

Oklahoma

School Performance Review



**Guthrie
Public Schools**

**“Staking a claim
in our students’
future”**





OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL
QUALITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

October, 2016

Fellow Oklahomans:

The Office of Educational Quality & Accountability is pleased to present this school performance review for Guthrie Public Schools (GPS).

This review is intended to help GPS contain costs, improve management strategies and operations, and increase student performance. To conduct this review the office contracted with *Prismatic Services, Inc.*

Guthrie Public Schools has a number of commendable programs and enjoys support from district residents; however, it is faced with some challenges. The review contains recommendations to help GPS meet those challenges and improve the efficiency of their operations. The review also highlights a number of “Commendable Practices” in programs, operations, and services provided by the administration, teachers, and staff.

We are grateful for the cooperation of GPS Board of Education, administration, staff, parents, and community members. They are to be commended for their dedication toward improving educational opportunities for their community.

We are pleased to announce that this review is available in hardcopy through the Office of Educational Quality & Accountability and on the office’s web site at www.oeqa.ok.gov

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Daniel Craig
Executive Director

Oklahoma School Performance Review

Guthrie Public Schools

October 2016



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This publication was prepared by the Office of Educational Quality & Accountability as authorized by Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Section 3-118.1 and 1210.5331. It was printed by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Central Services Department, as authorized by the Commission of Educational Quality & Accountability. 15 paper copies have been prepared at a cost of \$1,283.50. A copy has been electronically deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, October, 2016.



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The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability supports high level student performance by ensuring quality evidence based educator preparation, improving P20 school efficiency and effectiveness, and providing comprehensive statistical information for all stakeholders.



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Executive Summary

The Oklahoma School Performance Review (OSPR) Program was authorized by the Oklahoma Legislature during the 2001 session, amended during the 2005 session, and amended again during the 2012 session. The responsibility to conduct school performance reviews was originally assigned to the Office of Accountability, which is now the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. The purpose of a performance review is to develop findings, commendations, and recommendations regarding (1) containing costs; (2) improving management strategies; and (3) promoting better education for Oklahoma children.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability began the performance review of Guthrie Public Schools (GPS) in December 2015. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability contracted with Prismatic Services to assist with the review. The Prismatic consulting team conducted individual and small group interviews with district personnel. The team also reviewed operations by touring facilities, observing cafeteria operations, and riding school bus routes. Administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and high school students completed confidential surveys. The consulting team tabulated the surveys and used the results in this review. Survey results are contained in **Appendices A** through **C**.

For comparison purposes, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability selected five Oklahoma school districts as peer districts based upon size, geography, and demographics. They are: Altus, Guymon, Noble, Tahlequah, and Woodward. These districts are called peer districts throughout this report.

For further comparison, a Community Group average is also used throughout the report. GPS falls into community group D2, which includes districts with an Average Daily Membership (ADM) of between 2,000 – 4,999 students. The “2” indicates that the percentage of GPS students eligible to receive free or reduced price meals is above the state average.

During this review, 77 recommendations were developed; they were designed to improve operations and support increased academic performance. In some cases, these recommendations should result in a net savings to the district, in some cases a net cost, and in some cases they should have no fiscal impact but should improve district effectiveness. A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and Prismatic wish to express their appreciation to the Board of Education of Guthrie Public Schools, its Superintendent, Dr. Mike Simpson, and the many district employees, students, parents, and community residents who supported and provided input for this review.

GUTHRIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Guthrie school district is located in Logan County. Guthrie is situated on U.S. Highway 77, thirty-two miles north of Oklahoma City. The 2010 census reported the district's

population as being 23,052. During the 2013-14 school year, the district served 3,514 students in grades PreK-12.

In 2013-14, the Caucasian and Hispanic populations in GPS were the highest for all schools in the district except Guthrie High School, where the Caucasian and Black populations were the highest at 75 percent and 10 percent, respectively, as shown in **Exhibit 1**. Of all students enrolled at each school, more than half (ranging from 57.0 to 71.3 percent) were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Exhibit 1
Guthrie Student Enrollment and Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2013-14

School	Grade Span	Fall Enrollment	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
Cotteral ES	Pre-K	450	78%	7%	0%	14%	1%	68.4%
Central ES	1	288	76%	7%	1%	13%	3%	67.0%
Fogarty ES	2-3	536	75%	9%	0%	13%	3%	71.3%
Guthrie Upper ES	4-6	740	75%	8%	0%	12%	4%	70.3%
Guthrie Junior HS	7-8	508	83%	6%	0%	7%	4%	65.6%
Guthrie HS	9-12	1,026	75%	10%	0%	8%	7%	57.0%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2 compares Guthrie's demographics with its peers and the state for 2013-14. Guthrie had demographics similar to those of most of its peers, although Native American populations were notably higher for Noble and Tahlequah. The assessed property valuation in Guthrie was in the middle among its peers and lower than the state. Guthrie's percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals was also in the middle of the peers but slightly higher than the state.

Exhibit 2
Demographics of Guthrie, Peer Districts, and State, 2013-14

Entity	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
Guthrie	3,514.3	77%	8%	0%	11%	4%	\$36,044	65.4%
Altus	3,710.8	52%	8%	1%	38%	1%	\$27,049	62.4%
Guymon	2,831.0	25%	2%	3%	70%	0%	\$46,084	74.2%
Noble	2,844.5	76%	2%	1%	5%	15%	\$24,618	61.7%
Tahlequah	3,478.5	35%	2%	1%	18%	45%	\$24,394	71.5%
Woodward	2,993.2	71%	1%	1%	23%	4%	\$51,242	60.6%
State	1,292.2	59%	9%	2%	15%	15%	\$45,248	62.0%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

The data in **Exhibit 3** reflect average daily membership (ADM) trends compared to the peers, the community group average,¹ and the state. Guthrie had the second-highest ADM increase among its peers and outpaced growth rates in both the community group and the state.

Exhibit 3
Guthrie, Peer Districts, and State Student ADM Trends, 2009-10 to 2013-14

Entity	ADM					Percent Change
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	
Guthrie	3,274.0	3,290.1	3,302.7	3,448.7	3,514.3	7.3%▲
Altus	3,961.8	3,851.4	3,809.5	3,820.3	3,710.8	(6.3)%▼
Guymon	2,696.2	2,818.9	2,803.8	2,810.8	2,831.0	5.0%▲
Noble	2,927.4	2,916.3	2,825.1	2,831.0	2,844.5	(2.8)%▼
Tahlequah	3,481.6	3,575.8	3,523.8	3,520.8	3,478.5	(0.1)%▼
Woodward	2,618.1	2,660.5	2,712.3	2,821.2	2,993.2	14.3%▲
Community Group	2,806.2	2,802.6	2,939.8	2,968.7	2,960.8	5.5%▲
State	1,215.6	1,238.3	1,255.9	1,271.1	1,292.2	6.3%▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 4 shows demographic changes over the last five years in Guthrie. As ADM has grown, the district has seen slight increases in its Caucasian and Hispanic populations and slight decreases in Black and Native American populations. Over the same period, the

¹Guthrie and its peers belong to community group D2 based upon enrollment and free/reduced-price meals eligibility in 2013-14.

average assessed property valuation per student decreased by 2.9 percent, and eligibility for free and reduced-price meals rose by 4.3 percentage points.

Exhibit 4
Trend in Guthrie Demographics from 2009-10 to 2013-14

School Year	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
2009-10	3,274.0	74%	11%	0%	7%	8%	\$37,115	61.1%
2010-11	3,290.1	74%	10%	0%	8%	7%	\$37,212	65.7%
2011-12	3,302.7	77%	8%	0%	9%	5%	\$37,506	64.3%
2012-13	3,448.7	77%	8%	0%	10%	5%	\$37,692	65.4%
2013-14	3,514.3	77%	8%	0%	11%	4%	\$36,044	65.4%
Change	7.3%▲						(2.9)%▼	

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

COMMENDATIONS

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability identified “exemplary” or “best practices” in Guthrie Public Schools that led to 41 separate commendations. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability recommends that other school districts throughout Oklahoma examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they could be adapted to meet their local needs. The commendations are listed below and explained in detail in each chapter.

Chapter 1: MANAGEMENT, PERSONNEL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Guthrie board of education has three standing committees that increase board-administration communication by sharing information and addressing current issues on the board agenda.

Guthrie Public Schools has begun to develop key partnerships to address district needs and school improvement initiatives.

Guthrie Public Schools has developed policy and procedures for the management of legal services.

District procedures for preparing for board meetings and communicating board actions are well established and communicate transparency.

Guthrie Public Schools has collaborated with local social service agencies to offer a full day Pre-K classroom in an intergenerational setting that allows children a unique learning experience.

The superintendent engages the administrative team in regularly scheduled meetings to resolve issues, align plans, and coordinate district initiatives and operations.

The district, with the assistance of the long-range planning committee, shared with the community a framework for the multi-year planning needed to achieve the prioritized facility goals and objectives, which was essential to passing the bond.

The district partnership with Meridian Technology Center increases opportunities for students, and the high school supports the partnership with the Teacher as Advisor program.

Guthrie Public Schools maintains organized personnel records in a secure location ensuring that confidential information is protected and vital records are not lost or compromised.

Guthrie Public Schools has created multiple opportunities to communicate with community and parents through the use of a variety of tools.

The superintendent has established the Staff Communications Committee to improve communication with the school sites and uses the meetings to address staff questions and concerns.

Chapter 2: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM

The district is commended for initially implementing horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment processes.

The district is commended for data-driven decisions in identifying student need, and in designing curriculum, instructional delivery, and interventions.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for a strong administrative team with expertise and leadership skills to initiate positive organizational change and sustain its success.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for the establishment of professional learning communities.

The district is commended for implementing both the academic and behavioral RtI Model for grade levels K-11.

Chapter 3: BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for providing expanded and useful budget information on its website.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for providing its principals and activity sponsors with the “Activity Fund – Policies and Procedures Handbook”.

Chapter 4: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

The district is commended for engaging community members to achieve the first successful bond proposal in 10 years.

The district is commended for preserving the historic Capitol Elementary School and renovating Jelsma Stadium.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for using well-executed wall art in some of its facilities.

The district is commended for using carpet tiles that can be exchanged, cleaned, and reused.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for implementing SchoolDude computerized maintenance management system.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for employing the proper number of custodians to maintain school facilities at an acceptable level of cleanliness based upon national standards.

The district is commended for having unused natural gas meters disconnected in order to save utility costs.

The district is commended for energy and financial savings by retrofitting light fixtures throughout the district with LED bulbs.

The district is commended for having OEM conduct refuge assessments for its schools.

Chapter 5: SUPPORT SERVICES

Guthrie has implemented a thorough process for approving applications for free and reduced price meals, resulting in an approval rate that is higher than the state average.

The FSMC operating the child nutrition department is proficient in the use of marketing and decorating materials in the lunchrooms.

The FSMC operating the child nutrition department incorporates several best practices in its menus and food offerings.

The FSMC operated child nutrition department makes good use of technology for efficient and effective systems.

Guthrie Public Schools has an excellent policy that comprehensively addresses all aspects of the use of school kitchens and cafeterias.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for entering into a cooperative agreement with Rose State College to provide students with access to college coursework and credit.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for implementing School Messenger and other tools to increase communication with stakeholders including students, parents, and staff.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for using Frontline, an automated substitute teacher calling system, to assist in the access to and management of substitute teachers.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for including multiple stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of technology.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for implementing an online work order system to manage the district's technology maintenance and service needs.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for implementing a district-wide wireless network.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for allowing bus drivers to earn additional wages through extra-duty field trip assignments.

The transportation department is commended for providing ongoing training for all classes of buses.

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for employing best practices for bus maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECTED COSTS AND SAVINGS

A list of recommendations with their associated costs or savings is provided in **Exhibit 5**. In each chapter, implementation strategies and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Many of the recommendations have no costs or savings associated with them, but are designed to formalize, improve, and streamline operations. In some cases, the consulting team has made recommendations that will likely generate savings for the district, but in an effort to be conservative, no specific savings were estimated.

It must be understood that not all of the recommendations can be started at one time. The consulting team did not want to place priorities by indicating which recommendations should be implemented immediately and which ones implemented later. It will be up to the district to decide which ones to implement and the timelines for beginning implementation.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability recommends that the GPS Board of Education ask district administrators to review the recommendations, develop an implementation plan, and monitor its progress.

**Exhibit 5
Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation**

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Chapter 1	Management, Personnel, and Communications						
1	Develop a policy and procedure that will provide a consistent evaluation of the superintendent.						\$0
2	Develop policies and procedures for the evaluation of school administrators and directors.						\$0
3	Revise the policy on staff resignations to give the superintendent the authority to accept resignations on behalf of the board.						\$0
4	Organize a task force to elicit community, parent, and school staff input and develop a detailed action plan for transitioning the district from a grade center organization to neighborhood schools.						\$0
5	Implement an ongoing strategic planning process involving community and faculty stakeholders that defines decision-making processes and provides focus and direction through long-range goals and strategies.						\$0
6	Engage a professional grant writer and develop a cadre of teachers trained as grant writers to assist colleagues in securing classroom grants.						\$0
7	Evaluate all programs in use by the district.						\$0
8	Combine secondary course sections and review course offerings.	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$501,375
9	Develop a written standard operating procedures manual for personnel operations.						\$0
10	Develop a systematic process for making staffing decisions that includes careful consideration of teaching loads and class size district-wide, support staff configurations, and the impact of any decisions to district programs and services.						\$0
11	Develop strategies for retaining a qualified workforce and increasing the pool of highly qualified applicants for certified staff positions.						\$0
12	Develop a formal mentor program with trained mentors to provide teachers new to the profession or the district with the support needed for success.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
13	Structure a “grow your own program” that includes components to develop and train certified and support staff to assume leadership roles and provide a means for staff to acquire certifications and training needed to assume new positions.						\$0
14	Develop a professional development program for all support staff that includes job specific training, as well as participation in the professional development for certified staff, as appropriate.						\$0
15	Explore options for providing special education support staff and teachers with comprehensive, ongoing training that focuses on de-escalation strategies to minimize the necessity for restraint.						\$0
16	Monitor the use and increase the effectiveness of the district website, teacher web pages, and parent portal as tools to inform and involve parents.						\$0
17	Develop an outreach program to foster collaboration among parents and expand parent involvement in decision-making beyond required federal and state compliance planning committees.						\$0
18	Provide a leadership development program to assist the parent and teacher membership of organizations, such as the PTO, to become functional, high-impact organizations.						\$0
19	Provide transition activities and information for parents and their students as they move from one elementary grade center to the next.						\$0
	Subtotal	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$501,375
Chapter 2	Instructional Delivery System						
20	Strengthen the horizontal and vertical alignment process to function primarily at the teacher and classroom level.						\$0
21	Continue to build teacher and principal capacity that deepens, sustains, and drives the curricular and instructional delivery work based on student need.						\$0
22	Implement a process to assess site-based progress towards high functioning professional learning communities then put into operation the needed modifications.						\$0
23	Assess the need to continue MAP/MPG testing.						\$0
24	Continue refining RtI programmatic processes and procedures with widespread input from all stakeholders.						\$0
25	Continue the focus on expanding inclusionary practices.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
26	Equip all special education classrooms with appropriate space dedicated to de-escalating disruptive behavior.						\$0
27	Implement job-embedded training and communication processes for paraprofessionals.						\$0
28	Implement a regularly scheduled time for librarians to meet and review programmatic issues and share professional expertise.						\$0
29	Develop and implement a comprehensive counseling program with clear job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, and programmatic goals and expectations.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,000)
	Subtotal	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,000)
Chapter 3	Business Operations						
30	Establish a budget development process that provides for input from the public and district employees.						\$0
31	Place special emphasis on the percentage of district funds being budgeted for instruction during budget development and in future budget years establish a target percentage for instruction.						\$0
32	Provide the board and finance committee with monthly general fund status reports to enable all board members to monitor the fund's current balance.						\$0
33	Establish a stable millage rate as a target.						\$0
34	Develop desk procedures for each business services employee and establish a formal process for cross-training.						\$0
35	Require mandatory direct deposit of employee pay to improve efficiency for both the district and employees.	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$9,000)
36	Improve information provided to schools and departments including training materials pertaining to the administrative processes and schedule training for all staff involved in the processes.						\$0
37	Provide current monthly financial reports to the school board that include comparative revenue and expenditure data by function and other categories.						\$0
38	Develop reports for the child nutrition fund that monthly show fund balances, revenues, expenditures, and whether the program is making or losing money.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
39	Improve management of the district's investment in fixed assets by creating additional policies, revise requirements for placing lower cost items on the listing, and take a 100 percent simultaneous annual physical inventory of all buildings.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,000)
40	Modify the interface between the MAS personnel and payroll modules to reduce data entry by payroll and improve internal controls.						\$0
	Subtotal	(\$4,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$12,000)
Chapter 4	Facilities Use and Management						
41	Establish a long-range facilities planning committee and, in conjunction with the development of a strategic plan, develop a long-range facilities master plan.	(\$36,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$36,000)
42	Include design standards and programmatic square footages within published guidelines for square footage per student in planning for the new elementary school and later construction renovation projects.						\$0
43	Develop a comprehensive database to maintain accurate records of all facilities and properties.						\$0
44	Implement a preventive maintenance program that addresses not only filters but also life safety inspections and tests as well as equipment preventive maintenance inspections and tests based upon manufacturer's recommendations and best engineering practices.	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)	(\$16,050)
45	Hire nine additional maintenance technicians.	(\$65,386)	(\$130,772)	(\$196,158)	(\$261,544)	(\$294,237)	(\$948,097)
46	Conduct an inspection of all facilities, document all deficiencies using the existing work order system, and correct them.						\$0
47	Procure and issue all tools for use by maintenance personnel.	(\$988)	(\$494)	(\$494)	(\$247)	(\$247)	(\$2,470)
48	Develop a comprehensive Energy Management Program (EMP) to reduce energy consumption and decrease costs associated with energy.	(\$62,718)	\$23,286	\$23,286	\$23,286	\$23,286	\$30,426
49	Conduct a safety inspection of all facilities, document all deficiencies, and correct deficiencies quickly.						\$0
50	Inspect all eyewash stations, first aid kits, and AEDs to remove out-of-date materials and replace them with fresh materials.						\$0
	Subtotal	(\$168,302)	(\$111,190)	(\$176,576)	(\$241,715)	(\$274,408)	(\$972,191)

