both Florida law and the LULAC Consent Decree) on the District-wide performance of ESOL programs is completed each year. This report addresses the five major objective of the ESOL program:
  - The acquisition of English language skills
  - The completion of curriculum requirements
  - A review of indices of academic progress
  - Test performance results
  - The identification and exiting of LEP students

The data contrasts students’ performance across two school years and compares student performance to non-LEP students. The self-assessment data is used to set new baselines and determine where programmatic adjustments must be made for the next school year.

- **Individual Schools.** The School Improvement Plan defines specific objectives with clear criterion upon which to measure performance. SACs are responsible for determining performance on these objectives throughout the year and where appropriate redesigning intervention strategies where objectives are not being reached (or setting higher targets where objectives are reached early in the school year). As each subsequent School Improvement Plan is developed, the SAC first measures their progress on the previous year’s objectives before setting new targets.

The fact that performance measures for educational programs are in place and these performance measures are effectively communicated is supported by the results of the employee survey (see Exhibit 4-6). More than half the survey respondents (53.8%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that “the District does an effective job of using performance measures and benchmarks to assess how well educational and operational programs are meeting their goals and objectives” and slightly more than half (51.2%) “agree” or “strongly agree” the District regularly performs assessment of operational practices in the areas with which the respondent is most familiar. However, for each of these issues the survey results also suggest that significant improvement is possible.

**Exhibit 4-6**

**Employee Survey Results Confirm That Performance Measures For Educational Programs Are In Place**

Survey Item	Percent Who “Strongly Disagree”	Percent Who “Disagree”	Percent Who Are “Neutral”	Percent Who “Agree”	Percent Who “Strongly Agree”
The District does an effective job of using performance measures and benchmarks to assess how well educational and operational programs are meeting their goals and objectives.	8.0	14.1	24.1	36.0	17.8
The District regularly performs assessments of operational practices in the areas with which I am most familiar.	.1	5.1	26.6	34.4	16.8

Source: Berkshire Advisors Employee Survey.

While most respondents indicated that performance measures for instructional programs had been effectively communicated, they were less positive that performance measures for non-instructional programs had been effectively communicated. Consequently, improvement is needed in ensuring operational reviews are disseminated and on using the results of the reviews to improve performance. In each of these areas, the number of survey respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” with the associated survey items is less than 50 percent and a relatively high percentages of survey respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the related survey item (see Exhibit 4-7).

**Exhibit 4-7**

**Improvement Is Needed On Ensuring Operational Reviews Are Disseminated And Used**

Survey Item	Percent Who “Strongly Disagree”	Percent Who “Disagree”	Percent Who Are “Neutral”	Percent Who “Agree”	Percent Who “Strongly Agree”
I have review the results of these assessments..	13.1	20.6	22.0	28.1	16.2
The results of operational assessments are used to improve performance and cost-efficiency.	11.8	15.3	28.5	29.2	15.2

Source: Berkshire Advisors Employee Survey.

**Operational programs.** As discussed, performance measures have not been established for operational programs and consequently performance results cannot be used to drive improvements in efficiency and/or effectiveness for most non-instructional areas. The fact that performance measures for non-instructional programs are not in place,

effectively communicated, and used to improve performance is supported by the results of the employee survey (see Exhibit 4-8). For each of the survey items relating to these issues the percentage of non-certificated respondents who “strongly agree” or “agree” is relatively low (less than 40 percent) while the percentage of non-certificated respondents who “disagree” or “strongly disagree” is high (more than 30 percent and in some cases as high as 49.9 percent).

