1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Section 11.515, Florida Statutes, was created by the 1996 Florida Legislature for the purpose of conducting performance reviews of school districts in Florida. The statute provides that the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) contract with private firms to conduct performance reviews of identified school districts. As stated in the bill which called for the creation of this statute:

Public officials and citizens need to know if government funds are handled with the highest level of efficiency and productivity to ensure a quality education for students....

The bill also stated that:

School Board members and Superintendents can benefit from an objective and professional review of their school district’s management and performance.

The purpose of the Florida school district performance review is to identify ways that a designated school district can:

- save funds;
- improve management; and
- increase efficiency and effectiveness.

On December 12, 1996, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) of the Florida Legislature contracted with MGT of America, Inc. to conduct a performance review of the Lee County School District.

The entire review process was completed in a five-month time period. The major activities were scheduled and accomplished as displayed in Exhibit 1-1. Throughout the project, every effort was made to minimize disruptions to schools and to the central office.

Public input was a major feature of the review process. In the methodology section that follows, we describe the various mechanisms that were used to maximize community and employee involvement in the initial phase of the performance review. Appreciation is expressed to members of the Lee County School Board, former Superintendent Bobbie D’Alessandro, and school district employees, students and community residents who provided information during the performance review. Special appreciation is expressed to Dr. Ande Albert (who was assigned by the Superintendent to serve as the liaison with MGT for the review) for providing office space, equipment, meeting room facilities, and helpful staff to accommodate the on-site needs.
### EXHIBIT 1-1
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT PERFORMANCE REVIEW
MAJOR ACTIVITIES BY MONTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| December 1996 | ▪ Signed contract between MGT and OPPAGA with consent of the Joint Legislative Committee.  
                          ▪ Conducted initial meetings between MGT and officials of Lee County and OPPAGA.  
                          ▪ Designed interview and focus group instruments.  
                          ▪ Obtained and analyzed existing reports and materials on Lee County obtained from the district and state.  
                          ▪ Developed profiles of the district.  
                          ▪ Designed surveys for use with Lee County district administrators, principals, and teachers. |
| January 1997 | ▪ Conducted diagnostic review.  
                          ▪ Held public hearing (CHARRETTE)  
                          ▪ Conducted and analyzed results of surveys from central office administrators, principals, and teachers.  
                          ▪ Conducted interviews and summarized findings from interviews with School Board members, senior administrators, and community leaders, and from focus group sessions with selected groups.  
                          ▪ Visited selected schools. |
| February 1997 | ▪ Tailored guidelines to reflect unique local conditions as well as public and employee input and concerns in Lee County.  
                          ▪ Conducted in-depth on-site review.  
                          ▪ Collected and analyzed additional information as needed. |
| March 1997   | ▪ Made preliminary presentation in the district to OPPAGA and Lee County senior staff.  
                          ▪ Developed draft report. |
| April 1997   | ▪ Submitted draft report.  
                          ▪ Conducted meetings with OPPAGA and district representatives. |
| May 1997     | ▪ Prepared final report.  
                          ▪ Presented final report to school board.  
                          ▪ Distributed final report to the public. |
1.2 Methodology

Stakeholder Involvement/Diagnostic Review

During the week of January 27th, on-site interviews were conducted in the Lee County School District. Interview participants consisted of business leaders, chairpersons and members of various advisory committees, city and county officials, foundation members, parents, and concerned citizens. The public hearing or CHARRETTE was conducted on January 28, 1997 from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Cypress Lake High School. A total of 74 community representatives participated in the review process, 26 in individual interviews and 48 in the public hearing.

To secure the initial involvement of central office administrators, school principals, and teachers in helping to determine the scope of the performance review, individual surveys were conducted. Surveys provided administrators and teachers the opportunity to express their opinions on the way the school district was operating and to recommend opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

The written surveys provided statistically reliable information on the perceptions and opinions of school-based and non-school-based administrators as well as teachers, and the surveys allowed the review team to determine how the opinions and perceptions of central office administrators, school administrators, teachers, and the community differed. In addition, the survey responses of Lee County employees were contrasted with the survey responses obtained in previous performance reviews to provide benchmark comparisons with employees in other school systems across the country. The survey results and comparisons are included in Chapter 3 with instruments and survey results in Appendices A and B.