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Chapter 5	Support Services						
51	The contracted FSMC should staff kitchens using the Oklahoma State Department of Education staffing standards based upon MPLH calculations.	\$34,761	\$34,761	\$34,761	\$34,761	\$34,761	\$173,805
52	The FSMC for the Guthrie child nutrition program should provide training for all CN staff to ensure compliance with the requirements of Professional Standards and ensure that proper training records are maintained.						\$0
53	The FSMC should schedule the child nutrition director to perform regular onsite monitoring, oversight, coaching, and sharing of best practices in the school kitchens.						\$0
54	Appoint district employee(s) to monitor and provide oversight of the child nutrition FSMC contract as well as the program’s operations. Set up a system to evaluate performance (quality and service) and assess cost effectiveness and profitability.						\$0
55	Develop site-level reports that will provide meaningful data in a format that can be used for analysis and management decision-making.						\$0
56	Ensure the child nutrition program pays its fair share of the district utility costs as a direct expense.						\$0
57	The FSMC and the child nutrition director should develop strategies for increasing student participation rates.						\$0
58	Organize and implement a student feedback program using a variety of methods, such as advisory groups, testing and evaluation, and surveys, at the elementary and secondary level.						\$0
59	Develop and implement an equipment replacement plan.	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)	(\$184,645)
60	Develop and implement a “student as technician” program in cooperation with Meridian Technology Center and a teacher technician program paid with stipends to supplement technology support at the sites.	(\$37,400)	(\$37,400)	(\$37,400)	(\$37,400)	(\$37,400)	(\$187,000)
61	Maximize district resources by creating and implementing a plan to use a BYOD initiative and beginning purchases of new equipment in lieu of used equipment.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
62	Adopt district equipment standards that include an equipment replacement schedule for computers and other technology equipment.						\$0
63	Seek additional funding sources and grants to support improved technology equipment and professional development.						\$0
64	Develop and implement an instructional technology plan in conjunction with the district’s professional development plan.						\$0
65	Develop and test a disaster recovery plan that includes the district’s critical data, systems, and programs.						\$0
66	Assess the value of continuing to outsource transportation management and acquire proper training for the director and other staff by mentoring with local industry peers, attending OSDE workshops, seminars, and collaborating with local peers on Oklahoma standards.						\$0
67	Show greater attention to all areas of pupil transportation.						\$0
68	Establish a standard timeframe by which incident reports are received, reviewed, and translated into disciplinary action.						\$0
69	Re-evaluate each bus route and improve the process by which bus routes are generated.						\$0
70	Provide information, training, and intervention strategies from the special education program to the transportation department on any student with special needs.						\$0
71	Develop, document and implement specific areas of responsibility for each member of the transportation administrative team.						\$0
72	Take steps to reduce driver absenteeism.						\$0
73	Develop an alternate location for parent pick-up and reroute the buses to make pick-up and drop-off of students as safe as possible.						\$0
74	Once the district has built the new elementary school and changed over to neighborhood schools, they should review the existing no-ride-zone policy and possibly establish new bus rider criteria.						\$0
75	Review the current recommended and required forms from OSDE and incorporate them into daily operations to ensure that each driver is performing and submitting an accurate pre-trip inspection.						\$0
76	Reallocate the mechanics’ time solely to fleet maintenance and repair to allow adequate time to care for all GPS vehicles.						\$0
77	Develop a formal bus and support vehicle replacement plan.	(\$237,360)	\$0	(\$237,360)	\$0	(\$237,360)	(\$712,080)

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
	Subtotal	(\$276,928)	(\$39,568)	(\$276,928)	(\$39,568)	(\$276,928)	(\$909,920)
	Total savings	\$135,036	\$158,322	\$158,322	\$158,322	\$158,322	\$705,606
	Total costs	(\$487,791)	(\$210,605)	(\$513,351)	(\$341,130)	(\$611,183)	(\$2,101,342)
	Total net savings and costs	(\$352,755)	(\$52,283)	(\$355,029)	(\$182,808)	(\$452,861)	(\$1,395,736)

School Performance Review reports are typically lengthy and densely packed with information. They can at first be overwhelming to district stakeholders. For that reason, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability has identified the most likely “tipping point” recommendations. These are recommendations that the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability believes are the most important to implement and most likely to have the greatest organizational impact.

Of the 77 recommendations made, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability believes these seven recommendations to be the most critical:

- **Implement an ongoing strategic planning process involving community and faculty stakeholders that defines decision-making processes and provides focus and direction through long-range goals and strategies.** The district lacks an ongoing strategic planning process for institutional effectiveness. The long-range planning committee for facilities shows the district’s capacity for involving stakeholders. The benefit of such a planning effort is evident in the response of the community to the facilities plan and should be built upon to expand the strategic processes. This performance review report provides a series of tactical recommendations, which can provide a basis for a long-term strategic plan.
- **Implement a process to assess site-based progress towards high functioning professional learning communities then put into operation the needed modifications.** Each of the GPS building sites is unique in implementing the PLC process. The structures, schedules, and commitment differ. The principals need to reflect on trends and patterns that have emerged during the recent years of implementation. They each need to assess where their staff is on the journey to developing, deepening, and sustaining the PLC process. Each building principal needs the autonomy to review and assess his or her own staff with regard to PLCs.
- **Establish a budget development process that provides for input from the public and district employees.** There is currently no public, and limited or no staff involvement in the budget development process. The superintendent and school board should adopt and publish an annual budget calendar and create a budget advisory committee. The budgetary process and timeline should be communicated throughout the district in order to foster transparency. Budget discussions for the upcoming school year should begin early in the spring semester at the latest. Budget discussions should include opportunities for input from district and community stakeholders.
- **Establish a long-range facilities planning committee and, in conjunction with the development of a strategic plan, develop a long-range facilities master plan.** The district does not have a long-range strategic plan which would include a long-range facilities master plan. While some initial steps were taken in 2013, the district lacks a complete plan. There are two steps that are vital for continuing the process for developing a facilities master plan. First, the district must take stock of what it currently has in the way of facilities, with a detailed analysis of the condition of each of its facilities. Second, an accurate and realistic student enrollment projection will be necessary to weigh against the capacity of facilities.
- **The FSMC should schedule the child nutrition director to perform regular onsite monitoring, oversight, coaching, and sharing of best practices in the school kitchens.**

Manager meetings should be held at least once a month. The director should visit all schools on a regular basis (a minimum of twice a month). She should maintain a log of issues needing attention and note follow-up. Inconsistencies from school to school should be noted. The director should address these variations by developing standard procedures and providing this information to managers. Observations of staff performance should be used for coaching, sharing of best practices, and development of future training needs.

- **Maximize district resources by creating and implementing a plan to use a BYOD initiative and beginning purchases of new equipment in lieu of used equipment.** The district purchases used equipment from other school districts instead of purchasing new equipment. While this practice initially saves money, the cost and staff required to maintain and support the equipment impacts the viability of such a practice. Nearly all surveyed staff agreed that the district uses technology past the end of its useful lifespan. The district should focus on strategic purchases of new equipment and fully fund a viable equipment replacement plan.
- **Develop an alternate location for parent pick-up and reroute the buses to make pick-up and drop-off of students as safe as possible.** During the morning drop-off of students, there are no school officials present to provide supervision. This presents both a safety risk to students and potential liability issue for the district. The district should provide supervision, limit areas in which students can congregate, and prohibit bus riders from leaving campus.

Chapter 1:
Management, Personnel, and
Communications

Chapter 1

Management, Personnel, and Communications

This chapter addresses the management, personnel, and communications of Guthrie Public Schools (GPS) in the following sections:

- A. Governance
- B. Organization and Management
- C. Planning and Evaluation
- D. Personnel Management/Professional Development
- E. Community and Parent Involvement
- F. Communications/Public Relations

The organization and management of a school district involves cooperation between elected members of the board of education and staff of the district. The school board's role is to establish goals and objectives for the district in both instructional and operational areas, determine the policies by which the district will be governed, approve the plans to implement those policies, provide the funding sources necessary to carry out the plans, and evaluate the results of the plans.

Once the school board adopts goals and objectives for the district, it is the responsibility of the superintendent and staff to establish administrative policies and procedures to achieve the desired results. That achievement involves recommending the hiring and retention of employees, as well as ongoing communication with the community to ensure a clear understanding of the goals and the district's efforts to accomplish them.

Background

In 2013-14, the Caucasian and Hispanic populations were the highest in all schools throughout Guthrie Public Schools (GPS) except Guthrie High School, where the Caucasian and Black populations were the highest at 75 percent and 10 percent, respectively, as shown in **Exhibit 1-1**. Of all students enrolled at each school, more than half (ranging from 57.0 to 71.3 percent) were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Exhibit 1-1
Guthrie Student Enrollment and Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2013-14

School	Grade Span	Fall Enrollment	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
Cotteral ES	PK-K	450	78%	7%	0%	14%	1%	68.4%
Central ES	1	288	76%	7%	1%	13%	3%	67.0%
Fogarty ES	2-3	536	75%	9%	0%	13%	3%	71.3%
Guthrie Upper ES	4-6	740	75%	8%	0%	12%	4%	70.3%
Guthrie Junior HS	7-8	508	83%	6%	0%	7%	4%	65.6%
Guthrie HS	9-12	1,026	75%	10%	0%	8%	7%	57.0%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 1-2 compares Guthrie's demographics with its peers and the state for 2013-14. Guthrie had demographics similar to those of most of its peers, although Native American populations were notably higher for Noble and Tahlequah. The assessed property valuation in Guthrie was in the middle among its peers and lower than the state. Guthrie's percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals was also in the middle of the peers but slightly higher than the state.

Exhibit 1-2
Demographics of Guthrie, Peer Districts, and State, 2013-14

Entity	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
Guthrie	3,514.3	77%	8%	0%	11%	4%	\$36,044	65.4%
Altus	3,710.8	52%	8%	1%	38%	1%	\$27,049	62.4%
Guymon	2,831.0	25%	2%	3%	70%	0%	\$46,084	74.2%
Noble	2,844.5	76%	2%	1%	5%	15%	\$24,618	61.7%
Tahlequah	3,478.5	35%	2%	1%	18%	45%	\$24,394	71.5%
Woodward	2,993.2	71%	1%	1%	23%	4%	\$51,242	60.6%
State	1,292.2	59%	9%	2%	15%	15%	\$45,248	62.0%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

The data in **Exhibit 1-3** reflect average daily membership (ADM) trends compared to the peers, the community group average,¹ and the state. Guthrie had the second-highest ADM increase among its peers and outpaced growth rates in both the community group and the state.

¹ Guthrie and its peers belong to community group D2 based on their enrollment and eligibility for free/reduced-price meals.

Exhibit 1-3
Guthrie, Peer Districts, and State Student ADM Trends, 2009-10 to 2013-14

Entity	ADM					Percent Change
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	
Guthrie	3,274.0	3,290.1	3,302.7	3,448.7	3,514.3	7.3% ▲
Altus	3,961.8	3,851.4	3,809.5	3,820.3	3,710.8	(6.3)% ▼
Guymon	2,696.2	2,818.9	2,803.8	2,810.8	2,831.0	5.0% ▲
Noble	2,927.4	2,916.3	2,825.1	2,831.0	2,844.5	(2.8)% ▼
Tahlequah	3,481.6	3,575.8	3,523.8	3,520.8	3,478.5	(0.1)% ▼
Woodward	2,618.1	2,660.5	2,712.3	2,821.2	2,993.2	14.3% ▲
Community Group	2,806.2	2,802.6	2,939.8	2,968.7	2,960.8	5.5% ▲
State	1,215.6	1,238.3	1,255.9	1,271.1	1,292.2	6.3% ▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 1-4 shows demographic changes over the last five years in Guthrie. As ADM has grown, the district has seen slight increases in its Caucasian and Hispanic populations and slight decreases in Black and Native American populations. Over the same period, the average assessed property valuation per student decreased by 2.9 percent, and eligibility for free and reduced-price meals rose by 4.3 percentage points.

Exhibit 1-4
Guthrie Change in Demographics from 2009-10 to 2013-14

School Year	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
2009-10	3,274.0	74%	11%	0%	7%	8%	\$37,115	61.1%
2010-11	3,290.1	74%	10%	0%	8%	7%	\$37,212	65.7%
2011-12	3,302.7	77%	8%	0%	9%	5%	\$37,506	64.3%
2012-13	3,448.7	77%	8%	0%	10%	5%	\$37,692	65.4%
2013-14	3,514.3	77%	8%	0%	11%	4%	\$36,044	65.4%
Change	7.3% ▲						(2.9)% ▼	

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

A. GOVERNANCE

Oklahoma state education laws, as codified in the Oklahoma School Code (OSC) and district policies, establish the powers and responsibilities of the district board of education and the superintendent. The OSC contains 1,470 sections numbered consecutively and each section provides legal guidance for school district governance and operations. The information provided in **Exhibit 1-5** reflects sections relevant to board of education organization and basic governance principles.

Exhibit 1-5
OSC: Board of Education Governance and Organization

Topic	Section
School District Definition	8
School System Administered by State Department of Education	17
Positions in School System Defined	18
General Fund Definition	22
Building Fund Definition	23
School District Corporate Powers	122
Governing Body of School District	123
Election of Board of Education	125
Expansion of Board of Education	126
Workshop for New Board Members	127
Relation by Affinity or Consanguinity	129
Employment of Relation of Board of Education Members	130
Excluding Litigious Board Member from Proceedings	131
School District Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer	132
Local Treasurer Surety Bond, Duties, Cash Investment Ledgers	133
Oath of Office	135
Requirements for Bonds for Employees and Officers	136
Powers and Duties of Board of Education	138
Meetings of Board, Executive Sessions and Compensation	148
Officers of Board	149
Presidents Duties	150
Vice Presidents Duties	151
Clerk Duties	152
Open Meeting Act	787

Source: Oklahoma School Code, 2015

Powers and duties of the board of education are contained in OSC Section 138. These powers and duties cover all activities related to operating public school districts. Key powers and duties prescribed in OSC include:

- election of officers;
- establishing board policies;
- building and operating schools and related facilities; and
- contracting for an annual audit of all district and school activity funds.

OSC, Section 125 addresses the size and election of school boards in Oklahoma, and Section 149 provides a description of the required officers for school boards. The Guthrie board consists of seven members, each of whom is elected to four-year terms. **Exhibit 1-6** reflects the board membership, leadership positions, and terms as of February 24, 2016.

Exhibit 1-6
Guthrie School Board Members

Board Member	Board Position	Year of Election or Appointment	Term Expires
E. Sharon Watts	President	2016	2020
Jennifer Bennett-Johnson	1 st Vice President	2014	2018
Travis Sallee	2 nd Vice President	2016	2020
Tina Smedley	Board Clerk	2015	2019
Gail Davis	Deputy Board Clerk	2013	2017
Janna Pierson	Member	2014	2018
Terry Pennington	Member	2013	2017

Source: Guthrie Public Schools, February 2016

The district holds board elections each February. The board members swear-in elected members and vote on officers at the next meeting. OSC Sections 150, 151, and 152 list the duties of each officer of the board of education. The board must also elect a clerk, who may or may not be a member of the board.

OSC Section 127 outlines the training requirements for school board members. Within 15 months following election, new school board members are required to complete 12 hours of instruction on education issues in the areas of:

- school finance;
- legal issues (employment, due process new laws, the *Oklahoma Open Records Act* and the *Oklahoma Open Meeting Act*); and
- duties and responsibilities of district board of education members (including special education and ethics).

Reelected board members must complete six hours within 15 months of reelection. Furthermore, every board member (new and reelected) must agree in writing to complete at least one hour each of instruction in:

- school finance;
- the *Oklahoma Open Records Act* and the *Oklahoma Open Meeting Act*; and
- ethics.

As of January 2016, each Guthrie board member was up-to-date on training.

Board of Education Meetings

The Guthrie Board of Education meets on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 pm in the board room at the district administration building. The meeting place and time may be changed by agreement of a majority of the board members. Special meetings are held as needed, and board members receive agendas and any supporting information in advance of the meetings. The

superintendent’s administrative assistant also serves as the board clerk, attends meetings, and prepares meeting minutes for approval by the board.

The superintendent provides the board of education with a packet during the week before each meeting. The routine business items are located together on the consent agenda and acted upon before getting into any other topics. The agenda is posted online on the school website on the Wednesday before the scheduled meeting. The meeting packet is posted on Thursday with a copy sent to the local news media. Minutes of all previous board meetings are posted on the website as soon as the board approves them.

FINDING 1-1

The GPS board of education has a standing committee structure that provides increased opportunity for communication between administration and board members. In cooperation with the current superintendent, the board has established three standing committees: Property/Insurance; Curriculum; and Finance.

According to policy, these committees are appointed by the board president, and all committees are intended only as fact-finding and advisory. The three standing committees, which meet the week before the regularly scheduled board meetings, are comprised of three appointed board members, the superintendent, and appropriate members of the administrative team. The meetings are facilitated by the superintendent or the appropriate member of the superintendent’s cabinet. After each committee meeting reports are provided to the full board.

In interviews with the consulting team, board members and administrators indicated that the committees have increased communication and provided board members with more in depth information. Board members have time to interact with the administrative team, asking questions, clarifying concerns, and developing a better understanding of agenda items. According to administrators and several board members, the use of the standing committee structure allows advance preparation, which reduces board meeting time and allows board meetings to move more smoothly. Perhaps as a result of this committee structure, most GPS staff members believe that the school board understands the needs of the district (**Exhibit 1-7**).

**Exhibit 1-7
Staff Survey Results Regarding School Board**

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school board understands the needs of the district.	9%	52%	24%	12%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

COMMENDATION

The board of education has three standing committees that increase board-administration communication by sharing information and addressing current issues on the board agenda.

FINDING 1-2

GPS has partnerships that support district needs and school improvement. This provides increased opportunities for staff and students. With a continued focus on increasing partnerships, the district will be able to expand its capabilities to address local needs.

District staff indicated a number of partnerships being used to increase the capacity of the district to address local needs. Partnerships are being developed with universities, agencies, and other educational entities to address staff needs, as well as to better serve students. **Exhibit 1-8** summarizes some of the current partnerships.

Exhibit 1-8
Guthrie Public Schools Partnerships

Partnership	Purpose of Partnership
Partnership with Langston University	Langston University has been working with GPS to provide concurrent enrollment classes at the high school with university faculty providing face-to-face instruction.
A collaborative arrangement with Oklahoma State University to provide an increasing number of student teachers in district schools	OSU student teachers assigned to the district are being reviewed and considered as potential employees as part of what the district refers to as its “grow our own” initiative.
Partnerships with Rose State University and Northwestern Oklahoma University	Students take college credit courses online and through a video conferencing system.
An agreement with Willow Creek Health Care	This partnership, in its fourth year, provides facilities and program support for an Intergenerational PK classroom.
Partnership with Oklahoma City Community College	This collaboration provides OCCC speech pathologist students with an opportunity for clinical experience, working side by side with the district speech pathologists.
Partnership with Meridian Career Technology Center to expand educational services to district youth	This partnership provides GPS students with career courses for electives or certifications, STEM program options, and outreach programs.
Partnership with the Guthrie Education Foundation	This collaboration provides teacher grants, supports facility needs, and provides consultants to the district.
An arrangement with Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services	This partnership provides the transition school-to-work program for eligible students with disabilities.

