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Personnel Systems and Benefits

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools Personnel System and Benefits function has strong leadership and in recent years has improved many personnel practices. Additional improvement is possible, however in the areas of recruitment, workforce stability, customer service, use of data in planning and evaluation, communications, substitute hiring and deployment, managing employee misconduct investigations, records management and use of technology.

Conclusion

The Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS or the District) Personnel System and Benefits has several practices in place that contribute to improved efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. The District uses technology to assist in recruitment, staffing and professional development. Its professional development program for instructional and non-instructional staff is comprehensive and provides continued professional growth. The leadership development program for school administrators includes an assessment of potential leadership capabilities and a competency based curriculum. Instructional staff is evaluated using the Procedures for Observation, Assessment and Evaluation of Instructional Personnel (PACES). PACES supports improved instruction through the use of a professional support team, colleague teachers and mentors. MDCPS supports teachers in obtaining National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification. The District ranks number one in the state and fourth in the country for National Board Certified teachers. The Office of Professional Standards supports the District in managing poorly performing employees and employee discipline matters. The District has used effective cost containment practices in managing the workers' compensation program. The District's claims experience in managing workers' compensation has improved, reducing workers' compensation costs from an average cost per claim of \$1,600 in 1998 to an average cost per claim of \$1,400 in 2001.

While there is improved effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery in the personnel and benefits function, some improvements are warranted. Existing recruitment practices are unlikely to be adequate to meet the District's needs as competition for staff increases. A more systematic and targeted approach to recruitment and retention of qualified staff is needed to ensure that vacancies are filled in hard to fill locations and critical shortage areas. The District needs to establish performance measures and targets to measure recruiting progress and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment program. A more systematic approach to evaluate positions to support effective salary administration is needed. Improved communication with job applicants would strengthen the hiring process.

The District has not developed a systematic approach to assess factors that contribute to workforce instability and has not taken proactive steps to address these factors. A performance/skills based compensation system to recognize and reward high levels of performance would support improved workforce stability. The District needs to discontinue use of early retirement incentives that are costly and negatively impact workforce stability.

Although the District's overall approach to staff development is sound, the program would benefit from a more systematic approach in the development and evaluation of program offerings for non-instructional staff to ensure that these offerings adequately reflect the district's overall needs. Use of disaggregated data on student performance to ensure that staff development program offerings for instructional staff focus on priority needs would strengthen the District's staff development program. The DATA Center should be discontinued due to its limited district-wide impact and the high cost of the program.

The District's staff development program for school-based administrators is sound, yet procedures for soliciting and receiving feedback on administrator performance by stakeholders should be strengthened.

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The linkage between performance and compensation for outstanding performance needs to be strengthened to provide needed financial incentives for improving student performance.

The process for investigating employee misconduct needs to be strengthened by establishing standards and performance measures for investigators to improve timeliness and quality of investigative reports. The District would benefit from the development and implementation of a strategic plan for communication to provide a systematic process to solicit and receive feedback and input.

The hiring and deployment of substitute teachers is neither efficient nor effective. The District needs to develop and implement a strategic plan to improve recruitment and compensation for substitute teachers. The District would benefit from the use of an automated substitute management system to improve the deployment of substitutes.

The District's Records Management System lacks an adequate and effective records management process and records retention schedule. The district needs to aggressively develop, implement and support a quality on-going records management program in compliance with state and federal records retention requirements to include improved use of technology.

The District needs to develop clear policies and procedures for early return to work to strengthen its workers' compensation cost containment efforts.

The Department of Personnel Management and Services needs to develop and implement a strategic plan that includes specific performance standards and measures to assess program performance, efficiency, and effectiveness. A review of the organizational structure and staffing levels of personnel management services using clearly defined criteria should be conducted each year to assess organizational effectiveness. A systematic process to solicit feedback from clients/customers should be established to guide improvements in service delivery and personnel practices.

The District needs to comply with the requirement that direct deposit be mandatory for all school district employees.

Finally, ensuring that an attorney supports the contract negotiation process, clarification of the role of the Chief negotiator, and using interest-based negotiations and decision-making to improve communication can strengthen the District's collective bargaining process.

During the course of this review, Berkshire Advisors identified a number of district accomplishments relating to personnel systems and benefits, some of which are included in Exhibit 7-1 below.

Exhibit 7-1

The District Has Had a Number of Notable Accomplishments in Personnel Systems and Benefits in the Last Three years

- An Automated Applicant Tracking System (ATS) has been established to support recruitment and staffing and online access to applications
 - Online course registration and online course offerings are available for professional development
 - Distance Learning Opportunities and the beginning stages of a Virtual Campus have been developed to enhance professional programs
 - Document imaging is used to support records management
 - A new and effective system to evaluate and support instructional staff (PACES) has been developed and implemented
 - Comprehensive leadership development training for school administrators has been established
 - The process for National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Certification is being supported
 - The Office of Professional Stands provides support to schools in strengthening performance management
 - Cost-containment efforts have reduced workers' compensation costs by \$200 per claim over the past 4 years
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Source: Miami Dade Public Schools.

Overview of Chapter Findings

Berkshire Advisors, Inc. reviewed the District's Personnel Systems and Benefits function using the Best Financial Management Practices developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) and adopted by the Commissioner of Education. The consulting team employed several methodologies to develop chapter conclusions and action plans. For example, Berkshire Advisors consultants conducted extensive on-site interviews with district level managers, region directors, school site administrators, and union leaders and visited school sites where meetings were held with teachers, administrators, other school-based staff and parents. In addition, an extensive document review was performed. This review included a review of school board policies, applicable state statutes, rules and regulations, procedure manuals, published school district reports and other data provided by the District. To receive additional input, Berkshire Advisors conducted a survey of a representative sample of all District employees. In addition, where appropriate, benchmark comparisons of peer districts have been made.

An overview of chapter findings is presented below.

Recruitment, Hiring, Training and Retention of Qualified Staff

1. Although the District's overall recruitment program is generally sound, the program would benefit if it took a more systematic approach to the recruitment and retention of qualified staff and to ensure vacancies were filled in a timely manner. (Page 7-15)
2. Although the District has implemented a number of sound practices to promote workforce stability, it has not developed a systematic approach to assess factors that contribute to workforce instability and has not taken proactive steps to address them. (Page 7-26)
3. Although the District's overall staff development program for non-instructional staff is sound, the program would benefit from a more systematic approach to developing and evaluating program offerings. (Page 7-32)
4. Although the District's overall staff program for instructional staff is sound some modest steps can be taken to strengthen the program. (Page 7-34)
5. The District's staff development program for school-based administrators is sound, yet procedures for soliciting and receiving feedback on administrative performance by stakeholders should be strengthened. (Page 7-38)

6. An effective system for evaluating the performance of employees has been established by the District. (Page 7-40)
7. The District has established effective approaches to working with poorly performing employees. (Page 7-42)

Efficient and Effective Human Resource Management

8. Current communications approaches are not completely effective in part because a systematic process to solicit and receive feedback and input from employees is lacking. (Page 7-44)
9. While the District provides and requires training for substitute personnel, the hiring and deployment of substitutes is neither efficient nor effective. (Page 7-46)
10. The District’s records management system lacks an adequate and efficient records retention schedule. (Page 7-49)
11. While the District’s use of cost-containment practices for its workers’ compensation program is commendable, policies and procedures for early return to work should be strengthened. (Page 7-51)
12. While many human resource programs are working well, performance standards and performance measures are not used to assess program performance, efficiency and effectiveness (Page 7-53)
13. The structure and staffing of personnel management and services should be assessed on an ongoing basis to determine effectiveness. (Page 7-55)
14. A systematic process to solicit feedback from clients/customers should be established to guide improvements in service delivery and personnel practices. (Page 7-56)
15. The District’s collective bargaining process is sound but can be strengthened with by improving communication and clarifying of the role of the District’s chief negotiator. (Page 7-59)

Fiscal Impact of Recommendations

Five of this chapter’s recommendations have a direct fiscal impact. The recommendation to develop an intake team of four support staff will increase costs by an estimated \$180,000 in the first year and \$120,000 in subsequent years. (This recommendation assumes a cost of \$30,000 per employee including benefits and \$60,000 to upgrade the Applicant Tracking System in the first year. Salary costs will be ongoing.) Eliminating the DATA Center will save the District \$1.2 million for each year or \$6.0 million over a five-year period. The recommendation to purchase an Automated Substitute Deployment System will require the investment of \$250,000 in year one to acquire and implement the system and \$50,000 during subsequent years to support system upgrades. Training for interest-based bargaining assumes a one-time estimated cost of \$30,000, which should be shared by the District and the union. In addition, improving management of the Early Return to Work Program will reduce workers’ compensation costs an estimate \$500,000 each year or \$2.5 million over a five-year period. The net savings that will result from implementing each of these recommendations is estimated to be \$7.36 million over a five-year period.

Exhibit 7-2

Five Management Structures Action Plan Recommendations Have Fiscal Impacts

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan 7-3: Establish four member intake team to manage the application process and communication to prospective employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires and investment of \$180,000 in year one and \$120,000 in each subsequent year. The total estimated investment over five years is \$660,000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan 7-8: Eliminate Data Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district will save \$1,200,000 annually and \$6,000,000 over five years.

Recommendation	Five Year Fiscal Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan 7-12: Purchase Automated Substitute Deployment System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires an estimated investment of \$250,000 in year one and \$50,000 in each subsequent year for a total investment over five years of \$450,000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan 7-15: Improve management of Early Return to Work Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers' compensation costs will be reduced by an estimated \$2.5 million over five years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan 7-20: Training for school board, staff and union leadership in interest-based bargaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a one-time investment of \$30,000, which should be shared between the District and the Union.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc

Background

The Personnel Management and Services Division provide a broad range of human resources services to support the District's approximately 36,000 employees. There are 225 positions assigned to the Division and the Division's annual budget is \$18.5 million in the 2001-2002 school year. This background section provides general information on the Division's mission, its goals and priorities, and its organization.

Mission. The mission of the Personnel Management and Services Division is to “staff schools with highly qualified personnel, support the professional and personal growth of all employees, ensure the quality of performance, manage the contractual stipulations the labor force, assist all employees to achieve and maintain high standards necessary to ensure that all students learn, in ways that are more technologically powerful than ever before.”

Goals and priorities. The Division's strategic plan for Personnel Management and Services (which is titled the “Hallmark of Leadership”) identifies the following goals and priorities:

1. To improve the image of labor relations and personnel management by implementing more effective employment practices and establishing better communications with the school sites, regions and district worksites, and the general public.
2. To develop new contract language/procedures and communicate effectively to the field the contract stipulations and understanding.
3. To revise established assessment, appraisal and testing instruments and procedures used for entry-level interviews and annual evaluation decisions about employment.
4. To restructure professional development and expand leadership experiences for all employees to provide pathways for personal growth and to promote career advancement.
5. To provide employees with personal and professional services that promote physical, mental and financial well-being.
6. To implement and maintain standards of excellence for the present workforce and future employees.

Organization. The Division was reorganized in 1996 when the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel Management and Services was appointed. As described below, the Division was divided into five offices and reflects the organization at the time of the review. The Division has been reorganized effective February 13, 2002, as shown in exhibit 7-3.10.

- **Employee Support Programs.** This Office, which is headed by an Assistant Superintendent, is responsible for records management, employee leave of absences, retirement programs, unemployment compensation administration, fingerprinting for criminal background checks, Employee Assistance and Wellness Program, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and policy development for the district's drug testing program.
- **Professional Standards.** The Office of Professional Standards, which is led by an Assistant Superintendent, focuses on the process and procedures for handling employee misconduct, employee discipline, performance

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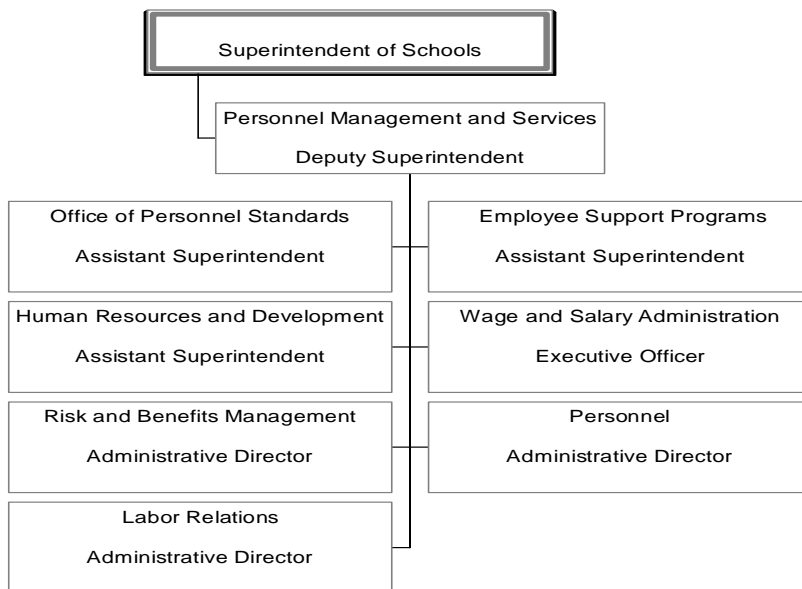
evaluation, administrative review process management and training, and the district's drug testing program for safety sensitive positions.

- **Human Resources and Development.** The Office of Human Resources and Development provides support to schools and the district for instructional and non-instructional staffing and professional development. An Assistant Superintendent heads this Office.
- **Risk and Benefits Management.** The Office of Risk and Benefits Management, which is headed by an Administrative Director, is primarily responsible for identifying district risks and managing financial solutions, administration of the district's benefits programs, such as health, life insurance, 401K, COBRA administration and workers' compensation program.
- **Wage and Salary Administration.** The Office of Wage and Salary Administration is responsible for compensation administration, job evaluation, salary placement, the maintenance of job descriptions and implementation of wage and salary contract settlements. This office is headed by an Executive Officer.

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts (during the review period- Aug, 2001-February 2002)

