SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL DIVISION EFFICIENCY REVIEW

FINAL REPORT

Submitted by:

MGT
OF AMERICA, INC.

March 16, 2006

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The Commonwealth of Virginia has created the School Efficiency Review program, which provides outside educational expertise to school divisions for assistance in utilizing educational dollars to the fullest extent possible. This program involves contracting with educational experts to perform efficiency reviews for select school divisions within the Commonwealth that volunteer to participate. School division efficiency reviews, in conjunction with the Standards of Learning results, enable Virginians to see how well each school division is performing and ensure that ideas for innovative reform are made available to all divisions in the Commonwealth.

Since its creation in 2003 the program has expanded every year and will include more than ten school divisions in the 2005-06 school year. In August of 2005 MGT of America was awarded a contract to conduct an Efficiency Review of Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS). As stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP), the purpose of the study is to conduct an external review of the efficiency of various offices and operations within SCPS and a final report of the findings, recommendations, and projected costs and/or cost savings as recommendations. The object of the review is to identify ways that SCPS could realize cost savings in non-instructional areas in order to redirect those funds towards classroom activities.

Overview of Smyth County Public School Division

Named for General Alexander Smyth, who once represented this area of Virginia in Congress, Smyth County is located in the rural western part of the state and is defined by mountain ranges and valleys. The county is divided into five geographic attendance areas: Marion in the central part of the county, Chilhowie in the southwest, Saltville in the northwest, Rich Valley in the northeast, and Sugar Grove in the southeast. Marion serves as the county seat and is the home to the School Administration of Smyth County.

SCPS operates a total of 14 schools consisting of three high schools, three middle schools, seven elementary schools (with varying grade configurations), and a career / tech center. The division employs over 800 teachers, staff, and support personnel to support the county's 5,100 students. Approximately three percent of students are minority, and 46 percent qualify for free or reduced meal prices. Approximately 15 percent of the division's students have been identified with special education needs.

The division' student performance data, dropout rate, and reduction in placement rate of students into special education programs bear out the fact that the division has progressed with a focus on meeting student needs. Test scores and survey results reported throughout this report substantiate that the district is continuing to improve its program for students. The theme adopted by the review team, after spending time in the division, is that Smyth County is a good school division that is ready to make the next step toward becoming a great system. It is the intent of this report to help with that effort.

The total operating budget for the 2005-06 school year was approximately $43 million, with a school debt and capital outlay budget of an additional $1.5 million. Funding for these disbursements were provided by the following breakdown; 67 percent from the Commonwealth of Virginia, 22 percent from local revenue sources, 10 percent from the federal government, and one percent from other funds. On the expenditure side, the division utilized 79 percent for instruction, eight percent operations and maintenance, five percent transportation, three percent each for administration and technology, and two percent for food services.

The division has experienced a number of administrative changes over the past few years. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and financial staff are recently new to their positions with the Assistant Superintendent being new to the division as well. This has resulted in a number of initiatives currently underway, including revisions to instructional services, evaluation procedures, budgeting procedures, and the division organizational structure. While these have generally been seen as positive steps for the division, it has also created some confusion regarding staff roles and responsibilities.

Review Methodology

The methodology MGT used to prepare for and conduct the Smyth County Public Schools Efficiency Review is described in this section. Throughout our practice, we have discovered that to be successful, an efficiency review of a school division must:

- be based upon a very detailed work plan and time schedule;

- specifically take into account the unique student body and environment within which the school division operates;

- obtain input from board members, administrators, and staff;

- identify the existence, appropriateness, and use of specific educational objectives;

- contain comparisons to other similar school divisions to provide a reference point;

- follow a common set of guidelines tailored specifically to the division being reviewed;

- include analyses of the efficiency of work practices;

- identify the level and effectiveness of externally imposed work tasks and procedures;

- identify both exemplary programs and practices as well as needed improvements;

- document all findings; and

- present straightforward and practical recommendations for improvements.

With this in mind, our methodology primarily involved a focused use of Virginia review guidelines as well as MGT's audit guidelines following the analysis of both existing data and new information obtained through various means of employee input. Each of the strategies we used is described below.

Review of Existing Records and Data Sources

During the period between project initiation and beginning our on-site review, we simultaneously conducted many activities. Among these activities were the identification and collection of existing reports and data sources that provided us with recent information related to the various administrative functions and operations we would review in Smyth County Schools.

More than 100 documents were requested from SCPS. Examples of materials MGT requested included, but were not limited, to the following:

- school board policies and administrative procedures;
- organizational charts;
- program and compliance reports;
- technology plan;
- annual performance reports;
- independent financial audits;
- plans for curriculum and instruction;
- annual budget and expenditure reports;
- job descriptions;
- salary schedules; and
- personnel handbooks.

Data were analyzed from each of these sources, and the information was used as a starting point for collecting additional data during our on-site visit.

Diagnostic Review

A diagnostic review of Smyth County Public Schools was conducted on October 3, 2005. MGT consultants interviewed central office administrators, community leaders, school board members, and county commissioners concerning the management and operations of Smyth County Schools.

Employee Surveys

To secure the involvement of central office administrators, principals/assistant principals, and teachers in the focus and scope of the efficiency review, three on-line surveys were prepared and disseminated in October 2005. Through the use of anonymous surveys, administrators and teachers were given the opportunity to express their views about the management and operations of Smyth County Schools. These surveys were similar in format and content to provide a database for determining how the opinions and perceptions of central office administrators, principals/assistant principals, and teachers vary.

SCPS staff was given from October 3, 2005 through October 11, 2005 to respond. The SCPS response rates for the three surveys were good. Eighty-eight percent of central office administrators returned a survey, as did 96 percent of principals and assistant principals and 66 percent of teachers. MGT compared all survey responses among the three employee groups and compared all SCPS administrators and teachers to those in the more than 30 districts where we have conducted similar surveys.

Complete survey results are provided in Appendix A. Specific survey items pertinent to findings in the functional areas MGT reviewed are presented within each chapter.

Conducting the Formal On-Site Review

A team of six consultants conducted the formal on-site review of Smyth County Public Schools during the week of November 15, 2005. As part of our on-site review, we examined the following SCPS systems and operations:

- Division Administration
- Personnel and Human Resources Management
- Financial Management
- Purchasing, Warehousing, and Fixed Assets
- Education Service Delivery and Management
- Facilities Use and Management
- Transportation
- Technology Management

Prior to the on-site review, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about SCPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted detailed reviews of the structure and operations of Smyth County Public Schools in their assigned functional areas. All SCPS schools were visited at least once, and most schools were visited more than once.

Our systematic assessment of Smyth County Public Schools included the use of MGT's *Guidelines for Conducting Management and Performance Audits of School Districts*. In addition, the Commonwealth of Virginia school efficiency review guidelines were used. Following our collection and analysis of existing data and new information, we tailored our guidelines to reflect local policies and administrative procedures, the unique conditions of Smyth County Schools, and the input of administrators in the school division. Our on-site review included meetings with appropriate central office and school-level staff as well as Smyth County officials and reviews of documentation provided by these individuals.

Comparison Summary

When comparing data on the Smyth County School Division to the five other specified school divisions within the state of Virginia, Smyth has the highest number of teachers per 1,000 students, and the corresponding lowest teacher pupil ratio. The ratio of pupils to classroom teachers in grades K-7 is 10.7 with a comparison division average of 11.5 and a statewide average of 13.1. For grades 8-12, the Smyth County ratio is 9.7 with comparison divisions and the state at 11.4 and 11.2, respectively. Among the

comparison divisions, Smyth County reports the lowest percentage of local funds, the highest percentage of state funds, and federal funding slightly above the average.

The division reports expenditures of $5,378 per pupil for instruction and $131 per pupil for administrative costs. This ranks second to lowest among the comparison divisions for both instructional and administrative costs. These expenditures are also below the statewide average of $5,550 for instruction and $193 for administration.

In terms of student demographics and performance, Smyth County is slightly below the average of the comparison divisions for total enrollment (5,129 vs. 5,195), has the highest number of schools, and is slightly above the average of economically disadvantage students (44.9% vs. 42.8%). Smyth county students scored higher than the state average on statewide testing in math and science, lower in English.

In drawing a summary and conclusions among comparison school divisions based on multiple data sources, once again the reader should remember that these data are self-reported by each school division and may contain inconsistencies. Also, some of the latest available data are for the 2002-03 school year. Any information resulting from these comparisons should be analyzed within these constraints, but can, nonetheless, be useful in the formulation of systemic findings and recommendations.

Commendations

Detailed commendations for exemplary efficiencies are found in the full report in Chapters 2 through 12. Among the major commendations for which Smyth County Public Schools is recognized are:

- developing a comprehensive six-year school improvement plan;

- taking significant steps toward re-organizing administrative functions;

- undertaking extensive measures to establish an annual evaluation program for all employees;

- conducting a needs assessment regarding professional staff development and implementing findings from the assessment;

- preparing a budget book that follows the recommendations set out by the national Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting;

- improving its budgeting process so that it is more inclusive and has more integrity;

- implementing a mandatory direct deposit policy that has resulted in cost and efficiency savings;

- creating opportunities for students of all abilities and interests to investigate and experience hands-on learning through career and technical courses tied to local employment needs;

- recognizing that high expectations lead to high student achievement in its administration of the Algebra Readiness diagnostic Test to all middle school students and its desire for data-based decision-making

- making school improvement a priority basis for school reform by relating it to data and scheduling board reports for each school;

- actively promoting creative inclusion strategies among administrators and teachers;

- creating procedures and accountability to ensure that only students with bona fide learning disabilities are eligible for services and placed in special education classes, allowing the division to expend its resources on those students most deserving of services and allowing others to be served with their peers in less restrictive environments;

- creating an array of support systems and alternative programs for its students that have contributed to a dropout rate below 1 percent for almost a decade yet continuing to explore improvement opportunities;

- taking the initiative to be involved in a pilot preschool inclusion program from which they can garner strategies to use throughout the division's schools;

- utilizing an effective bus driver staffing program;

- managing the division's Web sites professionally and effectively; and

- maintaining high levels of participation in the food service program from all levels of eligibility.

Major Findings and Recommendations

Although this Executive Summary briefly highlights key efficiency issues in Smyth County Public Schools, detailed recommendations for improving operations are found throughout the main body of the full report. Major findings and recommendations for improvement include the following:

- Create and implement an organizational chart that replaces the Director of Business and Auxiliary Services with an Operations and Finance Officer **(Chapter 2, Recommendation 2-4)**.

- Develop a system of regular communications and training of administrative staff geared toward shared decision making and implementation of the six year plan **(Chapter 2, Recommendation 2-6)**.

- Develop and implement a Smyth County School Division Human Resources Procedure Manual **(Chapter 3, Recommendation 3-3)**.

- Complete the creation of job descriptions for all positions and develop a systematic plan to review and update job descriptions on a three-year cycle **(Chapter 3, Recommendation 3-7)**.

- Conduct a needs assessment among classified professional staff and support staff in order to develop an appropriate professional development plan for each of these employee groups **(Chapter 3, Recommendation 3-13)**.

- Develop an organizational structure for the division's fiscal operations **(Chapter 4, Recommendation 4-1)**.

- Implement the budgeting and purchasing modules of the division's financial accounting system **(Chapter 4, Recommendation 4-3)**.

- Develop and implement asset tracking procedures **(Chapter 4, Recommendation 4-5)**.

- Develop purchasing procedures and train all division staff in their use **(Chapter 5, Recommendation 5-1)**.

- Continue plans to begin immediate development of curricular maps and other instructional materials **(Chapter 6, Recommendation 6-5)**.

- Develop allocation formulas for schools and division instructional programs that are sufficient to prevent schools from having to depend on fund raisers for essential instructional expenditures and program support **(Chapter 6, Recommendation 6-6)**.

- Take a comprehensive look at high school schedules to identify barriers and determine what would offer students the best options to partake fully of as many educational experiences as possible within Smyth County **(Chapter 6, Recommendation 6-7)**.

- Develop procedures to move data analysis to the school and classroom level and provide teacher support and a level of monitoring to ensure follow-through and keep discussion of data at the forefront of administrative discussions **(Chapter 6, Recommendation 6-11)**.

- Involve special education teachers systematically in curriculum mapping efforts, training opportunities for regular education teachers, and ensure that they have all content materials to fully support inclusion **(Chapter 7, Recommendation 7-1)**.

- Take measures to ensure that regular classroom teachers have the skills and knowledge to provide accommodations and differentiate

instruction for special needs students in their classes **(Chapter 7, Recommendation 7-2)**.

- Continue to expand program options for expanding services for students who do not succeed in traditional educational delivery models **(Chapter 7, Recommendation 7-7)**.

- Expand practices used for parent outreach in the preschool program for outreach to other parents throughout the division **(Chapter 7, Recommendation 7-11)**.

- Develop a facilities master plan to address the immediate space needs, future space needs, building capacities, enrollment capacities, building conditions, demographic analysis and enrollment projections, retention or disposal of each facility/property, consolidation of properties, and land acquisition, as required to provide a full, detailed, priority ranked, long-range division master plan **(Chapter 8, Recommendation 8-2)**.

- Purchase and outfit all busses with industry standard communication systems **(Chapter 9, Recommendation 9-2)**.

- Reorganize the Technology Services and Instructional Technology units to report based on service alignment functions rather than technological functions **(Chapter 10, Recommendation 10-2)**.

- Develop a training program for all food service employees **(Chapter 11, Recommendation 11-3)**.

Fiscal Impact

Based on the analyses of data obtained from interviews, surveys, community input, state and local documents, and first-hand observations in the Smyth County Public Schools, the MGT team developed over 80 recommendations in this report. Eighteen (18) recommendations have fiscal implications and are summarized in this chapter. **It is important to keep in mind that the identified savings and costs are incremental and cumulative.**

As shown below in Exhibit 1, full implementation of the recommendations in this report would generate a savings of almost $3.5 million over five years and a total net savings of $46,781 when total costs and one-time costs are taken out. It is important to note that the costs and savings presented in this report are in 2005-06 dollars and do not reflect increases due to salary or inflation adjustments.

Exhibit 1 below shows the total costs and savings.

EXHIBIT 1
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
SUMMARY OF ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)

CATEGORY	YEARS					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
TOTAL SAVINGS	$564,930	$714,718	$714,718	$714,718	$714,718	$3,423,802
TOTAL (COSTS)	($630,923)	($642,462)	($641,762)	($641,762)	($641,762)	($3,198,671)
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	($65,993)	$72,256	$72,956	$72,956	$72,956	$225,131
TOTAL ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						($178,350)
TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS) INCLUDING ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						$46,781

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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In September 2004, the Commonwealth of Virginia contracted with MGT of America, Inc., to conduct a School Division Efficiency Review of Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS). The review focused on the financial, organizational, and operational effectiveness of Smyth County Schools. Exhibit 1-1 shows an overview of MGT's work plan, and Exhibit 1-2 provides the timeline for the project activities.

1.1   *Overview of Smyth County Public Schools*

Smyth County Public Schools consists of three high schools, three middle schools, and six elementary schools, one K-8 school, and one career and technology center. Division administrative functions are centrally housed in the administrative offices on 121 Bagley Circle, Suite 300 in Marion.

Close to 800 teachers, staff, and support personnel work together to meet the educational needs of over 5,000 students. Approximately three percent of SCPS students are minorities, and 46 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch.

1.2   *Methodology*

The methodology MGT used to prepare for and conduct the Smyth County Public Schools Efficiency Review is described in this section. Throughout our practice we have discovered that to be successful, an efficiency review of a school division must:

- be based upon a very detailed work plan and time schedule;

- specifically take into account the unique student body and environment within which the school division operates;

- obtain input from board members, administrators, and staff;

- identify the existence, appropriateness, and use of specific educational objectives;

- contain comparisons to other similar school divisions to provide a reference point;

- follow a common set of guidelines tailored specifically to the division being reviewed;

EXHIBIT 1-1
OVERVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN FOR THE EFFICIENCY REVIEW
OF SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PHASE I - PROJECT INITIATION

Task 1.0
Initiate Project

Task 2.0
Develop Preliminary Profile of Smyth County Public Schools
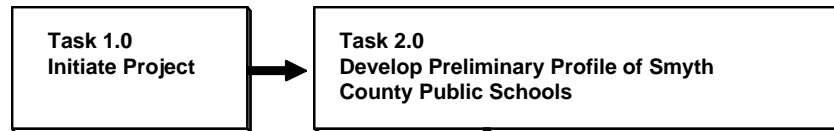
PHASE II - STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND DIAGNOSTIC REVIEW

Task 3.0
Conduct Preliminary Review

Task 4.0
Conduct Written Surveys of District Administrators, Principals, and Teachers

Task 5.0
Solicit Public Input in the Management and Performance Review

Task 6.0
Tailor MGT and Virginia Study Guidelines for Smyth County Public Schools
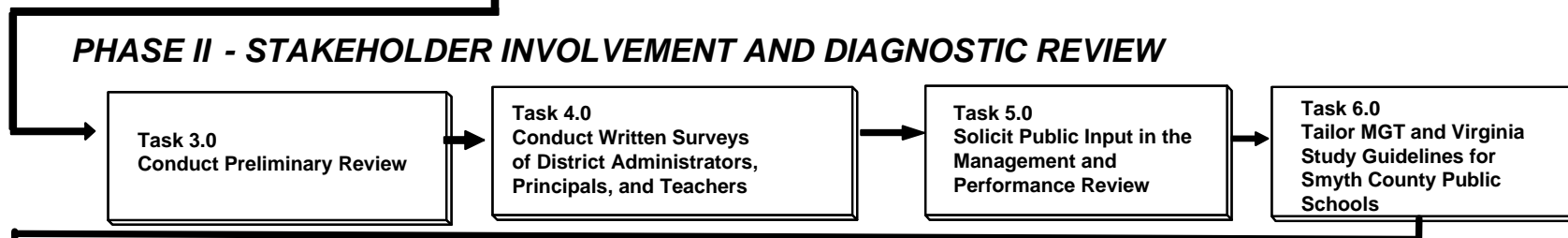
PHASE III - IN-DEPTH EFFICIENCY STUDY

Task 7.0
Review Division Administration

Task 8.0
Review Personnel and Human Resources Management

Task 9.0
Review Financial Management

Task 10.0
Review Purchasing, Warehousing, and Fixed Assets

Task 11.0
Review Educational Service Delivery and Management

Task 12.0
Review Special Education Programs

Task 13.0
Review Facilities Use and Management

Task 14.0
Review Transportation

Task 15.0
Review Technology Management

Task 16.0
Food Service

PHASE V - PROJECT REPORTING

Task 17.0
Prepare Draft and Final Reports
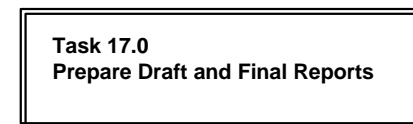
PHASE IV - COMPARISON TO OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

Task 17.0
Conduct Benchmark Analysis with Comparison School Divisions
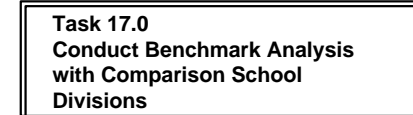
EXHIBIT 1-2
TIMELINE FOR THE EFFICIENCY REVIEW OF
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITY
September 2005	■ Finalized contract with the Commonwealth of Virginia. ■ Conducted initial meeting with Smyth County Public Schools officials. ■ Designed tailor-made, written surveys for central office administrators, principals, and teachers. ■ Collected and analyzed existing and comparative data available from the school division. ■ Produced profile tables of Smyth County Schools. ■ Disseminated surveys to administrators and teachers.
October 3-4, 2005	Visited with Smyth County Schools. ■ Conducted diagnostic review. ■ Collected data. ■ Interviewed School Board members and County officials. ■ Interviewed central office administrators. ■ Interviewed business and community leaders.
Week of October 10, 2005	Analyzed data and information which were collected.
October 15-30, 2005	Tailored review guidelines and trained MGT team members using findings from the above analyses.
November 14 -18, 2005	Conducted formal on-site review, including school visits.
November - December, 2005	Requested additional data from the school division and analyzed data.
December, 2005 – January, 2006	Prepared Draft Final Report.
January, 2006	Submitted Draft Final Report.
January 2006	Revised the Draft Report.
March 2006	Submitted Final Report.

- include analyses of the efficiency of work practices;

- identify the level and effectiveness of externally imposed work tasks and procedures;

- identify both exemplary programs and practices as well as needed improvements;

- document all findings; and

- present straightforward and practical recommendations for improvements.

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More than 100 documents were requested from SCPS. Examples of materials MGT requested included, but were not limited, to the following:

- school board policies and administrative procedures;
- organizational charts;
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- technology plan;
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SCPS staff was given from October 3, 2005 through October 11, 2005 to respond. The SCPS response rates for the three surveys were good. Eighty-eight (88) percent of central office administrators returned a survey, as did 96 percent of principals and assistant principals, and 66 percent of teachers. MGT compared all survey responses among the three employee groups and compared all SCPS administrators and teachers to those in the more than 30 districts where we have conducted similar surveys.

Complete survey results are provided in Appendix B. Specific survey items pertinent to findings in the functional areas MGT reviewed are presented within each chapter.

Conducting the Formal On-Site Review

A team of six consultants conducted the formal on-site review of Smyth County Public Schools during the week of November 15, 2005. As part of our on-site review, we examined the following SCPS systems and operations:

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- Transportation
- Technology Management

Prior to the on-site review, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about SCPS operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted detailed reviews of the structure and operations of Smyth County Public Schools in their assigned functional areas. All SCPS schools were visited at least once, and most schools were visited more than once.

Our systematic assessment of Smyth County Public Schools included the use of MGT's *Guidelines for Conducting Management and Performance Audits of School Districts.* In addition, the Commonwealth of Virginia school efficiency review guidelines were used. Following our collection and analysis of existing data and new information, we tailored our guidelines to reflect local policies and administrative procedures; the unique conditions of Smyth County Schools, and the input of administrators in the school division. Our on-site review included meetings with appropriate central office and school-level staff as well as Smyth County officials, and reviews of documentation provided by these individuals.

1.3   *Comparisons to Other School Divisions*

To effectively facilitate ongoing, systemic improvement and to overcome the continual challenges of a changing environmental and fiscal landscape, a school division must have a clear understanding of the status of its internal systems and processes. One way to achieve this understanding is to compare the operations of one school division to others with similar characteristics. MGT has found that such comparisons with other school divisions yield valuable insights and often form a basis for determining efficient and effective practices for a school division interested in making improvements. For these comparisons to be meaningful, however, the comparison school divisions must be chosen carefully. Ideally, a school division should be compared with others that are not only similar in size and demographics, but also similar in operations and funding.

The practice of benchmarking is often used to make such comparisons between and among school divisions. Benchmarking refers to the use of commonly held organizational characteristics in making concrete statistical or descriptive comparisons of organizational systems and processes. It is also a performance measurement tool used in conjunction with improvement initiatives to measure comparative operating performance and identify best practices.

With this in mind, MGT initiated a benchmarking comparison of the Smyth County Public Schools to provide a common foundation from which to compare systems and processes within the school division with those of other similar systems. As comparisons are made, it is important for readers to keep in mind that when comparisons are made across more than one division, the data are not as reliable, as different school divisions have different operational definitions and self-reported data by peer school divisions can be subjective.

The Virginia Department of Education has developed a cluster code to identify similar school divisions for comparison purposes. Cluster identifiers were created by using data including, but not limited to, the cost per student for each major area, major drivers of costs, and ranking of costs. Smyth County Public Schools is identified in Cluster 4. For that reason, MGT in conjunction with the Governor's Office and the SCPS leadership, agreed upon a set of school divisions from Cluster 4 to try to capture the characteristics of comparable county school divisions. The Virginia public school divisions chosen for comparison were:

- Isle of Wight County Public Schools Division;
- Pulaski County Public Schools Division;
- Carroll County Public Schools Division;
- Accomack County Public Schools Division; and,
- Culpeper County Public Schools Division.

Exhibit 1-3 illustrates how the comparison school divisions compare to the Smyth County Public Schools in terms of enrollment, number of schools, and percent of students that are economically disadvantaged. As can be seen:

- SCPS (5,129) has 66 fewer students than the peer division average student population of 5,195;

- With 155 students per 1,000 people in the general population, SCPS has the median student to general population ratio compared to the peer divisions;

- SCPS' percent of economically disadvantaged students (44.9%) is slightly higher than the peer division average (42.8%); and,

- SCPS, with 13 schools, is higher than the peer division average.

EXHIBIT 1-3
OVERVIEW OF PEER PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	CLUSTER IDENTIFICATION	TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION	STUDENT POPULATION PER 1,000 GENERAL POPULATION	PERCENT ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
Smyth County	**4**	**5,129**	**155**	**44.9%**	**13**
Isle of Wight County	4	5,167	173	31.0%	8
Pulaski County	4	4,939	140	37.5%	9
Carroll County	4	4,061	139	49.5%	10
Accomack County	4	5,385	140	61.0%	11
Culpeper County	4	6,489	189	33.1%	9
Peer Division Average	**N/A**	**5,195**	**156**	**42.8%**	**10**

Source: Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2005.
United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census Data.
www.schoolmatters.com.

Exhibit 1-4 offers a comparison of classroom teachers per 1,000 students among the comparison school divisions. As shown in the exhibit:

- At 97.8, SCPS has the highest number of teachers per 1,000 students of its peer divisions, much higher than the state average of 81.45;

- In grades K through 7, SCPS has a ratio of 10.7 students per classroom teaching position, which is below the peer divisions average, and below the state average; and,

- In grades 8 through 12, SCPS has a ratio of 9.7 students per classroom teaching position, the lowest of all the peer divisions, and lower than the state average of 11.2;

EXHIBIT 1-4
TEACHER STAFFING LEVELS AND PUPIL: TEACHER RATIOS
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2003-04 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	TOTAL TEACHERS PER 1,000 STUDENTS	RATIO OF PUPILS TO CLASSROOM TEACHING POSITIONS FOR GRADES K-7**	RATIO OF PUPILS TO CLASSROOM TEACHING POSITIONS FOR GRADES 8-12
Smyth County	**97.8**	**10.7**	**9.7**
Isle of Wight County	75.7	12.8	13.6
Pulaski County	88.7	10.8	12.3
Carroll County	89.1	11.5	10.9
Accomack County	90.1	10.7	11.6
Culpeper County	88.9	12.2	10.1
Division Average	**88.4**	**11.5**	**11.4**
STATE AVERAGE	**81.5**	**13.1**	**11.2**

Source: *2003 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia*, Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2005.
*Ratios based on End-of-Year enrollments.
**Pupil/teacher ratios for elementary and secondary may vary because of the reporting of teaching positions for middle school grades 6 - 8.

Exhibit 1-5 displays revenue percentages by federal, state, and local funding sources. As is shown:

- SCPS received a lower percentage of its funds, 23 percent, from local sources, than the peer division average of 31 percent. Among the peers, SCPS had the lowest percent of local funding;

- SCPS, at 56 percent, received the highest percentage of its funds from state sources than its peer divisions, and was higher than the peer division average; and,

- SCPS received the third-lowest percentage of its funds, over 9 percent, from federal sources, than the peer division average of slightly better than eight percent (8.70%).

**EXHIBIT 1-5
RECEIPTS BY FUND SOURCE
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2004 FISCAL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	SALES AND USE TAX	STATE FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	LOCAL FUNDS	OTHER FUNDS	LOANS, BONDS, ETC.
Smyth County	**10.18%**	**55.74%**	**9.26%**	**22.57%**	**1.81%**	**0.44%**
Isle of Wight County	5.92%	23.84%	4.10%	29.41%	1.28%	35.45%
Pulaski County	9.42%	43.51%	12.23%	31.47%	3.38%	0.00%
Carroll County	8.65%	47.45%	11.08%	29.16%	3.11%	0.54%
Accomack County	7.58%	34.35%	9.82%	25.40%	1.78%	21.07%
Culpeper County	8.38%	35.40%	5.72%	47.32%	3.18%	0.00%
Division Average	**8.35%**	**40.05%**	**8.70%**	**30.89%**	**2.42%**	**9.58%**

Source: *2004 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia*, Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2005.

Exhibit 1-6 displays the disbursements per pupil for operating a regular school day and for administration. As is shown:

- On regular operating-related items, SCPS spent $5,378 per student, which was less than the peer division average of $5,550, and second-lowest of the comparison divisions.

- On administration-related items, SCPS spent $131 per student, which was less than the peer division average of $193, and second-lowest among the comparison divisions.

**EXHIBIT 1-6
DISBURSEMENTS PER PUPIL FOR OPERATING REGULAR
SCHOOL DAY AND ADMINISTRATION
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2003 FISCAL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	INSTRUCTION PER PUPIL[1]	ADMINISTRATION PER PUPIL[2]
Carroll County	$5,641.66	$126.83
Smyth County	**$5,377.64**	**$130.87**
Accomack County	$6,040.02	$172.15
Culpeper County	$5,723.44	$210.32
Isle of Wight County	$5,597.14	$245.68
Pulaski County	$4,917.92	$270.07
Division Average	**$5,549.64**	**$192.65**

Source: *2004 Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia*, Virginia Department of Education, Web site, 2005.

[1] Represents expenditures for classroom instruction, guidance services, social work services, homebound instruction, improvement of instruction, media services, and office of the principal. This column does not include expenditures for technology instruction, summer school, or adult education, which are reported in separate columns within this table. This column also excludes local tuition revenues received for divisions 001 - 207, and prorates the deduction of these revenues across administration, instruction, attendance and health, pupil transportation, and operations and maintenance categories. Local tuition is reported in the expenditures of the school division paying tuition.

[2] Represents expenditures for activities related to establishing and administering policy for division operations including board services, executive administration, information services, personnel, planning services, fiscal services, purchasing, and reprographics.

1.4 *Overview of Final Report*

MGT's final report is organized into 11 chapters. Chapters 2 through 11 present the results of the School Division Efficiency Review of Smyth County Schools. Findings, commendations, and recommendations are presented for each of the operational areas of the school division which we were required to review. In each chapter, we analyze each function within the school division based on the current organizational structure. The following data on each component are included:

- description of the current situation in Smyth County Schools;

- a summary of our study findings:

  – findings from report and data sources which we obtained

  – a summary of our on-site findings;

- MGT's commendations and recommendations for each finding;

- implementation strategies and a completion timeline for each recommendation; and

- a five-year fiscal impact for recommended costs or cost savings which are stated in 2004-05 dollars.

We conclude this report with a summary of the fiscal impact of our study.

2.0 DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

2.0 DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

In this chapter the findings and recommendations for the overall organization of Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS) are presented. The major sections of the chapter include:

2.1   School Board Governance
2.2   Policies and Procedures
2.3   Comprehensive Improvement Planning
2.4   Organization and Management

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Smyth County Public Schools is governed by a seven member board and managed by an appointed Superintendent with the assistance of his leadership team. This chapter focuses on the Division's governance and management along with the development of the comprehensive improvement plan and the associated organizational structures. The administration of the Division has recently undergone changes in its organizational structure geared toward improving instructional services and maintaining fiscal responsibility.

The recent changes have had an impact on the management of the Division and is reflected in a general feeling that things are on the right track. This chapter reflects the theme that the Division is currently providing a good program for students that is well accepted by the numerous communities throughout the county. To move to the next level, and become outstanding, changes will be required. This chapter reflects some of those changes.

Paramount among the recommendations included in this chapter are a revised Division organizational chart, strengthening of the business services department, improvement in overall communications, and implementation of the Division's comprehensive six-year improvement plan.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, states have adopted provisions that place the governance and day-to-day management of schools in the hands of local authorities, typically local school boards. These boards generally have broad powers to establish policy, enter into contracts, develop budgets, and employ personnel. Among the 50 states there is considerable variation in the legal structure of school Divisions. Some school Divisions are fiscally independent (i.e., do not have to depend upon the state or another body politic for fiscal resources) while others are totally dependent upon other entities for their resources (i.e., some Divisions must rely on city councils, county commissions or like bodies and the state for budget approval and funds). Some school Divisions must take budget proposals or operating tax levies to the public for approval and other boards have latitude to set budgets and approve revenue levies within the constraints of law. The legal foundation of school Divisions is critical to the overall functioning of the organization as it defines the locus of power that determines how school boards and executive personnel may carry out their assigned responsibilities.

The primary state laws controlling the governance and operation of schools in Virginia are found in Title 22.1 of the Virginia Code. These laws give the School Board broad powers to adopt policies, fix contracts, approve the appointment of personnel, develop a budget for further review and approval by the city, and other actions designed to ensure secure, safe, and proper schools for Smyth County.

Exhibit 2-1 details information about the seven members of the School Board.

EXHIBIT 2-1
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

NAME	TITLE	DISTRICT	TERM EXPIRES	LENGTH OF SERVICE AS OF END OF 2005-06
Jesse Choate	Chair	Rye Valley	2007	15 Years
Jerry Chatron	Vice-Chairman	Saltville	2008	4 Years
Roger Nipper	Member	North Fork	2007	2 Years
Charles Doane	Member	Chilhowie	2008	4 Years
Laura Hall	Member	Atkins	2007	6 Years
Susan Sneed	Member	Royal Oak	2008	2 years
Kimberly Clark	Member	Park	2007	2 Years

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.

2.1 *School Board Governance*

FINDING

The Smyth County School Board has adequate time and background materials to conduct their monthly business in a professional manner. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Board chair, develops an agenda and background information for each agenda item as necessary. This information is provided to board members ahead of time so it can be studied before the meeting. Unless there is an emergency, issues are placed on the agenda as discussion items prior to coming before the board for action. This practice allows the School Board to study the issues and deliberate at some length before acting and creates stability in the decision making process.

COMMENDATION

The Smyth County Public Schools has developed a consistent and predictable process for the development and dissemination of materials necessary for conducting business-like school board meetings.

FINDING

The Smyth County Public Schools Board agendas and meeting packets do not have a consent calendar. Many school Divisions include a consent calendar item on the school board meeting agenda to include items such as the payment of bills, the approval of the sale of surplus items, approval of travel expenses, the acceptance of gifts, etc. The use

of a consent calendar allows the School Board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Although the present practice of acting on each item has not taken an undue amount of time, using a consent calendar sends a message about the board's desire to focus on policy issues, set priorities, and the focus of its use of time.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-1:

Include a consent calendar on the board agenda.

The use of a consent calendar will allow the School Board to group routine items into one motion and proceed on to more important issues. Should any School Board member wish to discuss an item in more detail or act on it separately, the item can be removed from the consent calendar and added to the regular agenda. As a result of using a consent calendar, the School Board should be able to shorten the length of the meeting or spend more time on "mission critical" issues. The implementation of this recommendation will require a change in Board Policy since the agenda format is included in that document. Exhibit 2-2 is an example of a board agenda with a consent calendar.

EXHIBIT 2-2
SAMPLE BOARD AGENDA

Board Agenda
Date
1. Call to Order
1.1   Call Meeting to Order (President)
1.2   Flag Salute
1.3   Roll Call (Minutes Clerk of the Board)
2. Consent Calendar
(Motion requires the approval of the "Consent Calendar" as printed or as amended. School Board members may, however, call for a vote on each of the items listed on the "Consent Calendar."
2.1   Agenda with Commentary
2.2   Minutes
2.3   Gifts
2.4   Payables
2.5   Surplus resolution
3. Presentations/Recognitions
3.1   Presentation of the Employee of the Month Awards
4. Public Comment
4.1   Comments from the Public
5. Superintendent's Report
5.1   Schedule of Upcoming Dates
5.2   Enrollment Update
5.3   Holiday Shutdown for Energy Management
6. Discussion Topics
6.1   Report from the Division Energy Manager
7. Questions form Board Members
8. Action Items – List Attached (Motion Required)
9. Adjourn

Source: Created by MGT of America, 2005.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Board does not evaluate itself, although some board members reported participation in "informal" feedback communications. The Smyth County School Board is comprised of seven members who receive both formal and informal board training each year; however, the effects of the training and general School Board effectiveness are not evaluated. The school division, as a whole, has a culture of evaluating its personnel, its programs, and its financial condition. The School Board evaluates the Superintendent annually, but does not have a self-evaluation. This informal process does not provide a formal way to make good school boards great.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-2:

Provide for an annual self-evaluation of the School Board.

Providing feedback, both formally and informally, is one of the "basics" in any improvement process. Structured feedback in the form of an evaluation instrument can supplement honest ongoing dialogue and discussion.

In addition, by conducting an annual evaluation, the board models the importance of the evaluation process. As a result, both the board and the organization develop a culture of continuous improvement. Exhibit 2-3 is one example of a self-assessment instrument used by some boards.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.2   Policies and Procedures

The development of policy and procedures constitutes the means by which an organization can communicate expectations to its constituents. In addition, adopting policy and establishing related procedures provide the mechanism for:

- establishing the school board expectations and what may be expected from the board;

- keeping the school board and administration out of trouble;

EXHIBIT 2-3
SAMPLE BOARD SELF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Meeting Evaluation

DIRECTIONS: By evaluating our past meeting performance, we can discover ways to make future meetings shorter and more productive. Check each item "Adequate" or "Needs Improvement".   If you check "Needs Improvement, include suggestions for improvement.

Adequate   Needs Improvement

_____   _____   Our meeting was businesslike, results-oriented and we functioned like a team.

_____   _____   Our discussion was cordial and well balanced (not dominated by just a few members).

_____   _____   We confined our discussion to agenda items only.

_____   _____   Our agenda included positive issues as well as problems.

_____   _____   We discussed policy issues rather than day-to-day management issues.

_____   _____   We followed parliamentary rules and consulted legal or professional counsel when needed.

_____   _____   The president or chairperson controlled and guided the meeting.

_____   _____   We dealt successfully with controversial items and attempted to develop solutions acceptable to all members.

_____   _____   Everyone contributed to the meeting.

_____   _____   All members were prepared to discuss material that was sent to them in advance.

_____   _____   Reports were clear, well prepared and provided adequate information for decision making.

_____   _____   Printed materials given to us were easy to understand and use.

_____   _____   Our meeting room was comfortable and conducive to discussion and decision making.

_____   _____   All members were in attendance and on-time - - and the meeting began and concluded on time.

_____   _____   For committees and ad hoc groups: There was adequate reason for us to meet.

My best suggestion for improving our next meeting is...

Source: Created by MGT of America, 2005.

- establishing an essential Division between policy making and administration roles;

- creating guidelines within which people operate;

- providing reasonable assurances of consistency and continuity in decisions;

- providing legal basis for the allocation of funds, facilities and other resources;

- facilitating and guiding the orientation of the school board members and employees; and

- acquainting the public with and encouraging citizen involvement within structured guidelines.

Policy and procedures, therefore, reveal the philosophy and position of the School Board and are stated clearly enough to provide for executive or staff direction.

FINDING

Policies in the Smyth County Public Schools are maintained in the Superintendent's office. The policy manual is composed of nine chapters denoted as major sections. Exhibit 2-4 below provides the policy manual sections.

EXHIBIT 2-4
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ORGANIZATION OF POLICY HANDBOOK

CHAPTER	TITLE
I	Educational Vision, Mission and Goals
II	The School Board
III	Administration
IV	Business and Operational Procedures
V	Personnel Policies
VI	Instruction
VII	Students
VIII	School and Community
IX	Policy Manual Development, Maintenance and Access

Source: Smyth County Public Schools Policy Handbook, November 2005.

Copies of the Smyth County School Board Policy Manual are to be maintained, updated, and provided to the public through general access, in accordance with Chapter IX of the Policy Manual. This access includes all school and public libraries as well as a copy being placed on-line at the Division web site. There has not, however, been recent updates nor is there any regulation requiring a regular review and update if appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-3:

Amend the School Board Policy Manual Chapter IX to require a review of the entire manual every five years.

While the policy dictates how updates will be inserted and maintained, there is no requirement for a regular review of all policies. Such a policy will ensure that this is completed and old or outdated policies will be revised and/or eliminated.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.3 *Comprehensive Improvement Planning*

Comprehensive school improvement planning is one of the key components of Division board and administrative functions. The provision of the best programs possible for students within the financial constraints of the community is the primary goal of most school Divisions throughout the United States. In the age of "No Child Left Behind" and the associated requirements of adequate yearly progress, school Divisions need to develop long range improvement plans and then allocate resources in accordance with that plan. It is important that all stakeholders in the Division have input into the plan and are provided with information regarding the implementation, the on-going activities and the results.

FINDING

The Smyth County Public Schools has developed a comprehensive six-year improvement plan for the years 2004-2010 that includes key focus areas, a timeline for implementation, and the responsibilities of each level of leadership within the Division. Exhibit 2-5 provides the name and proposed cycle for each of the key focus areas.

Goals and performance standards for each of the above focus areas have been developed. The goal statements are:

Vision:

- Create district and community consensus on achievement objectives.

- Clearly define expectations for what students should know and be able to do.

- Quantify those expectations and set agreed-upon measures for achievement.

EXHIBIT 2-5
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
COMPREHENSIVE SIX-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN KEY WORK FOCUS

**CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT**   **VISION**

THE

COLLABORATION   **KEY WORK
FOCUS**   **STANDARDS**

OF

**SMYTH
COUNTY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

CLIMATE   **ASSESSMENT**

2004 - 2010

ALIGNMENT   **ACCOUNTABILITY**
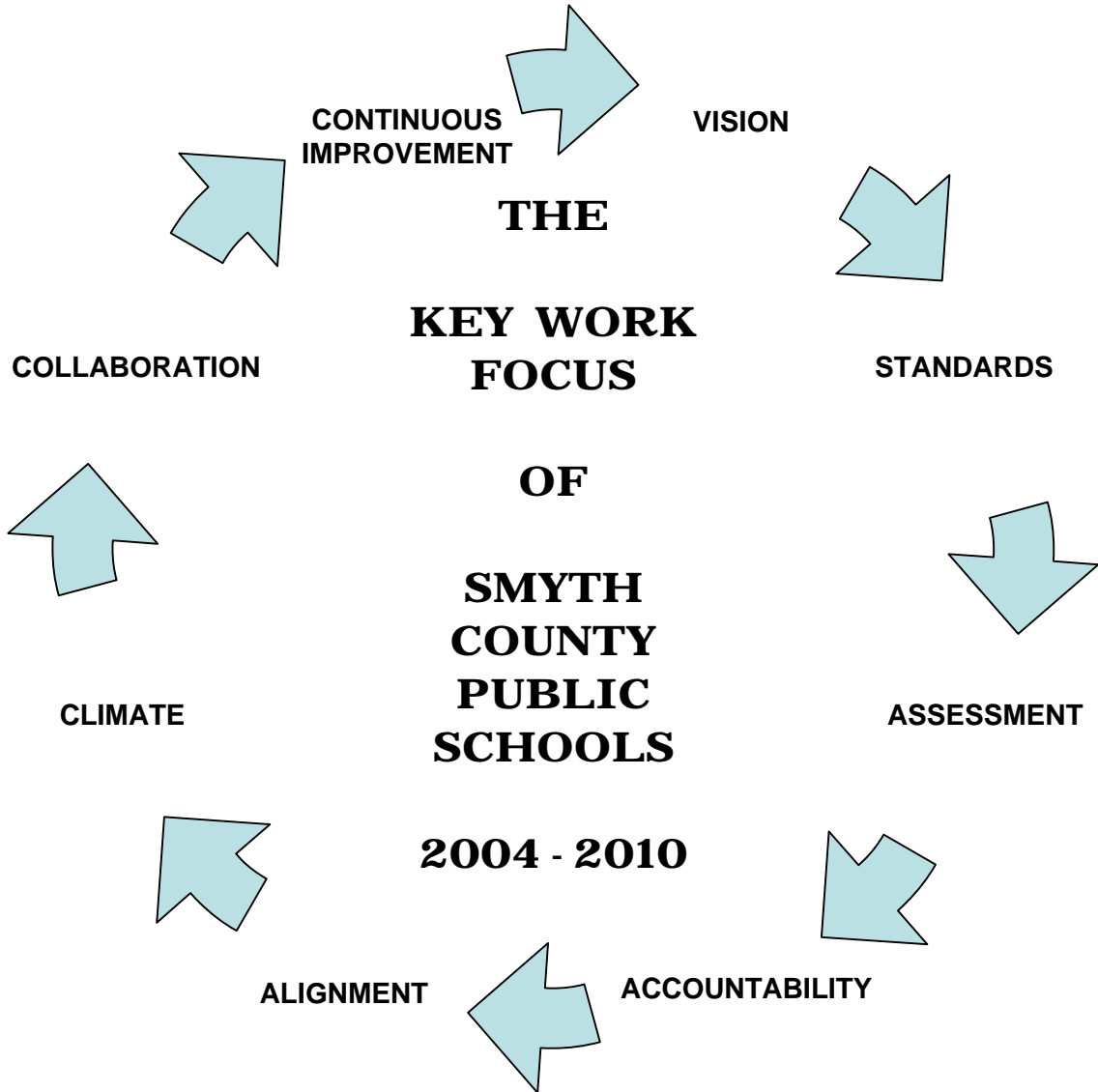
Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.

Standards:

- Establish clear standards for student performance and communicate them continually.

- Base standards on an external source that has credibility in the community.

- Disseminate standards clearly and widely to students, staff, and community members.

Assessment:

- Ensure that assessments are tied to established standards.

- Use multiple, ongoing assessment measures

- Ensure that assessments are explained to the community.

Accountability:

- Measure the performance of all school staff members, administrators and the school board itself against student achievement objectives.

- Continually track progress and report results honestly.

Alignment:

- Align resources to ensure students meet standards.

- Include the community in the review of the district budget and management process.

- Ensure that resources support parents in helping their children with school work.

Climate:

- Create a climate that supports the philosophy that all children can learn at high levels.

- Empower staff to meet the needs of all students.

- Model mutual respect and professional behavior in board meetings and with the school superintendent and staff.

Collaboration:

- Build collaborative relationships with political and business leaders to develop a consensus for student success.

- Communicate regularly with federal and state officials about student achievement.

- Model behavior that emphasizes trust, teamwork, and shared accountability.

Continuous Improvement:

- Commit to continuous education and training on issues related to achievement.

- Use data on student achievement to set priorities for allocating resources.

- Adjust strategic plan based on data and community input.

The plan outlines clear goals and standards for taking the Division to the next level. If all aspects are implemented as planned it will go a long way toward an effective program of school improvement.

COMMENDATION

The Smyth County Public Schools are commended for developing a comprehensive six year improvement plan.

2.4   *Organization and Management*

The effective organization and management of a large organization is typically composed of the executive and management functions incorporated into a Division organization. Within this Division a series of functional areas, determined as a response to its mission and related goals, are assembled. The successful, contemporary organization has, among its essential characteristics, the capacity to alter its structure to meet changing client requirements. The more the existing culture of the organization restricts this response, the less likelihood of the organization meeting client requirements and, as a result, experiencing successes.

This section reviews the Smyth County Public Schools' organization, decision making, management, planning and accountability, internal and external communications, and school organization and management.

2.4.1 *Division Organization*

The current organizational chart in the Smyth County Public Schools reflects a relatively flat line of accountability with most of the administrative personnel reporting directly to the Superintendent. Exhibit 2-6 illustrates the current organizational pattern.

EXHIBIT 2-6
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Smyth County School Board

Superintendent

Principals

Director of Nursing

Director of Federal Programs

Director of Special Education

Coordinator ABE/Alter. Education

Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Director of Secondary Ed.

Director of Vocational Ed.

Director of Elementary Ed

Director of Technology

Coordinator for SWVMHI Ed. Program

Business Decision Support Analyst

Director for Transportation/Maintenance

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Assistant Superintendent for Administration
(Duties: Coord. Food Services & Employee Benefit Services)

Source: Smyth County School Board Manual, 2005.

The Division has recently made changes to the administrative organization that have included the replacement of the assistant superintendent for administration position with a director of business/auxiliary services and a re-focus of the assistant superintendent for instruction position. This change resulted in a reduction of overall administrative costs but has increased the amount of budgetary responsibilities being taken on by the Superintendent. A new proposed organizational chart has been developed that provides some additional levels within the structure by

- assigning the directors for special education, secondary education, elementary education and federal programs to report directly to the assistant superintendent, and

- assigning the food service coordinator, director of human resources and director of maintenance/transportation to report directly to the director of business/auxiliary services.

This realignment of reporting structure will allow the director of business/auxiliary services to have greater budget responsibilities, duties that had not been assigned to the previous assistant superintendent for administration.

Exhibit 2-7 shows this proposed new organizational chart.

FINDING

Over the past two years, Division administration has made significant changes geared toward improving the efficiency of administrative functions. Most significant among the changes have been the re-assignment of the assistant superintendent duties and the reorganization of the financial operations. The assistant superintendent is working directly with educational program directors and principals toward improving Division curriculum, evaluation processes, communications, and educational program improvements. This emphasis on the educational program is reflected in the Division survey results showing that over 80 percent of administrators, principals and teachers rated the statement, 'the emphasis on learning has increased," as either "agree" or "strongly agree." At the same time, the changes in the financial organization has resulted in the Division going from a significant deficit two years ago to a significant surplus this year.

The reorganization of the Division administrative functions, along with the positive outlook throughout the Division regarding educational programs (see Chapter 6 – Educational Program Delivery) has positioned the Division very well. It can be said that the Division is in a position of taking the next step – that of becoming a high performing Division in all functions.

COMMENDATION

The Smyth County Public Schools is to be commended for taking significant steps toward re-organizing administrative functions.