Source: GPS, January 2016

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools has begun to develop key partnerships to address district needs and school improvement initiatives.

FINDING 1-3

The district has defined policy and administrative procedures for managing legal services and controlling legal expenses. This helps to control district expenditures in this area.

Board Policy B-18 establishes that the board of education will retain legal counsel and services as needed and authorizes the process for contacting the school attorney. To ensure wise use of resources, policy specifies that the board president, individual board members, and the superintendent or the superintendent's designee are the only ones authorized to contact the school attorney. The clerk of the board must be notified of each contact in order to reconcile the fees incurred. According to the assistant superintendent, the invoices for legal services go directly to the superintendent who verifies the expenditure and forwards to finance for payment. No invoices are paid without superintendent authorization.

Sound practices for reducing legal costs suggest a district system that restricts access and monitors contact with the attorney. Such a system includes restricting the number of people allowed to contact the attorney and specifies who is authorized to make the contact. For best practices to be maintained in managing legal services, monitoring strategies are critical in avoiding unnecessary legal costs. GPS policy and procedures align to best practices for engaging and monitoring school district legal services.

COMMENDATION

GPS has developed policy and procedures for the management of legal services.

FINDING 1-4

GPS has an established process for preparing the board meeting agendas and packets, disseminating minutes, and posting information about the functioning of the board. This provides transparency into district proceedings.

The GPS board meeting agenda is developed by looking at the prior year to determine what items are usually included for that month and those carried over from the previous meeting. With the routine items as the starting point, new items are added with input for board president and administrative council. The agenda is posted the Wednesday before the board meeting.

The board packet is prepared and distributed Thursday before the board meeting. In interviews, board members indicated the packets provided them with necessary information on agenda items. The packet is sent electronically to the board members at their district email addresses. Board members have the packet available at the meeting on an iPad.

The packet is also sent to the *Guthrie News Leader*, *Guthrie News Page* and the *Logan County Courier*. It is also posted on the district website with the meeting agenda. Board minutes are posted on the website after they have been approved by the board. Committee minutes from the standing committees are also posted for review.

COMMENDATION

District procedures for preparing for board meetings and communicating board actions are well established and communicate transparency.

FINDING 1-5

The GPS board does not have a clearly articulated policy and process for evaluating the superintendent. Without such a defined evaluation process with measurable performance objectives, it is difficult for the superintendent and board members to be clear on performance expectations and the direction for school improvement.

The current process for the evaluation of the superintendent is vague and ambiguous and does not establish measurable performance goals. The superintendent's contract states there will be an evaluation annually on a form provided by the superintendent, while Board Policy B-34 indicates the board will prepare a written evaluation of the superintendent annually with no reference to the procedure or an evaluation form. The evaluation form found in the current superintendent's personnel file is different from the one used for the previous superintendent. The superintendent contract describes terms and conditions of employment but sets no performance objectives for evaluation purposes. There is no process set forth in this policy and no reference is made to establishing measurable performance objectives or evaluation criteria.

In interviews with the consulting team, board members stated that the procedure used is ill-defined and not necessarily consistent from one year to the next. The superintendent contract specifies annual evaluations with a set deadline. Due to concerns raised by the superintendent and members of the board regarding the evaluation procedures in 2015, the board met with legal counsel in executive session to discuss a need for procedures.

Accreditation standard 210:35-3-48(a) (2) states that “the governing local board shall be responsible for the selection and evaluation of its chief executive officer who shall be the superintendent.” The board shall develop a policy to evaluate the superintendent, in conformance with the minimum criteria set by the State Board of Education. No one person will dictate the district’s evaluation tool, because the board must vote on those procedures.

As emphasized by the National Association of School Board (NASB) in its July 2014 report, *A Case for Improving Superintendent Evaluation*, superintendents and boards play key roles in the performance and outcomes of school systems. Fair, valid, and objective-driven evaluation of a superintendent’s performance is critical to the work of the superintendent and to the system’s accountability for success. Without an effective performance based evaluation process for the superintendent, it is difficult to align and focus board and superintendent leadership for significant improvement of the district.

Superintendent evaluation is a key issue with the national association as well as many state school board associations. While the Oklahoma State School Board Association website does not provide boards with guidance on establishing sound superintendent evaluation procedures, other state school board associations do post frameworks and guidelines.

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) provides direction to boards in developing effective superintendent evaluation processes with measurable performance goals. TASB provides a frame work for connecting the superintendent performance goals with those of the board. Examples are offered of how to make these connections. TASB also states that goals should contain criteria for what will demonstrate successful performance on the goal. This sets a recursive process in place by which reviewing and setting of performance goals is an integral part of the superintendent’s evaluation.

The Michigan School Boards Association has supported the development of a framework that includes a seven step process for superintendent evaluation. As part of this process, two steps address the setting of performance (“smart”) goals and identifying the type of evidence that will be needed to provide a credible measure of effectiveness in reaching the goal. Much like the TASB procedures, the Michigan framework describes the steps that the board and the superintendent take collaboratively to implement a superintendent evaluation system.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a policy and procedure that will provide a consistent evaluation of the superintendent.

The board should develop and implement a comprehensive superintendent evaluation process that is based on measurable performance goals and clear expectations. Since the school board

members have already recognized the need for a clear process for evaluating the superintendent and have discussed the needs and concerns with their attorney, they should follow through with their work of establishing a step-by-step procedure for superintendent evaluation. As part of establishing the process and working with the attorney to formalize it in policy, the board members should meet in a series of work sessions to clarify what they consider their existing practice.

Once the board has identified and clarified their current procedures for superintendent evaluation, the members should compare these to the sample procedures and goal setting documents from the various school board association resources and Marzano's model that aligns to the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) tools used in Oklahoma. This review will allow the board to build ownership in the process and enable them to work with the attorney to customize the procedures to the specific needs of the district.

An essential step should be to determine how annual student performance will be used in evaluation. Once the method for assessment of the student performance domain is in place, the board should determine how other measurable performance goals will be developed. Various school board association guidelines suggest that superintendent performance goals be related and derived from district goals. If district goals are not clearly articulated, then the board must consider how these goals should be developed, and what the role of the superintendent will be in developing the goals. Regardless of how the superintendent's goals are developed, there must be a criteria for what will be considered successful performance.

With the process for establishing the school performance goal and other superintendent goals identified, the board should collaborate with the superintendent to get feedback and refine the goal-setting process as needed. Then, with the core of the evaluation system determined, the board should continue to work collaboratively with the attorney and superintendent to develop the step-by-step procedure for the evaluation system. Once the superintendent evaluation system has been revised to include measurable performance goals, an evaluation form, and detailed procedures, the document should be developed into a policy. The appraisal form should be included as an exhibit attached to the policy. These should then be submitted to the board for approval.

All board members and the superintendent should have a clear understanding of the superintendent evaluation system, which would include how performance goals and effectiveness criteria are set, procedural steps, the roles of the board and superintendent in the process, and the use of the appraisal instrument. As new board members are elected, the evaluation system should be included in the orientation process.

With the finalized process in place, the language in the superintendent's contract should be revised to align to the evaluation system. After the completion of the first cycle of use, the board and the superintendent should collaborate to review the process and revise as needed.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-6

The district lacks policies and procedures that effectively address the school and district administrator evaluation process. This communicates a lack of emphasis on the growth of district leaders and results in confusion about the process.

The district adopted the Marzano model for both teacher and school administrator evaluations. By adapting the same evaluation model for both position types, the district has a consistent research-based approach to personnel evaluation for school improvement. There is a board policy for implementing the teacher evaluation based on the Marzano model, but no reference is made in policy to administrator evaluation.

There is a reference to administrator evaluation in the GPS administrator handbook. However, this reference does not mention the Marzano evaluation framework for school administrators. It indicates each administrator will receive a formal evaluation conference with the superintendent or a designee prior to a recommendation for contract renewal each year and that a board approved evaluation instrument will be used. No reference is made as to the process to be used in evaluation beyond the reference that a form will be used.

While the school administrators are evaluated using the research-based Marzano model, district leaders, such as the executive directors and departmental directors, are evaluated by the superintendent on a district-developed form. Since the Marzano District Leader Evaluation Form is not used, it means the district is evaluating key support administrators without a research-based evaluation model.

In focus groups, school principals and assistant principals indicated that the evaluation process is not clearly defined. Even though the form is consistently used, there is no description of an evaluation process that includes such components as pre-conferences, goal setting, data collection and presentation of evidence, formative conferences, or summative evaluation conferences in policy or procedure. Some report that no collaborative goal setting is done through a pre-conference, but instead they are given a goal for the year. Others stated that there is no discussion of the appropriateness of some indicators for their given role. The rating of “not applicable” (NA) is not discussed or used by supervisors, and some administrators did not know that it is a scale option on the evaluation form.

School administrators have been trained and certified on the use of the teacher evaluation instrument and attend recertification training every two years. However, according to the executive director, school administrators have not had training on their evaluation model which is part of Marzano’s School Leadership Development System. The director of district partnerships for Oklahoma’s TLE initiative stated that training has been available on the school leader evaluation, but it is a district decision to participate.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop policies and procedures for the evaluation of school administrators and directors.

The executive director for personnel should meet with elementary and secondary school administrators, including assistant principals, to discuss the current evaluation process. This group should discuss the desired process needed to support the evaluation model. From these discussions, the executive should write up the procedures for the evaluation process to be incorporated in a board policy regulation. The director of district partnerships for Oklahoma is available as a resource for feedback on the procedure document.

The evaluation process and form for district leaders should be reviewed by the superintendent in collaboration with the central office administrative team. As part of this discussion, the team should review and consider Marzano's research-based evaluation model for district leaders. The form is available through the state at no cost and training is available at a cost.

Training on the evaluation tool, indicators, and process should be referenced in policy. The executive director should contact the director of district partnerships to discuss training availability and alternatives for district staff. There are regional trainings available in the summer and cost sharing alternatives may be available through partnerships.

After the administrator teams have discussed the evaluations and developed the supporting processes, the executive director for personnel should develop a draft of district policy that establishes the evaluation model(s) used for school administrators and district administrators. Procedures for the evaluation process for each administrative group should be detailed in a supporting regulation. The draft administrator evaluation policy and regulation should be sent to the attorney for approval. The finalized policy should be submitted for board approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-7

District policy does not allow the superintendent power to accept staff resignations on behalf of the board. As a result, the superintendent cannot act to expedite personnel matters on some occasions.

The board policy D-10, *Certified Staff Resignations*, specifies that an employee's resignation must be submitted in writing to the superintendent and must be unequivocal as to intent and effective date. According to this policy "only the board of education has the authority to accept resignations".

This policy does not allow the superintendent to accept resignations on behalf of the board, which would make them binding at the time of submission. Some districts have developed policies that specify if an employee submits a resignation to the superintendent it cannot be revoked. In interviews with the consulting team, the superintendent indicated that the idea of this policy had been mentioned, but not seriously explored by the district.

Other districts, such as Crescent Public Schools, have adopted a policy whereby the submission of a resignation is effective and irrevocable unless otherwise determined by the board. With such

a policy, the superintendent is able to begin immediately making staff decisions regarding the vacant position. When there are pending personnel reductions and there is a notification timeline for those being non-renewed, every vacancy becomes immediately critical to planning.

RECOMMENDATION

Revise the policy on staff resignations to give the superintendent the authority to accept resignations on behalf of the board.

The superintendent should contact other district superintendents to discuss the benefits and issues of a policy which permits the superintendent to accept a resignation making it binding. Based on this feedback, the superintendent should discuss the revision of policy D-10 with board members. This discussion could held as part of the finance committee meeting as a tool in expediting staff planning.

Based on the board discussion, the superintendent should draft a revised policy to be shared with the attorney for the district. If approved by the attorney, a revision of board policy D-10 should be submitted to the board for approval.

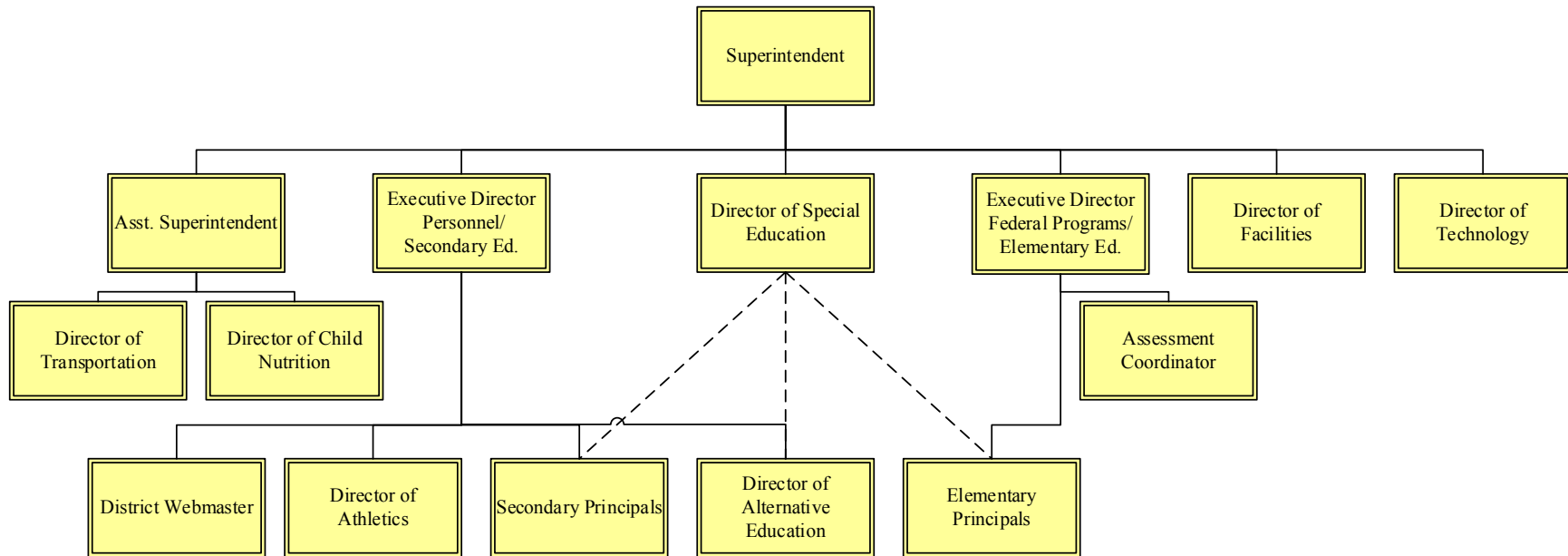
FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

B. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The superintendent of a school district serves as the chief executive officer and is the administrative leader responsible for policy implementation and day-to-day operations. An effective central office organizational structure is essential to the efficient delivery of services throughout a school district. Efficient central office organizational structures have the appropriate spans of control for district leadership with clearly defined lines of authority that are reflected in the district's organization charts. Effective central office structures encourage communication at all levels. **Exhibit 1-9** illustrates the current organizational chart for Guthrie Public Schools.

Exhibit 1-9
Current Guthrie Administrative Organizational Chart



Source: Created by Prismatic, February 2016

FINDING 1-8

Guthrie Public Schools, in collaboration with local agencies, maintains an intergenerational Pre-Kindergarten classroom in a local nursing home setting. As a result, the relationship and literacy-based intergenerational activities provide a strong foundation for school success.

Four years ago through collaboration between Smart Start Logan County, Guthrie Public Schools, Companion Healthcare and a local Senior Living Centers, GPS established a full day PK public school classroom located onsite at Willow Creek Nursing Home. Each year the district signs an agreement with the facility and pays \$1.00 for the year. According to the superintendent and staff, this program was created to offer a full day PK classroom when the district alone did not have the capacity to do so.

Due to the success of the program, efforts are being made to expand the option to another nursing home facility. The superintendent indicated that one of the benefits of the program has been that children have a full day of interactions with residents. Relationship and literacy-based intergenerational activities help lay a strong foundation for school success. One-on-one reading time between children and older adults improves early literacy outcomes for young children.

Connecting elders and young children provides rich opportunities for interaction and helps bring together the two groups. Residents are able to share life experiences with children interested in learning and experiencing from those around them. According to the superintendent, the anecdotal evidence indicates children learn to look at people differently with more acceptance than they might otherwise do without the intergenerational experience.

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools has collaborated with local social service agencies to offer a full day PK classroom in an intergenerational setting that allows children a unique learning experience.

FINDING 1-9

The administrative team meets with the superintendent on a monthly basis to resolve issues, align plans, and coordinate district initiatives. With a team approach to school improvement and coordinated management efforts, communication is enhanced and focused on school and district improvement goals.

The administrative council meets each month the day after the board meeting to discuss issues, share information, and coordinate and align planning across the district. This meeting facilitated by the superintendent brings together the directors and principals along with the assistant superintendent and executive directors. The agenda for the meeting allows the directors and principals to resolve problems and address issues, as well discuss the board meeting agenda. In interviews with the consulting team, principals stated this meeting gives an opportunity for regular communication among directors and principals. Minutes are taken to maintain a record of discussions.

According to Waters and Marzano,² a superintendent should engage others in collaborative goal setting. In particular, building-level administrators should be actively involved in the goal-setting processes and implementing agreed upon goals and strategies. Due to the complexity of the superintendent's responsibilities, an effective administrative team is critical in assisting the superintendent to fulfill district responsibilities and move the district in a focused direction. Guthrie Public Schools is employing these best practices.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent engages the administrative team in regularly scheduled meetings to resolve problems, align plans and coordinate district initiatives and operations.

FINDING 1-10

The district does not have a formal plan to finalize the school reconfiguration decision. It appears that the transition from grade centers to neighborhood schools is an accepted future structure, but there has been no planning around the transition.

As part of the recent bond proposal planning, the board, administration, and community discussed the move from grade centers to neighborhood schools. Due to district growth so far from town, the need to build a new elementary school on the southern edge of the district was evident to voters in the May 2015 bond election. The bond proposition set the stage to shift the other elementary schools to PK–4 neighborhood schools. While the board has not formally acted on reorganizing, the long-range committee on facility planning had included that reorganization in their thinking when the new elementary school was established as priority. Voter approval of the bond could be construed as support for the idea of neighborhood schools.

Originally, grade centers were created by the district to address potential inequities in schools, around the time of desegregation. The district founded the grade centers to create equity and ensure that all children had a comparable education. As noted by some board members and the superintendent, the demographics that drove the initial decision are no longer those of the current district – the percentage of Black students is just eight percent and not generally concentrated in any one area.

In interviews, the superintendent stated that the move to neighborhood schools would benefit the district in a number of ways. The perceived benefits include:

- improved parent involvement;
- reduced transportation time for students;
- reduced transportation cost;

² Waters, J.T. and Marzano, R.J. (2006). *School District Leadership that Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement*. Retrieved from McREL website: http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/asc/4005rr_superintendent_leadership.pdf

- reduced number of school transitions for children; and
- improved student achievement by aligning curriculum PK–6, with teachers at each site assuming ownership for the achievement of all students.