The results of the surveys and focus groups were used to ensure that major issues of concern were addressed during the performance review. Additionally, requests from individuals and groups who wanted to provide information either during the on-site phase of the project or by telephone were accommodated. Concerned citizens who were aware of the review expressed their opinions about various aspects of performance within the Lee County School District. Common issues were then incorporated into the scope of the performance review.

In-Depth On-Site Review

In February 1996, a total of 14 members from the MGT project team were involved in on-site work. These individuals were organized into specialized teams that examined components of the following 11 systems as defined in the project work plan:

- School District Organization and Management
- Educational Service Delivery and Performance Measures
- Personnel Management
- Community Involvement
- Facilities Use and Management
- Asset and Risk Management
- Financial Management
Introduction

- Purchasing and Warehouse Services
- Food Service
- Transportation
- Safety and Security

In addition, the MGT team analyzed both instructional and administrative technology within the district.

The systematic assessment of the district was aided by MGT’s *Guidelines for Conducting Management and Performance Audits of School Districts*. Following the collection and analysis of existing data, and new information from community input and surveys, guidelines were developed to reflect local rules and regulations, the unique conditions of Lee County School District, and the input of local residents, community leaders, central office administrators, principals, teachers and students.

The on-site review included meetings with hundreds of district-level and school-level staff, and the subsequent review of data and documentation provided by these individuals. Members of the review team conducted formal visits in 30 of the district’s schools. The school which were visited are shown in Exhibit 1-2.

On-site visits incorporated information from principals, teachers and other staff involved with the various components of the 12 district operations that were identified above. More than 200 campus-level employees were interviewed by one of 14 members of the review team during this time.

1.3 Overview of the Lee County School District

Schools and Students

As the 12th largest school district in the state, Lee County School District this year will serve about 53,000 students. This year, these students will be served in 36 elementary, 12 middle, nine high, and 10 special schools.

Lee County’s nearly 53,000 students represents the largest enrollment ever for the district. Exhibit 1-3 shows enrollment trends for the district for the past decade. As the exhibit shows, enrollment has risen steadily by one-third over the 10-year time span.

Exhibit 1-3 also shows that total student enrollment has risen at a slightly faster rate than the number of White non-Hispanic students in recent years. In the last half of the 1980s, the White non-Hispanic student population kept pace with total student population proportionally. In 1986-87, White students comprised 78 percent of the population; in 1995-96 they comprised 72 percent. This indicates a slightly higher growth rate among the minority populations in the district. For the 1995-96 school year, the Lee County School District is 72.0 percent White non-Hispanic, 15.9 percent Black non-Hispanic, 10.9 percent Hispanic, one percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native.
EXHIBIT 1-2
SCHOOLS VISITED IN THE LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BY MGT TEAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Middle Schools</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
<th>Special Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caloosa</td>
<td>Dunbar</td>
<td>Cypress Lake</td>
<td>Royal Palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hancock Creek</td>
<td>Suncoast</td>
<td>Riverdale</td>
<td>Exceptional School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tice</td>
<td>Lehigh Acres</td>
<td>Lehigh</td>
<td>New Directions Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinewoods</td>
<td>Cypress Lake</td>
<td>Fort Myers</td>
<td>(Alternative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf</td>
<td>Fort Myers</td>
<td>Estero</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen Park</td>
<td>Three Oaks</td>
<td>North Fort Myers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cape Coral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edison Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropic Isles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Colin English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Oaks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange River</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXHIBIT 1-3
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
STUDENT ENROLLMENT TRENDS

A further breakdown of enrollment trends is provided in Exhibit 1-4, which shows enrollment by student level for the past 14 years. Over this time span, the percentage of elementary students in the district has increased considerably, from 44 percent of total student population in 1983-84 to 52 percent in 1996-97. The percentage of middle school students has decreased over this same period, from 26 percent to 23 percent. The percentage of high school students has also decreased, from 29 percent to 26 percent. Students enrolled in preK classes account for some of this shift. In 1983-84, total preK enrollment was 21 students. In 1996-97, total preK enrollment is 1,780 students. This was by far the largest percentage increase of any grade level.