Exhibit 7-3.1 Personnel Management and Services

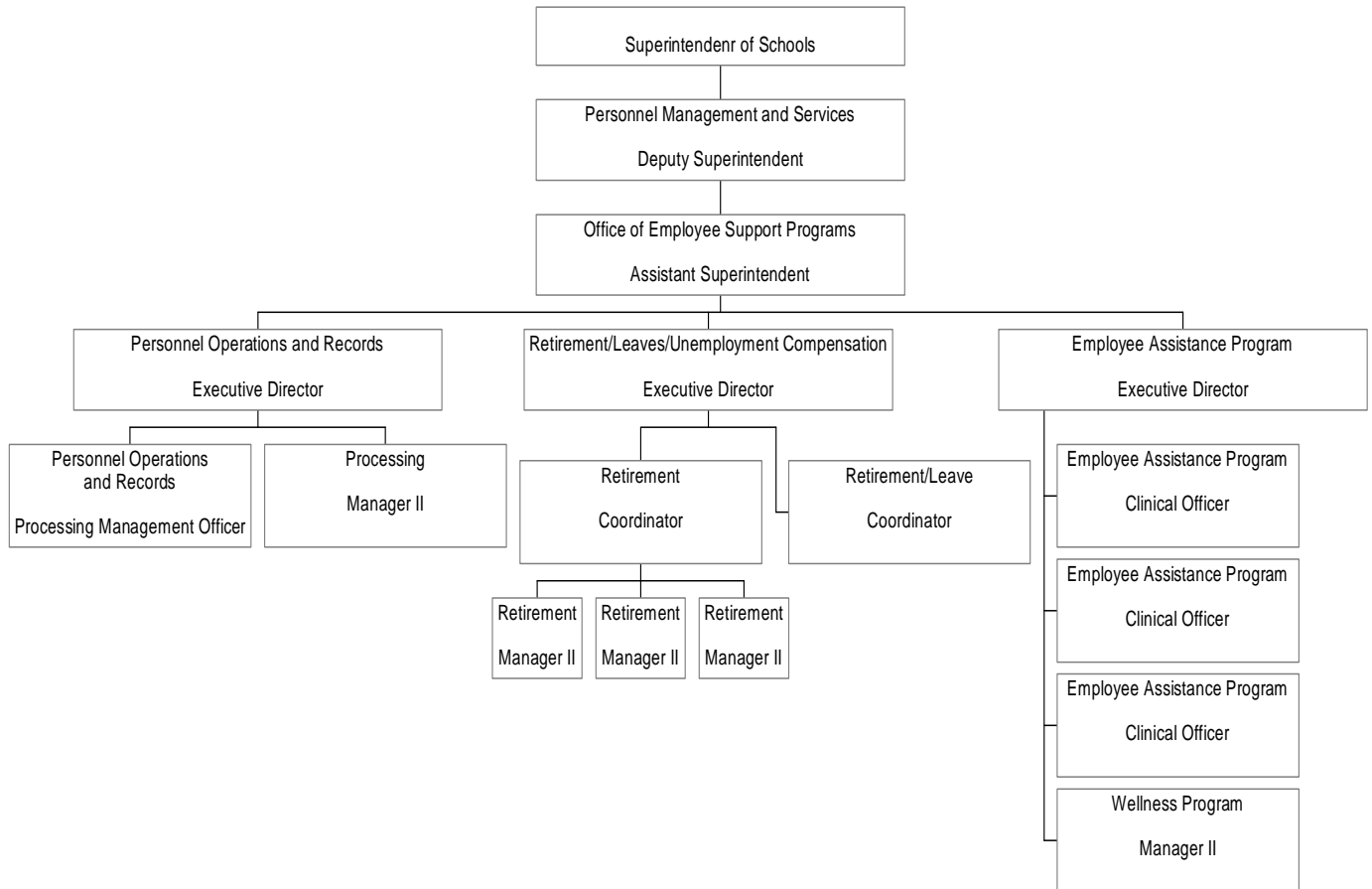


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.2 Employee Support Program

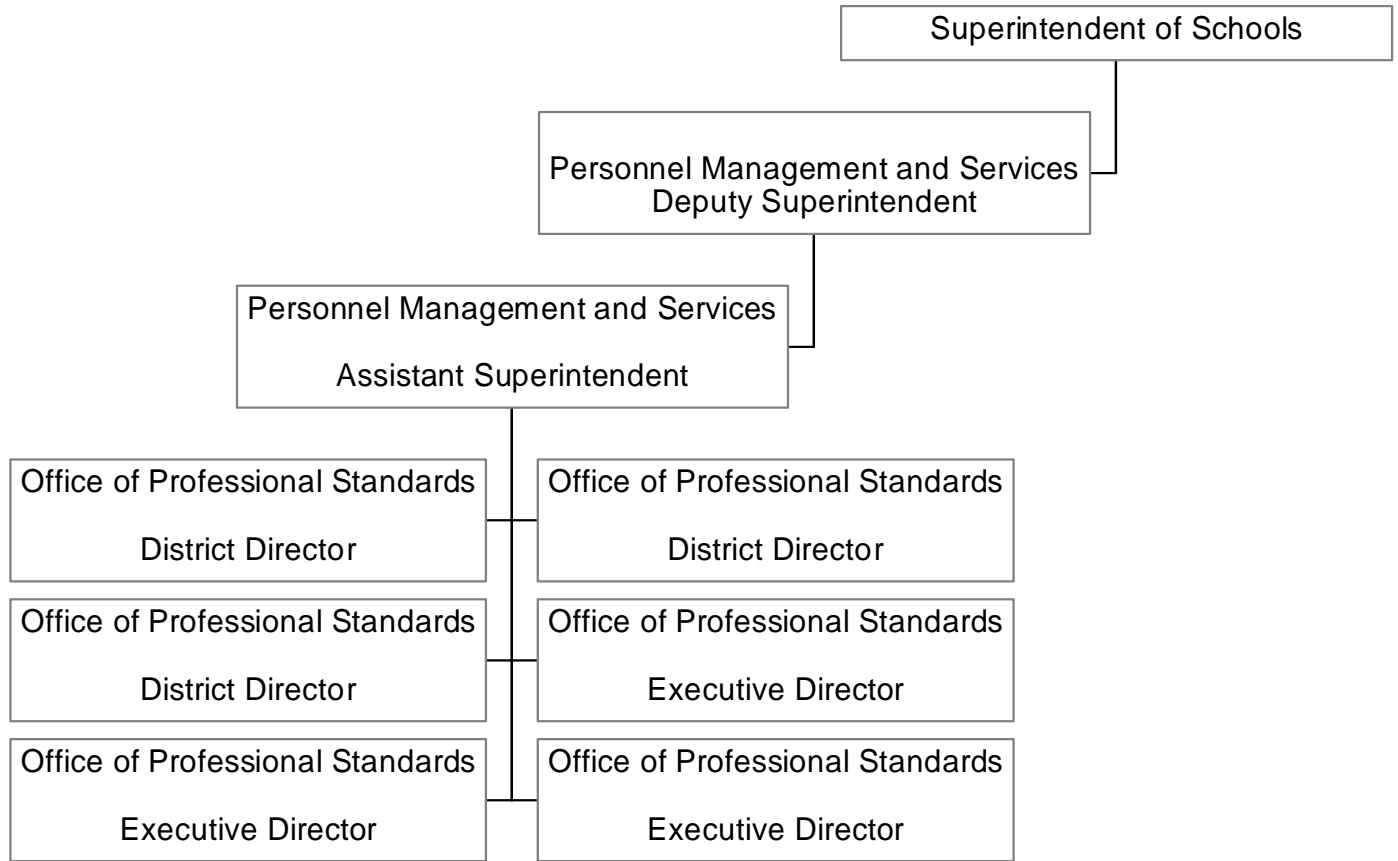


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools .

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.3 Professional Standards

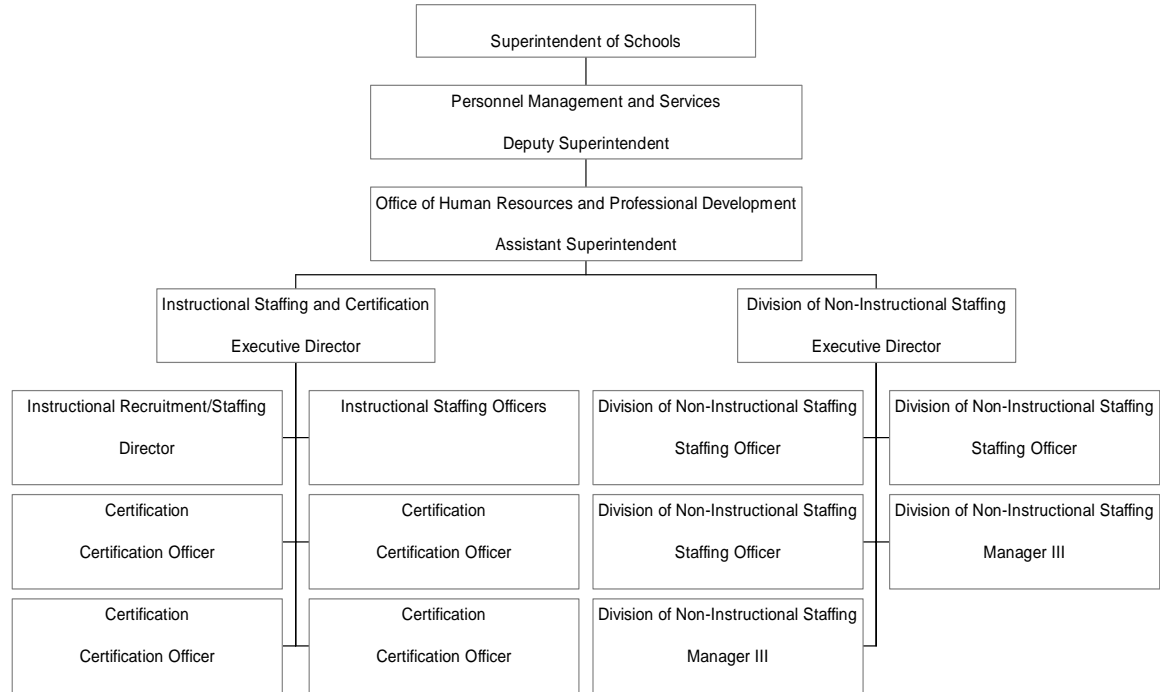


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.4 Human Resources and Development

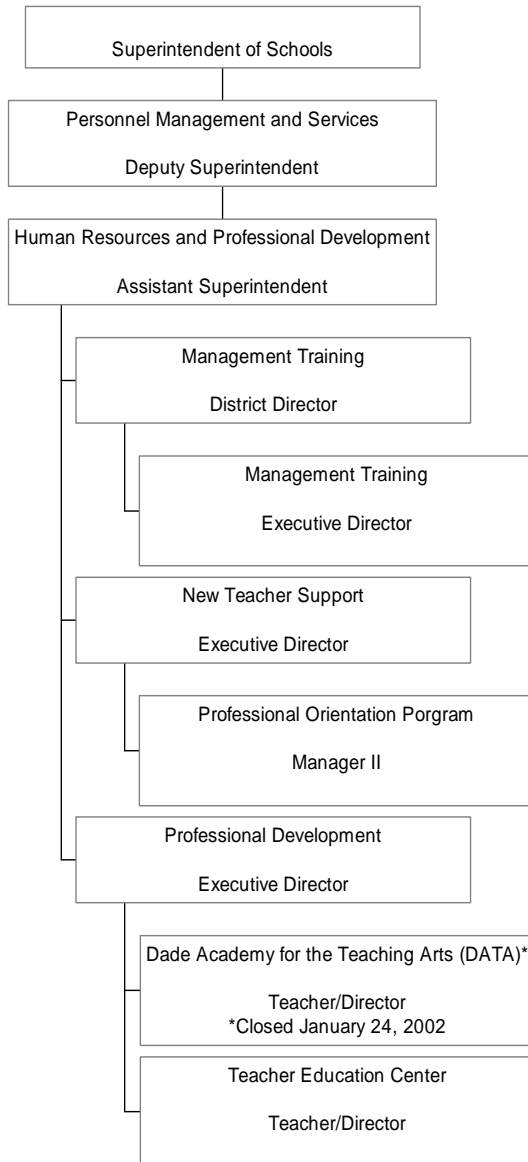


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.5 Human Resources and Development

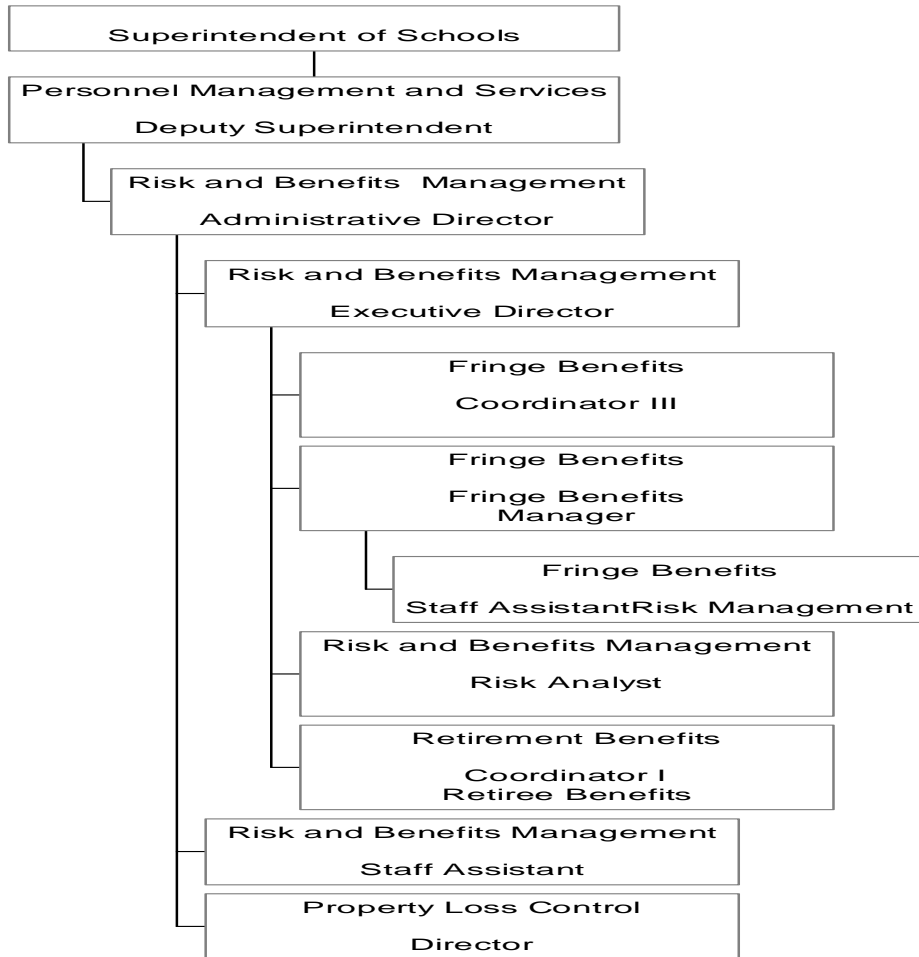


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.6 Office of Risk and Benefits Management

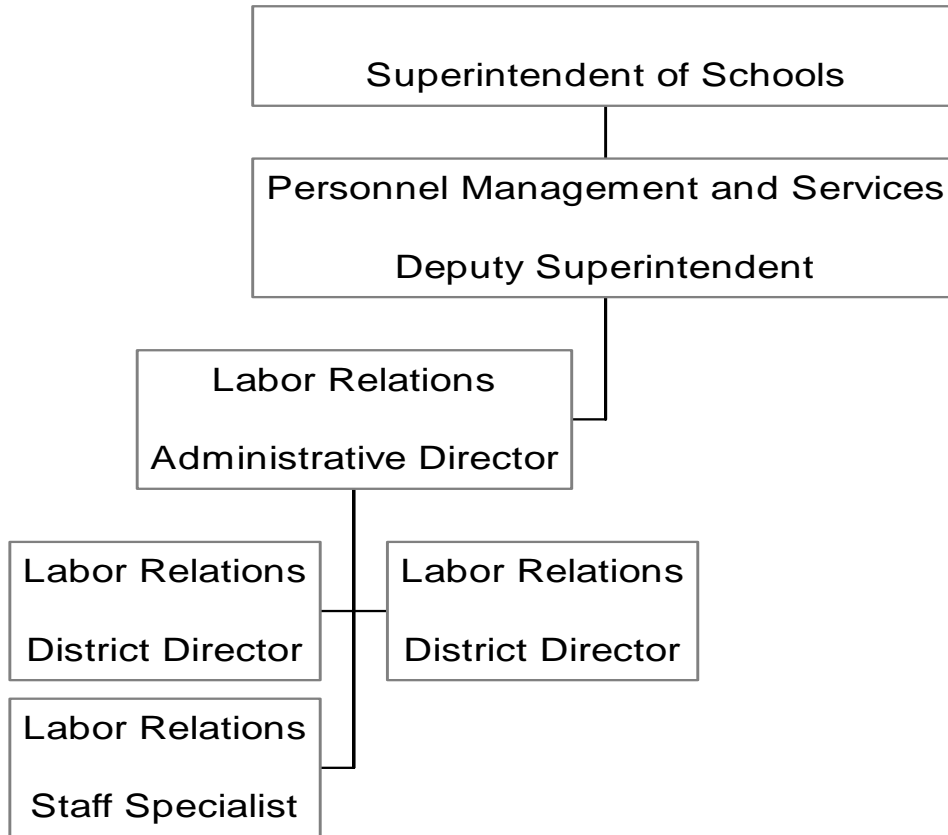


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.7 Wage and Salary Administration

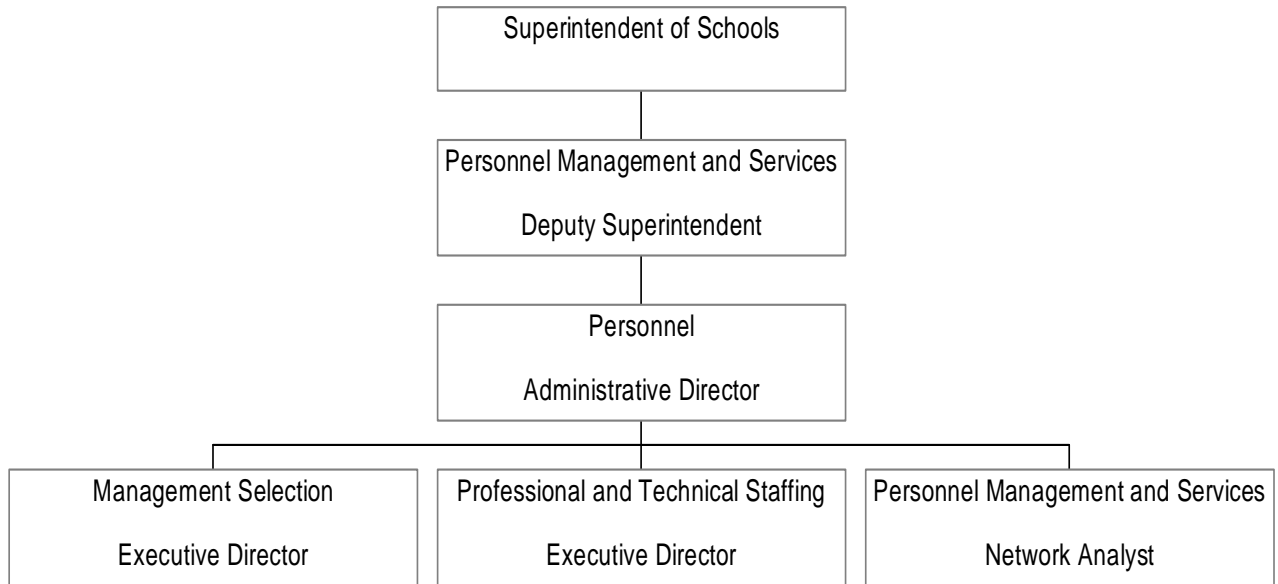


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management And Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.8 Personnel

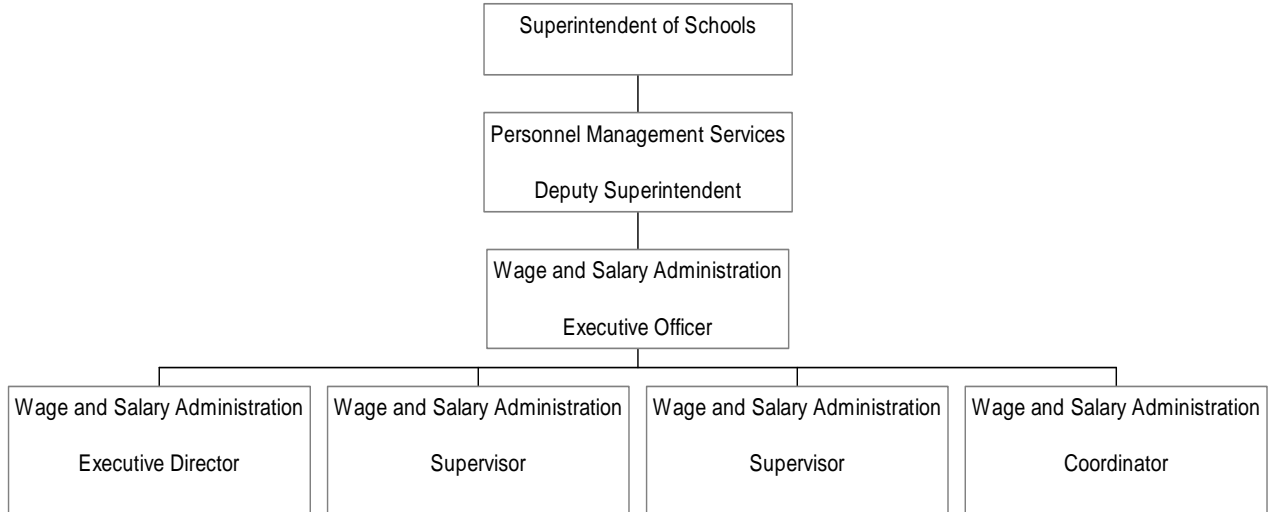


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Exhibit 7-3

Personnel Management and Services Organizational Charts

Exhibit 7-3.9 Wage and Salary Administration

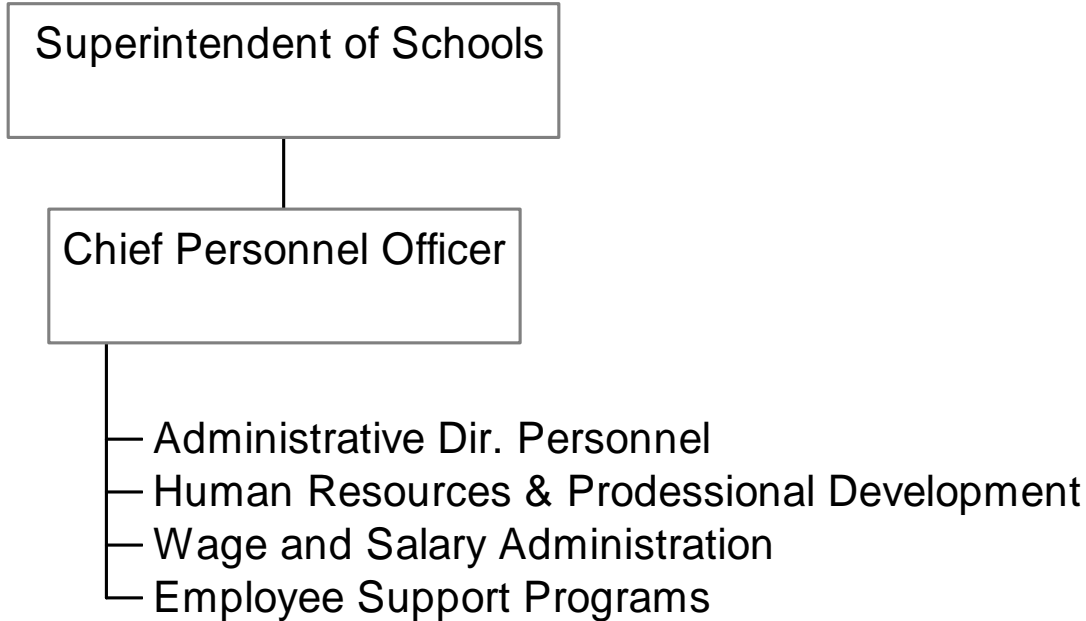


Source: Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Exhibit 7-3

Miami Dade Public Schools Office of Personnel Organizational Chart

Exhibit 7-3.10 Effective February 13, 2002



Labor Relations assigned to the Chief of Staff
Office of Professional Standards assigned to the Chief of Staff
Risk Management assigned to the Chief Financial Officer

Source: Miami Dade Public Schools; Effective: February 13, 2002.