**EXHIBIT 2-7
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**
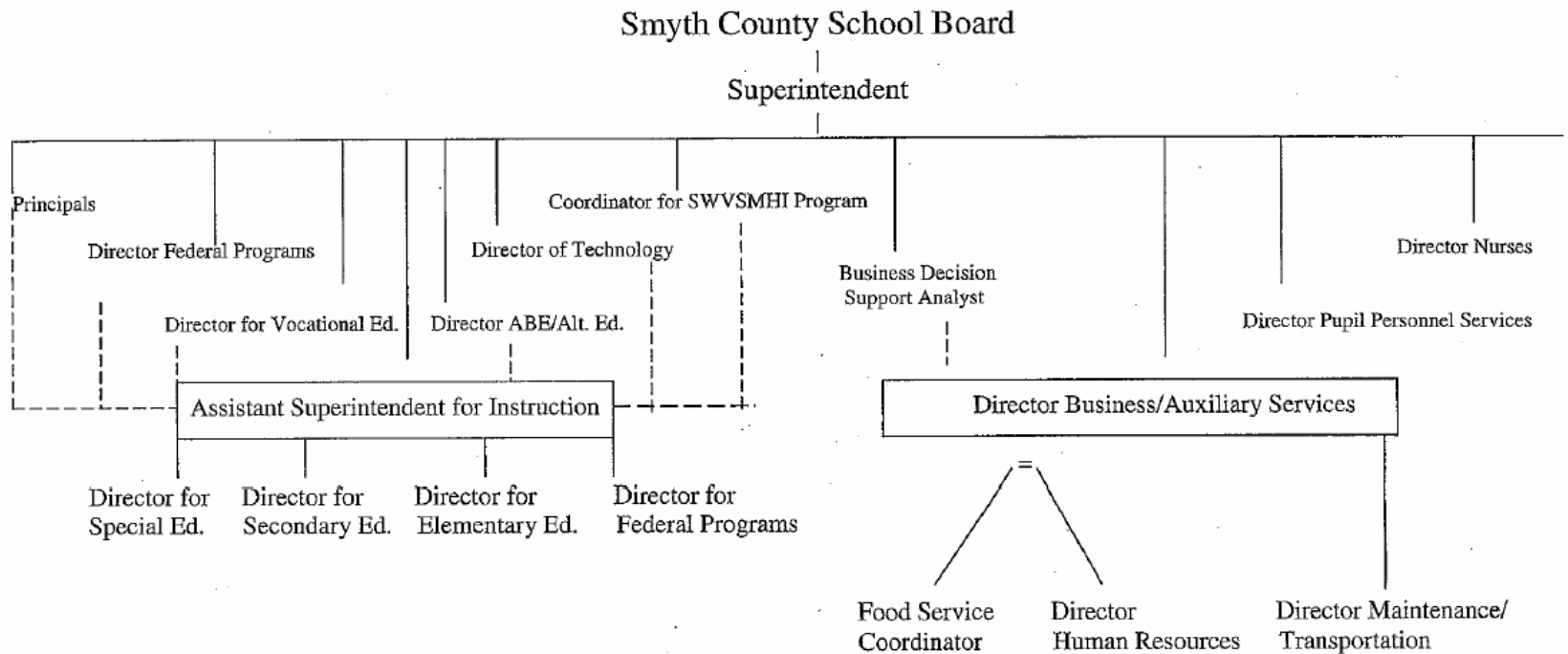
Source: MGT of America 2005.

FINDING

The elimination of the assistant superintendent for administration, while well intentioned, has resulted in much more of the responsibility for financial management resting with the Superintendent. This, in turn, has reduced the time available for the Superintendent to concentrate on other duties. It was necessary to provide this focus during the recent time of dealing with financial difficulties, but administrators may now want to look at a more conventional model of business functions.

Specific issues that have come up due to the Superintendent focusing on financial matters include the following:

- administrative staff need to be more visible;
- Division directors lack a coordinated focus;
- a lack of consistency among administrative processes; and
- inconsistent communications processes.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-4:

Create and implement an organizational chart that replaces the Director of Business and Auxiliary Services with an Operations and Finance Officer, and align all Divisional operations in this category under this new position.

The Division would be better served with an organizational structure that reflects a more traditional hierarchal model that allows the Superintendent to provide overall leadership and direction. As shown in Exhibit 2-8, the new structure will provide the Division with a clear view of the lines of responsibility as well as provide the services necessary in both the instructional and business sides of Divisional services. This will also provide the Superintendent with the ability to oversee all operations while having sufficient administrative staffing levels to maintain his focus on providing the educational leadership that will be necessary to implement the six-year improvement plan and to move the Division to the next level.

FISCAL IMPACT

The position of Operations and Finance Officer will require an estimated salary and benefits of $91,500. This is based on a salary of $75,000 plus 22 percent for benefits. The other costs associated with the position (supplies, expenses, office, etc.) are currently budgeted with other Division level positions.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Create an Operations and Finance Officer Position.	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)

EXHIBIT 2-8
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

```
                    Superintendent of
                     Smyth County
                     Public Schools
                    /              \
        Assistant                      Operations and
    Superintendent for                Finance Officer
       Instruction              /        |         |          \
       /        \         Accounting  Director of  Director of   Administrative
Divisional    School      Specialist  Human       Auxiliary     Technology
Directors     Principals              Resources   Services      Coordinator
                                                    |              |
                                                Food Service   Instructional
                                                               Technology Staff
                                                    |              |
                                                Maintenance     Assessment
                                                    |              |
                                                Transportation  Special
                                                                Education
                                                                   |
                                                                Student
                                                                Services
```
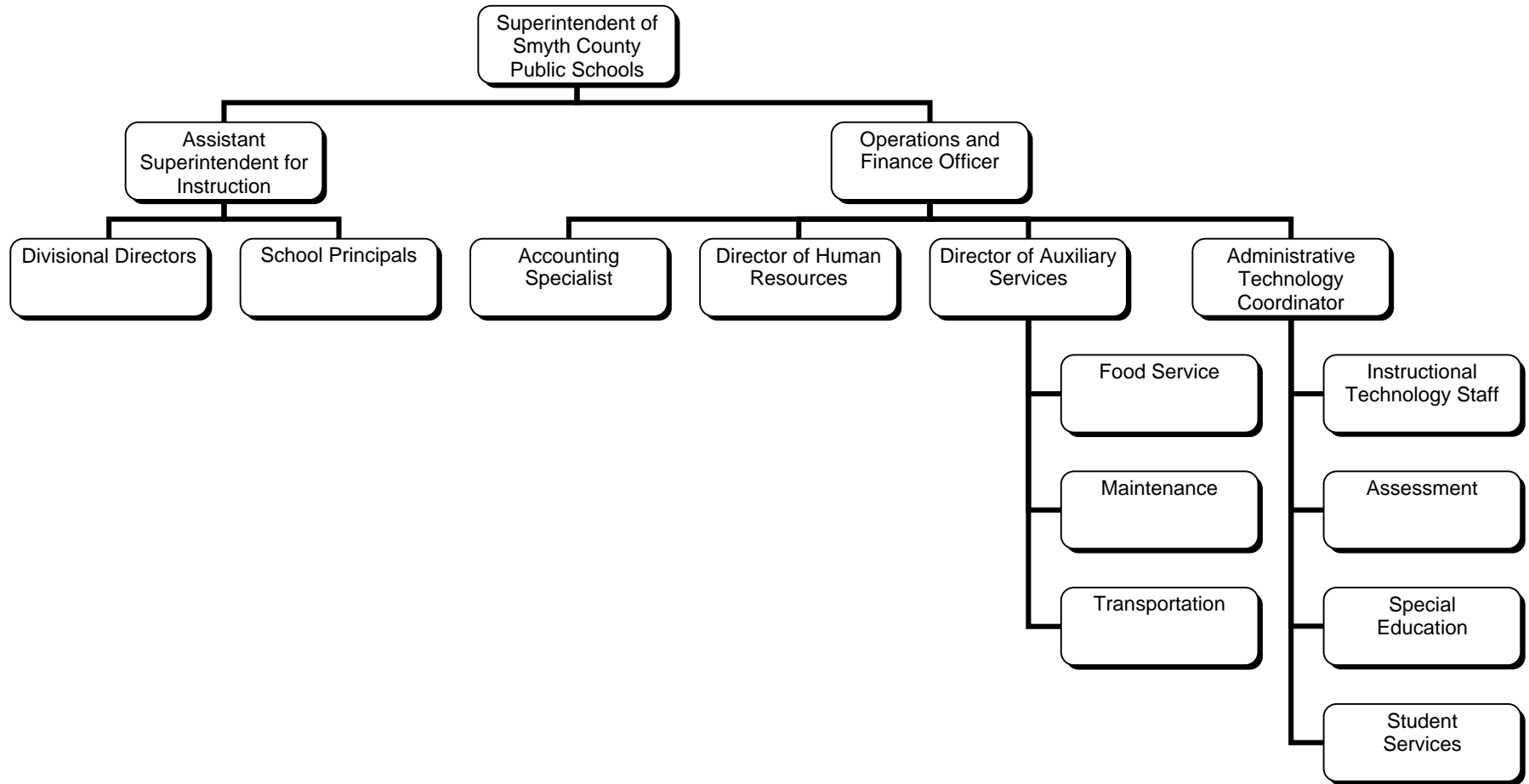
Source: Created by MGT of America, 2005.

FINDING

As stated previously, in order to fully implement the recommended organizational chart (Exhibit 2-8), it will be necessary to add the position of operations and finance officer. The individual assigned to this position would oversee the accounting, administrative technology, human resources and auxiliary services for the Division. A job description should be created for this position; currently one does not exist.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-5:

Develop a position description for the new Operations and Finance Officer position.

The job description should include the overall responsibility for Division finance and operation functions and oversee the directors in these areas. The qualifications for the position should include prior experience in financial management.

FISCAL IMPACT

The creation of the job description falls within the regular work of the Human Resources Department and will not require additional financial resources.

2.4.2 Decision Making and Management

Within the heart of an organization resides its life providers --- the decision making and management processes. Richard Beckhard in *The Organization of the Future* profiles the healthy organization and notes that it:

- has a strong sensing Division for receiving current information on all parts of the Division and their interactions;

- operates in a "form follows function" mode --- work determines the structures and mechanisms to do it and, consequently, it uses multiple structures (formal pyramidal structures, horizontal structures and teams, project structures, and temporary structures [as when managing a major change]);

- has a management Division that is information driven, and information is shared across functions and organization levels;

- encourages and allows decisions to be made at the level closest to the customer, where all the necessary information is available;

- communicates relatively openly throughout the Division;

- operates in a learning mode and identifying learning points is part of the process of all decision making;

- makes explicit recognition for innovation and creativity, and has a high tolerance for different styles of thinking and for ambiguity; and

- is generally managed with and guided by a strong executive officer employing a variety of work groups composed of individuals possessing appropriate skills and complementary traits.

FINDING

The administrative team in the Smyth County Public Schools meets on a regular basis to review on-going matters and provide updates. There is not, however, an established program of providing regular training and communicative opportunities to involve all staff in decision making and implementation of the six year comprehensive plan. There are numerous informal opportunities for this to occur but they are not organized and evaluated in a systematic way. There is also no formal process for communicating with the general public, even though the Smyth County School Board Policy Manual outlines the need and benefit of such a process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 2-6:

Develop a system of regular communications and training of administrative staff geared toward shared decision making and implementation of the six year plan.

The plan should include all Division level staff and principals and include activities that will ensure regular communications regarding school improvement throughout the Division. This will provide the framework for all levels of the administrative staff to understand what their role is in school improvement efforts and how success will be determined. Sample activities may include:

- strategic and long-range plan development;

- identification of data necessary to ensure that decisions are based upon accurate and complete information;

- effective community involvement;

- preparing the team to function effectively, including identification and treatment of dysfunctional activity and establishing effective internal communications;

- strategies for the specific and purposeful abandonment of obsolete, unproductive practices and programs;

- establishing a means for monitoring the Division's organizational climate.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 2-7:

Assign the responsibility of developing and implementing a public relations program to a central office administrator.

Effective internal and external communications is a key aspect of developing and maintaining organizations that facilitate the realization of essential goals and objectives. The underlying piece, as always, is fundamentally sound communications. The modern organization, having emerged to an age of requiring results tailored to the individual client, must engage in effective communications to all stakeholders and, furthermore, produce needed responses in a timely fashion.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3.0 PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

3.0 PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

In this chapter, the findings and recommendations for the overall operation of Human Resources of Smyth County Public Schools are presented. The major sections of the chapter include:

3.1   Human Resources Organization and Management
3.2   Personnel Policies and Procedures
3.3   Personnel Files
3.4   Job Descriptions and Job Specifications
3.5   Employee Compensation and Benefits
3.6   Employee Evaluations
3.7   Staff Development

MGT consultants reviewed a variety of documentation of the Human Resources functions for Smyth County Public Schools. Also, consultants interviewed employees who have duties related to the delivery of Human Resources services.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Smyth County School Board employs over 800 full-time classified and support personnel. More than 50 percent of these full-time employees are teachers and administrators. Smyth County Public Schools is effectively managed by a leadership team with vision and determination. The administrative leaders of SCPS have already begun the task of writing and/or revising many of the procedures and processes that are critical to the successful and efficient delivery of Human Resources services to a school division. Recommendations included in this chapter are essentially focused on providing the division with additional information that will support its efforts in establishing comprehensive and up-to-date human resource policies and procedures. Among these recommendations are the following key suggestions:

- Establish a comprehensive job classification system, an equitable salary scale for administrators, and an annual employee performance evaluation program;

- Reorganize, to a limited extent, the Human Resources office; and

- Implement a system of staff development for all employees.

INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources Department is responsible for delivering personnel services professionally to both internal and external customers. Procedures guiding the operations of the Human Resources Department should be well-written, comprehensive, easily accessible, and aligned with best practices in Human Resources management. The organization and administration of the Human Resources Department affect the quality of services provided to the school division and impact the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of services.

MGT conducted a survey of central office administrators, principals, and teachers within SCPS in order to ascertain their opinions with regard to services and operations in the school division. The survey analyses provided comparisons of the results of each group within SCPS and between SCPS and similar groups of central office administrators, principals, and teachers from other school systems. Exhibit 3-1 shows comparisons of the opinions of the three groups within SCPS on selected items from the survey.

EXHIBIT 3-1
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

	(% Agree + Strongly Agree) / (% Disagree + Strongly Disagree)		
	ADMINISTRATORS	**PRINCIPALS**	**TEACHERS**
I find Smyth County Schools to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	72/7	76/21	77/10
I plan to continue my career in Smyth County Schools.	72/0	75/8	87/4
Salary levels in Smyth County Public Schools are competitive	28/43	54/29	44/38
Most administrative practices in Smyth County Schools are highly effective and efficient.	43/21	54/21	48/30
Most of Smyth County Public Schools administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	64/28	46/21	47/13
Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	100/0	58/26	42/32
Central office administrators provide quality service to schools.	93/0	50/21	39/33

Source: MGT Survey, 2005

While the results show high satisfaction with the quality of work life in the Division, and strong commitment to continuing their careers working in the district, all three groups had less than overwhelming satisfaction with the competitiveness of division salaries. Central office administrators were least satisfied, with only 28 percent responding *agree or strongly agree* to the statement "Salary levels in Smyth County Public Schools are competitive. Teachers' response was 44 percent and principals were the highest with 54 percent. The issue with the widest disagreement in responses was "Central office administrators provide quality service to schools." While 93 percent of the administrators themselves responded *agree or strongly agree* to this statement, only 50 percent of principals and 39 percent of teachers did likewise. This bodes for the need to survey these constituents to determine their areas of dissatisfaction with divisional HR services.

3.1 *Human Resources Organization and Management*

The manner in which a Human Resources Department is organized and managed significantly influences the effectiveness of personnel services delivered to employees. Functions which the Human Resources Department performs should drive the organizational structure of a Human Resources Department, and these functions should be reviewed periodically to ensure that the needs of the organization are being effectively met.

FINDING

The Policy Manual for Smyth County Public Schools presents policies of personnel and human resources in Chapter V, "Personnel Policies." This chapter includes descriptions of policies governing employment such as federal and state regulations, licensure, job classifications, discipline, evaluations, staff development, salaries and benefits, and leaves of absence.

Currently, human resource functions are not centralized in a single Department. Both the Director of Human Resources and Auxiliary Services and the assistant superintendent oversee human resource functions. The Director of Human Resources and Auxiliary Services spends about 45 percent of his time with food services, 45 percent with Human Resources functions, and the remaining 10 percent with maintenance and transportation. The assistant superintendent spends about 50 percent of his time managing human resource functions during the spring and summer when most of the teacher hiring occurs and about 25 percent during the remainder of the year. His chief duties are employment and licensure of teachers, employment of instructional aides and paraprofessionals, teacher discipline, and staff development.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-1:

Reclassify the position of Director of Human Resources and Auxiliary Services to Director of Human Resources.

The Director of Human Resources should oversee all operations and functions of the Human Resources Office and should be assigned exclusively to this office. This person should also be the liaison for Human Resources with employees and administration.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The reclassification would serve more as a clarifying and specifying of current duties, rather than assuming additional responsibilities that would entitle the position to a higher pay grade.

3.2 *Personnel Policies and Procedures*

The Human Resources Department of any organization is responsible for planning, implementing, and maintaining a sound system of Human Resources management that complies with federal and state laws and with the mission of the organization. The major functions of Human Resources usually include responsibilities such as:

- conducting recruitment, initial screening, and interviewing;

- maintaining job applicant tracking;

- posting vacancy listings;

- processing new employees;

- conducting substitute employee orientation;

- introducing, enrolling, and maintaining comprehensive benefits;

- monitoring licensure for certified positions;

- processing and providing general oversight of staff development;

- maintaining substitute employee pool;

- processing disability documentation;

- handling grievances;

- maintaining the Human Resource Management System and personnel files;

- interacting with the public and employees concerning human resource inquires; and

- adhering to Board policies and procedures established for human resource management.

FINDING

Policies and regulations guiding the delivery of personnel services to employees are stated in Chapter V ("Personnel Policies") of the Smyth County Public Schools Policy Manual. Within this section of the manual, policies and regulations for the employment of staff, compensation and related benefits, the school system harassment policy, family and medical leave, nepotism, substance abuse, and substitute teachers are just a few of the personnel functions detailed.

In Chapter IX, "Policy Manual Development, Maintenance and Access," the policy manual states:

The Smyth County school system shall be governed by written policies adopted by the school board. Matters to be incorporated in written policy are determined by statute, Virginia Department of Education regulations, and the judgments of the school board as to what is needed in order to provide guidance to employees, students, parents/guardians, and citizens.

The current policy manual was approved effective January 1, 1997. Smyth County Public Schools presented MGT consultants with a draft of a policy manual dated July 14, 2005, which was presented to the School Board at the August 8, 2005 meeting. According to the minutes of the meeting, "the board received the draft copy of the Smyth County School Board Policy Manual." No further action was noted.

Policy 9.02 states that:

Addendum policies shall reflect the date of board approval and information pertaining to what, if any, existing policy provisions are amended or superseded. At least once each three years, addendum policies will be incorporated into the appropriate chapter of the policy manual with new updated manuals appropriately distributed.

No dates of board approval for amended policies were found.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-2:

Ensure that the current updates to the Smyth County School Board Policy Manual are completed and that future updates are completed on a regular schedule.

Policies are the written regulations that govern the operation of a school system. They should reflect current statutes of other agencies, such as the Virginia Department of Education and the United States Department of Education, which affect the Smyth County School Division. Policies should also convey the guidelines set by the local school board for the administration and operation of the school division.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The HR Department does not have a comprehensive "desk manual" of operating procedures outlining and describing the various functions performed by Human Resources. This manual typically defines the processes and procedures for the implementation, maintenance, and compliance of the personnel-related policies established by the Smyth County Board of Education in addition to the delivery of human

resource services. It also generally includes a copy of the board-adopted personnel policies.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-3:

Develop and implement a *Smyth County School Division Human Resources Procedure Manual.*

The manual should include the mission, goals, and organizational structure of the Human Resources Department as well as detailed procedures for executing the functions of the Department. It should be reviewed and updated regularly. With a well-organized, indexed, and comprehensive procedures manual, the Human Resources Department has a guidebook that provides a "one-stop" resource for all human resource functions and procedures. It also can also serve as a comprehensive training manual for new employees and a cross-training manual for current staff.

As previously stated, the procedures manual should provide standardized instructions for all human resource functions. These guidelines should eliminate inconsistencies and duplications of efforts in the office. It should also improve the overall efficiency of operations, and should ensure the continued efficient operation of Human Resources in case a staff person is absent for a day or for an extended period of time.

The procedure manual should include, but not be limited to, the following items:

- the purpose, vision, and goals of the Human Resources office;

- a copy of Smyth County Public Schools personnel policies;

- detailed, step-by-step descriptions of each process and procedure used in the delivery of personnel services;

- copies of all forms and/or computer screens used in the processes; and

- guidelines for regular and systematic update of the manual and reassessment of current procedures.

Every employee who carries out any personnel function should be involved in the development of the procedures manual. A form for documenting a task and the steps necessary for accomplishing the task should be submitted to each of these employees for their input. Then, the director of Human Resources or his administrative assistant should compile these into the procedures manual. The director and each personnel representative should have a bound copy of the procedures manual, and the manual should be provided on the Smyth County Public Schools intranet for easy access by all employees.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

No formal employee handbook is provided to SCPS employees; however, the school division annually publishes and presents to all staff members the "Smyth County Schools Opening of School Bulletin." The table of contents in the bulletin includes items such as the educational vision, mission, and goals of Smyth County Public Schools, how to study, and SCPS office hours. It also includes policies and procedures regarding employment issues (e.g., "renewal of license," "teacher evaluation," "sick leave," and "salary scale") as well as topics with reference to students or school operation (e.g., "age and grade for pupils entering school," "fire drills," "attendance," and "safety rules for students riding school buses"). The complete SCPS Policy Manual is exhibited on the school division's Web site.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-4:

Develop a *Smyth County Public Schools Personnel Handbook* for all employees.

The *Smyth County Public Schools Personnel Handbook* should include policies and procedures that affect all employees of SCPS, such as:

- payroll procedures;
- services performed by Human Resources;
- timelines for processing all personnel transactions;
- staffing and personnel classifications;
- employment contracts;
- Fair Labor Standards Act;
- Family Medical Leave Act;
- finger printing procedures;
- employment status changes;
- licensure;
- personnel evaluations;
- staff development;
- employee benefits;
- drug-free workplace;
- sexual harassment guidelines;
- grievance procedures;
- leave programs; and
- reports, forms, codes

Two effective management practices substantiate why an employee handbook is essential:

- to provide clear expectations and information about policies and regulations; and

- to protect the organization by ensuring that employees have been informed about policies and regulations, particularly those related to conditions of employment, employee rights, benefits, leave, salary schedules, and detailed procedures on personnel-related issues.

The handbook should be presented in a clear and concise manner that is structured for easy reading and guidance. Since the policy manual is found on-line, it is not necessary to reprint all of the policies. A guide to the location of specific policies, such as the table of contents of the policy manual, could be printed in a section of the handbook. Referring the reader to the on-line manual could save printing and paper costs for the division.

Additional information specific to a group of employees could be given as an addendum and maintained by the Human Resources Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of developing and compiling the handbook can be accomplished with existing resources.

3.3 *Personnel Files*

The Division of Human Resources is responsible for maintaining and protecting the confidentiality of personnel records for the school system.

FINDING

Personnel files for Smyth County Public Schools are not housed in a centralized location. Some files are in file cabinets in the payroll office, and some are in the office of the assistant superintendent. Also, most of the file cabinets are not equipped with locks. The files in the payroll office contain salary and benefit information and are conveniently located for payroll processing. Two people work in this office, which is a small and very crowded work space. MGT consultants were told that the hall door is locked if both payroll staff have to be out of the room at the same time. Otherwise, each one is responsible for ensuring that only certain people are permitted access to the personnel files.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-5:

Store and maintain employee personnel folders in a centrally located area that can be secured.

Personnel files have applicant or employee social security numbers and other private information. The Human Resources Department staff should be sure that all personnel paperwork is filed and secured each day in a locked office or file cabinet. Also, because each file includes a variety of information on each employee (e.g., licensure and payroll), it maybe necessary for persons from more than one office to access the files in a day.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3.4   *Job Specifications and Job Descriptions*

A carefully developed job classification system and well-written job descriptions are necessary for effective personnel management. Standards for jobs are set when a description of a job is clearly stated. Moreover, the assignment of appropriate pay grades is more easily accomplished when a job description has all the necessary components. Job descriptions can also serve as a basis for annual performance evaluations. More important, job descriptions are becoming increasingly important in defending workers' compensation and civil lawsuits.

FINDING

A job classification system groups jobs with similar education and experience requirements, levels of difficulty, complexity, and responsibility. Each classification is designated to a salary schedule or pay grade that represents its job worth.

Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS) employees are classified into two groups, "professional staff" and "support staff," both of which are full-time positions. "Professional staff" has two subgroups, licensed and classified. As stated in Section 5.08 of the SCPS policy manual, licensed professional staff are:

Employees performing supervisory, administrative, or educational functions in positions requiring license issued by the State Department of Education and are eligible to attain continuing contract status as made and provided by law.

Classified employees perform supervisory or administrative functions in which state licensure is not required and continuing contract status is not provided. Support staff are all employees who are not categorized as "professional staff."

Part-time employees in Smyth County Public Schools include substitute teachers, homebound teachers, summer school teachers, and any other professional or support staff person who works 35 hours or less per week. The exceptions are bus drivers who are considered full time at 20 hours per week and food service workers who are full time at 30 hours per week.

According to the Budget Book for Smyth County Public Schools, Fiscal Year 2005-2006, there are salary scales for 13 different job categories (teachers, administrators, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians, maintenance staff, garage mechanics, instructional aides, school secretaries, administrative secretaries, payroll clerks, clerk of the Board, and computer technicians), plus substitutes for bus drivers, teachers, and aides. In the employee payroll information, there are approximately 30 distinct job classifications with many having multiple titles within that classification. For example, MGT consultants found the following employee titles for the "aide" position:

- Aide
- County Title 1 PS Aide

- Guidance Aide
- Instructional Aide
- Library Aide
- New Kindergarten Aide Position
- Pre-school Aide
- Special ED Aide
- Teacher Aide
- Title 1 PS Aide
- Title 6 Aide
- Title 6 Pre-school Aide
- Title VI Aide

All positions in SCPS should be assigned to a specific job classification, and the job classification should be clearly stated on each job description.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-6:

Develop a job classification system.

A job classification structure can provide guidance for the development of job descriptions that accurately describe the expectations, requirements, and standards for each position in the organization. Classification systems should be reviewed on a regular basis to convey clearly the organizational expectations to employees, ensure consistency in the assignment or reassignment of employees, and maintain equity and parity in employee compensation plans.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Smyth County Public Schools has approximately 20 job descriptions in the policy handbook, most of which have been written recently. MGT consultants were told that writing job descriptions for all employee positions is a top priority, and work on this task has begun. Exhibit 3-2 shows a template for a comprehensive job description.

In the employee payroll information, MGT consultants found approximately 87 different position titles for school employees. Some of these titles indicated the same classification, such as "aide," which was noted previously. However, the differences in the titles may indicate that the positions have different duties and may have different funding sources. A job description should clearly define the distinctions of each position under the same classification.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-7:

Complete the creation of job descriptions for all positions and develop a systematic plan to review and update job descriptions on a three-year cycle.

EXHIBIT 3-2
ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB DESCRIPTION CONTENT
Header:
■ Job Title:
■ School/Department
■ Reports to:
■ Supervisor's Superior
■ Supervises:
■ Pay Grade:
■ Job Code
■ Overtime Status:
Main Body:
■ Job Goal:
■ Qualifications:
■ Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:
■ Performance Responsibilities: Essential Functions
■ Performance Responsibilities: Other Duties & Responsibilities
■ Physical Demands: (from supplement) *
■ Work Environment: (from supplement) *
■ Terms of Employment:
■ Evaluation:
Footer:
■ Date (developed or revised):
■ Board action if any:
■ Prepared by:
■ Approved by:
■ Work Locations Name:
■ Telephone Number:
■ HRS Review (with date):

Source: Created by MGT, 2000.

*A supplement to a job description describes the machines, tools, equipment that will be required of employee in the performance of the job. The physical requirements (sedentary, light, medium, heavy work) and activity (sitting, climbing, bending, twisting, reaching) are also described in the supplement as well as working conditions (such as outdoor, indoor, cold, heat, noise, and hazards).

SCPS should conduct a full review of the job descriptions currently approved and included in the policy manual. Careful review should be made of the essential functions of each job position. Job descriptions should be created and written for those unique

positions that do not currently have one, as was noted in the list of "aide" positions above.

Each employee in SCPS should be provided with a copy of his/her current job description. Job descriptions should provide an effective tool for communicating expectations to current and prospective employees and should serve as a basis for annual evaluations.

Once all the current job descriptions are created and reviewed, a procedure should be established by the Human Resources office for updating job descriptions on a three-year cycle. Systematically reviewing one-third of the job descriptions each year would accomplish this task and would make it more manageable for a Human Resources Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3.5   *Employee Compensation and Benefits*

Competitive salaries and employee benefits such as sick leave, health insurance, life insurance, and retirement, are essential to attracting and retaining highly-qualified and competent professional and support staff. Effective salary administration ensures that school system employees are treated equitably and understand how their salaries are determined.

FINDING

The official budget for Fiscal Year 2005–06 was approved by the Smyth County Board of Supervisors on April 28, 2005. Smyth County School Board published salary scales for 14 employee categories in the Smyth County Schools Budget Book:

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Cafeteria workers
- Bus driver
- Custodians
- Maintenance staff
- Garage Mechanics
- Instructional aides
- School secretaries
- Administrative secretaries
- Payroll clerks
- Clerk of the board
- Computer technicians
- Substitutes

In Exhibit 3-3, the average salary for a teacher on Step 5 with a Bachelors degree in Smyth County teacher is compared to four other school divisions in Virginia. As seen, SCPS compares favorably with these divisions.

EXHIBIT 3-3
COMPARISON OF AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	REGIONAL CLUSTER GROUP	TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION*	AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES**	TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
Smyth County	**7**	**5,129**	**$32,265**	**13**
Isle of Wight County	2	5,167	$36,300	8
Pulaski County	7	4,939	$31,202	9
Bristol	7	2,319	$32,491	6
Washington County	7	7,412	$31,720	18

Source: Smyth County School Board Web site, 2005; Isle of Wight County Schools Web site, 2005; Pulaski County Schools Web site, 2005; Bristol Schools Web site, 2005, Washington County Schools Web site, 2005.

*2004-2005 Virginia School Report Card.
**Teacher salary for Step 5, Bachelors degree, 2005-2006 School Year.

In the policy manual for Smyth County School Board, Policy 5.53: "Salary Scale for Administrators," states that:

> *A salary scale for administrators will be maintained which provides a base salary with adjustments for experience, degree attained, size of school, and bus driver supervision. Provisions for rewarding exceptional performance and for factoring in unsatisfactory performance will also be a part of salary determination.*

The salary scale for administrators includes five levels with each level comprising two or more administrative positions. The structure of levels on the scale is:

- **Level 1**

    – Assistant Superintendent
    – High School Principals

- **Level 2**

    – Director of Special Education
    – Director of Secondary Education
    – Director of Elementary Education
    – Middle School Principals

- **Level 3**

    - Director of Pupil Personnel Services
    - Director of Technology
    - Federal Program Supervisor
    - Elementary Principals
    - SCTC Principals

- **Level 4**

  – High School Assistant Principal
  – Director of Human Resources
  – Director of Adult Education
  – Director of Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute

- **Level 5**

  - Elementary Assistant Principals
  - Middle School Assistant Principals

The administrative position of director is noted at Levels 2, 3, and 4. The positions of principal, assistant principal, and supervisor are also found in these same levels. Generally, a director has responsibilities across the division or over an entire Department or program. Also, the entry level salary for this position is most often at or above high school principals.

At Level 2, the salaries for the three directors range from $62,797 to $73,965. At Level 3, the directors' salaries range from $60,687 to $63,475. At Level 4, there is only one director currently on the SCPS payroll, Director of Human Resources, whose salary is $55,802. According to the payroll information provided MGT, no employee is identified as Director of Adult Education or Director of Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute.

As can be seen from these salaries, there is a wide range of salaries for directors across three salary scale levels. MGT consultants found no explanation for the assignment of director positions to specific levels.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-8:

Revise the salary scale levels for administrators so that the director positions are in line with each other on the scale and ensure that salaries for directors are allocated equitably with respect to responsibilities.

Smyth County Public Schools currently does not have a set of job descriptions that are aligned to a job classification system. Creating and implementing a job classification system and a complete set of job descriptions are recommended above in Recommendation 3-6 and Recommendation 3-7. When the system is in place, the administrator position assignments should be revised to reflect the appropriate salary scale levels.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The salaries of administrators are determined by a tedious, and somewhat confusing, procedure. Also, there is some disparity between salary scale levels and associated salaries. A "Salary Determination Worksheet" is used for calculating administrators' salaries, and MGT consultants were told that it is easy to make a mistake in the salary calculations on an administrative contract. Below is a hypothetical situation that shows disparity in salaries related to positions.

Consider a person with 10 years of administrative experience and a Master's degree assuming the position of principal at Marion Senior High School. This position is at Level 1 on the administrator salary scale. The salary calculation is:

Base Salary: $63,342*
Experience Adjustment: $5,830 (increment [$583] x years of experience [10])
Degree Attained: $1,939 (Masters)
School Size Adjustment: $4,751
Transportation Supervisor: $ ($105 per full time route supervised to salary)
Other Adjustments: $0
Salary Per Scale: $75,866 (+ possible transportation adjustment)

*Benchmark figure used in calculations for all administrators' salaries

Now, consider the same person being appointed Director of Adult Education. This position is at Level 4 on the administrator salary scale. The salary calculation is:

Base Salary: $55,801*
Experience Adjustment: $2,940 (increment [$294] x years of experience [10])
Degree Attained: $1,939 (Masters)
School Size Adjustment: $0
Transportation Supervisor: $0
Other Adjustments: $0
Salary Per Scale: $60,677

This comparison shows only one example of the inequity of salaries as related to the positions and levels on the salary scale. In this instance, there is a fiscal penalty to accept a position which has divisionwide responsibilities and is generally recognized as a promotion.

Another item in the administrator salary determination is a "reduction in base salary: administrative experience." This item reduces the person's base salary in conjunction with the number of years of administrative experience. Exhibit 3-4 shows the method used to determine this reduction.

EXHIBIT 3-4
REDUCTION IN BASE SALARY
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	LEVELS 1 - 3	LEVELS 4 – 5
0	5%	10%
1	4%	8%
2	3%	6%
3	2%	4%
4	1%	2%
5+	-	-

Source: Smyth County Schools 2005-2006 Budget Book.

The explanation stated in the budget book is:

> *Reduction is not to exceed the difference in number of years to reach teacher maximum less actual years total experience multiplied by % appropriate to level. (1% at levels 1, 2, & 3 and 2% at levels 4 & 5)*

MGT consultants were told that this particular item became effective within the last five to ten years.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-9:

Revise the method of determining administrators' salaries in order to simplify the procedure and to ensure equitable salaries associated with each level.

Administrative positions should have salaries aligned with the overall responsibilities of the position, and divisionwide positions generally earn higher base salaries. Principals' salaries are often augmented by adjustments for school enrollment, FTE, number of special education or ELL students, and other factors that affect responsibilities in the daily operation of a school. The salary scale for directors, supervisors, assistant superintendents, and similar administrative positions should consider factors such as the number of personnel for whom they are responsible, the number of years of administrative experience, and the degrees and/or certifications held by the person.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Exhibit 3-5 displays the current school size adjustments used in determining the 2005-2006 salaries for administrators. MGT consultants found no explanation for the percentages used in this part of the calculation of administrators' salaries.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-10:

Standardize the school size adjustment percentages used in determining school administrators' salaries.

The percentages utilized in the adjustments follow no systematic pattern. Standards for modifying salaries should be defined by criteria that will ensure fairness to all salaries affected by adjustments.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

EXHIBIT 3-5
SCHOOL SIZE ADJUSTMENTS
ADMINISTRATOR SALARY SCALE

SCHOOLS	MARCH 31, 2005 ADM	PERCENTAGE	AMOUNT
Chilhowie High	386.7	2.0%	$1,267
Marion Senior High	764.1	7.5%	$4,751
Northwood High	305	1.0%	$633
Chilhowie Middle	360.6	1.5%	$905
Marion Middle	586.3	5.0%	$3,016
Northwood Middle	271.5	0.5%	$302
Sugar Grove Combined	207.4	0.0%	$0
Atkins Elementary	205.8	0.0%	$0
Chilhowie Elementary	646.8	6.0%	$3,439
Marion Intermediate	423	2.5%	$1,433
Marion Primary	513.3	4.0%	$2,293
Rich Valley Elementary	195.4	0.0%	$0
Saltville Elementary	273	0.0%	$0
Career and Technology Center	317	1.0%	$576

Source: Smyth County Schools 2005-2006 Budget Book.

FINDING

Smyth County Public Schools offers competitive salaries to teachers. Exhibit 3-6 shows a comparison of SCPS to other school divisions in Virginia.

EXHIBIT 3-6
COMPARISON OF AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

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Bristol	7	2,319	$32,491	6
Washington County	7	7,412	$31,720	18

Source: Smyth County School Board Web site, 20058; Isle of Wight County Schools Web site, 2005; Pulaski County Schools Web site, 2005; Bristol Schools Web site, 2005, Washington County Schools Web site, 2005.

*2004-2005 Virginia School Report Card.
**Teacher average salary for Step 5, Bachelors degree, 2005-2006 School Year.

Exhibit 3-7 shows a comparison of salaries and benefits of administrators in Smyth County Public Schools to administrators in other Virginia school divisions. SCPS has recently adopted changes in their benefit package for administrators in order to become more competitive.

EXHIBIT 3-7
COMPARISON OF SALARIES AND BENEFIT PACKAGES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

BENEFIT	SMYTH	WASHINGTON	TAZEWELL	RUSSELL	WYTHE	BLAND
Sick Days per year	12	12	12	12	12	12
Accumulated Sick Leave Limit	Unlimited*	Unlimited*	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Sick Leave Purchased at Retirement	$10.00	$50.00	$50.00	$43.00	$30.00	$25.00
Vacation Days per Year	12, 15, 18**	16	15 (plus all teacher holidays)	12, 13 (plus all teacher holidays)	18	12 (plus all teacher holidays)
Accumulated Vacation Limit	0	30	45	24	30	20
Vacation Days Purchased at Retirement	0	Per diem (approximately $250)	$50.00	$43.00	0	0
Personal Days per Year	2	3	3	3 (accumulate to 5)	3 (accumulate to 5)	3 (accumulate to 5)
Personal Days Purchased at Retirement	0	$50.00	$50.00	$43.00	$30.00	$25.00
Insurance	$190***	$317 (90 percent of individual)	$291* (100 percent of individual)	$227 (70 percent of individual)	$346	$228 monthly*
NOTES	*"Unlimited" has since been adopted **Based on experience: 1-10 years – 12 days 11-15 years – 15 days 15+ years – 18 days ***$300 has since been adopted	*After 150 sick leave days are accumulated, an employee may accumulate 5 additional days per year and receive compensation at the rate of $50.00 per day for the remaining days accumulated that year (including unused personal days). Additionally, any employee who misses 3 days or less during the year will be granted a $250 U.S. Savings Bond.	$454 (adult plus child – 80 percent of policy); $625 (family) -- (50 percent of policy)			*Employees who do not participate in the group health insurance may choose to purchase other insurance with this money.
SALARY*	**SMYTH**	**WASHINGTON**	**TAZEWELL**	**RUSSELL**	**WYTHE**	**BLAND**
Elementary Principal	$68,181	$63,819	$64,197	$58,651	$64,440	$62,633
Middle School Principal	$67,648	$64,950	$67,690	$47,254	$64,585	$62,633
High School Principal	$73,637	$67,108	$69,897	$65,612	$70,660	$62,633
Directors	$76,962	$73,069	N/A	$63,218	$70,959	$62,367
Supervisors	$68,417	$69,883	$69,897	$63,218	$63,369	$62,367

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.
*these are the maximum salaries for the 2003–04 school year

COMMENDATION

Smyth County Public Schools is commended for adopting additional competitive benefits in order to attract and retain highly qualified administrators.

3.6 *Employee Evaluations*

Evaluating the performance of employees enables a school system to maintain a high quality and qualified workforce. An appraisal system should be based on job descriptions and on-the-job performance of each employee.

FINDING

Section 5.25 in the "Personnel Policies" section of Smyth County Public Schools Policy Manual states that "licensed professional personnel shall be evaluated each year." SCPS has three categories of personnel: licensed professional, classified professional, and support staff. MGT consultants were told that the lack of annual performance evaluations for all employees is currently an issue being addressed by Smyth County schools, and SCPS provided MGT with copies of the evaluation procedures handbooks that have been developed.

Evaluation procedures for the following employee classifications have been created or are in the development stage:

- Professional personnel;
- Instructional directors/supervisors;
- Administrative personnel;
- Administrative assistants;
- Custodians; and
- The School Nutrition Program.

The evaluation process is outlined in the evaluation handbook for each employee group. The components in the process are:

- Purpose
- General Procedural Guidelines
- Timeline for Evaluation Process
- Evaluation Criteria
- Retention of Evaluation Documents
- Access to Information
- Employee Evaluation Appeal Procedure

Following the outline in the handbook are additional forms necessary for the evaluation. Below some of the forms are listed. All of these forms are not required for each employee; some may be applicable only to specific employee categories:

- Evaluation Form
- Classroom Observation Form
- Recommendation Form
- Annual Professional Development Profile (optional)

- Conferences by Evaluator
- Individual Improvement Plan
- Log for Review of Evaluation
- Personnel Evaluation Committee

The "Personnel Evaluation Committee" is a list of the personnel who served on the committee that reviewed, updated, and revised the evaluation procedures for that particular employee group.

The professional personnel handbook includes evaluation procedures for all instructional employees. Since some professional personnel have responsibilities that are unique to their position, a separate evaluation sheet must be created to evaluate those groups. For instance, media specialists and guidance counselors are professional personnel, but are not assessed by the same criteria as a classroom teacher. Therefore, Section II of the evaluation is not identical for all groups, but includes assessment criteria for the particular group being evaluated.

MGT consultants were told that the research for developing the evaluations is being done internally. Two of the main strategies being utilized are contacting professional colleagues in neighboring school divisions and searching the Internet for information on other school division Web sites.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County Public Schools is commended for the extensive measures already undertaken to establish an annual evaluation program for all employees.

FINDING

At the present time, performance evaluations for all employee groups have not been completed.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-11:

Continue to develop and implement annual performance evaluations for all employee categories.

Employee performance evaluations are an integral part of an effective Human Resources management system. The appraisal instrument should be comprehensive, constructive, consistent, and fair in order to provide accurate documentation of employee performance. Performance evaluations should be correlated to job descriptions. Since there are no job descriptions for most positions, the division should ensure that the appraisal system is based upon the job descriptions as soon as they are written and approved.

When completed and approved, evaluation procedures should be included in the *SCPS Human Resources Procedures Manual* and in the *SCPS Personnel Handbook*.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3.7   *Staff Development*

Comprehensive professional development programs provide the means to enhance the knowledge, expertise, and performance of a school division's employees and to encourage continued professional growth throughout each employee's career. Effective professional development programs should be coordinated and articulated throughout the school division, aligned with the goals of the school division, and assessed periodically to measure outcomes.

FINDING

Section 5.37 of the Smyth County School Board Policy Manual addresses "Tuition – Staff Development/Relicensure." The policy reads:

> *The Smyth County School Board will pay the tuition for professional personnel taking graduate level classes for relicensure and staff development purposes under the following conditions:*
>
> 1. *One three-hour graduate level course during the five year renewal period per professional employee.*
>
> 2. *Courses approved by the superintendent for specific identified needs of the school system and/or staff development.*
>
> 3. *Courses will be either those offered in Smyth County or those offered by the Abingdon Center of The University of Virginia.*
>
> 4. *Any exception to this policy will require prior approval of the superintendent.*

In past years, Smyth County Public Schools has offered a variety of professional development activities during the school year and during the summer. However, MGT consultants were told that SCPS had determined staff development to be a high priority and had begun the process to improve and expand it. In February, 2005, instructional staff participated in a needs assessment of professional development sponsored by SCPS. The instructional staff were asked "to identify areas in which they most need professional development" and "to indicate the type of professional development activities they prefer." The results of the needs assessment showed that more than half of those responding (approximately 51 percent) preferred the "school-level face-to-face" delivery method followed by "Web-based" and "division-level face-to-face" (approximately 22 percent and 21 percent, respectively). The professional development topics most preferred by the respondents were "strategies for working with the slow learner" (60 percent), "actively engaged learning" (48 percent), "identifying and accommodating learning styles" (48 percent), and "strategies for improving student performance in the core SOL areas" (47 percent).

As an outcome of the needs assessment results, SCPS budgeted $50,000 for professional development activities for 2005-2006. This is an increase of $24,885 over the budget for the 2004-2005 school year. SCPS also selected and outlined details of the following methods of professional development delivery for professional employees:

- In-school workshops
- Divisionwide workshops
- Web-based workshops
- College-level classes

A portion of the budget for professional development, a total of $27,000, has been allocated to the schools individually. This money will allow each school the freedom to conduct in-school workshops or other types of training selected at the school level. Allocations for professional development are based on student population of the school:

- 299 or fewer students receive $1,000
- 300 – 499 students receive $2,000
- 500 or more students receive $3,000

An existing school board policy provides money for college credit classes if the classes are taken toward recertification. This policy remains unchanged.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County Public Schools is commended for conducting a needs assessment regarding professional staff development and for implementing findings from the assessment in a professional development plan for the 2005–06 school year.

FINDING

Although SCPS has provided various staff development activities in past school years, no data were collected regarding the effectiveness of the workshops or trainings. A simple written survey administered to participants immediately following a workshop can be a valuable tool in documenting the significance of the workshop and the effectiveness of the presenter. These data gathered from the surveys should be beneficial in planning future activities.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-12:

Administer a follow-up survey to all participants immediately following each staff development activity, and compile the data for future reference.

In order to provide the most worthwhile and cost-effective staff development to employees, an organization must plan prudently. Effective planning decisions for staff development should be based on accurate documentation of the effectiveness and appropriateness of previous activities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

As of the 2005–06 school year, Smyth County Public Schools has implemented a diverse and practical professional development plan resulting from a needs assessment conducted among the instructional personnel. SCPS has two other categories of employees, "classified professional staff" and "support staff." No systematic staff development activities for these two classifications are in place at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-13:

Conduct a needs assessment among classified professional staff and support staff in order to develop an appropriate professional development plan for each of these employee groups.

SCPS effectively demonstrated the development and budgeting of a professional development plan for instructional employees. Carefully designed needs assessments for classified professional staff and for support staff should yield results that will assist the SCPS Human Resources office in drafting an appropriate staff development plan and budget for these employees.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact cannot be determined until the professional development plan has been drafted.

4.0   FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

4.0 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In this chapter the findings and recommendations for the financial management of Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS) are presented. The major sections of the chapter include:

4.1   Organization and Staffing
4.2   Budgeting
4.3   Accounting
4.4   Fixed Assets and Textbooks
4.5   Risk Management

CHAPTER SUMMARY

SCPS's financial management functions have been in a state of transition during the past few years. Turnover in key management positions has prompted the division to review the way it conducted many of its processes. The division has used the staff turnover as an opportunity to improve the accountability of financial management functions. The review team found a combination of old processes that continue to be maintained, while other processes or pieces of a process have been re-tooled.

SCPS financial management staff are dedicated and hardworking and have shown tremendous fortitude in the face of the changes and challenges they have taken on in recent years. This chapter contains several commendations including improvements made to the budgeting process, the budget book produced by the division, the use of direct deposit as a time- and money-saving device, and the excellent process used to account for division textbooks,

Recommendations contained in this chapter are essentially focused on continuing to move the division forward in the streamlining and strengthening of its processes. The recommendations contained in this chapter include:

- creating a position of Director of Finance which reports to the superintendent to oversee a re-structured accounting department;

- further streamlining the budget allocation process by allowing schools to spend their budget funds directly rather than seeking reimbursement for expenditures from the central office;

- using the budget module contained in the division's financial accounting system to more efficiently prepare and monitor budgets;

- hiring a grants coordinator to secure, account for and monitor grant funds for both the county and the school division; and

- improving the accountability for fixed assets by inventorying and reporting on equipment and property.

In addition, this chapter contains three recommendations for improving the division's management of risk. These recommendations include developing formal risk management policies and procedures, conducting employee safety training to reduce the number of work related injuries in the division, and obtaining adequate flood insurance for division schools.

INTRODUCTION

The Smyth County Public Schools' operating budget for 2005-06 was $43 million, with amendments pending. The key financial management functions of the division are carried out across a number of central administrative offices, with the individual schools having significant autonomy in the budget and financing process. Although the division superintendent has oversight for all fiscal operations in SCPS, he is assisted by a business decision support analyst. The accounting operations of the division include grants, payroll, accounts payable, revenue projection and maintaining the division's general ledger. The division utilizes an outside accounting firm to perform audits, and rotates the accounting firm contract to different firms every three to five years in keeping with auditing best practices. While it lacks a sufficient asset inventory tracking system, the division has commendable procedures and controls over its textbook inventory, and has an adequate automated systems infrastructure to implement the necessary controls over its asset inventory. The risk management functions of SCPS are the primary responsibility of the business decision support analyst, who coordinates the procurement and maintenance of the division's insurance coverages, casualty losses, and general and school leader liability.

4.1   *Organization and Staffing*

Exhibit 4-1 shows the organization and staffing of the finance, accounting, budgeting, and purchasing functions for SCPS. There is not a single department charged with overseeing the division's fiscal operations, but rather several individuals within the division that have a role in fiscal operations and oversight.

EXHIBIT 4-1
ORGANIZATION OF SCPS'S FISCAL OPERATIONS
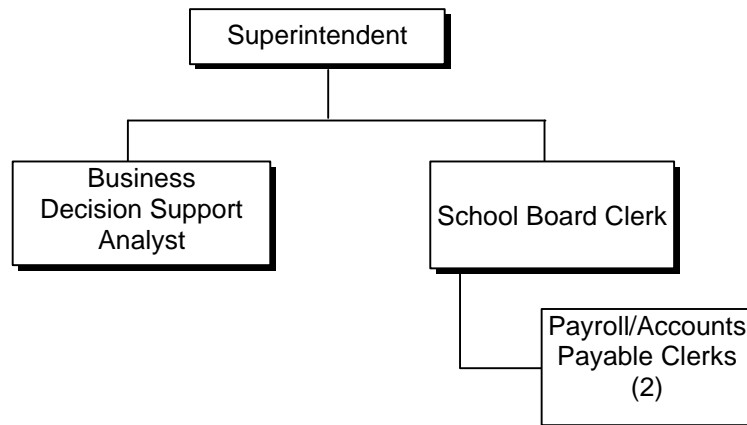
Source: SCPS organizational chart and interviews with division staff, November 2005.

The superintendent provides overall oversight for the fiscal operations for SCPS, including developing an annual budget and reviewing and approving expenditures.

The business decision support analyst position was created in 2003 to assist with support and design of the division's computerized financial system. The position quickly changed into one of providing support for the division's budget, accounting and risk management functions. The current responsibilities of the business decision support analyst include the following:

- produce revenue and expenditure reports for the superintendent and the school board;

- assist with monitoring and oversight of all division revenues and expenditures;

- assist with the preparation of the budget;

- oversee the school-based bookkeepers;

- coordinate insurance coverage for the division including property, casualty, liability, and workers compensation; and

- oversee the workers compensation program.