In focus groups, teachers and parents described benefits much the same way. Parents and PTO representatives discussed their perception of potential benefit on parent involvement. The neighborhood school structure would allow parents to build and maintain relationships with administrators and teachers, and give the PTO opportunity to develop long-term projects and programs. Parents also commented on the benefit of eliminating multiple transitions at the elementary level. Teachers concurred with parents on the benefits and additional benefits of neighborhood schools.

In developing the long-range facilities for bond proposal, the committee considered the research that supported the benefits described by staff and parents. While there is little definitive research that isolates the factor of grade configuration, the research does suggest there are benefits to a neighborhood configuration. The executive director for elementary education and federal programs synthesized the available research and shared general findings with the committee, board, and community to substantiate the benefits of neighborhood schools. The executive director’s presentation also pointed out the positives and negatives of the current structure of grade centers. This balanced presentation allowed planners to weigh the pros and cons when making decisions.

Exhibit 1-10 provides some of the parent survey results regarding general district impressions. As shown, more than half of parents who responded were not satisfied with the education their child receives, more than one-third did not feel they received academic information from the district, and nearly half did not describe their child’s school as a “good place to learn.” This level of parental dissatisfaction may be a result of the current fragmented elementary organization, as parents in focus groups noted several times that the current structure does not foster a sense of belonging to the elementary schools.

Exhibit 1-10
Parent Survey Results Regarding the District

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with the education my child receives.	13%	25%	9%	33%	20%
I receive enough information from the district regarding academic expectations for my child (i.e. student testing, retention, etc.).	12%	31%	22%	26%	9%
Our school can be described as a “good place to learn.”	9%	28%	14%	33%	16%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

RECOMMENDATION**Organize a task force to elicit community, parent, and school staff input and develop a detailed action plan for transitioning the district from a grade center organization to neighborhood schools.**

The superintendent should act on his initial thinking and convene various planning groups. One should be a task force to actively involve the community, parents, and staff in preliminary thinking on the pros and cons of neighborhood schools and what the district must consider in a shift to such a configuration. While there has been some discussion of neighborhood schools during bond election meetings, there should now be discussions focused exclusively on a move to neighborhood schools. The following should be considered when engaging the public:

- Focus group sessions should be facilitated discussions used to create authentic opportunities for dialogue and input; transcriptions should be made of the conversation.
- Parent, community, and staff focus groups should be held at school sites and community sites at various times to increase the participation.
- Silent forums should be held in appropriate locations in the community or connected to various civic meetings for responses before and after meetings.
- Listening sessions in the homes of stakeholders could provide a venue for open discussions related to the needs of the district.

A silent forum, which may be a new type of session for the community, allows participants to write responses to questions which are posted around the room. This provides another form of participation and gives those who may not feel comfortable in speaking in a group opportunity for input. While there is no need for a facilitator, there does need to be someone there to provide direction and answer questions. The executive director should develop forum questions based on points from the initial synthesis of the research.

While the task force is facilitating the various focus groups and forums, the superintendent should reconvene the long-range planning committee to continue its facility study to establish additional priorities and timelines. The work of the task force should be funneled into this committee for review. Working with long-range committee for facilities, the superintendent should present a recommendation for board approval for shift to neighborhood schools.

Once the board has approved the reconfiguration to neighborhood schools, the superintendent should appoint a committee, as originally planned, comprised of principals and teacher representatives from each school. Select parent members from the task force should also be appointed to this committee. This committee should address the logistics of such reorganization considering the task force facilitated focus groups' input and on the information presented by the executive director.

Representatives of the committee should accompany the superintendent when he meets with staff from other districts that have experience reconfiguring school grade spans in a district. The committee should address issues such as timelines, staffing decisions, setting up classrooms,

coordinating the moves, and communicating with parents. A written plan should be completed in collaboration with the executive director to ensure that all the pros and cons initially presented are addressed in some way. There should be communication strategies incorporated into every aspect of the plan. The superintendent should present the plan to the board.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

To be effective, a strategic plan must lay out key milestones to measure progress, establish a priority ordering of the items to be accomplished, provide a timeline for which each item is to be accomplished, and assign accountability for each item to a specified position in the school district organization. Finally, the organization must provide periodic reports on the status of the plan's implementation and any changes that must be made due to unforeseen circumstances or changes in assumptions.

According to Cook (2000), strategic planning requires total concentration of the organization's resources on mutually pre-determined measurable outcomes.³ Strategic planning allows an organization to have a clear focus on what it is doing and what it intends to do based upon established and monitored goals. A strategic plan will include long-term goals, which typically can be achieved in five to ten years. Short-term goals, which typically can be achieved in a year, support the attainment of the long-term goals.

All too often, organizations develop strategic plans that are broad statements with no ties to specific goals. For example, a school district may establish a goal of "improving student performance" without setting a target or identifying the strategies it plans to employ to achieve the desired outcome, or even fully defining "student performance". A better goal would be "improving student achievement by 10 percent from last year to this year as measured by state standardized testing". The district would then identify the means by which this goal would be achieved, such as through additional small group instruction with benchmark testing to monitor progress.

According to the Balanced Scorecard Institute:

There are many different frameworks and methodologies for strategic planning and management. While there are no absolute rules regarding the right framework, most follow a similar pattern and have common attributes. Many frameworks cycle through some variation of the following basic phases:

1. analysis or assessment, where an understanding of the current internal and external environments is developed;

³ Cook, Jr., W. (2000). *Strategics: The art and science of holistic strategy*. Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books.

2. strategy formulation, where high level strategy is developed and a basic organization level strategic plan is documented;
3. strategy execution, where the high level plan is translated into more operational planning and action items; and
4. evaluation or sustainment/management phase, where ongoing refinement and evaluation of performance, culture, communications, data reporting, and other strategic management issues occurs.⁴

FINDING 1-11

Guthrie Public Schools passed a bond issue through the development of a facilities plan and the active involvement of community and staff in communicating and promoting the bond. The May 12, 2015 bond election resulted in the approval of the district's \$16.2 million bond proposition, with 3,044 voters supporting the bond. This represented a 77 percent approval with 23 percent against, with 31 percent of the registered voters turning out to vote. After seven consecutive attempts, this is the first bond approved in a decade.

The bond provides for building a new school in the southern part of the district; repair roofs and address exterior issues at Central, Fogarty and Guthrie Upper Elementary schools; repairs at the junior high; heating and air at the high school; and investment in district technology. This approval of the comprehensive bond package is a direct result of the board and superintendent's actions to provide a long-range plan, involve the community and parents through a series of public forums, and engage the staff in bond promotion. The education foundation supported the efforts by providing resources to assist the district in its promotion.

A key to the success of the bond was the work of the long-range planning committee formed by the superintendent to prioritize facilities needs and develop recommendations for future plans. The committee, composed of community members and parents, reviewed facilities, visited other districts, studied the demographics and growth trends, and established a series of prioritized recommendations.

The long-term facilities planning was followed-up by the implementation of a detailed approach for educating the voters on the benefits of the proposition. The board members, superintendent, long-range planning committee members, and staff actively engaged in promoting the bond through scheduled community forums and meetings and communication through a variety of media outlets.

According to board members, the passage of the bond can be attributed the collective efforts to get out into the community with a sound plan of action and the ability to convey an openness and commitment to "doing what we said we would do". In focus groups with parents, certified and support staff, and administrators, everyone concurred with the board's assessment of why the community approved this bond after failing many previous ones. The difference, according to focus group participants, was the level of involvement and the planning. Board members and the

⁴ <http://balancedscorecard.org/Resources/Strategic-Planning-Basics>

superintendent actively engaged staff and community in understanding the plan, the long-range facility needs, financial commitment required, and the educational implications. Teachers remarked this was the first bond election where the superintendent and board came into the schools to discuss the proposition and the facilities plan.

COMMENDATION

The district, with the assistance of the long-range planning committee, shared with the community a framework for the multi-year planning needed to achieve the prioritized facility goals and objectives, which was essential to passing the bond.

FINDING 1-12

The district partners with Meridian Technology Center to expand opportunities for students through the center's outreach program, as well as the various programs at the center. The high school supports the partnership through the teacher advisement program (TAP).

Guthrie Public Schools, a partner district with the Meridian Technology Center, accesses a number of the center's programs to expand student opportunities. Meridian has developed an outreach program that brings center faculty to the GPS middle school and high school for special program opportunities. Other programs are available to students at the center campus in Stillwater.

In interviews with the consulting team, administrators discussed the importance of the partnership with Meridian Technology Center to expand opportunities for students. These opportunities include elective courses, participation in the STEM program, concurrent enrollment options, and certification programs.

The district has entered into the following formal partnership agreements with Meridian Technology Center for 2015-16:

- Guthrie Middle School Gateway to Technology Program, which pays for two eighth grade programs totaling \$50,000;
- STEM Academy: Pre-engineering and Biomedical Sciences which, provides GPS sophomores, juniors, and seniors opportunities to take courses in mathematics, science, and pre-engineering, with additional opportunities in biomedical sciences for juniors and seniors; and
- transcription of math and science courses for sophomores, juniors, and seniors that are taken at Meridian and count as credit at Guthrie High School.

As part of outreach efforts, Meridian has also partnered with the high school to provide onsite programs for students and community. A Meridian faculty member comes to the high school campus to work collaboratively in classrooms with sophomores. The GPS sophomores tour the Meridian campus to increase awareness of the opportunities available. The community benefits

from the outreach program as Meridian provides a faculty member to teach adult computer classes at the high school.

For the past three years the high school has used the teacher advisement program (TAP) to support high school students with academic and career exploration. This advisement program supports the partnership with the Meridian Technology Center.

The principal indicated that the high school recognized that a school counselor does not often have time to provide a comprehensive guidance program that provides in-depth career exploration and advisement. TAP provides a structured way to actively engage classroom teachers in providing additional academic support and opportunities for career exploration.

A teacher advisement program:

- provides students with increased opportunities for career exploration;
- supports students in making more informed choices;
- increases student graduation rates; and
- increases postsecondary enrollment rates for the district.

COMMENDATION

The district partnership with Meridian Technology Center increases opportunities for students, and the high school supports the partnership with the Teacher as Advisor program.

FINDING 1-13

Guthrie Public Schools does not have an ongoing strategic planning process for institutional effectiveness. As a result, the district lacks a comprehensive plan to guide centralized and decentralized decisions and evaluate progress toward meeting goals.

In discussions on district planning, the superintendent indicated there is no district strategic plan or an established planning process. The district is in the beginning phases of formulating a comprehensive long-range plan for the district. The work of the long-range planning committee for facilities is an example of this initial effort. According to the superintendent, this committee will be reconvened and reconfigured in the spring of 2016 to address future facility planning.

The district has no strategies for integrating all systems to ensure attainment of district goals. There are plans developed each year throughout the district. These include: school improvement plans, the technology plan, and plans for federal title programs. Several of these plans are a result of what is as referred to as compliance planning. Together, the plans may not always lead the district in the same direction, and there is no district approach to strategically plan for overall institutional effectiveness.

In the list of public input options, as provided by the district in response to an inquiry by the consulting team, there are few opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in substantive

district planning and decision-making. Other than the long-range planning committee for facilities, there is no indication that stakeholder groups are involved in ongoing district planning. Teachers and administrators also indicated that they had little opportunity to be engaged in district decision-making. When asked where the district was on the continuum of centralized to decentralized decision-making, the majority of responses fell on the centralized end of the continuum.

PTO representatives stated that the PTOs wanted to support the district in its efforts to improve the district, but they do not know what the district needs. There are no goals and plans that show long-term strategies which would assist the PTOs in knowing how to help. PTO representatives stated an interest in supporting technology, but do not know what technology will be introduced in the future.

The Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA) through its vision for public education planning has developed a strategic planning initiative for Oklahoma school districts that is built on significant stakeholder involvement in the process. The OSSBA, in collaboration with the K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal at the University of Oklahoma, has developed a planning process that is tailored to fit rural, suburban and urban districts.⁵

The Director of Strategic Initiatives at OSSBA noted that they are currently piloting the process. A key aspect of the process is that the leaders and community work with all stakeholder groups through facilitated discussions to develop a vision for the district. The process requires gathering and analyzing data, implementing action plans and establishing structures and processes for monitoring progress.

In addition to the strategic planning work being done by the OSSBA, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has a model for implementing strategic planning processes for institutional effectiveness. The institutional effectiveness model involves a systematic and ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and acting on information relating to goals and outcomes, which are developed in support of the mission and purpose of the district. Institutional effectiveness is a cyclical process and addresses the continuous improvements and refinements of goals and methods.⁶ A model for implementation can be found at Howard College, Big Spring, Texas, which has used the strategic planning processes for institutional effectiveness to systematically reviewing all programs and services for the purpose of continuous improvement.

With the approval of Oklahoma's waiver to meeting the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, schools identified as low performing ("priority", "targeted intervention", and "focus"⁷) were required to use Ways to Improve School Effectiveness (WISE) planning tools available through the SDE.⁸ While the waiver is no longer relevant, the WISE system still offers a viable structure for planning. WISE is centered on regular collection and analysis of data

⁵ http://www.ossba.org/continuous-strategic-improvement?_m=268

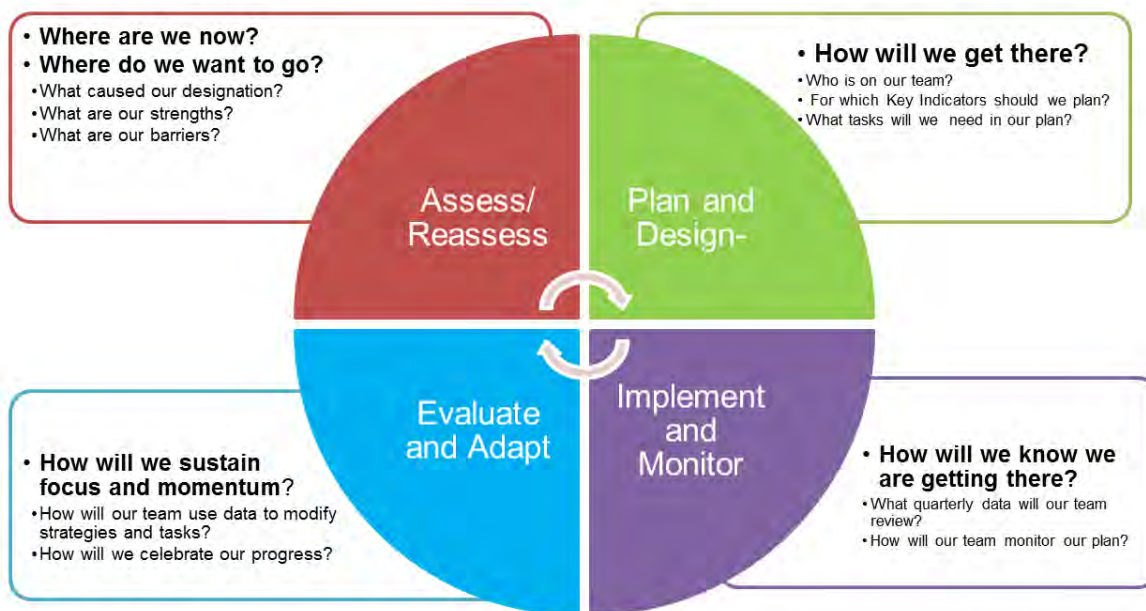
⁶ <http://www.oirpe.emory.edu/assessment/Institutional%20Effectiveness.html>

⁷ Priority schools are those in the bottom five percent of achievement in reading and mathematics, have a graduation rate below 60 percent for at least three years, or are Tier I School Improvement Grant schools. Focus schools are those with low achievement in reading and mathematics in Oklahoma's lowest performing subgroups or schools with low graduation rates in the state's lowest graduating subgroups.

⁸ <http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/ESEA-FAQ.pdf>

and includes nine key performance indicators (**Exhibit 1-11**). Each WISE indicator has multiple sub-indicators.⁹ While not a substitute for strategic thinking and planning at the district level, the WISE approach provides guidance that could support a strategic planning effort.

Exhibit 1-11
Ways to Improve School Effectiveness (WISE)



Source: <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/23-12-%202013-14%20Updated%20WISE%20Instructions%20for%20Schools.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION

Implement an ongoing strategic planning process involving community and faculty stakeholders that defines decision-making processes and provides focus and direction through long-range goals and strategies.

The long-range planning committee for facilities shows the district's capacity for involving stakeholders. The benefit of such a planning effort is evident in the response of the community to the facilities plan and should be built upon to expand the strategic processes. This performance review report provides a series of tactical recommendations, which can provide a basis for a long-term strategic plan.

To assist the district in implementing a strategic planning process, the superintendent and the board should explore the planning process model provided by the OSSBA. The superintendent should contact the Director of Strategic Initiatives to discuss a customized model of the process to address the needs of the district. Due to GPS going through a performance review, the district is not in the same position as those districts currently involved in the OSSBA pilot of the process.

⁹ <http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/WISE-PerfIndicators.pdf>

The superintendent should discuss with the Director of Strategic Initiatives at OSSBA and K20 Center representatives the development of a customized model that would address the unique position of GPS. The current cost to pilot districts ranges from \$20,000 to \$40,000. Grant funding and outside source funding may need to be identified to make this a viable option for GPS.

If the OSSBA model is not an option, the superintendent has the skills to facilitate and oversee the development of a long-range strategic plan that incorporates report recommendations through a series of priority-ordering activities. The WISE planning model can be used to assist the superintendent in creating a district model or the strategic planning for institutional effectiveness can be considered as a model.

In developing the strategic planning process, goals should be supplemented with specific and measurable long-term objectives for both instructional and non-instructional areas. The board and superintendent should ensure that the planning process engages major stakeholders. In annual budgeting the district should align and allocate financial resources to the goals.

As part of the process, the strategic plan should be reviewed annually or in shorter time increments as deemed appropriate. Review of the strategic plan should address the prioritized recommendations in this report to ensure that they remain at the top of the list or are modified as needed. The monitoring should determine if action steps are being successfully implemented and if the cost/benefit of the goals still makes sense with current funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-14

The district does not systematically secure grants to supplement district funds and federal program resources for school improvement initiatives or classroom projects. Due to the lack of a grant writing process, the district has not had access to possible additional funding to provide supplementary staffing, purchase additional technology, offer professional development, and expand instructional and support services to students.

While the district has not sought competitive grants, there is an interest and need to do so. Staff indicated interest in after school programs mentioning that the district once had the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant funds to support after school programs for some schools. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) offers access to the federally funded 21st Century grant for innovative after school programs that support student achievement. This grant fund would be accessible to the district for different schools or different collaborative partners.¹⁰

The SDE also offers the Math Science Partnership grant that helps districts implement programs to improve math and science instruction. This grant requires a partnership of the district with a

¹⁰ <http://ok.gov/sde/21ccle>

college or university to work with teacher learning and connect the classroom with real scientists.¹¹

During interviews with the consulting team, staff members frequently mentioned the need for technology for teachers and students to use in instruction, in addition to training on effective integration of technology into instruction. The high school principal emphasized the importance of having established resources to support technology integration. There are a variety of grants available from state, federal, and charitable organizations that will help meet these district needs.