1 Although the District’s overall recruitment program is generally sound, the program would benefit if it took a more systematic approach to the recruitment and retention of qualified staff and to ensuring vacancies were filled in a timely manner.

Competition with other districts for qualified staff is likely to increase in coming years

A number of factors are occurring to create a situation where the demand for qualified teachers is likely to skyrocket. First, the number of teachers nationwide who are eligible for retirement is increasing. The National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) reports that more than one-quarter of all teachers nationwide are at least 50 years of age and the median age of teachers nationwide is 44. These demographics suggest that more than half the nation’s current teachers will retire in the next ten years. In addition, school enrollments are increasing dramatically. By the year 2008, total public and private school enrollment is expected to rise to 54.3 million students. Close to 75% of those students will be minority students, thus creating a need for more diversity in the workforce. These trends are exacerbated by school reform efforts that call for class size reduction and, therefore,

also serve to increase the demand for teachers. In total, the nation will need to hire 2.2 million additional teachers in the next ten years. The State of Florida and the Miami Dade County Public Schools are by no means immune to these trends. The State of Florida will need at least 100,000 new teachers by the year 2010 to meet the challenge of increased student enrollment and to replace retirees. Moreover, in the near future the number of teachers that need to be hired by the Miami Dade County Public Schools will increase dramatically. The District projects a need to hire over 3000 teachers by September 2001 (an increase of 38.9% over the 2,222 positions that needed to be filled in 2000) and a need to hire close to 3,500 new teachers by 2002 (an increase of 63.9% over year 2000 needs) when District enrollment is expected to increase by 25,000 students. Moreover, an analysis of the impact of the District's Deferred Retirement Options Program (DROP) indicates that approximately 1,640 retirements will occur in 2003 (including the retirement of 962 teachers) and that 326 retirements will occur in 2004 (including the retirement of 229 teachers).

As the demand for teachers accelerates in the District, in Florida, and across the nation, competition for qualified staff will increase exponentially. Consequently, the importance of effective recruitment and retention strategies to the overall future success of the school district cannot be overstated.

The District has been generally, but not completely, effective at addressing existing staffing needs

When viewed from a number of perspectives the District's performance in meeting existing staffing needs has been sound. The District has, for example, come close to filling all needed vacancies. However, employee concerns about the quality of new hires and the time required to fill vacant positions are not insignificant. In addition, the District has made progress in ensuring the diversity of its workforce matches the diversity of the student body.

Filling vacancies. The District has successfully hired a significant number of teachers in each of the past two years. During the 1998-1999 year 2,339 teachers were hired and in the 1999-2000 year 2,708 teachers were hired. In addition, as of November 09, 2001, MDCPS had filled 2,042 of the 2,222 vacant teacher positions (91.9%). Many of the positions that were not filled are in the historically difficult to fill area of Exceptional Student Education (ESE). In addition, a number of vacancies are in Title I schools (typically inner city schools) and alternative education centers. Vacancies in non-instructional positions continue as well for paraprofessionals, clericals, Microsystems technicians, TV Systems technicians, vehicle mechanic, trades and bus drivers. Due to high turnover, bus driver positions are posted on an on-going basis.

While the District's efforts to fill vacancies are certainly credible, interview findings and the results of the employee survey strongly suggest that continued improvement is needed. In interviews, region directors and site administrators reported a continuing concern relative to filling vacancies in difficult to staff schools. Survey results reinforce these concerns. Fewer than half of the survey respondents (45.4%) "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "Sufficient staff are recruited to ensure vacancies for certificated staff are filled in a timely manner," and a third (33.0%) of the survey respondents "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with this statement. Even more concerns are raised with regard to the timeliness with which vacancies are filled for non-certificated staff. Only slightly more than one-third (34.6%) of the survey respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "Sufficient staff are recruited to ensure vacancies for non-certificated staff are filled in a timely manner," and more than two out of five respondents (40.6%) "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with this statement.

Employee survey results were only somewhat more positive with regard to the quality of staff recruited. Approximately 47% of the survey respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "The District does an effective job of recruiting highly competent certificated staff," while 29.6% of the respondents "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with this statement. With regard to the quality of non-certificated staff recruited by the District, slightly more than one-third (35.8%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that "The District does an effective job of recruiting highly competent non-certificated staff," while a sizable percentage (38.4%) "disagree" or "strongly disagree."

Ensuring a diverse workforce. The District clearly recognizes the importance of ensuring that the racial and ethnic composition of its workforce matches, to the extent possible, the racial and ethnic composition of the student body.

While the District has been released from maintaining court-mandated hiring ratios region directors report, and Personnel Management and Services staff confirm, that these ratios continue to serve as the guide for staffing levels. To track its success in maintaining a desired staffing mix, each month the District compiles and reports the status of hiring results by race and ethnicity for new and rehired instructional staff, trades, service and technical employees to the school board. These efforts have generally been successful. As Exhibit 7-4 shows, the race and ethnicity of the District’s new hires closely matches the race and ethnicity of the district’s student body.

Exhibit 7-4

The Race and Ethnicity of New Hires Closely Matches the Race and Ethnicity of District Students (a)

EEO Classification	Number	Percentage Of New Hires	Percentage Of District Students
White	814	14.5	11.8
Black	1,795	32.1	32.2
Hispanic	2,877	51.5	54.2
Other	101	1.9	1.8
Total	5,587	100.0	100.0

(a) Hires as of November 13, 2001.

Source: MDCPS Department of Personnel Management (Report Tolo3061)

In addition, over the past three years (from 1998-99 to 2000-01) the District has made slow but steady progress in altering the racial composition of the overall workforce to ensure it more closely matches the racial and ethnic composition of the District’s student body. Exhibit 7-5 shows during this period the total percentage of white employees has been reduced from 31.0% of the work force in 1998-99 to 28.0% of the work force in 2000-01 (the number of white students served by the District comprises 11.8% of the total student population). During this same period the percentage of Hispanic employees has increased (from 32.6% of the student population in 1998-99 to 35.6% of the student population in 2000-01). (Hispanic students account for 54.2% of the student population.) During this same period the percentage of black employees – which already closely matches the percentage of black students served by the District – has held steady.

Exhibit 7-5

Steady Progress Has Been Made To Improve the Racial Composition of the Workforce To Ensure It More Closely Matches the Racial Composition of District Students

	White – 11.8% of students			Black – 32.2% of students			Hispanic – 54.2% of students			Other – 1.8% of students		
	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	1998-99	1999-00	2000-2001	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Administrative	475	467	479	426	429	439	409	443	467	9	9	8
	36.0%	34.6%	34.4%	32.3%	31.8%	31.5%	31.0%	32.9%	33.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.60%
Instructional	7,696	7,759	7,617	5,315	5,458	5,613	6,688	7,278	7,857	217	265	312
	39.3%	37.4%	35.6%	26.4%	26.3%	26.2%	33.2%	35.1%	36.7%	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%
Other Staff	2,268	2,201	2,155	6,433	6,669	6,834	4,098	4,411	4,720	76	79	96
	17.6%	16.5%	15.6%	50.0%	49.9%	49.5%	31.8%	33.0%	34.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Total Full-time Staff	10,639	10,427	10,251	12,174	12,556	12,686	11,195	12,133	13,044	302	353	416
	31.0%	29.4%	28.0%	35.5%	36.4%	35.2%	32.6%	34.2%	35.6%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%

Notes: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: Florida Department of Education Public Schools Staff Survey (EEO-5), Compiled by Department of Research Services (October data).

The District’s hiring and recruitment practices are generally sound and, for the most part, are adequate to meet its current staffing needs

While some improvement is needed, the Division has generally been able to address the District’s needs for a competent and diverse workforce because it has established hiring and recruiting practices that are generally effective. Key features of these effective practices include the following:

- The District has developed plans to guide recruiting efforts
- A variety of funding sources are used to support recruiting activities
- Information on vacancies and employment requirements is widely distributed
- Technology is used to support hiring and recruiting efforts
- The District works to ensure that all instructional staff hold, or are eligible to hold, valid teaching and administrative certificates
- Criminal background checks are performed for all new employees
- The District works diligently to reduce the number of teachers working out of the field in which they are certified
- A range of strategies are used to recruit teachers in critical shortage areas
- Informal procedures have been established to ensure District compensation is competitive

The following paragraphs present additional information on each of these effective practices.

Recruiting plans. The District has developed a plan – the “3 R’s plan” (“Recommendations for Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Miami Dade County Public Schools”) – to guide its teacher recruitment and retention efforts. This plan calls for expanding recruitment efforts at local and national colleges and universities, making more effective use of technology to support recruiting efforts, developing strategies to attract new teachers to MDCPS, expediting the hiring process and encouraging MDCPS students to become teachers.

The District has assigned the responsibility for recruitment to one staff person who also has the responsibility for instructional staffing. The recruiter monitors the website, responds to inquiries and reports weekly the number of visits to the District’s website.

Recruiting funding. The District has made creative use of funding from a variety of sources (e.g., local school district funds, Federal Class Size Reduction Funds, and the Eisenhower Title II Grant) to support recruiting efforts. Exhibit 7-6 provides a breakdown of recruitment funding by funding source.

Exhibit 7-6

The District Uses Funding from a Variety of Sources to Support Recruiting Efforts

Program Development	Allocation
District Funds	\$15,000
Title VI Program Class Size Reduction	\$75,000
Title II Eisenhower Professional Development Program	\$15,000
Total Recruitment Budget	\$105,000

Source: 1999-2000 MDCPS Budget.

Providing information on vacancies and employment requirements. The District announces vacancies through the use of job postings (for non-instructional positions), newspaper advertisements, flyers and the District’s website. The District also distributes an attractive application packet for teachers – “Ready, Set, Teach.” This application packet provides information concerning procedures, timelines and other requirements for teaching positions.

Likewise, non-instructional job vacancy announcements outline the procedures and timelines for making an application.¹

The school district also posts on its application and in application packets its policy of non-discrimination in employment and instructional program activities. (school board Rules 6 GX13 – 4 A-1.01, 6 GX13 – 4A-1.32, and 6 GX13 –5d-1.10 govern these policies.) Additionally, the application materials are used to provide notice of the District’s adherence to applicable Federal Law and State Statutes.

Using technology to support hiring and recruiting efforts. While the District has plans to enhance its use of technology to support hiring and recruiting activities, it already makes effective use of technology in a number of areas. As noted, job announcements are posted on the District’s website. In addition, application information can be accessed online and employment applications can be downloaded from the District’s website. The District also uses an automated tracking system (ATS). Applicants become active in the Application Tracking System when all documents are received and when all reference checks, fingerprinting, and drug testing have been completed. School site administrators can access the applicant tracking system to identify potential candidates and schedule interviews. This system facilitates the efforts of school site administrators to contact candidates for interviews and, subsequently, to select candidates for employment, and recommend their appointment to the Office of Human Resource and Development.

Ensuring new hires are appropriately certified. The District requires that all instructional staff hold, or be eligible to hold, a valid teaching or administrative certificate. To ensure this requirement is met, during the hiring process the District reviews official transcripts, Statement of Status of eligibility (issued by the Department of Education) and critical teaching certificates to verify that instructional staff meet certification requirements. The District does not permit applicants to become active in the Applicant Tracking System until qualifications have been verified. It should be noted, however, that because the Florida Department of Education has a large backlog of teaching certificates to issue, many teachers new to teaching in the State of Florida might have only the Statement of Status of Eligibility when hired by the District, as reported by District staff and confirmed in focus group discussions with newly hired teachers.

Conducting criminal background investigations. school board Rule 6 G X13 –4C-1.021 requires that criminal background checks be completed on all newly hired personnel. To meet this requirement, the District files a complete set of fingerprints on each new hire with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). FDLE then processes and submits the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) for federal processing. The processing time for FBI checks can range from four to six weeks (quick turn around) to ninety days (slow turn around).

All new employees (including both full and part-time staff) are on probationary status until their fingerprints have been processed. Consequently, employees may be assigned to work locations where students are present before the results of the criminal background check are known. While it would be ideal to place employees only after criminal records checks have been completed it is nearly impossible to do so and fill positions in a timely manner. Indeed, placing employees in their work locations pending the results of the background check is a practice that is employed by school districts throughout the country. The high demand for criminal records checks, and the length of time required to complete them, force school districts throughout the nation to employ this practice. It should be stressed, however, that if the record check reveals an employee has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude he or she would be terminated immediately. Interviews with union officials, principals and region personnel directors confirm that prompt action is taken by the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) to remove employees from contact with students and, as appropriate, to terminate employment when the results of the criminal background check indicate the need to do so.

Minimizing teachers working out of field. School board policy and the State Department of Education permit teachers to work out of the field in which they have been certificated in areas where a critical shortage of certificated teachers exists. The District, however, works diligently to reduce the number of teachers working out of the field in

¹ Procedures for announcing vacancies and processing applications for administrative and technical staff are detailed in the District’s Management Selection Procedures Manual and the Professional Technical Staffing rules of the Dade County School Administrators Association (DCSAA) Contract.

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which they have been certificated and monitors on an ongoing basis the number of teachers working out of field (following procedures outlined in the Procedures Manual for Monitoring Teacher Certification). Each month, the DECO (Department of Education Edit Correction Online System) Out-of-Field Report is prepared. This report identifies the school, name of teacher, social security number of the teacher, course title, and section for each teacher in each region who is working out of the field in which her or she is certificated. Additionally, the report provides summary information on teachers who are working out of the field in which they are certificated for the District. Personnel and Management Services staff then communicates with the school site and the teacher to verify the information and ascertain the progress that has been made towards certification then uses this information. This process occurs each month and updated information is reported to the Department of Education.

Region directors and site administrators report that as a result of monitoring the number of out-of-field teachers has been reduced to an 8-11% range. A review of DECO Out of Field reports for October 26, 2001 and April 2000 supports the view that the number of out-of-field teachers is in the 8-11% range. Exhibit 7-7 shows both the percentage of teachers working out of the field in which they are certificated and the percentage of classes taught by these teachers during this period.

Exhibit 7-7

The Percentage of Teachers Working Out Of Field is in the 8% to 11% Range

	April 2000	October 2001
Percentage Of Teachers Working Out Of Field	8.54%	10.81%
Percentage Of Classes Taught By Teachers Working Out Of Field	3.16%	4.12%

Source: Miami Dade County Public Schools Department of Education Edit Correction Online System Out Of Field Reports.

Exhibit 7-7.2

Most Out-of-Field Teachers Teach Two or Fewer Classes

Number Of Classes Taught By Each Out Of Field Teacher	April, 2000	October 26, 2001
1 Class	5.10%	6.91%
2 Classes	1.48%	1.83%
3 Classes	.44%	.71%
4 Classes	.32%	.34%
5 Classes	.59%	.74%
6 Classes	.31%	.54%
7 Classes	.08%	.13%
8 Classes	.06%	.11%
9 Classes	.03%	.03%
10 Or More Classes	.10%	.16%

Source: Miami Dade County Public Schools DECO Out Of Field Reports.

Recruiting teachers in critical shortage areas. Each year, the District identifies areas of critical teacher shortages and develops strategies to address these shortages. In the past, such strategies have included advance contracting, placement on the salary schedule at step 2 and the payment (at the end of the school year) of a one-time stipend of \$1,000. Teachers may also receive tuition reimbursement and student loan forgiveness through the Florida Department of Education to pursue certification in one of the critical shortage areas identified by the State Board of Education. In addition, teachers in hard to place schools have received incentives through the Graduate Certification and Urban Education Programs. These programs were are intended to enhance skill development for teachers employed in Title I schools, provide a \$500 stipend for those who remain in the designated hard to fill school assignment, provide tuition reimbursement and upon completion of the program, payment at the next higher differential in the credential payment schedule. The teacher continued to receive the Urban Education stipend as

long as he or she remained in a selected Title I school and receive an acceptable annual evaluation (Article XXV-Section 4-UTD Collective Bargaining Agreement). (This program is currently being phased out).