The school board clerk, a 30-year veteran of the school division, in addition to other duties, is responsible for making monthly cash projections and overseeing the payroll and accounts payable functions. As Exhibit 4-1 shows, the Payroll and Accounts Payable clerks report directly to the school board clerk and have the following responsibilities:

- processing monthly payroll;

- maintaining employee leave records;

- processing monthly accounts payable and reimbursement checks;

- performing employee retirement accounting and reporting; and

- assisting employees in enrolling in school division benefits.

In addition to the positions reflected in Exhibit 4-1, the division has several other positions in various departments throughout the division that have a role in SCPS fiscal functions. For instance, the administrative assistant for Federal Programs is responsible for reviewing Title I Funding and school allotment allocations, ensuring that expenditures are coded to the proper budgetary accounts, and submitting school expenditure requests to the school board clerk for reimbursement. In addition, the executive assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction is responsible for oversight of all textbook and school supply inventories and the accounting processes associated with each.

In SCPS, the bookkeepers at each school play a major role in the fiscal operations of the division. Unlike the more traditional school bookkeeper who is responsible only for maintaining a school's student activity accounts, bookkeepers in SCPS are responsible for paying invoices for all goods and services procured at each school site, paying the

food service invoices for each school's cafeteria operations, compiling and reporting school-based employee time worked and leave taken, accounting for school-based grant funds, and maintaining student activity fund accounts.

FINDING

The organizational structure for SCPS's fiscal operations is not well designed and does not promote accountability in the division. During the review team's interviews, it became clear that each individual's responsibilities are compartmentalized, and there is not a clear channel for communication between the various individuals conducting the fiscal activities. For instance, during interviews, SCPS employees demonstrated adequate knowledge and capabilities when discussing their individual responsibilities; however, when asked about steps in processes which they didn't personally handle, employees had very little knowledge of what happens outside of their realm of responsibility.

Because the oversight for fiscal operation functions is spread throughout the division, and that not everyone understands what others' responsibilities entail, fiscal accountability is diminished.

The review team also found that some of the work load assignments to be inconsistently distributed. For instance, the two clerks handling accounts payable and payroll have excessive work loads that require them to work overtime and to take work home with them. A more cohesive organizational structure is more conducive to cross-training, allowing work loads to be allotted more equitably.

Though the employees of SCPS have done a good job of informally communicating the information necessary to fulfill their respective responsibilities, the school division could benefit from having a more cohesive organizational unit with formal lines of communication and cooperation.

The review team identified a best practice organizational model in Dinwiddie County Public Schools (DCPS), a school division with approximately 4,500 students located in southeastern Virginia. DCPS's organizational structure for is fiscal operations is presented in Exhibit 4-2 below.

EXHIBIT 4-2
ORGANIZATION OF DINWIDDIE COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOL'S FISCAL OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT
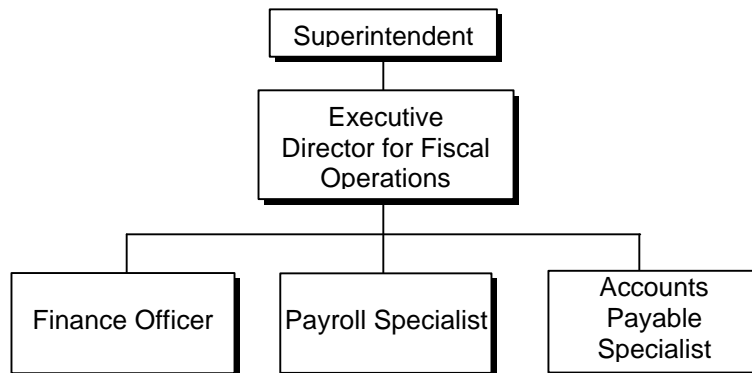
Source: *Organization Profile*, Office of the Superintendent and interviews with Fiscal Operations Department staff, November 2005.

As Exhibit 4-2 shows, DCPS's financial functions fall under the direct supervision of an executive director position that provides direction and guidance for all fiscal operations. DCPS's executive director acts as the division's purchasing agent and risk manager as well as having the oversight responsibilities for all budget and finance operations. The finance officer performs general ledger and grant accounting functions and oversees the division's seven school-based bookkeepers. The payroll specialist is responsible for processing the division's payroll and the accounts payable specialist has the duties of entering all purchase orders into the financial system and paying all invoices.

Because of DCPS's strong organizational structure, the fiscal operations of the division are sound and the employees of the department work as a cohesive unit.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-1:

Develop a strong organizational structure for the division's fiscal operations.

Exhibit 4-3 shows a proposed organizational structure for SCPS's fiscal operations functions. As this exhibit shows, this recommendation requires the addition of an overall financial manager position to oversee the entire finance and budgeting processes. The individual selected for this position should have extensive finance and budgeting experience, with preference given to a candidate with a finance certification such as Certified Public Accountant.

EXHIBIT 4-3
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR
SCPS'S FISCAL OPERATIONS

Superintendent
Operations and Finance Officer
Accounting
Auxiliary Services
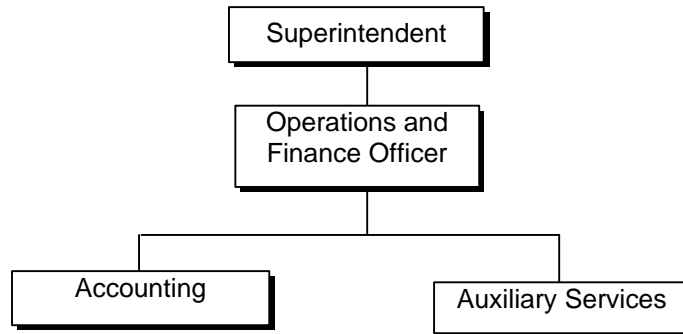
Source: MGT of America, Inc., December 2005.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of implementing this recommendation has been detailed in Chapter 2: Division Administration (Recommendation 2-4).

4.2   *Budgeting*

SCPS operates its 14 schools and two educational centers with a 2005-06 operations budget of $43 million; the 2005-06 school debt and capital outlay budget amounts to $1.5 million. Exhibit 4-4 shows the division's sources of revenue for 2005-06. As this exhibit shows, the most significant source of revenue (67 percent) comes from the Commonwealth of Virginia, with local funds representing 22 percent of the division's revenues, followed by federal funds and other sources at 10 percent and one percent, respectively.

EXHIBIT 4-4
SCPS'S 2005-06 BUDGETED REVENUES BY SOURCE
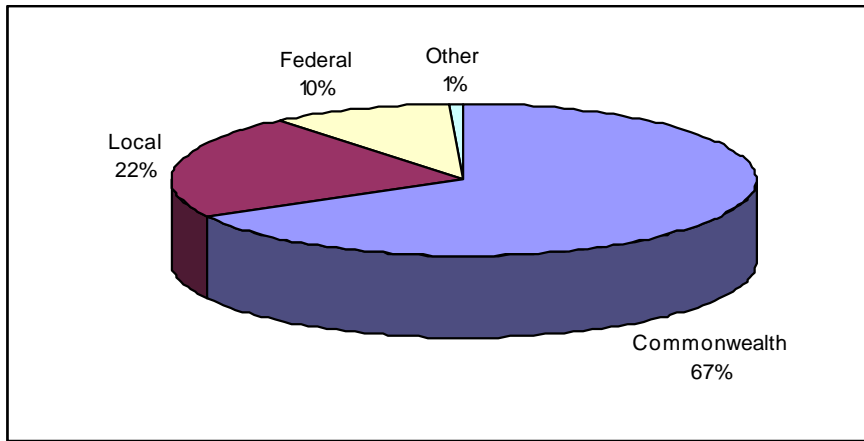
Source: Smyth County Public Schools Budget Book, April 28, 2005.

The detail of expenditures for SCPS's operating budget is shown in Exhibit 4-5. At 79 percent of total budgeted expenditures, instruction is by far the most significant expenditure category for SCPS.

SCPS's business and operational procedures require that the superintendent present an estimate of revenues and expenditures, with advice and consent of the school board, to the county board of supervisors by April 1st of each year. Exhibit 4-6 shows the division's budget calendar for the preparation of the 2005-06 budget.

EXHIBIT 4-5
2005-06 BUDGETED EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION FOR LCPS
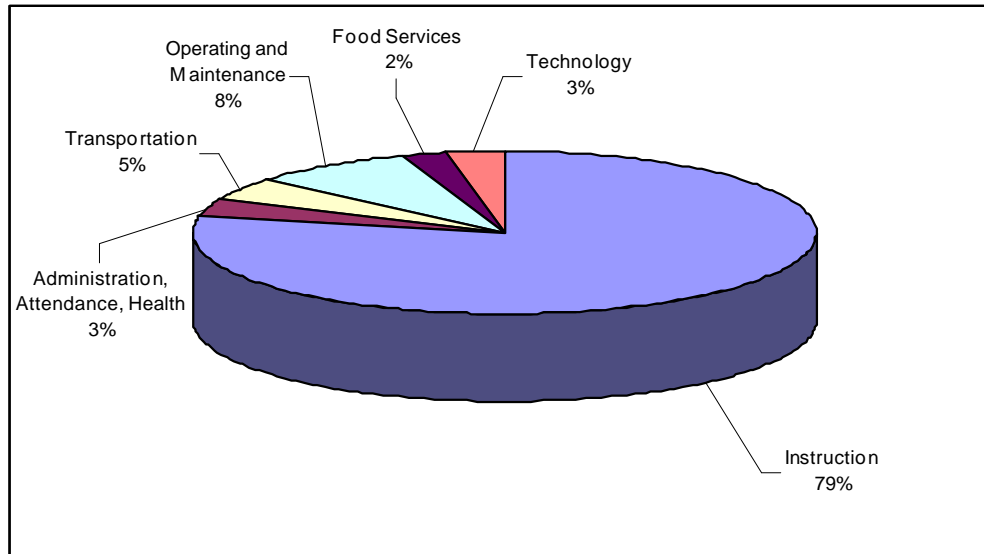
Source: Smyth County Public Schools Budget Book, April 28, 2005.

EXHIBIT 4-6
SCPS 2005-06 BUDGET PREPARATION CALENDAR

August – October 2004:
o Staff participates in identifying needs and priorities
o Principals and staff develop budget requests within guidelines based on formulas, needs, and board priorities
o Budget book update begins
o Joint meetings are held to communicate with local county administration
November – December 2004:
o Need for improvements are identified by each central office department
o Communication of needs with the Board of Supervisors and legislature occurs in a joint meeting
o Review of the Governor's Proposed Budget
o Revenues are studied closely to avoid over projection
January 2005:
o Community participates in identifying needs and priorities through a public forum
o Superintendent presents first draft of the budget to the school board
o All available methods are used to inform and involve the total community in the budget process
o School board reviews and discusses first draft of the budget in work sessions
February – March 2005:
o Board continues its budget work session and makes tentative budget decisions
o School Board Budget Goals are set for the year
o School board creates draft copy of its budget
o Citizens are allowed the opportunity to comment on proposed budget in public hearing
o School Board adopts its proposed draft budget prior to April 01, 2005
April – May 2005:
o Budget is presented to the Smyth County Board of Supervisors for financial approval and inclusion in its advertised fiscal plan
o School board and superintendent make changes in budget based on available funds from the local governing body
o School board formally adopts a school budget
o Adopted budget is released prior to May 01, 2005
o Contracts are created and distributed to employees

Source: Smyth County Public Schools Budget Book, April 28, 2005.

FINDING

SCPS prepares a comprehensive budget book containing the details of its approved budget. In addition to detailed information about the division's budget, the budget book contains the superintendent's message about the approved budget, division mission, vision, goals and objectives, demographic information on county population and wealth statistics, and school-based information. The book provides information to the reader on the processes used in preparing the budget, as well as data on school achievement.

Information in the budget book is provided in both table form and graphically, allowing ease of understanding by the reader.

In its list of best practices for the budgeting process, the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting advises that governments present their budgets in a clear and easy-to-use format. The council states that the budget is the guide that determines the direction of government and is the single most important document routinely prepared by governments. To be usable to stakeholders, a government's budget should not only contain the appropriate information, but should be clear and comprehensible.

COMMENDATION

SCPS prepares a budget book that follows the recommendations set out by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting.

FINDING

SCPS is currently undergoing significant changes in its budget and fiscal processes. Stimulus for these changes came with the turnover of some key positions in the division, including the position of superintendent. Prior to the current administration, the development of the budget was a closed process. Though this management style of fiscal operation worked for many years in the division, changes such as the No Child Left Behind legislation and the challenges of reduced educational funding require a more transparent and standardized approach.

Fiscal operations staff have implemented procedures that are helping the division to improve finance and budget decision-making. For instance, in the past, rather than amending a budget when funds were depleted, staff merely charged needed items to budget accounts that had available funds. This resulted in poor historical cost information that could be used in examining trends and serving as a prediction for future expenditures. New procedures require that proper budget transfers occur so that items can be charged to their proper budget accounting codes.

COMMENDATION

SCPS has improved its budgeting process so that it is more inclusive and has more integrity.

FINDING

Though the division has made great strides in improving its budgeting process, principals told the review team that the way in which the division handles budget allocations for schools is cumbersome, time-consuming, and does not facilitate the educational process. Oftentimes the school year has already begun before principals know what their budgets will be. Because schools must get ready for incoming students and start their school years, this makes it difficult to plan expenditures.

After the budget has been approved, each school is allocated money based on funding formulas based primarily on enrollment. This annual allocation, however, is not given to schools up front but, rather, schools must first expend money for which they subsequently get reimbursed. This process often requires that schools dip into their student activity funds to procure instructional items, reimbursing the activity funds following reimbursement from the central office.

The reimbursement process duplicates effort in that schools must first process and pay their invoices, which are then reviewed by two different departments in the central office - first by the administrative assistant for Federal Programs and a second time by the payroll/accounts payable clerks.

Because each school handles it own procurement and payment processes, and these processes can vary among the 14 schools in the division, accountability and controls over these processes are weakened.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-2:

Eliminate the reimbursement process and allow schools to spend their funds directly.

Allowing schools to spend their funding directly without going through the reimbursement process will cut down on the amount of work processed at both the school sites and at the central office. Rather than issuing reimbursement checks to each school, the payroll/accounts payable clerks should pay all school invoices directly.

To ease the process of starting a school year, schools should be allocated 60 percent of their respective budgets at the beginning of the fiscal year so that they can adequately plan and pay for expenditures necessary in the opening of schools. After total budget allotments have been adjusted based on actual enrollment figures, schools could then receive 20 percent of the allotment in December and the remaining 20 percent in March.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

SCPS does not use the budgeting module of its financial accounting system in the preparation or monitoring of its budget. This practice results in extra work for the division in that information from the accounting system must be downloaded into an Access data base and manipulated outside of the main accounting system.

Division staff told the review team that the reasons for not using the budget module were system inadequacies. One staff member has been trained for use of this module.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-3:

Implement the budgeting module of the division's financial accounting system.

Although initial implementation of the budget module may be a time-consuming endeavor, after the system has been properly set up and employees have received proper training, the system should provide more accurate budget reports in a more timely manner.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

4.3 *Accounting*

The accounting operations of the division include accounting for grants, preparing and reporting payroll, processing accounts payable invoices, making revenue projections, and maintaining the division's general ledger. These accounting functions are performed by the staff shown in Exhibit 4-1.

FINDING

For 2004-05, SCPS, in conjunction with the county, hired a new outside auditing firm after several years of maintaining a relationship with the prior auditor. The prior audit firm had been performing the division's audit for many years, but staff was unable to tell the review team exactly how long the prior auditor had been used.

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOA) of 2002 pertains to publicly held companies; however, many public entities are implementing SOA requirements as a show of good stewardship. Section 203 of the SOA requires a five-year rotation cycle for external auditors. This policy of mandatory rotation of auditors is a way to counter the perception that long-term relationships between auditors and their clients impair auditor independence and professional skepticism.

The county contracted with the new auditing firm during 2005, executing a three-year contract with an option to extend for an additional two years, for a total of five years.

COMMENDATION

SCPS is using sound accounting practices by rotating its auditing firm every five years.

FINDING

The division has had a mandatory direct deposit policy since 2002. The direct deposit program allows employees to have their paycheck amount deposited directly into an account of the employee's choice.

Studies have shown that organizations that use direct deposit effect not only cost savings from the elimination of check stock and reduced processing fees, but efficiency savings as well. For instance, the National Automated Clearinghouse Association (NACHA) - The Electronic Payments Association, states the benefits of direct deposit as:

- there are fewer checks to print and store;

- facsimile signature security isn't necessary with direct deposit since no signatures are required;

- lost and stolen checks are eliminated;

- financial institution service charges are reduced; typically, it costs more to process a paper check through an entity's bank account than a direct deposit transaction;

- the potential for errors is reduced because direct deposit requires less manual handling than a check;

- account reconciliation is simplified;

- fraud is reduced because there is less potential for counterfeit checks, stolen checks or signature plates, altered amounts, and forged signatures;

- problems with direct deposit are very rare; the chance of having a problem with a check is 20 times greater than with direct deposit;

- administration costs can be lowered due to the elimination of manual check preparation;

- organizations report savings of more than 40 cents in processing costs for each paper check converted to direct deposit;

- direct deposit adds one more incentive to competitively attract employees; and

- productivity can be increased due to employees spending less time away from work to cash or deposit a payroll check.

COMMENDATION

SCPS has implemented a mandatory direct deposit policy that has resulted in cost and efficiency savings for the division.

FINDING

SCPS does not have standardized processes for grants. Without a grant writer or administrator to oversee grants in the division, each school seeks grants independently of other schools and each school monitors and accounts for their own grants. This has resulted in several problems including grants that have never been recorded to division financial records, loss of grant funding because money was not spent in time and overall poor controls related to grants administration.

Schools that have professional grant writers or administrators typically receive a higher percentage of grant funding than schools that do not have such positions. For example, Wimberley Independent School District (WISD), a Texas school system with 1,800 students, hired a retired educator to help write grants. In the first year, WISD received an additional $671,000 in grant funding.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-4:

Coordinate with the county to hire a grants administrator.

Typically, organizations that previously did not have a grant writer position can pay for the position through the additional grant revenues generated by the position. In addition, this shared position will be able to help both the county and the school division better optimize its grant funding opportunities.

The business decision support analyst and the county finance director could jointly write an initial grant to fund a grant writer or administrator position. After the first year of having the position, the division and the county could determine whether to continue to write a grant to fund the position or to begin funding it from general revenues.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is dependent upon how the county and the school division wish to structure the grant writer position and what percentage each entity agrees to pay toward funding the position. However, to illustrate a potential fiscal impact should the school division and the county determine to fund the grant position from general fund revenues, the following assumptions have been made:

- The position would follow the school division's administrative salary schedule, and would be comparable to a clerk of the board with a salary range of $42,886 to $47,862.

- The position would be funded equally by the county and the school division.

- The position would be full-time.

- Benefits for the position would be 22 percent of gross salary.

- The county and the school division would incur only one-half of the total salary and benefits amount during fiscal year 2006-07 due to the timing of hiring the position.

Taking the mid-point of the salary range for this position of $45,374 ([$42,886 + $47,862]/2) and adding benefits of 22 percent amounts to a total annual salary and benefits of $55,356 ($45,374 X 1.22). The division's assumed cost of this position would be $27,678 ($55,356 X .5).

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Coordinate with the County to Hire a Grants Administrator.	($13,839)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($27,678)

4.4   *Fixed Assets and Textbooks*

Exhibit 4-7 shows the detail of SCPS's capital assets as of June 30, 2004, the most recently audited information available.

EXHIBIT 4-7
SCPS'S CAPITAL ASSETS
AS OF JUNE 30, 2004

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Land	$613,644
Buildings	646,297
Equipment	3,184,579
Accumulated depreciation	(8,044,841)
Net capital assets	**$1,799,679**

Source: County of Smyth, Virginia, Financial Statements, June 30, 2004.

Fixed assets include equipment and other assets used in the operation of the division. Fixed assets should be accounted for by keeping detailed inventory records of asset descriptions including make, model and serial numbers, acquisition dates, cost, annual depreciation amounts, and the location of the assets. Safeguarding of assets includes comparing the detailed recorded transactions to the physical assets on a regular basis. Missing or stolen assets should be reported as soon as they are detected as missing so that asset recovery and accountability can be attempted.

Section 4.24 (Inventory of Equipment/Furniture/Books/Supplies) of SCPS's policy manual state that:

Each school shall maintain a comprehensive inventory of valuable equipment, furniture, books, and instructional supplies. Inventory lists must include sufficient identifying information and are to be updated on an annual basis. A copy of such annual inventory shall be maintained in the office of the principal for each school.

In addition to acquiring assets, SCPS also purchases textbooks for use in classrooms. In 2004-05, SCPS expended $255,803 for the purchase of textbooks, and in 2005-06 textbook expenditures are anticipated to amount to over $811,000.

FINDING

SCPS tracks and monitors its classroom textbooks on a monthly basis. Each teacher is required to perform textbook counts monthly and report lost books to the central office and to parents. Though by law Virginia school divisions cannot withhold grades or transcripts for the purpose of collecting for lost textbooks, school divisions can restrict student participation in things such as extracurricular field trips pending submission of funds for lost books.

Because SCPS conducts frequent counts of its classroom textbooks, schools are able to collect from parents in a timely fashion. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, for instance, SCS schools were unable to collect for only 13 textbooks amounting to $684.

Schools are required to reimburse the division's textbook fund for missing or damaged books for which they were not able to collect from parents. School districts and divisions that place the burden of textbook recovery at the school level typically have much fewer textbook write-offs.

COMMENDATION

SCPS has sound procedures and controls over the custody of its textbook inventory.

FINDING

SCPS does not maintain an asset inventory tracking system, nor does it conduct annual asset counts. Although division policies require that principals maintain and track inventories of equipment, division staff informed the review team that this is not being done and that the inventory listing has not been updated since 2002.

Failure to provide adequate protection of fixed assets can leave the division at risk of losing valuable items. In addition, in the event that division property were to be lost or stolen, poor controls prevent the division from identifying the individual responsible for the item's loss or theft.

School systems that employ sound fixed asset controls are better able to protect their investments in furniture, equipment, and other valuable items and are able to identify missing or stolen assets in a timely manner. Clay County Public Schools (CCPS) in Florida, for instance, uses fixed asset controls that help it to keep fixed asset losses to a minimum.

CCPS requires that all fixed assets be added to the school's asset database upon receipt. Each school principal or department head, or their designees, are responsible for entering the asset data. The accounting department monitors this process to ensure that assets are entered in a timely manner and that asset data is correct.

Each CCPS principal or department head is then required to conduct a physical inventory of assets on a regular basis. Thefts are required to be reported to the county sheriff immediately so as to increase the potential for properly identifying a responsible party. Further, any assets that simply cannot be located are reported to the board on a quarterly basis. This process helps to ensure that all assets are properly recorded and tracked, lest the responsible principal or department head be required to explain the loss to the board during a public meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-5:

Develop and implement asset tracking procedures.

SCPS has the automated systems necessary for recording and tracking assets. Implementing fixed asset procedures and testing those procedures on a regular basis will help the division to better protect its valuable equipment and computers.

Once the asset register has been updated, the superintendent should require that all principals and department heads conduct annual inventories. For items found missing or stolen, the responsible principal or department head should either be required to fill out a police report (in the case of stolen items), or report missing items to the school board on a regular basis.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation. Implementation of this recommendation, however, will most likely result in improved accountability for division assets and will eliminate the need to purchase replacement assets.

4.5 *Risk Management*

Risk management functions include assessing and managing a variety of risks that are inherent in school division operations. Risk management includes identifying and mitigating risks, maintaining adequate insurance coverage, establishing policies and procedures to adequately safeguard assets such as property, equipment, cash, and investments. Risk management provides protection for employees by providing appropriate safety equipment and training. Procurement of workers' compensation and adequate employee health insurance are also risk management functions.

Risk management functions in SCPS are primarily handled by the business decision support analyst who is responsible for coordinating the procurement and maintenance of insurance coverage for property, casualty losses, general and school leader liability, floods, and insurance coverage for the division's school buses and other fleet vehicles. The director of human resources and auxiliary services is responsible for coordinating and administering the employee health insurance program.

SCPS participates in the Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) insurance pool for its auto, liability, workers' compensation and property insurance.

School board policy 4.16 (Insurance Management) states that "the school board will maintain adequate coverage of risks relating to activities of board members, employees of the board, volunteers working under the auspices of the board, and real and personal property owned or leased by the board." This policy requires the school board to determine those whose insurance risks will be covered and authorize changes in coverage when necessary. The superintendent is charged with assuring that insurance coverage is reviewed at least annually and with making recommendations to the board regarding insurance management and terms of coverage.

In addition, policy 4.17 (Property Insurance/Fleet Insurance) requires the school board to "maintain insurance coverage on all buildings, building contents and every school bus and public use vehicle owned by the division."

FINDING

SCPS does not have a formal risk management process nor does it have formal risk management policies. While there is coordination between the business decision support analyst and the director of maintenance and transportation regarding insurance coverage and safety issues, no formal risk assessments take place and there is no formal risk management training.

Effective risk management programs are becoming more and more important as medical costs increase, as the work place becomes more complicated and hazardous, and as our society, in general, becomes more litigious. Small organizations such as SCPS are not insulated from the risk of loss; in fact, it is just as important, if not more so, for small organizations to implement effective risk management programs.

Risk management is the process by which organizations establish risk management goals and objectives, assess and monitor risks, and select and implement measures to address risks in an organized and coordinated way. Managing risk should include light duty programs, so that injured workers can return to work as soon as possible. Risk management also incorporates disaster recovery planning so that important functions such as payroll can be performed even in the event of a major disaster.

The review team identified a best practice for risk management in Chesterfield County, Virginia. The county maintains a Risk Management office that serves both the county government and the school division. The mission of Chesterfield's Risk Management office is to develop and manage a risk profile that best suits the county's vision and mission. The office seeks to reduce the long-term cost of risk while maximizing the probability of long-term benefits.

Chesterfield's risk management techniques include:

- Avoidance – redesign processes to avoid particular risks with the plan of reducing overall risk.

- Diversity – spread the risk among numerous assets or processes to reduce the overall risk of loss or impairment.

- Control – design activities to prevent, detect, or contain adverse events or to promote positive outcomes.

- Share – distribute a portion of the risk through a contract with another party, such as insurance.

- Transfer – distribute all of the risk through a contract with another party, such as outsourcing.

- Accept – allow minor risks to exist to avoid spending more on managing the risks than the potential harm.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-6:

Develop risk management policies and procedures and implement a comprehensive risk management program in the division.

As the designated risk manager for SCPS, the business decision support analyst should be tasked with overseeing the steps necessary for coordinating and implementing a risk management program.

The business decision support analyst should contact the Virginia School Board Association, Virginia Association of Counties, and other organizations for assistance in setting up a program and developing policies and procedures. The program should contain the elements of formal training programs and light duty programs for employees.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

There is no formal safety training for division employees, nor are employees provided with safety devices such as back braces and safety goggles. Review of workers' compensation claims histories for 1999 through 2004 shows that the division is incurring multiple worker injuries that could be prevented. For this time period, the division incurred a total of 274 incidents that resulted in 120 actual claims at a cost of $262,165. With the exception of five claims that resulted in significant individual claim amounts, most other injuries were small injuries that possibly could have been prevented through proper safety training.

Details of worker compensation claims show a significant number of claims related to lifting of heavy objects and falls from using chairs or desks as step ladders in classrooms.

Organizations that provide safety training to employees prove to have decreased incidents that result in employee injury. These organizations typically review injury claims on a regular basis and adjust or address training issues that can prevent or minimize injuries as a result of on-the-job accidents.

MGT identified several school operations that were able to achieve significant cost savings by implementing coordinated conducting analyses of worker accidents and focusing safety efforts to reduce or eliminate these accidents.

For example, El Paso Independent School District (EPISD), a district of over 63,000 students decreased its workers' compensation claims expense by 81 percent over a seven-year period. EPISD attributes this cost reduction to careful analysis of worker accidents, monitoring claims, resolving safety issues as they arise, and keeping frequent contact with injured workers.

Tyler Independent School District (TISD) in Texas reduced its workers' compensation costs by 45 percent over a one-year period. The district's risk manager established an aggressive program to train employees and conduct safety inspections to prevent employee accidents.

By conducting safety programs including training in back safety techniques, blood-borne pathogens, carpal tunnel syndrome, fire safety, heat stress and materials handling, El Paso Community College (EPCC) reduced its workers' compensation costs by 45 percent over a two-year period. In addition to its proactive preventative safety training, EPCC provides its workers with protective equipment such as ergonomically correct chairs and desks, back braces, and non-slide shoes for maintenance workers.

Robstown Independent School District (RISD), a Texas district with just under 4,000 students, decreased its workers' compensation costs by almost 41 percent within a one-year period. RISD achieved these cost savings by implementing an aggressive employee safety campaign.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-7:

Coordinate with the county to develop a comprehensive employee safety training program.

By coordinating with the county, SCPS can improve its employee safety record while sharing the administrative responsibilities of developing and maintaining an effective program. The division has many resources available to it regarding developing safety training classes including its major insurance provide, the Virginia Association of Counties.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on MGT's experience in other school systems that have implemented safety programs, a moderate estimate of achievable cost savings for SCPS would be ten percent. Based on the division's 1999-2004 claims history, this would equate to $26,215 annually. This fiscal impact accounts for the fact that the division would not see the benefits from implementing a safety program immediately. Therefore, savings for the 2006-07 fiscal year are estimated to be only five percent or $13,108.

This is a conservative estimate of potential savings to demonstrate the fiscal impact associated with this recommendation. It is likely that the division could achieve a cost savings greater than 10 percent.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Coordinate with the County to Develop a Comprehensive Employee Safety Training Program.	$13,108	$26,215	$26,215	$26,215	$26,215

FINDING

Review of division insurance policies shows that the schools do not carry adequate flood insurance coverage. The business decision support analyst requested flood plain maps of division schools showing that three schools are located in flood-prone areas. The insurance policies on two of the three schools cover $56,000 for the building structure and $12,000 for building contents. In the event of a flood, this coverage would not be sufficient to indemnify the division for any losses.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-8:

Obtain adequate flood insurance coverage for division school property.

The division should act immediately to obtain adequate flood insurance coverage on the schools at most risk of flooding. The division should take a physical inventory of school property to assess the amount of insurance necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT

The division currently is paying a total of $2,391 for flood insurance. Though insurance premium rates are difficult to estimate, the division should expect premiums to double. This fiscal impact can therefore be estimated to be approximately $2,400 annually, and $12,000 over a five-year period.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Obtain Adequate Flood Insurance Coverage for Division School Property.	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)

5.0   PURCHASING

5.0 PURCHASING

In this chapter the findings and recommendations for the purchasing functions of Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS) are presented. The major sections of the chapter include:

   5.1   Purchasing Processes and Procedures
   5.2   Cooperative and Collaborative Purchasing

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The division has concentrated its efforts in making improvements in its budgeting and finance functions while purchasing operations have remained relatively unchanged. As a result, the division's purchases processes are cumbersome, do not provide adequate accountability, and do not provide SCPS with the highest value of goods for the lowest possible prices. Recommendations in this chapter focus on overhauling SCPS's purchasing processes to gain savings in both efficiency and costs. Specific recommendations include:

   ■   developing purchasing procedures and training staff in the use of the
       procedures;

   ■   using the division's purchasing software to provide better controls
       and management information for purchasing operations;

   ■   coordinating purchases throughout the division to obtain bulk
       discounts; and

   ■   developing a collaborative purchasing function with Smyth County
       government.

INTRODUCTION

Virginia school divisions are required to follow the Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA). In SCPS, section 4.11 of school board policies covers the rules that all division staff are required to follow when procuring goods and services on behalf of the division. This policy states that purchases of goods and services estimated to be $10,000.00 or more must be subject to competitive bidding or competitive negotiations. The policy further requires that whenever the amount of purchases exceeds $400.00, two or more proposals from qualified vendors must be received. Policy section 4.11 further prohibits bidders from conveying anything of value to district employees.

5.1   *Purchasing Processes and Procedures*

In SCPS, the procurement process is highly decentralized since each school performs its own purchasing functions. Schools are responsible for procuring all goods considered to be "consumables" such as office and instructional supplies. For capital outlay items and consumables such as copier paper that is purchased in bulk, the appropriate central office employee is charged with overseeing and coordinating these purchases.

As discussed in Chapter 4 Financial Management, SCPS school divisions are required to expend funds from fundraisers or student activity funds for the purchase of school and instructional supplies, and submit for reimbursement from the central office. All invoices, therefore, are paid by each school's bookkeeper without being entered into the division's central accounting system.

FINDING

Smyth County Public Schools does not have documented purchasing processes and each school handles the purchasing process differently. Because there are no standardized directions for schools or departments in making purchases, the review team identified a wide variety of purchasing practices among the division's schools.

School divisions that have well documented and communicated policies and procedures have fewer problems associated with their procurement functions. Policies should be specific and should clearly spell out dollar thresholds, and the responsibilities of the purchasing agent as well as users of the purchasing system. Procedures should also be clear and help departments and schools understand how the purchasing function works, with contact information so that in case of a question, users will know who to contact.

Good procedures should contain the following components:

- table of contents
- overview of policies and Commonwealth laws
- clearly defined dollar thresholds
- specific information on how to complete a purchase order
- purchase order authorization procedures
- contracting and contract compliance procedures

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-1:

Develop purchasing procedures and train all division staff in their use.

After the procedures have been developed and include the elements listed above, all division employees having a role in the procurement of goods or the processing of purchase orders should be trained in using the policies and procedures.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation.

FINDING

SCPS does not encumber funds for its purchases. Creating an encumbrance means to set aside funds as designated for payment of future expenses. Encumbered funds are not available for use other than the specified purposes. An encumbrance is recorded at the time a purchase order is issued or a contract is signed for the purchase of goods or services. The difference between an encumbrance and a liability is that an encumbrance is a formal commitment of budgeted resources at the time a purchase order is issued or a contract is signed, whereas a liability is incurred when services or goods are received and the legal obligation to disburse cash is created.

The use of encumbrances enhances financial monitoring and decision making. It provides early warning of spending commitments and significantly reduces the opportunity for over expenditures. Through effective use of information, encumbrances enable school decision-makers to:

- monitor and control commitments to expend funds;

- forecast expenditures and cash needs;

- ensure and demonstrate compliance with spending plans, budgets, and other legal requirements;

- maximize investment earnings through accounting control of available funds;

- avoid double orders and similar errors in the purchasing process;

- report spending commitments consistently in accordance with generally accepted government accounting standards and other reporting requirements; and

- identify the need for contract amendments.

In addition, SCPS schools do not use standard purchase orders forms, and some school bookkeepers told the review team that they do not use purchase orders at all. The purchase order form is an important document in that it provides an audit trail for what was ordered, from whom it was ordered, and who approved the purchase. In addition, purchase orders provide valuable information to vendors because they contain the specifics of the order in addition to the division's terms and conditions.

The review team found Dinwiddie County Public Schools (DCPS) to have a sound process for encumbering its purchase orders. In DCPS, paper copies of purchase orders are prepared and approved at the school or department level before being submitted to the central office. After review and approval by the appropriate central office staff, purchase orders are submitted to the Accounts Payable specialist who enters the information into the financial system.

Because all purchase order information is contained in the main accounting system, SCPS is able to run reports that indicate purchasing trends, signaling to division managers if they should alter purchasing practices or seek new bids.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-2:

Use the purchasing module in the division's financial software to encumber purchases.

Implementation of this recommendation will require significant changes to the way that the division currently handles purchase orders and invoices. In order to improve accounting and purchasing controls, and to provide better information to management and the board, SCPS should require that all purchases be approved using a standard, pre-numbered division purchase order. All purchase orders, after being approved by the budget holder, should then be entered into the purchasing system.

Entering all purchase order information into the financial system can be achieved in one of two ways. If given remote access to the financial system, users can enter purchase order information directly into the system upon purchase order initiation. The system will accept the entry and charge the purchase order against the designated budget account, but will not officially "post" to the financial records until proper approval has been received.

An alternative method of accomplishing this process is to have all purchase orders entered to the system centrally. In this case, paper copies of purchase orders are sent to the central office where they are input into the system.

In order to maintain complete purchasing history, all vendor payment must also be made from the centralized accounting system. This requires that central office accounts payable staff process all school based invoices rather than this process being performed by school bookkeepers.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation will require additional staff time from central office employees, but the staffing and organizational changes recommended in Chapter 4 should allow the division's accounts payable personnel to handle these additional responsibilities.

5.2 Cooperative and Collaborative Purchasing

The VPPC allows for collaborative or cooperative purchasing. That is, school divisions may purchase from contracts from any state or local government agency, even though the school division did not participate in the request for proposals for the invitation to bid. Specifically, Section 2.2-4304 of the VPPA states:

> Any public body may participate in, sponsor, conduct, or administer a cooperative procurement agreement on behalf of or in conjunction with one or more other public bodies, or public agencies or institutions or localities of the several states, of the United States or its territories, the District of Columbia, or the U.S. General Services Administration, for the purpose of combining requirements to increase efficiency or reduce administrative expenses in any acquisition of goods and services.

Except for contracts for professional services, a public body may purchase from another public body's contract even if it did not participate in the request for proposal or invitation to bid, if the request for proposal or invitation to bid specified that the procurement was being conducted on behalf of other public bodies.

FINDING

Smyth County government has an agreement with SCPS for performing routine maintenance on its fleet of public safety vehicles. Instead of employing its own mechanics, the county pays the school division to have transportation department mechanics perform routine maintenance such as oil changes. This arrangement benefits both parties because the school division has excess capacity to take on the additional job of servicing county vehicles, while the county avoids employing additional vehicle maintenance staff or sending its vehicles to a vendor for maintenance.

COMMENDATION

SCPS and the county collaborate for the routine servicing of county vehicles.

FINDING

The county does not have a purchasing agent. Similar to the arrangement for routine vehicle maintenance, both the county and the school division could benefit by having SCPS's business decision support analyst assist the county with its purchasing processes for an administrative fee.

The review team identified a best practice in use in the Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS), a small rural school system in Western Maryland. ACPS's relationship to Allegany County government is similar to that of SCPS in that the county board of commissioners oversees the budget for the school system.

ACPS and the county coordinate on several shared services and purchases including shared computer services, contracted pest management services, copier leases, computer purchases, and copier paper purchases. The two entities maintain several coordinating committees who meet regularly to ensure that consolidated services are running smoothly and to plan for upcoming budget cycles.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-3:

Create and staff a committee to investigate and oversee collaborative purchasing and contracting opportunities between Smyth County and SCPS.

In addition to investigating goods and services that could be procured collaboratively, the county and SCPS should investigate the option of SCPS's business decision support analyst providing purchasing services to county government.

The fee arrangement for collaborative purchasing efforts could be modeled after purchasing cooperatives that charge user fees based on the purchase price of the cooperative purchase. Typical fees charged under such arrangements range from 3 to 8 percent for buses, vehicles and vehicle parts, 5 to 8 percent for contracted services, and 2 to 6 percent for custodial supplies, office equipment and other purchases.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are multiple variables to any cost savings associated with this recommendation. However, to illustrate the revenue and savings that could be generated by having the school division assist the county with making collaborative purchases, this fiscal impact is based on a scenario of the county paying an administrative fee to the school division of two percent of the purchase price of any given item or group of items. Further, this scenario provides that through a collaborative purchasing arrangement, the county and school division purchase $100,000 worth of goods or services for which the SCPS coordinated and evaluated bids.

This fiscal impact calculation further assumes that a conservative savings of seven percent can be achieved through collaborative purchasing efforts, and that the county's portion of the goods or services represents $40,000 while the school division's portion is $60,000.

The estimated savings and revenue generation to the county and to the school division are shown below:

	Savings/Revenue to County	Savings/Revenue to School Division
Total value of goods or services	$40,000	$60,000
Savings realized from joint bidding	$2,800	$4,200
Administrative fee ([$40,000 - $2,800] X 2 percent)	($744)	$744
Total savings/revenue	$2,056	$4,944

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Create and Staff a Committee to Investigate and Oversee Collaborative Purchasing and Contracting Opportunities Between Smyth County and SCPS.	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944

6.0 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

6.0 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter provides a summary of the delivery and evaluation of educational services to students in the Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS). The five major sections of this chapter are:

6.1   Organization and Management of Curriculum and Instruction
6.2   Curriculum and Instruction
6.3   Use of Data for Instructional Purposes
6.4   School Improvement
6.5   Instructional Professional Development

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Smyth County has an academic leadership team which is balanced between people who have grown up in the community and those who are relatively new to the division, thus providing varied experiences to division decisions and operations. Many interviewees, regardless of background, expressed excitement about the direction the division is going, new initiatives, and upper level division leadership.

The division's student performance data, dropout rate, and reduction in placement rate of students into Special Education programs bear out that the division has progressed with a focus on meeting student needs. Division leadership has a vision of critical priorities it must address and the impact they will make on student performance and employee knowledge and skills. They further recognize the impact they will make on the community and its economic health and have embraced community leaders in the endeavor. Corroborating that is the fact that community members and business and industry leaders attended two public forums during the site visit and shared insights into the needs of the county's schools. Division plans recognize the need to:

- focus more strongly on strengthening the curriculum;

- create a strong personnel evaluation system that ties individual growth and student performance together;

- increase professional development opportunities for staff;

- move toward inclusive practices in all schools and classes; and

- use data as a foundation for many related decisions.

Toward that end, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction have directed division instructional leaders to be in the schools a minimum of four days out of the week.

To date, the division has used the state's standards as a curriculum without division supplemented pacing guides, alignment of resources to identified learning objectives, or systematic articulation between and among all grades and schools. Other impediments to further improvements have been inadequate school funding, and a

lack of written processes that ensure consistency among all schools and across the division, holding people accountable beyond professional trust.

Recommendations contained in this chapter relate to developing written procedures, structures, and functions that contribute to more effective coordination and planning of tasks that will provide a more cohesive support system for the curricular and instructional functions of the division's operations. Key suggestions that should assist the division in achieving a more seamless service delivery include:

- re-organize the Instructional Department and re-distribute responsibilities to more logically related functional positions;

- provide key instructional leaders adequate secretarial support to allow them to focus on administrative responsibilities rather than clerical tasks;

- combine responsibilities for Assessment, School Improvement, and Evaluation in a new Director's position;

- combine the positions of Director of Elementary and Secondary Education into a single position of Director of Curriculum to contribute to a seamless organization and coordination of curriculum and instruction within the division;

- extend current initiatives to base decisions on data by moving professional development systematically to the level of the classroom teacher and identify, collect, and disseminate best practices that are currently occurring in SCPS schools;

- develop an allocation formula for schools that raises the bar to provide adequate support for instruction that precludes the need for them to conduct fund raising events for basic needs;

- examine the impact that current high school schedules have on equity of opportunity for students across the division;

- identify key professional development opportunities critical to the realization of the division's goals for teachers, students, and technology integration and develop procedures to ensure that they translate to changed instructional practices; and

- build on current plans to develop curriculum maps and extend opportunities to students for higher levels of achievement through educational experiences offered in SCPS schools.

INTRODUCTION

Central office staff serves as the support system for the education that is provided in schools of any school division and, depending on factors such as organization, staffing and processes, can either strengthen or hinder progress towards high achievement for students. Prior to the site visit, surveys were sent to central office

administrators, school-level administrators and teachers for feedback regarding various aspects of division services. The responses of SCPS central office administrators and principals were merged for a comparison of their responses with those of similar groups of administrators in other school districts.

In surveys of SCPS central office administrators, principals, and teachers, responses to questions regarding the quality of educational services were overwhelmingly positive. As shown in Exhibit 6-1, in response to, "the central office was responsive to school needs", 100 percent of the division administrations either *agreed or strongly agreed* with the statement. Nearly 60 percent of principals responded this way, but only 42 percent of teachers, with nearly a third of this group, disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement. The changing views in perception of district responsiveness may be due to any number of factors. While central office administrators strongly agree that they are being responsive, the definition of what accounts for "responsiveness" may be different in the minds of principals and teachers. Closing this perception gap will require a closer examination of division services in this area and discussions among these three constituencies.

EXHIBIT 6-1
SURVEY RESPONSES OF SMYTH COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

	ADMINISTRATORS		PRINCIPALS		TEACHERS	
	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree
SCPS central office is responsive to school needs	100%	0%	58%	26%	42%	32%
SCPS central office provides quality service to schools	93%	0%	50%	21%	39%	33%
Our schools have the necessary instructional materials and supplies	86%	7%	58%	30%	55%	30%
Smyth County teachers enforce high learning standards for students	93%	0%	96%	0%	90%	4%
Our schools can be described as "good places to learn"	85%	7%	96%	0%	87%	7%
	Adequate — Outstanding	Some/Major Improvement	Adequate — Outstanding	Some/Major Improvement	Adequate — Outstanding	Some/Major Improvement
Instructional coordination and supervision	36%	57%	37%	59%	54%	38%
Instructional support	50%	43%	42%	59%	48%	48%

Source: Smyth County Public Schools MGT Survey Results, 2005.

There was a similar disparity in responses to "SCPS Central Office provides quality service to schools. Again, division administrators rated themselves highly in this area with 93 percent responding *agree or strongly agree.* This positive response dropped precipitously with principals (50 percent) and even more steeply with teachers, only 39 percent of which responded positively. When asked about the adequacy of instructional supplies and materials, the division administration again responded with 86 percent *agree or strongly agree.* Principals and teachers were less agreeable with only 58 percent and 55 percent respectively, responding in the affirmative. There was solid agreement however, on the issue of teachers' enforcing high learning standards, with over 90 percent of administrators, principals and teachers all responding *agree or strongly agree.*

Employees were also asked to rate the quality of instructional coordination and supervision and instructional support provided by the division. Nearly 60 percent of administrators and principals felt that coordination and supervision of instruction needed some or major improvement, whereas only 38 percent of teachers felt the same, again, a significant difference in perception that should be explored further. There was agreement regarding the quality of instructional supported provided to schools, with each group's *adequate to outstanding* responses falling between 42 and 50 percent.

MGT consultants also surveyed peer division administrators on the same issues related to educational services. In each survey area, Smyth County administrators consistently responded more positively regarding the quality of educational services than administrators in other districts. The largest differences were in the areas of being responsive to school needs—with 100 percent SCPS administrators responding positively compared to 76 percent for other division administrators—and providing necessary school materials, with 86 percent SCPS administrators responding positively compared to 63 percent for other division administrators (Exhibit 6-2).

EXHIBIT 6-2
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES OF SMYTH COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

	SCPS Administrators		Other Division Administrators	
	% Agree + Strongly Agree	% Disagree + Strongly Disagree	% Agree + Strongly Agree	% Disagree + Strongly Disagree
Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	100%	0%	76%	8%
Central office administrators provide quality service to schools	93%	0%	77%	6%
The emphasis on learning in this division has increased in recent years	85%	0%	83%	6%
Our schools have the necessary instructional materials and supplies	86%	7%	63%	17%
Our schools can be described as "good places to learn"	85%	7%	84%	5%

Source: Smyth County Public Schools MGT Survey Results, 2005.

In rating the division on aspects of division/program functions relating to educational service delivery, Smyth County administrators, principals, and teachers are in agreement that the emphasis on learning has increased in recent years with responses ranging from 82 to 85 percent *Agreeing* or *Strongly Agreeing.* There was also a high level of agreement among all three groups with respect to the following questions:

- Our schools can be described as "good places to learn;"

- Teachers in our schools know the material they teach;

- Teachers in our schools care about students' needs; and

- Principals and assistant principals in our schools care about students' needs.

6.1   *Organization and Management of Curriculum and Instruction*

In order for efficient and effective educational processes to promote the highest possible levels of student achievement, a school system's organization and procedures must be thoughtfully aligned, communicated to and understood by educators at all levels. Personnel at the division level must have expertise in the aspects of education for which they are responsible. There must be adequate support staff to ensure that administrators' time can be devoted to functions the division has identified as critical to the educational process; resources must be leveraged to maximize the capacity of the division's staff; and processes for clear and frequent communication and co-planning among central office support staff and school-level recipients of their services must be developed and protected.

FINDING

A lack of clarity of reporting structure and accountability for specific administrative tasks impedes the ability of central office staff to perform their job responsibilities. An additional factor affecting performance is the lack of secretarial support for key instructional directors to conduct routine clerical tasks that administrators currently must do themselves.

The visiting team was provided a semblance of a current organizational structure for the Instructional Department that shows the Directors of Special, Elementary, Secondary, and Federal Programs reporting to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. However, it also included many dotted lines denoting shared reporting relationships between the Assistant Superintendent for principals and the Directors of Federal Programs, Vocational, Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Alternative Education, the Director of Technology, and the Coordinator for the Southwest Virginia State Mental Health Institute (SWVSMHI) Program. A separate organizational chart for the Department of Instruction showed the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction having eight direct reports:

- The Director of Special Education,
- The Lead Teacher Coordinator,
- The Director of Federal Programs,

- The Director of Elementary Education,
- The Director of Secondary Education,
- The Director of Testing (vacant, but currently being advertised),
- The ESL Coordinator, and
- The Director of Career and Technical Education.

He also evaluates half of the principals. Much of the coordination and communication between instructional leaders in the division is done informally in halls as issues arise that directors think the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent need to be apprised of, and in semi-monthly meetings. The morning after board meetings, division and school administrators also meet. Too much ambiguity lies in the current structure that even division interviewees could not fully explain during the on-site visit. This leads to confusion on the part of both central office and school personnel as to who to confer with regarding issues that arise. It also wastes administrators' time as, without clear reporting structures, they report to both the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent in order to communicate clearly with their "supervisor(s)." This, in turn, could also lead to delays in taking critical action or making essential timely decisions.

Personnel interviewed during the diagnostic visit demonstrated recognition of the challenges implicit in the existing communication and reporting structure of the division:

- The inadequate level of central office staffing, in particular the need for a director of testing;

- The reorganization of district administration did not adequately address issues surrounding staffing;

- Administrative staff needs more visibility;

- Elementary and secondary directors do not have administrative help; and

- Position responsibilities need to be better defined.