**Exhibit 4-8**

**Performance Measures For Non-Instructional Programs Are Not In Place**

Survey Item	Percent Who “Strongly Disagree”	Percent Who “Disagree”	Percent Who Are “Neutral”	Percent Who “Agree”	Percent Who “Strongly Agree”
The District does an effective job of using performance measures and benchmarks to assess how well educational and operational programs are meeting their goals and objectives.	12.6	16.3	33.5	28.0	9.6
The District regularly performs assessments of operational practices in the areas with which I am most familiar.	12.8	19.7	32.2	27.0	8.3
I have reviewed the results of these assessments.	22.5	27.4	23.2	21.0	6.0
The results of operational assessments are used to improve performance and cost-efficiency.	14.7	17.3	33.9	27.1	7.0

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

**The District does not systematically evaluate alternative service delivery methods and privatization for all educational and operational programs**

The District, from time to time, has considered alternative service delivery methods and privatization. Examples of alternative service delivery approaches include the following:

- **Exceptional student education.** Frameworks have been developed for analyzing which ESE related supports and services are best provided by District staff and which are best performed by contractors in collaboration with community agencies. This decision process considers both clinical and educational practices and incorporates an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of various alternatives. ESE also performs routine assessments of both student support needs and program support need to determine which services are most efficiently and cost-effectively provided by District staff or in collaboration with community agencies.
- **Alternative education.** A large portion of alternative education services are provided to District students through a combination of District school programs and provide providers. Contracts have been established with private community agencies or in collaboration with community, county, and state agencies. A range of models

have been developed to serve the varying needs of high-risk students and these models are routinely assessed to ensure services are provided in the most clinically and educationally sound, as well as the most cost effective, manner. A new evaluation process has also been developed to monitor schools and services that are provided through contractors or through collaborative agreements to ensure they are both efficient and effective.

- **Edison project.** The District contracted with the Edison Project to operate one school. The success of this effort was evaluated and a determination was made not to expand this initiative.
- Although the District should be commended for its approach to evaluating alternative service delivery in each of these cases, the fact remains that the District’s approach to evaluating alternative service delivery is spotty. The determination of the functions and services for which alternative service delivery methods should be considered tends to lack rigor and to be made on a case-by-case basis. (Indeed, the extent to which alternative service delivery approaches are reviewed tends to be determined by the predilections of individual managers.) No framework has been established to guide such decisions on a District-wide basis. Moreover, once a decision to implement an alternative service delivery method has been made, that decision is not re-evaluated at regular intervals. (It would not be uncommon for circumstances to change over time to the point where a decision to employ an alternative service delivery approach that at one point in time was sound is no longer efficient or effective.)

## Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District develop an overall framework to guide its approach to evaluating the performance and cost-effectiveness of major educational and operational programs.*
- *We recommend that each organizational unit use this framework to develop guidelines for evaluating the performance and cost-effectiveness of their operations.*
- *We recommend that a schedule be established that specifies when the performance and cost-effectiveness of individual organizational unit should be formally evaluated.*

Action Plan 4-4 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

### Action Plan 4-4

<b>Develop And Implement A Framework For Evaluating Performance And Cost Effectiveness</b>	
Strategy	Develop and implement an overall framework to guide the District’s overall approach to evaluating the performance and cost-effectiveness of major educational and operational programs.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify the types of factors that should be considered when evaluating the performance do of a major educational and/or operational program.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify the types of factors that should be considered when determining whether a program is cost-effective.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify the factors that should be considered when making tradeoffs between program costs and program effectiveness.</p> <p>Step 4: Use the factors developed in Steps 1, 2 and 3 to develop a framework and guidelines that all managers can use when evaluating program performance and effectiveness.</p> <p>Step 5: Charge the leadership of each organizational unit to use this framework to develop guidelines for evaluating the performance and cost effectiveness of their operations.</p> <p>Step 6: Develop a schedule for completing programs evaluations for each organizational unit.</p>