Guthrie Public Schools is eligible to apply for one or more Oklahoma Educational Technology Trust (OETT) grants. The grant process has two stages. The grants include the following:

- **Phase I: Leadership Training** - Phase I teaches the IDEALS for Student Achievement and how they relate to technology use in the classroom. Superintendents or administrators in Oklahoma schools and/or districts must complete Phase I before applying for Phase II.
- **Phase II: Grants to Schools** - Phase II provides individual school site and/or district competitive grants. Each OETT grant school receives a maximum of \$40,000, which includes technology equipment and up to \$4,000 in staff release time, and \$25,000 in professional development provided by K20 Center/OK-ACTS. Grant recipients are required to provide a 10 percent match of \$4,000.¹²

The Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education offers Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grants to public school. GEAR UP prepares middle and high school students for college through academic preparation programs and scholarships for students, professional learning opportunities for educators and college access information for students and parents. The K-20 Center also offers a GEAR UP grant that provides technology for a cohort of youth as they move from seventh grade to graduation. Professional development is provided to teachers at each grade level as the cohort group moves from one grade to the next.¹³

Foundations grants are available to fill additional needs. The National Education Foundation offers teachers and teacher leadership teams grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Private foundations such as the Lois Lenski Covey Foundation (LLCF) awards grants ranging from \$300 to \$3,000 annually to public libraries and schools throughout the United States.¹⁴ Meanwhile, entities in Oklahoma, such as the Inasmuch Foundation¹⁵ and the Kirkpatrick Foundation¹⁶ offer grants of various sizes and purposes to schools throughout the state.

Writing grants for programs such as these is also a good way to foster community service and generate parent involvement with the school. High school and elementary teachers can also pursue grants to support the classroom. The Walmart Foundation and Donors Choose grants can fund special learning projects.

¹¹ <http://ok.gov/sde/title-ii-part-b>

¹² <http://oett.org/grantmaking/>

¹³ <http://www.okgear>

¹⁴ <http://www.loislenskicovey.org/6.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.inasmuchfoundation.org/>

¹⁶ <http://kirkpatrickfoundation.com/grants/>

Shrinking budgets have also lightened mandates from the state for various types of expenditures, such as library collections, textbooks, and professional development. With state funding for education remaining below what schools received in 2008, districts increasingly must pursue competitive grants from various private and public entities.

Crescent Public Schools contracts with a professional grant writer to provide grant writing services in accordance with the needs of the district. The additional grant money supplements federal program resources resulting in significant benefit to the district. From 2006-07 to 2011-12, grant funds have ranged from \$237,156 to \$1,031,800. These funds are in addition to federal allocations from Title I, REAP, and Title VI (Indian Education).

RECOMMENDATION

Engage a professional grant writer and develop a cadre of teachers trained as grant writers to assist colleagues in securing classroom grants.

The superintendent should request district and community volunteers to serve on the committee to look at the availability of external resources. The committee should research and prioritize grant funding opportunities, recognizing that it may need to pursue many smaller grants rather than one larger one. It is recommended that the district uses a grant writer to pursue the larger grants. There are a number of grant writers in the state who work on commission. The district could utilize such a writer's services with no upfront cost.

In engaging a professional grant writer, the district should interview candidates and review past work products. The contractor must be able to work with the district to seek grant resources that align to district goals and needs. The committee should advertise the contract position and contact Crescent and other school districts/resources for recommendations on possible grant writers.¹⁷

Partnerships are critical to securing grants. The district should expand existing partnerships to include a college or university, and other districts. The Chickasaw, Choctaw, and the Citizen Pottawatomini Nations can be powerful partners in seeking competitive grants. To successfully pursue the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant and the Math Science Partnership grants, the district must have viable partnerships. The grant writer will need to be able to facilitate partnership planning team meetings prior to the writing of a grant for the district to be competitive.

District middle school science teachers attended a conference in Kansas City in 2015 at which a teacher from Lawton Public Schools conducted a workshop for teachers on how to write classroom grants. Those teachers who attended this workshop and the teacher presenter could be used as resources to other teachers. A team of experienced teacher grant writers should be developed to assist colleagues in writing for Walmart grants and the DonorsChoose.org

¹⁷ <http://writer.trustoria.com/Grant-Writing-Professional/Oklahoma-City-Ok>

classroom grants. This team should also explore the NEA Teacher Innovation grants as a resource for more extensive classroom learning projects.¹⁸

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-15

The district does not have a program evaluation process. As a result the district is not able to monitor and adjust its programs and initiatives to ensure that these efforts are enhancing learning and improving student achievement.

In discussions of district and school programs, the consulting team found that program effectiveness is not systematically addressed. In interviews, administrators and program directors shared anecdotal evidence to support program effectiveness but no specific student performance data was available.

Based on interviews and document reviews, the consulting team determined there are no regulations, procedures, or evaluative resources in place to systematically evaluate school improvement initiatives such as the University of Virginia Lead project, Professional Learning Community structures, intergenerational Pre-Kindergarten classroom, teacher advisement program, and teaming structures at the middle school and upper elementary school. There are no specified procedures to evaluate the special program areas such as gifted and talented, special education, or the Response to Intervention (RtI).

Program evaluation is important because it determines the degree to which a program or project results in change. Educational program evaluation has expanded over the years from the initial focus on federal grant program evaluation to evaluation of local programs and educational activities. Program evaluation collects information about a program or some aspect of a program in order to make decisions about that program. There are a number of different forms of evaluation and the type used depends on information needed to improve or assess the program.

According to the *Basic Guide to Program Evaluation*, major types of program evaluations include:

- Goal-Based: Evaluates the extent to which predetermined goals/objectives are met;
- Process-Based: Evaluates how a program works and how it gets the results it does; and
- Outcomes-Based: Evaluates the degree to which outcomes are accomplished.¹⁹

Process evaluation occurs during the program and is a type of formative evaluation. Impact and outcome evaluation occur at the completion of the program and are considered forms of summative evaluations.

¹⁸ <http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/grants-to-educators/>

¹⁹ <http://managementhelp.org>

Evaluations typically address these types of questions:

- Do all students seem to benefit from using the programs? How do we know?
- Do some students not seem to benefit from the using the programs?
- How much usage of the programs appears to be necessary to see student improvements?
- How do the programs support academic areas in need of improvement, as identified by low scores on state tests?

Ultimately, evaluation in the education context is the attempt to determine whether funds have been spent wisely and in a manner aligned with local, state, or national program goals and guidelines. Funds are always limited, so it makes sense to spend them only where they have a proven positive impact. **Exhibit 1-12** provides an overview of the steps to an effective evaluation. The process begins with initiation tasks such as assembling an evaluation group and assigning responsibilities, defining terms and tasks, and developing an evaluation timeline. Next, the evaluators must select program outcomes that, when measured, will be sufficient indicators of success. Data must then be collected, organized, analyzed, and reported, ultimately culminating in the concise determination and implementation of necessary improvements to the program.

Exhibit 1-12
Eight Steps to Measuring Program Outcomes



Source: Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, United Way, 1996

RECOMMENDATION

Evaluate all programs in use by the district.

The district should evaluate all programs in order to determine what works for Guthrie students, to identify processes that should be continued from programs that have worked well, and to identify how improvements spurred by grants can be sustained. Program evaluations can be assigned to small groups of teachers or individual teachers. The evaluation results should be discussed among teachers and leadership, then presented to the school board.

The superintendent should convene a study group comprised of program directors and principals to develop procedures for program evaluation. The group should first identify all the programs, projects, and curriculum/school improvement initiatives to be evaluated. All external evaluations of any grant-based programs should be analyzed to determine if additional evaluations are needed to address district questions. With the identified programs as the focus, the group should explore the various types of program evaluations and resources available to design evaluation protocols and templates. Different evaluation methods may be needed for different programs.

Since it may be difficult to evaluate all the current programs simultaneously, the superintendent's study group should prioritize the current programs for evaluation and develop timelines for the design and implementation of the evaluation protocols. As the group works to design appropriate program evaluations for the various projects, the following resources on program evaluation design and implementation are available:

- *Program Evaluation Plan* by the Commission on Accreditation provides an evaluation plan and a template for evaluation;²⁰ and
- *Framework for Program Evaluation* provides a framework for the program evaluation process and outlines steps.²¹

Once the program evaluation plans are designed, the superintendent, working with the study group members, should formalize these into the regulations and procedures and develop a policy to present to the board. Evaluation for the identified programs should be initiated and the superintendent and principals should monitor the evaluation of each program.

Formative program evaluation results should drive ongoing program revisions and sustainability planning. The superintendent should provide reports to the board on the formative results and any resulting program revisions. Summative program evaluations should be submitted in written form to the board with a presentation from the superintendent on the status of the program or sustainability plans.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

²⁰ www.cahiim.org

²¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm>

FINDING 1-16

There are a number of classes at the high school with low enrollments as well as several instances where multiple sections of a course are offered, each with small enrollment. This leads to higher than necessary instructional expenses.

In reviewing the course/section enrollment data for the second semester of the 2015-16 school year, the consulting team found a number of single section courses with low enrollments. These are shown in **Exhibit 1-13**. Having a high number of secondary teachers allows for a wider variety of course offerings, but for each course added, enrollment numbers for classes across-the-board often suffer. This ultimately results in higher costs, as teachers are paid on the same salary scale regardless of the number of students they teach.

Exhibit 1-13
Single-Section High School Courses with Low Enrollment

Course	Enrollment, 2015-16, 2 nd Semester
Ag Commo	6
Agriscience II	12
AP Biology	4
AP Calculus	6
AP English IV	13
AP Enviro Science	8
AP Studio Art	9
Economics	14
German II	15
Intro to Horticulture	12
Mythology II	17
Newspaper I	6
Physics	18
PreAP Spanish III	1
Robotics	7
Sports Officiating	7
Web Page Design	15
Yearbook I	10

Source: GPS, January 2016

Similarly, the high school has a number of courses where it offers multiple sections but the average enrollment across the sections is less than 20. **Exhibit 1-14** shows the results of the consulting team’s analysis for the second semester 2015-16 enrollments. While this result may be unavoidable for some specialized classes that the district believes important to offer, such as Introduction to Agriculture or for classes that have limited equipment available, such as Computer Applications II, creating multiple small sections of other types of classes is inefficient.

Exhibit 1-14
Multi-Section High School Courses with Low Average Enrollment

Course	Number of Sections Offered	Total 2 nd Semester Enrollment	Average Enrollment per Section
Ag Power and Tech	2	8	4
Math of Finance	2	10	5
PerFin Literacy	6	89	15
Intro to Ag Power	2	30	15
Chemistry I	6	92	15
Computer App II	10	166	17
Art II	2	35	18
English III	9	164	18
Intro to Ag	4	73	18
PreAP Calculus	3	55	18
Creative Writing I	2	37	19
Algebra I	9	169	19

Source: GPS, January 2016

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recognizes a clear and transparent method for budgeting resources to individual schools as a best practice. This includes staffing allocations. As the GFOA notes:

Districts, especially those with a large number of school sites, must have a clear and transparent method for determining how resources will be allocated to individual school sites. Districts should use allocation methods that work to align resources used at the school sites with the District's Plan of Action for effective instructional strategies and resource deployment. For this purpose, many districts use staffing ratios that allocate staffing to school sites based on enrollment.²²

RECOMMENDATION

Combine secondary course sections and review course offerings.

This can be done over time through attrition or deliberately as a cost-savings measure. First, the superintendent and high school principal should meet to determine a number below which a class will not be formed (and under what circumstances would exceptions be made). If a small number of students want a course that Guthrie High School does not offer, then the school can provide them with an online option. Next, the administration should determine the target number of students that each teacher should have throughout the day, and how teaching electives should factor into that.

²² http://www.gfoa.org/sites/default/files/PK12_4C.pdf

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates that the high school could eliminate three teaching positions by combining small sections of classes and deciding to offer some low enrollment classes only every other year. The teaching position reduction could be accomplished through attrition, as resignations and retirements occur, or through re-assignment of staff based upon certifications held. The GPS compensation package (salary, health and retirement) for a new teacher is \$33,425. Eliminating three positions would save the district \$100,275 per year.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Reduce the number of teachers at the high school.	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275	\$100,275

D. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personnel Management

Personnel costs typically represent the largest expense in school districts. As a result, efficient and effective management of human resource functions is critical to the overall effectiveness of a district. Typical tasks of a school district’s human resources department include the following:

- recruiting employees;
- overseeing the interviewing, selection, and processing of new employees;
- retaining employees;
- processing promotions, transfers, and resignations;
- determining and maintaining compensation schedules;
- managing insurance programs;
- managing employee benefits programs;
- planning and forecasting personnel needs;
- maintaining complete employee records, including records on training and certification;
- developing and maintaining job descriptions, which includes establishing required job credentials;
- managing the employee evaluation process;
- handling employee complaints and grievances, including grievance procedures;
- developing personnel policies; and
- ensuring that the employer follows all laws and regulations.

In order to support the mission of a school district, it is important that these human resources functions be efficient, effective, and aligned to federal and state law. Like most employers,

public school districts must comply with federal laws governing human resources management. These laws include:

- *Fair Labor Standards Act*, which governs wages and hourly payments;
- *Americans with Disabilities Act*, which requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to any employee or job applicant who has a disability; and
- *Equal Employment Opportunity Act*, which prevents employers from making hiring and firing decisions based upon age, race, religion, gender, or other factors not related to performance.

In addition, state laws govern school district human resource administration in areas such as grievances, due process, termination, and contract renewal. Personnel selection and retention are part of a continuous process necessary to ensure an experienced, quality teaching staff.

Personnel management coordination in GPS is the responsibility of the executive director for personnel and secondary education, who is responsible for recruitment, selection, and evaluation of certified personnel. The directors of maintenance, transportation, and child nutrition have responsibility for support staffing and evaluation in their respective areas. Personnel records and benefits documentation are maintained by the administrative assistant/personnel clerk; the payroll clerk generates a monthly payroll with information provided by the personnel clerk and employee records.

Exhibit 1-15 shows that, in 2013-14, GPS had the second-highest number of administrators among the peer districts and the third-highest number of teachers. Its teacher count was the same as the peer average, and its ratio of teachers to administrators was slightly below the peer average.

Exhibit 1-15
Comparison of Teacher and Administrator Staffing, 2013-14

Entity	ADM	Number of Administrators (FTE)	Number of Classroom Teachers (FTE)	Ratio of Teachers to Administrators
Guthrie	3,514.3	19	182	10:1
Altus	3,710.8	17	236	14:1
Guymon	2,831.0	15	171	11:1
Noble	2,844.5	15	147	10:1
Tahlequah	3,478.5	20	198	10:1
Woodward	2,993.2	17	159	9:1
Peer Average	3,171.6	17	182	11:1

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 1-16 compares Guthrie's per-student spending on administrator salaries with that of its peers. As shown, Guthrie's spending was near the peer average of \$400 per student and was higher than only two of its peers.

Exhibit 1-16
Administrative Expenditures Comparison, 2013-14

Entity	ADM	Number of Administrators	Total Salary	Administrator Cost per Student
Guthrie	3,514.3	19	\$1,417,571	\$403
Altus	3,710.8	17	\$1,344,037	\$362
Guymon	2,831.0	15	\$1,059,375	\$374
Noble	2,844.5	15	\$1,186,290	\$417
Tahlequah	3,478.5	20	\$1,452,260	\$417
Woodward	2,993.2	17	\$1,308,847	\$437
Peer Average	3,171.6	17	\$1,270,162	\$400

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 1-17

GPS maintains organized personnel records in a secure central office location. All pertinent personnel records are filed in the official central office files, which ensures the confidentiality of documents and makes them accessible to an employee upon request.

The GPS personnel clerk maintains personnel files and medical records separately in locked file cabinets located adjacent to the executive director's office. A review of the personnel files showed all files to be well organized in a consistent format and including:

- employment documents;
- contracts and job descriptions;
- records of board employment action;
- transcripts and certifications;
- records of employee verification and salary earnings;
- teacher retirement forms; and
- evaluation records.

Personnel files are maintained under the direction of the accounts payable clerk who works to keep all files updated.

According to Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) guidelines, personnel files and medical records are private documents and should be maintained in locked file cabinets in a secure location. Files should only be accessible to those people with a legitimate need to access the files. Special guidelines apply to securing and handling medical information obtained through medical examinations and tests.²³ The *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* also requires that medical records be secured and accessible only for safety and health purposes. GPS organizes and maintains personnel records according to professional human resource standards, which serves to generate trust on the part of employees.

²³ www.shrm.org

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools maintains organized personnel records in a secure location ensuring that confidential information is protected and vital records are not lost or compromised.

FINDING 1-18

Guthrie Public Schools does not have a standard operating procedure manual for personnel operations that include personnel selection and employment processes, personnel attendance and leave record entry, professional development records, and personnel payroll connections. As a result, the incorporation of new staff and cross-training can be more difficult, and the lack of written procedures can cause inconsistencies in employment practices.

A review of the district's policies indicate there is no internal operating procedures manual that details the practices of personnel operations. In interviews, the executive director for personnel, personnel clerk, and principals described the common set of informal hiring procedures. The hiring procedures are established though not written in policy or regulations.

In interviews with the consulting team, the personnel clerk described detailed procedures for handling each of the following personnel functions:

- content and maintenance of personnel files;
- maintenance of personnel evaluations;
- implementation of the sick leave bank;
- family medical leave;
- maintenance of medical records;
- personnel hiring including posting, application, screening, interviewing and recommending employment;
- processing new employees/benefits/payroll;
- criteria for the contents of the personnel files and the set-up of the files;
- maintenance of medical records and family medical leave files;
- maintenance of leave records and connections to payroll;
- substitutes hiring and training; and
- professional development records.

There are no written documents that detail operating procedures for the above functions. There are numerous benefits for developing an operational procedures manual for personnel operations. An operating procedures manual standardizes procedures to ensure continuity of operations. By detailing operating procedures, the district provides a framework for ensuring consistency in personnel practices which means staff members are treated fairly and equitably.

It also assists the personnel department in transitioning new employees, cross-training staff, and maintaining continuity when substitutes are needed in the department. For example if a staff member is absent and a colleague is suddenly assigned the responsibility to step in and complete an unfamiliar task, such as to get out a payroll, having a written procedure is invaluable. Procedures provide the how-to for employees and provide a framework for cross-training.²⁴

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a written standard operating procedures manual for personnel operations.