The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent have requested that all division administrators spend between three and four days each week in schools;, nevertheless, the issue of visibility of division level administrative staff continued to arise in interviews, particularly with respect to secondary schools. Some interviewees noted that the director visits when called and others expressed a desire for more frequent, even monthly visits, accompanied by substantive discussions. One principal noted that he would prefer higher levels of accountability expected of him as well as of division directors for visibility and leadership. This is particularly noteworthy when the position of Director of Elementary Education has additional responsibilities beyond those of the position of Director of Secondary Education and when many of those responsibilities cross all grade levels. Although some additional division of responsibility has occurred this year, many commented on ambiguity of accountability for aspects of middle school programs. In two focus groups, principals expressed concern that middle schools were like the proverbial middle child, getting lost in the shuffle of division priorities. In an attempt to clarify responsibilities and reporting

relationships, the division has begun development of a job responsibility flow chart, specifically because of the duality of oversight of middle school by both elementary and secondary directors; however, considering that the surveys were conducted within the past two months, clarity has not yet been achieved.

One of the characteristics of an effective school or school system is a clear, focused mission. When there is uncertainty regarding reporting structures and accountability for specific actions, congruity of mission is difficult to convey.

Exhibit 6-3 shows the comparative number of division-level administrators between Smyth County and other divisions selected for their similarity to it in characteristics. It shows that a number of instructional administrators is equal to the average number of administrators in all the peer divisions.

EXHIBIT 6-3
INSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2003-04 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION	INSTRUCTIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL
Smyth County	**5,129**	**6.0**
Isle of Wight County	5,167	9.2
Pulaski County	4,939	5.0
Carroll County	4,061	6.0
Accomack County	5,385	8.5
Culpeper County	6,489	8.0
Division Average	**5,195**	**6.0**

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2005.

Exhibit 6-4 shows a proposed organizational structure for the Department of Instruction. The current structure is included within the overall division administration organizational chart (see Exhibit 2-6).

Tasks that are currently responsibilities of instructional administrative personnel that could either be carried out by clerical staff, if there were any to support them, or should be the responsibilities of other division administrators are detailed below. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services is currently responsible for:

- school safety,
- safety audits,
- crisis management,
- alternative education,
- liaison with the Sheriff's Department for School Resource Officers,
- community liaison with family support and mental health agencies,
- homebound,
- homeless education,
- child protective services,
- adult programs,

EXHIBIT 6-4
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS INSTRUCTIONAL DEPARTMENT
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Assistant Superintendent │
                    │     for Instruction      │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────┬───────────┴───────────┬───────────────┐
┌───────────────┐ ┌───────────────┐ ┌───────────────┐ ┌───────────────┐
│ Director of    │ │ Director of    │ │ Director of    │ │ Director of    │
│ Curriculum and │ │ Federal        │ │ Special        │ │ Assessment,    │
│ Instruction    │ │ Programs and   │ │ Education      │ │ School         │
│                │ │ Assessment     │ │                │ │ Improvement and│
│                │ │                │ │                │ │ Evaluation     │
└───────────────┘ └───────────────┘ └───────────────┘ └───────────────┘
┌───────────────┐                    ┌───────────────┐
│ Coordinator of │                    │ Coordinator of │
│ ESL            │                    │ Special        │
│                │                    │ Education      │
└───────────────┘                    └───────────────┘
┌───────────────┐
│ Lead Teacher   │
│ Coordinator    │
└───────────────┘
┌───────────────┐
│ Director of    │
│ Career and     │
│ Technical      │
│ Education      │
└───────────────┘
┌───────────────┐
│ Director of    │
│ Pupil          │
│ Personnel      │
│ Services       │
└───────────────┘
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Source: Created by MGT, November 2005.

- all division discipline,

- student services,

- gang awareness, and

- directing guidance with the exception of the testing component.

In the past, the Director of Elementary Education was responsible for the following tasks that are either clerical or cross boundaries between elementary and secondary education, creating possible confusion on the part of division personnel regarding reporting responsibility:

- working with the Director of Technology on data disaggregation for the division,

- gifted, since the coordinator spends her time teaching full-time,

- art,

- music,

- data analysis training,

- school improvement development/review/coaching,

- summer school, and

- mentoring.

As stated earlier, there has been some division of responsibilities, but many of these tasks still bridge elementary and secondary education. Additionally, two de facto quasi-administrative positions in the division who are described as supervisors hold full-time teaching positions. The Coordinator of Gifted Education spends 100 percent of her time serving students and schools. The Coordinator of ESL also teaches full-time and conducts administrative tasks although she has some time allocated for administrative responsibilities. One is paid at a teacher level and one as an administrator. The time of neither is being well utilized for administrative purposes, since they are full-time teachers. Disparities in the salary schedule are addressed in Chapter 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 6-1:

Adopt the proposed re-organizational structure for the Department of Instruction.

The re-organization would benefit the division by:

- reducing ambiguity of responsibility between elementary and secondary areas by merging curricular and instructional responsibilities into a single position of Director of Curriculum and Instruction;

- reducing the number of personnel who directly report to the Assistant Superintendent;

- creating a position of Director of Assessment, Data Analysis, and Evaluation. This will provide a needed level of support and accountability for schools not meeting accreditation which is discussed later in this chapter; and

- creating a clear communications and reporting structure in departments that directly impact instruction and curriculum for planning and program implementation purposes.

Recommendation 6-2:

Re-assign tasks to positions more logically aligned with functions.

Instructional administrators' time could be devoted to functions more likely to have a positive impact on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and, therefore, student performance by assigning responsibilities better related to facilities such as school safety, safety audits, and crisis management to the Director of Facilities.

The Director of Assessment, Data Analysis and Education will have primary responsibility for the development and implementation of assessment programs, the correlation between assessment and school improvement will allow the individual to work closely with the assistant superintendent toward positive improvement programs.

Recommendation 6-3:

Develop a comprehensive list of equipment needed to equip classes at each school level that can be amended depending on specific situations but can be managed largely by clerical personnel.

A clerical staff member can work with the Directors of Elementary, Secondary, and Special Education to examine past orders for equipment and supplies for classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and for regular and special education to create a general list of equipment that is needed for each new classroom. Once such lists are developed, the task of ordering equipment can be conducted by a clerical staff

member in consultation with an administrator with revisions or additions being made based on specific needs of that class. This will save much time in re-creating an order list every time a classroom needs to be equipped and will re-coup administrative time to be focused on instructional priorities.

Recommendation 6-4:

Provide secretarial support to the proposed positions of Director of Assessment, School Improvement, and Evaluation and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of these recommendations would result in additional annual costs to the division. Costs are figured at an average secretary's salary of $22,772 plus benefits of 22 percent ($5,010), for a total cost of $27,782 per position. Two positions would, therefore cost $55,564 per year.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Hire two Secretaries.	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)

6.2   *Curriculum and Instruction*

Successful school systems have stated guidelines and expectations that underlie a sound, challenging curriculum. It is far more than state standards, providing enrichment and remediation opportunities for students based upon their individual needs. Grounded in research-based strategies, it defines and buttresses realization of clear learning goals. The curriculum encompasses relationships between goals, specific learning objectives, instructional activities, and student assessments. It also identifies a scope and sequence in which information, skills, and concepts are taught and reinforced throughout the years to inculcate learning into students' knowledge base. Effective curricular guiding documents also build in assessments and periodic monitoring of both student achievement and the effectiveness of the documents themselves. Materials can then be identified and purchased that assist in teaching concepts and knowledge not addressed in division curricular resources and that provide for student remediation and enrichment.

FINDING

The new assistant superintendent for instruction has recognized that, to date, the "curriculum" that SCPS uses consists of the scope and sequence provided with Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) and assessments, but little else. Some principals are reported to have gone beyond Commonwealth guidance to enhanced instructional planning and coordination within their buildings. To date, though, the division has not developed its own curricular materials for those purposes. Leaving instruction tied solely to Commonwealth documents creates potential gaps in student learning due to local factors.

In acknowledgement of the need for a more comprehensive curriculum for Smyth County students, the assistant superintendent has laid plans to develop, implement, and evaluate system-wide curricular and instructional initiatives focused on raising the achievement levels of all students in the SCPS schools and unifying curriculum and instruction across the division. Toward that end, one of the priority undertakings in the division is initiation of curriculum mapping. The assistant superintendent plans to take key instructional Directors to a curriculum mapping conference, and possibly use some Heidi Hayes Jacobs videos to introduce the concept, its benefits, and its components. Subsequent to that, local assessments will begin to be devised, aligned to Virginia SOL standards, and funds will be allocated in next year's budget for the mapping process to begin in earnest.

Curriculum mapping is one of many instructional initiatives planned for the division over the next several years; however, no evidence was provided to MGT that specific action plans for achievement of the objectives for those initiatives had been developed. Furthermore, no action plan was provided for other curricular initiatives planned beyond those in the Program Improvement Plan.

Best practices demonstrate that creating a system that ensures monitoring, and formative and summative evaluations; provides fidelity in implementation and opportunities for interim revisions in response to assessment; and leads to achievement of the results intended upon implementation. Without including all of those elements in a plan to achieve even goals to which there is universal commitment, it is likely to falter and not realize desired outcomes.

Some transitional activities were described to occur between elementary and middle school teachers that, in those cases, contribute to a better understanding on the part of teachers at both levels of individual student needs and of instructional preparatory strategies that could bolster student success. Extensive transition activities are planned annually at Chilhowie Middle School for students to make a smooth transition between schools. Principals were even noted to cover teachers' classes in order for that communication to occur. However, that articulation was not reported to take place between middle and high schools. When the division develops procedures that ensure this kind of discussion is taking place between teachers at all levels in all schools, student achievement will improve as will the richness of curriculum and instruction. SCPS is also beginning the construction of a county-wide course code book, thus has taken some important steps toward creating cohesion in their instructional programs.

In order to identify specific resources that reinforce or teach concepts not addressed in textbooks, teachers in the same and adjacent grades must have opportunities to talk and explore materials, benchmarks and strengths and weaknesses in student learning. Systematically developing and conducting beginning of year common assessments of student knowledge at each grade and sharing the results between grade levels helps teachers at both levels to understand curricula beyond their grade and the steps they need to take to better prepare students for success. It also provides opportunities for teachers to discuss materials they have for instruction of specific knowledge and to share instructional strategies. All of those actions contribute to a more cohesive, fluid curriculum that spirals to teach and reinforce important skills and concepts.

One parent participating in the public forum during the site visit expressed a concern about middle school science courses available for students and the extent of hands-on applied learning that students receive. Conversations with middle school interviewees reinforce the need for science to be a part of the curriculum mapping discussion. Applied learning experiences vary from school to school for middle school students partially based on facilities availability, but, for equitability, should be the same for all students regardless of the school they attend.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-5:

Continue plans to begin immediate development of curricular maps and other materials.

Undertaking such a sizable initiative has the potential to benefit the division in two significant ways. The process will develop a comprehensive, broad and also specific infrastructure to support student instruction and ensure student learning at higher, more coordinated levels. It will also strengthen the teacher corps within the division by providing them opportunities for collaboration, sharing, and learning through the discussions and debates that will ensue.

Plans should include establishing priorities for instructional initiatives purposefully and then developing action plans with specific accountability, procedures, timelines, and measurable baselines, goals, and strategies deemed critical for goal achievement. By detailing very specifically who, what, when, and how actions will be taken to achieve goals deemed critical for instructional and curricular improvement by the division, the likelihood of their accomplishment is raised as well as people's commitment to the process and the end result. Important aspects of this process also include identifying necessary resources available or needed, budgeting sufficient funds and planning and providing professional development that will contribute to success. Instructional initiatives that principals have identified as essential for their students should have county support and coordination. Some successful school systems have established K-12 curriculum committees for content areas. Their quarterly meetings keep the curriculum vibrant by constantly discussing new ideas and recent instructional experiences that may color their view of curricular needs.

FISCAL IMPACT

The costs of implementation of this recommendation will depend on the speed with which the division decides to move, but have already been considered in the budget.

FINDING

Historically funds have not been committed to supporting specific programs or endeavors. Many interviewees gave specific examples of how this had impaired the division's instructional program. For example, this was the first year for an allocation to support elementary music and the first year for each school to receive an allocation for school-specific professional development. Middle and high schools receive allocations for physical education, but elementary schools do not. This year, the County purchased

textbooks for Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) preparation and is in the process of purchasing health textbooks. Intervention programs for the Positive Attitude for Life Skill (PALS) Program have no budget for materials or common set of curricular materials. Desks, too, are not on a replacement schedule.

Principals are given allocations for their school budgets but are forced to rely on fund-raising to supplement their per student instructional allocation. Other expectations for them to include in their "instructional" budget are copy machine repairs or contracts, paper, ink cartridges, and office supplies. With an increase in the number of tests administered this year, paper expenditures are anticipated to increase. Additionally, the division is missing many efficiencies in bulk purchasing and contracting by requiring each principal to purchase and/or negotiate prices. Principals report that technology is purchased at the division level, but if they want to provide more for their schools or even provide some academic materials for their teachers, they must raise funds externally. Several individuals noted that students were not allowed to write in consumable elementary books due to the cost, so teachers were put in the position of copying pages for students to use. Federal 21st Century Community Learning grants have helped the division to develop a technology infrastructure that has begun to bridge the gap of inequity among schools. Purchasing and financial recommendations are addressed in greater detail in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report.

It is clear that current division leadership has taken steps to begin to remediate this fiscal challenge. The situation did not occur overnight, nor will it be fixed quickly. If the division is to realize its extensive goals of moving to the next level in terms of instructional quality for its students, then it must develop an allocation formula for schools and programs that provides a base level of resources that will ensure equity among schools and sufficient funds to meet division and community expectations for student achievement. High expectations by division leadership, including the school board and the public, must be supported by resources that are adequate enough to enable school staffs to reach those goals of improved student achievement.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-6:

Develop allocation formulas for schools and division instructional programs that are sufficient to prevent schools from having to depend on fund raisers for essential instructional expenditures and program support.

Examining the needs of programs throughout the division for replacement of equipment, materials, and consumable resources and building a rotating schedule of funds allocation will enable the division over time to bring all programs up to date. A school formula should allocate funds sufficient to cover essential needs. It should include both categorical allocations that must be spent on the specified purpose and flexible funds for other areas. This combination will provide for equitable educational opportunity in categorical areas (e.g., instructional materials) while also giving principals the flexibility to move other funds to school-based priorities such as purchasing technology above and beyond that funded by the division.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Principals have been allowed the freedom to determine not only school schedules but also course offerings with board approval. As one consequence, schedules vary among high schools. Two of the division's high schools are on 4x4 block schedules. The third high school is on a seven period day. These variances have an impact on some instructional programs and equity of educational opportunities for students depending on the school they attend. In recognition of possible equity issues, division leadership is currently working on district-wide high school program of studies that will be shared with the school board annually to provide equity in staffing and funding.

Spring 2004, SOL student scores show relatively comparable performance at each school. The two smaller high schools on block schedules, Chilhowie (CHS) and Northwood (NHS), offer only four and three distance learning courses respectively, to their students involving 1.5 percent and 3.8 percent of their students. That compares to Marion Senior High (MSHS) which offers 13 courses with 5.3 percent of its students enrolled. At Marion and Chilhowie, two of the distance learning (DL) courses are Advanced Placement (AP) and at Northwood, one is. Both block schools offer two DL dual enrollment classes. At Chilhowie, six percent of its students are enrolled and at Northwood, five percent. Marion offers seven dual enrollment courses to 11.5 percent of its students.

At MSHS, a total of 85 students participate in 157 AP classes, at CHS 15 students participate in 24 classes, and at NHS, 15 students take part in 16 classes. Of the 197 students enrolled in SCPS AP classes, 17 (8.6 percent) are on free and reduced lunch. The difference in AP courses among the schools is understandable since a block schedule more closely mirrors community college schedules with their dual enrollment options and a seven period day provides year-long AP instruction so that students are well-prepared for spring AP exams.

Although infrequent, when students transfer between division high schools, they face other dilemmas resulting from differing schedules. Two recent mid-semester transfer students between MHS with its 7 periods and CHS with its 4 x 4 block schedule were faced with the question of what to take between now and the end of the first semester. This also potentially reduces the number of credits transfer students can attain. High school personnel must also structure an instructional program for students in that position.

Another challenge the varying schedules offer high school students is that students from all three high schools attend classes at the division's only Career and Technology Center (CTC). Students who attend school at Marion High School for 50 minute periods do not benefit from full instructional time at the CTC because of travel time to and from school. Exploratory classes there last for only forty-five minutes. Students are not the only individuals facing challenges due to one schedule or another. Teachers who are on a block schedule, for instance, have two science projects and fairs to coordinate that

require careful scheduling for a county-wide fair and potentially eliminate half of students in a block schedule from participating.

Much discussion heard during the site visit framed the decision largely as an either/or dilemma; however, there is more than one possible way to block schedule and some offer compromises that might alleviate the challenges presented by schools in the same division being on separate types of schedules. The critical factor is what is best for students. This kind of issue should be a division decision, not left to individual schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-7:

Take a comprehensive look at high school schedules to identify barriers and determine what would offer students the best options to partake fully in as many educational experiences as possible within Smyth County.

Currently, all students are not able to take advantage of the same opportunities in SCPS based solely on which high school they attend. Issues that need to be examined are specifically what students in each school are being denied, to what extent, and whether the school schedule is the determining factor. If, after examination, it appears that school schedules are the key factor, then other possible schedules such as modified blocks in which some block classes are offered and some year-long classes should be examined and selected for use in all Smyth high schools. Teachers and administrators, especially those who doubt the benefits of a particular schedule should be encouraged to visit other schools using it and talk to those who are involved.

Examining the entire schedule could identify additional cost savings regardless of the final decision. Many schools on a seven period day assign teachers six instructional periods and one planning period. Teachers at Marion Senior High only teach five periods with two periods of planning/duty per day for a total of 110 minutes of non-instructional time. That equates to a total of 550 minutes or 9.2 hours of non-teaching time per week. Exhibit 6-5 shows a typical schedule of a MHS teacher with 55 minutes of planning each day and an additional 55 minutes of duty time.

EXHIBIT 6-5
SAMPLE MARION HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER
PLANNING/DUTY SCHEDULE

	TEACHING	PLANNING	DUTY
1st Period	55		
2nd Period	50		
3rd Period		55	
4th Period	75		
5th Period	50		
6th Period			55
7th Period	50		
Total Minutes	280	55	55

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.

If each of Marion High's 53 full-time teachers were assigned instructional responsibilities during their current 55 minute "duty" periods, it would reap nearly an additional 48.6

hours of instruction per week (53 teachers x 55 minutes=2,915 mins/60=48.6 hours). Using a 32.5 hour week instructional schedule, that equates to the equivalent of 1.5 teachers teaching six periods (1.5 teachers x 6.5 hours x 5 days=48.75 hours), thus would allow the district to reduce its instructional staff by 1.5 teachers. During the current seven period day, there are 390 minutes of possible instructional time. MSHS teachers are teaching only 280 minutes, or 72% of the day. If they were assigned instructional responsibilities instead of duty, they would be teaching 335 minutes, or 86% of the day.

Similarly, in a 4x4 block schedule, teachers are teaching three of four possible classes or a total of 75% of their available time. In schools that use an alternating block of eight periods, four different classes are held each day, so that teachers can have planning periods on alternating days instead of every day. Exhibits 6-6 and 6-7 show that the alternating eight block schedule would increase teaching time to 87.5% of available time. Using a schedule similar to Chilhowie High's 400 minute day from 8:45-3:25 (2,000 minutes per week), teachers would receive either 285 or 190 minutes of planning time every other week for a total average planning time of 237.5 minutes in contrast to the 425 they currently receive (5 days x 85 mins.). That would average a gain of 187.5 instructional minutes per week per teacher (425-237.5=187.5) With a staff of 35 like Chilhowie's, that would reap an additional 109.38 hours of instruction in a week (35 teachers x 187.5 saved minutes=6,562.5/60=109.38 hours per week) Using a 33.3 hour week instructional schedule, that equates to the equivalent of 3.3 teachers teaching seven periods in two days (109.38/33.3=3.3).

EXHIBIT 6-6
SAMPLE CHILHOWIE HIGH TEACHING AND PLANNING
SCHEDULE OF TWO TEACHERS ON ALTERNATING BLOCK SCHEDULE
WEEK ONE

BLOCK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	TOTAL PLANNING TIME WEEK ONE
8:45-10:20						
10:25-12:00						
12:10-1:45		Y**		Y		**190**
1:50-3:25	X*		X		X	**285**

Source: MGT of America, 2005.
*X=Teacher 1 Planning Period.
**Y=Teacher 2 Planning Period.

EXHIBIT 6-7
SAMPLE NORTHWOOD HIGH TEACHING AND PLANNING
SCHEDULE OF TWO TEACHERS ON ALTERNATING BLOCK SCHEDULE
WEEK TWO

BLOCK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	TOTAL PLANNING TIME WEEK TWO	TOTAL PLANNING TIME IN TWO WEEKS
8:45-10:20							
10:25-12:00							
12:05-1:40	Y		Y		Y	**285**	**475**
1:45-3:20		X		X		**190**	**475**

Source: MGT of America, 2005.
*X=Teacher 1 Planning Period.
**Y=Teacher 2 Planning Period.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources, but could result in savings for the division, depending on the final decision. Some aspects of the difference between a seventh period day and a 4x4 block can be quantifiable. On block schedules, textbook costs are cut in half, as books are re-used during the second semester. Instructional time, too, on both schedules can be compared and tied to costs per instructional hour.

Conservatively assuming similar savings of one teacher at Northwood High, projected potential savings by re-examination and changing high school planning schedules to reduce teaching positions by six at an average teacher salary of $38,629 plus benefits of 22% totaling $8,498 would reap a total savings per teacher or $47,127. Savings from eliminating six positions the first year beginning in July 2006 would be $141,381. Savings each additional year would be $282,762 for a total five year savings of $1,272,429.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Eliminate Six Teaching Positions.	$141,381	$282,762	$282,762	$282,762	$282,762

FINDING

Many personnel interviewed expressed concern that the division has reading and math specialists in all elementary schools, but, because they are funded by Title I, they are not available to provide support for all students and possibly detract from the division's plans to provide for full inclusion for the benefit of all students. Those stating this concern were convinced that additional individualization of instruction for all students would result from

the availability of those positions for all students in the division's elementary schools. Close to 45 percent of the division's student population is economically disadvantaged. All of the division's elementary schools have higher poverty indices than the division average of 44.9 percent. According to 2004-05 data from the district's federal consolidation entitlement programs application shown in Exhibit 6-5, elementary schools' percentage of students from low-income families range from 47.55 to 62.23. Yet, of the division's 2,250 PreK-5 students reported in membership in the 2005-06 Consolidated application, 502 (22.3 percent) receive Title I services this year. Consequently, when Title I students are prioritized according to Needs Assessments based on SOL scores, non-mastery of SOL objectives, PALS test performance, report card objectives, teachers' recommendations, and other factors, there is a likelihood that eligible students who could benefit from Title I resources cannot access them.

EXHIBIT 6-8
SMYTH COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN POVERTY
2004-05

SCHOOL	GRADE SPAN	TOTAL STUDENTS IN ATTENDANCE ZONE	STUDENTS FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES	PERCENTAGE
Marion Primary	PK-2	414	258	62.23
Saltville Elementary	PK-5	251	149	59.36
Rich Valley Elementary	PK-5	184	99	53.80
Atkins Elementary	PK-5	184	99	53.80
Marion Intermediate	3-5	475	254	53.47
Sugar Grove Combined	K-8	220	107	48.64
Chilhowie Elementary	PK-5	654	311	47.55

Source: Smyth County 2004-05 Consolidated Federal Application, November 2005.

Excluding Pre-K Title I personnel, six full-time Title I funded teachers tutor math for Title I students in the division's seven elementary schools. An additional four Title I funded teachers work with students in both math and reading at two other schools. Five teachers teach reading in three elementary schools. That totals 14.5 Title I funded teachers who supplement instruction for 502 students in the division's seven elementary schools. An additional eight teaching positions are funded by the division to provide either reading or math instruction to remaining K-5 students.

As the program is currently delivered, Title I instruction is provided in a replacement model for both reading and math. Those teachers serve a maximum of 34 students daily, according to the 2005-06 Consolidated Application. One of the division's expressed approaches to reaching its goal of alignment of resources in its Six Year Plan is a low pupil to teacher ratio. Leaders are currently making projections for next year's teacher needs. Using teachers in this model provides a pupil to teacher ratio of 1:6.8. If the division were to consider extending the use of these teachers to all students in each school, there could be two potential benefits that would reach beyond service to Title I identified students. Continuing to work with low-performing students in a replacement model that extended to students other than those ranked for eligibility for Title I services would allow the teachers to work in small groups with students identified to need work on specific skills as well as those currently eligible for Title I services. It would also bolster

the corps from 14 teachers to 22 who would serve all students needing assistance. Using an inclusionary model in working with teachers throughout the schools could also contribute to lowered pupil to teacher ratios during instruction and benefit both Title I and non-Title I identified students, as well. By expanding the inclusion model beyond special education teachers to Title I teachers, more teachers would have the opportunity to see and experience the powers of inclusion for them as professionals as well as for their students, and more students would benefit from multiple teachers' styles and knowledge.

In school systems and classes where special education and regular education teachers collaborate, instructional strategies for both teachers are expanded with all students benefiting. When collaboration moves to co-teaching between regular and special education students, benefits such as total integration of special education students into regular education classes even result in inability to discern special education students from regular education students. The same benefits would also accrue to non-special education students who are taught using collaborative teaching models.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-8:

Examine the flexibility offered by using Title I and other federal funds to support increased proficiency among all students through provision of schoolwide Title I programs.

Benefits of moving to a schoolwide delivery model are the use of funds for raising the proficiency level of all students in eligible schools as noted in the Title I handbook, a reduction in record-keeping focused on only Title I identified students, and a move toward heightened levels of inclusion of all students. Implementing this recommendation could lead to increased student achievement and growth in teacher skills, knowledge, and practice.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

6.2.1 *Career and Technology Education*

FINDING

The Smyth Career and Technology Center (CTC) has experienced a metamorphosis in its physical plant, programs, and impact on SCPS students over the past five years. Once on the verge of closing, it now has renewed division commitment, and has undergone extensive improvements and recovered vitality. Much of the equipment was in disrepair and disuse, but with a committed principal, additional teachers, and division leaders, they have been renovated and augmented with new computerized resources. Perkins funds, local business donations, and grant funds have supported renovations and updates of equipment. The school serves as a community center: while the public forum during the site visit was held there, two other events were also occurring at the CTC. The school's improvement plan reflects a vision with specific strategies identified to achieve it.

Over the years, some outdated programs have been deleted and others added that are more closely tied to labor projections. Project Lead the Way, a pre-engineering program has been added and used as a recruitment tool for under-represented female students. Middle schools all now have a Gateway pre-engineering program so that there is a seamless 6-12 grade pre-engineering program for students in all geographic areas of the county. Other middle and high school career and technical courses are also offered in division schools. As a means of recruiting other new students to the center, an exploratory block for ninth grade students exposes them to courses the first forty-five minutes of the day after which they are transported back to their home schools. Those "pathways" classes take place simultaneously with other classes so that ninth grade students observe more advanced learning related to their exploratory course. Some even move from exploratory classes into that class in the same semester. The assistant principal also teaches classes at one of the high schools as a bridge to the CTC's programs.

Classes are taught in 75 minute blocks in the morning and afternoon. Because Marion High's classes are only 50 minutes, all of the students who could potentially attend are not able to because of conflicts with that schedule, or, if they do, lose instructional time at either end in travel. This is especially true for those in 45 minute exploratory classes.

Current enrollment at the CTC is 320 and has hovered around that number for the past three years. Figures from last year show that program completion rates of students in the division's CTC programs were 12 percent at both Northwood and Chilhowie High Schools, 3.6 percent at Marion Senior High, and 16 percent at the CTC. Exploratory classes, close relations with principals and guidance counselors, and the provision of CDs to students about programs before enrolling for exploratory courses are steps taken to lead to program completion. Without a guidance counselor at the school, recruitment relies on these strategies.

Strides in outreach to students from all walks of life, not only traditional "vocational track" students are evidenced in one school's valedictorian and salutatorian attending last year and a Virginia Tech/Marion Senior graduate's attributing his post-graduation job success to drafting classes he took at CTC that led him to success in engineering.

The principal of the CTC is also the Director of Vocational Education, meeting with teachers in other schools at the beginning of the year and at times throughout the year depending on in-service schedules. Due to responsibilities at the CTC, he observed that he did not spend as much time with teachers at other schools as he would like. He does ask that they, as well as the entire program, have their own program advisory committees. The advisory committee has been active in suggesting new courses, encouraging the addition of a Work Keys lab for job skills assessment as well as Kuder labs in middle and high schools for students to learn their career interests. A new grant-funded career coach will begin in January serving as a liaison between the schools and local employers.

One parent noted in the public forum that "Vocational career education needs to be fully funded." Even though there has been an improvement, the satellite programs at the individual schools should be evaluated for equipment, resources, and technology resources. Many programs have outdated or no equipment and several classrooms have

no Internet access. If the county is trying to develop a high tech workforce, the providers need to have 'industry' standard equipment."

COMMENDATION

Smyth County is commended on its commitment to creating opportunities for students of all abilities and interests to investigate and experience hands-on learning through career and technical courses tied to local employment needs.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-9:

Expand discussion of the entire Career and Technology/Technical Education programs in SCPS schools in appropriate venues.

This recommendation includes formal discussions at CTE Advisory Committee meetings at all levels. It also necessitates scheduling times for career and technical teachers and guidance counselors to meet at more frequent intervals throughout the year to discuss and plan program expansion and updating. Finally, it dictates that the Vocational Director/Principal of the CTC spend more time in direct communications with career and technical staff across the division. With the return of the assistant principal at the CTC to full-time assignment at the school, this should be a priority consideration. All career and tech teachers in the division should provide input to discussions on program needs, student recruitment issues, issues impacting program completion rates, and be apprised of important information on a regular schedule. The perspective of all teachers is critical for the vitality of any program and for seamless movement and progress of students from middle and high schools to the center.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

6.3   *Use of Data for Instructional Purposes*

A critical task that curriculum coordinators and supervisors should be able to perform is to disaggregate and analyze student performance data provided after SOL testing for decisions about staff development, work with individual teachers, grade levels, departments and principals, and other division staff. Regular examination of data can guide program and policy decisions and allow divisions to better align expectations with actions most likely to garner desired outcomes.

FINDING

Smyth County administrators recognize the importance of collecting and analyzing data in their commitment specified in their Six-Year Plan to continuous improvement and their noting the need to "establish a data-driven decision making process" and "use data on student achievement to set priorities for allocating resources." Although there has been a push to use data as the basis for decisions and instructional planning within the division, reports reflect that use is not consistent. The division has made a good faith effort to

inculcate the use of data for decision-making into school and division practices and to provide some training to support that goal. Some principals have made data analysis a priority for grade level and department discussions; however, professional development needs to be more uniform and extend consistently to the teacher level in order for them to comprehend the benefits to them and their students of their regularly collecting and analyzing performance data even from their own constructed tests. Procedures need to be in place that systematize and support faculty with data analysis and regular, ongoing examination of student performance and program data as well. Despite intentions, data disks are currently not disseminated fully and therefore not utilized for school and division decisions. Consequently, some administrators and teachers use data for instructional decisions and some do not. When the division fulfills its intention of consistent, ongoing use of data as a basis for decision making, ongoing changes can be made in teacher practice and program improvement, resulting in continuous, customized instructional changes benefiting individual students as well as the student population as a whole.

The desired goal is that common sets of activities will be developed at schools to the level of performance by item so that teachers base decisions such as student grouping as well as enrichment and remediation on student performance data. In the past, having had extensive experience in data disaggregation and analysis, the Director of Elementary Education in conjunction with the Director of Technology have created CDs with school data disaggregated. They have taken them to individual schools for examination and discussion. Principals have been trained in accessing data by student subgroup from the web as well as understanding available information. However, this year, the elementary director is only providing that data to elementary schools. One means the elementary director has used has been assignment of people working on their administrative practicums to disaggregate and explain data. Others stated that they had tried to get data to the schools, but from there, it depends on individual principals to use it for instructional purposes. At the division level, administrators have tried to reinforce the importance of its use to identify subgroups that are or are not progressing. The assistant superintendent and Director of Elementary or Secondary Education met with each principal to review their AYP data and then asked principals to make time to discuss the AYP data with their staffs. The Director of Federal Programs regularly visits schools and classes discussing specific student performance issues of PreK and Title I students using spreadsheets that detail student success in specific strands and subjects.

SCPS, like many other Virginia divisions, is also using Flanagan Tests for Higher Standards for procurement of periodic data as a means of instigating instructional changes throughout the school year. They have also begun division-wide use of the Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test as an assessment of math knowledge and skills for middle school. This practice has enabled principals to open the gates of access to algebra to students who would traditionally not have had that opportunity. One middle school principal identifies students and even schedules them according to data. Departments are also expected to conduct item analyses to understand better student strengths and gaps and to make instructional decisions. However, understanding of the power of data and its potential uses for making those decisions was repeatedly noted by personnel interviewed to be dependent upon individuals and not monitored for consistency. The pervasive belief expressed was that the division can and should be doing more.

The Special Education Department, using the Virginia data disaggregator to examine the achievement of its students, and interviewees noted that they had been able to determine improvements. Using that system, they were able to quantify the number of students who were meeting expectations and determined that more than 50 percent of SCPS Special Education students were passing, with some in the advanced proficient range. It also provided information they used for remediation to assist students in bridging learning gaps. The director reported some problems with the change to the Educational Information Management System (EIMS) but division personnel state that the same information is available through EIMS as long as the disability codes have been correctly entered on the test forms.

Best practices support the analysis of data by educators throughout the school system to continually examine the results of practice, instruction, programs, and curricular materials so that ongoing changes can be made and that each student's learning needs are constantly addressed. This practice keeps teachers and administrators focused on tailoring educational opportunities for student strengths and weaknesses. When they examine all sources of data from homework to class and weekly assignments and assessments as well as standardized and benchmark tests, instead of narrowing the curriculum and instruction in response to high-stakes testing, the range of instructional practices is broadened to promote student participation and learning.

Virginia's literature on effective practices underscores the importance of data analysis in stating:

> Teachers in successful schools participate in staff development activities to develop sound assessment tools. Student academic progress is monitored both formally and informally using a variety of assessment strategies. Interventions for students are designed based on these assessments. In successful schools students are taught the testing and scoring system to be used to evaluate their progress. There is a clear system in place for collecting, summarizing and reporting student achievement information based on the assessments.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County recognizes that high expectations lead to high student achievement in its administration of the Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test to all middle school students and its desire for data-based decision making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 6-10:

Extend efforts to raise expectations for students beyond those who are high performing by examining other means of accelerating curriculum and offering challenging academic content to others universally as a part of the curriculum mapping process.

In its algebra readiness testing of all entering middle school students, the division has demonstrated its belief that a broader range of students than those traditionally offered advanced academic opportunities is capable of meeting higher expectations. Examining

practices that other Virginia divisions have undertaken to expand access to higher levels of curriculum would provide information about practices and curricula that could be adapted for SCPS students. The Winchester City Schools have investigated practices in other Virginia schools to raise academic expectations for a larger group of students. They expect all middle school students to at least have the chance to take and pass Algebra I (and some are even taking, Geometry, and Algebra ll). They have found that extending access to more students has not affected their students' passing rates on SOL tests. They have taken other steps in elementary math instruction as well that may be informative for Smyth County.

The ACT College Readiness Report contains graphs that show the relationship between rigorous course-taking sequences for students as the greatest factor on ACT performance and college readiness. By making Algebra and Geometry available to students earlier in their school experiences, the division will open opportunities for a greater number of students to succeed in college.

Recommendation 6-11:

Develop procedures to move data analysis to the school and classroom level and provide teacher support and a level of monitoring to ensure follow-through and keep discussion of data at the forefront of administrative discussions.

This strategy should result in teachers and principals being more aware of individual and student groups' needs and foster a desire for them to gain additional skills and knowledge to meet them. When training is universal and monitoring of data collection and analysis becomes embedded in system processes, the division will have affected a continuous improvement process for instruction and programs. The process, when aligned fully across the division, holds promise to help the division reach the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal of proficiency for all students.

Division leaders noted that principals were astute regarding instruction, curriculum, and data analysis. Scheduling the analysis and discussion of student performance trends across elementary and secondary grades as a topic at principals' meetings will:

- create an insight among all division administrators into strengths;

- areas of need, and resources available in other division schools;

- help to create a cohesive approach to identification and delivery of professional development;

- identify individual and groups of teachers and students needing additional support; and

- strategies to group students with similar needs for remediation or enrichment across grade level and teachers with strengths can be used as resources for those needing additional assistance.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of these recommendations can be accomplished with existing resources.

6.3.1 **_Annual Yearly Progress, Standards of Learning Performance, and State_** **_Accreditation_**

FINDING

Information contained in AYP, SOL, and accreditation documents can serve as a rich source of data that can lead to development of strategies to address indicators such as attendance and student participation in testing as well as academic factors. In 2004-05, data provided to MGT showed that subgroups of students at two elementary and two middle schools did not meet attendance expectations for adequate yearly progress (AYP). In three cases, the subgroups were Students With Disabilities (SWD) which is also the subgroup whose performance kept the division from meeting AYP as a whole for the 2004-05 school year. At two schools, Limited English Proficient (LEP) students' and Disadvantaged students' attendance also did not meet expectations. Another concern in the 2004-05 AYP report was the participation rate of students in testing, whether "current" or "Three-Year." In many schools, over the prior three years, numbers of SWD were too small to be reportable, but this does not negate the importance of being vigilant about their participation in testing and their attendance rates. In three schools, the participation rate of both SWD and Disadvantaged students was lower than the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO), in one of them for two subjects. In another two schools, the participation rate of SWD did not meet AMO and in a final school, Disadvantaged students did not. Attendance and participation remained concerns in the 2005-06 school year AYP report as did the performance of specific subgroups, largely of minorities of students. Attendance is an issue that can be addressed by all school staffs throughout the year and should not be an area where a school's students do not meet expectations. Similarly, schools should have an element of control over the number of students in each subgroup who participate in tests.

An examination of Spring 2004 SOL performance in schools in SCPS shows that there are some subjects in which students performed at extremely high rates at one or more schools and extremely low rates at others. Such data holds a wealth of information that, when used, can benefit teachers and students across the division. This should be a source of the curriculum mapping discussion that is planned to take place. It should also serve as a resource for using practices that are proving effective in some division schools to raise student achievement in the same and/or other subjects at other schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-12:

Use student performance data to identify teachers, grades, or departments where students are learning at high levels, and use those personnel as resources to disseminate and teach effective practices at other schools throughout the division.

Data analysis can do far more than inform individual teachers. It can help in identifying best practices taking place in division schools so that they can be promulgated throughout all division schools. Leaders should create opportunities for teachers to visit classrooms and present their best practices to other faculties and such practices within the division should be consistently added to the division's website for broad dissemination.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

6.3.2 *Program Evaluation*

Another essential use of data is for making programmatic revisions, decisions about the effectiveness of processes and programs that have been initiated, and elimination of those that are not rendering the desired results. All of that information allows the division to target its resources toward expenditures and energies that have the highest likelihood of achieving its desired results.

FINDING

Requested documents that provide evidence of program evaluations reveal that few such documents exist in SCPS. Only one monitoring report was provided, a Special Education Program Monitoring Report. Interviewees substantiated the paucity of evaluative processes used systematically in the division. The cover sheet for the request had "N/A" noted with respect to availability of evaluation reports. Without a regular examination of the results of practices and programs throughout the school year or program period, ineffective strategies can be continued without accruing the benefits for which they were initiated and resources were expended. In contrast, when interim, systematic scrutiny occurs, adjustments can be made throughout implementation so that the program is implemented with fidelity and, therefore, the desired results for students are likely to occur.

The SCPS Six-Year Plan reflects an understanding of the part that evaluation plays in the provision of quality service as a function of quality education and states that "evaluation instruments will be used to measure the quality and effectiveness of programs, activities, and support for student achievement." In school systems that are committed to continuous improvement, programs are identified for systematic examination, and the systems provide for formative and summative evaluations to be performed on a rotating schedule. Those processes ensure that programs are meeting actual current educational needs and purposes for which the initiatives were undertaken and that interim and end-of-year examinations give feedback on the effectiveness of processes and program impact. With that data, adjustments can be made throughout implementation to continually focus resources on intended outcomes. Furthermore, evaluations provide information that is useful in making determinations regarding continuation, expansion, or termination of ineffective programs and practices. Upon adoption and implementation of new programs, effective organizations also include as a fundamental part of program planning, evaluative processes that cycle information to administration regarding ongoing effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-13:

Assign responsibility for program evaluation to the proposed Director of Assessment, School Improvement and Evaluation; identify programs to be evaluated for effectiveness; and establish a schedule for examination of a set number each school year.

Once a cycle of program evaluation is undertaken, the division will have a means by which to be sure that its resources, both fiscal and human, are being expended to garner the results for which they were initiated. It can then be certain that it is targeting efforts into actions that are meeting the division's priority goals. Additionally, procedures that track the success of students in programs over time should also be included to determine program effectiveness and furnish data that can be used for program revision. The division's apparent desire is for data to become an underpinning of division, school and classroom instructional decision making. Similarly, it can inform decisions about the programs that support classroom instruction and assist division leadership in budgeting, staffing, programmatic, and even policy decisions. Reporting program evaluations to the board would provide an additional level of accountability. When evaluation becomes an integral part of program adoption, the division can be certain that its resources are channeled toward its intended impact on student performance and teacher efficacy.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

6.4   *School Improvement*

School improvement plans increasingly are shaping strategic changes at schools and districts. In June, 2005, the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA issued a policy report entitled: *School Improvement Planning: What's Missing?* That report stressed that school improvement planning guides tend to ignore or marginalize the ways in which schools address critical factors interfering with learning and teaching. The report called for schools to reframe school improvement policy to redress this deficiency.

FINDING

The school improvement process in Smyth County is overseen by the assistant superintendent for instruction. He uses the annual school plans as a basis for discussion of student performance data relative to school actions and initiatives; however, school improvement is one of a myriad of other responsibilities of that position. In conjunction with school improvement, the assistant superintendent is also in charge of academic reviews for the Commonwealth. Division leaders have worked with principals to examine what was accomplished with prior plans and correlate new goals with those achievements. They have also created a high degree of public accountability by having each school present its plan to the school board.

Although three middle schools are accredited this year, all four went through the review process and stated that it was a learning process that all principals should experience.

However, personnel interviewed from the middle school that did not meet accreditation for the past two years, when asked, stated frankly that they had received no additional resources or support from the central office to ameliorate their needs.

The division provided sample school improvement plans for 2005-06 from schools across the division that showed many commonalities in format and content, but some disparities as well. The majority of them use the same format, explicitly identifying baseline data from which progress will be measured and targeted content areas and specific SOL goals, as well as the source of the recommendation. Charts in most plans show:

- measurable objectives related to the target area;

- strategies for meeting the objective;

- action codes (e.g., student academic improvement, instructional time);

- Resources needed;

- Evidence of implementation of strategies;

- Person(s) responsible; and

- Projected timeframe.

All plans do not, however, have measurable goals or objectives, thus, success would be difficult to assess. Some contain additional information such as staff development calendar, graphs of longitudinal student SOL data by grade and subject, and/or page(s) describing the school's strengths, target areas for improvement, and strategies for improvement. Contrasts observed between elements of plans are:

- Responsibility is very specifically assigned to individuals in Saltville Elementary and to specific grade levels in Sugar Grove while others denote generally "classroom teachers;"

- Some plans are easy to read with numbers and bullets and therefore, easy to reference as guiding documents for change while others do not even have spaces between each objective, strategy, or source of evidence, so are not only difficult to read, but also likely not to be used to guide reform;

- A few plans have specific boxes that clearly relate objectives to strategies, resources, evidence, responsible party and projected time frame while others include lengthy lists in each column without apparent relationships between each element;

- Some focus on only a few essential strategies, making achievement probable while others' extensive lists are so lengthy they are not focused, or make achievement seem overwhelming. For example, in

one plan, a single objective has 22 strategies listed, 16 resources, and 23 identified implementation evidences;

■ Much of the "evidence of implementation" is general such as improved PALS/SOL scores or attendance and does not connote the impact of implementation, but only documentation that something took place rather than its quality and specific impact on student learning;

■ Many projected timeframes are year-long, precluding the ability to examine progress toward goal achievement and make mid-year adjustments to heighten success;

■ One plan has a timeline, but it is difficult to know if it is one of several years or specific dates and months (e.g. 8/03-5/08). Including timelines for interim benchmarks is a noteworthy inclusion if that is what was meant; and

■ Some baseline data specifically note the percent of students meeting or exceeding benchmarks from which progress can be measured and relate the goal to an identified SOL score so that progress can be measured. However, in other plans, goals that should be related to baseline data and therefore, measurable, are generally stated (e.g. "to improve students' ability to read and comprehend material). Others do not state goals at all in the area for that element.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County is commended on making school improvement a priority basis for school reform by relating it to data and scheduling board reports for each school.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-14:

Revise the school improvement plan format for simplicity and uniformity and include interim timelines and parameters that provide schools a tool they can use to chart progress toward specific identified goals.

Assign responsibility for oversight and monitoring of school improvement plans to the proposed position of Director of Assessment, School Improvement, and Evaluation. When plans are simplified with specific expectations for schools to focus on a few, important goals, they are likely to be used as instruments for change. Provisions should include:

■ requiring that schools focus on only two or three critical areas for improvement,

■ specifically identifying baseline data that is measurable,

- requiring that accountability be specifically assigned to individuals, departments, or grade levels,

- define improvement goals related to those data-based needs,

- include interim benchmark timelines, and

- a format that easily relates all elements of a specific goal and objectives to each other so is easy to use and, therefore, achieve.

Action plans that are focused on the most critical needs of a school, in which strategies are thoughtfully related to those needs and progress can be measured from a specific mark to a definite result, make their realization not only likely but also give participants hope of success. Monitoring accountability is easy when specific individuals or groups are identified as responsible. Similarly, people are more likely to assume that responsibility when they are specifically assigned public responsibility.

With the division's intention of becoming data-based, school improvement plans should be rooted in data as well. The position most logical to hold responsibility for them, therefore, is the person responsible for the division's student performance data analysis and use. By assigning responsibility for school improvement to that position, the division will merge two critical and related responsibilities in one position and will ensure that student performance data is the driving force underlying school reform in its schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

COMMENDATION

The SCPS used the academic review process as a means of inculcating in principals an understanding of elements that contribute to school and student success.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-15:

Use principals who participated in the review process as leaders in replicating the experience for other principals in the division.

Peers have great credibility among principals. Those who have experienced the review process themselves and found it beneficial will serve as strong, positive emissaries of its merits to other principals and convey the potential benefits and associated knowledge to their fellow SCPS principals.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

6.5   Instructional Professional Development

Staff development will be discussed both in this chapter and in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 encompasses discussion of the administration, budget, staffing, delivery system and documentation processes. This chapter will discuss its strengths and needs in terms of preparation of highly qualified teachers for the SCPS schools. Research has demonstrated that, to be effective, staff development must be relevant and supported over time to be sustained and to make an impact on teacher practice. NCLB recommends that it be research-based to develop a teacher corps that is highly qualified. Additionally, training needs to be aligned with state standards and local student needs.

FINDING

Until this year according to personnel interviewed, the division has not provided either extensive professional development related to instruction, nor have schools had a specific allocation to conduct their own. A new focus has been placed on staff development at the school and administrative levels. Most of the staff development in the past either took place in the summer, especially relating to technology, or was held in August. Principals report that there is still little coordination from the division level, but that some of them have joined together pooling their resources to provide professional growth opportunities for their teachers on common needs. Principals have been appreciative of the opportunity to provide training and taken the initiative to see that their teachers receive that which they, as school leaders, feel is essential for their students.

SCPS employs science and math lead teachers at the elementary through eighth grade to provide professional development to teachers and to participate in it themselves. They are required this year to report back after training or conferences so that others can benefit from their learning experiences. They hold monthly meetings in which they often participate in training. Also this year, administrators have begun participating in book talks at grade levels and in feeder patterns for schools. This gives principals who share students opportunities for professional dialogue regarding topics that cross grade lines. It also reinforces the notion subscribed to in successful schools of a school-wide focus on expectations for achievement.

COMMENDATION

Division leadership has taken a novel approach to book studies by offering them in school feeder patterns as well as grade level principal meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-16:

Assign coordination of instructional professional development to the proposed Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

In order for schools and the division to realize economies of scale relative to professional development and to ensure that schools capitalize on the multitude of training available at no charge, one person at the central office must be responsible for awareness of resources and coordination of training. Many aspects of coordination can be conducted

by clerical support when that individual is assigned one, but this should be done centrally.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

7.0   SPECIAL PROGRAMS

7.0 SPECIAL PROGRAMS

This section reviews the organizational structure of Special Programs in the Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS). Special Programs are those programs that provide supplemental or extended support for students and their families and enhance student performance and academic achievement. Besides special education, they include programs for at-risk students, preschool education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Responsibility for these programs is shared among several administrators. The Director of special education and Coordinator of special education oversee and coordinate special education. The ESL Coordinator reports to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services is the administrator at the division level responsible for oversight and implementation of other special programs and support services including guidance, student services, and alternative education. special education is provided to supplement, accommodate, or modify the general academic course of study and is intended to provide adequate support to ensure the academic success of students with disabilities. The pupil personnel role is to provide supplemental or extended support for students and their families that contribute to enhanced student performance and academic achievement.

This chapter provides a summary of the delivery and evaluation of services to students receiving special services in the Smyth County Public Schools. The four major sections of this chapter are:

  7.1   Special Education
  7.2   Programs for At-Risk Students
  7.3   Remediation
  7.4   English for Speakers of Other Languages

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The organizational structure of the SCPS with respect to special education includes the Director and a Coordinator of special education as well as psychologists, social workers, nurses, and speech therapists at the division level. The Director of special education works with the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the assistant superintendent to coordinate instruction, curriculum and staff development to integrate special education, support services, and regular education. The Director of Pupil Personnel works closely with staff at the Teaching Alternative Program (TAP) Center, principals, and community representatives to meet students' educational needs in order to keep them in school and prepare them for success upon graduation whichever educational route they choose.

Recommendations contained in this chapter relate to creating procedures and monitoring processes to ensure that the division's goals relating to students with special needs are met. Key suggestions that should assist the division in achieving a seamless service delivery include:

  ■ Include special education teachers in curriculum mapping and training that is provided for regular education teachers;

- Address the shortage of speech language therapists by informing parents of steps the division has taken and joining other divisions with similar challenges to bring a college program to the area;

- Expand Medicaid billing to render additional resources for the division;

- Assign the new workforce coordinator responsibility to work with special education students in addition to those in regular programs;

- Use the preschool pilot inclusion program as a source of best practices for use in classes across the division; and

- Expand parent outreach in all schools.