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	Step 7: Evaluate the performance and cost-effectiveness of each major educational and operational program.
	Step 8: Develop improvement initiatives based on this evaluation.
	Step 9: Develop plans to implement needed improvements.
	Step 10: Implement plans
	Step 11: Re-evaluate program performance and cost-effectiveness every two to three years.
Who is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent – Management And Accountability
Time Frame	April 2002 to February 2003
Fiscal Impact	No immediate fiscal impact.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District Develop an overall framework to guide decisions with regard to what services should be provided in-house and what services should be provided by outside contractors or by using some other alternative service delivery approach.*
- *We recommend that each organizational unit use this framework to develop guidelines for assessing what services should be provided in-house and what services should be provided by outside contractors or by some other alternative service delivery approach.*
- *We recommend that a schedule be established that specifies when alternative service delivery approaches should be evaluated.*

Action Plan 4-5 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

### Action Plan 4-5

<b>Develop And Implement A Framework For Evaluating Alternative Service Delivery</b>	
Strategy	Develop an overall framework to guide decisions with regard to what services should be provided in-house and what services should be provided by outside contractors or by using some alternative service delivery approach.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Identify types of alternative service delivery approaches (including outsourcing).</p> <p>Step 2: Systematically identify the potential benefits associated with each services delivery alternative.</p> <p>Step 3: Systematically identify the potential costs and risks associated with each service delivery alternatives.</p> <p>Step 4: Develop approaches for weighting costs and risks against benefits.</p> <p>Step 5: Summarize the results of Steps 1 through 4 in an evaluation framework.</p> <p>Step 6: Charge the leaders of each unit to use this framework to make a preliminary assessment of functions and services that are good candidates for outsourcing (or another alternative service delivery approach).</p> <p>Step 7: Develop a schedule for completing a more detailed analysis of the costs, risks, and benefits associated with each candidate function or service.</p> <p>Step 8: Determine for which specific functions and services outsourcing or some other alternative delivery approach should be pursued.</p> <p>Step 9: Develop plans to implement these alternative service delivery approaches.</p> <p>Step 10: Implement the plans.</p> <p>Step 11: Re-evaluate programs and services using the evaluation framework every two to three years.</p>
Who is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability

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Time Frame	April 2002 to February 2003
Fiscal Impact	No immediate fiscal impact.

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Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

## **4 The District evaluates the performance of its major educational programs and uses these results to improve program performance; however, little effort is devoted to evaluating operational programs and in neither the educational nor operational program areas is adequate attention focused on controlling costs.**

### **The District performs a number of high quality program evaluations**

Various District departments and units perform evaluations of District educational programs. Some departments coordinate the evaluation of their own programs. For example, the Vocational and Technical Education programs are routinely evaluated by independent Advisory Committees comprised of community members from appropriate local businesses. The programs are evaluated for appropriateness and/or availability of tools, administrative support, curriculum instructional support and program performance. In addition, ESE staff have performed a number of on site program support reviews including reviews of best practices for Children's Mental Health/SED Hospital to School and on-site ESE program reviews. The Elementary, Secondary and Workforce Development Education unit has also performed an analysis of Algebra 1, Algebra 1A, and Algebra 1B classes in seven senior high school and an analysis of Middle School Mathematics in 13 Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

When requested, the Office of Evaluation and Research also performs program evaluations on behalf of District departments. Over the past 12 months from December 2000 to December 2001 office completed 18 reviews (some of which are interim reports or are repeated for more than one year), including the following:

- Evaluation of K-8 Centers Program
- Preliminary Evaluation Reports: Success for All, Safety Net, and the Edison Project
- Report Summary on Student Enrollment Projected by the Metro- Dade Planning Department
- Evaluation of the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic Learning Through Listening Program
- Evaluation of the 1999-2000 HIV/AIDS Education Program
- Evaluation Of The Success For All Program (1999-2000)
- Evaluation of the Edison Project School – Final Report (1999-2000 School Year)
- Review of Charter Schools (1999-2000)
- Evaluation of the Comprehensive Reading Plan – Second Interim Report (1999-2000 School Year)
- Evaluation of the Disciplinary Schools Program
- Evaluation of Project PROUD (1999-2000 School Year)
- Tile I Evaluation Summary Report (1999-2000)
- A Partial Census of Haitian-Americans and Haitian Creole Speakers Employed By the Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- Evaluation of the I.D. Badge Program
- Evaluation of the Cognitive Tutor Algebra I Program
- School Improvement Plans – Schools Not Making Adequate Progress (2000-2001)
- Evaluation of HIV/AIDS Educational Program
- Evaluation of the Education Now and Babies Later (ENABL) Program.