The District has also received approval to pilot an Alternative Certification Program from the Department of Education. This program provides non-education majors the opportunity to complete a program designed to meet the professional education coursework requirements for issuance of a professional certificate. Participants will have two years to complete all program requirements. It should also be noted that the District currently hires psychology and sociology majors to fill Exceptional Student Education (ESE) vacancies while they complete ESE certification requirements.

Procedures have been established to ensure compensation levels are competitive. The District has taken a number of informal approaches to assess salary levels and ensure they are competitive. From time to time, the Wage and Salary Division compares District compensation levels with compensation levels in competitive organizations for non-instructional positions. The District also employs an informal process to benchmark teacher and administrator salaries with comparable districts using phone calls and personal contacts. The District also uses published surveys to obtain competitive salary data such as the Educational Research Service (ERS) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In addition to these informal comparisons, the salary survey conducted by The Council of Great City Schools is used when preparing for collective bargaining. This survey is comprehensive and includes more survey respondents than just the members of the Council. In addition, in 1998-99 the District used Arthur Andersen to review and make recommendations regarding compensation for managerial salaries. The results of this study indicated that “it appeared MDCPS existing structure minimums were below competitive entry rates” thus making it difficult to attract entry-level talent. Recommendations were made to adjust the salaries of approximately 440 employees. In addition, the salary structure was modified to provide for minimum and maximum pay ranges. (An analysis of these ranges and schedules indicates that District managerial staff is compensated within these minimum and maximum pay ranges.)

While the District’s approach to ensuring compensation levels is something less than systematic, this approach has proved effective in ensuring compensation for most positions is competitive. A comparison of minimum hourly rates paid by the Miami Dade County Public Schools with minimum hourly rates paid by competitive organizations reveals that MDCPS wage rates are competitive and, with the exception of the minimum hourly rate paid to bus drivers, fall within the range of hourly rates paid by competing organizations. It is worth noting, however, Broward County Public School salaries are higher than the salaries paid by MDCPS for all positions. (See Exhibit 7-8)

Exhibit 7-8

Minimum Hourly Rates Paid by the Miami Dade County Public Schools to Selected Non-Instructional Positions Are Competitive with Those Paid by Competitive Organizations

Position	Organization	Minimum Hourly Rate Paid By Organization
Security Guard	Broward County Government	\$7.32
	Jackson Memorial Hospital	\$7.37
	Miami Dade County	\$7.49
	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$7.54
	South Florida Survey	\$7.68
	Miami Dade County Community College	\$7.69
	Broward County Public Schools	\$8.50

Position	Organization	Minimum Hourly Rate Paid By Organization
Custodian	South Florida Survey	\$6.40
	Florida International University	\$6.44
	Jackson Memorial Hospital	\$6.60
	Miami Dade County	\$6.73
	Miami Dade County Community College	\$6.95
	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$6.95
	Palm Beach County Schools	\$7.37
	Broward County Government	\$8.22
	Broward County Public Schools	\$8.22
Maintenance Worker	Miami Dade County Community College	\$7.69
	Broward County Government	\$7.50
	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$8.50
	Broward County Public Schools	\$8.63
	Jackson Memorial Hospital	\$9.55
Food Service Worker	Palm Beach County Schools	\$5.60
	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$5.99
	Jackson Memorial Hospital	\$6.33
	Broward County Government	\$6.96
	Broward County Public Schools	\$7.13
Bus Driver	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$8.78
	Palm Beach County Schools	\$8.84
	Broward County Public Schools	\$9.57
	Miami Dade County	\$11.80
	Broward County Government	\$12.23

Source: MDCPS Wage and Salary Division, Personnel Management Services.

Likewise, as Exhibit 7-8 shows salaries paid to starting teachers, principals, and assistant principals are competitive with salaries paid by other large districts – both in Florida and in other states although the top of the salary range for principals and assistant principals is higher than for the other large districts for which salary information was gathered.

Exhibit 7-8

Salaries Paid To Teachers, Principals and Assistant Principals by the Miami Dade County Public Schools Are Competitive with Salaries Paid in Other Large Districts

Position	District	Salary Range
Teacher*	Clark County Public Schools (Nevada)	\$26,849 to \$34,203
	Hillsborough County Public Schools	\$30,000 to \$37,023
	Broward County Public Schools	\$30,000 to \$38,492
	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$32,425 to \$39,425
Assistant Principal**	Hillsborough County Public Schools	\$42,993 to \$78,197
	Clark County Public Schools (Nevada)	\$50,842 to \$74,800
	Broward County Public Schools	\$55,202 to \$71,325
	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$56,451 to \$101,546
Principal	Hillsborough County Public Schools	\$64,274 to \$110,027
	Miami Dade County Public Schools	\$64,667 to \$117,521
	Broward County Public Schools	\$70,012 to \$95,556
	Clark County Public Schools (Nevada)	\$73,300 to \$93,612

* Entry-level salaries only; ** Includes 10 and 12 month salaries

Source: Council Of The Great City Schools.

Existing practices are unlikely to be adequate to meet the District's needs as competition for staff increases

As noted in the previous sections, the District's existing hiring and recruiting practices have been, for the most part, sufficient to meet the existing demand for staff. However, these policies and practices will need to be modified in some key areas if Personnel and Management Services is to continue to meet the District's needs as competition for staff increases. In particular, practices will need to be modified in five key areas:

- A more strategic approach to addressing recruiting needs is required
- A more targeted approach to recruiting for hard to fill positions and hard to staff locations would be beneficial
- A more systematic approach to updating position descriptions is needed
- A more systematic approach to evaluating jobs to support effective salary administration is needed
- Improved communication with job applicants is needed

A discussion of these issues is presented in the following paragraphs.

Recruiting. A review of documented recruitment activities reported to the school board indicates that recruiting activities are generally focused within the State of Florida with some selective recruitment in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Illinois. Thus, the majority of teachers hired are recruited from colleges and universities in the state. Little effort has been made to ascertain whether these strategies are effective. Indeed, the District's recruitment plan lacks the performance measures and performance goals needed to assess effectiveness and to forecast staffing needs. Moreover, customer satisfaction is not tracked and used to evaluate and restructure the recruiting plan to maximize the overall effectiveness of the recruitment program.

Locations and positions that are hard to fill. As discussed, the District has taken positive steps to recruit teachers in critical shortage areas and has also established procedures to facilitate filling vacancies in locations for which it is difficult to place teachers. In particular, a procedure has been established that prevents applicants who have been placed on the Applicant Tracking System from refusing employment when it is offered. (Applicants who refuse employment are removed from the hiring process.) In interviews and focus group discussions, however, District staff report that applicants have found ways around the system to avoid placement in inner city schools or locations that require considerable driving time by, for example, using answering machines to avoid direct contact by a school administrator seeking to fill a vacancy in a location that is perceived as being undesirable.

The District would benefit from an even more proactive approach to recruiting and hiring staff to fill positions of critical shortage and locations that are difficult to serve. Aggressive recruitment measures and timelines should be established for these positions. In addition, the use of aggressive incentives to fill ESE positions and to staff locations at which it is difficult to place staff should be considered.

Position descriptions. The District maintains a file of position descriptions for all positions. These position descriptions contain basic objectives, job tasks and responsibilities, minimum qualifications for the position and reflect Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. In addition, the District maintains a database of job descriptions for active positions and is in the process of putting position descriptions online so that school site administrators can more easily access them. Staff indicates that position descriptions are not current for all active positions, however. Instead of having a systematic process for updating position descriptions on a regular basis, positions descriptions are only updated when positions are posted or when a supervisor or employee makes a direct request that the position description be reviewed. A more systematic approach to revising job descriptions would be beneficial.

Job evaluation. A job factor analysis system is currently used to evaluate positions and determine compensation (based on the market). (These activities, performed by the Office of Wage and Salary Administration, have five technical staff to perform wage and salary analysis.) This job factor analysis system uses such criteria as experience, skills, knowledge, ability, supervisory level (number of direct/indirect reports), financial responsibility, communications and working conditions and assigns a point factor to evaluate position level and compensation. The District does not, however, have a systematic job evaluation policy or a process for wage and salary

administration. This is true despite the fact that Arthur Andersen conducted a Job Evaluation and Compensation Study in 1999 and this study included recommendations for implementing an ongoing job evaluation and salary administration program.

Communications with job applicants. Interviews and focus group discussions suggest that job applicants have difficulty ascertaining the status of their applications. While applicants can call the appropriate staffing specialist to get information on the status of their applicants, recent hires report this process to be generally ineffective because they have trouble speaking directly with anyone when such inquires are made. Instead, when applicants call for information on the status of their applications they generally must leave voicemail messages, which, in most cases, are not returned. Often a school site administrator who is interested in hiring the applicant must intercede to ascertain an applicant’s status in the hiring process. This problem exists in large part simply because the District does not employ any staff who are primarily responsible for ensuring effective communications nor has a clear procedure been established for job applicants.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District establish performance measures and targets to measure recruiting progress and to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of recruiting process.*

Action Plan 7-1 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation

Action Plan 7-1

Establish performance measures and targets for recruiting	
Strategy	Modify the District’s Recruitment Plan to include specific recruitment targets, performance measures and timelines and use this information to evaluate recruitment program progress and effectiveness.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish goals and objectives for recruiting in all certification areas Step 2: Determine recruiting and hiring needs in ESE and hard to fill school assignments Step 3: Determine the desired results and establish benchmarks and timelines for hiring in ESE, and hard to fill assignments Step 4: Analyze costs and establish budget for targeted recruitment effort and recruiting incentives for ESE and hard to fill assignments Step 5: Determine the desired results for each of the recruiting target areas Step 6: Establish benchmarks and timelines to assess progress in each of the recruiting target areas Step 7: Report to the Board at agreed upon intervals during the hiring season progress towards meeting recruiting targets Step 8: Assess the outcome of targeted recruiting and make improvements based on feedback from schools relating to recruiting effectiveness Step 9: Modify targets and strategies as necessary for improvement
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer; Recruiter; Assistant Superintendent Human Resource Development
Time Frame	August, 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District develop and implement policies and procedures for updating job descriptions and managing the salary system on an on-going basis.*

Action Plan 7-2 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation

Action Plan 7-2

Implement an annual job evaluation and salary administration program	
Strategy	Conduct a job analysis of a sample of positions on an annual basis.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop and obtain Board approval of the policies and procedures for job evaluation and salary administration</p> <p>Step 2: Develop and disseminate communication to employees to describe the procedures for job evaluation and salary administration.</p> <p>Step 3: Establish timelines for the job evaluation process</p> <p>Step 4: Establish timelines for salary adjustment structures that align with the budget process and collective bargaining to facilitate monitoring and ensuring the competitiveness of the District’s salary structure</p> <p>Step 5: Make salary adjustments aligned to the market, job evaluation results, collective bargaining strategy and ability to pay.</p> <p>Step 6: Evaluate results of the job evaluation process for effectiveness and make appropriate modifications on an ongoing basis to ensure competitive compensation system</p>
Who is Responsible	Executive Officer, Wage and Salary Administration
Time Frame	Operational by July 1, 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the Office of Human Resources and Development assess the effectiveness of its communications and follow-up strategies with applicants.*

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

Action Plan 7-3

Improve the effectiveness of communications and follow-up with applicants	
Strategy	Establish an in-take unit to receive applications and manage communications with applicants throughout the hiring process
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish a team of four staff to be responsible for receiving online, mail and in person applications</p> <p>Step 2: Establish points of communication with applicants during the hiring process.</p> <p>Step 3: Build communication structures in the Automated tracking System that will allow applicants to access the system through a secure website using an assigned pin number</p> <p>Step 4: Automate communication to applicants in the Applicant Tracking System based on pre-determined communications points during the hiring process.</p> <p>Step 5: Obtain feedback from applicants as to the effectiveness of the communication process and modify the communication process as appropriate</p>
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent Human Resources and Development, Network Analyst, Executive Director of Operations and Records
Time Frame	September 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	Estimated initial cost to implement \$180,000 plus an additional \$120,000 per year.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

2 Although the District has implemented a number of sound practices to promote workforce stability, it has not developed a systematic approach to assessing factors that contribute to workforce instability and has not taken proactive steps to address them.

The District has implemented a number of sound practices to promote workforce stability

The Miami Dade County Public Schools have a number of practices in place that help to promote workforce stability. These practices include the District's efforts to:

- Provide support to initiatives that link pay with performance
- Clearly define requirements for supplemental pay
- Provide incentives for teacher with credentials in critical shortage areas or who work in schools where placing staff is difficult
- Analyze the impact of the state sponsored Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP)
- Informally compare salary and benefits costs with competitive organizations

Performance based compensation. One way to retain outstanding teachers and administrators and to encourage less than outstanding teachers and administrators to consider other career options is to employ a compensation system that links pay with performance. While, as will be discussed later in this section, the District has not established a compensation system that consistently reward outstanding performance, it does support several initiatives to link pay and performance. For example, the current compensation system allows the District to address poor performance by withholding salary increases for teachers and managerial exempt employees whose performance is deemed substandard. In addition, the State provided in 2000-2001 a bonus for outstanding teachers in schools rated by the state as being "D" and "F" schools and for teachers in alternative schools serving disruptive students. To be eligible for such a bonus, a teacher must have been teaching, with full-time classroom responsibility in a grade level that administered the reading and/or math FCAT during the designated school year and must have been teaching the subject tested. Moreover, the teacher must have a satisfactory performance evaluation and had no disciplinary issues during the designated school year. Student progress must be documented by improvement on math or reading FCAT scores from the previous school year. Improvement must be documented by an increase in the percentage of students at the school scoring at FCAT levels 2 to 5 in reading or math. Each bonus is worth a minimum of \$1,000 and a maximum of \$3,500. Principals in designated "D" and "F" schools recommend teachers meeting the criteria. The school board then reviews the data and recommendations and approves payment of the bonuses. The state also provides a bonus for advanced placement teachers.

Supplemental pay. Workforce stability may be modestly enhanced if teachers and administrators clearly understand for what activities they will receive supplemental pay. To this end, the District has clearly negotiated provisions for the requirements and compensation of teachers receiving supplemental pay. These requirements relate to number of courses taught during the regular workday and time spent by teachers on approved activities beyond the normal workday. Under the current system, teachers may seek supplemental pay assignments but are selected for these assignments by their principal. Principals have a fair amount of authority in making these decisions because the collective bargaining agreement speaks to "qualified applicants" but does not define required qualifications.

Critical shortage areas and schools at which it is difficult to place teachers. As discussed in Section 1, each year, the District identifies areas of critical teacher shortages and develops strategies to address these shortages. In the past, such strategies have included advance contracting, placement on the salary schedule at step 2 and the payment (at the end of the school year) of a one-time stipend of \$1,000. Teachers may also receive tuition

reimbursement and student loan forgiveness through the Florida Department of Education to pursue certification in one of the critical shortage areas identified by the State Board of Education. In addition, teachers in hard to place schools have received incentives through the Graduate Certification and Urban Education Programs.²

Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP). To the District’s credit it has analyzed the impact of the state sponsored Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) on District staffing. DROP allows eligible employees to defer retirement and essentially invest their retirement annuity. Thus, when they actually retire and begin to receive their monthly annuity they also have a sizable “nest egg” at the time of actual retirement and when the employee begins to receive the monthly retirement annuity. The District calculates that the greatest impact of the DROP program will be in 2003 when approximately 1,640 retirements will occur (including 962 teachers). In addition, 326 retirements are expected in 2004 (including 229 teachers). To minimize the impact of DROP on District staffing needs, the District has offered an enhanced retirement benefit incentive to eligible employees. Four plan options were offered to employees to induce some of the large group of DROP enrollees (2003) to retire early and, by so doing, to minimize the impact on the District. These options are estimated to cost approximately \$4.1 million in 2001-2002 and \$3.9 million in 2002-2003. These programs were not designed to save money but will provide some net savings to the District in the short term.³

Salary and benefits comparisons. As discussed in Section 1, the District has conducted informal limited comparisons with other districts and public and private employers when setting salaries. (As the comparisons presented in Exhibits 7-7 and 7-8 in the previous section suggest, with some exceptions--most notably, bus drivers--the wages the District pays are competitive with wages paid in other organizations. The Broward County Public Schools, however, pays its non-instructional staff more than the Miami-Dade County Public Schools but salaries for starting teachers, assistant principals, and principals are comparable.) As also discussed in Section 1, the salary comparisons made by the District are generally done to prepare for collective bargaining and not as a part of an ongoing and systematic evaluation of compensation levels. A comparison of fringe benefit coverage conducted by AFSCME indicates that benefits for employees in this bargaining unit are comparable to the fringe benefit coverage in other organizations (The results of this comparison is presented in Exhibit 7-9).

Exhibit 7-9

Fringe Benefits Coverage for AFSCME Employees Is Similar to Coverage Provided by Other Organizations

FRINGE BENEFITS											
Employer	Health Ins.	Life Ins.	Dental Care	Vision Care	Pres. Drug Coverage	Retirement Plan	Dependent care	Long - term Care	Other Fringe Benefits	Cost of Fringe Benefits	Cost of Retirement Benefits
Florida International University	Yes-F/T Yes -P/T	Yes-F/T Yes -P/T	Yes-F/T Yes -P/T	Yes-F/T Yes -P/T	Yes-F/T Yes -P/T	Yes-F/T Yes -P/T	Yes-F/T Yes -P/T		Disability, Cancer Care, Hospital Income	14.07%	31.50%
Jackson Memorial Hospital	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	NONE	NONE	-----	35.55%	.075+ 1.1645
Florida Power & Light Co	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	None	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	-----	25%	-----
Broward County school board	Yes-F/T N/A-PT	Yes-F/T N/A -P/T	Yes-F/T N/A -P/T	Yes-F/T N/A -P/T	None	Yes-F/T No -P/T	Yes-F/T No -P/T	NONE	NONE	-----	-----
Broward County flex Government	dollars per										Average Avg. \$8229 \$5562

² Additional information on this program is presented in Section 1.