**EXHIBIT 1-4**

**LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**STUDENT ENROLLMENT TRENDS BY SCHOOL LEVEL**

![Graph showing enrollment trends by school level for 1983-84 to 1996-97.](image)


Exhibit 1-5 provides information on the trends in the percentage of students in the upper and lower quartiles on the Grade Ten Assessment Test (GTAT) in both reading comprehension and mathematics. Since 1992-93, the percentage of students scoring in the lower quartile on either the reading comprehension or mathematics portions of the GTAT has generally risen -- the only exception was a decrease from 1993-94 to 1994-95 on the mathematics portion. The percentage of students scoring in the upper quartile on the mathematics portion rose from 1991-92 to 1993-94, fell in 1994-95 and then rose again in 1995-96, but has not yet risen above the 1993-94 figure of 27 percent. The percentage of students scoring in the upper quartile on the reading portion has also not followed a consistent path. Scores rose steadily from 1991-92 to 1994-95 but then fell three percentage points (equivalent to about 80 students) in 1995-96. For the 1995-96 school year, Lee County School District ranked in the 47th median national percentile on the GTAT reading portion and in the 54th percentile on the mathematics portion.
Another indicator of student achievement is the percentage of students who enter college or technical school upon graduation. Exhibit 1-6 provides this information for the district for the past decade. As the exhibit shows, the percentage of students entering college has not followed a clear pattern from year to year, but has not regained the high achieved in 1987-88 and 1990-91, when 64.5 percent of Lee graduates went on to college. The percentage of students entering technical schools has also fluctuated, but has generally been on a slow decline since 1986-87.

**Staff**

Exhibit 1-7 provides the number of classroom teachers and total instructional staff per 1,000 students over time. As the exhibit shows, the relative proportions of instructional staff and classroom teachers per 1,000 students have remained nearly constant, mostly because classroom teachers comprise the vast majority of total instructional staff. The exhibit also shows that the number of instructional staff and classroom teachers per 1,000 students jumped significantly between 1986-87 and 1987-88. The number then fell slightly and just about leveled off for several years. After a period of decline from 1990-91 through 1992-93, the number of instructional staff and classroom teachers has risen. Currently, there are 60.0 instructional staff per 1,000 students and 54.5 classroom teachers.
EXHIBIT 1-6
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TRENDS IN PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENTERING COLLEGES AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS


EXHIBIT 1-7
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TREND IN NUMBER OF INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF PER 1,000 STUDENTS

In terms of all staffing in Lee County School District, the percentage of those in Instructional Services has decreased over the past three years. According to the 1996-97 district budget, in 1994-95, staff in Instructional Services comprised 36.8 percent of all staff. In 1995-96 this percentage fell to 36.6 percent. In 1996-97 this percent fell again to 36.2 percent.

Exhibit 1-8 also focuses on the past three years and shows the number of students per one staff member (includes all positions within the school budgets), by school type. High schools have the highest number of students per staff member and this figure has increased from 12.4 to 12.6 from 1994-95 to 1996-97. Middle schools have the second highest number of students per staff member, but this number has steadily decreased from 11.6 to 11.0. Elementary schools have the lowest number of students per staff member, varying between 10.6 and 10.1.

EXHIBIT 1-8
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TREND IN NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER

Exhibits 1-9 and 1-10 illustrate the trends in staffing by staff type. Staffing levels for instructional (non-teacher), administrative, and supervisory/technical positions has remained nearly constant for the past three years. As Exhibit 1-9 shows, the greatest one-year increase in these categories of personnel was for instructional, non-teacher personnel, which had a gain of 11.3 positions in 1996-97. The greatest one-year loss was of 9.5 positions for administrative personnel from 1994-95 to 1995-96.
In contrast, staffing levels for teachers and support personnel have not been constant over the same period. Lee County has added 294 teachers since 1994-95 and 175 support personnel.