The evaluations completed by the Office of Evaluation and Research are of high quality. The evaluations examine whether the program being reviewed is meeting its intended objectives, evaluations are understandable, are summarized in a written report, and include a plan of action for how the evaluations can be used to improve performance. In addition, the reports are shared with program staff and board members. In two areas, however, the quality and focus of the evaluations could be improved. First, plans of action included in the reports would benefit from being more specific and action oriented.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the overall evaluations would benefit from focusing more attention on identifying ways to improve program cost-effectiveness. For example, in the process of evaluating a program an opportunity to improve its cost-effectiveness might be identified. Even if this is not the primary focus of the evaluation the opportunity to enhance cost-effectiveness should be shared as part of the evaluation report and associated implementation plans. In addition, specific evaluations might be performed that compared the costs of various programs that have similar objectives and achieve similar results.

### **A systematic process has not been established to ensure that the recommendations of program evaluations are implemented**

While anecdotal evidence from interviews suggests that the program evaluations performed by the Office of Evaluation and Research and by individual units are well regarded and are generally used to improve performance, no systematic follow-up of how the results of program evaluations are used to improve performance or the extent to which the plans of action presented at the end of evaluations are implemented. Certainly, the results of the evaluations are used to inform the types of improvement initiatives discussed in section 3 of this chapter, however no analysis has been conducted to assess how the recommendations of specific evaluations have been implemented. However, the Office of Evaluation and Research does not currently have the resources needed to systematically conduct follow-up evaluations of programs to assess implementation progress.

### **The program evaluations which are performed do not consistently reflect the most important issues facing the District**

The 18 program evaluations completed by the Office of Research and Evaluation over the past 12 months have not consistently focused on the programs that have the most impact on the District. (While undertaking an evaluation of Project PROUD, the I.D. Badge Program, the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic Learning Through Listening Program is certainly worthwhile, these programs have only a limited impact on the District's overall performance.) Instead, program evaluations (at least the program evaluations performed by the Research and Evaluation unit) tend to be done only when required by the provisions of a grant or when an individual program manager requests that an evaluation be undertaken. It is worth noting that virtually no program evaluations have been performed of operational programs (such as Facilities Construction, Facilities Maintenance, Personnel, Asset and Risk Management, Purchasing, Transportation and Food Services) although a review of some operations was included as part of the review performed by Arthur Andersen in 1999. In addition a complete review of garage operations and Transportation Department operations is currently being conducted by the Office of Management and Compliance Audits.<sup>6</sup> Because program evaluations are not consistently performed and do not focus on areas that have the greatest impact on the cost and quality of District operations, opportunities to revise and improve District programs and services in a systematic way are lost.

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<sup>5</sup> These plans of action are prepared by the program being evaluated.

<sup>6</sup> The Office of Management and Compliance Audits has also done more limited reviews focusing on the specific procedures including a review of construction contract administration, the automation of the bid process, and payroll procedures. For more information about the District's Office of Management and Compliance Audits, see Chapter 14, Cost Controls, pages 14-16 through 14-21.

## Recommendations

- We recommend that the District develop criteria for determining when formal program evaluations and assessments of performance (including costs) should be conducted.
- We recommend that the District use these criteria to develop procedures for undertaking these program evaluations and assessments.
- We recommend that resources for conducting follow-up assessments to determine whether action plan steps have been implemented should be included in the initial evaluation design.

Action Plan 4-6 provides the steps needed to implement these recommendations.