³ The assumptions upon which these plans were based assume an estimated increase of 2% a year in replacement salaries relative to retirees salaries and that minimal insurance costs paid by the school board will increase 7.5% a year. The assumptions also assume that increases in health insurance costs will be incurred for both active and retired employees.

FRINGE BENEFITS											
Employer	Health Ins.	Life Ins.	Dental Care	Vision Care	Pres. Drug Coverage	Retirement Plan	Dependent care	Long - term Care	Other Fringe Benefits	Cost of Fringe Benefits	Cost of Retirement Benefits
F/T Employee											
Miami-Dade Community College	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Optional	-----	-----	17%	26%
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	Yes-F/T	NO	Yes-F/T	Legal; Hosp. Income	\$3,342 + 9.89%	20.14%

Source: MDCPS Wage and Salary Division; Personnel Management Service; AFSCME Salary Survey.

With regard to health care benefits, the District currently contributes \$330 a month to cover the cost of single coverage for health benefits for all full-time employees. This covers both the cost of the premium for the HMO and flexible benefits. The difference between the cost of the HMO (the monthly premium for a single person to participate in the HMO is \$238.87) and the \$330 per month paid by the District can be applied by employees to purchase additional benefits through the flexible benefits options for core benefits such as life insurance, additional health coverage and disability coverage. While actual premium rates differ both Broward County and Palm Beach County School districts cover the cost of the single rate as well as the Point of Service Plan (POS) for part and full – time employees. It should be noted that a true comparison of benefits is extremely difficult as plan designs vary. Premium rates also vary for health coverage based on the claims experience of plan participants.

To effectively address workforce instability the District needs to take a more systematic approach to assessing the factors that contribute to workforce instability and take proactive steps to address them

The practices the District has implemented to promote workforce stability are not perceived as being effective. Indeed, two out of five respondents to the employee survey (40.0%) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that “the District does an effective job of retaining its most skilled non-certificated staff. (Only 10.% of the survey respondents “strongly agree” with this statement.) With regard to the District’s effectiveness in retaining its most skilled non-certificated staff the results are similar. Approximately 37% of the survey respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement, “The District does an effective job of retaining its most skilled non-certificated staff” while only 8.4% “strongly agree” with this statement.

A number of factors contribute to the District’s shortcomings in retaining outstanding staff and promoting workforce stability in other important ways:

- The detailed information District managers need to make sound decisions is not systematically analyzed
- The District does not provide adequate incentives to encourage outstanding employees to remain employed with the District
- Succession planning is inadequate

A more detailed discussion of each of these factors follows.

Lack of analysis. The District collects a great deal of information that could be used to identify factors that contribute to workforce instability but does not analyze this information in any meaningful way. For example, detailed information is collected on the number employees who leave the District and the reasons for their leaving. Most notably, a Personnel Action Listing of Instructional and Non-instructional appointments, reassignments, leaves and separations is compiled and reported to the school board. The information provided in the Personnel Action Listing for April 12, 2001 to May 9, 2001 is presented in Exhibit 7-10.

Exhibit 7-10

Personnel Action Listings Provide A Great Deal Of Useful Information On The Number Of People Leaving The District’s Employment And The Reasons For Their Leaving

	Instructional	Non-Instructional
Full-Time Appointment	94	64
Part-Time Appointment	729	617
Reassignments, Change of Status	178	355
Leaves	81	32
Separations	692	562

Source: MDCPS school board Agenda Personnel Action Listing (April12-May 9,2001)

The District, however, does not analyze this information to identify trends or unusual variations. In addition, because the District has not analyzed its actual rate of turnover there is no way to determine whether the District’s turnover rate is higher, lower, or comparable to its peers.

Likewise, the District does not currently analyze the wealth of information that could be available from exit interviews. The Florida Department of Education has mandated that each Florida district conduct exit interviews for every teacher who leaves the classroom. This includes teachers who accept a position in another district or state; accept a position (within the District) other than teaching position (e.g., counselor, assistant principal, etc.); submit a resignation; retire; or have been terminated from employment by MDCPS. A questionnaire, provided by the Department of Education, is administered by the principal and submitted online to the District office. The results of these exit interviews have the potential to be extremely useful to the District in better understanding why employees leave and in obtaining feedback on what the District might do to retain employees.⁴ Nevertheless, the District has not analyzed the results of the exit interviews conducted thus far nor has it collected information through exit interviews for other employee groups. The District does, however, maintain a database of exit interviews that have been completed.

Lack of incentives. The incentives the District has established to reward outstanding performance are limited and, perversely, some incentives that are in place are designed to encourage employees to leave. To the District’s credit, some incentives have been established to reward performance. (These incentives have been previously discussed.) These strategies have not been structured, however, to have a District wide impact. In addition, while interview results strongly suggest that programs focused on attracting staff to schools for which it is difficult to place have not been successful, formal analysis of the District’s ability to retain staff in these hard to fill positions has not occurred. Consequently, appropriate incentives to address this need have not been developed. Moreover, while supplemental pay opportunities are well defined, the District has not established instructional performance as a requirement for staff that receive supplements. Thus, an opportunity to provide an incentive for staff to improve instructional performance has been lost.

It is also worth noting that the District continues to offer an incentive for employees to retire early despite the fact that it faces a significant challenge in recruiting sufficient teachers to meet its needs. Indeed, the District has offered some type of early retirement incentive since 1991, when it began its one time only” incentive. These incentives have, for the most part, continued retiree health benefits at the District’s expense until the retiree is Medicaid or Medicare eligible. While the primary purpose of these incentives is to reduce salary costs⁵ these savings are generally realized for only a 5-year period at which time the savings eventually go away. The cost of the benefits

⁴ Discussion with staff indicate that many teachers leave MDCPS for a variety of reasons such as desire to be closer to home, difficulty of teaching assignment, and negative press about MDCPS. These assumptions are informal, however, and need to be confirmed for planning and programmatic purposes by a more systematic assessment.

⁵ Salary savings are achieved when a relatively highly paid senior employee retires and is replaced by a new employee who starts near the bottom of the salary scale.

for the retiree continues, however, until the retiree becomes eligible for Medicaid or Medicare. Not only do these incentives provide a motivation for employees to leave the District at precisely the time hiring needs are beginning to peak, but they also remove needed knowledge, skills, experience from the District’s workforce as well as an understanding of the District’s history. Knowledge, skills, experience and a sense of history are all essential to a stable workforce.

Lack of succession planning. At present, the District focuses very little attention on succession planning. Consequently, succession planning is not an integral part of the District’s efforts to stabilize its workforce nor is succession planning used to provide a context for evaluating the impact of early retirement incentives.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District develop a performance/skilled based compensation system to recognize and reward high levels of performance and to improve workforce stability.*

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

Action Plan 7-4

Reward High Levels of Performance	
Strategy	Design and implement a performance based compensation system.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Develop and recommend to the school board a policy for performance-based compensation.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish a committee of stakeholders composed of teachers, administrators, and support staff to provide input and develop recommendations for performance based compensation system. (Similar to Joint Labor Management Committee on Benefits)</p> <p>Step 3: Align the compensation system with the performance management system for respective employee groups using criteria for improved student, school and district performance.</p> <p>Step 4: Submit the performance based compensation system to the school board for approval.</p> <p>Step 5: Negotiate the performance based compensation system with respective employee groups</p> <p>Step 6: Implement the performance based compensation system.</p> <p>Step 7: Evaluate the effectiveness of the performance based compensation systems and assess its impact on student performance.</p> <p>Step 8: Make modifications and improvements as necessary</p>
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief negotiator, Executive Director Wage and Salary Administration
Time Frame	June 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	The recommendation should be implemented within existing resources. Phase in new system with new employees replacing current compensation system that rewards length of service, course credits and degrees.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District discontinue the use of early retirement incentives, which are costly and negatively impact workforce stability.*

Action Plan 7-5 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-5

Discontinue The Use Of Early Retirement Incentives	
Strategy	Assess the impact of all active district retirement incentives.
Action Needed	Step 1: Analyze the impact of all active district retirement incentives. Step 2: Develop a plan to phase out current district retirement incentive plans. Step 3: Incorporate as part of performance based compensation system recognition and reward for performance and longevity (Action Plan 7-4) Step 4: Obtain school board approval to phase out District sponsored retirement incentives. Step 5: If unable to phase out current retirement incentives, develop a policy stating that no new retirement incentive should not be established Step 6: Assess the impact on workforce stability for future planning purposes.
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer; Chief Financial Officer
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The recommendation can be implemented within existing resources. District should realize reduction in benefit costs over time.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District develop a plan to address, remedy and improve workforce stability that incorporates succession planning*

Action Plan 7-6 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-6

Develop And Implement Strategies To Improve Workforce Stability	
Strategy	Develop and implement a workforce stability and succession plan for the District and update it annually.
Action Needed	Step 1: Review and revise school district policies that negatively impact workforce stability. Step 2: Analyze factors that currently contribute to workforce instability. Step 3: Analyze district turnover data Step 4: Conduct and analyze exit interviews for all staff that leave the District. Step 5: Conduct salary and benefits comparisons Step 6: Implement internal pay equity plan. Step 7: Use data obtained in steps 3 to 6 to develop a workforce stability and succession plan for the District that identifies and addresses organizational needs Step 8: Update workforce stability and succession plan annually Step 9: Conduct annual evaluation of workforce stability and succession planning and assess additional opportunities to improve workforce stability
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	The recommendation should be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

3 **Although the District’s overall staff development program for non-instructional staff is sound, the program would benefit from a more systematic approach to developing and evaluating program offerings.**

The District’s overall staff development program for non-instructional staff is sound

The District has established a well-designed staff development program for non-instructional staff. In addition to new employee orientation, a range of course offerings⁶ are provided to non-instructional employees. These programs include: "Diversity In The Workplace" (offered to paraprofessionals and school support); "Conflict Resolution and Confrontation Skills" (offered as part of annual training bus drivers receive); "Public Relations" (offered as part of clerical training); and "Computer Literacy" (offered as part of head custodial leadership training).

In addition, online training opportunities are available to non-instructional staff. Program offerings that are available on-line include: "Microsoft Office 2000"; "Interpersonal Skills;" and "The World In Your Palm"(teaches use of the Palm O S handheld computer). Moreover, mentor programs have been established for a number of non-instructional positions including new office personnel and food service managers.

Overall satisfaction with the training program for non-instructional staff is fair as reflected in the results of the employee survey. More than half (51.6%) of the survey respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "I have the opportunity to participate in the professional development activities I need to improve my job performance," and almost three out of five respondents (59.6%) "agree" or strongly agree" that "participation in staff development programs has made me more effective". With regard to the extent to which staff development programs meet the needs of peers, however, fewer than half the respondents (41.2%) "agree" or "strongly agree." Moreover, the percentage of survey respondents who "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with these statements is not insignificant, indicating additional room for improvement. (Survey results relating to training for non-instructional staff are summarized in Exhibit 7-10.)

Exhibit 7-10

Satisfaction with the Training Program for Non-Instructional Staff Is Mixed

Survey Item	Percentage Who "Strongly Disagree"	Percentage Who "Disagree"	Percentage Who Are "Neutral"	Percentage Who "Agree"	Percentage Who "Strongly Agree"
I have the opportunity to participate in the professional development activities I need to improve my job performance	13.7%	17.3%	17.4%	34.2%	17.4%
Overall staff develop program offerings address the needs of my peers	16.1%	18.5%	24.3%	28.7%	12.5%
Participation in staff development programs has made me more effective	9.0%	12.0%	20.2%	40.8%	18.8%

Source: Berkshire Advisors employee survey.

⁶ These course offerings are detailed in the District’s Master Plan for staff development.

It is worth noting that not only are well-designed course offerings available to non-instructional staff but non-instructional staff are taking advantage of these opportunities. A review of the training records⁷ for 20 randomly selected non-instructional employees revealed that all employees had taken part in the new employee orientation and that these employees participated an average of 24.2 hours of training over the most recent 12 month period. (The hours of training employees received ranged from 100 hours for the employee with the most training to 2 hours for the employee with the fewest hours of training over this period).

The staff development program for non-instructional staff would benefit from a more systematic approach to developing and evaluating program offerings

Despite the overall strength of the staff development program for non-instructional staff, the program would benefit from a more systematic approach to developing and evaluating program offerings. For example, while the District should be commended for using a needs assessment to help develop the training program, this needs assessment does not currently adequately reflect district long-term needs and priorities

In addition, while staff development courses are evaluated the success of these programs in building the staff capabilities needed to address the district’s overall needs are not currently assessed. Moreover, the department does not currently make sufficient use of feedback from program participants to evaluate the quality of orientation and in-service training programs. Indeed, more than half of the non-instructional survey respondents (52.6%) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement, “My feedback relating to the District’s new employee orientation program has been solicited.” (Only slightly more than a quarter of the survey respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Likewise, while two out of five non-instructional staff surveyed (42.7%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that “my feedback on the staff development programs in which I have participated has been solicited” more than a third (33.6%) “disagree” or “strongly disagree.”

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District modify the approach it currently takes to developing and evaluating staff development offerings for non-instructional staff to ensure these offerings adequately reflect the district’s overall needs.*

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

Action Plan 7-7

Align Non-Instructional Staff Development Offerings with Long-Term Needs and Priorities of the District	
Strategy	Modify approaches to developing and evaluating staff development offerings for non-instructional staff.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish District priorities for staff development based on District Improvement Goals and Program Initiatives annually. Step 2: Assess staff to determine staff development needs based on District Staff Development priorities. Step 3: Conduct survey to determine areas of need identified by staff. Step 4: Prepare staff development offerings. Step 5: Conduct staff survey annually to solicit input on staff development needs and offerings.

⁷ The Personnel Management and Services Department is responsible for maintaining training records on-line for non-instructional staff.

	Step 6: Evaluate the quality of staff development offerings using staff feedback annually.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Development
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

4 Although the District’s overall staff development program for instructional staff is sound some modest steps can be taken to strengthen the program

The District’s overall staff development program for instructional staff is sound

Overall the District’s staff development program for instructional staff is quite good. This finding is strongly supported by the fact that overall satisfaction with the professional development program as reflected in the employee survey results is high. Indeed, as Exhibit 7-11 shows, the percentage of school-based instructional staff that “agree” or “strongly agree” with three survey items relating to professional development approaches or exceeds two-thirds percent.

Exhibit 7-11

Satisfaction With The Professional Development Program For School Based Instructional Staff Is High

Survey Item	Percentage Who “Strongly Disagree”	Percentage Who “Disagree”	Percentage Who Are “Neutral”	Percentage Who “Agree”	Percentage Who “Strongly Agree”
I have the opportunity to participate in the professional development activities I need to improve my job performance	7.3%	9.5%	11.2%	35.1%	36.9%
Overall staff develop program offerings address the needs of my peers	7.2%	12.7%	14.8%	38.5%	26.9%
Participation in staff development programs has made me more effective	5.1%	7.9%	15.7%	39.9%	31.4%

Source: Berkshire Advisors employee survey.

It is worth noting that not only are well-designed course offerings available to instructional staff but instructional staff are taking advantage of these opportunities. A review of the training records⁸ for 20 randomly selected

⁸ The Personnel Management and Services Department is responsible for maintaining training records on-line for non-instructional staff.

instructional employees (teachers) revealed that all teachers had taken part in the new teacher orientation and that these teachers accumulated an average of 131 master plan points over the most recent validity period. (The master plan points received ranged from 488 for the employee with the most master plan points to 4 for the employee with the least master plan points for this validity period.)

The overall success of the professional development program is based in large part on its sound design. The program has a number of notable features include the following:

- An effective orientation program is incorporated into the overall staff development plan
- A new teacher induction program has been established
- Planning for teaching incorporates an assessment of student achievement
- Effective use is made of training funds
- The training of instructional staff includes a number of key components that are center to improving classroom performance
- A variety of training approaches are used
- Follow-up evaluations are performed to ensure that training results in improved performance
- Instructional staff are encouraged to pursue certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching standards

A discussion of each of these features of the District's professional development program follows.

Orientation program. A review of agendas for orientation programs strongly indicates that a sound, effective orientation program for new instructional employees has been established. This orientation program has been approved by the Florida Department of Education and, as required by the Department of Education, participants are surveyed each year to obtain feedback and input. (It should be noted, however, that this finding is not consistently confirmed by the results of the employee survey. About a third (35.8%) of the instructional staff who have been employed by the District for less than three years "agree" or "strongly agree" that their feedback relating to the orientation program has been solicited while about an equal percentage (36.5%) "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with this statement.) In addition, meeting agendas indicate that the District plans its orientation program jointly with the United Teachers of Dade.

Induction program. The District has established a comprehensive induction program that provides new teachers with the opportunities to learn the skills needed to be successful in specific school environments. Formal mentors⁹, who receive master plan points for certification purposes, provide support for some teachers. Other teachers are supported by National Board Certified Teachers. (The Professional Assessment and Comprehensive Evaluation System (PACES) also provide new teachers with a professional growth team, which includes a colleague teacher.)

Planning. The District is also thoughtful about what training teachers are provided. Most notably, the District undertakes an annual needs assessment to understand training needs. This assessment process includes a number of factors including indicators of student performance (for training provided through the Title II Eisenhower Professional Development Program). In addition, plans are in place to incorporate student indicators as a key component in the professional development planning process for teachers.

Use of training funds. The District's use of training funds is based on the Master Plan for Staff Development that has been approved by the Board and the Florida Department of Education. (At present, professional development activities related to standards implementation receive the largest share of professional development funds.) The District has also taken a number of steps to improve the cost-effectiveness with which professional development services are provided. Most notably, the District provides training online and is in the beginning stages of implementing a virtual campus and distance learning.

⁹ Mentors have the opportunity to participate in training to help them learn mentoring techniques and practices.

Training components. The training of instructional staff includes a number of key components that are central to improving performance in the classroom. A review of the Master Plan for in-service education, interviews with professional development staff, and the teacher-director of the Teacher Education Center confirm that training for instructional staff includes two key components: research-based teaching strategies that increase student learning and development and strategies for assessing student performance. The results of the employee survey also confirm that these components are included as parts of the training teachers receive. Almost two thirds (63.5%) of the school-based instructional staff surveyed “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I have received training in how to use research-based teaching strategies that increase student learning and development.” Moreover, almost four out of five school-based instructional staff (79.9%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that “I have received training relating to developing and implementing student performance.”