Exhibit 1-11 provides the percentages of staff turnover by school type from 1994-95 to 1995-96. The “instructional and other staff” category includes classroom teachers, media specialists, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other professional instructional staff. Staff turnover is highest in the middle schools and lowest in the high schools. In both the elementary and middle schools, instructional and other staff turnover is higher than the total turnover rate in the same. In the high schools, the reverse is true.

**Revenues and Expenditures**

As Exhibit 1-12 shows, the Lee County School District’s sources of revenue have changed slightly over the past three years. The amount of funding from federal flow through dollars has remained steady at six percent. However, the amount of state funding has increased, from 28 percent to 32 percent while local funding has decreased from 66 percent to 62 percent.
EXHIBIT 1-10
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
STAFFING LEVELS FOR TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL


MGT of America, Inc.
EXHIBIT 1-11
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
PERCENTAGE OF STAFF TURNOVER 1995-96


MGT of America, Inc.
EXHIBIT 1-12
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
REVENUE SOURCES
1994-1995

1994-1995
Local 66%
State 28%
Federal 6%

1995-1996
Local 65%
State 29%
Federal 6%
These sources of revenue support a budget of nearly $537 million this year. Exhibit 1-13 provides a summary of all funds expenditures by function over the past three years. Not surprisingly, instructional services received the largest percentage of funds, approximately 36 percent this year. Facilities acquisition and construction was second, receiving 25 percent of all budgeted funds.

Exhibit 1-14 provides information on the percentage of all funds expenditures for two functional categories: school administration and general administration. The percentage of all funds expended on school administration has decreased over the past three years, from 5.4 percent in 1994-95 to 5.1 percent in 1995-96 to 3.6 percent in 1996-97. However, the percentage of all funds expended on general administration has remained fairly constant, from 0.6 percent to 0.7 percent and then back to 0.6 percent.

Exhibit 1-15 provides information on average teacher salaries for the past 10 years. As the exhibit shows, average teacher salaries for all degree types have risen at about the same rates throughout the decade shown. With the exception of teachers with specialist degrees, average salaries did increase in 1995-96 over 1994-95.

Chapter 2 contains a comparison of Lee County with five other school districts.
### EXHIBIT 1-13
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
FUNDS EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION
1994-95 through 1996-97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1994-95</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>1995-96</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>1996-97</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Services</td>
<td>$145,967,707</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>$155,248,649</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>$171,731,493</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Personnel Services</td>
<td>$12,897,662</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$12,567,633</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$15,701,153</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Media Services</td>
<td>$5,638,136</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$5,826,313</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$6,165,347</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst./Curr. Development Svc</td>
<td>$8,765,155</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$7,077,488</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$9,496,098</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instr. Staff Training Services</td>
<td>$2,804,995</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$3,421,852</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$3,695,783</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>$322,714</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$314,414</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$357,763</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Administration</td>
<td>$2,341,891</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$2,883,208</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$2,710,235</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administration</td>
<td>$21,382,492</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$21,562,255</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$17,297,386</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Acquisit. &amp; Constr.</td>
<td>$69,187,313</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>$30,269,640</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>$117,313,689</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Services</td>
<td>$1,975,846</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$2,037,436</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$2,160,623</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Services</td>
<td>$14,281,385</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>$14,303,399</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$15,622,688</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Services</td>
<td>$34,123,625</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>$30,504,914</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>$33,547,627</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Transportation Svc</td>
<td>$15,471,458</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>$14,923,615</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>$15,424,645</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation of Plant</td>
<td>$25,064,057</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$26,645,927</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$29,970,285</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Plant</td>
<td>$9,710,771</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$10,157,574</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$7,197,225</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>$1,778,297</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$1,565,591</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$840,435</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>$24,549,357</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$85,321,059</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>$24,953,944</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$396,262,861</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$424,630,967</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$474,186,419</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXHIBIT 1-14
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
PERCENTAGE OF ALL FUNDS EXPENDED FOR SCHOOL AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
1994-95 through 1996-97

EXHIBIT 1-15
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TRENDS IN TEACHER SALARIES