The executive director for personnel should coordinate the development of the standard operating procedures manual for personnel operations. The first step in this process should be to meet with personnel support staff to discuss the need, the timeline for completion, and procedures for developing the operating manual. The staff should write the detailed procedures in the personnel operating procedures manual for their functional area. When this task is complete, the staff should reconvene to share written procedures, revise and finalize.

Special attention should be focused on the district's hiring procedures. The executive director for personnel should engage principals in discussions of the existing practice, any need for revisions, and development of written employment procedures. The principals and personnel clerk should meet with the executive director to draft and finalize the written procedures. *The School Personnel Management System* published by the National School Board Association is a possible resource in the development of appropriate procedures.

The employment procedures should detail the actions to be taken at each stage in the selection and hiring process and define the roles and responsibilities of administrators at each stage. The document should specify the role of the superintendent and the school board in the employment procedures. Procedures should also include ways to document and monitor consistent implementation of the guidelines.

Once employment procedures are finalized, they should be incorporated into the operating manual along with the other personnel operations procedure. Upon completion of a draft version of the standard operation procedures, the superintendent should have the draft document reviewed by the attorney or a representative from the Oklahoma State School Board Association (OSSBA) to ensure procedures are sound and that employment procedures are aligned to fair employment standards and best employment practices. The board should develop policies that address the resulting written procedures where appropriate.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-19

The district does not have an established process for evaluating staffing needs, determining staff reductions, and making reassignments. Without a clear decision-making process, staffing

²⁴ <http://virtualproductivitysolutions.co.za/2011/11/02/5-key-benefits-of-a-standard-operating-procedures-manual/>

decisions are sometimes made without giving full consideration to the impact to programs and services.

GPS personnel decisions are impacted, as are those of all Oklahoma districts, by the drastic cuts that have been experienced in state education funding. In addition, to state cuts in funding, staff adjustments are made due to the population shifts, changes in student characteristics, grant funding, and state and federal laws and regulations. The following exhibit illustrates personnel shifts and fluctuations over the past five years, which reflect some of the personnel management decisions made over that time period.

From 2009-10 to 2013-14 the ADM increased from 3,274 to 3,514, which computes to a 7.3 percent increase. GPS reduced the number of certified staff by 5.0 full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions and its administrative staff by 0.4 FTE (**Exhibit 1-17**). Over that time period, the number of regular classroom teachers dropped from 189.8 to 182.3 with fluctuations during that time period with the lowest number of classroom teachers, 176.6, in 2012-13. The number of special education teachers remained the same with two years of fluctuations. Administrative staffing remained between 18.0 and 19.0 over the five-year period.

Exhibit 1-17
GPS Certified and Administrative Staffing
2009-2010 to 2013-2014

Position	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Regular classroom teacher	189.8	179.7	176.6	179.7	182.3
Special education teacher	25.7	23.5	25.5	26.5	25.7
Counselor	11.9	4.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
Other certified professional staff	13.5	12.4	18.9	21.2	22.3
School and district administrators	19.0	18.0	18.6	19.0	18.6
Total	259.9	237.6	243.6	252.4	254.9
ADM	3,274.0	3,290.1	3,302.7	3,448.7	3,514.3
ADM Increase	0.6% ▲	0.5% ▲	0.4% ▲	4.4% ▲	1.9% ▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

In interviews with the consulting team, the superintendent stated that in previous years the cuts in staff have been done through attrition with consultation from principals, and the Reduction In Force (RIF) procedure has not had to be used. However, due the projected funding cuts for 2016-17, the district may have to resort to RIFs in both certified and support staff. The district has clearly defined RIF procedures and policies for each employee group.

At the present time, the district lacks significant data to assist in making staff reduction decisions. There is no statistical program evaluation information available to determine program effectiveness and identify those that should be maintained. Also, the district has no job analyses of support or administrative personnel positions in order to determine which positions are most critical and essential based upon the actual work performed.

Best practice suggests that districts should develop an objective process for determining staffing needs, reductions and reassignments to ensure that the best possible decisions are made with respect to district goals. A sample of such practice was found in the way the Hinton Public

Schools superintendent worked with principals and teachers in developing district priorities and establishing options for budget reductions. The superintendent met monthly with all district staff to discuss priorities and financial status. During times of financial constraint, the meetings generated options for staffing reductions or reassignments that have the least impact on student learning. This helps all staff to understand how staffing and budget decisions are made, and that objective processes are used to minimize the negative impact of reductions on district programs and services.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a systematic process for making staffing decisions that includes careful consideration of teaching loads and class size district-wide, support staff configurations and the impact of any decisions on district programs and services.

The superintendent should work with the cabinet, administrative council and a representative group of teachers to develop a process for making staffing decisions. As part of designing a staffing decision process, consideration should be given to:

- engaging all instructional staff in identifying needs and generating options for reductions if needed;
- taking a critical look at course offerings, scheduling, class size and staff skills and credentials;
- exploring possible redistribution or reduction of staff at the secondary level if necessary to increase the number of teachers at elementary as class size warrants;
- addressing ways to maintain or adapt the most effective student programs and services within the existing financial constraints;
- developing a communication model that involves staff discussions at all levels to create an open, transparent process for making staffing decision; and
- using student performance results and program evaluation data to adjust course offerings and staff assignments as needed.

A framework for strategic workforce planning is provided by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). According to NAPA, strategic workforce planning is a systematic process for identifying the human capital required to meet organizational goals and developing the strategies to meet these requirements.²⁵ Such long-term planning for the district would involve a decision-making model that is integrated in personnel management as an ongoing function.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

²⁵http://napawash.org/images/reports/00_04_Building_Successful_Organizations_A_guide_to_strategic_workforce_planning.pdf

FINDING 1-20

Guthrie Public Schools does not have a personnel recruitment and retention plan. This hinders the district in maintaining a highly qualified certified workforce.

Beyond the standard recruiting tools of posting listings of vacancies in various locations and media sources, there is no long-range plan for recruitment though it seems there is general concern about having enough highly qualified applicants available. The district had 35 certified employees new to the district in 2015-16 and 55 in the previous year. In interviews, administrators indicated if there had been more than 35 positions for the current school year, they did not think the district could have filled the positions due to the limited pool of applicants.

Similar to most districts, the retirement of veteran staff also presents concerns for GPS. Both of the high school agricultural education teachers retired at the same time, and clerical staff described the possibility of simultaneous retirements happening with several key clerical positions.

A review of employment statistics illustrates the need for districts to develop recruitment and retention plans to maintain a quality teaching staff. The National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) in the 2012-13 follow-up study reported that of teachers leaving the profession, 6.3 percent of those reported that they left for reasons of salary. Among public school teacher movers, 59 percent moved from one public school to another public school in the same district and 38 percent moved from one public school district to another public school district between 2011-12 and 2012-13.

RECOMMENDATION**Develop strategies for retaining a qualified workforce and increasing the pool of highly qualified applicants for certified staff positions.**

Recruiting and retaining educators is not the sole responsibility of the personnel department. Planning and implementing an ongoing recruitment program is the responsibility of everyone in a school community. The superintendent and executive director responsible for personnel should convene a recruitment and retention team to:

- identify the strengths and challenges of recruitment and retention in the district;
- set short- and long-term goals for improving recruitment practices;
- ensure an organized approach to recruitment efforts;
- make sure that recruitment and retention becomes an ongoing priority for the district;
- bring skills, knowledge, and energy to the district to implement successful recruitment and retention practices.

The committee should include a cross section of district personnel that represent teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, teacher association members, and retired educators. In addition, there should be representatives from the community that include board members,

parents, business leaders, Chamber of Commerce leaders, civic organization representatives, and marketing and human resource professionals.

As a first step, it is essential for the committee to assess the district's strengths and weaknesses, identify trends, and determine the effectiveness of existing efforts to hire and retain certified educators. Data will help to verify and sharpen the committee's understanding of district needs and priorities for recruitment and retention. Data will provide a foundation from which to plan and a baseline to measure district efforts.

If the data shows that the district is challenged in attracting qualified applicants, the committee might explore what the New Hampshire Department of Education has identified as "promising strategies". These include:

- improve the image of your district through ongoing public relations and marketing;
- expand district outreach to reach more potential applicants;
- enlist community help in recruitment efforts;
- define the characteristics and skills of the ideal applicant and align recruitment strategies;
- strengthen relationships with institutions of higher education and teacher preparation programs;
- work on efforts to "grow your own" candidates and explore alternative certification opportunities; and
- identify incentives available for candidates that will attract and help retain quality educators.²⁶

In considering these "promising strategies", the committee should note that the superintendent has begun addressing a number of these through developing partnerships with college and universities. To expand on the current efforts of the superintendent, the committee should also review the 2015 report by the Oklahoma Teacher Shortage Task Force to identify recruitment and retention recommendations that can be modified or adapted. Examples of a few of the recommendations from the task force report that might be helpful to local planning include:

- Target and recruit high school students, undergraduate students, mid-career professionals, and military personnel to enter the teaching profession.
- Allow for retired teachers to serve in the role of mentor – the retired mentor would not be employed by the district.
- Create a scholarship program to provide for a one-time scholarship for test takers.
- Adopt and fund a teacher recruitment program, with matching funds from the business and education community.
- Create a pilot program on different teacher/leader models that include mentors, lead teachers, or instructional coaches.²⁷

²⁶ http://www.nheon.org/prof_dev/RetainRecruit/AS3Plan.html

Once the committee has determined the key components of the plan, it might be helpful to use a planning template and explore the literature to write up the implementation strategies. These sample templates and planning resources can be of use:

- Sample Recruitment Strategy Template²⁸
- Six Easy Steps To Building A Recruiting Strategy And Successfully Measuring The Outcome²⁹
- Planning the Steps in Your Recruitment³⁰

In developing and implementing an effective recruitment plan, it is important that the committee is conscious of how the district is perceived externally. For example, is the culture of the district attracting applicants? Are teachers included in all aspects for the recruitment and selection process? Are district teachers included in job fair recruitment and on interview committees? Teachers can be the best recruiters.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Professional Development

While the development of a competent certified and support personnel staff is often considered a human resource function, the professional development of personnel is also a critical component of instructional delivery and school improvement. Professional development programs enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators in order to improve student learning. The base of knowledge in education is growing so rapidly in every academic discipline that educators must stay current and develop new expertise. Effective school districts provide ongoing learning opportunities for all educators. The SDE standards specify that professional development should increase competencies in core curricular areas.

Learning Forward, formerly the National Staff Development Council, has established standards for quality professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students.³¹ These standards characterize quality professional learning as that which:

- occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment;
- requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning;
- integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes;

²⁷ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Prelim.%20report%20Dec.%2015%202015.pdf>

²⁸ <http://dvfbc.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Sample-Recruitment-Strategy-Planning-Template.pdf>

²⁹ <http://www.eredia.com/ere/6-easy-steps-to-building-a-recruiting-strategy-and-successfully-measuring-the-outcome/>

³⁰ <https://www.go2hr.ca/article-category/recruitment/planning>

³¹ <http://learningforward.org>

- aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards;
- requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning;
- uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning; and
- applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

The *NCLB* quality professional development guidelines specify that professional development should be ongoing, targeted to student achievement, and distributed over time. Single presentation and one-time only activities are not considered quality professional development under *NCLB* guidelines. These guidelines apply to professional development activities that are funded with federal funds.

The district professional development calendar includes:

- two day new teacher orientation days that starts in August;
- five days in the school calendar identified as professional development days with four of those days scheduled before school starts and one in January;
- one of the four August days provides a half-day devoted to district professional development sessions and the remaining scheduled as in-service days at the school sites;
- convocation and state mandated training provided for support and certified during August in-service days; and
- one day in January that provides a half-day devoted to district professionals.

Board policy E-1 states that the district must offer a minimum of 30 hours of professional development each year as part of the “school hours” calendar option adopted by the district. The current schedule meets that requirement.

FINDING 1-21

The district does not have a formal support program for entry level teachers and teachers new to the district. Without a mentor program provided by experienced teachers and monitored by the principals, those new to the district often lack personal and professional support.

For 2015-16, the district’s 35 new teachers had a two-day orientation before the start of the school year and entry-level teachers had mentors who serve without a stipend. Principals indicated that volunteer mentors are also assigned to each experienced teacher who is new to the district. In focus group discussions, some teachers new to the district stated they did have mentors, while others did not know of any designated mentor. According to principals, the assigned mentors have no formal training and the mentoring activities are not monitored.

Four major trends emerge from research literature about why new teachers leave their positions:

- new teachers feel overwhelmed by the expectations and scope of the job;
- new teachers feel isolated and unsupported in their classrooms;
- new teachers are unclear about expectations; and
- new teachers' own expectations don't match the actual job.³²

A structured mentor support system for new teachers addresses the above mentioned factors. Mentoring of new teachers can be viewed as a continuum, starting with personal and emotional support, expanding to teaching practice. According to WestED in its work on designing support for beginning teachers, it is critical to provide structured support to new teachers as they face the challenges of a new work place, new colleagues, a need for perspective, and understanding of the work climate.³³

Assigning experienced teachers to guide and support new teachers provides valuable professional development for both first-year and veteran teachers. Danielson (1999) found that mentoring helps novice teachers face their new challenges; through reflective activities and professional conversations, they improve their teaching practices as they assume full responsibility for a class. Danielson concluded that mentoring fosters the professional development of both new teachers and their mentors.³⁴

At least one Oklahoma district provides an individualized program of training and orientation to all certified staff new to the district each year. Mentors are assigned not only to resident, entry-level teachers, but to all teachers new to the district. The program emphasizes the importance of structured support to the success and retention of new staff, as well as to those who are experienced but new to the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a formal mentor program with trained mentors to provide teachers new to the profession or the district with the support needed for success.

The executive director responsible for personnel should meet with principals and key experienced teachers to discuss what a structured mentor support system for new hires might involve. This group should set up interviews and focus groups with entry level teachers and veterans new to the district to determine the challenges they faced in their first year with the district. After analyzing these data, the planning group should explore resources that might be helpful in developing a structured mentoring program to address the anticipated needs of teachers new to the district and entry level teachers. An article titled Induction Programs That Keep New Teachers Teaching and Improving by H. Wong could be useful.³⁵

In some instances, due to the number of teachers new to the district that might be assigned to a given building, the district might consider a team approach to supporting the new teachers.

³² http://www.nheon.org/prof_dev/RetainRecruit/SU1supporting.html

³³ https://www.wested.org/online_pubs/tchrbrief.pdf

³⁴ Danielson, C. (1999). Mentoring beginning teachers: The case for mentoring. *Teaching and Change*, 6(3), 251–257.

³⁵ <http://newteacher.com/pdf/Bulletin0304Wong.pdf>

Involving staff members from other grade levels or content areas in the support continuum could benefit all involved. **Exhibit 1-18** demonstrates questions to explore for those involved in the support of new educators.

Exhibit 1-18
Questions for Those Involved in the Support of New Educators

- How should your induction-with-mentoring program be tailored to meet the needs of both traditionally and non-traditionally prepared teachers?
- How will the principals monitor the mentoring process to ensure that the teachers new to the district and entry level teachers have consistent support throughout the school year?
- How can you support veteran educators who are coming into a new district?
- What resources will you need to assist non-traditionally prepared teachers who are pursuing certification?
- What can you do to make sure that late hires are completely oriented and haven't missed important information?
- How can you assist “grow your own” teachers from within your district in adjusting to their new role within the district?
- How can you assure that all new hires get the support they need to achieve competence in pedagogy and classroom management?
- How will support for a mature new educator differ from support for a young new educator?

Source: http://www.nheon.org/prof_dev/RetainRecruit/SU6AltCert.html

The executive director responsible for professional development could possibly provide assistance in planning a support structure, as well as:

- provide training to the experienced teachers assigned to support a new teacher;
- facilitate study group discussions that would address the needs of both the experienced and inexperienced; and
- conduct or assist staff in presenting a structured orientation program with follow-up discussions.

In planning a support structure, the scheduled professional development days can be used to offer training or follow-up on components of a structured program. Part of these days could be scheduled for mentor training, facilitated study groups, focus groups, and instructional planning across grades or content.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-22

The district has no structured “grow your own” program. As a result, there is no program that prepares certified staff as leaders, coaches, or facilitators, or assists certified and support staff in acquiring certifications and training needed for upward mobility in the system.

During the onsite consulting period, the executive director and superintendent mentioned a “grow your own” program to address staffing needs. However, no specific plan was provided. The superintendent said that “grow your own” involved the district working with select student teachers to have them commit to the district. The executive director referenced using teachers as presenters during the Edcamp sessions as a “grow your own” strategy though there is no professional development available to these teachers to develop facilitation or presentation skills.

There was no indication that the district has a program for developing teacher leadership. Teachers are not prepared to assume roles as coaches, mentors, facilitators or workshop presenters.

Title II funds are not used to support teachers or support staff in acquiring certifications. There are three National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) in GPS but there is no district plan to support teachers through this professional development process and certification. In interviews, teachers reported that some teachers are taking online courses for administrator certification, but there are no resources available from the district to assist them. There are no strategies in place to identify and assist support employees in seeking teacher certification.

Some districts have a formal “grow your own” program. For example, *GROW YOUR OWN* is an innovative program used by the Lufkin ISD in Texas to support post-secondary education of local high school students and paraprofessionals who commit to pursuing teaching as a career. Program participants complete the required college course of study and are then considered for employment as a teacher. The Lufkin ISD program provides technical assistance pertaining to college studies; mini-scholarships; availability of grants; offset cost for tuition and books; and release of paraprofessionals to attend college classes.

RECOMMENDATION

Structure a “grow your own program” that includes components to develop and train certified and support staff to assume leadership roles and provide a means for staff to acquire certifications and training needed to assume new positions.

The superintendent should work with the executive directors to create a “think tank” group of individuals to assist them in developing a “grow your own” program. The group should include representatives from the educational foundation, school PTOs, classroom teacher association, teacher preparation faculty from partner higher education institutions, teachers, and principals.

The group should review the 2015 report by the Oklahoma Teacher Shortage Task Force to identify recommendations that serve as a springboard to strategies for a “grow your own” program.³⁶ The group should brain storm and explore strategies for:

- developing teachers for various leadership positions by providing a comprehensive training program to build skills in coaching, facilitating and mentoring;
- using National Board Certification to develop teacher leaders;
- identifying and assisting support employees in acquiring teacher certification;
- certifying classroom teachers as special education teachers;
- determining use of alternative certification options for increasing the pool of certified prospects;
- using the concurrent enrollment classes available on campus as an opportunity for the support staff to acquire college course credits;
- identifying resources for incentivizing certification efforts; and
- generating funds for tuition, stipends, and scholarships.

The strategies generated by the think tank group should be developed for inclusion in the district recruitment and professional development plans, as appropriate.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-23

The district does not provide support staff with professional development opportunities beyond the state required training. Without job specific training for all support staff, the district is not able to develop and maintain the desired competency and sense of professionalism.