Training approaches. Interviews and a review of the Master Plan for in-service education suggest that a variety of training approaches (e.g., lecture, simulation of techniques, observations, classroom practice and feedback) are used to provide training. This finding is confirmed by the results of the employee survey. Three out of four school of the school-based instructional staff surveyed (75.8%) “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement “A variety of approaches are used to provide the training I have received.”

Follow-up evaluations. One of the keys to any effective training initiative is the follow-up needed to ensure that the training individuals receive translates into improved practices. In the Miami-Dade Public Schools the Teacher Education Center is responsible for providing on-site follow-up. The building “techs” who are responsible for staff development at individual school sites work closely with Teacher Education Center staff to ensure teacher use of time subsequent to training is assessed to determine if learning is embedded in the teaching and learning process. Teachers also return to the Teacher Education Center to assess the level of implementation of research based instructional strategies. The success of these efforts is reflected in the results of the employee survey. Three-fourths (74.5%) of the school-based instructional staff that responded to the survey “agree” or “strongly agree” that “participation in staff development programs has made me more effective.”

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification. In accordance with the provisions of Florida law, the District has developed policies to encourage instructional personnel to pursue certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. Candidates receive a \$7,500 stipend for pursuing certification; National Board certified teachers receive a \$4,100 stipend if they mentor other candidates; and candidates who complete the portfolio portion of the process receive 120 master plan points. The success of the District’s efforts in encouraging teachers to pursue National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification is reflected in the fact that the District currently has 132 National Board Certified teachers and ranks first in the State of Florida and fourth in the nation in the number of National Board Certified Teachers employed. An additional 170 teachers have applied for certification for the 2001-2002 school year.

Disaggregated data should be used to evaluate training needs

As noted, the district currently conducts an annual needs assessment to understand training needs. While the information that is used to perform this assessment includes some information relating to student performance, at present information on student performance is not disaggregated to ensure needs are properly identified. In the same way, information from employee evaluations is not disaggregated to the extent needed to pinpoint the staff development needs of individuals and groups of instructional staff.

Continued operation of the DATA center is not cost-effective

The Dade Academy for the Teaching Arts (DATA Center) began in 1986 as part of a career ladder program and in partnership with the United Teachers of DADE. (The Academy, which provides a nine-week sabbatical for approximately 48 secondary teachers each year, is staffed with 12 resident teachers and 24 adjunct teachers.) The adjunct teachers replace participating teachers for the nine-week period during which participating teachers engage in classroom observations of other teachers, participate in field experiences, and attend workshops and seminars. In addition, the teacher produces a product such as the establishment of a school within a school program at the end of the nine-week period.

Formal evaluations of the program have not produced longitudinal data as to program effectiveness, improved instruction or improved student performance. While the program provides a professional development opportunity for individual participants, its impact is limited because it benefits a relatively small number of teachers and has little or no district-wide impact. Moreover, the cost of the program is not small. The program's current cost is \$1.2 million dollars or approximately \$20,000 per participating teacher for the 2001-2002 school year. Eliminating this program will not materially affect the quality of professional development in the District and will result in significant savings.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the district use disaggregated information on student performance and from employee evaluations to ensure staff development offerings for instructional staff focus on priority needs.
- We recommend that the DATA Center be discontinued which will reduce costs without materially affecting the quality of staff development programs.

Action Plan 7-8 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-8

Improve Instructional Staff Development	
Strategy	Use disaggregated data on student performance to improve staff development and discontinue the DATA Center.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine criteria to be used in disaggregating data on student performance to improve staff development offerings Step 2: Analyze results of employee evaluations to determine staff development needs Step 3: Report results of steps 1 and 2 to the Superintendent Step 4: Develop staff development offerings to be included in the Master Plan for Staff Development Step 5: Assess the results of staff development efforts using employee feedback to determine whether staff development activities have been effective. Step 6: Close the DATA Center.
Who is Responsible	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Development; Office of Education Planning
Time Frame	January, 2003
Fiscal Impact	This District will save \$1.2 million annually and \$6 million over five years.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

5 The District’s staff development program for school-based administrators is sound, yet procedures for soliciting and reviewing feedback on administrator performance by stakeholders should be strengthened.

Overall, the staff development program for school-based administrators is quite good

Overall the District’s staff development program for school-based administrators is very good. This finding is strongly supported by the fact that the overall satisfaction of school-based administrators with the professional development program as reflected in survey results is high. Indeed, as Exhibit 7-12 shows, the percentage of school based administrators that “agree” or “strongly agree” with each of three survey items dealing with professional development approaches or exceeds 80%.

Exhibit 7-12

School-Based Administrators Are Extremely Satisfied With Their Professional Development Programs

Survey Item	Percentage Who “Strongly Disagree”	Percentage Who “Disagree”	Percentage Who Are “Neutral”	Percentage Who “Agree”	Percentage Who “Strongly Agree”
I have the opportunity to participate in the professional development activities I need to improve my job performance	4.1%	7.3%	9.1%	27.0%	52.5%
Overall staff development program offerings address the needs of my peers	3.3%	9.7%	8.5%	33.8%	44.7%
Participation in staff development programs has made me more effective	1.5%	4.4%	10.2%	36.0%	48.0%

Source: Berkshire Advisors employee survey.

The District’s professional development programs for school-based administrators have a number of notable features including the following:

- All school-based administrators must complete the District’s Leadership Training Program
- All school site administrators are required to have a Professional Development Plan
- New school administrators are assigned a support team to help ensure their success
- Prospective school site administrators receive leadership training prior to be selected to be administrators
- A discussion of each of these program features follows.

Leadership training. All principals, assistant principals, and school site administrators must complete the District’s Leadership Training Program. (This requirement is confirmed by the results of the employee survey. Eighty-eight percent of the school-based administrators surveyed “agree” or “strongly agree” that they have “participated in a district leadership-training program for administrators and school-based managers.) The Leadership Training Program is a collaborative initiative between Human Resource Professional Development Staff, the Executive Training Program, and School Operations employees.

Professional development planning. To guide ongoing professional development activities for school-based administrators, each administrator is required to have a Professional Development Plan. These Professional Development Plans incorporate Sterling Criteria (Baldrige) and Sunshine State Standards. In addition, they focus on ensuring school site administrators are skilled in using the new teacher evaluation process (PACES) and have the ability to use data to assess classroom effectiveness. School Operations staff and Executive Training Program staff through the Human Resource Development Management Academy provide ongoing training consistent with this plan.

Support team. A support team consisting of a supervisory administrator, a mentor principal, and an associate mentor is assigned to each new school administrator. The responsibilities of the mentor principal and the assistant principal include participation in a training component offered through Management Training prior to working with the participant; meeting with the participant to review the self assessment data and plan activities to address areas in need of professional growth; scheduling a day for mentor shadowing; working informally (via telephone, site visits, etc.) with the mentor; working proactively with the mentor to avert problems; and linking the mentee with the Resource Cadre and other district resources to provide management training assistance. In addition, to ensure they can successfully fulfill their responsibilities as mentors, prospective mentors are required to complete a training module offered through the Management Training Academy before beginning to work with new administrators as mentors.

Leadership training for prospective school site administrators. The District provides a comprehensive training program for prospective assistant principals through the Leadership Development Institute for Teachers. Specific competencies, experiences and training are required to complete this program including but not limited to demonstration of a orientation to decisiveness, commitment to vision and mission, interpersonal sensitivity, ability to gather and analyze data, manage interaction, demonstrated organizational ability and strong written and oral communication skills. Candidates who participate in this program are identified and assessed using the Gallup – Principal Perceiver instrument, Florida Principal Assessment Competencies, and a leadership inventory.

Clearly defined procedures for soliciting and reviewing input from stakeholders on the performance of school-based administrators should be developed

Section 231.29. *Florida Statutes*, requires the District to provide a mechanism for parents and teachers to provide input into the evaluation of administrators’ performance when appropriate. While the District has established vehicles for communicating this requirement to parents and teachers – both through the Miami-Dade Academic Information Record and the District Faculty Handbook website – procedures for soliciting and reviewing feedback relative to administrative performance are not clearly defined. Likewise, it is unclear how such information is used as part of the performance assessment process. The lack of clearly defined procedures for soliciting feedback from these stakeholders not only puts the district in danger of not being in compliance with Florida law, but also more importantly, without this information a well-rounded assessment of administrator performance – which includes input from a range of perspectives – cannot be achieved.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District clearly define the process for evaluating administrator performance to ensure input is provided from teachers and parents.*

Action Plan 7-9 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-9

Develop Process for Evaluating Administrator Performance	
Strategy	Develop clearly defined and well-communicated process to ensure input from teachers and parents in the evaluation of administrator performance.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish a committee of administrators and teachers to develop survey instruments for parents and teachers relative to administrator performance. Step 2: Develop communication strategy to inform teachers and parents of the input process Step 3: Establish timeline for obtaining feedback using the newly developed surveys. Step 4: Analyze results of feedback Step 5: Incorporate feedback information into the administrator performance evaluation. Step 6: Assess effectiveness of the input process and modify it, as needed, for improvement
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer, Region Directors
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

6 An effective system for evaluating the performance of employees has been established by the District.

The District has established a sound performance evaluation system.

The District has implemented and provides to teachers a number of items relating to performance evaluation including the Teacher Assessment and Development System (TADS), Procedures for Observation, Assistance and Evaluation of Instructional Personnel, and a newly developed Professional Assistance and Comprehensive Evaluation System (PACES)¹⁰. The collective bargaining agreement also contains procedures for evaluating employees that are incorporated in the PACES process. The PACES performance evaluation system has a number of sound features including the following:

- The performance evaluation system includes an appraisal of the employee’s content knowledge
- Feedback on performance is received from a number of perspectives
- Staff whose performance is low receive written notice
- Performance evaluation results can affect the compensation instructional personnel receive
- Evaluation results are used to determine training needs

A discussion of each of these features of the performance evaluation system follows.

Appraisal of the employee’s content knowledge. Consistent with the labor contract for teachers, the PACES performance evaluation system includes an appraisal of the employee’s content knowledge. The contract states,

¹⁰ PACES has been approved by the Florida Department of Education.

“All teachers shall demonstrate through the performance of their professional responsibilities a mastery of basic skills (i.e., reading, writing, speech, computation, spelling, fundamental [generic] teach competencies, and subject matter skills) in areas of certification.” The contract also gives the District the right to develop and use diagnostic tests and assessment techniques to determine professional growth needs.

Feedback from a variety of perspectives. Consistent with the collective bargaining agreement, the PACES performance evaluation system gives school site administrators the final authority and responsibility for teacher evaluation. However, the evaluation process also allows for input from individuals with a range of perspectives about employee performance. For example, under the PACES process master teachers are allowed to assist in the assessment of teacher performance. (The collective bargaining agreement does not, however, allow teachers to evaluate other teachers.) In addition, the District provides notice to parents and teachers through the District’s Handbook and the Academic Information Record that they can provide input into the evaluation process.

Written notice of low performance. The PACES evaluation process requires that employees whose performance is low receive written notification. Procedures for informing employees of their poor performance are outlined in the District’s procedures for Observation, Assessment and Evaluation of Instructional Personnel and in the Professional Standards Manual, which also outlines due process procedures.

Link to compensation. One of the central questions that should be asked when evaluating any performance evaluation process is whether the process provides incentives for good performance and disincentives for poor performance. The district’s performance evaluation process has “teeth.” Policies and procedures are in place to withhold salary increases for instructional personnel when performance is unacceptable. In addition, in some cases, additional compensation can be paid to outstanding teachers. For example, there is a State Bonus Payment for outstanding teachers in “D” and “F” schools (as rated by FCAT scores) and for teachers working in Alternative Schools serving Violent and Disruptive Youth. Moreover, advance placement teachers are paid a bonus.

Training needs. The District compiles and uses data from employee evaluations to determine training needs. PACES places a particular emphasis on linking teaching and learning with professional development for teachers.

For the most part, the District’s performance evaluation system is effectively implemented

Establishing an effective performance evaluation system is “necessary” but not “sufficient” to ensuring productive employee evaluations. In addition, the performance evaluation system must be effectively implemented. The District has taken important steps toward ensuring that the PACES system and process are followed effectively. Most importantly, training, guidance, and coaching are provided to all personnel involved in the evaluation. In addition, training agendas and manuals of procedures have been developed by the district to support implementation of the performance evaluation process. Moreover, interviews with both union leaders and district managers confirm that training, guidance and coaching relating to performance evaluation is a strong component of the evaluation process. Respondents to the employee survey also agree that administrators receive training about the employee evaluation process. More than two-thirds (70.5%) of the administrators responding to the survey “agree” or “strongly agree” that “I have received training and/or coaching in how to evaluate personnel properly.”

Notably, the performance evaluation process has been used to support the dismissal of poor employees. (This is a key test of the effectiveness of an evaluation process as in many school districts the evaluation process is not used to dismiss ineffective staff.) Over the past few years the District has litigated and prevailed in the dismissal of 107 instructional staff for non-performance. It should be noted that these dismissals were for Professional Service Contract teachers and therefore a higher level of due process was required than for other employees. Additionally 54 instructional staff (including 15 administrators) were terminated for non-performance. (Six of the 15 administrators were re-directed to other assignments.)

The performance evaluation system is also supported by sound record keeping. In particular, procedures regarding the maintenance of records relating to poor performance, placement on probationary status, and disciplinary action

are in place (and documented in the Professional Standards Manual). In addition, staff from the Office of Professional Standards maintains a database relating to the status of cases of poor performance.

In some areas, the District’s performance evaluation system can be strengthened

Despite the overall soundness of the District’s performance evaluation system, the system can be strengthened in some areas. In particular, the linkage between performance and compensation can be strengthened. While some outstanding teachers can be rewarded in the current system relatively few opportunities are available to reward outstanding performance. Strengthening this feature of the performance evaluation system would enable the evaluation system to become the cornerstone of an accountability system that has as its driving force improving student performance. In addition, as discussed in a previous section, a more direct connection between evaluation results and training should be established.

The District has established appropriate policies relating to the drug testing of employees and provides appropriate drug or alcohol abuse assistance to employees

District policy follows federal guidelines for a drug-free workplace. Additionally, procedures for providing assistance to employees with alcohol and substance abuse problems comply with federal and Florida law as do District practices relating to notice and random drug-testing requirements. A District provided Employee Assistance Program is also available to employees who have alcohol or substance abuse problems. Moreover, in accordance with federal requirements, a substance abuse professional is contracted with by the District to work with employees who perform safety sensitive job functions and test positive for alcohol and illegal substances.

Recommendations

- *We recommended that the linkage between performance and compensation for outstanding educators be strengthened to provide needed financial incentives for improving student performance.*

Action Plan 7-4 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation. (See page 7-31)

7

The District has established effective approaches to working with poorly performing employees.

The District’s approaches to working with poorly performing employees are effective

Approaches to working with poorly performing employees fall into two broad categories: employees whose performance is merely poor and employees whose performance is unacceptable. With regard to employees whose performance is unacceptable, the District uses the Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida as the standard for defining unacceptable behavior that is harmful to students. Consistent with Board policy, employees who are identified as exhibiting unacceptable behavior are placed on administrative leave or, as appropriate, assigned to an alternate location.

Overall responsibility for dealing with employees who are not performing effectively is assigned to the Office of Professional Responsibility. Procedures for helping these employees improve their performance, or for dismissing them if their performance does not improve, appear to be in place and to be effectively implemented. One reason for the district’s success in addressing issues of poor employee performance is that the District provides training, guidance and coaching to managers in how to work effectively with poorly performing employees. This finding is confirmed by the results of the employee survey. Of the administrators surveyed 71.2% “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I have received training and/or coaching on the procedures and issues associated with working with poorly performing employees.”

The Office of Safety and Security manages allegations of employee misconduct. The prompt investigation and disposition of employee misconduct is critical to the safety and security of students. Prolonged investigations are also costly to the District when employees are placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of investigations. While the Office of Professional Responsibility has a 90 day standard for completion of investigations, staff, union members and site administrators express concern that the 90 day standard is often not met, thereby lengthening the investigation process. The Office of Safety and Security has not been accountable for meeting this standard.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District establish standards and performance measures for investigations of employee misconduct.*

Action Plan 7-10 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-10

Improve The Process For Investigating Employee Misconduct	
Strategy	Develop standards and performance measures to improve timeliness and quality of employee misconduct investigations and reports.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Convene a task force of stakeholders to review and analyze the process for handling employee misconduct investigations.</p> <p>Step 2: Establish standards for timely completion of investigations of employee misconduct.</p> <p>Step 3: Establish and develop template and standards for writing employee misconduct investigations reports.</p> <p>Step 4: Establish a review process to evaluate the quality of employee misconduct investigation reports.</p> <p>Step 5: Establish performance measures to assess improvement in quality and timeliness of the process for investigating employee misconduct.</p> <p>Step 6: Evaluate quarterly to ascertain process improvement and to make modifications as needed.</p>
Who is Responsible	Chief of Staff
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

8 Current communications approaches are not completely effective in part because a systematic process to solicit and receive feedback and input is lacking.

The District uses a variety of approaches to communicate information to employees

The District currently uses a variety of approaches to communicate information to employees including the following:

- **Distribution of materials directly to employees or to work locations.** A great deal of information is distributed directly to employees and is available at their work locations. For example, the District's employee handbook is distributed directly to employees, as is the Employee Benefit Notebook. In addition, collective bargaining agreements are widely disseminated. Moreover, each District department distributes policies and procedures appropriate for the respective area.
- **Dissemination of information via the District's website.** The Office of Information Technology maintains the District's website with input from various District offices. A broad range of information is available to employees through the website (including the employee handbook, benefit information, health benefit enrollment, and school district policies)
- **Dissemination of information using e-mail.** Interviews and focus group discussions suggest that the District makes effective use of e-mail as a means of distributing district news and other relevant information. In addition to information provided by the central and regional offices, principals distribute and post e-mail communication concerning personnel and other relevant matters.
- **Sharing of information with meetings.** Each month region personnel directors meet with central Personnel Management and Services staff to discuss a range of issues and, by all accounts, these meetings are useful. It should be noted, however, that similar meetings do not occur on a regular basis with other district departments.