INTRODUCTION

The Smyth County Public Schools special programs all fall under the umbrella of the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. The primary special programs encompass special education, alternative programs, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and preschool. This chapter discusses services provided in each area with worthy practices that deserve commendation being noted as well as recommendations to build upon those procedures in order to continue to improve service to SCPS students in special programs. The recommendations relate to creating structures and functions that strengthen division plans to better coordinate and plan tasks that will provide a more cohesive support system for students with special needs in regular as well as special education classes. Key suggestions that should assist the division in achieving a more seamless service delivery include:

7.1 *Special Education*

The Office of Special Education directly aligns with other supplemental programs under the supervision of the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. These programs and services are related to supplementing, accommodating, or modifying the general academic course of study and are channeled toward ensuring the academic success of students with disabilities. Reporting to the Director are:

- the Coordinator of special education

- one occupational therapist

- one occupational therapist aide

- one physical therapist

- two physical therapist aides

- three psychologists

- one social worker

- four speech and language therapists, including one vacancy and another anticipated

FINDING

Concerns expressed during the diagnostic visit regarding special education were:

- staff development needs regarding inclusion;

- moving to more inclusive models – there is a need to determine best program(s) for Smyth County;

- The organization of special education delivery. The division currently utilizes a large number of aides and is working toward an inclusion model, but is not fully implemented;

- more consistency in special education programs;

- development of a Pre-K model; and

- number of identified students seems high.

Survey responses by SCPS personnel and reflect that 43 percent of teachers and administrators believe that coordination of those programs is *Adequate* to *Outstanding.* This was in contrast to 50 percent of Principals who felt those programs were in *Need of Some* or *Major Improvement.* With respect to student services 84 percent of principals, 71 percent of central office administrators, and 67 percent of teachers *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed* that, "Sufficient student services are provided in this school division (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).

Special education students in SCPS with more severe disabilities are served in self-contained classes. Currently, 75 of 906 special education students (including speech) are taught in self-contained classes. Some are included, to an extent, in mainstream classrooms. Personnel interviewed stated that principals tried to integrate special education students into regular classes as much as possible and sought resources to support their inclusion. Prior to the Special Education Director's taking his position three years ago, the division had begun an effort to integrate special education students into regular education classes. One elementary school, Chilhowie, pioneered inclusion because of the principal's previous experience. In the past two years, expansion has been promoted through discussion among administrators of the benefits, sharing research that supported inclusion, and explanations of different models being provided. From those initial discussions, encouragement has expanded through sending teams of regular and special education teachers to conferences together to see the spectrum of practices and understand how different models fit the needs of different students. The director has urged principals to send their most resistant teachers for attendance and collaboration with special education teachers. Interviewees reported that division high schools had come a long way, although they had the furthest to progress. Middle schools were already using inclusion in some content areas.

One of the greatest impediments to extension and success is the issue of joint planning time between special education and regular education teachers. To provide principals

with strategies to overcome that barrier, the director has made presentations to principals concerning creative ways to find time during the day, such as hiring roving substitutes or using aides to supervise during assemblies, so that teachers have time for collaboration.

Training has been offered to administrators, regular education and special education teachers regarding topics related to inclusion, in addition to the efforts that the Director has made to send teams of regular and special education teachers to learn about inclusive models. Taking the size of the division into consideration, several practices have also been adopted to support the expansion of inclusion in division schools. The Commonwealth has offered training in inclusion in the Smyth geographic area. Principals were encouraged strongly to attend so that they would understand inclusive models and instructional techniques as well as administrative support and resources that would be needed for effective implementation.

In order to facilitate the use of accommodations for special education students, the division has developed an "IEP at a Glance" document. Aware that teachers do not have time to read full IEPs on the students in their classes, they receive an "IEP at a Glance" on each student who will be in their classes. The document incorporates modifications the student needs in specific subject area, asks both teachers to discuss how to provide the accommodations and what they mean to the regular classroom teacher. Division-wide, principals have been asked to set aside time during pre-planning for collaborative discussions between regular and special education teachers for those discussions. Principals were also asked to have section meetings when faculties meet so that special education teachers have time to talk to teachers in specific subject sections about meeting individual students' needs and instructional strategies that are effective in making accommodations. Another strategy the division has promoted is, after spring pre-registration is completed, teachers get together to discuss student strengths and weaknesses. This is particularly valuable at the high school level where students have many teachers and consequently less opportunity to know teachers, and vice versa, as they do in the division's small elementary schools. To date, these requests have been expected to take place at schools across the county without requirements per se or monitoring to ensure that they have, in fact, occurred.

In successful school systems and classes where special education and regular education teachers collaborate, instructional strategies for both teachers are expanded with all students benefiting. When collaboration moves to co-teaching between regular and special education students, benefits such as total integration of special education students into regular education classes even result in inability to discern special education students from regular education students. Successful schools examine scheduling options and creatively allocate time for teachers to focus on instruction. Time is set aside for collaboration and planning among teachers within subject areas, grade levels, and across instructional responsibilities.

COMMENDATION

The Special Education Department has actively promoted creative inclusion strategies among administrators and teachers in SCPS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 7-1:

Involve special education teachers systematically in curriculum mapping efforts, training opportunities for regular education teachers, and ensure that they have all content materials to fully support inclusion.

For inclusion to benefit students, both special education and regular education teachers must be equal partners in the content-based as well as skill and social education of special education students. For that to happen, they must learn together and from each other and collaboratively develop strategies and understand teaching techniques as well as curricular materials. A strategy that Dinwiddie County (VA) has used to heighten inclusionary techniques in its schools was creation of a Collaborative Task Force with the goal of every school having a collaborative model. In its first meeting, participants discussed such issues as requisite paraprofessional staff development, the paucity of co-planning time between inclusion teachers, scheduling, needed differentiation and resources and how to introduce the concept to reluctant teachers. All special education teachers, too, have all instructional materials that regular teachers do so that they fully understand and can access curricular content materials.

Recommendation 7-2:

Develop feedback processes that ensure that requested time and actions at schools are being devoted to teacher discussion of accommodation strategies and that individual student needs are well-communicated and understood by all teachers serving them.

By devising informal means of keeping the issue of accommodations and inclusion before teachers and administrators, the division will not only heighten awareness of the importance it places on inclusion in its classes, but will add an element of accountability without mandated monitoring. One simple strategy might be an item on the agenda of principals' meetings following requested set-side times that would allow principals to share ideas and report on their schools' progress. This would also provide awareness on their part of classes to visit and teachers who could serve as resources for their own teachers. Another more formal means of ensuring that principals understand and systematically support inclusion in their schools' classes would be to add an item related to inclusive practices on the newly developing evaluation instruments.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of these recommendations can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Immediately upon taking over, the Director of Special Education recognized a possible over-identification of students placed in SCPS's special education programs. Twenty percent of the division's students were in special education programs. In order to alleviate placement of students who did not need direct services, he instituted the following procedures to ensure consistency of consideration of eligibility:

- determination of the existence of a severe discrepancy between the student's ability and achievement of one and one-half standard deviation;

- the special education referral document has a checklist specifying both instructional and behavioral concerns and requires a review of existing educational records and data that have been reviewed by the IEP Team. They include:

  – previous evaluations and assessments;

  – health data;

  – attendance record;

  – discipline record;

  – transfer record;

  – work samples;

  – leading questions regarding behaviors that may indicate hearing or vision problems; and

  – an array of pre-referral interventions for the teacher to check that have taken place in the regular classroom;

- A written list of steps to be taken for new referrals by schools is widely disseminated for use by child study teams and the special education lead teachers who lead those teams, generally by grade level; and

- The director purchased copies of a Pre-Referral Intervention Manual published by Hawthorne Educational Services for all principals to have as a resource.

Additionally, the coordinator attends most eligibility meetings and occasionally the director attends, when challenging issues are anticipated.

Since initiating these procedures last year, enrollment in special education has decreased from 940 to 906.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County has created accountability procedures to ensure that only students with bona fide learning disabilities are eligible for services and placed in special education classes, allowing the division to expend its resources on those students most deserving of services and allowing others to be served with their peers in less restrictive environments.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-3:

Take measures to ensure that regular classroom teachers have the skills and knowledge to provide accommodations and differentiate instruction for special needs students in their classes.

Teachers of special education students will benefit from professional development on differentiated instruction that not only teaches skills and strategies, but also supports learning with follow-up opportunities for practice, discussion, and coaching. Developing schedules that carve out time for collaborative planning between teachers who share students will help individualize all instruction for students and guide decisions regarding grouping. This will create a mentoring program for new teachers so that they that they become familiar with inclusion and intervention strategies to use with students with special needs. This could then be added as an item on teachers' and administrators' annual evaluations regarding the use or monitoring of inclusive practices in order to provide a level of accountability that will underscore the use of inclusive practices.

When collaboration moves to co-teaching between regular and special education students, benefits such as total integration of special education students into regular education classes may even result in the inability to discern special education students from regular education students.

One means of creating unity of purpose that some successful schools have used is creating cross-curricular study groups that choose proficiencies to target for student improvement and research best practices for improving that skill. Each teacher or team could then develop an action research plan, establish baseline data for students, incorporate research into practice, plan assessments and measure and analyze results. Questions are then asked: did we learn it? Did we implement it? Did it make a difference for students?

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Data from the Virginia Department of Education classifies areas of exceptionality by the number of students with the disability and percentage of the total special education population that each exceptionality represents. Exhibit 7-1 shows that the majority of students with disabilities in SCPS are identified as Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) with

385 (46.2%) reported. As in many other divisions, the second most prevalent disability identified in SCPS is Speech/Language with 111 (24.4%) students. Following in prevalence are Mental Retardation with 83 students (9.9%) and Developmentally Delayed with 52 (6.2%).

To ensure that students who are referred for placement in special education classes are appropriately identified, either the Director or Coordinator of special education attends all eligibility meetings and adheres strictly to eligibility criteria for each disability. In each of those meetings, participants use checklists that delineate the characteristics of each disability so that all can see and collaboratively determine eligibility based on those criteria. One of them also attends each initial Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meeting to ensure that accommodations that are discussed and included in those plans are essential for meeting the individual student's educational needs.

Beyond attendance at eligibility meetings and initial IEPs, the Director and Coordinator have divided the SCPS schools between themselves for direct service. Each has a designated number of schools for which they are responsible for teacher and administrative support, consultative service.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997 mandates that special education services be provided to students with disabilities in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible, based on the child's needs and not his/her disability.

EXHIBIT 7-1
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS BY DISABILITY
DECEMBER 1, 2001 STUDENT DATA REPORT

EXCEPTIONALITY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATION
Mental Retardation	83	9.9%
Hearing Impaired	5	0.6%
Speech/Language	204	24.4%
Visually Impaired	1	0.1%
Emotional Disturbed	24	2.8%
Orthopedically Impaired	4	0.4%
Other Health Impaired	57	6.8%
Specific Learning Disability	385	46.2%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Multi-Disabled	14	1.7%
Traumatic Brain Injury	2	0.2%
Autistic	0	0.0%
Developmentally Delayed	52	6.2%
Severe Disabilities	2	0.2%
TOTAL STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	**833**	**100%**

Source: Virginia Department of Education Totals for Students With Disabilities By Disability and Age, Ages 0-22+ State Totals and Individual Division Totals, as of December 1, 2001.

SCPS has experienced a shortage of speech pathologists this year and is anticipating another vacancy at the end of the calendar year with an upcoming resignation. One position has been vacant for the past two years. The division has advertised on the

state website, at universities and colleges with speech programs, on Speech and Language websites, and even in neighboring Tennessee, to no avail. The director serves as a regional representative on a state council where he has raised the pressing need for more speech and language therapists in the state. Another possible impediment in hiring therapists that the director mentioned is the lower end of the salary scale for such positions is not competitive with neighboring divisions. This matter has been discussed with the assistant superintendent. Salary issues are discussed in depth in Chapter 3 of this report.

No mention was made, however, of communication with parents relating to efforts and the difficulty that the division has experienced in attempting to fill a long-standing vacancy, not to mention an upcoming additional vacancy, nor of providing support or services in other ways. Parents of special education students are vigilant in rallying for services for their students and need to be informed of the challenges the division is facing. Parents comprise a Special Education Advisory committee that keeps abreast of the challenges in obtaining speech pathologists. Students, as much as possible, need to have their needs met for oral motor development and speech as well as being provided assistive technology that will facilitate their development.

This is not a unique situation that Smyth County faces. Dinwiddie County, another Virginia division, has advertised widely as has Smyth; however, Dinwiddie has been aggressive in keeping parents informed and part of the solution to the problem their vacancies have created by keeping them informed of their recruitment efforts, enlisting them to reach out to potential sources of therapists, and even creating workbooks for parents to use with their children at home in the interim. They have also promised summer compensatory services in order to help offset the lack of services during the school year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 7-4:

Adopt strategies to inform parents of students eligible for speech and language services of efforts the division has made and alternative plans for providing that service.

Smyth County has only had one complaint filed against its Special Education Department in the past five years and is even more fortunate that, with a long-standing speech therapist vacancy, they have not had other complaints filed. Taking a pre-emptive step in making parents well aware of actions they have taken to try to fill the vacancy has the potential to contribute to continuing that record and preventing the fiscal and human resources that are absorbed in complaints and hearings and would be time well spent.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

Recommendation 7-5:

Create a coalition with neighboring divisions having similar speech therapist recruitment challenges to investigate the possibility of having a university develop a branch speech program in the area.

Many small divisions in the Commonwealth are experiencing the same difficulty in finding sufficient therapists to meet student needs. With NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements, limitations exist in the number of students programs can accept. Nevertheless, exploring novel ways to meet the exigent need for additional speech therapists could reap benefits for Smyth County as well as neighboring divisions. Some courses are available on-line, so a mix of on-site and on-line instruction might benefit the university, interested teachers, and the division, not to mention students.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of these recommendations can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Smyth County, like many others in Virginia and other states, has adopted the use of a computer-based IEP development program; however, unlike many other systems that have purchased standardized, ready-made programs that are web-based, Smyth County conducted extensive research before deciding. Their decision was to purchase a computer-based program that resides on the division's own server, providing numerous benefits to the division:

- because it is on the SCPS server, the division is not dependent on external organizations to repair the service;

- the system can be tailored to specific division needs and updated annually; and

- the purchase cost for three years was only $20,000 compared to two to three times that amount for other systems.

COMMENDATION

The Department of Special Education is commended for taking the initiative to research available programs, weigh pros and cons, and wisely use division resources to purchase an IEP program that meets its needs for a minimal cost.

FINDING

Division leadership has compared the costs of contracting with an external agency for services of occupational and physical therapists (OT, PT) with hiring their own in order to make a determination that would be the most cost-effective provision of services for the division's resources. Considerations taken into account were equipping positions,

assuming mileage costs, salaries with anticipated years of experience, assignment of an existing office and benefits costs.

The estimated difference between contracting and hiring personnel in those positions was $2,004. The benefits anticipated to be realized by the division, however, based on prior experience with contracted services were continuity of service and consistency of personnel for the students. Previously, the company with which the division contracted had high turnover among its occupational therapists in addition to difficulty filling the vacancies. An additional benefit acquired with hiring its own OT and PT personnel has been increased revenues through Medicaid billing discussed below.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County is commended for examining costs and continuity of services for students and taking aggressive steps to devise cost-effective solutions.

7.1.1 *Program Expenses and Receipts for Medicaid and Related Services*

Medicaid is a federal entitlement program that finances medical services. An important focus of the Medicaid program is to improve the delivery and accessibility of health-care systems and resources. School systems and numerous public agencies provide an important link in improving child health because of the regular contact with the child and the parent or guardian.

The Medicaid Administrative Outreach Program allows Medicaid reimbursement to local education agencies. The payments to the local education agencies are based on the cost of providing eligible health-related outreach activities. The reimbursement of administrative claims is based on the percentage of students in the total school population that are eligible for Medicaid.   The implementation of the Medicaid Administrative Outreach Program can prove to be an invaluable revenue source for expanded health and social services to the students of the Smyth County Public Schools.

FINDING

In contrast to numerous other small Virginia divisions, Smyth County has been billing for many eligible reimbursable Medicaid expenses. The Commonwealth provides projections based on community demographics and economic factors of possible numbers of students eligible for billed services. Although it does not estimate dollars reaped by the division, it does estimate a range of numbers of students. Based on a "penetration rate" of 50.28 percent, the state estimates that, of SCPS's students, 933 will be Medicaid eligible. Of those, an estimated 469 will be special education. They then estimate a range from 60 percent (281) to 30 percent (141) of them who will require billable Medicaid services.

The director reported that, when he took over the position three years ago, only occupational and physical therapy were being billed. This is the first year that they have begun billing for administrative claims. The division contracts with an individual who is considered very knowledgeable in Virginia regarding Medicaid reimbursement issues. He charges the division 10 percent of revenues for the work he does. Many divisions

have found that using an external agency or agent is the most feasible means of handling the extensive paperwork involved in filing for Medicaid reimbursement. During the site visit, the director had actually planned to contact him regarding expansion of billing to other services, but was called to court. The two of them were to develop an estimate of revenues that might be gained when the division adds transportation and other eligible services to billed services. Due to the shortage of speech and language therapists in the division, and the consequent overload of current personnel, he has not tried to extend billing to those positions. Also, because nurses in the division are itinerant and their time at schools is limited, he has not attempted to document their services for billing.

Discussions with personnel responsible for Medicaid billing in divisions selected for their comparability to Smyth County revealed that many of them have made a concerted effort to include far broader groups of personnel for administrative billing and begun to gain far greater revenues as a result. In two of the counties, the head of nursing is the individual in charge. One individual stated that, by carefully identifying eligible individuals for administrative billing at the beginning of this year, Accomack County had increased those numbers from 31 last year to 98 this year. With the first billing cycle this school year, their revenues had increased dramatically over the first quarter the previous year. Despite the fact that they, like Smyth County, are experiencing a shortage of speech therapists, they are billing for those services and receiving no complaints. The approach that she has taken has been training and email support and ongoing communications to commend those who are submitting their reports and reminders for those who have not. She feels that the ongoing communications has been the key to success without resentment of the additional work. Each individual is responsible for inputting data regarding their services which can then be checked at the division office.

In Carroll, they are billing for the Special Education Director, occupational, physical and speech therapists, psychologists, nurses, guidance counselors, principals or anyone involved in discipline, and for special education teachers who are case managers. They are also awaiting approval of rates so that they can begin billing for transportation as well. It is apparent from the success of other similar divisions that Smyth County can add many personnel to its billable services and expand its revenues sizably. Exhibit 7-2 shows revenues received by peer divisions for the 2004-05 school year.

EXHIBIT 7-2
MEDICAID REVENUES FOR COMPARABLE SCHOOL DIVISIONS
2004-05

DIVISION	STUDENT POPULATION	REVENUES
Smyth County	**5,129**	**$104,580**
Accomack County	5,385	$114,000
Carroll County	4,061	$165,000
Culpeper County	6,489	Not Available
Isle of Wight	5,167	$38,974
Pulaski	4,939	Not available

Source: MGT of America, November 2005.

Exhibit 7-3 shows historic data on Medicaid revenues received by SCPS over the past three years since the current Director of Special Education took over the position. It shows that revenues have increased over those years and that they increased

dramatically between 2003-04 and 2004-05 with the hiring of the division's own OT and PT personnel.

EXHIBIT 7-3
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT REVENUES
2003-04 THROUGH 2004-05

YEAR	TOTAL REIMBURSEMENTS
2002-03	$31,361.94
2003-04	$43,539.27
2004-05	$104,580.42

Source: Smyth County Department of Special Education, November 2005.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-6:

Expand billing for Medicaid reimbursement for additional eligible individuals and services.

The division increased its revenues by more than 2-1/2 times within one year by developing a process to systematically collect information from two categories of employees. By similarly developing a user-friendly form, and training relevant personnel as other divisions have done, the division can expand its revenue collection. These are non-categorical funds that can be used to address other needs the division deems critical for its students.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

7.2   *Programs for At-Risk Students*

FINDING

Comments related to the division's alternative programs that were made in interviews during the site visit included:

■ strong alternative school programs; and

■ Alternative programs seen as a strength – currently include a day diploma program, night school program, GRE program, middle school "project return" program, and adult GED.

Interviewees during the site visit confirmed those observations with enthusiastic support for the many approaches that the division has devised to meet the needs of its students needing education outside of the traditional school environment. Data provided in Exhibit 7-4 detailing dropout statistics from 1966 to 2005 evidence that the dropout rate between 1966 and 1988 initially fluctuated largely between 3.8 percent and 5.4 percent. However, since 1989, it has not been above 2.3 percent and, with the exception of one year, has been below 1 percent since 1993. The 2005 dropout rate was .21 percent.

EXHIBIT 7-4
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CONTINUING EDUCATION DROPOUT STATISTICAL INFORMATION
1966-2005

YEAR	NO. GRADS	2 YEAR COLLEGE		4 YEAR COLLEGE		COLLEGE		OTHER EDUCATION		TOTAL STUDENTS		DROPOUT	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%	No.
1966	411					123	30	86	21	209	51.0	3.8	
1967	426					163	38	70	16	233	54.0	5.2	
1968	370					157	42	66	18	112	60.0	5.8	
1969	353					167	47	29	8	196	55.0	5.1	
1970	378					200	53	41	11	241	64.0	5.4	
1971	390					220	56	38	10	258	66.0	4.4	
1972	341					162	48	26	8	188	56.0	5.2	
1973	486					210	44	40	8	250	52.0	4.6	
1974	456	104	22.8	84	18.4			34	7.5	222	48.7	5.2	
1975	446	127	28.5	88	19.7			34	7.6	249	55.8	4.6	
1976	459	116	25.3	92	20.0			44	9.6	252	54.9	5.1	141
1977	461	95	20.6	93	20.2			43	9.3	231	50.1	5.0	138
1978	434	125	28.8	87	20.0			26	6.0	238	54.8	5.6	150
1979	431	110	25.5	87	20.2			27	6.3	224	52.0	4.8	127
1980	397	89	22.4	67	16.9			24	6.0	180	45.3	4.9	127
1981	442	121	27.4	89	20.1			10	2.3	220	49.8	4.6	115
1982	460	158	34.3	77	16.7			20	4.3	255	55.3	4.5	109
1983	401	118	29.4	77	19.2			39	9.7	234	58.3	3.7	90
1984	421	126	29.9	73	17.3			15	3.6	214	50.8	3.1	77
1985	375	191	26.9	73	19.5			16	4.3	190	50.7	1.8	70
1986	419	121	18.9	99	23.6			29	6.9	249	54.9	4.0	102
1987	404	116	28.7	93	23.0			11	2.7	220	54.4	3.6	89
1988	423	140	33.1	106	25.1			43	10.2	289	68.4	4.2	104
1989	453	178	39.3	119	26.3			29	6.4	326	72.0	2.3	55
1990	385	125	32.5	95	24.7			37	9.6	259	66.8	2.5	65
1991	421	142	33.7	116	27.6			46	10.9	304	72.2	1.3	35
1992	430	160	37.2	112	26.0			37	8.6	309	71.8	1.1	28
1993	377	129	32.4	102	27.1			31	7.7	252	67.2	.88	22
1994	339	113	33.3	113	33.3			28	8.3	254	74.9	.45	11
1995	349	129	37.0	108	30.9			23	6.6	260	74.5	.65	16
1996	325	122	37.5	75	23.1			30	9.2	227	69.8	.87	21
1997	363	145	39.9	105	28.9			18	5.0	268	73.8	1.04	25
1998	365	84	23.0	141	38.6			55	15.1	280	76.7	.64	15
1999	308	112	36.4	100	32.5			36	11.7	248	80.6	.85	19
2000	296	125	42.2	98	33.1			10	3.4	233	78.7	.77	17
2001	312	115	36.9	103	33.0			21	6.7	239	76.6	.91	21
2002	303	91	30.0	80	26.4			88	29.0	259	85.5	.53	12
2003	394	118	25.4	125	31.5			34	8.6	276	70.1	.69	16
2004	323	114	35.3	91	28.2			19	5.9	224	69.3	.39	9
2005	340	145	42.6	105	30.9			8	2.4	258	75.9	.21	5

Source: Smyth County Office of Pupil Personnel Services, November 2005.

The division continuously examines its programs and practices regarding support and programming for students referred to its alternative schools and makes revisions based on those examinations. Its stated philosophy is to place accountability on students for attendance and learning, offering several program options that provide a flexible, individualized plan. The intent is to assist those who have either dropped out or fallen significantly behind to earn credit, obtain job training and vocational skills, and receive counseling and personal support. Four programs are offered school-aged students at its Teaching Alternative Program (TAP) center based on student needs and circumstances with additional options for adults in the community. Each program is structured for certain students with certain instructional goals. Exhibit 7-5 shows students targeted for each and the elements of the program designed to meet their needs.

In order to place students properly, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services works with principals and counselors at schools to examine scheduling adjustments and other alternatives that can accommodate student needs in their home school before consideration for placement in an alternative program. They may also include a mental health provider or other community representative in those discussions. The director stated that principals and their staffs were phenomenal at trying to address students' needs at their schools, so she knows that when she receives a call, all options have been explored. A grant-funded workforce coordinator will begin working in the division in January to serve as a liaison between the schools and businesses and will assist students with employability skills. That person should work with the 35 special education students enrolled in vocational classes that may lead to jobs in the community for them as well as other division students.

Programs offer students a family atmosphere and small numbers, often with one-on-one instruction by teachers carefully selected for their sensitivity to student needs. Commitments to attend are generally for one year with re-evaluation at the end of enrollment based on attendance, grades, and behavior. Principals know that, if a recommendation is made for students to return to their home school, they are ready and follow-up will take place to ensure student success or consideration for re-referral to the alternative program. Students also have the option of remaining at the center if they choose.

With the inception of SOLs, the programs' curricula had to be amended to some extent. However, with four teachers, one of whom is a vocational teacher, the program can meet the needs of verified credits for students. Some math SOL remediation has been integrated into the vocational classes and Life Management Skills. Students can also be placed in jobs with monitoring and support by the director and a transition coordinator. Student success on SOLs has given the program additional credibility among other teachers in the division. Teachers are expected to handle discipline in their own classes and testimony to their success is that there has not been a fight at the center in 16 years.

**EXHIBIT 7-5
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS AT THE TEACHING ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM
2005-06**

PROGRAM/ MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT	ELIGIBLE STUDENTS	PROGRAM COMPONENTS
TAP I (35)	Significantly behind their peers due to: ■ Behavior ■ Attendance record ■ Age ■ Credit deficiencies	Academic assistance enabling them to return to their home school during the next school term through: ■ Small group instruction in basic subjects ■ Remediation and instruction in SOL areas ■ On-going counseling, conflict resolution, and to address issues facing youth ■ Career orientation and awareness ■ Vocational training for job entry skills
TAP II for Teen-age Parents (40)	■ Pregnant young women ■ Young men who are accepting responsibility for parenthood	The program's primary goal is to keep students in school and give them skills and knowledge to juggle their complex roles by providing a support group and teaching: ■ Child development, ■ Parenting ■ Gender equity and career issues ■ Community assistance providers ■ Issues of concern such as family planning, substance abuse
TAP III	■ Students who have dropped out, and ■ Students who are significantly behind their peers due to: − Being parents − Attendance record − Age − Credit deficiencies	■ Individual assessment regarding achievement, credits earned, ability, and interest ■ Development of an alternative assessment plan including one or more of the following objectives: − 22 credits for a high school diploma − Vocational training and skill acquisition − A cooperative work experience ■ Courses are arranged sequentially in packets for individual work with a teacher's assistance in a classroom setting. Packet completion results in credit awarding.
Project Return (cooperative program between Fluvanna County Schools, Virginia Department of Education and Smyth County) (12)	Students in grades K-12 with behavioral or medical reasons that have caused their removal from regular educational placements The division likes to keep spaces in this program for middle school students who are at-risk.	■ Low student-teacher ratio ■ Individualized program based needs and abilities ■ On-going counseling regarding conflict resolution, anger management and substance abuse ■ Vocational awareness ■ SOL remediation and instruction
Individual Student Alternative Education Plan	■ Students must be at least 16 and receive a minimum on each of the following tests: − Reading (TABE) or other 7.5 grade equivalent − GED practice test score of 410	■ Career guidance counseling ■ Mandatory enrollment and attendance in GED prep or alternative program ■ Counseling on the economic impact of dropping out ■ Procedures for re-enrolling in high school programs ■ Career and technical training for those without jobs
Adult Evening High School Diploma	■ Adults 20 or older	■ Completion of unfinished high school coursework for receipt of a regular high school diploma from a SCSP high school
General Educational Development (GED)	■ Adults 18 or older who are not presently enrolled in regular public schools and do not have a high school diploma or GED Certificate	■ Basic skills for functioning in society ■ Completion of at least secondary school ■ Employability skills
Adult Basics Education	■ Adults who have difficulty with reading comprehension, composition, basic math skills, or who desire bringing those skills to a level that makes them eligible for a GED program	■ Classes that will brush up skills in needed subjects

Source: Compiled by MGT of America, Inc., November 2005.

An alternative class for special education high school students was moved to the CTC this school year in order to give those students more comprehensive learning experiences and more instructional time. Previously, eligible students attended night school two nights a week. Students are selected based on their need for placement in a setting different from a regular high school. One teacher teaches a maximum of twenty students. However, the classes are split with the goal of having ten students in the morning and ten in the afternoon. During the time students are not in the Tech Quest class, they are taking career courses in other parts of the CTC. Students who are solely focused on attaining their high school credits attend the Tech Quest class the entire day.

Despite the myriad of options available for Smyth County students who are either at risk of dropping out or need alternative educational settings beyond traditional schools, leaders expressed concern regarding two other unmet needs. Project Return spaces are reserved as much as possible for middle school students who generally spend ½ day at the Center and ½ day at their home school. Occasionally there are middle school students who have committed felonies so cannot spend that half day at their home school. The concern relates to how they might spend their time during the half day they are not in school and their adjustment to regular school upon return the following year. The second concern is that alternative programs offered at Chilhowie and Marion Senior High Schools two nights a week do not provide sufficient instruction for students. This was a concern voiced by an attendee at the public forum during the site visit, too. The division has examined the possibility of either changing the program to four nights a week at each site or moving it to a daytime delivery at the CTC in which students with different needs (e.g. those prepared for GED taking, those needing pre-GED academic instruction, and others) could be taught by separate instructors that the current configuration does not allow. Location at the CTC would also enable them to take career and technology courses there and would provide them transportation. Unfortunately, though, the costs of an estimated $70,000-$160,000 and the addition of new courses at the CTC next year precluding the availability of space serve as barriers to the option of re-location there for a day program. The Six Year Plan shows plans to continue evaluating the need for elementary and middle school alternative programs.

Successful schools provide at-risk students access to reform-oriented instruction that are equivalent to more advantaged students. Virginia's literature review on effective practices states with regard to intervention strategies, "students are given additional learning time in a variety of settings with varied approaches to instruction." The costs of not addressing the needs of potential dropouts during their school years are great to the individual and to society. Dropouts incur personal costs in the form of reduced earnings, higher chances of unemployment, and higher likelihood of involvement with crime. Social costs appear in the form of lower total productivity of the labor force, lower tax collections, and higher needs for public services such as welfare, health, and employment services. Research notes the following findings: (1) graduates show higher earnings than dropouts; (2) dropouts show higher unemployment rates than graduates; (3) dropouts are three times more likely than graduates to live in poverty; (4) dropouts are overrepresented in the populations served by public services; (5) dropouts report higher public assistance subsidies than do graduates; and (6) a higher proportion of dropouts than graduates reported serious trouble with the law.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County has created an array of support systems and alternative programs for its students that have contributed to a dropout rate below 1 percent for almost a decade yet continues to explore improvement opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 7-7:

Continue to expand services for students who do not succeed in traditional educational delivery models by hiring six teachers on two additional nights per week.

The success of current programs is evident in the low dropout rate among SCPS's students. Nevertheless, continuing to weigh program costs against more ambiguous societal and personal costs to dropouts is a moral imperative the division takes seriously. By continuous evaluation and responsiveness to student needs, the division can budget for long-term solutions to changing needs of its students. The costs of expanding current two-night programs at two schools to four nights are estimated below.

Each of six teachers is paid a fixed stipend of $20 per hour inclusive of benefits for three hours per night of instruction ($20 x 3=$60 per night). Four teachers teaching four nights a week for 36 weeks, which would be the maximum number of weeks the program would be offered, would cost $51,840 ($60 x 4 nights=$240/week x 36 weeks=$8,640 per teacher per year x 6 teachers=$51,840 total program cost). Since the program is currently offered for two nights, additional costs are estimated to be only $25,920. Those costs, of course, exclude additional curricular and materials costs that would be associated with program expansion. These costs need to be weighed, too, against the total number of additional students that could be served and the enhanced educational program they would all be afforded. The figures below are based on the recommendation leading to program expansion in June 2006.

FISCAL IMPACT

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Hire Six Teachers for Two Additional Nights Per Week.	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)

Recommendation 7-8:

Ensure that the new workforce coordinator works with special education students on transitional needs and employability skills in addition to students in regular educational programs.

There is no transition coordinator for the special education students most likely to be in the greatest need of assistance making the transition from school to work. The addition of this position should benefit all students and provide equal opportunities to all students for successful transition from school to the world of work.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

7.2.1 _Remediation_

FINDING

With Project Graduation funds, the division has asked schools to identify students needing remediation by SOL scores and subject so that they can track student performance and the schools' use of funds to ensure that they are using them in a timely manner to benefit students prior to SOL assessment administration. With respect to development of other, non-Project Graduation remediation programs for students, the division gives principals and their school staffs the flexibility to develop their own plans for their students. An examination of the plans revealed that there do not appear to be specific components that must be included in the plans and that schools are free to identify students, design their own programs, and determine the length of the program. It is not clear whether budgets are allocated to schools based on SOL scores, student numbers, or other guidelines that may exist. Programs differ in staffing required, delivery model, program time, and students targeted. Some programs are offered during the school day while others are after-school programs and require additional transportation expenses. Some are specifically designated for special education students. Some request one teacher whereas others request five with transportation as well. Most report that students are selected based on teacher recommendation and SOL scores with other factors sometimes considered. Only one references a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

Chilhowie Middle School has developed remediation packets with essential knowledge flash cards for parents to use with their children at home. Accountability is built in with parents asked to sign off with the date and time resulting in rewards for students such as a sock hop.

Providing a variety of avenues for meeting students' needs for remediation has proven successful in other schools that often combine approaches, offering morning study sessions, afternoon "jam sessions" and elective tutorial courses with additional intensive voluntary jam sessions during the weeks prior to state testing.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-9:

Require schools to conduct an evaluation of the success of their remedial programs and submit it to the central office at the end of the school year.

By tracking the success and attendance of students involved, the division and its schools will have evidence upon which to base decisions for future program design, resource allocation, and delivery times.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

7.3   *Preschool Programs*

Smyth County Public Schools have preschool classes ranging from 16-18 students at all elementary schools with one teacher and one aide in each class. All schools have one preschool class with the exception of Marion Primary School which has three, partially because it was one of the first two schools to have programs, so served students from several schools initially. Students receive guidance time from the school counselor. Some collaboration exists between school programs and Head Start with Head Start personnel being invited to division in-service training. A pilot preschool 4-year-old inclusion class at Marion Primary was begun this year as part of a Commonwealth initiative involving five pilots throughout the state. The class has 28 students, 10 of which are students with special needs. The Commonwealth is providing resources and the regional Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) is conducting observations and providing follow-up to training and observations. The Director of special education reported that they had already learned much about inclusion that can be transferred to other grade level teachers in the SCPS schools.

Students are assessed in the spring and fall with the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). Fall scores are used to guide individual focus for literacy activities throughout the year. End of year scores and student achievement throughout the year will be topics of discussion between preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers in the spring. To date, there has been no tracking of student success after entering kindergarten to determine the impact that the program has had on at-risk students who attend.

FINDING

There is an associated vibrant parent outreach program. Seven of the programs have waiting lists. The Director of Federal Programs is in charge of Preschool programs and active in parenting activities. The first of four annual Parent Advisory Committee meetings was held in September with a make-it-take it workshop. Teachers were active in developing stations for parents to choose either skills or grade level materials. Other components of those parenting nights are games for children during the parents' workshop time and games for parents to take home for use with their children to reinforce skills and knowledge. Every Tuesday night from 4-7, a parent resource room at the CTC is open for parents to checkout books and other media materials for home use with their children. In contrast to the disciplined outreach to parents through these programs, parent comments made during the public forum reflected a sense that schools do not reach out enough and keep parents well-informed of critical information or of events in a timely manner. Comments included:

- would really like more timely newsletters from the school. Often the events being reported have already passed, or there is little time to plan to participate; and

- we need help recruiting more parents and teachers in the PTO.

In most instances, children come to school ready to learn but with different cultural, educational, and environmental experiences to draw from. It is the responsibility of the educational system to meet children where they are and encourage and support their development from that point. To promote learning for all children, educators must provide a school environment that acknowledges children's diverse backgrounds, helps children transition comfortably into the next instructional level, and provides community supports when necessary. Such provisions support each child's readiness to learn as well as each school's readiness to educate young children.

COMMENDATION

Division personnel have taken the initiative to be involved in a pilot preschool inclusion program from which they can garner strategies to use throughout the division's schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 7-10:

Systematically collect and compile best practices identified as effective in the preschool program to be broadcast and replicated in other classes.

The pilot is being conducted by two teachers who volunteered to be a part of it and is being sponsored by the Commonwealth with support from TTAC. All of those serve as powerful sources of rich information that the division can benefit from with little effort. Whether full inclusion is possible or not with SCPS schools so scattered is moot, but practices, ideas, and even materials will all likely be developed in the pilot that will benefit other teachers and students through heightened differentiation of instruction used in the pilot.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished utilizing existing resources.

Recommendation 7-11:

Expand practices used for parent outreach in the Preschool Program for outreach to other parents throughout the division.

Student achievement has been shown for decades to improve as schools develop strategies to involve parents in their children's education. Other benefits accrue as well. When teachers and administrators are committed to parent involvement, parents know that and are more positive about teachers' interpersonal skills, rate them higher in overall ability, and evaluate them as better overall because of their efforts to involve them. Even greater benefits are reaped by the schools in general—when communities invest in parent involvement, there are increases in levels of parent and community support for the schools, increases in financial support, and heightened advocacy for education in general. By using practices already in place in the division and expanding them through the use of research experts like Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins, the

division can create a comprehensive parent involvement plan that will enlist parents as partners in all students' education.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

7.4   *English for Speakers of Other Languages*

Smyth County ESL enrollment is only 49 students at present. Consequently, few people in the schools are affected by their arrival on the scene. However, the small number of students has an effect on the size and ability of the program to meet their and their families' needs. Two ESL teachers work with all students. One of those individuals is also the program coordinator, so besides instructional responsibilities, she has administrative tasks beyond teaching. She is in her first year in that role, but reported that former ESL Coordinators with fewer students to teach themselves had worked closely with community agencies to assist families in integration into the community and procuring needed support and assistance. Since the arrival of people who are non-English speaking is new to the community, there is also a relatively minimal level of understanding within the community of what assistance they need and how to help them. During the site visit, the first ESL parents meeting was held offering parents information on how to help their children with homework provided by the Director of Federal Programs. The coordinator also produced a parent newsletter that described the program as well as activities in ESL and at Chilhowie Elementary, the school with the largest ESL population. They also asked them what services or information they needed for future programs. An adult education English teacher is also providing instruction in English for parents with child care on an ongoing basis.

FINDING

The two ESL teachers conduct intake testing when students arrive to determine their initial levels of fluency with languages. As a consequence of the program's size, one teacher is based at the school with the largest population with the Coordinator itinerant, serving most students once a week in their school and some who require more time being served two or three times a week.

Classroom teachers have little experience or knowledge of how to integrate these children into their classes. The ESL teachers provide as much support as they can, but are limited in time. The coordinator reported that many are happy to have the students in their classes but frustrated that they cannot communicate and would like to have language classes available for themselves. One has even sought and received financial assistance to take a Spanish class on her own. She noted that Blue Ridge College offers free on-line courses for classroom strategies for mainstream teachers of ESL students. When requested or indicated, the coordinator finds tutors for high needs students.

The coordinator stated that she has longitudinal data that allows her to follow students throughout their education in SCPS and monitor progress or possible backtracking.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-12:

Develop plans to provide and/or support Spanish language training for interested SCPS classroom teachers and administrators.

Helping local teachers to gain facility with a language that is predominant among a large segment of the student population will not only assist them in teaching ESL children for whom they are responsible but also build capacity within the schools of SCPS of people who can serve as resources to the schools and the families of ESL students as the population grows.

The division could possibly offer a stipend similar to those that alternative education night school teachers receive of $20 per hour for a teacher to teach Spanish to teachers or could possibly arrange for a community member or community college instructor to provide instruction. Applied learning by teacher-students tutoring students could enhance their language acquisition and benefit SCPS ESL students at the same time. Providing a time and place for teachers to take the on-line course on classroom strategies with refreshments would be another inexpensive way for the division to provide meaningful professional development for a cadre of its teachers that could also flow to their colleagues in their home schools. They could also become emissaries to community agencies and organizations with which they are affiliated regarding the needs and strengths of families of ESL students.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation would be minimal, assuming the $20.00 per hour rate times 30 hours per semester, would amount to $600.00 per semester, or $1,200.00 per year. This amount of training should be sufficient for the current number of teachers servicing ESL students.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Pay a Stipend for Spanish Instruction for Teachers of ESL.	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)

8.0 FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

8.0 FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

In this chapter the findings and recommendations for Facilities Use and Management for the Smyth County Public Schools are presented. The major sections of the chapter include:

8.1   Organizational Structure
8.2   Capital Planning and Facility Use
8.3   Maintenance Services
8.4   Custodial Services
8.5   Energy Management

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The facilities of Smyth County Public Schools are effectively managed by a Director of Facilities who is attempting to address a multitude of building issues with limited resources with which to do so. Recommendations contained in this chapter are essentially focused on allowing the division to address critical building issues in a more comprehensive fashion. The facilities challenges faced by the division are daunting but manageable, provided that good sound data is available to formulate the Capital Improvement Plan, the community is engaged in this process, and "courageous patience" is exercised. The following are the key recommendations of this chapter:

■   align the Director of Facilities position to the proposed organizational chart in order to permit this person to address the serious building problems facing the division;

■   commission a professional study that will produce a long term facility plan for the division in accordance with the standards established in this report;

■   hire two additional maintenance personnel in order to increase the ability of the unit to respond more quickly and to a larger number of work orders;

■   assign custodians on a more equitable square footage basis using APPA standards;

■   adopt Time and Task standards and conduct periodic inspections, based on these standards;

■   institute a more comprehensive training program for custodians; and

■   adopt an energy efficient system to reallocate dollars expended for energy into the classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of facilities management services in school divisions centers on providing a safe, secure and educationally stimulating environment for the division's students. Typical functions include:

- Maintenance of facilities and grounds;

- custodial services (often in a combined role with school administration);

- capital planning including the development of a long range facilities plan;

- demographics including enrollment forecasts and school capacities;

- development of educational specifications for school facilities;

- completion of minor facility upgrades/enhancements;

- contracting of services for major facility upgrades/enhancements;

- oversight of long range plan implementation; and

- energy management.

Depending on the size of the school division, the above functions may be completed entirely by division employees or the majority of the services can be outsourced. The Smyth County Public Schools are organized so that the above functions are provided through both the office of the director of facilities and grounds and through the Superintendent's office. Custodial services are managed and supervised by their school principal. Because there have been few capital projects over the past few years much of the long range capital planning, enrollment forecasting, capacity analysis, etc. has been completed on an "as needed" basis. With the current identified need for major capital improvements the division will need to study all alternatives for meeting that need.

8.1   *Organizational Structure*

Smyth County Public Schools presently operates fourteen schools and three educational centers. There are nine attendance districts which use the following building configurations:

District 1:   Atkins Elementary; Marion Middle, Marion Senior

District 2:   Chilhowie Elementary, Middle, Senior

District 3:   Marion Primary, Intermediate, Middle, Senior

District 4:   Marion, Chilhowie High School, Sugar Grove

District 5:   Rich Valley Elementary, Northwood Middle, Northwood Senior

District 6:   Saltville Elementary, Northwood Middle, Northwood Senior

District 7:   Saltville Elementary, Rich Valley Elementary, Northwood Middle, Northwood Senior

District 8:   Sugar Grove (K-8), Marion Senior, Chilhowie Senior

District 9:   Sugar Grove (K-8), Marion Senior, or Chilhowie Senior

Exhibit 8-1 provides a breakout of the grade configurations at the above schools.

EXHIBIT 8-1
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRADE CONFIGURATIONS

SCHOOL	GRADE CONFIGURATION
Atkins Elementary	K-5
Chilhowie Elementary	K-5
Marion Primary	K-2
Marion Intermediate	3-5
Rich Valley Elementary	K-5
Saltville Elementary	K-5
Sugar Grove	K-8
Marion Middle	6-8
Northwood Middle	6-8
Chilhowie High/Middle	6-12
Marion Senior	9-12
Northwood High	9-12
Smyth Career	10-12

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.

The mix of grades and the distribution of students in accordance with the attendance districts speak clearly to the geographic challenges within this division. Mountains separate the schools; small towns dominate the landscape; and travel between the schools is challenging. The building's student populations range from a high of 793 (Marion Senior High) to a low of 192 (Atkins Elementary).

The Director of Transportation and Maintenance, five (5) maintenance personnel, and an administrative assistant are responsible for the two units. The maintenance personnel are as follows: electrician, plumbing, furnace repair, and coal truck driver. Several of the schools use coal either as the primary source of heat or as a backup. The work order process used for maintenance requests is a concern at all levels and will be addressed in the Maintenance Services section of this report.

The custodial staff of Smyth County Schools reports directly to the principal of each building. This arrangement makes the custodial staff responsible directly to each principal and it unburdens the Director of Transportation and Maintenance who already

has a significant number of responsibilities. However, this situation is not without some difficulties which will be explained further in the Custodial Services section.

FINDING

The geographic situation presents special challenges to the division. The tradition of the division has been to allow each school to operate as totally independent units. Efforts have been made to standardize all operations and to introduce written policies and procedures into the work place. Much progress has been made; much more remains to do.

The organizational structure has the director's position reporting directly to the Superintendent. The secretarial support of the position is ambiguous to an outside observer. More often than not it appears as the support staff has multiple responsibilities and everybody just "pitches in" if something needs to be done.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-1:

Align the director's position to the recommended organization structure proposed in this report under Division Administration.

This change should permit a clearer understanding of the duties and responsibilities for this unit, enabling the unit to address the serious building issues being faced.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be completed with existing resources as the cost for the re-organization of division administration has been covered in Chapter 2 of this report.

8.2 *Capital Planning and Facilities Use*

The facilities operated by Smyth County Schools are generally clean and every effort is made to provide a safe environment for the children within the available resources; however, the issue is the lack of a comprehensive plan to address a myriad of facilities problems throughout the district. Chief among these problems are:

- Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) problems at many of the facilities.

- Up-to-date technology infrastructure is lacking at many of the facilities.

- Many instructional spaces being utilized for purposes other than for which they were designed.

- Electrical service that is out of date, unavailable in many areas, and/or not in working order.

- Numerous physical deficiencies including roof leaks, inoperable windows, broken ceiling tiles, etc.

The issue is not whether effort is being made to address the many concerns for the buildings; that effort is being made and often in an exemplary fashion. The issue is one of scope. There are simply too many problems to address without having a plan with which to do so.

Engaging in facilities planning is critical to the success of any school division. The essential activities of a facilities planning process include:

- the development of a facilities plan that is responsive to the educational needs of the students and of related educational programs;

- plans for the optimum utilization of existing facilities to ensure that overbuilding does not occur;

- accurate student demographic information that assures new facilities are located in appropriate areas of the school division and are designed to the optimum capacity; and

- A clear understanding of the safety and security needs of the contemporary educational setting.

Every school building in the division was visited during this review and each had facilities issues that needed to be addressed. At Marion Intermediate School there was general agreement that those problems are severe. Because of this, MGT consultants visited the school for a second time and conducted an "unofficial" analysis using the company's *Building Assessment System (BASYS)* program. This process involves a much more in depth analysis of the physical condition and the educational suitability of the building. This analysis resulted in two scores, one for physical condition and one for educational suitability.

The ***BASYS*** criteria for the physical condition score are based on the following standards:

90+   **New or Like New:** The building and/or a majority of its systems are in good condition, less than one year old, and only require preventative maintenance.

75-89   **Good:** The building and/or a majority of its systems are in good condition and only require routine maintenance.

60-74   **Fair:** The building and/or some of its systems are in fair condition and require minor repair.

50-59   **Poor:** The building and/or a significant number of its systems are in poor condition and require major repair or renovation.

Below 50   **Unsatisfactory:** The building and/or a majority of its systems should be considered for replacement.

With a database consisting of thousands of schools, Marion Intermediate's unofficial score was 27, which on the BASYS scale places it well below unsatisfactory. As demonstrated by the above criteria this falls within the unsatisfactory category and the building should be considered for replacement. Another way to look at this analysis is to subtract this score from 100 (100 – 27 = 73) and conclude that it would take an investment of 73% of the building cost in order to repair all deficiencies. This is valid because the score value of each component within ***BASYS*** is calculated according to that components percentage of the total building value.

The ***BASYS*** criteria for the educational suitability score are based on the following standards:

90+   **Good:** The facility is designed to provide for and support the educational program offered. It may have minor suitability issues but generally meets the needs of the educational program.

75-89   **Fair:** The facility has some problems meeting the needs of the educational program and may require some remodeling.

50-74   **Poor:** The facility has numerous problems meeting the needs of the educational program and needs significant remodeling or additions.

Below 50   **Unsatisfactory:** The facility is unsuitable in many areas of the educational program.

The unofficial educational suitability score for Marion Intermediate School was 23, which again places it in the unsatisfactory category. This indicates that in many ways the facility is unable to appropriately house the program that is being offered.

The Marion Intermediate School is a building that also houses the school division's most needy special education students for grades 3-5. The non-air conditioned building has serious issues with a shifting foundation which would not permit most windows to open,

electrical issues that have injured staff in the past, falling ceiling tile, and serious sewer problems – to name but a few of the issues. It is important to recognize that the school division is making every effort to address these concerns. This building represents the most serious need for the division, but not the only building that needs improvement.