Guthrie Public Schools support personnel include teacher assistants, cafeteria personnel, custodial staff, maintenance staff, transportation staff and clerical/financial personnel. In focus group discussions, support staff indicated that they were included in the mandated training and the presentation of the guest speaker at the beginning of school training. Classroom paraprofessionals and teacher assistants, however, are not included in the training provided for teachers.

Also, in focus group discussions, support staff described the need for opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. Clerical staff expressed the need for ongoing technology training. The school secretaries also indicated their interest in meeting together on a scheduled basis for training and sharing sessions. Currently, the district does not provide such opportunities.

³⁶ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Prelim.%20report%20Dec.%2015%202015.pdf>

On occasion, the maintenance and custodial staff has received training from various vendors servicing the district. This job specific training has not been regularly scheduled or organized around the needs of the staff.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a professional development program for all support staff that includes job specific training as well as participation in the professional development for certified staff, as appropriate.

The executive director responsible for personnel should ensure that support staff representatives are included on the professional development committee for the purpose of planning and integrating the training schedule for support staff into the comprehensive plan. The first task of the committee should be to review the current professional development schedule for certified staff to determine the workshops that are appropriate for all support staff and those that are unique to the needs of classroom teaching assistants. Opportunities should also be offered to staff with similar duties so they may meet to promote sharing and problem solving as a group. The technology department should develop a technology training series for the clerical staff so they may provide detailed professional development to support staff on learning new software.

As part of the planning, the committee should explore training options available through outside resources such as partnering with surrounding districts or vendor-sponsored training. Larger districts usually have staff development programs scheduled for support personnel that could offer options for custodian staff, clerical, transportation, and child nutrition staff. By partnering with outside districts, GPS could pay a registration fee for staff to attend. The training for maintenance and custodial staff with state vendors should be scheduled to accommodate the needs of the support group.

In planning professional development for support personnel, the committee should review federal programs and grant funds to identify possible funding resources. The committee may be able to identify resources by adjusting Title I and Title II budgets to include instructional support staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-24

The district does not provide a professional development program or strategies for de-escalating behavior for special education staff. As a result, special education support staff and teachers are not prepared to recognize and address escalating behavior.

In interviews with support staff and teachers, they indicated a need for space in working with students to de-escalate behavior. An accompanying need was expressed for training for special education support staff and teachers, as well as other support staff and teachers in the district, on escalation strategies.

There are several training models for preparing staff to deal with de-escalating aggressive student behavior. One is offered by Oklahoma Institute for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Education and Training and accredited by the Oklahoma State Medical Association to provide what is referred to as CAPE training. Creating a Positive Environment (CAPE) is training that enhances employee's verbal and non-verbal skills. The training curriculum emphasizes verbal interventions and non-restrictive methods of dealing with escalating student behavior. CAPE is designed to foster safety and promoting dignity in dealing with students.³⁷

A second model is used by Byng Public Schools district's special education department to provide a comprehensive professional development program, Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI).³⁸ Developed during the 1970s, *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention* training focuses on understanding effective communication and human physiology during a student's episode of aggressive behavior. CPI is based on a core philosophy of maintaining care, welfare, safety and security. With a certified in-district trainer, Byng has the capacity to expand the program to regular education teachers, prepare new teachers, and sustain the effective use of CPI at a minimal cost to the district. Each year the CPI training has been expanded to include staff beyond special education. All the principals and counselors have completed the training, and now regular education teachers are being included in training.

RECOMMENDATION

Explore options for providing special education support staff and teachers with comprehensive, ongoing training that focuses on de-escalation strategies to minimize the necessity for restraint.

The director of special education should work with a committee to explore the available training models for de-escalation training. The committee should be comprised of special education teachers, special education support staff, and representatives from the professional development committee. The exploration process should include an in-depth study of CAPE and CPI models and any other available models to determine which might best meet the needs of the district.

As the committee explores training options, the director of special education should contact Byng Public Schools about the CPI program. Efforts should be made to schedule a time for the Byng CPI trainer to meet with the committee to discuss the details of CPI and the district's training model. The committee should discuss partnering with Byng as a way to access initial training. Those conversations should include the cost of teachers going to Byng for training or for the Byng trainer to come to Guthrie.

Regardless of what model is selected, GPS should work to develop a comprehensive professional developmental program that provides ongoing training. Byng's basic CPI training consists of 1.5 days of training for three years. As a result of this initial training, special education support staff and teachers are prepared to recognize and address escalating behavior, and use verbal and physical intervention techniques to diffuse situations at the earliest stages. The program is

³⁷ <http://ok.gov/odmhsas/documents/Training%20Catalog%202013%203%201.pdf>

³⁸ <http://www.crisisprevention.com/About-CPI>

sustained by having those who complete the three years of basic training attend a four-hour refresher course each year.

The results of the committee's exploration should be incorporated into the district's comprehensive professional development plan. The training model should be considered as part of the budgeting process for the district professional development plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

E. COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

School districts are a vital part of communities, often associated with a community's identity, sense of pride, and quality of life. This is especially true in smaller communities. In order to strengthen this role, school districts should develop effective communications and community involvement programs that lead to a more informed and engaged staff and community. Research demonstrates that community outreach benefits both the community and the schools.

Effective community involvement programs should highlight the unique characteristics of the school district and the community. These programs can significantly affect citizen perceptions of and engaging the community with the school system. Effective programs will rally public support and involvement. That will result in parent and community volunteers, public participation in the decision-making processes that affect the schools (e.g. bond and board elections), and productive business and community alliances.

Exhibit 1-19 shows a five-year comparison of parent conference attendance rates for Guthrie, its peers, and the state. The district had a participation rate at parent/teacher conferences that fell near the middle of its peers, although for two years (2011-12 and 2013-14), the attendance rate was lower than all of its peers and the state. Overall, Guthrie tends to have average conference attendance rates when compared to its peers.

Exhibit 1-19
Trend in Parent Conference Attendance

Entity	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Guthrie	68.1%	71.9%	57.2%	78.3%	65.6%
Altus	67.4%	68.4%	70.8%	68.2%	70.0%
Guymon	82.8%	84.5%	84.8%	87.6%	79.8%
Noble	63.3%	61.4%	66.0%	61.8%	70.0%
Tahlequah	61.0%	63.3%	67.4%	65.5%	66.6%
Woodward	81.6%	86.0%	88.2%	89.8%	90.3%
State	72.2%	72.0%	73.5%	74.0%	74.1%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 1-25

The district has created multiple opportunities for communication with parents and the community. Communication tools include the website, Facebook, School Messenger, Remind, parent portal, and local media sources.

Guthrie parents emphasized the benefit of School Messenger to generate mass emails providing information and notifying them of emergencies. Parents also indicated that some teachers use Remind to communicate, which they find helpful in keeping updated on classroom and school events.

In addition to the website, parents explained that the parent portal provides information on student grades and attendance. The teacher webpages are another source of information according to parents. These classroom webpages have the potential of reaching and informing a number of parents, as more teachers create these.

The community receives communication regularly through the district website. In interviews, board members commented on the importance of being transparent in building trust with the community and the district use of the website to keep the community informed of board action and district planning. In addition to posting the board meeting agenda each month, the district posts the complete board packet and approved board minutes that detail all action taken. The board meetings can also be seen via the web, which allows the public to view the board in action. Contact information on the board and administration is easily accessible on the website.

The superintendent communicates with the parents and community regularly through the use of newsletters. These newsletters are sent to the local newspapers, and then posted on the website. Teachers and parents both commented on the effectiveness of the newsletters in updating them on current district issues. The use of the newsletter adds to the efforts to be more transparent in communications with the community and staff.

COMMENDATION

GPS has created multiple opportunities to communicate with community and parents through the use of a variety of tools.

FINDING 1-26

The district does not monitor the effectiveness of the district website and portal in communication with parents, nor has it prepared parents to access these resources before eliminating traditional sources of information. As a result, the portal and website may not serve to keep parents as informed and involved with their child's learning.

Guthrie parents and PTO representatives commented on the use of the website and portal as communication tools. They indicated that the website could be useful but they did not find it to be user friendly. Parents would like to provide feedback as to how the website can be improved.

According to parents, many of the teacher classroom pages are incomplete and inconsistent, which impedes communication. Elementary parents voiced a hope that the schools would

continue the weekly information packet for communication until the classroom and school websites are able to provide a comparable level of communication. Parents stated that some teachers were using Remind effectively to communicate. As shown in **Exhibit 1-20**, many parents do not feel they receive timely communication from teachers.

Exhibit 1-20
Parent Survey Results Regarding District Communications

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I receive timely communications from my child's teachers regarding his/her progress in school.	25%	31%	10%	22%	13%
I receive enough information from the district regarding academic expectations for my child (i.e. student testing, retention, etc.).	12%	31%	22%	26%	9%
The district website is a useful tool for me and/or my child.	18%	43%	19%	17%	4%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

Parents in focus groups commented that the effectiveness of the portal in communicating is dependent on the teacher. Some teachers consistently post grades while others do not. It was suggested that all teachers be expected to post at least once a week. PTO representatives expressed concern that not all parents knew about the portal, and some did not know how to use it. They commented it would be helpful if information about the portal could be provided at all schools during enrollment with training available.

Districts have found parent portals are great vehicles to keep parents connected. In a portal, parents can see their child's progress, a list of assignments, special communications from teachers, and any other important information. However, portals will not be used effectively unless they are promoted and parents understand how to access them.

RECOMMENDATION

Monitor the use and increase the effectiveness of the district website, teacher web pages, and parent portal as tools to inform and involve parents.

The superintendent should convene a task force comprised of the director of technology, district webmaster, teachers, principals, and PTO representatives to plan for the effective use of district technology to engage and inform parents. As a first step, the task force should determine the current status of the effectiveness of the website and portal as communication tools. Parent and teacher focus groups should be conducted at each site, along with surveys, to obtain feedback and suggestions.

Based on the data collected, the task force should develop a plan that would increase the effectiveness of the website, portal, and other technology as tools for parent communication. The plan should include specified actions, designated responsibilities and expectations, timelines, and

methods for monitoring and ongoing evaluation. Attention should be given to making the website more user friendly and the portal more regularly updated.

The plan should include training for both teachers and parents. Teachers may need support in the effective use of the web pages and portal to engage parents. Parents should be provided opportunities for support and training to access and use the portal. The use of weekly information packets should be phased out as parents become more familiar with the technology.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-27

GPS does not use existing structures to expand the active engagement of the parents beyond the compliance planning required to obtain title funding for the district. As a result, the district is lacking engagement and input from critical parent groups.

The district provides special services to Native American students through Title VII federal funds. With approximately four percent of the student population being Native American, the district receives approximately \$50,000 each year. The required Title VII planning committee, comprised of four parents, a teacher, and a student, meets once a year with the executive director responsible for federal programs. A parent committee is required by law to assist in planning for the use of the funding resources. The majority of the funds for 2015-16 were used to purchase lap top carts for schools, with the remaining funding tutors.

Another committee is required for planning for Title I grant funds. The committee is comprised of parents of the students served by this grant, which in this district includes all students. According to a district report, this committee meets once a year, prior to grant submission. No information was available on the parent membership of this committee. Face-to-face dialogue with parents is limited in both committees.

In the 2014-15 annual district survey of parents, a total of 58 parents responded. The number of parent responses by school ranged from one to 18. The majority of parents in four schools responded favorably to the statement “programs are provided to parents to assist them with their roles in their children’s education”, while a majority of responding parents in two schools stated this was not true in their respective schools.

As SEDL points out, school improvement efforts are more sustainable when parents and community members understand them and have been involved in the decision-making process. Apathy, distrust, and confrontation are often manifested when the community is not involved in the decisions that affect the education of their children. With diverse student populations, parent involvement presents challenges as schools strive to create welcoming environments and outreach programs that involve parents in their communities. Studies show that when parents and

community members are engaged with and in schools, student performance improves, attendance increases, and dropout rates decrease.³⁹

The “Dual Capacity – Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships” offered by the U.S. Department of Education builds on existing research and suggests that partnerships between home and school can only develop if both families and staff have the prerequisite capacity to engage in partnership.⁴⁰ Research suggests that these families who are trained to be more active in their children’s schools are often met by an unwelcoming school climate and resistance from staff to their efforts for more active engagement. To increase authentic parent engagement, programs directed at improving family engagement must focus on building the capacities of both staff and families to engage in partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop an outreach program to foster collaboration among parents and expand parent involvement in decision-making beyond required federal and state compliance planning committees.

The superintendent, working with the executive director, should convene the Title VII Indian Education and Title I parent committees and district administrators as a planning team to begin exploring ways to increase the involvement of all parents. As part of the initial discussions, the committee should review district data and use the SEDL work paper referenced above, and the U.S. Department of Education as study guides.

In addition to the study guides and case studies, the executive director should provide the committee with copies of the results for the last three years of the annual parent survey required by policy, as well as the survey results available in this report. Principals should also provide data on the number of volunteers in the respective schools, and the disaggregated data by subgroups on the number of parents attending parent conferences for the past three school years.

To expand the conversation beyond the committee, the superintendent should involve the committee in developing plans to engage focus groups to provide broader input. The committee should identify informal meeting settings, which should take place in the community, outside the school setting.

In determining the composition of the focus group(s), the superintendent can facilitate this process by having each person on the planning team develop a socio-gram map of who in the diverse parent community that he/she knows. With the individual socio-grams completed, the group shares the maps to reduce overlap. This will produce a list of people that each committee member could potentially bring to a focus meeting.

The team should establish a schedule of focus groups around team member’s schedules since they will be responsible for inviting their personal contacts to the meeting. The focus groups should discuss ideas and strategies for increasing engagement of staff and parents in an active

³⁹ <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/family29/1.html>

⁴⁰ <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partnership-frameworks.pdf>

partnership for school improvement by expanding the collective capacity. Focus groups should also include the opportunity for broad-based, authentic planning to expand the needs assessment and contribute to planning the services needed.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-28

The district does not have a formal structure to support and foster organized parent involvement through such organizations as the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). As a result, the organizations are not able to accomplish their full potential for impacting schools.

In conversations with the consulting team, PTO representatives expressed an interest in expanding the participation of parents and teachers in the parent teacher organization at each school site. At some schools there is a void in parent leadership, and the school administrator largely runs the PTO. The parents who are actively involved do not have strategies for expanding participation in any organized way. Representatives emphasized the value of having teachers actively involved with parents.

While in the focus group, the PTO representatives came up with a tentative plan for how they might recruit during the enrollment period. The fact that parents used the focus group meeting for collaborative discussion and planning illustrates the need for district support in creating opportunities for district-wide PTO planning. Current PTO leaders stated that last year the executive director met with PTO presidents quarterly to provide information, but this year there have been no meetings.

According to parent representatives, some of the site organizations have had some limited discussions on goals and plans. They engage in fund raising sometimes without a clear purpose or goal in mind. At some schools, the PTO members have to ask the administrator what they can do to help the school or teachers. The Fogarty PTO is helping renovate the library and the seating in the auditorium.

While many see fund raising as the primary role of a PTO, the work of the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) shows that parents can come together with teachers, school administrators and community to improve student achievement.⁴¹ Through CIPL leadership training, parents can partner with teachers and administrators to develop projects that reach far beyond fund-raising. These projects focus on:

- making schools more welcoming to parents;
- easing students' transitions between schools;
- promoting literacy skills of both adults and children;
- boosting schools' technology resources;

⁴¹ <http://prichardcommittee.org/our-initiatives/gcipl/>

- encouraging schools to examine achievement and attendance data; and
- bringing teachers and parents together to discuss mutual hopes for their schools.

According to the National Education Association, when parents engage in ways to improve learning, students make greater gains.⁴² Schools that build partnerships with families and respond to parent concerns, honor their contributions, and share decision-making responsibilities, sustain connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. The parent-teacher organizations play a key role in building these partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide a leadership development program to assist the parent and teacher membership of organizations, such as the PTO, to become functional, high-impact organizations.

The superintendent should create a team comprised of PTO parent leaders, teacher PTO representatives, and administrators to assist the executive director in planning a summer leadership seminar series for parents and teachers. The team should review the Dual-Capacity Building Framework, the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) information, and the PTO Today website.⁴³ The executive director should facilitate the review process in order to build ownership and capacity of the members of the team.

In planning the first summer seminar series created to develop teacher and parent leadership, the team should focus on what and how the PTO can become more than just a fund raising organization. Possible objectives could focus on projects, as suggested by the work.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

F. COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC RELATIONS

The primary role of communications in a school district is to convey a message and image consistent with the school board policies that are implemented through procedures established by the superintendent and district staff. Critical components of communications include strategies for externally communicating with the community and internally communicating within the school district.

FINDING 1-29

To address communication with school sites, the superintendent has established the Staff Communications Committee (SCC). The SCC meets monthly and is comprised of teacher representatives from each school.

⁴² <http://www.nea.org/tools/17360.htm>

⁴³ <http://www.ptotoday.com/>

In the various discussions with staff, the SCC was referenced repeatedly as an example of the district's effort to increase communication with school-based staff. The purpose of the committee is to give school staff access to the superintendent to discuss questions and concerns on a regular basis. Support staff mentioned the SCC as helpful in increasing communication by allowing them to ask questions. Minutes are taken at each meeting, and the administrative assistant to the superintendent distributes these to everyone.

Leaders of the Guthrie Association of Classroom Teachers spoke positively of the SCC in improving communication with teachers. In focus group discussions, association leaders referenced the superintendent's willingness to communicate and work with teachers.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent has established the Staff Communications Committee to improve communication with the school sites and uses the meetings to address staff questions and concerns.

FINDING 1-30

The district does not provide a transition program at the elementary level to assist parents and students as they move from one grade center to the next. With schools organized as grade level centers, parents and students have as many as six transitions from one school to the next.

In interviews with the consulting team, elementary parents discussed the issue of transitions from one school to another. With grade level centers, students make multiple transitions until they graduate from GPS. Each school operates differently, and there is not a district-wide program to assist parents and students at transition points.

PTO representatives pointed out the frustration that parents experience as their children move from one school to the next. They do not know routine procedures, homework policies, class expectations, and discipline procedures. All of these may vary from one school to the next. For instance, one school was using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a discipline model and another was not.

The district provides elementary, junior high, and high school handbooks. The elementary handbook addresses general policy and procedures pertinent to all elementary schools. However, at the end of the handbook, parents are referred to site-specific handbooks. According to parents, site handbooks do not prepare them or their child for the actual transition to that school. A transition activity or even a pamphlet that detailed the differences would be helpful.

Districts plan formal transition activities prior to students moving from elementary to middle school or junior high and from there to high school. These are usually considered a major transition point. As parents pointed out, GPS has four elementary centers so students are required to make four major transitions before ever reaching junior high and there are no formal transition activities for them.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide transition activities and information to parents and their students as they move from one elementary grade center to the next.