Current Communications Approaches Are Not Completely Effective

Results of the employee survey suggest that the communications approaches are not completely effective. While improvement is possible in all areas, the survey results suggest the District does a better job of ensuring staff are informed about issues affecting their own jobs than about broader issues facing the District. More than two-thirds of the survey respondents (68.5%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that they are "familiar with the major issues facing the District that affect (their) job(s)." Likewise, staff is generally comfortable that they "have a sufficient understanding of the District's objectives, priorities and initiatives to effectively perform (their) job(s)." (Almost two-thirds or 64.6% of the survey respondents, "agree" or "strongly agree" with this statement.) However, survey results are somewhat less favorable with regard to the District's effectiveness in sharing information on its overall objectives and information on major new initiatives. Fewer than half (48.7%) of survey respondents "agree" or "disagree" with the statement, "The District does an effective job of communicating its objectives and priorities to District staff," and more than a quarter of the survey respondents (25.6%) "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with this statement. Moreover, while slightly more than half the survey respondents (54.4%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that "the District does an effective job of communicating information on major new initiatives with District staff," a not insignificant percentage (23.1%) "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with this statement.

Systematic processes are not in place to solicit and receive feedback from employees

The District does not solicit or receive feedback from employees in any systematic fashion. The use of feedback data to guide program, service, support or improvements appears to be completely lacking. Indeed, more than half (51.2 % of the employee survey respondents) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement, “The District has solicited my feedback when developing a major policy (through surveys, task forces, work groups, or other means)” and fewer than one in ten respondents (9.4%) “strongly agree” with this statement. It is worth noting, however, that some evidence exists that employees have provided at least some input on major policy revisions relating to benefits and teacher evaluation (PACES).

Not only are formal mechanisms for receiving feedback from employees not in place, but informal mechanisms are not in place either. Most notably, senior managers are not perceived as spending a significant amount of time visiting work sites to discuss issues with employees and receive their feedback. Indeed, almost half the survey respondents (49.8%) “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that “Senior District leaders come to my work site periodically to meet with employees,” and only 11.3% of the survey respondents “strongly agree” with this statement. Moreover, focus groups findings with staff at school sites suggest that District employees have little interface or connection to District offices. Principals indicate that they get most of their support and interaction at the region level while school based employees look to the local school administrator as the primary source for information.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the District develop a strategic plan for communication

Action Plan 7-11 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-11

Improve Communication with Employees	
Strategy	Develop a systematic process to receive feedback and input from employees.
Action Needed	Step 1: Systematically assess the effectiveness of current District communications Step 2: Conduct an employee survey to ascertain methods of communication most helpful and useful to employees Step 3: Develop and implement a variety of strategies to receive feedback and obtain input from employees. Step 4: Communicate to employees how feedback and input is used Step 5: Evaluate annually the effectiveness and usefulness of the communication plan and make modifications, as necessary.
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer and Communications Director
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

9 While the District provides and requires training for substitute personnel, the hiring and deployment of substitutes¹¹ is neither efficient nor effective.

The District has established some effective policies for managing substitute personnel

While significant improvement in the managing of substitute personnel is needed, the District has established some effective policies relating to substitute personnel. Most notably, training is now required of all new substitutes in the District before they are able to begin work. A Title VI Grant for Substitute Training (STELL) currently supports this training. In addition, information in the New Educator newsletter entitled “Substitute Teacher Survival” is also provided to substitute teachers. (While the District should be commended for requiring this training, the results of the employee survey with regard to the adequacy of this training are mixed. On the one hand, more than one third (34.2%) of the school-based administrators surveyed “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement, “Substitute teachers are well trained.” On the other hand, well more than half the school-based administrators surveyed (54.0%) “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement.)

Another effective practice that the District has initiated is the requirement that permanent substitutes who provide extended substitute service be fully certified. These permanent substitutes have access to the same professional development activities as “regular” teachers, must attend new substitute teacher training, and have their performance evaluated on an annual basis.

To the District’s credit it also conducted a study to ascertain recruitment and hiring strategies for substitute teachers. As part of this study, comparative benchmarking with other Florida and large city school districts was performed.

Overall, however, significant improvement is needed in the District’s approach to managing substitutes

A number of significant problems have been identified relating to the District’s approach to managing substitute teachers including:

- The absence of a system to monitor and manage employee absenteeism
- Ineffective procedures for assigning substitutes to schools
- Insufficient availability of substitutes in some schools
- Lack of needed support from the central office

A discussion of each of these improvement opportunities follows.

Monitoring and managing employee absenteeism. No evidence suggests that a system to monitor and evaluate rates of employee absenteeism currently exists in the District. While the collective bargaining agreement defines an unexplained absence, there is no standard by which excessive absences for employees are assessed. Further, no evidence exists that incentives are in place to discourage absenteeism. Site visits confirm that staff attendance and the lack of available substitutes is a major problem at many schools. Indeed, some schools indicate their substitute allocation was already depleted less than halfway through the school year.

¹¹ This section focuses exclusively on substitute teachers. Arranging for substitutes for non-teacher employees who are absent and need to be replaced is not supported by the District’s central office.

Substitute assignments. The process for assigning substitutes to schools is neither efficient nor effective. At present, substitutes are hired from a permanent pool of substitutes by each local school.¹² A substitute finder is employed at each school site to contact substitutes from a list provided by the District office. Several calls may be made before a replacement is found for one absence. In addition, because no standards or policies are in place to govern substitute responsibility they may or may not accept an assignment. Even worse they are not required to return to an assignment after one day. Obviously, if they decide not to return, the laborious process of identifying a substitute teacher must be repeated.

Substitute availability. Perspective with regard to whether there is sufficient availability of substitutes are mixed. More than two-thirds of the school-based administrators who responded to the employee survey (68.1%) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “The District does an effective job of hiring a sufficient number of substitute teachers.” On the other hand, slightly less than a quarter (23.5%) of the school-based administrators responding to the survey “disagree” or “slightly disagree” with this statement. Moreover, in interviews principals generally indicated that under the present system for hiring and obtaining substitute service neither the allocation nor availability of substitutes is sufficient.

The primary reason for this difference of perspectives relating to the availability of substitutes appears to stem from the fact that some schools experience higher rates of absenteeism than others due to the nature of the school program. School serving exceptional children; alternative schools and inner city schools experience greater needs than others. These schools tend to deplete their allocation earlier and have the greatest difficulty obtaining substitutes.

Lack of central office support. In interviews and focus groups, school site administrators reported inadequate response and support from the District office in maintaining sufficient substitutes. Further, examples were cited where substitute candidates were referred to the District office for hire and were given inadequate or incorrect information, turned away (in spite of severe shortage) or were not contacted to complete the hiring process. Principals also report the loss of potential substitutes for their schools due to this lack of responsiveness on the part of Personnel Management and Services staff.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the District purchase and implement an automated substitute management system.

Action Plan 7-12 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-12

Automate the Deployment of Substitute Personnel	
Strategy	Develop and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an automated substitute management system.
Action Needed	Step 1: Establish a task force to assess school substitute needs that includes principals, teachers and region office staff. Step 2: Benchmark what other Districts are doing with regard to substitute management Step 3: Incorporate local district needs and best practices when developing RFP for Automated Substitute Management System Step 4: Issue RFP. Step 5: Make recommendations to school board on recommended system

¹² In addition to “pool” substitutes who are assigned to one school or cluster of schools, a list of “emergency” substitutes is maintained. These emergency substitutes can be called if the substitute pool is depleted on a given day. Emergency substitutes are paid \$87 per day and pools substitutes are paid \$110 per day. Pool substitutes can work a maximum of 180 days during the school year.

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	Step 6: Train school district staff and substitutes on enrollment procedures and use of the automated management system.
	Step 7: Review with task force and make modifications, as necessary.
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer
Time Frame	June 30, 2003
Fiscal Impact	Initial estimated cost \$250,000 plus an estimated \$50,000 per year for updates. The costs may be offset by savings associated with reduced substitute costs (as monitoring and management of absenteeism improves) and by eliminating the need for substitute callers at school sites. (The District currently spends approximately \$350,000 a year with projected savings of \$1.75 million over a five-year period.)

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District develop and implement a strategic plan to recruit and compensate substitute teachers.*

Action Plan 7-13 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-13

Strengthen Process For Recruiting and Compensating Substitute Personnel	
Strategy	Develop and implement a strategic plan to recruit, train and compensate substitute teachers.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Establish a task force made up of teachers, administrators, and district/region personnel to examine the District’s substitute needs</p> <p>Step 2: Develop plans for recruiting, training and compensating of substitute teachers (similar to plan for recruitment presented in Action Plan 7-1)</p> <p>Step 3: Develop a District cadre of substitutes similar to pool substitutes who are compensated full-time and must be available each day to work where needed. (This district-wide cadre of substitutes should serve as the priority pool for filling vacancies. These substitutes should be permitted access to health benefits.)</p> <p>Step 4: Develop a system with processes to evaluate the performance of substitutes.</p> <p>Step 5: Evaluate giving partial experience credit for salary placement purposes for those who have worked in the District as a part of the substitute teacher cadre.</p> <p>Step 6: Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan for recruiting, hiring and compensating substitute teachers. Revise and modify for program as appropriate.</p>
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer
Time Frame	March 2002
Fiscal Impact	Can be implemented using existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

10 The District's records management system lacks an adequate and effective records retention schedule.

The District's approach to personnel records management has a number of positive features

Adequate attention to records management can increase department efficiency, decrease the number of misplaced or lost documents, support good customer service, reduce labor and other costs, improve decision-making, improve processing efficiency and reduce litigation exposure and other related problems. As a public entity, school districts are subject to specific record management guidelines mandated by the state as well as federal employment records requirements.

The District's current approach to personnel records management has a number of positive features including the following:

- Policies and procedures have been clearly established
- Responsibility for records management is clearly defined
- Personnel records are accessible
- A system has been established to locate personnel records
- Updating of personnel records is reasonably timely

A discussion of each of these positive features of the District's current approach to records management follows.

Policies and procedures. School board policy sets forth the procedures for maintaining personnel records. The policy is consistent with Florida Statutes and the State Division of Archives, History and Records Management.

Organizational responsibility. The Office of Personnel Operations and Records is responsible for personnel records maintenance and handling open records requests.

Accessibility. Personnel records are generally available to officials with the clearance to view them. Indeed, the school-based administrators responding to the employee survey overwhelmingly indicate that they are able to access personnel records at their work location: 90.5% "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "I am able to access personnel records at my work location" while only 3.8% "strongly disagree" with this statement.

Location of personnel records. The District currently keeps personnel records in three different formats – electronic images, microfiche/microfilm, and paper. Hard copy records are kept in files and boxes around the department. In addition, principals maintain some personnel records at school sites in employee files. Department staff has developed a database to assist in the location of personnel records with the date of hire serving as the guide to where they are stored.

Updating personnel records. The District has established policies to update personnel records on a timely basis. The District's self-assessment reports indicate that personnel records are updated daily on the mainframe and that the updating of hard copy records is done on a timely basis. That records are perceived to be updated in a timely manner is reflected in the results of the employee survey. Most (55.5%) of the survey respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that "personnel records are updated in a timely manner. It should be noted, however, that 27.8% of the survey respondents are neutral on this issue, which may reflect a lack of understanding of the purpose and content of personnel files. (A general lack of awareness relating to personnel files was also reflected in interviews and focus groups at school sites.)

The District's approach to records management has a number of shortcomings as well

While the District's approach to records management has a number of strengths, current approaches have a number of shortcomings as well (some of which are not completely within the control of Personnel Management and Services). The shortcomings include inadequate technology and the lack of a records retention strategy. A discussion of each of these shortcomings in the District's approach to records management follows.

Technology. While the department has worked hard over the last four years to use technology to support records management, it is victimized by the lack of an integrated Human Resource Information System. There are currently over 50 standalone databases in the department that operate from a mainframe platform. Maintaining so many databases is not only inefficient from a processing perspective but also requires duplicative effort (identical data must be entered into more than one database) and increases the risk of errors (the more times data is entered into a database the greater the likelihood of error). For example, because the current Applicant Tracking System stands alone there is currently no way to transfer applicant information onto payroll and benefit databases once an individual is hired. It should be stressed that maintaining so many databases is not only ineffective and inefficient from the perspective of the central human resource function but maintaining so many databases also makes it more difficult for staff in the field to access meaningful personnel information. While, as noted, personnel data is available to site managers, using databases that stand alone and operate from a mainframe platform limits the ability of site managers to interact with the system in any meaningful way. For example, site managers cannot update or correct the local school assignment such as a change in grade level assignment. At present, school sites are primarily limited to amending attendance information.

Records retention strategy. The District has not developed an effective strategy for records retention. On the contrary, there appears to be a belief by the District that all personnel records must be retained forever. Without a records retention strategy there is no way for the department to determine what paper records should be processed using the Minolta Document Imaging System (currently used for the electronic imaging of personnel records) and what records should be retained in hard copy because they will be first in line to be destroyed. (Sixty seven million images would need to be recorded to clear the backlog of personnel records that currently exists.) At present, personnel records for employees hired before 1983 are on microfiche/microfilm and personnel records for employees hired after August 1998 are imaged. Other than this standard there is no expectation with regard to what form records should be kept. A sample of randomly selected personnel records from employees represented by seven bargaining units revealed that records are currently kept in a wide variety of formats driven by date of hire. In the sample, 70 items (36.6%) had been imaged, 51 (26.8%) were in paper folders, and 70 (36.6%) were on microfiche/microfilm. Some sample items were stored in one or more of these formats.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District aggressively develop, implement and support a quality, on-going records management program in compliance with state and federal records retention requirement to include technology upgrading.*

Action Plan 7-14 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-14

Develop, implement and support a quality, on-going records management program	
Strategy	Develop a records retention schedule for all personnel records in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
Action Needed	Step 1: Complete a comprehensive records inventory creating a list of all personnel related data and records.

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- Step 2: Establish a task force (which should include a representative of each Personnel and Management Services unit) and charge this task force with identifying District employee record issues and with developing a strategic plan for managing department records.
 - Step 3: Develop policies for creating, storing and retrieving personnel files.
 - Step 4: Implement and post a retention schedule for all personnel documents consistent with requirements set forth in Florida Statutes and established by the State Division of Archives, History, and Records Management.
 - Step 5: Assess and establish appropriate methods of records destruction that reflects confidentiality, legal and environmental standards.
 - Step 6: Develop a records management manual.
 - Step 7: Develop a plan to image all records currently not imaged. (Outsource this project as necessary to eliminate the current backlog.)
 - Step 8: Assess records management procedures, identify areas and sources for improved processes, to include technology upgrade, update records management manual annually, train personnel staff regularly and review district, state and federal mandates relating to records retention to ensure compliance

Who is Responsible	Executive Director of the Office of Personnel Operations and Records Management; Executive Director, Office of Information Technology
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

11 While the District’s use of cost containment practices for its workers’ compensation program is commendable, policies and procedures for early return to work should be strengthened.

The District’s use of cost containment practices for its Workers’ Compensations Program is commendable

The District has worked aggressively to control its workers’ compensation costs and these efforts have resulted in considerable success. From 1998 to 2001 the District’s experience ratings ¹³ have improved from a rating of .83 in 1998 to a rating of .99 in 2001. These rating gains are not only significant, they have also been consistent. In each year during this period with the exception of 1999, experience ratings improved over the prior year’s experience rating. Moreover, the District has received a rating of 100% compliance with no deficiencies from the State of Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).

A number of strategies have contributed to the District’s success in controlling workers’ compensation costs:

- The District makes effective use of information to control costs
- A third party administrator is used to support cost control efforts
- An effective safety program has been established
- Information on workers’ compensation procedures is widely disseminated

A brief discussion of each of these strategies follows.

¹³ Claims/loses as a percent of payroll used to establish premium rates.

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Information. The District uses information very effectively as a tool for controlling workers' compensation costs. Information on the District's loss experience is carefully tracked and used to develop cost control strategies. In particular, the Medical Savings Detail Report provided through the CorVel Information System is used to monitor costs and cost savings. The District also monitors claims and costs by location and department and produces a Stewardship Report that reports this information. Moreover, competitive benchmarking is used to gauge the success of its efforts and to identify cost control practices used in other organizations. The District aggressively tracks and compares its performance with state and national statistics, peer and area school districts, and government and private industry.

Third party administrator. The District uses a third party administrator to provide on-going loss prevention services. Gallagher-Barrett Loss Prevention Services provides a comprehensive risk control service to the District. According to District managers, the use of this service has contributed significantly to the District's improved experience ratings from AHCA and its success in controlling costs.

Safety program. The District's safety inspection program is included as a part of its contract with Gallagher-Barrett Loss Prevention Services. Under this program, the third party administrator conducts on-site inspections and then prepares follow-up reports to the District with recommendations for corrective action. High-risk areas and professions are inspected on a routine basis.

This program appears to be quite successful. Principals of high-risk schools and programs (e.g., Exceptional Student Education schools) report reductions in workers' compensation claims and prompt response when requests are made for inspection. They further report that employee attendance improves when corrective action plans are implemented.

Information dissemination. Ensuring employees understand the workers' compensation program not only assures that they will benefit from it as warranted but also, by raising awareness, provides a vehicle for reducing claims. The District currently does an excellent job of sharing information about the Workers' compensation program. A comprehensive workers' compensation procedures manual is distributed to all school district employees. This manual provides information to employees on workers' compensation claims ranging from report of injury to advocacy. That employees are familiar with policies and procedures relating to workers' compensation is supported by the results of the employee survey. More than two-thirds of the survey respondents (66.7%) "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "I am aware of District requirements relating to the reporting of on-the-job injuries." (Only 7.3% of the survey respondents "strongly disagree" with this statement.)