### Action Plan 4-6

#### Develop And Implement A System For Determining When Formal Program Evaluations Should Be Conducted

Strategy	Develop criteria for determining when formal program evaluations and assessment of performance (including costs) should be conducted and use these criteria to set priorities for program evaluation.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop criteria for determining when formal program evaluations and assessments of performance should be conducted.</p> <p>Step 2: Use these criteria to develop a schedule for completing evaluations of major programs.</p> <p>Step 3: Develop criteria to determine when evaluations should be done by the Research and Evaluation and when they should be performed by department staff.</p> <p>Step 4: Assess the resources required to perform needed performance evaluations (both by departments and by Research and Evaluation).</p> <p>Step 5: Assess the resources required to conduct follow-up evaluations to determine whether evaluations findings have been used to improve performance.</p> <p>Step 6: Adjust priorities to reflect the resources available to perform evaluations.</p> <p>Step 7: Use the resulting schedule to perform evaluations.</p>
Who is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability
Time Frame	April 2002 to September 2002
Fiscal Impact	No immediate impact.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

## 5 The District reports on the performance of its major educational programs to ensure accountability to parents and other taxpayers.

### Available information on performance is widely disseminated

The District makes information on its performance and cost-efficiency available through a number of communications vehicles. Reports on the performance of the District’s major educational programs (including evaluation reports) are routinely distributed to the public by the District’s Offices of Public Relations and Evaluation and Research. The District is required to complete many of these reports to comply with regulatory or grant requirements.) In particular, Statistical Abstract reports which contain summaries of evaluation reports and provides a wealth of information on the District. Likewise, District and school profiles are published providing test score,

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attendance, and demographic information on each school as well as findings from the school climate survey. An accountability report is also published that summarizes the District’s progress in meeting the objectives detailed in its strategic plan. The Statistical Abstract and the School Profiles are distributed to 34 public libraries, seven colleges and universities, and eight other organizations (e.g., City of North Miami Community Planning and Development, the Dade County Health Department, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, the Dade County Fair). The Accountability Report is distributed to all schools and senior administrators and is also available to the public, Board and at other committee meetings.

In addition, the District makes effective use of the Internet to provide information on performance. In particular, program evaluation reports and the Title I survey report are available on the District’s website. The website also includes links to other websites (most notably the Florida Department of Education website) that can be used to access information on the District and its performance.

It should be noted, however, that the District can only provide information on programs it has evaluated. Moreover, because, as previously noted, the District does not systematically evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its programs cost-effectiveness cannot be shared. (However, prior drafts of this report – which deals with a variety of cost-effectiveness issues – has been put on the District’s website.) Likewise, evaluations of the performance of operational functions are generally not performed and therefore cannot be disseminated to the public.<sup>7</sup> (Again, prior drafts of this report which evaluated operational functions were put on the District’s website.)

**The District conducts an annual climate survey to receive feedback from parents and other taxpayers**

Every year the District conducts a School Climate Survey to “grade” each school on a number of dimensions including safety, the quality of education provided, and the overall school climate. Staff, parents, and students of elementary middle, and senior high schools respond to this survey and the responses are analyzed and report to the Board, the Superintendent, senior District staff, region office staff, and individual schools. As noted, results from these climate surveys are included in the published school profiles.

- *We recommend that as information on the performance of non-instructional operations is developed that this information be widely disseminated.*

Action Plan 4-7 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

***Action Plan 4-7***

<b>Disseminate information on non-instructional performance.</b>	
Strategy	Disseminate information on non-instructional performance as this information is developed.
Action Needed	Step 1: Using the approaches currently used to disseminate information on non-instructional performance as a starting point identify stakeholders with which information on non-instructional performance should be shared  Step 2: Develop cost-effective approaches to sharing information on non-instructional performance with these stakeholders.  Step 3: Develop plans to share information on non-instructional performance.  Step 4: Implement these plans as information on non-instructional performance is developed.
Who is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent – Management and Accountability
Time Frame	October 2002 to October 2003
Fiscal Impact	No immediate impact.

<sup>7</sup> As noted the Office of Management and Compliance Audits is currently undertaking a review of garage and transportation operations.