Several use coal to heat buildings and the systems are either on or off. Some modernizations in HVAC systems have occurred in a few buildings but the use of energy management systems is not possible at this time. Windows and doors would not permit any regulation of heating systems, since most windows are single paned. Most buildings must turn the system on and leave it on while adults and children are in the building. There is often a wide variance in the temperatures within a building. Those spaces closest to the HVAC systems tend to be warmer than those further away. In interviews with Smyth County employees who are working within these buildings, most complained that the heating system was also "not clean" suggesting that the by-product of the coal-powered heating system was not environmentally conducive to quality education. No tests were conducted to confirm this opinion.

FINDING

Smyth County Public Schools has a six-year facility plan that should serve as a precursor to a more comprehensive plan; however, the plan lacks sufficient data to create a master facility plan. The Board of Supervisors, School Board, and taxpayers should expect a facility plan that is based on good data. The schools belong to all the people; the priorities for addressing building needs will ultimately be decided by them. The real issue that will drive the debate will be the priority list that will be generated from the study. The will of the people to fund that list will determine the pace under which the plan is deployed.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-2:

Develop a division master plan to address the immediate space needs, future space needs, building capacities, enrollment capacities, building conditions, demographic analysis and enrollment projections, retention or disposal of each facility/property, consolidation of properties, and land acquisition, as required to provide a full, detailed, priority ranked, long-range division master plan.

The engagement of all division stakeholders in a comprehensive, data-driven, thoroughly researched, and well documented facility study will provide the division with the information and support that will be necessary to implement meaningful facility improvements. In addition to an analysis of need, the study will need to engage staff and community in establishing facilities priorities for the division. The plan should be funded at a level commensurate with the seriousness of the problem.

FISCAL IMPACT

While planning consultants vary in how much they charge for these services a reasonable estimate based on similar services in similar size divisions is $150,000.

It is recommended that an RFP be prepared to ascertain the exact cost for this study. The RFP process would also allow the division to establish the criteria for doing the study. The Request for Proposal should contain the following elements:

- Review of mission statement, division goals and objectives, and current and projected programs and services

- Solicitation of public input

- Development of standards for ranking building needs

- Assessment of all facilities and sites

- Completion of a facilities inventory

- Analysis of demographics and enrollment projections

- Development of capacity formulas

- Review of all buildings for educational suitability and technology readiness

- Development of a prioritized master plan

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Development of a Division Master Plan.	($150,000)	$0	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

While the degree of facility issues that need to be addressed is high, the division has worked to keep this issue in front of the community. Evidence of this effort includes:

- During interviews with board members the concern regarding the condition of facilities was paramount.

- During the community forum held when the review team was on site, facilities proved to be the most critical issue on the minds of those who attended. Comments ranged from the need for a new Intermediate school to the fact that many facilities had excess capacity.

- During the school visitations made by the review team, facility issues and the division's efforts to address them were seen as critical.

- The survey of division administrators, principals, and teachers reflected that all three groups see facility issues and the efforts to address them as a critical concern.

COMMENDATION

The division is to be commended for their efforts to address building concerns; the level of concern is high and the division leadership is committed to making a difference for the children of the community.

8.3   *Maintenance Services*

The division operates with a very small maintenance staff of five employees. Serving the 15 facilities with all their physical needs is a daunting task. The director has instituted a "work order" process to identify priorities and document the work needed, which is now being done. The maintenance staff meets with the director every morning prior to the start of school and assignments for the day are given.

Most of the repair work being done in the buildings fall under the division's definition of "maintenance." Custodians are not asked to perform any tasks that are complicated or require a level of skills that are beyond their capabilities. A few buildings have day custodians who contribute to repairing some maintenance problems; however, even those personnel's contributions are limited. Most of the maintenance work is being done by the small but dedicated maintenance staff.

FINDING

The maintenance staff lacks sufficient personnel to keep up with the repair demands the older buildings require. The work order system and process used to determine the priorities is admirable but there are not enough trained people to respond to needs in a timely fashion. This is reflected by the attitudes of the people in the buildings towards maintenance.

In a recent MGT survey, administrators, principals, and teachers rated plant maintenance as needing some/major improvement by these percentages:

    Administration: 93%
    Principals: 54%
    Teachers: 38%

The hard work being done by the maintenance personnel is not being fully appreciated. During the interview process as well, complaints about the response time to work orders were often heard. This is completely understandable because building personnel only see what still needs to be done – not what is being done daily. The list of "to do's" is a long one.

In addition to the concerns regarding maintenance, the lack of staff is supported by the numbers. American School and University Magazine, in their April, 2005 edition reported that the average square footage per maintenance employee in school division's in the size range of Smyth County is 85,572. With a total square footage in Smyth County schools of 972,990 the square footage per maintenance employee is 194,598 or more than double the national average.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-3:

Employ two additional maintenance staff in the division.

As discussed in the previous sections of this report, the facility maintenance needs for the division are profound. Effort must be made to decrease the response time for the maintenance requests which will both increase morale and provide for a safer environment for adults and children. This can only be accomplished by increasing the number of maintenance personnel capable of responding to the requests. Time is needed to develop a comprehensive plan; deploying that plan will take even longer. A "stop gap" action step is necessary. Two additional employees will not bring the division to the average square footage for maintenance employees but will narrow the current gap.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on an estimated salary of $35,000 per year, plus 25 percent benefits, the cost of adding two maintenance staff members would be $87,500. This cost could be reduced by eliminating some of the outsourcing in this area; however given the needs in the division, current manpower levels should be maintained.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Add Two Maintenance Staff	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)

8.4 *Custodial Services*

There are noticeable differences in the cleanliness of buildings throughout the division. Some buildings are much harder to clean then others, given their age and condition of the building. Some custodian crews appear to be more knowledgeable in how to use chemicals and cleaning processes better than others. The focus of this section will be on training issues that will help equalize the results being achieved in the division's schools.

FINDING

The number of custodians and the hours they are permitted to work vary greatly from building-to-building. Exhibit 8-2 captures this information:

EXHIBIT 8-2
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION
CUSTODIAL HOURS PER WEEK

SCHOOL	SQUARE FOOTAGE	# OF CUSTODIANS	HOURS PER WEEK	AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS PER CUSTODIAN
Marion Senior High	169,200	6	278	46.3
Chilhowie High	74,100	3	130	43.3
Northwood High	114,600	4	123	30.8
Smyth CTC	81,100	2	94	47
Marion Middle	74,300	3	134	44.7
Northwood Middle	60,100	3	95	31.7
Chilhowie Middle	20,471	2	87	43.5
Sugar Grove Combined	51,700	2	87	43.5
Chilhowie Elementary	76,258	4	169	42.3
Marion Intermediate	65,900	3	134	44.7
Marion Primary	65,000	2	92	46.0
Atkins Elementary	26,400	2	90	45.0
Saltville Elementary	50,461	2	87	43.5
Rich Valley Elementary	43,400	2	77	38.5
Total	**972,990**	**40**	**1,677**	**41.9**

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.

The relationship between the square footage cleaned and the number of hours assigned is difficult to understand. The data presented seems more a product of past practice than a result of a systematic approach. The condition of the buildings might have a bearing on the number of custodians and the assigned square footage.

In addition to the variance in the amount of hours per custodian among the buildings the amount of square footage to be cleaned varies as well. Exhibit 8-3 provides an analysis of this discrepancy.

Even taking into consideration the fact that there is a difference in the number of hours per custodian, the differences in square footage remains high.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-4:

Custodial staffing should be assigned on a square footage basis.

There currently exists a wide discrepancy in custodial staffing levels among Smyth County Schools. The division should review the duties of each custodian and make assignments accordingly.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact to this recommendation.

EXHIBIT 8-3
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION
SQUARE FOOTAGE PER CUSTODIAN

SCHOOL	SQUARE FOOTAGE	# OF CUSTODIANS	SQUARE FOOTAGE PER CUSTODIAN
Marion Senior High	169,200	6	28,200
Chilhowie High	74,100	3	24,700
Northwood High	114,600	4	28,650
Smyth Career and Technology Center	81,100	2	40,550
Marion Middle	74,300	3	24,767
Northwood Middle	60,100	3	20,033
Chilhowie Middle	20,471	2	10,236
Sugar Grove Combined	51,700	2	25,850
Chilhowie Elementary	76,258	4	19,065
Marion Intermediate	65,900	3	21,967
Marion Primary	65,000	2	32,500
Atkins Elementary	26,400	2	13,200
Saltville Elementary	50,461	2	25,231
Rich Valley Elementary	43,400	2	21,700
Total	**972,990**	**40**	**24,325**

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.

FINDING

The Smyth County Public Schools does not have written custodial standards as part of their school board policy manual. As a result, the buildings may not be consistently cleaned at the level indicated by the staffing allocation. According to the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA), one custodian can clean approximately 18,000-20,000 sq. ft in an 8-hour period and meet the industry standard of Level 2: "Ordinary Tidiness".

There are three major components of the time and task standards identified by the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers or the APPA Standards:

- Appearance Levels must be defined and described in some detail. (The APPA handbooks provide descriptions for five levels of cleanliness as summarized in Exhibit 8-4.)

- Standard Spaces must be identified to ensure that the difference in the types of spaces and the cleaning effort required of those spaces is clearly distinguished. (The APPA handbooks identify 33 different types of spaces.)

- CSF (Cleanable Square Feet) is an industry standard that is used to measure and compare data.

EXHIBIT 8-4
APPA CLEANLINESS SCALE

Level 1:	Ordinary Spotlessness - Only small amounts of litter and ashes in containers. Floor coverings are kept bright and clean at all times. No dust accumulation on vertical surfaces, very little on horizontal surfaces. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins are kept clean. Only small amounts of spots visible.
Level 2:	Ordinary Tidiness - Only small amounts of litter and ashes in containers. Floor coverings show periods of peak and valleys in appearance. Dusting is maintained at a high level. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins show evidence of spots and dust.
Level 3:	Casual Inattention - Only small amounts of litter and ashes in containers. Floor coverings show periods of peak and valleys in appearance. Dust accumulation on vents, vertical, and horizontal surfaces. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins show accumulations of dust, spots, and prints.
Level 4:	Moderate Dinginess - Waste containers are full and overflowing. Floor coverings are normally dull, marked and spotted with infrequent peaks. Dusting is infrequent and dust balls accumulate. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins are dirty and spotted.
Level 5:	Unkempt Neglect - No trash pickup. Occupants of building are responsible. Regular floor care is eliminated. Dusting is eliminated. All glass, light fixtures, mirrors, and washbasins are very dirty.

Source: APPA: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers, 1998.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 8-5:

Develop standards for custodial services that are consistent with APPA standards.

By having custodial standards, the same level of expectations will create internal consistencies across the school division. This will improve the quality of cleaning and light maintenance activities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Recommendation 8-6:

Develop time and task standards for custodial services.

The Smyth County Public Schools will benefit by having time and task standards for custodians in two major ways:

- The workload for custodians will be more equitably distributed. Schools presently understaffed will receive additional custodian time and will be cleaner.

- It is a well-know motivational principle that higher expectations lead to higher performance. It stands to reason that an organization with no time and task expectations will benefit from improved performance expectations. Exhibit 8-5 details an example of cleaning guidelines as per cleaning standards.

EXHIBIT 8-5
SAMPLE CLEANING GUIDELINES
AS PER CLEANING STANDARDS

Custodial Evaluation

School: _____
Date: _____

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Notes
Classrooms, labs, gyms, offices										
Routine Activities										
1 Vacuum, sweep, dust mop floors										
2 Clean chalkboard or whiteboards and trays										
3 Clean erasers										
4 Empty waste containers										
5 Empty pencil sharpener(s)										
6 Spot-clean walls and doors										
7 Dust flat surfaces										
8 Re-lamp										
Project Activities										
1 Damp-mop floors										
2 Spray buff/burnish floors										
3 Clean trash containers										
4 Dust vents										
5 Interim floor care										
6 Dust blinds										
7 Clean windows - both sides										
8 Strip/refinish floors										
9 Clean light fixtures (project)										
10 Clean furniture and multiple seating (project)										
Hallways, foyers										
Routine Activities										
1 Vacuum, sweep, dust mop floors										
2 Empty waste containers										
3 Spot-clean walls and doors										
4 Dust flat surfaces										
5 Re-lamp										
Project Activities										
1 Damp-mop floors										
2 Spray buff/burnish floors										
3 Clean trash containers										
4 Dust vents										
5 Interim floor care										
6 Dust blinds										
7 Clean windows - both sides										
8 Strip/refinish floors										
9 Clean light fixtures (project)										
10 Clean furniture and multiple seating (project)										
Restrooms, lockers										
Routine Activities										
1 Damp-mop, sanitize floors										
2 Disinfect, sanitize sinks, toilets, and urinals										
3 Clean, sanitize paper dispensers										
4 Clean, sanitize stalls and privacy partitions										
5 Fill paper dispensers										
6 Empty waste containers										
7 Spot-clean walls and doors										
8 Dust flat surfaces										
9 Re-lamp										
Project Activities										
1 Spray buff/burnish floors										
2 Clean trash containers										
3 Dust vents										
4 Clean windows - both sides										
5 Strip/refinish floors										
6 Clean light fixtures (project)										

Source: Smyth County Public School, 2005.

FINDING

Currently there is no systematic method of assessing custodial service quality that ties in with APPA Standards. There is a very basic quality control system in place to determine if custodial care meets the supervisor's expectations. (The direct custodial supervisors are building principals who are not typically trained in the evaluation of facility cleanliness.) Lack of quality control procedures often leads to poor performance.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-7:

Train principals on the APPA standards and have them conduct periodic custodial service quality inspections using forms reflecting the newly adopted custodial standards.

Conducting periodic custodial service quality inspections will enable the school division to gather important information about how custodial services can be improved. The data can be analyzed and shared at the appropriate level of service. Some information may best be shared with custodians, while management personnel may use other information to make structural changes in how, where, or when services are delivered. By training principals on the standards, there can be reduction in the amount of variation in school cleanliness across the division.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The desire to provide clean and sanitary facilities are the norm for the division's schools but schools vary a great deal in how these functions are delivered and the overall results. All buildings, regardless of age and condition, showed effort being placed in providing a suitable learning environment for children; however, when this type of variance exists, it increases the need for appropriate training of custodians as well as the need to standardize assignments. The division currently does not have any structured program of training for custodians.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-8:

Increase the amount and quality of training for all custodians.

Custodians need a proper knowledge and understanding on how best to clean facilities. With training, employees become more aware of new methods and products that provide efficiencies. In addition, the risk of injury decreases when employees are trained in the latest methods and in the hazards of certain products currently in wide use. There are custodial staffs within the buildings that are quite accomplished in the science as well as the art of cleaning surfaces. Sharing that knowledge in a collegial environment would

also prove valuable to all parties involved by creating a stronger sense of pride for the contributions this employee group makes to the mission of the division.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost for implementing this recommendation should be minimal. Often, the companies who provide the cleaning products to schools are willing to offer training on their products as well. These sessions are usually cost free to the division. Cooperating with neighboring school divisions in offering training is an option that should be explored as well.

8.5 *Energy Management*

Efficient energy management is a vital tool for the cost of efficient operation of the Division's utilities. Energy audits and other sources of data are essential to control energy costs. Such data will help to determine priorities and will help to monitor and evaluate the success of a program. While the purpose of the energy management program is to minimize waste and reduce costs, the program also should ensure comfort in occupied spaces and encourage energy awareness across the division.

Energy Management Strategies are implemented in a fragmented manner in the Smyth County Public Schools. Some schools have energy management control systems for operating Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems while others do not. Other schools have them in some parts of the buildings while other portions do not. There is no designated individual(s) responsible for implementing energy management programs, either at the Division or individual school level.

FINDING

With the advent of increased costs for energy to provide fuels for HVAC systems, school systems have established numerous and varied policies, procedures, and methods for increasing efficiencies in energy consumption and reducing operating costs. Policies typically describe the Board's specific desire to ensure that maximum resources are available for instructional purposes and charge the administration with developing related procedures.

Procedures generally prescribe a range of measures and activities to be implemented and a specific means for computing the results. Some Boards develop incentive programs to reward employees for actions or recommendations that have resulted in substantial savings or improvement in the performance of energy consuming equipment.

Energy management methods range from sophisticated, centralized, computer controls over HVAC systems and other energy consumption devices to simple manual procedures for turning thermostats down and lights off during periods of minimal building or room utilization.

Smyth County Public Schools does not have a comprehensive energy management program. The division is not taking advantage of possible significant opportunities to save energy dollars by having an aggressive energy management program. If implemented properly an energy management program will provide substantial energy savings, without sacrificing comfort.

The School Division does not have an individual who is assigned the responsibility of Resource Conservation Manager. Moreover, there is no aggressive program to affect the energy conservation behavior of students and staff in the School Division.

The current Operating and Maintenance budgeted expenditures for the Smyth County Public Schools represent 8% ($3,360,000) of the total operating budget of $42,000,000 which are detailed in Exhibit 8-7.

EXHIBIT 8-7
2005-06 BUDGETED EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION
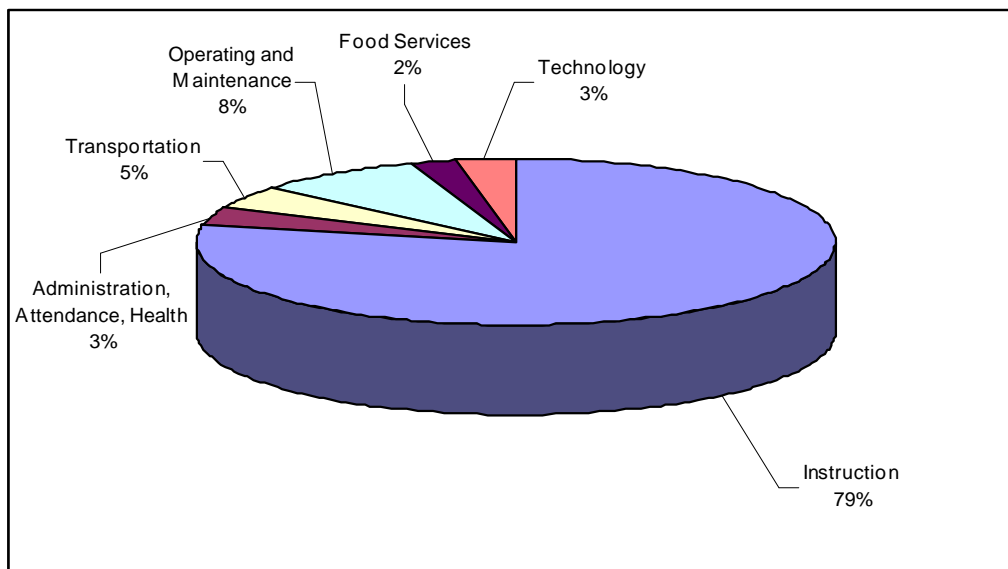
Source: Smyth County Public Schools Budget Book, April 28, 2005.

Common energy management programs include the following components:

- coordinating with neighboring utilities to ensure best rates;

- monitoring utility use for irregularities which may indicate leaks;

- preparing and distributing facility checklists during holiday periods;

- checking heating, ventilating, and air conditioning units in schools and portable classrooms;

- training staff in thermostat operation;

- consulting on design of new schools;

■ overseeing scheduling of times of operation for HVAC equipment at all schools;

■ checking all utility meters;

■ checking utility bills for accuracy; and,

■ conducting education programs for building users.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-9:

Employ a Resource Conservation Manager to lower utility costs.

A Resource Conservation Manager can act as an instructional resource to school principals and teachers regarding energy conservation. Through this role, the Resource Conservation Manager can affect behavioral change in staff and students. The rate of behavioral change can be accelerated with an incentive program for students and staff (e.g. funds from recycling, additional supply budgets as a percent of utility savings).

One school district in Indiana, similar to Smyth County Public Schools, reported a savings of $885,469 in cost avoidance for utility expenses from February 2002 – December 2005. Cost avoidance entails dollars saved for utility expenses as well as factoring in increased costs due to inflation and other factors. The School District is working with Energy Education Inc. P.O. Box 780, Wichita Falls, TX (940-767-1500). The district employs a part-time Resource Conservation Manager. MGT of America is not recommending a specific firm but would like to suggest that these types of firms exist, specializing in energy conservation measures and have been successful in achieving results.

Through careful monitoring of utility bills, the Resource Conservation Manager can provide guidance to the Director of Transportation and Facilities regarding which utility cost intervention programs would have the best payback. The Resource Conservation Manager can also be directly involved in obtaining grants and incentives from utility companies. A sample job description for a Resource Conservation manager is provided in Exhibit 8-7. The Resource Conservation Manager should report to the Director of Transportation and Maintenance.

EXHIBIT 8-7
RESOURCE CONSERVATION MANAGER (RCM)
PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Monitor and report resource use habits and trends.

2. Establish a resource accounting database using compatible software.

3. Coordinate with the facility operator to identify conservation opportunities.

4. Complete walk-through surveys of each facility during and after normal operating hours using standardized survey forms.

5. Report base year consumption data to management and building staff. Coordinate with the building staff conservation opportunities and review the heating and lighting procedures at the school. Direct development and implementation of Resource Conservation management plans.

6. Prepare monthly status reports that include an assessment of conservation savings for review by management, building staff and occupants.

7. Coordinate with management to provide resource efficiency information and training for all staff and occupants through such means as newsletters, presentations and workshops.

8. Develop a recognition program that encourages actions toward savings goals and provides financial rewards for each building when goals are met.

9. Coordinate with interested staff to develop conservation teams to assist with implementation of program initiatives in their buildings.

10. Develop a recognition program that encourages monthly monitoring of conservation savings and provides incentives for individual buildings to achieve beyond minimum threshold levels.

11. Establish a bulletin board at each school that tracks the progress of the school's conservation savings.

12. Consult with the Business Office regarding the administration of the conservation *share-the-savings* rebates to the schools.

13. Coordinate with interested teachers the development and implementation of student conservation groups to monitor and reduce energy and natural resource consumption in their school buildings. Establish student "energy patrols".

14. Encourage the use of school building as learning laboratories to model energy conservation and environmental stewardship practices that may apply at school and at home.

15. Cooperate with the Curriculum Department to integrate energy and environmental education into the District's curricula and facilitate teacher workshops.

16. Work closely with representatives of local utilities

Source: Created by MGT America.

FISCAL IMPACT

Both costs and savings determine the fiscal impact of this program for the Smyth County Public Schools. The cost of a Resource Conservation Manager is estimated to be $50,000 ($41,000 plus 22 percent benefits). Based on utility savings reported by other districts, the utility savings realized through behavioral changes in students and staff through the implementation of a Resource Conservation Manager is estimated to equal $100,800 (3 percent of total Operating and Maintenance budget expenditures of $3,360,000 as detailed in Exhibit 8-7). The net savings of the program is $50,800 per year.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Employ Resource Conservation Manager	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)
Generate Utility Savings	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800
Net Savings	**$50,800**	**$50,800**	**$50,800**	**$50,800**	**$50,800**

9.0   TRANSPORTATION

9.0 TRANSPORTATION

One of the most important functions and responsibilities of any school division is the transportation of our nation's children. Each day during the school year, the nation's school buses move millions of students from hamlets, towns, cities and rural areas to and from school.

This chapter presents the major findings, commendations, and recommendations for the transportation function in Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS). The five major sections of this chapter are:

9.1   Organization and Staffing
9.2   Planning, Policies and Procedures
9.3   Training and Safety
9.4   Vehicle Maintenance
9.5   Facilities

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Overall, the SCPS Transportation Department provides effective and efficient student transportation services. The department is in compliance with most Virginia Department of Education policies and procedures. The department does an effective job controlling costs, training drivers, maintaining buses, maintaining its commercial fleet, and delivering students to and from their destinations.

Notable accomplishments of the Transportation Department in the areas of financial management, bus replacement policy and vehicle maintenance are:

- The department has done an outstanding job incorporating and applying sound fiscal practices to maximize the funding resources received at both the local and Commonwealth levels.

- The Director of Transportation and the shop foreman have established and followed a coordinated approach to effectively replace buses based on the Commonwealth-adopted bus replacement schedule of every twelve years. The board has yet to adopt the policy of a twelve year replacement cycle.

- The vehicle maintenance program implemented by the shop foreman is of high quality and aligned to the laws and regulations specific to the Commonwealth of Virginia. This program is supervised and executed more than adequately.

The division needs to improve in the areas of technology to assist in bus maintenance records and record storage; to acquire a new bus maintenance shop and parking facility; and to secure appropriate communication technologies to ensure drivers, transportation staff, and division staff can communicate at all time. Specifically:

- The Transportation Director, shop foreman, and mechanics need to begin recording all bus maintenance records into a computerized

system for accurately recording and storing all bus service records. Currently, all records are paper-based and stored in metal file cabinets at the bus garage. The lack of a records retention and storage process leaves the division susceptible to the loss of these important artifacts.

■ SCPS does not have adequate maintenance facilities to meet the operation requirements of the division transportation system. The maintenance facility only has the capacity to accommodate two buses and one motor vehicle at a time. This inadequacy leads to inefficient practices and creates additional vehicle service issues on the mechanical staff and transportation staff.

■ SCPS Transportation Department has serious challenges providing bus drivers with an effective two-way communication system. Consequently, there is a danger of bus drivers and students being placed in critical transportation situations which may adversely affect the drivers and students safety.

INTRODUCTION

SCPS geographic configuration is both urban and rural with a minimal level of growth and development. With a 2004-05 student population of 5,129 students, the SCPS School Board anticipates per annum student growth of less than two percent over the next 10 years.

In 2004-05, the division provided transportation on a daily basis for approximately 4,126 students traveling to and from 13 school centers, attending field trips, after school activities and shuttles to other locations. Among those served were 52 exclusive students, who, because of their varying disabilities or special needs, required special arrangements to school sites throughout the county.

SCPS provides bus transportation, free of charge, to all qualified students to and from school within the student's attendance area. Transportation is also provided between the home or school and other educational facilities operated by SCPS in which the student is enrolled. Students may be required to meet a bus at an assigned stop, not to exceed the distance of one-half mile from his/her residence, on a state maintained road. SCPS is in compliance with the Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-176 which states, in part, "County School Boards may provide transportation of pupils, but nothing herein contained shall be construed as requiring such transportation."

MGT conducted a survey of SCPC administrators, principals, teachers as part of this efficiency review. They were asked to indicate *agree/strongly agree* or *disagree/strongly disagree* with the statement, "Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time. As Exhibit 9-1 indicates, 71 percent of administrators, 92 percent of principals, and 72 percent of teachers indicated that they *disagree/strongly disagree* with that statement.

EXHIBIT 9-1
TRANSPORTATION COMPARISON SURVEY
RESPONSES OF ADMINISTRATORS, PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION

RESPONDENT GROUP	% INDICATING AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE	% INDICATING DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE
SCSD Administrators	0%	71%
SCSD Principals	4%	92%
SCSD Teachers	8%	72%

Source: MGT Survey, 2005.

The most recent data available from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is for the 2002-03 school year. Therefore, comparative analysis of SCPS and five peer school divisions use five-year reports from 1998-98 to 2002-03 as provided by VDOE along with relevant information and data from the SCPS Transportation Department.

Exhibit 9-2 provides a five-year overview of students transported in each school division. It is important to note that pupils provided transportation by SCPS are the total number of riders (morning and afternoon runs) using school transportation services. As indicated, the peer school division average in 1998-99 was 4,168 and declined to 4,073 in 2002-03; registering a reduction of 95 students. In contrast, during the same five-year period, SCPS student totals increased by 109; from 4,375 students in 1998-99 to 4,484 in 2002-03.

EXHIBIT 9-2
FIVE-YEAR TOTAL OF STUDENTS TRANSPORTED YEARLY COMPARED TO
PEER DIVISIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1998-99 THROUGH 2002-03

SCHOOL DIVISION	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Accomack County	5,016	5,014	5,018	4,713	3,987
Carroll County	3,118	3,214	3,642	3,450	3,303
Culpepper County	3,996	4,130	4,130	4,221	4,281
Isle of Wight County	4,917	4,148	4,222	4,241	4,588
Pulaski County	3,588	3,601	3,758	3,806	3,796
Smyth County	**4,375**	**4,311**	**4,413**	**4,357**	**4,484**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION TOTAL	**25,010**	**24,418**	**25,183**	**24,788**	**24,439**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION AVERAGE	**4,168**	**4,069**	**4,197**	**4,131**	**4,073**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2005.
*Note: Numerical entries are totals for students transported morning and afternoon runs.

Yearly transportation costs for SCPS and comparison peer divisions are shown in Exhibit 9-3. In 1998-99, the peer school division average cost was $1,687,885. It increased 21 percent to $2,041,572 by 2002-03. The same trend, an increase from $1,221,967 to $1,543,909 resulted in a 26 percent increase for SCPS.

It is important to note that these increases correspond to similar increases throughout the nation for school transportation services. Higher costs for parts and supplies, more

expensive buses, rising personnel costs, and higher fuel costs directly impact school transportation expenses.

EXHIBIT 9-3
FIVE-YEAR TRANSPORTATION COSTS COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1998-99 THROUGH 2002-03

SCHOOL DIVISION	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Accomack County	$2,203,315	$2,417,417	$2,432,613	$2,054,565	$2,466,624
Carroll County	$1,697,845	$1,833,426	$1,620,396	$1,796,760	$2,010,048
Culpepper County	$1,813,633	$1,995,621	$2,001,119	$2,123,834	$2,109,133
Isle of Wight County	$1,752,733	$2,321,748	$2,076,497	$2,170,303	$2,733,766
Pulaski County	$1,437,817	$1,494,700	$1,650,803	$1,629,460	$1,385,953
Smyth County	**$1,221,967**	**$1,337,637**	**$1,366,224**	**$1,495,971**	**$1,543,909**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION TOTAL	**$10,127,310**	**$11,400,549**	**$11,147,652**	**$11,270,893**	**$12,249,433**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION AVERAGE	**$1,687,885**	**$1,900,092**	**$1,857,942**	**$1,878,482**	**$2,041,572**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2005.

Student transportation services are significantly impacted by how efficiently regular and exclusive (special education) students are transported. Exhibit 9-4 (regular students transported) and Exhibit 9-5 (exclusive students transported) provide comparisons with peer divisions.

EXHIBIT 9-4
REGULAR STUDENTS TRANSPORTED COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1998-99 THROUGH 2002-03

SCHOOL DIVISION	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Accomack County	4,927	4,941	4,953	4,648	3,860
Carroll County	3,068	3,159	3,585	3,394	3,241
Culpepper County	3,898	3,998	3,998	4,127	4,152
Isle of Wight County	4,859	4,071	4,143	4,143	4,487
Pulaski County	3,505	3,515	3,644	3,689	3,678
Smyth County	4,301	4,191	4,294	4,283	4,433
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION TOTAL	**24,558**	**23,875**	**24,617**	**24,284**	**23,851**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION AVERAGE	**4,093**	**3,979**	**4,103**	**4,047**	**3,975**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2005.

EXHIBIT 9-5
EXCLUSIVE STUDENTS TRANSPORTED COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1998-2003 SCHOOL YEARS

SCHOOL DIVISION	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Accomack County	89	73	65	65	60
Carroll County	50	55	57	56	62
Culpepper County	98	132	132	94	129
Isle of Wight County	51	67	71	90	99
Pulaski County	80	82	103	114	115
Smyth County	**70**	**120**	**119**	**74**	**51**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION TOTAL	**438**	**529**	**547**	**493**	**516**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION AVERAGE	**73**	**88**	**91**	**82**	**86**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2005.

As the exhibits show, in 1998-99 SCPS transported 4,371 students, of which 4,301 or 98 percent, were regular students and 70, or two percent, were exclusive students. In 2002-03, SCPS transported 4,484 students, of which 4,433 or 99 percent, were regular students and 51, or one percent were exclusive students. In comparison, the peer division average total in 1998-99 was 4,166 of which 4,093, or 98 percent, were regular students and 73, or two percent, were exclusive students. In 2002-03 the peer division total average of students transported was 4,061 students of which 3,975, or 98 percent, were regular students and 86, or two percent, were exclusive students. By 2002-03, SCPS exclusive student transportation requirements had decreased one percentage point, whereas the peer divisions remained at a constant two percent. Over a five-year period, the number of exclusive students transported in SCPS decreased by 30 percent while increasing 18 percent in the peer comparison divisions.

The cost per mile for regular and exclusive students is shown in Exhibit 9-6. Three of the peer selections (Carroll, Accomack, and Pulaski) had costs per mile for regular students below the peer average of $1.75, while Isle of Wight was slightly above average and Culpepper was 42 percent higher. Peer selections for exclusive student cost per mile all exceeded the peer average of $2.03 with the exception of Accomack and Carroll. As the exhibit shows, SCPS transported regular and exclusive students at a cost of $2.00 per mile.

Exhibit 9-7 provides a comparison of the number of deadhead miles in 2002-03. Deadhead miles are defined as mileage spent moving to begin a route or spent going to pickup a student prior to commencing transportation service. Deadhead miles can be considerable and they add significantly to student transportation costs. As the exhibit shows, SCPS is significantly below its peer comparison group in deadhead miles (201) and the cost of those miles ($402).

EXHIBIT 9-6
COST PER MILE FOR REGULAR AND EXCLUSIVE STUDENTS
COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2002-03 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	REGULAR STUDENTS COST PER MILE	EXCLUSIVE STUDENT COST PER MILE
Accomack County	$1.39	$1.70
Carroll County	$1.32	$1.32
Culpepper County	$2.49	$2.49
Isle of Wight County	$1.84	$2.47
Pulaski County	$1.46	$2.17
Smyth County	**$2.00**	**$2.00**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION AVERAGE	**$1.75**	**$2.03**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION TOTAL	**$10.50**	**$12.15**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2005.

EXHIBIT 9-7
DEADHEAD MILES COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2002-03 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	DEADHEAD MILES	COST
Accomack County	112,570	$156,371
Carroll County	206,791	$272,955
Culpepper County	175,733	$437,576
Isle of Wight County	111,410	$204,580
Pulaski County	63,907	$93,307
Smyth County	**201**	**$402**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION AVERAGE	**111,769**	**$194,198**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION TOTAL	**670,612**	**$1,165,191**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2005.

Exhibit 9-8 shows that SCPS, for the 2002-03 school year, had 20 spare buses, which was 24 percent of its entire fleet ratio. The peer group average during the same time was 15 spares, or 19 percent of the fleet average. The 2004-05 bus inventory listing provided by the Transportation Department shows there are currently 75 buses in the inventory.

EXHIBIT 9-8
PUPILS, BUSES AND SPARE BUSES COMPARED TO PEER DIVISIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2002-03 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DIVISION	PUPILS	BUSES	SPARE BUSES	PERCENT SPARES	SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT STUDENTS*
Accomack County	3,987	91	11	12%	67
Carroll County	3,303	81	7	9%	0
Culpepper County	4,281	83	17	20%	0
Isle of Wight County	4,588	78	22	28%	2
Pulaski County	3,796	62	13	21%	3
Smyth County	**4,484**	**82**	**20**	**24%**	**0**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION AVERAGE	**4,073**	**80**	**15**	**19%**	**12**
PEER SCHOOL DIVISION TOTAL	**24,439**	**477**	**90**	**N/A**	**72**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, 2005.
*Transportation of special education students

9.1   *Organization and Staffing*

Exhibit 9-9 shows how the SCPS Transportation Department is currently structured to accomplish daily operations. The director reports to the Superintendent. The Area Coordinators are responsible for the operational core function of ensuring that students are transported to and from school in a safe and timely fashion. When the director is absent, the administrative assistant is next in the line of authority. The staffing levels shown are based on division precedent and are not the result of a staffing formula.

EXHIBIT 9-9
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR
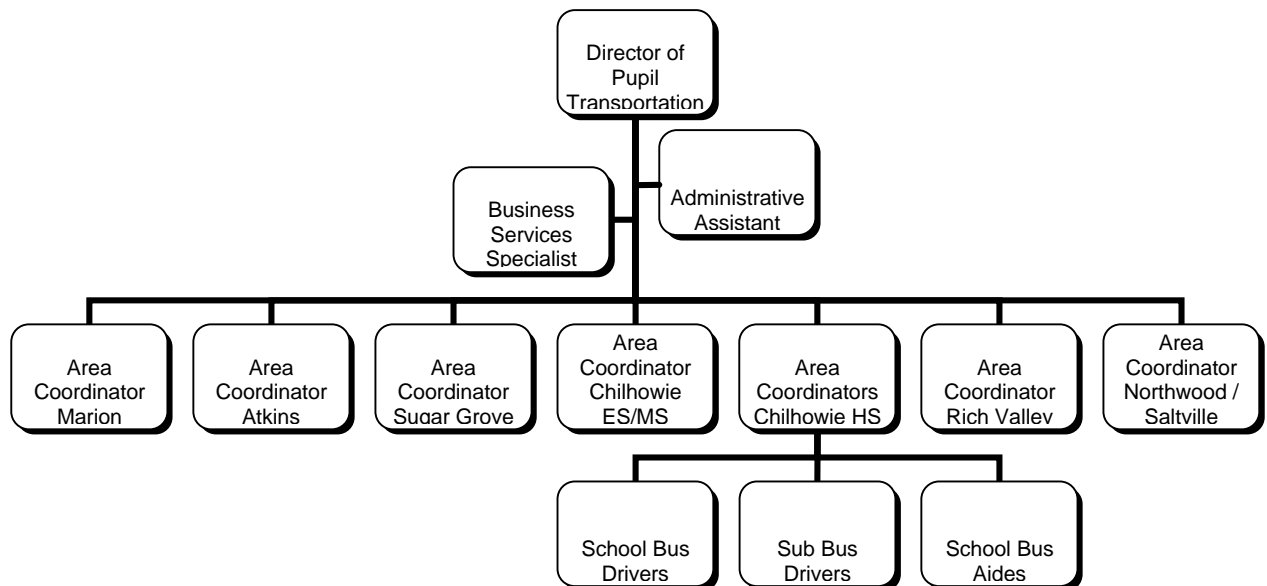
Source: SCPS, Department of Transportation, 2005.
*Area coordinators are responsible for the supervision of bus drivers, sub drivers and bus aides in their area of responsibility.

FINDING

There are 55 full-time drivers, as well as 25 substitutes and 20 staff aides. All of the key positions shown on the chart are qualified bus drivers and may be summoned to serve as a substitute when needed. The department has an active recruiting program and does have enough regular drivers for its planned routes and other transportation activities.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County Public Schools is commended for its effective bus driver staffing program.

9.2   *Planning, Policies, and Procedures*

The SCPS Transportation Unit has an experienced staff. There are published SCPS policies and procedures for transportation, including a clear statement of mission and goals, and a Transportation Procedures Manual. Their staff does participate in the formal budget projections process.

Some exclusive education students are transported by non-bus vehicles which are part of the total transportation fleet. Other unique transportation requirements may be necessary in order to transport students to and from the off-site education facilities.

SCPS allows drivers to take buses home if they are closer to their first pickup point than they would be if they parked in a bus lot. This policy reduces deadhead miles and enhances the timely start of routes in the morning.

The internal procedures for the department are developed by applying knowledge gained from operations or adapting to directed policy changes. The Transportation Manual was last updated in November 2004. MGT found this manual to be comprehensive and complete. Staff and drivers (new and old) are informed about changes in procedures through the in-service training that occurs twice annually. Attendees at the training sessions are paid for their time. The training is conducted by division-certified school transportation trainers, but the director participates and contributes.

FINDING

The Transportation Department has several processes in place for monitoring performance and contributing to a system of continual improvement. The Director of Transportation and key staff members measure performance by examining the annual reports from all of the school administrators to assess how the schools evaluate transportation performance. Additionally, the data that feeds the annual report to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is reviewed for performance indicators. Drivers, trainers, and the shop foreman submit data on mileage, costs per mile, deadhead mileage, hazardous routes, accidents, and the number of students transported. Most of this information is paper based. In the area of maintenance, shop records are verified to assess compliance with the policy that every bus receives a service/safety inspection every 30 days.

There are procedures in place to handle complaints waged by students, parents, and the general public. If the complaint is about a driver, it is normally investigated by the school principal who then seeks to resolve the issue. The director's assistant maintains a complaint file after review by the director. Depending on the issue, the complaint might be referred to in the annual evaluation. If the issue is minor, such as a dispute over a pick-up time, it is resolved and the complaint is discarded. A review of several driver records confirmed that both complaints and commendations are maintained therein.

COMMENDATION

Smyth County Public Schools Transportation Department is commended for its focus on assessing performance and seeking continuous improvement.

FINDING

SCPS does not have a board-adopted comprehensive school bus replacement plan. The division is currently using a 12-year plan. SCPS staff indicated the decision to implement a 12-year bus replacement plan was predicated on observations of neighboring divisions and their bus replacement plans in addition to state suggested replacement schedules. Division staff indicated that a nearby county currently uses the 12-year old buses as spares; however, SCPS will need them in the future for regular runs as well as extra-curricular and athletic events.

Exhibit 9-10 shows 19 buses which are in excess of 12 years of age and are in need of replacement. MGT found that 11 of the 67 buses listed have been purchased and eight of the 75 total buses in the fleet have been designated for surplus and are awaiting dispersal.

EXHIBIT 9-10
BUS REPLACEMENTS BY YEAR PURCHASED SINCE 1990
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

YEAR PURCHASED	NUMBER OF BUSES NEEDING TO BE REPLACED	FUEL USE TYPE
1990	5	Diesel
1991	5	Diesel
1992	9	Diesel
1993	4	Diesel
1994	1	Diesel
1995	8	Diesel
1996	0	Diesel
1997	4	Diesel
1998	0	Diesel
1999	3	Diesel
2000	7	Diesel
2001	1	Diesel
2002	4	Diesel
2003	5	Diesel
2004	0	Diesel
2005	11	Diesel
TOTAL BUSES	**67**	**Diesel**
AVERAGE AGE OF SMYTH COUNTY BUSES IS 7 YEARS (PURCHASED IN 1998)		
MEAN AGE OF SMYTH COUNTY BUSES IS 8 YEARS (PURCHASED IN 1997)		

Source: SCPS Transportation Department, February 2005.

The typical useful life of school buses is between 10 and 15 years. The Virginia Department of Education recommends a 10-year depreciation cycle for 64-passenger buses and a 12-year replacement cycle for 78-passenger buses. In SCPS the division has set in place a purchasing cycle which will effectively meet the goal of a 12-year replacement cycle in two to three more years depending on the planned purchasing for SY 2006 and SY 2007. SCPS needs to purchase an average of four buses per year in each of the SY 2006 and SY 2007. At that time, SCPS will have 67 buses less than twelve years of age. This allows for a spare bus level of 15 percent which is at the higher end of the recommended VDOE level of 10 percent – 15 percent. In discussion with the Transportation Director and review of the various routes and extracurricular activities, SCPS needs the additional spare buses to maintain operational efficiencies.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-1:

Adopt a formal school board policy establishing a 12-year bus replacement cycle.

Although the initial decision to establish a 12-year replacement cycle has not been approved by the SCPS School Board, the Transportation Director should draft a policy for review and approval by the Superintendent and SCPS School Board. There is an immediate need for eight new buses.

This recommendation should be implemented with the start of the 2006-07 school year.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will be on-going, as buses are replaced. Due to some buses being over 12 years, there are additional immediate costs. Purchase of the recommended four buses per year in the ensuing SY 2006 and SY 2007 should cost the division $300,000 per year, assuming the average cost of a new bus is $75,000. This amount falls within the current amounts budgeted by the Division.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Purchase Four Replacement Buses Annually.	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)

9.3   *Training and Safety*

SCPS transportation training and safety programs are the responsibility of the director and the four certified driver trainers. These positions have a stated goal to monitor all safety issues related to pupil transportation, investigate all accidents, and file accidents reports with VDOE. The Certified Trainers are also responsible for the planning, integration, and implementation of all training for personnel assigned to the department.

The SCPS Transportation Department stresses the importance of maintaining an active and responsive program to keep its personnel highly trained. It also sets high standards of safety and has a stated policy to achieve zero injuries and zero chargeable accidents.

FINDING

The Safety and Training Program in place at SCPS has been in place for over five years. The trainers are energetic, enthusiastic, professional, and deeply concerned about providing a highly competent training program.

- Safety meetings are conducted for all drivers;

- SCPS bus drivers possess a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL), are 21 years of age, and are generally physically fit to operate a school bus safely;

- State mandated classroom and 24-hours behind the wheel training is completed by all bus drivers; and

- Training, as required, is conducted for all other personnel assigned to the Transportation Department.

Exhibit 9-11 shows training offered, whether it is required by law, employee satisfaction, certification, or pay differential. SCPS transportation staff development consists of training that is conducted or provided for all personnel in the Transportation Department. The Director of Transportation is aware that well-trained bus drivers and staff contribute to operational and cost-efficiencies.

EXHIBIT 9-11
TRANSPORTATION-RELATED STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAINING
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR

TRAINING OFFERED	REQUIRED BY LAW	EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION	CERTIFICATION	ANY PAY DIFFERENTIAL
CPR & First Aid	Yes	Moderate	Yes	No
Driver Training	Yes	High	Yes	Yes
VA Assn. for Pupil Transportation	Yes	High	Yes	No
Special Needs*	Yes	High	Yes	No
Passenger Control	Yes	High	No	No
Safety	Yes	High	Yes	No
DMV Regulations	Yes	High	No	No
Drug Abuse	Yes	High	Yes	No
Bus Evacuation of Students*	Yes	High	Yes	No
Radio and Cell Phone Use	Yes	High	Yes	No
School Bus Safety Curriculum	Yes	High	Yes	No
EDULOG Training	No	High	Yes	No

Source: SPSD Transportation Department, November 2005.
*Training hosted by Virginia Department of Education at away locations for two or more days.

Overall, the SCPS training program is high quality. The training staff provides adequate initial, on-going and specialized training for all transportation staff. Additional training for both trainers and drivers is available through the VDOE. All drivers are in compliance with VDOE regulations and appropriate processes and systems are in place for monitoring.

The responsibilities of the Safety and Training Program are to ensure all drivers are trained and well prepared. SCPS through an effective curriculum and highly skilled driver trainers is meeting this responsibility. SCPS drivers are well prepared and provide a safe and responsible environment for all students. The resources to support the training program are included in the annual budget and are used appropriately. Supplies and materials associated with the training program are provided on an on-going basis to all staff. Trainers are available for questions and overall communication regarding the program is frequent and timely.

COMMENDATION

The Smyth County Public Schools Transportation Department, in conjunction with the driver trainers, provides a highly effective training program.

FINDING

Interviews with the director, key staff, and comments in the bus driver focus group reveal that not having sufficient, reliable two-way communications adversely affects the overall transportation operation. Not only is key division transportation staff unable to reach drivers during normal route times, drivers and aides cannot reach emergency personnel should a health, safety or security issue arise. Several drivers do carry personal cellular phones, but cell coverage in large portions of the county is inadequate or non-existent. This concern is further exacerbated during extracurricular trips, field trips, and athletic trips.

During the on-site review, MGT staff found that the division has problems maintaining effective communication with drivers during normal route times. The recurring need for reliable communications significantly impacts the safety and security of drivers, students, and staff.

This departmental practice results in a loss of efficiency and effectiveness. Drivers are not able to make contact with division transportation staff during critical situations that may arise during normal as well as before and after school routes. These safety and security issues leave the division in an extremely vulnerable position and could result in unexpected consequences.

In other school divisions, this problem has been solved by using industry standard two-way communication systems. In some cases these systems are solely owned and operated by the division or are operated in conjunction with other county service providers, such as county communications systems already in existence.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-2:

Purchase and outfit all buses with industry-standard communication systems.

Immediately purchase industry-standard communication systems for all school buses, vans, and transportation vehicles within the division. Two-way radios installed in the

buses, vans, and transportation vehicles will greatly decrease the response times to driver, student, and staff safety and security issues.

To implement this recommendation, the Director of Transportation should obtain approval of the Superintendent through the Assistant Superintendent for Financial and Administrative Services to purchase radios for all transportation vehicles including buses and vans. Once radios have been installed a cooperative agreement between the school division and the county maintenance department should be enacted for the sharing of tower communication services. This agreement will reduce the cost of implementation significantly to the school division.

FISCAL IMPACT

Costs for this recommendation will require a one-time outlay of approximately $28,350. This includes $250 for radios and $100 installation costs per unit for 79 buses, one base station, and one truck.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Install Communication Systems on Buses.	($28,350)	$0	$0	$0	$0

9.4 Vehicle Maintenance

SCPS vehicle maintenance responsibilities are performed by two full-time mechanics. The Shop Foreman is a qualified senior mechanic and if required, may augment or support mechanic responsibilities in operational situations, providing a total of three mechanics when needed. The Vehicle Maintenance Section operates from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Mechanics work staggered shifts, with each mechanic completing eight hours. The Shop Foreman has been in his position of responsibility for over 25 years and reports to the Director of Transportation.

FINDING

The SCPS vehicle maintenance section has a sufficient number of mechanics and provides outstanding service.

The transportation industry and majority of school divisions nationwide have a common ratio of one mechanic per 20 to 30 vehicles with the average being approximately 1:25. The SCPS mechanic-to-vehicle ratio is above the national average of 1:25. When factoring age of the fleet, the expertise of the mechanics and level of maintenance performed, the mechanic-to-vehicle ratio is adequate as reflected by an SCPS outstanding maintenance program.

The staff keeps records on the type of repairs and cost data are adequately captured to show which bus was repaired, what was repaired, who repaired it, where was it repaired, and what the cost of the repair was.

Of the many school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia and other school systems in other states evaluated by MGT, the accomplishments by the mechanics of the Transportation Department to maintain and repair buses and other vehicles and equipment in the fleet inventory is one of the best.

COMMENDATION

The SCPS Transportation Department mechanics are commended for the outstanding service they provide maintaining the fleet.

FINDING

The Transportation Maintenance program has a paper-based vehicle information maintenance system which does not conform to Commonwealth of Virginia School Review Procedures as they relate to transportation. Although the state-required records for school bus maintenance are captured in this system and are accurate and reflect the VDOE-established procedures for vehicle tracking, the efficiency of this system as well as the ability to provide adequate document storage and backup are compromised.

The SCPS Transportation Department does not meet the Commonwealth guidelines for a highly-effective Vehicle Maintenance Information System (VMIS), which employ several technological innovations and indicators to manage the fleet. A comprehensive computerized vehicle information management system should be brought on-line to more efficiently manage the SCPS transportation fleet.