Policies and procedures for early return to work should be strengthened

The District is not currently taking full advantage of opportunities to reduce workers' compensation costs by establishing transitional work programs for claimants. The Workers Rehabilitation Alternative allows payment of up to 80% of salary when a claimant returns to work in a transitional work program. This incentive encourages work site supervisors to use transitional program workers while the worker gradually returns to full work capacity and the District gradually assumes the full salary cost of the employee. Early return to work and/or transitional work programs have significantly reduced workers' Compensation claims where school districts have established a definitive policy and procedures for implementation and accountability.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District develop clear policies and procedures for early return to work to strengthen its workers compensations cost containment efforts.*

Action Plan 7-15 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-15

Strengthen Policies And Procedures For Early Return To Work	
Strategy	Assign leadership and responsibility for implementing an Early Return to Work Program.
Action Needed	<p>Step 1: Assign the leadership and responsibility for a Board approved early return to work program to the Office of Risk and Benefits Management</p> <p>Step 2: Develop policy and procedures for the early return to work program.</p> <p>Step 3: Use the Joint Labor Management Committee on benefits to receive input, feedback and guidance in the development of the program.</p> <p>Step 4: Assess and determine areas where transitional work can be performed.</p> <p>Step 5: Obtain Board approval for the Early Return to Work Program.</p> <p>Step 6: Develop and implement communication strategy for the Early Return to Work Program.</p> <p>Step 7: Evaluate the program each year and make modifications to improve effectiveness.</p>
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources. Savings of 2 percentage of current costs will likely result. Savings of \$2.5 million over five years is anticipated.

12 Standards and measures are not used to assess program performance, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Performance measures and data are not used to guide human resource program initiatives

As discussed throughout this chapter, the performance of Personnel Management and Services is sound in many respects. The Department will not be able to reach even higher levels of performance, however, unless its leadership begins to make more effective use of performance measures and data to guide program initiatives. At present, program efforts and initiatives are guided by the past experience of the Department’s leadership. While this experience is credible, it does not provide a sound basis for evaluating program strengths and shortcomings, assessing needs, developing programs, improving programs that are in place, and determining what programs should be retained and what programs should be discontinued. Deficiencies in the Department’s use of information to guide decision making is reflected in a number of ways:

- Benchmark comparisons or other relevant data are not used to establish program priorities or assess cost efficiency
- Regular evaluations of the performance and costs of the human resources program does not occur
- The use of analysis to determine the potential cost savings of alternative service delivery approaches (such as privatization or contracting services) does not occur as a general practice¹⁴.
- Comparisons with other districts to understand program implementation approaches occurs only on a limited basis (e.g., substitute recruitment strategies)

¹⁴ It should be noted that the Office of Risk and Benefits Management has analyzed the costs of internal versus external administration of workers’ compensation loss prevention services. In addition, school board benefit-funding comparisons have been made with other Florida districts.

- The lack of priority the Department places on using information and performance measures to guide decision making and drive improvement efforts is reflected most clearly in the Department’s strategic plan (the Hallmark of Leadership document). While goals and objectives are articulated in this strategic plan, the plan does not provide any baseline indicators that can be used to evaluate improvement or success. In addition, the action plans incorporated in the strategic plan lack standards, which can be used to assess whether the action plan objectives are met.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the Department of Personnel Management and Services develop and implement a strategic plan that includes specific performance standards and measures*

Action Plan 7-16 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-16

Develop Strategic Plan That Includes Performance Standards And Measures	
Strategy	Revise and update the Hallmark of Leadership (current strategic plan).
Action Needed	Step 1: Obtain data and feedback in each of 15 critical success factor areas ¹⁵ Step 2: Analyze data and feedback Step 3: Use analysis to guide strategic planning process Step 4: Hire a consultant to lead strategic planning process Step 5: Review current vision and mission for relevance Step 6: Establish performance goals Step 7: Set performance indicators and measures in the critical success areas as determined by the data analysis Step 8: Define appropriate responsibilities Step 9: Align program activities to expenditures Step 10: Evaluate effectiveness of program activities Step 11: Make program change and modifications as needed
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

¹⁵ Critical success factors for typical human resource management practices should be used to measure the Department’s performance. These factors should guide the strategic planning process and serve as the basis for evaluation Department performance. These critical success factors are: leadership and stewardship; visionary and strategic planning; organizational structure; human resources effectiveness measures; operational efficiency; customer service orientation; organizational culture and work environment; recruitment and staffing; employee benefit administration; compensation and salary administration; performance management; training and development; technology; and compliance.

13 **The structure and staffing of Personnel Management and Services should be assessed on an ongoing basis to determine effectiveness**

The organizational structure of Personnel Management and Services is not evaluated on an ongoing basis

The current Personnel Management and Services organizational structure was developed as the result of a staffing retreat held in 1996. The structure was designed, in part, to align with the District's six regions to improve responsiveness to those regions. While this feature of the organizational structure is sound, other features of the current structure are less compelling. For example, while reporting lines with the structure are clear, spans of control do not appear to be by industry standards, benchmark comparisons or any rationale. Indeed, some units and individuals have significantly greater spans of control than others. For example, within the Office of Human Resources and Development the Executive Director for Instructional Staffing and Certification manages and supervises all instructional staffing and all certification activities for the District while the Executive Director for Non-Instructional Staffing has responsibility for supervising and managing non-instructional staffing only. Moreover, the Assistant Superintendent, Executive Officers, Administrative Directors all have the same general level of organizational authority and responsibility but have different titles and compensation.

Despite these shortcomings in the current organizational structure, there has been no review of the organizational structure since it was first established in 1996. Consequently, no reports have been made to the school board regarding changes in organizational structure.¹⁶

While Personnel Management and Services staff is appropriate, the Department would benefit from more clearly defined staffing standards

Comparison of Personnel Management and Services staffing with the staffing of the human resources function in six other districts (with between 12,000 and 27,000 employees) indicates that Personnel Management and Services staffing is adequate. The Personnel Management and Services staffing ratio of 700 employees served for each human resources employees compares favorably with ratios in the Broward County Public Schools (600 employees served for every human resources employee) and the Palm Beach County Public Schools (450 employees served for every human resource employee). Some districts in the survey had ratios as low as 250 employees served for each human resources employee.

While these comparisons are useful in assessing the overall level of Personnel Management and Services staffing, more detailed benchmark comparisons of, for example, staffing per employee by human resource function would be beneficial. In addition, establishing staffing standards based on service expectations, workload, and the systems used to support human resource function would also be beneficial. At present, no such detailed analysis of Personnel Management and Services staffing is performed.

Recommendations

- *We recommend a review of the organizational structure and staffing levels of personnel management services using clearly defined criteria be conducted each year.*

Action Plan 7-17 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

¹⁶ The Deputy Superintendent for Personnel Management has provided an annual report to the school board on program activities. This report has not provided recommendations for program improvement, however.

Action Plan 7-17

Review Organizational Structure And Staffing Levels	
Strategy	Assess organizational structure and staffing levels using clearly defined criteria.
Action Needed	Step 1: Conduct customer surveys to ascertain level of satisfaction with current levels of service. Step 2: Evaluate organizational structure, systems and processes to determine what changes are needed to improve service. Step 3: Benchmark other organizations to understand how they have addressed similar issues Step 4: Determine areas needing modification/change Step 5: Develop criteria recommendations for organizational change and staffing modifications Step 6: Draft revised organizational and structural plans Step 7: Obtain school board approval for any reorganization/restructuring Step 8: Evaluate and update organizational structure annually to meet changing District needs and priorities.
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

14 A systematic process to solicit feedback from clients /customers should be established to guide improvements in service delivery and personnel practices.

Perceptions of Personnel Management and Services response to requests for personnel assistance are mixed

Region directors and principals articulate satisfaction with the level of response to requests for personnel assistance (particularly from the Office of Professional Responsibility). However, interviews and focus group findings suggest that as one moves from managers and leaders to line employees the level of satisfaction with the responsiveness of Personnel and Management Services declines. In interviews and focus groups, staff voiced concern that unless you are a principal/manager you are unlikely to receive a return phone call. Principals, on the other hand, indicate success in using phone, fax and e-mail to make and receive responses on personnel issues.

These findings are supported in the results of the employee survey. As Exhibit 7-13 shows the percentage of non-administrator survey respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “Requests for personnel assistance are handled promptly” is 21.7% less than the percentage of administrators who “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Moreover, the percentage of non-administrators who “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement is 9.4% higher than for administrators.

Exhibit 7-13

Non-Administrators Are Less Satisfied With The Response To Personnel Assistance Than Administrators

	Administrators	Non-Administrators	Difference
Strongly Agree(a)	24.3%	9.8%	14.5%
Agree(a)	37.0%	29.8%	7.2%
Neutral(a)	20.0%	32.3%	(12.3%)
Disagree(a)	12.4%	15.1%	(2.7%)
Strongly Disagree)	6.3%	13.0%	(6.7%)

(a) Agree or disagree with the statement “Requests for personnel assistance are handled promptly.”

Source: Berkshire Advisors Employee Survey.

Periodic evaluation of personnel practices and adjustments of these practices is needed to reduce costs and/or improve efficiency and effectiveness

The District has not implemented a review of the human resource program’s delivery of service to reduce costs and improve efficiency and effectiveness. Such studies have been conducted in many comparable school districts to assist in improving program service delivery. Systematic evaluation of human resources services have, for example, been performed in the New Orleans Public Schools, the Providence Public Schools, the Rhode Island Public Schools, the Buffalo Public Schools, the District of Columbia Public Schools, and the Houston Independent School District. In the absence of a comprehensive review of personnel services, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools System has relied on the past experience of leadership to guide program changes and modifications.

In addition to a comprehensive review of human resources operations, an accountability system should be established that incorporates a systematic process for soliciting feedback from clients/customers and ongoing evaluation of performance using performance measures (as discussed in Section 12). The annual report presented to the school board by the Office of Personnel Management and Services does not contain such an analysis and does not provide recommendations for program change and/or improvement.

The District does not mandate direct deposit of employee pay

While the District does not mandate direct deposit of employee pay, 70% of all district employees take advantage of direct deposit. The participation of 70% of the District’s 39,000 full-time and 12,000 part-time employees is reasonably good. This high participation rate stems in part from the District’s efforts to encourage participation through e-mail and direct correspondence to employees.

The best practices defined by OPPAGA and approved by the Commissioner of Education suggest that mandatory direct deposit of employee pay can be an indicator of efficient personnel practices. To maximize the efficiencies obtained through the use of direct deposit, the District should continue to expand its use. For example, the District could routinely require new employees to sign up for direct deposit, unless extraordinary circumstances exist that make direct deposit an unsatisfactory option for an individual employee.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District assess the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery and personnel practices.*

Action Plan 7-18 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-18

Assess Service Delivery and Personnel Practices	
Strategy	Conduct a needs assessment and solicit employee feedback with regard to the effectiveness and efficiency of human resource program services.
Action Needed	Step 1: Conduct a needs assessment of the District relative to human resource needs. Step 2: Conduct an employee survey to obtain feedback about the efficiency and effectiveness of human resource programs Step 3: Use results to set strategic goals and objectives for the program Step 4: Define criteria or measurement for services Step 5: Identify assumptions, limitations and resources needed to accomplish goals Step 6: Re-assess and make program changes, modifications, improvements based on results of assessment evaluation.
Who is Responsible	Chief Personnel Officer
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- *We recommend that the District develop policies that increase the use of direct deposit of employee pay.*

Action Plan 7-19 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-19

Mandate Direct Deposit of Pay	
Strategy	Develop policies that increase the use of direct deposit of employee pay.
Action Needed	Step 1: Develop policies to increase the use of direct deposit of employee pay, such as requiring it for new employees, and identifying criteria for allowing exceptions to this practice. Step 2: Work with labor leaders to establish timelines for implementing this policy and identify exceptions. Step 3: Submit policy to the Board for approval. Step 4: Communicate policy and timelines to staff. Step 5: Implement policy.
Who is Responsible	Deputy Superintendent Personnel Management and Services
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

15 **The District's collective bargaining process is sound but can be strengthened by improving communication and clarifying the role of the District's chief negotiator.**

District labor relations practices are generally sound

The Office of Legislative and Labor Relations was established in 1973 and given sole responsibility for managing the District's labor relations program. This office has the responsibility for: negotiating labor agreements; managing labor relations matters including contract implementation and administration; representing the schools in arbitration and impasse proceedings, unfair labor practice charge, and other Public Employee Relations Commission Hearings; and training staff on labor relations issues. The District's approach to labor relations is generally sound and incorporates a number of positive features including the following:

- The District's decision-making process is in compliance with the statutory roles
- The process for reviewing and evaluating negotiations proposals is sound
- Records of negotiations are maintained

Compliance. The District's decision-making process is in compliance with the statutory roles assigned to the Superintendent of Schools and the school board through its Chief negotiator with Chapter 447, Florida Statutes.

Negotiations proposals. The District's approach to requesting and reviewing negotiations proposals is generally sound. This process begins by the District issuing a request for negotiations proposals. These proposals are submitted to the chief negotiator and reviewed by the Collective Bargaining Issues Review Committee. Senior staff members also review the proposals for operational, fiscal and programmatic impact. In addition, the Office of Financial Affairs and the Division of Wage and Salary Administration perform cost analysis of both District and union proposals. The Superintendent of schools makes the final determination as to what proposals are reviewed and recommended to the school board for approval. The chief negotiator then receives authorization from the school board to negotiate on behalf of the District.

One particularly positive feature of this process is the extent to which administrators from throughout the District are involved in the process. Almost half (48.4%) of the administrators who responded to the survey "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "I have the opportunity to provide substantive input during the contract negotiations process."

Records. The Office of Legislative and Labor Relations has maintained negotiations records since 1974. These records are referenced chronologically and serve as negotiation history.

The District should ensure that an attorney supports the contract negotiations process

During recent teacher and school police negotiations an attorney was not at the table during negotiations. This had not been a problem during prior negotiations because the chief negotiator who preceded the current incumbent was also an attorney. Given the importance of contract issues to the District's overall management ensuring a legal expert is available to support the negotiations process is extremely important.

It should be noted, however, that District legal counsel is retained for representation on all labor relation matters. Legal Counsel is also retained for representation on litigation issues to provide as needed advice, representation, and counsel.

The role of the District's chief negotiator should be clarified

Allegations of unfair labor practices have risen during recent negotiations with teachers. This resulted in large part due to written communication to the school board from the previous Superintendent of Schools that unilaterally stopped the negotiation process with the Dade Federation of Teachers. In addition, in interviews union leaders expressed legitimate concern about the level of authority granted to the Chief negotiator. In particular, they were concerned that the Chief negotiator had not been given clear authority to reach tentative agreements of behalf of the District to resolve economic issues during the recent negotiations with the teachers' union and the safety and security union. Confidence and trust on the part of all parties is critical to the success of the collective bargaining process. Consequently, with the change in school district leadership, a restatement of the District's negotiations philosophy and process may be helpful. Likewise, the role of the District' Chief negotiator should be clarified.

The District's initial efforts to establish interest-based decision making should be expanded and supported by improved communications

While interest-based problem solving¹⁷ does not define the District's approach to making all decisions that affect employees, in some areas the District has taken advantage of this process when making decisions. In particular, union leaders and the chief negotiator report that many labor negotiations issues are resolved using a joint District and union committee structure. For example, the District's joint labor management committee recently completed a review of health benefits. Rising premium costs, provider access, choice of plans and providers and plan design were the issues under review. In interviews, union leaders expressed strong satisfaction with the review and decision-making process in part because it gave them a sense of ownership for the outcome. As a result of this effort, the school board has approved a new health benefit program with changes to minimize the impact of rate increases. This was an excellent process and one that should serve as a model for decision-making using interest-based problem solving.

While the District's process for reviewing health benefits was excellent, it would have been even more effective had it included a strong communications component. Interviews and focus groups with staff and school sites indicated that these employees lack a clear understanding about the changes, why the changes were needed, and what the impact of the changes would be. In short, confusion and lack of understanding was evidenced by those affected by the decision. These findings underscore the need for strategic communications to be included as a key component of a model of interest-based decision making. The primary shortcoming of the District's approach to reviewing health benefits was not the quality of the process used to make the decisions but the failure to effectively communicate the results of this process to interested stakeholders. Missing from this process was a strategic communication design.

Recommendations

- *We recommend that the District use an interest-based approach to collective bargaining and problem solving.*

Action Plan 7-20 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

¹⁷ Interest based decision-making is a process whereby the interests of all parties are considered in the decision-making process.

Action Plan 7-20

Strengthen Interest-Based Decision Making/Bargaining	
Strategy	Engage in training for interest-based bargaining and decision making for school board members, the Superintendent, key District administrators, union leaders and negotiations team members.
Action Needed	Step 1: Obtain agreement from all parties to participate in training. Step 2: Obtain approval from school board including budget Step 3: Request proposals for training Step 4: Solicit trainer Step 5: Conduct training Step 6: Use interest-based bargaining to support future negotiations and decision-making Step 7: Evaluate the effectiveness of interest-based bargaining. Step 8: Report and make improvements as needed
Who is Responsible	Chief of Staff; Chief negotiator
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	Requires a one-time investment of \$30,000, which should be shared between the District and the Union.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- We recommend that the District ensure an attorney is available to support labor contract negotiations. Action Plan 7-21 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-21

Strengthen Support to Labor Contract Negotiator	
Strategy	Engage school district attorney as a member of the District’s negotiation team.
Action Needed	Step 1: Recommend to Superintendent that school district’s attorney be placed on the district’s negotiation team Step 2: Develop role and responsibility of the attorney in the negotiation process Step 3: Assign attorney to the negotiation team
Who is Responsible	Chief of Staff; Chief negotiator
Time Frame	June 30, 2002
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.

- We recommend that the District clarify the role of the Chief negotiators. Action Plan 7-22 provides the steps needed to implement this recommendation.

Action Plan 7-22

Improve Confidence in Negotiation Process	
Strategy	Clarify role of Chief negotiator through clear communication of negotiations authority and direction.
Action Needed	Step 1: Determine district strategy for negotiations Step 2: Establish process for giving direction and authority to the Chief negotiator on District issues Step 3: Establish process for obtaining direction and authority on union issues Step 4: Establish priorities for bargaining and school district interests Step 5: Give Chief negotiator clear direction and authority to resolve issues in step 4 Step 6: Establish clear process for communication between Superintendent, school board, and Chief negotiator
Who is Responsible	Chief of Staff
Time Frame	June 30, 2002 and on-going
Fiscal Impact	This recommendation can be implemented within existing resources.

Source: Berkshire Advisors, Inc.