The SCPS records system is extremely vulnerable to loss and/or damage. The transportation records are stored in three file cabinets in the shop foreman's office. The shop foreman has institutional knowledge regarding each of the transportation and non-transportation vehicles. However, in the event of a loss of the paper-managed system, record retrieval would be extremely difficult and would greatly impact the maintenance and repair schedules for the transportation vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-3:

Purchase and implement a Vehicle Maintenance Information System (VMIS).

SCPS implementation of a vehicle maintenance information system is critically important. A VMIS system implementation in SCPS would eliminate several risk factors related to records retention and storage.

FISCAL IMPACT

Base pricing on a VMIS system is reflected in the table below. These costs are an average of system prices from around the country provided by multiple vendors. The implementation of this type of software is relatively simple and can be handled by the existing SCPS technology staff.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Purchase and Implement a VMIS.	($3,000)	($700)	$0	$0	$0

9.5 *Transportation Facilities*

FINDING

The Transportation Department is facing some critical decisions about its maintenance facility. The current facility does not have the capacity to meet the division's future needs.

Currently, County and City officials are making county road decisions that will affect division property used for the Marion Bus parking area. These city and county rulings will eventually impact the Marion bus parking facility and the combination of repair vehicles and regular route buses cannot be accommodated at the current maintenance facility one-half mile away. The division is in the process of examining several options in relocating both facilities to another location, yet to be determined.

The division would benefit if it were to conduct a comprehensive analysis to determine the most effective options in developing a new transportation and bus maintenance facility. The division should consider future capacity, overall utilization of the new facility and what existing properties might be available for consideration in approaching their decision. The SCPS Transportation Department will benefit considerably in operational effectiveness by providing an updated facility for use by both driver and maintenance staff.

While conducting an on-site evaluation of the current maintenance facility, MGT staff found that certain maintenance functions cannot be performed because of facility limitations. These limitations include major maintenance capabilities, as well as routine daily service activities. The current facility has a number of antiquated features which hinder the performance of these duties. The division maintenance staff is severely limited by age and functionality of the current facility.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-4:

Include the facility needs of the Transportation Department with the development of a division facilities master plan.

Including the need for an updated transportation facility within the facilities master plan will benefit the division in its efforts to provide the most operationally efficient transportation program possible.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact is included in the facilities chapter of this study.

10.0 TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AND USE

10.0 TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AND USE

This chapter reviews administrative and instructional technology use in the Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS). The four major sections are:

10.1	Technology Planning
10.2	Organization and Staffing
10.3	Infrastructure and Web Development
10.4	Inventory Control and Asset Management

CHAPTER SUMMARY

When reviewing the administrative technology resources of a school system, MGT examines the computing environment within which the administrative applications operate; the applications themselves and the degree to which they satisfy user needs; the manner in which the infrastructure supports the overall operations of the school system; and the organizational structure within which the administrative technology support personnel operate.

In reviewing instructional technology, MGT analyzes all areas that contribute (or should contribute) to the effective use of technology in the classroom. This includes broad areas such as the technology plan; the organizational structure and the infrastructure to more specific resources available in the classroom, such as the type of hardware employed; the method of selecting software; and the access to outside resources. Other critical factors assessed include staff development for teachers, school-level technology support and maintenance, and the equitable distribution of technology among schools.

The findings in this evaluation have resulted in several recommendations for the division. These include:

- Involve the Smyth County Public Schools Technology Advisory Committee in the monitoring and implementation of the SCPS Technology Services Plan.

- Reorganize the Technology Services and Instructional Technology units to report based on service alignment functions rather than technological functions.

- Develop a proposal detailing the activities within the technology plan that support telecommunications upgrades and submit the items for approval.

- Develop and implement stringent asset and inventory control measures for all technology equipment.

INTRODUCTION

The Technology Services Department (TSD) is the unit that supports all technology use in the Smyth County Public Schools. The Director of Technology reports directly to the

Superintendent. There are four technicians and five instructional technology resource teachers that report directly to the Director of Technology.

Exhibit 10-1 depicts the organizational structure of the unit. This staff is responsible for:

- Computer Hardware and Network Support
- Instructional Technology
- Network Administration, Maintenance, Infrastructure, and Servers
- Repair and Maintenance of Computers and Peripherals
- Resource and Security Control
- Telecommunications
- Testing and Deployment of all Instructional Software and Hardware
- Support and Maintenance of Software Applications

EXHIBIT 10-1
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
2005

Source: Smyth County Public Schools Technology Services Organizational Chart, 2005.

TSD maintains the following equipment for the division in the schools, administrative offices, and satellite locations:

- 1,100 computers
- 50 servers
- 80 networked printers
- Network switches
- Network routers
- District connectivity – DS3, 14 DS1 circuits

The distribution of computers at the schools cannot be determined at this time due to the lack of inventory controls and a documented asset control process. This leaves exact

inventory levels difficult to ascertain. There is no per facility/site inventory of existing computer equipment. The total number of computers has been determined from existing purchasing documentation.

Several questions on the MGT survey of central administrators, principals, and teachers relate to technology development and implementation in SCPS. Exhibit 10-2 reviews some of the relevant survey responses. As the exhibit shows, there is an overall high level of satisfaction within the district regarding the amount of technology usage, although teachers were, generally, the least satisfied group in this regard. Although the survey did not specifically ask about technology-related staff development, responses to general staff development questions indicate that they could be driven by concerns with technology training. Although most respondents were generally satisfied with SCPS administrative technology and the technology they use in completing their job responsibilities, a significant minority was dissatisfied with process and procedures that typically rely on technology, including data processing. In addition, there seems to be a consistently higher level of dissatisfaction relative to Instructional Technology than any other specific technology area surveyed.

Ten years ago, technology was seen as an add-on in school districts, indeed in many organizations, including private businesses. Now, technology is a foundational aspect of almost every organization.

Planning is the key to success for using technology. This not only applies to school systems, but to each of its individual schools. A school should have a technology plan that is closely aligned with its curricula. Similarly, a school system's technology plan should be designed to help the school system achieve its educational goals.

The value of planning cannot be overstated. It is the only way that educational enterprises can adequately address the five most critical factors related to the use of technology, as outlined below:

- **Training**. Professional development is critical for all staff and is especially important for teachers since they are responsible for creating an effective learning environment for students. Unless serious attention is given to what training will be provided, how it will be delivered, when and how frequently it can be made available, and to whom it is directed, effective training will not be the result. The price of inadequate training is a considerable loss in the "payoff" on the investment in educational technology resources.

- **Equity**. Despite the best intentions, there often is a variance in the level of technology resources available at each school. Unfortunately, technology can widen the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" if such an imbalance is not corrected. Without careful planning by both the division and the school, the possibility of technological inequity is multiplied.

EXHIBIT 10-2
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SURVEY STATEMENT OR FUNCTIONAL AREA	(% Good + Excellent) / (% Fair + Poor)[1]		
	ADMINISTRATORS	**PRINCIPALS**	**TEACHERS**
The division's job of providing adequate instructional technology.	50/43	21/80	42/56
The division's use of technology for administrative purposes.	64/36	54/41	48/29
Staff development opportunities provided by Smyth County Public Schools for teachers.	64/28	59/42	46/53
Staff development opportunities provided by Smyth County Public Schools for school administrators	50/50	41/50	28/22
	(% Agree + Strongly Agree) / (% Disagree + Strongly Disagree)[2]		
I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	93/7	55/29	55/33
Most administrative practices in Smyth County Public Schools are highly effective and efficient.	64/28	46/21	47/13
Most of Smyth County Public Schools's administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel) are highly efficient and responsive.	64/28	46/21	47/13
Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which causes unnecessary time delays.	50/36	21/51	30/28
	(% Needs Improvement + Needs Major Improvement) / (% Adequate + Outstanding)[3]		
Data Processing	28/64	50/37	16/43
Administrative Technology	43/50	39/52	24/45
Instructional Technology	64/29	79/21	57/40
Instructional Support	43/50	59/42	48/48
Staff Development	64/29	58/42	45/52

Source: MGT Survey, 2005.

[1] Percent responding *Good* or *Excellent* / Percent responding *Fair* or *Poor.*
[2] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.*
[3] Percent responding *Needs Some Improvement* or *Needs Major Improvement* / Percent responding *Adequate* or *Outstanding.*

- **Rapid Change**. Few things change more rapidly than technology. If the implementation and ongoing operation of the technology resources are not monitored carefully, the school system or school will not effectively manage this rapid change.

- **Funding**. The lack of funding is one of the greatest barriers to the effective use of technology in the classroom. Part of this is due to the fact that school systems do not recognize that there are funds that can be used to support technology that have historically been used for other purposes (e.g., textbook funds are now frequently used to purchase instructional software). Unless planning addresses how all elements of technology and technology support are funded, this barrier will have a considerably greater impact than it should.

- **Credibility**. A plan that outlines how technology resources will be acquired, deployed, and used will help to develop credibility with the community. Both the School Board and the public are anxious to see that tax dollars are spent in an effective manner. Only through planning is it possible to demonstrate that proposed strategies have been well conceived, acquisitions of technology resources have been carefully considered, and that every aspect of the implementation is cost effective.

A technology plan must address the specific requirements and preferences of the organization it is designed to serve. Although multiple plans may contain very similar elements, no two plans will be alike. Likewise, while there are guidelines that can help a school district develop a plan that is right for the environment within which it operates, there is no "right way" to develop a technology plan.

10.1 <u>Technology Planning</u>

FINDING

Smyth County Public Schools has a Technology Advisory Committee that convened in an effort to develop the six-year Technology Plan. The team was composed of 21 members from across the division. The members included:

- The division's Director of Technology
- A division instructional supervisor
- Faculty representatives from each of the division's 14 schools
- A member of the school board
- An industry representative
- A parent representative
- Student representatives

This committee was representative of the entire school system and included people who had a good understanding of technology. Drafts of the plan were published on the school board's Web site and public input was gathered through an online survey and a public hearing.

The committee completed the Technology Plan in SY 2003. The committee meets on a semi-annual basis to review the plan and analyze the progress made. A semi-annual meeting is not sufficient to implement and monitor a plan of this scope effectively.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-1:

Involve the Smyth County Public Schools Technology Advisory Committee in the monitoring and implementation of the SCPS Six-YearTechnology Plan.

The Technology Advisory Committee was composed of a group of well-qualified individuals. It completed its work and now the committee meets twice a year to review and update the plan. The committee, at a minimum, should meet on a quarterly basis, or monthly, if possible. Managing this plan in a more diligent fashion will produce operational efficiencies across the district, which should result in the coordination of planning activities, the recommendation of plan-based expenditures, and the review of instructional technologies and their impact on student achievement.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

10.2 *Organization and Staffing*

Ideally, technology is one area of a school system that supports all administrative and instructional personnel in a constructive way. Organizing technology resources to achieve this outcome effectively is a necessary yet formidable task.

FINDING

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), an internationally recognized, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the effective use of technology in K-12 education, has developed a Technology Support Index rubric to assist school districts in determining their needs in a variety of technology support areas. In the index, school districts are divided into one of four categories for various areas of technology usage and support.

These categories are:

- emergent (beginning support capability);
- islands (isolated areas of effective support);
- integrated (very good support provided in most areas); and
- exemplary (excellent support in most areas).

The Technology Support Index identifies integrated school districts as having an organization structure where the technical support functions and instructional technology support functions report *differently*, but each unit is cohesively organized and there is communication between units. In contrast, districts functioning at an exemplary level have an organizational structure where all of the technology functions report through the

same unit in the organization, providing for a logical chain of command and communication structures.

Smyth County Public Schools is operating primarily in the island category, (i.e., technical support functions and instructional technology support functions report similarly, but each unit is separate in function and does not effectively support one another).

The interviews conducted by MGT revealed that while there is communication between the Technology Services and Instructional Technology units, there is not a cohesiveness of service and support out to the administrators, teachers and students. Currently, most members of Information Services do not inherently understand the core activities of teaching and learning – the "business" of the school division that their work supports. In addition, most members of Instructional Technology do not understand the hardware and software requirements or impacts of instructional design decisions. Separating these two functions will create an environment where both units will facilitate improved approaches to the design, implementation, and support of technology within the school division as well as create the opportunity for effective professional development and streamlined support models.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-2:

Reorganize the Technology Services and Instructional Technology units to report based on service alignment functions rather than technological functions.

For Smyth County Public Schools to operate at the highest levels of technology support and usage, the Technology Services and Instructional Technology functions should report to separate units in the organization. The technology support staff should focus on the support of equipment and hardware and the instructional staff need to focus on the delivery of services in the classroom. In the organization's current configuration, the Instruction Technology Resource Teachers (ITRTs) report to the Director of Technology, but there is confusion around the true purpose of these positions.

The Virginia Department of Education clearly states in its guidelines that ITRTs, carefully chosen and wisely used, are more effective in helping teachers incorporate technology into the classroom than any other type of professional development tool. Too often, SCPS is using ITRTs for technical usage instead of instructional support. The organizational structure needs to be modified in order to allow principals and instructional leaders throughout the district to determine the support activities for these individuals. The Director of Technology needs to focus on the support functions of the district. The alignment of these two disparate functions under the same organizational schema seems to be contradictory and less beneficial to the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

The Technology Services Department of the SCPS supports not only instructional, but also administrative, technology. The Application Support Section of Technology Services consists of the Director of Technology, a finance support specialist, and four technicians. This group is actively engaged in the management of the administrative systems, such as finance, food services, and library-media centers. In addition, this group engages in software development to extend the reporting functionality of, and between, these systems, as well as develops databases for administrative support. Exhibit 10-3 lists the administrative software titles and brief descriptions of each.

All systems such as these require a certain level of management as there are continuing needs that arise related to product upgrades and maintenance. In many cases, contracts are negotiable with software vendors, offering reasonably priced time and materials services related to extending the functionality of these software packages as well as ensuring ongoing interoperability with other systems.

The process for managing these systems is currently extensive and time consuming. The division should examine vendor options and, where fiscally responsible, establish mutually beneficial contracts that support the technology goals and objectives of the division.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-3:

Reduce software application management by internal SCPS staff.

Establish service level agreements with vendors to provide on-going maintenance and support for all software applications. Modify existing service level agreements (SLAs) provide additional service and support where applicable. Reduce staff time to acceptable levels regarding management of non-SLA applications and software. Additionally, limit the purchase of new software until a comprehensive management plan is developed and adopted.

This recommendation can reduce the amount of full-time staff needed to support administrative applications and re-direct those hours to the reduction of technology backlogs. The skills of the technology services technicians are better used in the field, addressing the needs of the division staff and students, rather than managing software applications.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing budgeted division resources.

EXHIBIT 10-3
ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNOLOGY

SOFTWARE	PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION
Xpert from RDA Systems	Payroll, vendor payments, financial management. This is a Linux-based X-Windows application. It is run on a Debian Linux server and uses TightVNC to access the program from PC workstations.
Windows Server 2000 IIS	Web server
Ipswitch iMail	Mail server
Symantec Anti-Virus Corporate Edition	Antivirus
SASI from NCS Pearson	Student information management. The District Integration version of SASI enables real-time enrollment monitoring and prevents duplicate student ID's.
SRC (State Reporting Companion)	Extracts Virginia-mandated reports from SASI.
CAFÉTerm Point of Sale System from Data Business Systems	School cafeteria point-of-sale system.
FARMA from Data Business Systems	Manages free and reduced meals program. Enables division to identify high school students who are eligible for free and reduced meals from applications submitted by their younger siblings.
Alexandria from Companion Systems	Library automation system.
AntiSpyware from Microsoft	Antispyware application from Microsoft (currently in beta testing).
Call Manager Express from Cisco Systems	Provides VOIP phone system at Rich Valley and Northwood Middle Schools. Project underway to replace old PBX systems at Marion Intermediate School and Marion Senior High School with similar system.
Databases developed in-house.	Currently using databases developed in-house for the following: 1. To generate monthly expenditure and revenue reports from raw data imported from Xpert financial system; 2. To develop budget projections associated with salary increases; 3. To track teacher licensure; 4. To track student SOL mastery; 5. To track student remediation; 6. To generate purchase orders; 7. To track monthly health insurance payments from retirees and generate an ACH file for processing those payments; 8. To track maintenance supplies; 9. To track technology work orders; 10. To track WAN circuit work orders with Sprint and Verizon.
DVMOD from ABS Technology Architects	DVMOD (Digital Video Media on Demand) provides digital video to classrooms from a collection of digitized videos at Northwood Middle School and Rich Valley Elementary School.
IPTV from Cisco Systems	IPTV provides streaming cable channels into classrooms at Northwood Middle School and Rich Valley Elementary School. These two schools did not have cable service until 2003. At that time, we elected to use our existing Ethernet infrastructure to provide cable service into the classroom, rather than run additional coaxial cable and drops.
United Streaming	Each school has a subscription to United Streaming's library of digital educational videos, which are available in Windows Media Player or QuickTime format.

EXHIBIT 10-3 (Continued)
ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNOLOGY

SOFTWARE	PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION
Moodle Learning Management System	Provides a means of delivering supplementary online instruction. Currently used to provide an online discussion board for an English honors class. Will be used to provide professional development activities and to deliver online tests to our students.
SVETN	The Southwest Virginia Education & Training Network provides distance learning opportunities for students at division's three high schools, over a private video network. SVETN also offers professional development opportunities and library of asynchronous high school courses delivered over the World Wide Web.
Linwood Holton Governor's School	Provides synchronous distance learning over the World Wide Web to division's three high schools.
VAPS	Virginia Advanced Placement School provides asynchronous distance learning over the World Wide Web to division's three high schools.
Renaissance Place (various applications)	Division currently uses Renaissance Place's Accelerated Reader, Accelerated Math, Star Reader, and Star Math in all elementary schools and three middle schools. Currently migrating to the Web portal version of this software.
SOL to GO	School subscriptions to this SOL question game in all elementary and middle schools and a lab pack for remediation use in each high school.
CmapTools	Division has deployed CmapTools concept mapping software and are working with teachers to develop ways of integrating this software into the curriculum.
Breakthrough to Literacy	Two elementary schools (Atkins and Saltville Elementary) are using this software and its associated materials in grades K-3 to support reading.
QuickReads	One elementary school (Atkins) is using this software in grades 2-5 to support reading.
Software-based reading and math program for elementary grades.	Currently evaluating software packages to support reading and math instruction in the elementary grades.
Online SOL Testing	All high school end-of-course SOL assessment currently is delivered online, except for writing. Some middle school SOL assessments were delivered online last year, and the number of middle school online assessments will expand this spring. This is a package of software, including the Web-based assessment and reporting system, and various pieces of software that offer online tutorials and practice test questions.
KnowledgeBox	One elementary school (Marion Intermediate) is using this LAN based collection of videos, software, and print activities.
Software supplied with adopted textbooks.	Most of the textbooks have adopted in recent years include accompanying CD-ROM's. At the request of teachers, deployment of some of this software has begun. These applications are developed usually with Macromedia's Director or Authorware programs, and sometimes will not work on Windows 2000/XP machines.
AutoDesk Inventor	3D design software used in Gateways to Technology program at the middle school level and in pre-engineering program at the high school level.
AutoCAD	Used for drafting classes.
MS Office	Division has standardized to MS Office for all office productivity tasks and in high school business classes.
VRS 3.0	A program developed by the Virginia Retirement System to manage monthly VRS payments and employee benefits.

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, Information Services, 2005.

10.3 <u>Infrastructure and Web Development</u>

Infrastructure is the underlying system of cabling, communications lines, hubs, switches and routers that connects the various parts of a Wide Area Network (WAN). It is similar in nature to a human skeleton or a road network—it accomplishes no work on its own, but rather enables other systems to operate.

Infrastructure is the most important of all technology resources. If a sound infrastructure is in place, most users will have a means of accessing people and information throughout their organization and beyond, greatly facilitating their ability to accomplish the responsibilities of their job. Increased efficiency and effectiveness will be the result. Without an effective infrastructure, such capabilities are very limited.

Web sites have become one of the primary vehicles used by the private sector to promote the services or products offered, identify the locations of regional offices, provide testimonies from satisfied customers or deliver any other message that are desired for the public to see. Similarly, governments are turning to Web sites to help provide the information and services they are obligated to provide to their constituents. Further, Web sites are becoming exceedingly important resources for use at all levels of education.

FINDING

The Network Administration section of Technology Services carefully manages the division's networks and servers. This group of the director of technology and four technicians is responsible for managing not only the WAN, but also all its related elements, such as:

- servers;
- switches;
- wireless access points; and
- routers.

Interviews conducted with principals and staff in the schools indicated that the network was working moderately effectively for them. However, the network is nearing full capacity; and some schools have begun exceeding capacity for peak performance. The division staff are aware of this issue and have made recommendations to add additional bandwidth at key locations throughout the division to mitigate this problem.

SCPS infrastructure is not as effective as it should be to support the staff, students, and schools properly throughout the division. Given its size, it is impressive that the Smyth County Public Schools WAN serves the schools as well as it does. This outdated framework will affect the division in the near future, if left unattended. The technology plan of the division recommends investment in the technology infrastructure throughout the division. Technology will continue to expand within the division; therefore, the investment in infrastructure at this time is strongly advisable.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-4:

Develop a proposal detailing the activities within the technology plan that support telecommunications upgrades and submit the items for approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

The current SCPS Technology plan identifies expenditures for Telecommunications (Network Connectivity). This recommendation is proposed for the 2005-06 school year budget and should be implemented.

FINDING

The ITD supports the technical operation of the SCPS Web site. The use of content management tools streamlines the process for web management and minimizes the impact on staff. Web management is performed in a professional and effective manner.

The division's Internet site is easy to navigate and contains helpful information that many division patrons, staff, and students access on a regular basis. The information contained on the site represents a community, staff, and parent focus in relation to schools and activities. Division notices are posted in an accessible fashion for all constituent groups to access.

While most of this site is up-to-date and helpful, there were sections that contained broken links. These can lead to frustration for the end-user.

A school division's Web site is a key communication vehicle to parents and community members and therefore becomes one representation of the school division's overall quality. SCPS maintains an exceptional Web site that reflects positively on the Division and staff. The Technology Services Department provides outstanding service and support for the division's Web site.

COMMENDATION

The Smyth County Public Schools is highly commended for the professional and effective management of the division's Web sites.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-5:

Monitor Web site frequently to ensure that all links are functioning as intended.

Web sites are very useful public relations tools for school districts. They allow employees and the public-at-large to have instant access to information about the schools and the district, as well as communicate with school personnel. A Web site that is not updated regularly does not represent the school district well.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

10.4 *Inventory Control and Asset Management*

Many school organizations across the country are finding themselves faced with the challenge of technology inventory and asset management. As devices become smaller and more portable, tracking these items becomes more and more difficult. Given the millions of dollars at stake, school organizations are beginning to take appropriate actions to protect and identify these assets. Laptops, digital cameras, and LCD projectors are just a few of the items that are easily misplaced or stolen. Loss of these assets affects the financial health of the division and the availability of resources for staff and students.

Computerized systems for providing inventory control and asset management are available and widely used by various public and private sector organizations. These systems are well-designed and provide cost control measures as well as address inventory losses. A sample of organizations across the country showed as much as a 10 percent savings by using an inventory control system to track lost and stolen inventory. SCPS is anticipating over $453,000 dollars in technology equipment expenditures for 2005-06 school year as projected in the technology plan budget. An industry average of 10 percent cost recovery over the life of these systems would equate to almost $45,300. Those savings projected over the next five years, assuming purchasing trends remain consistent would net SCPS an estimated $217,500.

FINDING

Smyth County Public Schools does not have adequate tracking systems for technology assets across the division. No inventory tagging practices are currently in place and as such, SCPS is unable to provide accurate technology asset assessments at each division site. Inventory records established at the time of purchase are not updated in a timely manner and may not be available. Adequate space control measures for the appropriate storage and security of assets is lacking. The ability of the division to track smaller-sized items, such as hard drives, CD ROMs, and printers, is significantly deficient. Uncontrolled computer storage areas are accessible to staff as well as the public. This access, coupled with the lack of appropriate inventory tagging, makes these items virtually untraceable. The division is at risk if appropriate measures to track and inventory technology assets are not placed in a timely fashion.

MGT has evaluated numerous education technology departments across the country and has found inventory control to be a common concern for all. Asset tracking is difficult across such varying purchasing processes. SCPS is experiencing deficiencies in this area. The division should modify several asset control processes to ensure adequate tracking of inventory. SCPS, upon receipt of any technology item, should assign a unique divisionwide identification number. This unique number will provide historical information regarding the equipment or device, as well as the dollar value. The division should affix Identification stickers to all inventories to manage all division assets effectively. The division should apply a standard method of asset depreciation and

calculate a total technology asset value. The total asset value is then used a baseline to conduct all future division inventories.

Inventory control is paramount to quality asset management. Successful systems use frequent inventories and reconcile the asset values often. A division the size of Smyth County can expect to have total technology asset valuation in the millions of dollars. The protection of these assets is paramount.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-6:

Develop and implement stringent asset and inventory control measures for all technology equipment.

Coordination between the Superintendent, Business Services Department and the Technology Service Department to establish specific inventory control measures are essential. The Division and an intra-department committee must develop a policy regarding inventory controls and asset management and present it to the Board of Education for approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

As demonstrated above, the research on sample similar organizations across the county indicates that Smyth County Public Schools can expect to save approximately two percent of the total current technology asset value annually by establishing appropriate inventory controls and asset management. The approximate value of all technology assets within the division ranges between 1.75 and 2.25 million dollars. Therefore, the average annual savings could reach as high as $50,000 in recovery of lost and stolen equipment. For future inventory, the savings could amount to 10 percent annually, or $45,300 of the anticipated $453,000 technology purchases planned for SY 2007-08. Discussion concerning additional inventory controls and asset management recommendations is contained in the financial management chapter of this report.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Develop and Implement Inventory Control Measures.	$50,000*	$45,300	$45,300	$45,300	$45,300

*Based on total current inventory of $2.5 million

11.0 FOOD SERVICES

11.0 FOOD SERVICES

In this chapter the findings and recommendations for food services are presented. The major sections of the chapter include:

11.1   Organization and Staffing
11.2   Policies and Procedures
11.3   Planning, Management, and Operations
11.4   Purchasing, Warehousing, and Contracting
11.5   Student Participation

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Smyth County Public Schools operates 13 different school lunch programs, with each school granted total autonomy over menus, food purchases, and operations. There has been a long tradition in the division to permit autonomy, until recently. This system is now changing rapidly due in large part to the appointment of a Food Service Director.

The key findings of this chapter include the following:

■ The present organizational system is working for the time being but as the Food Services Unit continues to develop its operations procedures, the organizational structure will need to be re-examined.

■ The board and Superintendent need to speak clearly on the matter of consolidating food services management and operations through board policies and the strategic planning process.

■ The consolidation of all finances into the division's financial accounting system and reducing the number of building staff who monitor financial operations to three was an important first step towards consolidation of services and operations.

■ Movement towards cooperative purchasing with surrounding school divisions will greatly enhance the purchasing power of the Food Services Unit.

■ Facilities are a serious detriment to efficient and effective operations of this unit. Food services operations are greatly affected by poor facilities. The facilities have been this way for a very long time and will continue to pose challenges to the mission of the Food Services Unit.

■ Equipment purchases have fallen behind, primarily because the unit had been in deficit spending for many years. The program is self-supporting and must generate enough income to purchase equipment.   Because of the deficits, this has not been possible until recently.

■ Student participation numbers are impressive and will continue to rise as quality and delivery systems improve. Increasing the number of students participating in the breakfast program is a priority for the unit.

This section of the efficiency study will concentrate on describing the operations of the Food Services unit in the past in order to be able to understand the changes that have already occurred and the changes that will be occurring soon. Suggestions will be made that will take this unit to another level of operations as quickly as possible. The journey has already begun; this report will offer ideas that will facilitate and advance the pace in which they can accomplish their mission.

INTRODUCTION

In surveys of SCPS central office administrators, principals and teachers, responses to questions regarding the quality of food services were mixed. As shown in Exhibit 11-1, in response to, "the food services department encourages student participation through the use of customer satisfaction surveys," *agree or strongly agree* accounted for 25 percent of less of the responses from all three groups. There were split responses to the issue of the appeal and nutritional value of the breakfast and lunches served in the division. Principals were the most positive on this issue, with 88 percent responding, *agree or strongly agree.* There was a slightly less enthusiastic response from administrators, 71 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing, but only 44 percent of teachers responding in the affirmative. Since this latter constituency has the vantage point of seeing the meals served in the division's cafeterias each day and listening to students' responses to the meals, their differing perceptions are worth noting.

EXHIBIT 11-1
SURVEY RESPONSES OF SMYTH COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Survey Item	ADMINISTRATORS		PRINCIPALS		TEACHERS	
	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree
The food services department encourages student participation…	7%	29%	25%	38%	16%	48%
The food services department provides nutritious, appealing meals…	71%	14%	88%	4%	44%	36%
	Adequate - Outstanding	Some/Major Improvement	Adequate - Outstanding	Some/Major Improvement	Adequate - Outstanding	Some/Major Improvement
Food Service	71%	29%	37%	59%	42%	47%

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Survey Results, 2005.

MGT consultants also surveyed peer division administrators on the same issues related to food services. With regards to encouraging student participation through the use of customer surveys, as shown in Exhibit 11-2 there was no comparison data available; however, regarding the nutrition and appeal of the meals, Smyth County administrators were nearly 10 percent more favorable, with 71 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the quality of school meals was good, compared with a 62 percent response from other districts. In rating food service overall, the difference in positive ratings was minimal, 71 percent for Smyth County administrators, compared with 67 percent from other divisions.

EXHIBIT 11-2
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES OF SMYTH COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS

	SCPS Administrators		Other Division Administrators	
Survey Item	**% Agree + Strongly Agree**	**% Disagree + Strongly Disagree**	**% Agree + Strongly Agree**	**% Disagree + Strongly Disagree**
The food services department encourages student participation…	7%	29%	N/A	N/A
The food services department provides nutritious, appealing meals…	71%	14%	62%	14%
	Adequate - Outstanding	**Some/Major Improvement**	**Adequate - Outstanding**	**Some/Major Improvement**
Food Service	71%	29%	67%	18%

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Survey Results, 2005.

11.1 *Organization and Staffing*

Smyth County is a geographically diverse community separated by mountains and distinguished by its smaller communities. Each of the school buildings in the county is responsible for food preparation, purchases, and all accounting practices. The principal of each building is a significant player in this model.

Over the course of time, several school buildings began to experience large deficits in their operating budgets while other schools were carrying large cash balances. Upon the appointment of a new Director of Human Resources and Auxiliary Services, the first act was to consolidate seven funds into three accounts. This move was met with some resistance and animosity, although there was a great deal of understanding of the financial problems the Food Services Unit was experiencing.

FINDING

The first step towards consolidation in SCPS Food Services Unit has been taken. The director is in the process of relieving food service head cooks and office secretaries of financial responsibilities, and is currently involved in an effort to consolidate these services under one person, yet to be determined, with minimum financial responsibilities

assigned to the buildings. Efforts to improve the financial situation of the Food Services Unit have been successful as evidenced by the beginning cash balances and capital outlays for the past two school years. As shown in Exhibit 11-3, beginning balances increase by nearly $10,000 in one year, and capital outlay allocations increased by nearly $20,000 over the same period.

EXHIBIT 11-3
CASH BALANCES

SCHOOL YEAR	BALANCES	CAPITAL OUTLAY
2003-2004	$535,803.96	$73,952.72
2004-2005	$544,931.90	$96,621.74

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, 2005.

COMMENDATION

The Food Services Unit leadership is commended for its successful efforts in regaining a strong financial foundation for the department.

FINDING

As shown in Exhibit 11-4, managers are divided into three categories.

EXHIBIT 11-4
SALARY RANGES FOR FOOD SERVICES' MANAGERS

MANAGER POSITIONS	SALARY RANGES
Level I	$11, 239-$12,502
Level II	$13, 034-$20,350
Level III	$16,664-$17,784
Cooks	$6.75-$9.00

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, 2005.

The wide range of pay schedules can be explained by the autonomy issue. Schools have set salary schedules in the past. There are plans by the Director of Food Services to study the pay schedule for cooks/head cooks in the future. The unit did not report any overtime pay.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 11-1:

Develop a standardized pay schedule for all food service employees.

All pay scales should be standardized across all locations in the division to ensure equity among staff. While there are plans in place to study this in the future as an equity issue, it needs to become a priority.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

11.2 *Policies and Procedures*

The brief policies relating to food service are contained in Section 4.13 of the Smyth County School Board Policy Manual, and read as follows:

> Each school in Smyth County providing food services for students will be responsible for the operation and fiscal management of food service programs in accordance with the standards and requirements set forth by the State Department of Education, the State Department of Health, the National School Lunch Act, and the nutritional integrity policies of the Smyth County School Board.
>
> Food and nutrition are integral to a student's educational experience, impacting academic and physical performance, as well as attendance and attention span. Access to a variety of foods necessary to support growth and development are vital to a student's health and well being.
>
> School meals should be prepared so as to ensure a balance between good nutrition and student preferences while meeting the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Each school will create an environment to develop healthy lifestyles and enhance a student's ability to reach academic and physical potential. Such environment will encompass all food served or sold in the school during school hours including vending, classroom parties, birthday parties, field trips, etc. Foods sold or served outside of the school lunch and breakfast program should be nutritionally sound and not in nutritional or financial competition with school meals.
>
> Each school should integrate nutrition education into the total school program and provide for the active involvement of students, parents, teachers, administrators, food services personnel, and the community in implementing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

As the department seeks to improve the quality of its services in terms of training of food service personnel, enforcing the no-competition policy, and provision of creative and nutritional meal options, these policies may be revisited for updates and amendment.

FINDING

Smyth County Schools has a Food Service Unit that is clearly marked for significant changes. That process has already begun. With the consolidation of all finances, the first and most difficult step has been taken. Present cash balances now indicate that the financial dilemma that marked the old system has been resolved. Cash balances for the

last two school years have shown improvement, a profound change from the deficit spending from previous years. The unit will be facing many more significant challenges as the division moves towards tighter controls. The staff recognizes these obstacles. At the building level, the condition of the equipment and working conditions have helped food service staff to recognize the need for change. The Food Services Department lacks a clear mission. A review of records indicates a lack of vision and mission in the planning process.

As stated previously, the Food Service Unit leadership is to be commended for its actions toward correcting budget deficits and getting the operation back on sound financial footing.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 11-2:

Develop a mission statement for the Food Services Unit to submit to the school board for approval.

It is further recommended that the board clearly state its support of the consolidation of services by adopting measurable goals and requiring periodic updates on the progress being made toward achievement of these goals by the Food Services Unit by incorporating such language into board policy.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

The present director does not have a background in or experience with school food services. He was selected for his organizational skills and because he had a track record of getting things done. He also previously owned two restaurants. Limited staff development opportunities are provided to any food service personnel at this time. Again, this area was not been addressed because of other pressing matters.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 11-3:

Develop a training program for all food services employees, including the director.

Remaining up-to-date on training and safety issues is critical for school food services staff. Training should be organized for proper food handling procedures, HACCP training, and Hazardous Materials handling. With no prior experience in food service, the director has had to "learn while doing." Providing the director with opportunities to attend regional and state food service meetings and conferences would provide experiences that would augment the on-the-job training. The federal government's National Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities (NCEF) Web site provides links to numerous resources that would be beneficial to food service personnel (http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/food_service.cfm#10310). This comprehensive Web site provides tips and strategies on a wide variety of food service

issues including: food handling and safety, optimizing cafeteria space, guidelines for purchasing food service equipment, and producing creative and nutritional menu plans.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

11.3 *Planning, Management, and Operations*

The Food Services Unit is in a response mode at the present time. Very little planning exists; few formal processes are evident; and data to make decisions is limited. Because each school has complete autonomy in regards to setting menus, purchasing is not centralized. Efforts are underway to join a cooperative purchasing group consisting of other school divisions. The advantages for doing so are many. Recently, the school divisions sent out a Request for Proposal for their Food Products/Related Supplies. Both these steps are viewed as positive trends in finding ways to control costs.

FINDING

School lunch prices have not increased in at least ten (10) years. In Exhibit 11-5, a comparison to other school divisions indicates that Smyth County prices are either the lowest (or close to the lowest) among the comparable divisions.

EXHIBIT 11-5
COMPARISON OF SCHOOL LUNCH PRICES

DIVISION NAME	LUNCH PRICES ELEMENTARY	LUNCH PRICES MIDDLE	LUNCH PRICES HIGH
Bland	1.30	1.30	1.30
Bristol City	1.50	1.75	1.75
Buchanan	1.35	1.60	1.60
Carroll	1.40	1.50	1.50
Dickinson	1.25	1.25	1.50
Giles	1.30	1.40	1.40
Grayson	1.40	1.40	1.50
Lee	1.20	1.50	1.50
Norton	1.30	1.30	1.30
Pulaski	1.25	1.40	1.40
Radford	1.75	2.00	2.00
Russell	1.55	1.55	1.65
Smyth	**1.20**	**1.35**	**1.35**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, 2005.

A review of thirteen (13) school divisions indicate that Smyth County Public Schools ranks near the bottom of this list for lowest lunch prices at almost every level.

The capital expenditures plan for food services is limited in its scope due primarily to the limited budget available. One of the top priorities for the unit is to look at the dish washing equipment, none of which has ever been replaced in any of the buildings.

School lunch tables are also an issue. Small appliances are high on the purchase list for the unit. Storage was identified as a critical issue by the director and staff. Dry storage is small; freezer space very limited or located in an area far removed from the operations; cold storage is often severely limited. By way of example, several schools must serve their milk from ice chests – there is neither electricity nor equipment to do it any other way.

The data is too limited to determine productivity standards such as meals per labor hours; staffing patterns; food and labor costs, inventory procedures, and revenue and expenditures controls. The report sent to the Commonwealth of Virginia (SNP005) provides some useful information for the division but the data has not been disaggregated for the buildings in a manner that permits actionable steps to be taken. The record keeping is not at this level of sophistication yet, but the director recognizes the need to do so.

Smyth County Food Services Unit prepares meals every day and does so to the best of their abilities. As the unit begins to consolidate its efforts and more formal processes are developed, key indicators of success will be identified and measured to ensure quality food is being served to its customers in an efficient and effective way.

Equipment needs, salary considerations, and the need to build modest cash balances warrant the consideration of every means to raise revenue while at the same time, applying cost-savings initiatives. More income is necessary to move the unit to its desired goals as quickly as possible.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 11-4:

Increase food lunch prices.

Additional revenue is necessary to purchase badly needed equipment. The division has not increased lunch prices for at least ten (10) years and now has one of the lowest costs in the region. This additional revenue would permit the unit to identify needed equipment which will help in the overall efficiency of Food Services.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact for increasing lunch prices, based on present usage is as follows. The division served 119,781 meals during September of 2005. Using a very conservative estimate, based on the information provided by the division, a 25 cent increase could produce an additional income of approximately $1,000 per day. The total number of meals for September were divided by 30 days and then multiplied by 25 cents per meal to arrive at a per day figure of $998. Based on a 180-day schedule, the following income would be derived:

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Increase Lunch Prices by 25 Cents	$179,671	179,671	$179,671	$179,671	$179,671

FINDING

The food service staff projected a very positive and caring attitude. Every school and kitchen staff was visited during the site visit. During these interviews, food service staff pointed out the challenges they were facing daily but still projected a great deal of pride in what they were doing. "Home made" biscuits, rolls, and buns were a source of pride for them. The fact that each school creates its own menu limits the division's ability to take advantage of purchasing opportunities. Joining a cooperative purchasing group will have advantages; creating common menus among all schools will maximize this opportunity.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 11-5:

Unify the division's daily menus, creating common menus among all schools.

Aligning menus will also enable the division's food services leadership the opportunity to discuss balanced diets. The act of creating a common menu will also provide the unit's leadership the chance to exchange ideas to bring greater efficiency to the unit. The advantages of a common menu are varied. Cost efficiency and program effectiveness will be better served in a system that has a common menu.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

FINDING

Management planning sessions are not conducted to discuss menus, cost control procedures, training sessions, food service preparation techniques, inventory levels, profit/loss, or to develop maintenance and capital plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 11-6:

Conduct regularly scheduled meetings with the Director of Food Services and head cooks.

The purpose of these meetings would be to develop action steps, based on a **SMART** goal format that will accelerate the pace of the consolidation efforts. **SMART**, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Reasonable, and Time Bound, describes a goal-setting process that is results-focused, with an emphasis on crating conditions for positive change.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

Recommendation 11-7:

Adopt the SMART goal process when establishing future goals for the division.

Setting SMART goals takes the goal setting process to another level. The goals established using this format require a more rigorous process than most goal setting processes. There are numerous sources to learn more about this process. The following is adapted from Paul J. Meyer's "<u>Attitude is Everything</u>."

S – Specific: A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions:

- *Who: Who is involved?

- *What: What do I want to accomplish?

- *Where: Identify a location.

- *When: Establish a time frame.

- *Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

- *Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

M – Measurable: Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal. When progress is measured, the organization will stay on track, reach target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that causes continued effort required to reach the goal.

A – Actionable: When identifying goals that are important, ways will be discovered that can make them become a reality. Goals are impossible to attain unless each goal is broken down into the specific actionable steps necessary to accomplish that goal. Only then does the goal become manageable.

R – Reasonable: To be reasonable, a goal must represent an objective toward which the organization is both *willing* and *able* to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; every goal represents substantial progress. The goal is probably realistic if the organization truly *believes* that it can be accomplished.

T - Time Bound: A goal is time-bound when specific timelines are established for each action step of the goal.

A plan is needed. The plan must identify the scope of the problem and then design incremental steps to accomplish the goals. Involving those most affected by the decisions will foster a sense of efficacy, producing "buy-in" for the necessary steps that must be taken. The Food Services Unit consists of very caring people who want to make a difference for the children. The final product of this process will be worth the effort. The rapport already exists with the Food Service Director and the staff, which is an excellent building block.

The director should research how **SMART** goals must be written. A Google search will produce numerous hits such as: www.topachievement.com or, www.goal-setting-guide.com or, www.uncommon-knowledge.com. These sites will offer a detailed explanation on how to establish **SMART** goals. It is also critical to garner board and Superintendent support for the vision and goals. As the unit moves towards operating in a more efficient and effective manner, change is unavoidable which, will cause some people to be uncomfortable. Good communications with the board, Superintendent, and community will help greatly in understanding what Food Services personnel are attempting to accomplish. For example, lunch prices should be raised because the have not been raised for over ten years.   An increase in lunch prices must be a part of the means to fund the strategic plans for the Food Services Unit.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

11.4 *Purchasing, Warehousing, and Contracting*

FINDING

The pursuit towards cost-effectiveness and more efficiency will be challenging for this unit. The decisions regarding meal preparation are controlled by each school. Menus are planned by the head cooks but have some consistency to them because of the use of federal commodities. The ability to do bulk purchases is limited at present until the director can exercise more control over the unit. Storage will continue to be an issue. Additional revenue will allow the unit to purchase some devices that will increase storage capabilities, a move that has begun in a few schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 11-8:

Join the Cooperative Purchasing consortium at the earliest possible date.

Joining the cooperative has numerous advantages. The obvious one is to take advantage of a much larger purchasing base, which will positively affect the prices paid for food and other related items. The other advantage would be to join an established network of experienced food service people who can offer suggestions and support. Many of the issues that this Food Services Unit will experience have been experienced by others. Sound advice and practical suggestions will be most helpful during the building years for this program. In the interim, the division should standardize all menus in the schools in order to take full advantage of the purchasing power of a division that serves 120,000 meals per month.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using existing resources.

11.5 *Student Participation*

SCPS has enjoyed a high rate of participation for its food services. According to the Virginia Department of Education, the 2004-05 eligibility for free and reduced rates totaled 46.22 percent. Exhibit 11-6 below presents the eligibility rates for SCPS, compared with peer districts for the 2004-05 school year.

According to the preceding data, SCPS is close to the average for the peer districts for free and reduced eligibility, with only a 2.31 percent variance in the overall rate. In every case, SCPS slightly exceeds the average eligibility for the combined eligibility.

EXHIBIT 11-6
FREE/REDUCED ELIGIBILITY
COMPARISON WITH PEER DIVISIONS
2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR

DIVISION NAME	TOTAL STUDENTS	NUMBER FREE	PERCENT FREE	NUMBER REDUCED	PERCENT REDUCED	TOTAL F/R	PERCENT F/R
Accomack	5,311	2,820	53.10	420	7.91	3,210	61.01
Carroll	4,115	1,587	38.57	479	11.64	2,066	50.21
Culpepper	4,500	1,074	23.87	384	8.53	1,458	32.40
Isle of Wight	5,109	1,395	27.30	323	6.32	1,718	33.63
Pulaski	4,979	1,578	31.69	412	8.27	1,990	39.97
Smyth	**5,086**	**1,891**	**37.18**	**460**	**9.04**	**2,351**	**46.22**
AVERAGE	**4,850**	**1,724**	**35.29**	**413**	**8.65**	**2,132**	**43.91**
DIFFERENCE	**236**	**167**	**1.89**	**47**	**.39**	**219**	**2.31**

Source: Commonwealth of Virginia, MGT Analysis 2005.

Although the free/reduced percentage is less than half of the total student body, SCPS has historically maintained high levels of participation for both breakfast and lunch. The participation, however, is not consistent across all schools. Exhibit 11-6 displays the participation rates at each school, for each eligibility type. Exhibit 11-7 details breakfast participation, and Exhibit 11-8 details lunch participation.

As the exhibits show, participation for breakfast at the elementary level ranges from 34.01 percent at Chilhowie Elementary to 72.27 percent at Atkins Elementary. The middle schools range from 20 to 30 percent in participation, with the high schools averaging around 18 percent.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 11-9:

Increase breakfast participation to 50 percent at all school levels.

While the division has had relative success with its breakfast program, an increase in participation should assist in students' readiness to learn and should generate increased revenues.

EXHIBIT 11-7
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION – BREAKFAST
OCTOBER 2005

SCHOOLS	OCTOBER 2005 TOTAL ADP/ADA
Atkins ES	68.16%
Chilhowie ES	35.27%
Marion Intermediate	47.62%
Marion Primary	49.29%
Rich Valley ES	53.54%
Saltville ES	51.27%
Sugar Grove Comb.	51.69%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION- ES	**50.97%**
Chilhowie MS	22.29%
Marion MS	32.18%
Northwood MS	35.68%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION – MS	**30.05%**
Chilhowie HS	25.91%
Marion HS	21.38%
Northwood HS	21.67%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION – HS	**22.98%**
OVERALL PARTICIPATION	**36.40%**

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Analysis 2005.

EXHIBIT 11-8
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION – LUNCH
OCTOBER 2005

SCHOOL	OCTOBER 2005 TOTAL ADP/ADA
Atkins ES	89.55%
Chilhowie ES	84.19%
Marion Intermediate	83.33%
Marion Primary	79.51%
Rich Valley ES	88.38%
Saltville ES	84.75%
Sugar Grove Comb.	90.82%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION- ES	**85.79%**
Chilhowie MS	85.14%
Marion MS	75.27%
Northwood MS	94.61%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION - MS	**85.00%**
Chilhowie HS	57.25%
Marion HS	53.92%
Northwood HS	79.00%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION - HS	**63.39%**
OVERALL PARTICIPATION	**76.84%**

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Analysis 2005.

FISCAL IMPACT

Current federal reimbursement dollars, based on the October 2005 meal counts are $282,552 per month for breakfast. Breakfasts are reimbursed by the federal government at a rate of $.23 per full-price meal, $.97 for reduced and $1.27 for free. Increasing

participation at all schools to 50 percent will bring increased revenue from federal reimbursement of $75,026.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Increase Breakfast Participation to 50 Percent.	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026

FINDING

SCPS has experienced historically high participation in the school lunch program. The Free/Reduced eligibility rate is 46.22 percent, which is above the state average (33.31%). Exhibit 11-9 shows a comparison between SCPS and the state average.

EXHIBIT 11-9
FREE/REDUCED ELIGIBILITY COMPARISON

	SCPS	STATE
FREE	37.18%	26.15%
REDUCED	9.04%	7.16%
TOTAL ELIGIBILITY*	46.22%	33.31%

Source: Virginia Department of Education, SY2004-2005 Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program Eligibility Report.
*Totals are rounded to two decimal spaces.

School breakfast and lunch participation rates are usually proportionate to free/reduced eligibility rates. Where the free/reduced rates are higher, participation will be higher. SCPS has a historically high participation across all levels of eligibility for nutrition services. In the case of SCPS, however, the free/reduced percentage is less than 50 percent of the entire student body.

Exhibit 11-10 below details the Average Daily Participation (ADP) with factoring considered for Average Daily Attendance (ADA). As shown in the exhibit, the elementary average participation for lunch is 85.79 percent, middle is 85 percent and high school is 63.39 percent, for a division average of 78.06 percent. High school participation rates tend to be lower due to factors such as work programs. Even when factoring in the reduction in participation levels due to these factors, SCPS has extremely high participation rates.

COMMENDATION

The division is commended for increasing and maintaining high rates of school lunch participation.

EXHIBIT 11-10
AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION – LUNCH
OCTOBER 2005

SCHOOL	OCTOBER 2005 TOTAL ADP/ADA
Atkins ES	89.55%
Marion Intermediate	83.33%
Marion Primary	79.51%
Rich Valley ES	88.38%
Chilhowie ES	84.19%
Saltville ES	84.75%
Sugar Grove	90.82%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION- ES	**85.79%**
Chilhowie MS	85.14%
Marion MS	75.27%
Northwood MS	94.61%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION - MS	**85.00%**
Chilhowie HS	57.25%
Marion HS	53.92%
Northwood HS	79.00%
AVERAGE PARTICIPATION - HS	**63.39%**
OVERALL PARTICIPATION	**78.06%**

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Analysis.

FINDING

An important component of participation rates are the different reimbursement levels. The purpose of the National School Lunch Program is to provide nutritionally sound meals to all students who want one, with provision for extreme reduction or forgiveness of cost to students from needy families. As mentioned previously, SCPS has less than 50 percent of students qualified for free/reduced lunches. According to the October 2005 data, there are a significant number of students who pay full meal prices. It is important to monitor the ADP as it relates to eligibility, in order to ascertain that the program is reaching the students who need it most. Exhibit 11-11 and 11-12 show the detail of the percentage of students in each eligibility bracket for monthly participation for breakfast and lunch. For example, the data shows that at Atkins Elementary, 43.33 percent of students eating school lunches are full price students, 13.89 percent qualify for reduced-priced lunches, and 42.78 of the average participation are free-qualified students.

EXHIBIT 11-11
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADP – BREAKFAST
OCTOBER 2005

SCHOOL	PAID % ADP	REDUCED % ADP	FREE % ADP
Atkins ES	40.15%	16.06%	43.80%
Marion Intermediate	29.50%	7.50%	63.00%
Marion Primary	36.63%	9.05%	54.32%
Rich Valley ES	36.79%	11.32%	51.89%
Chilhowie ES	33.02%	16.51%	50.47%
Saltville ES	23.14%	11.57%	65.29%
Sugar Grove	43.93%	14.02%	42.06%
Chilhowie MS	37.50%	8.33%	54.17%
Marion MS	35.03%	11.86%	53.11%
Northwood MS	12.79%	3.49%	83.72%
Chilhowie HS	36.00%	7.00%	57.00%
Marion HS	41.61%	14.29%	44.10%
Northwood HS	36.92%	13.85%	49.23%

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Analysis, 2005.

EXHIBIT 11-12
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADP – LUNCH
OCTOBER 2005

SCHOOL	PAID % ADP	REDUCED % ADP	FREE % ADP
Atkins ES	43.33%	13.89%	42.78%
Marion Intermediate	38.29%	8.29%	53.43%
Marion Primary	41.33%	9.44%	49.23%
Rich Valley ES	45.71%	10.86%	43.43%
Chilhowie ES	47.63%	11.66%	40.71%
Saltville ES	33.50%	11.00%	55.50%
Sugar Grove	43.62%	15.96%	40.43%
Chilhowie MS	53.09%	6.55%	40.36%
Marion MS	45.65%	12.32%	42.03%
Northwood MS	47.37%	8.33%	44.30%
Chilhowie HS	62.44%	5.43%	32.13%
Marion HS	55.67%	11.33%	33.00%
Northwood HS	49.79%	13.50%	36.71%

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Analysis, 2005.

While from these data we can determine how many students are participating in the school meal program, there remains a question. Does the program reach the students that it is targeting? Exhibits 11-13 and 11-14 details the Average Daily Participation as it relates to eligibility status for breakfast and lunch.

EXHIBIT 11-13
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADP/ELIGIBILITY – BREAKFAST
OCTOBER 2005

SCHOOL	PAID ADP AS % OF ELIGIBILITY	REDUCED ADP AS % OF ELIGIBILITY	FREE ADP AS % OF ELIGIBILITY
Atkins ES	60.44%	73.33%	65.93%
Marion Intermediate	32.60%	40.54%	47.62%
Marion Primary	41.59%	44.00%	51.76%
Rich Valley ES	38.61%	52.17%	65.48%
Chilhowie ES	22.95%	50.00%	41.47%
Saltville ES	30.11%	53.85%	61.24%
Sugar Grove	48.96%	44.12%	51.14%
ELEMENTARY AVERAGE	**39.32%**	**51.14%**	**54.95%**
Chilhowie MS	15.43%	28.57%	27.08%
Marion MS	22.63%	31.82%	39.33%
Northwood MS	9.24%	13.64%	63.72%
MIDDLE AVERAGE	**15.77%**	**24.68%**	**43.38%**
Chilhowie HS	13.04%	35.00%	51.82%
Marion HS	14.41%	30.26%	28.17%
Northwood HS	14.29%	23.08%	29.36%
HIGH AVERAGE	**13.91%**	**29.45%**	**36.45%**
OVERALL AVERAGE	**24.00%**	**39.69%**	**46.23%**

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Analysis, 2005.

EXHIBIT 11-14
SMYTH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADP/ELIGIBILITY – LUNCH
OCTOBER 2005

SCHOOL	PAID ADP AS % OF ELIGIBILITY	REDUCED ADP AS % OF ELIGIBILITY	FREE ADP AS % OF ELIGIBILITY
Atkins ES	85.71%	83.33%	84.62%
Marion Intermediate	74.03%	78.38%	83.48%
Marion Primary	75.70%	74.00%	75.69%
Rich Valley ES	79.21%	82.61%	90.48%
Chilhowie ES	79.02%	84.29%	84.19%
Saltville ES	72.04%	84.62%	86.05%
Sugar Grove	85.42%	88.24%	86.36%
ELEMENTARY AVERAGE	**78.73%**	**82.21%**	**84.41%**
Chilhowie MS	83.43%	85.71%	77.08%
Marion MS	68.98%	77.27%	72.80%
Northwood MS	90.76%	86.36%	89.38%
MIDDLE AVERAGE	**81.06%**	**83.11%**	**79.75%**
Chilhowie HS	50.00%	60.00%	64.55%
Marion HS	48.60%	60.53%	53.17%
Northwood HS	70.24%	82.05%	79.82%
HIGH AVERAGE	**56.28%**	**67.53%**	**65.85%**
OVERALL AVERAGE	**69.16%**	**77.63%**	**76.53%**

Source: Smyth County Public Schools, MGT Analysis, 2005.

As shown in the tables above, there are high participation rates across the free and reduced lunch eligibility groups. Of all free and reduced students, 76.53 percent and 77.63 percent, respectively, are participating in the school lunch program. With the exception of Marion Primary, over 80 percent of all free-eligible students are participating in the school lunch program. Even considering just the full-price students, there is an average of 69.16 percent participation. The lowest elementary lunch participation rate is 72.04 percent at Saltville Elementary. The only school which falls below 50 percent participation in any category division wide is Marion High School, with a 48.60 percent participation rate for full-price students. The participation at the breakfast meal is significantly lower, however, still commendable. At the elementary levels, the free and reduced eligibility levels are over 50 percent.

COMMENDATION

The division is maintaining consistently high levels of participation at all levels of eligibility.

12.0 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL COSTS AND SAVINGS

12.0 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL COSTS AND SAVINGS

Based on the analyses of data obtained from interviews, surveys, community input, state and division documents, and first-hand observations in Smyth County Public Schools (SCPS), the MGT team developed 34 commendations and 83 recommendations in this report. Fifteen (15) recommendations have fiscal implications.

As shown below in Exhibit 12-1 and in detail in Exhibit 12-2, full implementation of the recommendations in this report would generate a savings of almost $3.5 million over five years and a total net savings of $46,781 when total costs and one-time costs are taken out. Exhibit 12-3 and 12-4 break down the costs by operating versus capital expenses respectively.

Exhibit 12-1 shows the total costs and savings for all recommendations.

EXHIBIT 12-1
SUMMARY OF ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)

CATEGORY	YEARS					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
TOTAL SAVINGS	$564,930	$714,718	$714,718	$714,718	$714,718	$3,423,802
TOTAL (COSTS)	($630,923)	($642,462)	($641,762)	($641,762)	($641,762)	($3,198,671)
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	($65,993)	$72,256	$72,956	$72,956	$72,956	$225,131
TOTAL ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						($178,350)
TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS) INCLUDING ONE TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						$46,781

Exhibit 12-2 provides a chapter by chapter summary for all costs and savings.

It is important to keep in mind that only recommendations with fiscal impact are identified in this chapter. Many additional recommendations to improve the efficiency of Smyth County Public Schools are contained in Chapters 2 through 11.

MGT recommends that SCPS give each of these recommendations serious consideration and develop a plan to proceed with implementation and a system to monitor subsequent progress.

EXHIBIT 12-2

SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF SAVINGS (COSTS)

CHAPTER REFERENCE	ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 2: DIVISION ADMINISTRATION							
2-4 Hire an Operations and Finance Officer (p. 2-14)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($457,500)	
CHAPTER 2 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($457,500)**	
CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT							
4-4 Coordinate with the County to Hire a Grants Administrator (p. 4-12)	($13,839)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($124,551)	
4-7 Coordinate with the County to Develop a Comprehensive Employee Safety Training Program (p. 4-18)	$13,108	$26,215	$26,215	$26,215	$26,215	$117,968	
4-8 Obtain Adequate Flood Insurance Coverage for Division School Property (p. 4-19)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($12,000)	
CHAPTER 4 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($3,131)**	**($3,863)**	**($3,863)**	**($3,863)**	**($3,863)**	**($18,583)**	
CHAPTER 5: PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING							
5-3 Create and Staff a Committee to Investigate and Oversee Collaborative Purchasing and Contracting Opportunities Between Smyth County and SCPS (p. 5-6)	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$24,720	
CHAPTER 5 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$24,720**	

EXHIBIT 12-2 (CONTINUED)
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF SAVINGS (COSTS) (Continued)

CHAPTER REFERENCE	ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 6: EDUCATIONAL SERVICES							
6-4 Hire Two Secretaries (p. 6-11)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($277,820)	
6-7 Eliminate Six Teaching Positions (p. 6-18)	$141,381	$282,762	$282,762	$282,762	$282,762	$1,272,429	
CHAPTER 6 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$85,817**	**$227,198**	**$227,198**	**$227,198**	**$227,198**	**$994,609**	
CHAPTER 7: SPECIAL PROGRAMS							
7-7 Hire Six Teachers for Two Additional Nights Per Week (p. 7-18)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($129,600)	
7-12 Pay a Stipend for Spanish Instruction for Teachers of ESL (p. 7-23)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($6,000)	
CHAPTER 7 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($135,600)**	
CHAPTER 8: FACILITY USE AND MANAGEMENT							
8-2 Develop Master Plan (p. 8-7)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($150,000)
8-3 Hire Two Maintenance Staff (p. 8-10)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($437,500)	
8-9 Hire Resource Conservation Manager (p. 8-20)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($250,000)	
8-9 Generate Utility Savings (p. 8-20)	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$504,000	
CHAPTER 8 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($183,500)**	**($150,000)**
CHAPTER 9: TRANSPORTATION							
9-1 Purchase Four Replacement Buses Annually (p. 9-10)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($1,500,000)	
9-2 Install Communication Systems on Buses (p. 9-13)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($28,350)
9-3 Purchase and Implement a Vehicle Maintenance Information System (p. 9-14)	($3,000)	($700)	$0	$0	$0	($3,700)	
CHAPTER 9 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($303,000)**	**($300,700)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($1,503,700)**	**($28,350)**
CHAPTER 10: TECHNOLOGY							
10-6 Develop and Implement Inventory Control Measures (p. 10-14)	$50,000	$45,300	$45,300	$45,300	$45,300	$231,200	
CHAPTER 10 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$50,000**	**$45,300**	**$45,300**	**$45,300**	**$45,300**	**$231,200**	

EXHIBIT 12-2 (CONTINUED)
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF SAVINGS (COSTS)

CHAPTER REFERENCE	ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 11: FOOD SERVICES							
11-4* Increase Lunch Prices by 25 Cents (p. 11-8)	$179,671	$179,671	$179,671	$179,671	$179,671	$898,355	
11-9* Increase Breakfast Participation to 50 Percent (p. 11-14)	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$375,130	
CHAPTER 11 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$1,273,485**	
TOTAL SAVINGS	**$564,930**	**$714,718**	**$714,718**	**$714,718**	**$714,718**	**$3,423,802**	**$0**
TOTAL (COSTS)	**($630,923)**	**($642,462)**	**($641,762)**	**($641,762)**	**($641,762)**	**($3,198,671)**	**($178,350)**
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($65,993)**	**$72,256**	**$72,956**	**$72,956**	**$72,956**	**$225,131**	**($178,350)**
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS (COSTS) INCLUDING ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						**$46,781**	

*Reserved Fund for Food Service.

EXHIBIT 12-3
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF OPERATING FUND SAVINGS (COSTS)

CHAPTER REFERENCE	ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 2: DIVISION ADMINISTRATION							
2-4 Hire an Operations and Finance Officer (p. 2-14)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($91,500)	($457,500)	
CHAPTER 2 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($91,500)**	**($457,500)**	
CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT							
4-4 Coordinate with the County to Hire a Grants Administrator (p. 4-12)	($13,839)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($27,678)	($124,551)	
4-7 Coordinate with the County to Develop a Comprehensive Employee Safety Training Program (p. 4-18)	$13,108	$26,215	$26,215	$26,215	$26,215	$117,968	
4-8 Obtain Adequate Flood Insurance Coverage for Division School Property (p. 4-19)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($2,400)	($12,000)	
CHAPTER 4 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($3,131)**	**($3,863)**	**($3,863)**	**($3,863)**	**($3,863)**	**($18,583)**	
CHAPTER 5: PURCHASING AND WAREHOUSING							
5-3 Create and Staff a Committee to Investigate and Oversee Collaborative Purchasing and Contracting Opportunities Between Smyth County and SCPS (p. 5-6)	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$4,944	$24,720	
CHAPTER 5 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$4,944**	**$24,720**	
CHAPTER 6: EDUCATIONAL SERVICES							
6-4 Hire Two Secretaries (p. 6-11)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($55,564)	($277,820)	
6-7 Eliminate Six Teaching Positions (p. 6-18)	$141,381	$282,762	$282,762	$282,762	$282,762	$1,272,429	
CHAPTER 6 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$85,817**	**$227,198**	**$227,198**	**$227,198**	**$227,198**	**$994,609**	

EXHIBIT 12-3 (CONTINUED)
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF OPERATING FUND SAVINGS (COSTS)

| CHAPTER REFERENCE | ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS) | | | | | TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS) | ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS) |
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 7: SPECIAL PROGRAMS							
7-7 Hire Six Teachers for Two Additional Nights Per Week (p. 7-18)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($25,920)	($129,600)	
7-12 Pay a Stipend for Spanish Instruction for Teachers of ESL (p. 7-23)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($1,200)	($6,000)	
CHAPTER 7 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($27,120)**	**($135,600)**	
CHAPTER 8: FACILITY USE AND MANAGEMENT							
8-2 Develop Master Plan (p. 8-7)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($150,000)
8-3 Hire Two Maintenance Staff (p. 8-10)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($87,500)	($437,500)	
8-9 Hire Resource Conservation Manager (p. 8-20)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($50,000)	($250,000)	
8-9 Generate Utility Savings (p. 8-20)	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$100,800	$504,000	
CHAPTER 8 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($36,700)**	**($183,500)**	**($150,000)**
CHAPTER 9: TRANSPORTATION							
9-3 Purchase and Implement a Vehicle Maintenance Information System (p. 9-14)	($3,000)	($700)	$0	$0	$0	($3,700)	
CHAPTER 9 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($3,000)**	**($700)**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**($3,700)**	
CHAPTER 10: TECHNOLOGY							
10-6 Develop and Implement Inventory Control Measures (p. 10-14)	$50,000	$45,300	$45,300	$45,300	$45,300	$231,200	
CHAPTER 10 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$50,000**	**$45,300**	**$45,300**	**$45,300**	**$45,300**	**$231,200**	
CHAPTER 11: FOOD SERVICES							
11-4* Increase Lunch Prices by 25 Cents (p. 11-8)	$179,671	$179,671	$179,671	$179,671	$179,671	$898,355	
11-9* Increase Breakfast Participation to 50 Percent (p. 11-14)	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$75,026	$375,130	
CHAPTER 11 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$254,697**	**$1,273,485**	

EXHIBIT 12-3 (CONTINUED)
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF OPERATING FUND SAVINGS (COSTS)

CHAPTER REFERENCE	ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS)					TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS)	ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
TOTAL SAVINGS	$564,930	$714,718	$714,718	$714,718	$714,718	$3,423,802	
TOTAL (COSTS)	($330,923)	($342,462)	($341,762)	($341,762)	($341,762)	($1,698,671)	($150,000)
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	$234,007	$372,256	$372,956	$372,956	$372,956	$1,725,131	($150,000)
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS (COSTS) INCLUDING ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						$1,575,131	

*Reserved Fund for Food Service.

EXHIBIT 12-4
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL DIVISION
CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY OF CAPITAL FUND SAVINGS (COSTS)

| CHAPTER REFERENCE | ANNUAL SAVINGS (COSTS) | | | | | TOTAL FIVE YEAR SAVINGS (COSTS) | ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS) |
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11		
CHAPTER 9: TRANSPORTATION							
9-1 Purchase Four Replacement Buses Annually (p. 9-10)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($300,000)	($1,500,000)	
9-2 Install Communication Systems on Busses (p. 9-13)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($28,350)
CHAPTER 9 SUBTOTAL SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($1,500,000)**	**($28,350)**
TOTAL SAVINGS	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
TOTAL (COSTS)	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($1,500,000)**	**($28,350)**
TOTAL NET SAVINGS (COSTS)	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($300,000)**	**($1,500,000)**	**($28,350)**
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS (COSTS) INCLUDING ONE-TIME SAVINGS (COSTS)						**($1,528,350)**	

APPENDIX A:

SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX A

EXHIBIT A-1
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

PART A OF SURVEY	ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSES (%)	PRINCIPAL RESPONSES (%)	TEACHER RESPONSES (%)
1. Overall quality of public education in the Smyth County Schools is:			
Good or Excellent	92	100	91
Fair or Poor	7	0	9
2. Overall quality of education in the Smyth County Schools is:			
Improving	71	79	65
Staying the Same	21	13	26
Getting Worse	7	8	6
Don't Know	0	0	4
3. Grade given to the Smyth County Schools teachers:			
Above Average (A or B)	93	96	91
Below Average (D or F)	0	4	6
4. Grade given to the Smyth County Schools school level administrators:			
Above Average (A or B)	78	84	64
Below Average (D or F)	0	17	33
5. Grade given to the Smyth County Schools central office administrators:			
Above Average (A or B)	78	50	49
Below Average (D or F)	0	42	45

EXHIBIT A-2
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

PART B	(%A + SA) / (%D + SD)[1]		
	ADMINISTRATORS	PRINCIPALS	TEACHERS
1. The emphasis on learning in this school division has increased in recent years.	85/0	88/8	82/5
2. Our schools are safe and secure from crime.	93/7	100/0	78/13
3. Our schools effectively handle misbehavior problems.	71/14	87/8	57/29
4. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	14/71	54/37	37/52
5. Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.	86/7	58/30	55/30
6. Our schools can be described as "good places to learn."	85/7	96/0	87/7
7. There is administrative support for controlling student behavior in our schools.	79/7	87/8	66/22
8. Most students in our schools are motivated to learn.	93/7	87/13	66/23
9. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	78/21	96/4	88/4
10. The curriculum is broad and challenging for most students.	86/0	92/4	78/7
11. There is little a teacher can do to overcome education problems due to a student's home life.	21/64	21/59	29/52
12. Teachers in our schools know the material they teach.	100/0	100/0	94/1
13. Teachers in our schools care about students' needs.	93/0	100/0	94/2
14. Teachers expect students to do their very best.	100/0	96/4	92/2
15. The school division provides adequate technology-related staff development.	64/21	42/46	55/29
16. Principals and assistant principals in our schools care about students' needs.	71/0	100/0	79/9
17. In general, parents take responsibility for their children's behavior in our schools.	50/21	71/17	29/48
18. Parents in this school division are satisfied with the education their children are receiving.	78/14	91/0	69/6
19. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	57/21	50/23	39/38
20. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	21/28	43/35	26/40
21. This community really cares about its children's education.	57/7	83/4	56/16
22. The food services department encourages student participation through customer satisfaction surveys.	7/29	25/38	16/48
23. The school division requests input on the long range technology plan.	43/7	46/33	32/30
24. Funds are managed wisely to support education in this school division.	71/0	55/17	29/39
25. Sufficient student services are provided in this school division (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).	71/14	84/13	67/20
26. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in this school division.	57/21	58/25	34/39
27. The school division provides adequate technical support.	50/21	29/41	45/34
28. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0/71	4/92	8/72
29. The food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	71/14	88/4	44/36

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-3
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

PART C	(%G + E) / (%F + P)[1]		
	ADMINISTRATORS	**PRINCIPALS**	**TEACHERS**
1. Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in Smyth County Schools.	64/35	50/51	45/46
2. Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in Smyth County Schools.	57/36	62/38	47/45
3. Board of Education members' work at setting or revising policies for Smyth County Schools.	50/50	62/34	49/41
4. The School District Superintendent's work as the educational leader of Smyth County Schools.	57/36	71/29	61/37
5. The School District Superintendent's work as the chief administrator (manager) of Smyth County Schools.	85/14	67/33	61/36
6. Principals' work as the instructional leaders of their schools.	64/36	87/13	68/31
7. Principals' work as the managers of the staff and teachers.	93/7	83/16	70/29
8. Teachers' work in meeting students' individual learning needs.	71/28	92/8	91/9
9. Teachers' work in communicating with parents.	50/43	67/33	85/15
10. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs.	43/57	62/37	61/38
11. Students' ability to learn.	86/14	75/25	76/23
12. The amount of time students spend on task learning in the classroom.	78/21	66/29	79/20
13. Parents' efforts in helping their children to do better in school.	14/78	33/62	30/68
14. Parents' participation in school activities and organizations.	28/71	42/59	29/69
15. How well students' test results are explained to parents.	36/64	54/41	49/43
16. The cleanliness and maintenance of facilities in Smyth County Schools.	57/43	50/50	60/40
17. How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community.	57/43	62/33	55/37
18. Staff development opportunities provided by Smyth County Schools for teachers.	64/28	59/42	46/53
19. Staff development opportunities provided by Smyth County Schools for school administrators.	50/50	41/50	28/22
20. The school district's job of providing adequate instructional technology.	50/43	21/80	42/56
21. The school district's use of technology for administrative purposes.	64/36	54/41	48/29

[1] Percent responding *Good* or *Excellent* / Percent responding *Fair* or *Poor.* The *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-4
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]		
PART D: WORK ENVIRONMENT	**ADMINISTRATORS**	**PRINCIPALS**	**TEACHERS**
1. I find Smyth County Schools to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	72/7	76/21	77/10
2. The work standards and expectations in Smyth County Schools are equal to or above those of most other school districts.	78/7	84/16	74/9
3. Smyth County Schools officials enforce high work standards.	78/14	79/12	74/14
4. Most Smyth County Schools teachers enforce high student learning standards.	93/0	96/0	90/4
5. Smyth County Schools teachers and administrators have excellent working relationships.	71/14	75/13	54/23
6. <u>Teachers</u> who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	43/43	46/17	22/38
7. <u>Staff</u> who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	57/36	46/8	21/37
8. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	58/14	87/4	88/6
9. I have adequate facilities in which to conduct my work.	71/21	71/17	71/23
10. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	93/7	55/29	55/33
11. The workloads are equitably distributed among teachers and among staff members.	43/50	71/21	46/36
12. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	21/57	21/67	22/61
13. Workload is evenly distributed.	36/42	51/33	44/38
14. If there were an emergency in the schools, I would know how to respond appropriately.	79/14	92/4	89/6
15. I often observe other teachers and/or staff socializing rather than working while on the job.	21/50	13/66	20/60

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree11* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-5
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

PART E: JOB SATISFACTION	(%A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]		
	ADMINISTRATORS	PRINCIPALS	TEACHERS
1. I am very satisfied with my job in Smyth County Schools.	58/21	75/12	82/11
2. I plan to continue my career in Smyth County Schools.	72/0	75/8	87/4
3. I am actively looking for a job outside of Smyth County Schools.	7/65	8/76	8/76
4. Salary levels in Smyth County Schools are competitive.	28/43	54/29	44/38
5. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	65/14	55/16	66/21
6. I feel that I am an integral part of Smyth County Schools team.	72/7	67/8	69/19
7. I feel that there is no future for me in Smyth County Schools.	0/86	8/88	9/75
8. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	7/72	29/50	31/54

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-6
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS**

PART F: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE/PRACTICES	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]		
	ADMINISTRATORS	**PRINCIPALS**	**TEACHERS**
1. Most administrative practices in Smyth County Schools are highly effective and efficient.	43/21	54/21	48/30
2. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	36/21	62/25	42/32
3. Smyth County Schools administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	57/7	75/16	51/32
4. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	29/50	42/29	16/28
5. Teachers and staff are empowered with sufficient authority to effectively perform their responsibilities.	43/43	87/8	68/20
6. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	50/36	21/51	30/28
7. The extensive committee structure in Smyth County Schools ensures adequate input from teachers and staff on most important decisions.	36/14	54/21	33/33
8. Smyth County Schools has too many committees.	14/36	13/37	25/24
9. Smyth County Schools has too many layers of administrators.	7/71	8/63	36/28
10. Most of Smyth County Schools administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	64/28	46/21	47/13
11. Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	100/0	58/26	42/32
12. Central office administrators provide quality service to schools.	93/0	50/21	39/33

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

**EXHIBIT A-7
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS**

PART G: SCHOOL DISTRICT/PROGRAM FUNCTION	% NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT	/ % ADEQUATE [1] + OUTSTANDING	
	ADMINISTRATORS	PRINCIPALS	TEACHERS
a. Budgeting	71/29	71/25	72/18
b. Strategic planning	57/14	46/50	49/30
c. Curriculum planning	78/14	50/50	41/54
d. Financial management and accounting	79/14	55/37	55/27
e. Community relations	57/43	50/50	45/50
f. Program evaluation, research, and assessment	71/14	46/54	38/50
g. Instructional technology	64/29	79/21	57/40
h. Pupil accounting	50/43	29/54	27/49
i. Instructional coordination/supervision	57/36	59/37	38/54
j. Instructional support	43/50	59/42	48/48
k. Federal Programs (e.g., Title I, Special Education) coordination	43/50	50/46	43/48
l. Personnel recruitment	50/36	42/46	29/50
m. Personnel selection	57/35	42/59	36/51
n. Personnel evaluation	71/21	50/46	33/59
o. Staff development	64/29	58/42	45/52
p. Data processing	28/64	50/37	16/43
q. Purchasing	43/43	50/42	28/36
r. Plant maintenance	57/29	67/29	43/32
s. Facilities planning	93/0	54/46	38/34
t. Transportation	14/78	37/62	22/61
u. Food service	29/71	33/67	47/42
v. Custodial services	57/43	29/71	40/53
w. Risk management	46/38	30/62	28/44
x. Administrative technology	43/50	39/52	24/45
y. Grants administration	50/43	71/21	38/32

[1] Percent responding *Needs Some Improvement* or *Needs Major Improvement* / Percent responding *Adequate* or *Outstanding.* The *should be eliminated* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-8
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
WITHIN SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

PART H: OPERATIONS	ADMINISTRATORS (%)	PRINCIPALS (%)	TEACHERS (%)
1. The overall operation of Smyth County Schools is:			
Highly efficient	0	8	6
Above average in efficiency	29	50	34
Average in efficiency	64	29	50
Less efficient than most other school districts	0	13	8
Don't know	7	0	3
2. The operational efficiency of Smyth County Schools could be improved by:			
Outsourcing some support services	21	25	19
Offering more programs	29	42	36
Offering fewer programs	7	0	4
Increasing the number of administrators	21	33	7
Reducing the number of administrators	7	4	37
Increasing the number of teachers	36	75	67
Reducing the number of teachers	14	0	1
Increasing the number of support staff	50	58	52
Reducing the number of support staff	0	4	8
Increasing the number of facilities	21	25	32
Reducing the number of facilities	50	8	6
Rezoning schools	50	25	17
Other	7	8	16

*Percentages may add up to over 100 percent due to rounding.

EXHIBIT A-9
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART A OF SURVEY	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS (%)	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS (%)
1. Overall quality of public education in the school district is:		
Good or Excellent	92	85
Fair or Poor	7	14
2. Overall quality of education in the school district is:		
Improving	71	69
Staying the Same	21	20
Getting Worse	7	2
Don't Know	0	3
3. Grade given to teachers:		
Above Average (A or B)	93	78
Below Average (D or F)	0	1
4. Grade given to school administrators:		
Above Average (A or B)	78	77
Below Average (D or F)	0	3
5. Grade given to school district administrators:		
Above Average (A or B)	78	77
Below Average (D or F)	0	5

EXHIBIT A-10
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART B	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS
1. The emphasis on learning in this school division has increased in recent years.	85/0	83/6
2. Our schools are safe and secure from crime.	93/7	65/16
3. Our schools effectively handle misbehavior problems.	71/14	54/24
4. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	14/71	26/62
5. Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.	86/7	63/17
6. Our schools can be described as "good places to learn."	85/7	84/5
7. There is administrative support for controlling student behavior in our schools.	79/7	68/12
8. Most students in our schools are motivated to learn.	93/7	65/12
9. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	78/21	56/10
10. The curriculum is broad and challenging for most students.	86/0	70/8
11. There is little a teacher can do to overcome education problems due to a student's home life.	21/64	20/58
12. Teachers in our schools know the material they teach.	100/0	69/6
13. Teachers in our schools care about students' needs.	93/0	80/4
14. Teachers expect students to do their very best.	100/0	74/7
15. The school division provides adequate technology-related staff development.	64/21	n/a
16. Principals and assistant principals in our schools care about students' needs.	71/0	84/4
17. In general, parents take responsibility for their children's behavior in our schools.	50/21	42/34
18. Parents in this school division are satisfied with the education their children are receiving.	78/14	57/16
19. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	57/21	36/39
20. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	21/28	35/24
21. This community really cares about its children's education.	57/7	63/15
22. The food services department encourages student participation through customer satisfaction surveys.	7/29	n/a
23. The school division requests input on the long range technology plan.	43/7	n/a
24. Funds are managed wisely to support education in this school division.	71/0	67/18
25. Sufficient student services are provided in this school division (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).	71/14	57/26
26. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in this school division.	57/21	48/24
27. The school division provides adequate technical support.	50/21	n/a
28. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0/71	8/56
29. The food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	71/14	62/14

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*/Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-11
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART C	(% G+ E) / (% F + P)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS
1. Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in the school district.	64/35	40/51
2. Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in Smyth County Schools.	57/36	36/58
3. Board of Education members' work at setting or revising policies for the school district.	50/50	44/48
4. The school district Superintendent's work as the educational leader of the school district.	57/36	78/18
5. The school district Superintendent's work as the chief administrator (manager) of the school district.	85/14	77/20
6. Principals' work as the instructional leaders of their schools.	64/36	70/29
7. Principals' work as the managers of the staff and teachers.	93/7	74/25
8. Teachers' work in meeting students' individual learning needs.	71/28	62/32
9. Teachers' work in communicating with parents.	50/43	49/41
10. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs.	43/57	44/47
11. Students' ability to learn.	86/14	74/20
12. The amount of time students spend on task learning in the classroom.	78/21	49/34
13. Parents' efforts in helping their children to do better in school.	14/78	29/56
14. Parents' participation in school activities and organizations.	28/71	27/59
15. How well students' test results are explained to parents.	36/64	36/44
16. The cleanliness and maintenance of facilities in the school district.	57/43	70/30
17. How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community.	57/43	60/35
18. Staff development opportunities provided by the school district for teachers.	64/28	63/32
19. Staff development opportunities provided by the school district for school administrators.	50/50	53/43
20. The school district's job of providing adequate instructional technology.	50/43	54/43
21. The school district's use of technology for administrative purposes.	64/36	53/46

[1] Percent responding *Good* or *Excellent* / Percent responding *Fair* or *Poor.* The *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-12
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART D: WORK ENVIRONMENT	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS
1. I find the school district to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	72/7	81/8
2. The work standards and expectations in the school district are equal to or above those of most other school districts.	78/7	75/7
3. School district officials enforce high work standards.	78/14	73/12
4. Most school district teachers enforce high student learning standards.	93/0	62/8
5. School district teachers and administrators have excellent working relationships.	71/14	54/14
6. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	43/43	26/33
7. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	57/36	37/34
8. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	58/14	79/15
9. I have adequate facilities in which to do my work.	71/21	71/21
10. I have adequate equipment and computer support to do my work.	93/7	70/22
11. The workloads are equitably distributed among teachers and among staff members.	43/50	29/28
12. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	21/57	16/70
13. Workload is evenly distributed.	36/42	32/46
14. The failure of school district officials to enforce high work standards results in poor quality work.	79/14	78/7
15. I often observe other teachers and/or staff socializing rather than working while on the job.	21/50	16/58

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-13
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART E: JOB SATISFACTION	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS	**OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS**
1. I am very satisfied with my job in the school district.	58/21	77/12
2. I plan to continue my career in the school district.	72/0	83/6
3. I am actively looking for a job outside of the school district.	7/65	8/78
4. Salary levels in the school district are competitive (with other school districts).	28/43	45/40
5. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	65/14	75/13
6. I feel that I am an integral part of the school district.	72/7	74/11
7. I feel that there is no future for me in the school district.	0/86	10/77
8. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	7/72	42/45

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-14
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART F: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE/PRACTICES	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS	**OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS**
1. Most administrative practices in the school district are highly effective and efficient.	43/21	54/23
2. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	36/21	44/33
3. School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	57/7	65/18
4. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	29/50	28/44
5. Teachers and staff are empowered with sufficient authority to effectively perform their responsibilities.	43/43	52/18
6. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	50/36	40/37
7. The extensive committee structure in the school district ensures adequate input from teachers and staff on most important decisions.	36/14	50/20
8. The school district has too many committees.	14/36	37/32
9. The school district has too many layers of administrators.	7/71	19/64
10. Most administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	64/28	54/25
11. Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	100/0	76/8
12. Central office administrators provide quality service to schools.	93/0	77/6

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-15
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS AND
ADMINISTRATORS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART G: SCHOOL DISTRICT/PROGRAM FUNCTION	% NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT / % ADEQUATE + OUTSTANDING[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATORS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS ADMINISTRATORS
a. Budgeting	71/29	47/45
b. Strategic planning	57/14	44/42
c. Curriculum planning	78/14	30/50
d. Financial management and accounting	79/14	36/53
e. Community relations	57/43	39/53
f. Program evaluation, research, and assessment	71/14	34/50
g. Instructional technology	64/29	48/41
h. Pupil accounting	50/43	25/48
i. Instructional coordination/supervision	57/36	30/50
j. Instructional support	43/50	32/51
k. Federal Programs (e.g., Title I, Special Education) coordination	43/50	24/52
l. Personnel recruitment	50/36	47/42
m. Personnel selection	57/35	46/48
n. Personnel evaluation	71/21	47/49
o. Staff development	64/29	48/49
p. Data processing	28/64	38/45
q. Purchasing	43/43	34/53
r. Plant maintenance	57/29	43/48
s. Facilities planning	93/0	38/48
t. Transportation	14/78	21/65
u. Food service	29/71	18/67
v. Custodial services	57/43	37/54
w. Risk management	46/38	20/54
x. Administrative technology	43/50	42/49
y. Grants administration	50/43	24/49

[1] Percent responding *Needs Some Improvement* or *Needs Major Improvement* / Percent responding *Adequate* or *Outstanding*.

EXHIBIT A-16
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS AND
PRINCIPALS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART A OF SURVEY	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS (%)	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS (%)
1. Overall quality of public education in the school district is:		
Good or Excellent	100	89
Fair or Poor	0	11
2. Overall quality of education in the school district is:		
Improving	79	78
Staying the Same	13	15
Getting Worse	8	7
Don't Know	0	1
3. Grade given to teachers:		
Above Average (A or B)	96	85
Below Average (D or F)	4	1
4. Grade given to school administrators:		
Above Average (A or B)	84	91
Below Average (D or F)	17	1
5. Grade given to school district administrators:		
Above Average (A or B)	50	73
Below Average (D or F)	42	7

EXHIBIT A-17
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS AND
PRINCIPALS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART B	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD) [1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
1. The emphasis on learning in this school division has increased in recent years.	88/8	89/4
2. Our schools are safe and secure from crime.	100/0	81/9
3. Our schools effectively handle misbehavior problems.	87/8	74/14
4. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	54/37	30/59
5. Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.	58/30	75/14
6. Our schools can be described as "good places to learn."	96/0	92/3
7. There is administrative support for controlling student behavior in our schools.	87/8	89/6
8. Most students in our schools are motivated to learn.	87/13	77/12
9. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	96/4	86/6
10. The curriculum is broad and challenging for most students.	92/4	86/7
11. There is little a teacher can do to overcome education problems due to a student's home life.	21/59	19/69
12. Teachers in our schools know the material they teach.	100/0	90/4
13. Teachers in our schools care about students' needs.	100/0	92/3
14. Teachers expect students to do their very best.	96/4	89/4
15. The school division provides adequate technology-related staff development.	42/46	n/a
16. Principals and assistant principals in our schools care about students' needs.	100/0	98/1
17. In general, parents take responsibility for their children's behavior in our schools.	71/17	51/31
18. Parents in this school division are satisfied with the education their children are receiving.	91/0	73/9
19. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	50/23	43/36
20. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	43/35	60/20
21. This community really cares about its children's education.	83/4	72/14
22. The food services department encourages student participation through customer satisfaction surveys.	25/38	n/a
23. The school division requests input on the long range technology plan.	46/33	n/a
24. Funds are managed wisely to support education in this school division.	55/17	67/19
25. Sufficient student services are provided in this school division (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).	84/13	56/36
26. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in this school division.	58/25	61/24
27. The school division provides adequate technical support.	29/41	n/a
28. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	4/92	18/68
29. The food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	88/4	58/26

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-18
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS AND
PRINCIPALS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART C	(%G+ E) / (%F + P)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
1. Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in the school district.	50/51	39/57
2. Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in the school district.	62/38	41/56
3. Board of Education members' work at setting or revising policies for the school district.	62/34	50/47
4. The school district Superintendent's work as the educational leader of the school district.	71/29	81/17
5. The school district Superintendent's work as the chief administrator (manager) of the school district.	67/33	81/17
6. Principals' work as the instructional leaders of their schools.	87/13	89/11
7. Principals' work as the managers of the staff and teachers.	83/16	94/6
8. Teachers' work in meeting students' individual learning needs.	92/8	80/20
9. Teachers' work in communicating with parents.	67/33	68/32
10. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs.	62/37	64/36
11. Students' ability to learn.	75/25	84/16
12. The amount of time students spend on task learning in the classroom.	66/29	72/27
13. Parents' efforts in helping their children to do better in school.	33/62	35/64
14. Parents' participation in school activities and organizations.	42/59	33/66
15. How well students' test results are explained to parents.	54/41	51/47
16. The cleanliness and maintenance of facilities in the school district.	50/50	65/34
17. How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community.	62/33	66/32
18. Staff development opportunities provided by the school district for teachers.	59/42	68/31
19. Staff development opportunities provided by the school district for school administrators.	41/50	63/37
20. The school district's job of providing adequate instructional technology.	21/80	46/52
21. The school district's use of technology for administrative purposes.	54/41	54/45

[1] Percent responding *Good* or *Excellent* / Percent responding *Fair* or *Poor.* The *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-19
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS AND
PRINCIPALS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
PART D: WORK ENVIRONMENT	**SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS**	**OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS**
1. I find the school district to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	76/21	88/5
2. The work standards and expectations in the school district are equal to or above those of most other school districts.	84/16	83/6
3. School district officials enforce high work standards.	79/12	81/9
4. Most school district teachers enforce high student learning standards.	96/0	81/7
5. School district teachers and administrators have excellent working relationships.	75/13	76/7
6. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	46/17	48/31
7. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	46/8	54/25
8. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	87/4	80/13
9. I have adequate facilities in which to do my work.	71/17	74/19
10. I have adequate equipment and computer support to do my work.	55/29	65/27
11. The workloads are equitably distributed among teachers and among staff members.	71/21	68/21
12. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	21/67	19/68
13. Workload is evenly distributed.	51/33	45/35
14. The failure of school district officials to enforce high work standards results in poor quality work.	92/4	96/2
15. I often observe other teachers and/or staff socializing rather than working while on the job.	13/66	12/77

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*. The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-20
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS AND
PRINCIPALS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
PART E: JOB SATISFACTION	**SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS**	**OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS**
1. I am very satisfied with my job in the school district.	75/12	83/8
2. I plan to continue my career in the school district.	75/8	88/4
3. I am actively looking for a job outside of the school district.	8/76	8/78
4. Salary levels in the school district are competitive (with other school districts).	54/29	40/48
5. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	55/16	74/15
6. I feel that I am an integral part of the school district.	67/8	74/12
7. I feel that there is no future for me in the school district.	8/88	8/81
8. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	29/50	32/58

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-21
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS AND
PRINCIPALS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART F: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE/PRACTICES	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	**OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS**
1. Most administrative practices in the school district are highly effective and efficient.	54/21	69/18
2. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	62/25	62/21
3. School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	75/16	71/15
4. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	42/29	36/38
5. Teachers and staff are empowered with sufficient authority to effectively perform their responsibilities.	87/8	77/12
6. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	21/51	40/39
7. The extensive committee structure in the school district ensures adequate input from teachers and staff on most important decisions.	54/21	60/21
8. The school district has too many committees.	13/37	35/34
9. The school district has too many layers of administrators.	8/63	27/57
10. Most administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	46/21	57/26
11. Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	58/26	65/20
12. Central office administrators provide quality service to schools.	50/21	63/18

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-22
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS AND
PRINCIPALS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART G: SCHOOL DISTRICT/PROGRAM FUNCTION	% NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT	**/**	% ADEQUATE [1] + OUTSTANDING
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS		OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
a. Budgeting	71/25		49/48
b. Strategic planning	46/50		38/53
c. Curriculum planning	50/50		40/59
d. Financial management and accounting	55/37		35/60
e. Community relations	50/50		37/61
f. Program evaluation, research, and assessment	46/54		32/65
g. Instructional technology	79/21		60/39
h. Pupil accounting	29/54		27/66
i. Instructional coordination/supervision	59/37		40/58
j. Instructional support	59/42		44/55
k. Federal Programs (e.g., Title I, Special Education) coordination	50/46		32/57
l. Personnel recruitment	42/46		47/48
m. Personnel selection	42/59		41/57
n. Personnel evaluation	50/46		40/58
o. Staff development	58/42		43/57
p. Data processing	50/37		39/51
q. Purchasing	50/42		37/58
r. Plant maintenance	67/29		55/43
s. Facilities planning	54/46		51/43
t. Transportation	37/62		43/54
u. Food service	33/67		35/65
v. Custodial services	29/71		47/52
w. Risk management	30/62		23/63
x. Administrative technology	39/52		48/49
y. Grants administration	71/21		34/49

[1] Percent responding *Needs Some Improvement* or *Needs Major Improvement* / Percent responding *Adequate* or *Outstanding.* The *should be eliminated* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-23
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHERS AND
TEACHERS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART A OF SURVEY	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS (%)	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS (%)
1. Overall quality of public education in the school district is:		
Good or Excellent	91	74
Fair or Poor	9	25
2. Overall quality of education in the school district is:		
Improving	65	53
Staying the Same	26	27
Getting Worse	6	16
Don't Know	4	4
3. Grade given to teachers:		
Above Average (A or B)	91	83
Below Average (D or F)	6	1
4. Grade given to school administrators:		
Above Average (A or B)	64	59
Below Average (D or F)	33	11
5. Grade given to school district administrators:		
Above Average (A or B)	49	38
Below Average (D or F)	45	21

EXHIBIT A-24
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHERS AND
TEACHERS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART B	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD) [1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
1. The emphasis on learning in this school division has increased in recent years.	82/5	71/13
2. Our schools are safe and secure from crime.	78/13	53/28
3. Our schools effectively handle misbehavior problems.	57/29	37/48
4. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	37/52	28/62
5. Our schools have the materials and supplies necessary for instruction in basic skills programs such as writing and mathematics.	55/30	54/31
6. Our schools can be described as "good places to learn."	87/7	74/11
7. There is administrative support for controlling student behavior in our schools.	66/22	55/29
8. Most students in our schools are motivated to learn.	66/23	55/29
9. Lessons are organized to meet students' needs.	88/4	79/9
10. The curriculum is broad and challenging for most students.	78/7	77/11
11. There is little a teacher can do to overcome education problems due to a student's home life.	29/52	35/46
12. Teachers in our schools know the material they teach.	94/1	88/4
13. Teachers in our schools care about students' needs.	94/2	91/3
14. Teachers expect students to do their very best.	92/2	88/4
15. The school division provides adequate technology-related staff development.	55/29	n/a
16. Principals and assistant principals in our schools care about students' needs.	79/9	83/7
17. In general, parents take responsibility for their children's behavior in our schools.	29/48	27/53
18. Parents in this school division are satisfied with the education their children are receiving.	69/6	53/14
19. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	39/38	29/50
20. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	26/40	36/38
21. This community really cares about its children's education.	56/16	49/27
22. The food services department encourages student participation through customer satisfaction surveys.	16/48	n/a
23. The school division requests input on the long range technology plan.	32/30	n/a
24. Funds are managed wisely to support education in this school division.	29/39	28/46
25. Sufficient student services are provided in this school division (e.g., counseling, speech therapy, health).	67/20	53/34
26. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in this school division.	34/39	35/33
27. The school division provides adequate technical support.	45/34	n/a
28. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	8/72	17/60
29. The food services department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	44/36	43/34

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-25
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHERS AND
TEACHERS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART C	(%G+ E) / (%F + P)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
1. Board of Education members' knowledge of the educational needs of students in the school district.	45/46	24/64
2. Board of Education members' knowledge of operations in the school district.	47/45	29/55
3. Board of Education members' work at setting or revising policies for the school district.	49/41	27/58
4. The school district Superintendent's work as the educational leader of the school district.	61/37	49/40
5. The school district Superintendent's work as the chief administrator (manager) of the school district.	61/36	50/38
6. Principals' work as the instructional leaders of their schools.	68/31	63/36
7. Principals' work as the managers of the staff and teachers.	70/29	67/32
8. Teachers' work in meeting students' individual learning needs.	91/9	79/20
9. Teachers' work in communicating with parents.	85/15	75/24
10. Teachers' attitudes about their jobs.	61/38	50/49
11. Students' ability to learn.	76/23	64/35
12. The amount of time students spend on task learning in the classroom.	79/20	60/37
13. Parents' efforts in helping their children to do better in school.	30/68	21/76
14. Parents' participation in school activities and organizations.	29/69	23/75
15. How well students' test results are explained to parents.	49/43	38/52
16. The cleanliness and maintenance of facilities in the school district.	60/40	52/47
17. How well relations are maintained with various groups in the community.	55/37	43/44
18. Staff development opportunities provided by the school district for teachers.	46/53	61/38
19. Staff development opportunities provided by the school district for school administrators.	28/22	32/22
20. The school district's job of providing adequate instructional technology.	42/56	47/51
21. The school district's use of technology for administrative purposes.	48/29	45/31

[1] Percent responding *Good* or *Excellent* / Percent responding *Fair* or *Poor*. The *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-26
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHERS AND
TEACHERS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART D: WORK ENVIRONMENT	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
1. I find the school district to be an exciting, challenging place to work.	77/10	69/12
2. The work standards and expectations in the school district are equal to or above those of most other school districts.	74/9	63/14
3. School district officials enforce high work standards.	74/14	63/15
4. Most school district teachers enforce high student learning standards.	90/4	78/8
5. School district teachers and administrators have excellent working relationships.	54/23	45/26
6. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	22/38	25/39
7. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	21/37	23/36
8. I feel that I have the authority to adequately perform my job responsibilities.	88/6	81/12
9. I have adequate facilities in which to do my work.	71/23	69/23
10. I have adequate equipment and computer support to do my work.	55/33	54/36
11. The workloads are equitably distributed among teachers and among staff members.	46/36	40/43
12. No one knows or cares about the amount or quality of work that I perform.	22/61	24/58
13. Workload is evenly distributed.	44/38	36/43
14. The failure of school district officials to enforce high work standards results in poor quality work.	89/6	87/7
15. I often observe other teachers and/or staff socializing rather than working while on the job.	20/60	18/66

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-27
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHERS
AND TEACHERS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
PART E: JOB SATISFACTION	**SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS**	**OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS**
1. I am very satisfied with my job in the school district.	82/11	70/15
2. I plan to continue my career in the school district.	87/4	76/8
3. I am actively looking for a job outside of the school district.	8/76	11/74
4. Salary levels in the school district are competitive (with other school districts).	44/38	33/53
5. I feel that my work is appreciated by my supervisor(s).	66/21	65/21
6. I feel that I am an integral part of the school district.	69/19	59/20
7. I feel that there is no future for me in the school district.	9/75	12/73
8. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	31/54	20/69

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-28
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHERS AND
TEACHERS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART F: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE/PRACTICES	(% A + SA) / (% D + SD)[1]	
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS	**OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS**
1. Most administrative practices in the school district are highly effective and efficient.	48/30	34/36
2. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	42/32	36/36
3. School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	51/32	39/35
4. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	16/28	15/29
5. Teachers and staff are empowered with sufficient authority to effectively perform their responsibilities.	68/20	55/27
6. Major bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes which cause unnecessary time delays.	30/28	45/19
7. The extensive committee structure in the school district ensures adequate input from teachers and staff on most important decisions.	33/33	29/39
8. The school district has too many committees.	25/24	43/13
9. The school district has too many layers of administrators.	36/28	53/15
10. Most administrative processes (e.g., purchasing, travel requests, leave applications, personnel, etc.) are highly efficient and responsive.	47/13	35/28
11. Central office administrators are responsive to school needs.	42/32	27/34
12. Central office administrators provide quality service to schools.	39/33	27/31

[1] Percent responding *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* / Percent responding *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.

EXHIBIT A-29
COMPARISON SURVEY RESPONSES
SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHERS AND
TEACHERS IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PART G: SCHOOL DISTRICT/PROGRAM FUNCTION	% NEEDS SOME IMPROVEMENT + NEEDS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT	**/**	% ADEQUATE [1] + OUTSTANDING
	SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS		OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
a. Budgeting	72/18		65/16
b. Strategic planning	49/30		47/24
c. Curriculum planning	41/54		52/41
d. Financial management and accounting	55/27		49/23
e. Community relations	45/50		53/38
f. Program evaluation, research, and assessment	38/50		42/38
g. Instructional technology	57/40		53/40
h. Pupil accounting	27/49		29/39
i. Instructional coordination/supervision	38/54		38/48
j. Instructional support	48/48		48/45
k. Federal Programs (e.g., Title I, Special Education) coordination	43/48		36/40
l. Personnel recruitment	29/50		40/35
m. Personnel selection	36/51		42/37
n. Personnel evaluation	33/59		41/48
o. Staff development	45/52		42/52
p. Data processing	16/43		21/34
q. Purchasing	28/36		33/30
r. Plant maintenance	43/32		41/37
s. Facilities planning	38/34		41/28
t. Transportation	22/61		32/46
u. Food service	47/42		41/47
v. Custodial services	40/53		44/49
w. Risk management	28/44		22/32
x. Administrative technology	24/45		24/34
y. Grants administration	38/32		21/32

[1] Percent responding *Needs Some Improvement* or *Needs Major Improvement* / Percent responding *Adequate* or *Outstanding.* The *neutral* and *don't know* responses are omitted.