The executive director responsible for the counseling program should meet with elementary counselors, principals and PTO representatives to discuss transition points and develop a plan to address student and parent needs. The team should first identify what might be perceived as operational differences between the schools. Then the team should convene groups of parents whose children had recently moved to another school to share their perception of the transition issues. Teacher representatives from each grade should be included in focus groups to discuss what they consider to be the major transitional concerns in instruction.

After identifying the issues at each transition point from the various perspectives, the team should develop a plan to address these. School counselors and principals should assume the responsibility of coordinating and implementing the activities and related parent communication. Parent feedback should be obtained at appropriate points to determine the effectiveness of the activities in meeting parent and student needs. The team should meet at the end of the school year to revise the transition program based upon the feedback.

With the elementary transition program in place, the transition activities to junior high and high school should be reviewed. The executive director should then facilitate the review of the transitions at the secondary level.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 2:
Instructional Delivery

Chapter 2

Instructional Delivery System

This chapter addresses the instructional delivery of Guthrie Public Schools (GPS) in the following sections:

- A. Curriculum
- B. Instructional Delivery and Student Performance
- C. Special Programs
- D. Student Services

The primary purpose of any school system is educating children. Effective schools deliver quality instruction based upon a district's capacity to manage and implement a rigorous, relevant curriculum. The education process requires robust policies and procedures that direct the instructional process, provide well-designed programs to meet the needs of all students, and provide resources to support program implementation. The monitoring and evaluation of program effectiveness based upon student performance data are also essential.

A. CURRICULUM

Oklahoma state education laws, as codified in the Oklahoma Administrative Code (210 OS § 15), manage the instructional process to ensure academic success for all students. It is the responsibility of the school district to meet the requirements of the law. A district's instructional program, along with its allocation of resources, is the means by which a district attempts to meet the educational needs of all students. A well-designed and managed process for developing curriculum and directing instruction, collecting assessment data to evaluate and monitor programs, and providing the resources needed to support educational efforts is essential if a district is to meet the needs of its students.

Curriculum development and instructional delivery are critical components of student learning. The presentation of materials, concepts, skills, and new ideas greatly affect the acquisition of knowledge. Curriculum content and instructional strategies need proper alignment and regularly scheduled evaluations. This promotes improvement of student performance and ensures curricular relevance, rigor, and equity.

Oklahoma school boards and superintendents provide principals and teachers with necessary tools to deliver the state adopted standards. The state standards, the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS), drive educational delivery. With the re-adoption of the PASS, educators are encouraged to shape their educational efforts by integrating the best practice of instructional shifts. The goal is that such efforts will provide the rigor and relevance students need to be college and career-ready.

The PASS provides a consistent, clear articulation of learning expectations, guides teacher instruction, and assists parents in knowing what they need to do to assist in the educational process. The academic standards are intended to mirror the robust, relevant, real world knowledge and skills that students need for success in college and careers. The PASS defines the

content, knowledge, and skills students should gain during their K-12 educational careers. The PASS prepares high school graduates for success in college courses and in workforce environments. **Exhibit 2-1** further explains the PASS standards.

**Exhibit 2-1
Priority Academic State Standards**

What the PASS Does	What the PASS Does Not Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on deep thinking, conceptual understanding, and real world problem solving skills • Set expectations for students to be college, career, and citizenship ready • Incorporate literacy in science, social studies, and technical subjects • Emphasize the use of citations and examples from texts when creating opinions and arguments • Increase rigor and grade level expectations • Determine the full range of support for English language learners and students with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictate how teachers should teach • Mandate a specific curriculum • Limit advanced work beyond the standards • Require the purchase or development of entirely new instructional materials • Prescribe all that can or should be taught • Limit efforts to prepare students for college, career, or citizenship readiness • Prescribe interventions for students below grade level

Source: SDE, 2014

A comparison of core curriculum units shows Guthrie outpaced all of its peers and the state in language arts and in math, although it tied with two of its peers in the number of math units. In all subjects, Guthrie exceeded the state numbers and matched or exceeded the community group numbers. The district was near the middle of its peers in science, social studies, fine arts, and language. The total number of core curriculum units offered by Guthrie was higher than the community group, higher than the state, and the second highest among its peers (**Exhibit 2-2**).

Exhibit 2-2
Comparison of Core Curriculum Units by Subject, 2013-14

Subjects	Guthrie	Altus	Guymon	Noble	Tahlequah	Woodward	Community Group	State
Language Arts	16.5	10.5	11.0	10.0	6.5	13.0	10.6	7.9
Science	11.0	10.0	9.0	13.0	6.5	9.0	9.0	6.1
Math	10.0	9.5	10.0	10.0	8.5	7.5	9.5	6.5
Social Studies	7.0	7.5	7.0	8.0	4.5	7.0	7.1	5.5
Fine Arts	12.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	11.0	10.5	11.3	7.1
Languages	4.0	7.0	3.0	6.0	3.5	2.0	4.0	2.6
Total	60.5	58.5	55.0	63.0	40.5	49.0	51.5	35.7

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-3 provides a 10-year comparison of GPS instructional expenditures as a percent of total expenditures as well as the annual instructional expenditures per student. Over that time period, instructional expenses have ranged from 49 percent to 57 percent of all expenditures. Instructional dollars per student have varied from \$3,337 per student in 2004-05 to \$4,088 in 2009-10.

Exhibit 2-3
Trend in Instructional Spending



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database and Prismatic calculations

FINDING 2-1

The district has implemented processes for vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment. The central office personnel and building principals are keenly aware of the importance of aligning both horizontal and vertical curricula. Dialog has already taken place to incorporate the pending new math and language arts state standards into the curriculum maps and pacing guides.

Horizontal curriculum alignment allows teachers to closely align what is taught, share ideas, and develop common formative and summative assessments. Common assessments lead teachers to a deeper knowledge of how much content is mastered by each student. Horizontal curriculum alignment ensures that key concepts and standards are emphasized in every grade level or content classroom. Horizontal alignment ensures every student is taught the same quality standards and skills. Teachers may still maintain autonomous instructional delivery strategies and classroom structures.

Vertical alignment, organizing curriculum from one grade level or content area to the next, is often more challenging. Vertical alignment allows each teacher to build upon the work of the previous teacher without duplication or inconsistency of what has been taught. Proper vertical alignment requires digging into curriculum at all levels to align and layer skills, content, and background knowledge.

At the time of this report, it remains a challenge to develop a curriculum alignment plan. The state of Oklahoma is in the final stages of approving new state standards. All standards need to be included and integrated into living and teacher-friendly documents available to all staff. The alignment process requires teachers to align learning standards, skills, and objectives that flow seamlessly from a level of introduction through mastery.

Guthrie administrative staff and teachers understand the need for continuous vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment. The district administration has taken initial steps to vertically and horizontally align curriculum.

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for initially implementing horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment processes.

FINDING 2-2

Guthrie administrative staff has meaningful dialog regarding both vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment. However, horizontal and vertical alignment at the teacher and classroom level merits continued focus. The GPS teacher teams need to take the alignment process to a higher level once state standards are available. Teachers reported there was minimal alignment dialog regarding standards and skills that need continual and ongoing maintenance for mastery at multiple grade levels. Retention of those basic skills and content needed for ongoing mastery need to be clearly identified and calendar paced. Because most GPS assessments are multiple-choice tests, there is limited alignment conversation about integrating essay and problem solving questions on formative assessments and benchmarks.

The kind of data GPS teachers use and need for robust discussions regarding re-teaching, remediation, and enrichment was unclear. Some teachers felt the current data results did not align with the curriculum being taught. There are differing stages of how teachers apply the data results to teach and adjust content and skills with greater intent. Teachers were not routinely able to articulate a clear understanding of how they adjusted and paced curriculum based on data. There were inconsistencies in re-assessing for mastery and if lack of mastery revealed legitimate trends and patterns that merited pacing and alignment adjustments.

Exhibit 2-4 shows the student survey results regarding education in Guthrie. These results indicate the need for teachers to review curriculum to ensure curriculum is aligned with student need so that students recognize the learning support they receive from the adjusted and paced curriculum.

Exhibit 2-4
GPS Student Survey Results Regarding Education

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Education is the main priority in our school district.	11%	38%	17%	24%	10%
Students learn the necessary material to be prepared for the next grade.	8%	40%	20%	19%	13%
I am being academically prepared for life after high school.	11%	28%	18%	22%	20%
Our schools can be described as “good places to learn”.	6%	26%	24%	26%	18%
I knew what to expect on the state tests.	11%	39%	20%	19%	12%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

Some teachers indicated that professional learning community (PLC) agendas were often prescriptive, top down, and did not address current curriculum and pacing issues. This interfered with teachers addressing the immediate, day-to-day needs to re-teach, remediate, enrich, and re-assess opportunities. The consensus among teachers was that PLC time was important for vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment, but should be more realistic and driven by teacher and immediate student need. It was suggested that teachers and or teacher teams create or have input in getting curricular issues on the PLC agenda.

Alignment takes time, open-mindedness, continuous review on the part of the teachers and leadership from the principal. The alignment process is not standardized practice across all grade levels and content areas. Teachers reported the need for more PLC and professional development time dedicated to teacher-to-teacher vertical and horizontal alignment. There are inconsistencies in how the interventionists and coaches are involved in alignment processes at the building sites.

At GPS, the current building configurations present a barrier to vertical alignment. The pending move to neighborhood schools will present new challenges in the horizontal alignment process.

At the time of this report, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) is in the final stages of approving the new state standards. The new standards must be in place in order for the alignment process to be meaningful work.

When teachers independently decide what students will learn it results in repetition of content, missing content, and non-sequential learning. Research is clear that without proper horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment, teaching at one grade level will not lay the foundational learning needed for success at the next level. When standards based accountability tests are established, teachers plan classroom instruction in a way that follows the standards¹ both vertically and horizontally. This is why frequent collaboration among teachers is so necessary. The following documents provide additional research and information to support GPS standardizing the horizontal and vertical alignment process at the grade level and department level:

- Align Your Curriculum and Save Your Students;²
- Aligning Curriculum Within and Across Grades;³
- Horizontal and Vertical Alignment;⁴ and
- Curriculum Mapping & Analysis: Basic Definitions.⁵

Alignment dialog among departmental and grade level staff must clearly center on the “ins and outs”. Teachers must know what content and skills the students should come “in” with and what content and skills the student should go “out” with. There should be subsequent best practice dialog for delivering the skills and content to students using multiple strategies and techniques. This dialog includes such things as how to launch the learning, sharing bell-to-bell activities, and what are cross-curricular connections to the content and skills. Peer learning opportunities where teachers observe each other are important. Teachers need to observe how students are “learning” and not how teachers “teach”. These are fundamental, in-house tools for professional growth.⁶

Teachers must engage in deep, open, honest conversations regarding what content mastery looks like, how to assess for mastery, what evidence is needed for mastery, and how to align curriculum and instruction for mastery. The alignment process asks teachers to review assessments and plan how students will be assessed to ensure all skills and concepts are included in the learning experiences. Teachers need robust data. Data from high quality, common formative assessments that identify:

- individual students who need additional time and support for learning;

¹Porter, A.C. (2002). Measuring the Content of Instruction: Uses in Research and Practice. *Educational Researcher*, 31(7), 3-14.

²<http://www.hotchalkeducationnetwork.com/curriculum-alignment-matters/>

³<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/aligning-curriculum>

⁴http://images.pearsonassessments.com/images/tmrs/tmrs_rg/HorizontalVerticalAlignment.pdf?WT.mc_id=TMRS_Horizontal_and_Verticle

⁵<http://www.slideshare.net/Suadalazzam/curriculum-mapping-analysis-basic-definitions-9834837>

⁶<https://www.teachingchannel.org/aligning-curriculum-module-sac>

- the teaching strategies most effective in helping students acquire the intended content knowledge and skills;
- program concerns – areas in which students generally are having difficulty achieving the intended standard; and
- improvement goals for individual teachers and the team.⁷

Sound assessment data are important to help to identify students who are not mastering particular objectives or who are functioning below grade level. However, that knowledge is meaningless without altering instruction and pacing and re-aligning curriculum to provide support for these students. In their study of high-performance districts, Cawelti and Protheroe found that a common characteristic was the districts' recognition of the need for curricular and instructional processes that enable teachers to accomplish three things on a daily and weekly basis. These three things are:

- organizing instruction to regularly administer interim assessments of skills taught before moving on to new material;
- providing tutoring or extra help for those students who fail to master the skills taught and enrichment learning activities for those who have mastered the skills; and
- providing frequent practice throughout the year to ensure retention for students who have initially mastered the skills needed.⁸

The ongoing, capacity-building dialog around curriculum takes regularly scheduled dedicated time. There are some teacher teams across the district that addresses horizontal curriculum alignment with commitment and conformity. The vertical aspects of curriculum alignment are more difficult to address because of grade configurations. The pending move to neighborhood schools will also influence the logistics and scheduling alignment discussions. Regardless of the configurations, teachers need regularly scheduled release time to do the work. Once the new standards are officially in place and available to teachers, vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment can be attended to with rigorous effort.

RECOMMENDATION

Strengthen the horizontal and vertical alignment process to function primarily at the teacher and classroom level.

The district administration has provided initial direction and dialog to the vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment process. With the big picture in place, teachers must take the alignment process to the grade and department level. There is verbiage indicating the district vertically and horizontally aligns curriculum, but the process needs to be teacher and data-driven with consistency and fidelity. Research is clear this is one of the most highly effective processes for improving schools.

⁷Dufour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R. and Many, T. (2006). *Learning by Doing*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

⁸Cawelti, Gordon, and Protheroe. (2001). *High Student Achievement: How Six School Districts Changed into High-Performance Systems*. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

The building principal, interventionist, instructional coach, and teachers must have a common understanding about vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment. An active alignment process is the roadmap for daily teaching that is aligned horizontally and vertically. The alignment process must be built on Oklahoma state standards, but allow for teachers' strengths and creativity in the delivery of instruction.

Curriculum alignment begins with what teachers are already doing and builds towards becoming more effective and student driven. Building principals share the stage with teaching staff in the critical review of instructional effectiveness, student learning results, and the impact on curriculum alignment. The curriculum maps are not just for teachers, they show students what they will study. During regularly scheduled PLC time, teachers should routinely review and design curriculum with a range of learning activities and assessments that provide choices for students and allows them to use their unique talents and interests. Teachers should engage students in developing essential questions for content and instructional units. Students should also be involved in thinking about curriculum related topics or ideas for projects they may wish to pursue during the unit of study.

While reviewing the alignment of curriculum maps and pacing guides, teachers also should consider ways to upgrade their teaching strategies, materials, and resources. As teachers analyze their maps and compare their instruction with student performance data, they should identify ways to use instructional strategies and resources more effectively. Sometimes this means that a resource or strategy that is successful for one teacher may be adopted or adapted by others who identify similar needs in their classroom. Likewise, teachers abandon resources and strategies that are not effective in improving student learning.⁹

The vertical and horizontal alignment process must be teacher-owned and student-centered. The central office and building principal must empower teachers to design their students' actual learning experiences, and "own" the curriculum.¹⁰

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 2-3

The district's central office personnel, building principals, and core curriculum teachers are heavily involved data disaggregation, dialog for intervention, and discussions regarding what works. The district leadership has clear expectations for use of data in designing curriculum, delivering instruction, and implementing learning interventions.

Guthrie Public Schools has set high expectations for teachers using data to inform instruction. The district has used data disaggregation and analysis as a primary vehicle for school

⁹Jacobs, H. H. (2000). "Upgrading the K-12 Journey through Curriculum Mapping: A Technology Tool for Classroom Teachers, Media Specialists, and Administrators." *Knowledge Quest*. 29(2), November/December), 25, 28-29.

¹⁰Burns, R. C. (2001). *A leader's guide to curriculum mapping and alignment*. Charleston, WV: AEL, Inc.

improvement and improved student learning. The consulting team found much dialog about the use of data to inform classroom instruction and improve student learning.

Research is replete in directing educators across the country to effectively use assessment data. The essential elements of effective use of data to improve instruction include:

- good data;
- staff expertise with collection and analysis of data;
- sufficient time structured into the schedule for staff to analyze the information; and
- carefully designed changes in curriculum and instruction that address the needs identified by the analysis.¹¹

The National Education Goals Panel conducted a series of hearings designed to find examples of successful schools and to understand why they were succeeding. “Using data to drive improvement” was identified as a key to success. Specifically, the successful schools “use performance information to determine where they were succeeding and where they need to direct their efforts for improvement.”¹²

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for data-driven decisions in identifying student need, and in designing curriculum, instructional delivery, and interventions.

FINDING 2-4

Interviews and focus groups indicated much of the professional learning community (PLC) times focus on curricula and instructional delivery. Even though there are PLC issues that need resolution, equally important is the need to spend the majority of PLC time building teacher capacity. Teachers indicated a need for greater focus on sharing differentiated instructional strategies and more in-depth dialog regarding how to adapt, modify, and adjust instruction and curriculum pacing. There was openness and desire among the principals and teachers to build their own capacity through site and grade level analysis and planning.

The staff recognized the need to have dedicated time for reflective conversation regarding what is working and what needs improvement. Principals understand the importance of building level autonomy to have conversations about how to move instruction to a higher level that is based on student need and will improve student learning and achievement.

There is need for teachers to build on their current strengths, share expertise, and knowledge development. Principals are aware of the need to promote knowledge growth through not only professional development, but also collaboration. Some teachers reported they need time to

¹¹Protheroe, N. (2001). Improving Teaching and Learning with Data-Based Decisions: Asking the Right Questions and Acting on the Answers. Retrieved from

<http://www.rogersschools.net/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=3497164>

¹²Rothman, R. (2000). *Bringing All Students to High Standards: Report on National Education Goals Panel Field Hearings. Lessons from the States*. Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel.

actively collaborate on current student needs rather than adhere to a predetermined PLC agenda. They need to identify the basis for day-to-day learning problems and devise solutions. This builds professional knowledge, develops skills, and constructs new ways to analyze and respond to curricular and instructional problems. All GPS principals are capable of facilitating the tension between autonomous, high performing, productive teams, and teams who still need nurturing and guidance.

Throughout the district, teachers create instructional action plans. The consulting team found inconsistencies across the district in the quality and pragmatic implementation of these plans. Some teacher teams reported their weekly PLC sessions were beneficial. Teachers had healthy dialog, designed instruction, and returned to their classrooms with practical strategies for instruction. Other teachers reported PLC time had them following a prescribed agenda and the process was too authoritarian. Some felt they were asked to focus on issues that were not current or relevant to the daily, pressing issues teachers were facing. They were often bogged down in the paperwork and accountability process. Others reported if meaningful dialog was taking place, the PLC session timed out before all teachers were able to share. In focus groups, one staff member responded as “we don’t leave the PLC feeling good and like we got things accomplished”.

Generally, GPS teachers appreciate PLCs and recognize their need. There is still the frame of mind that building PLC agendas are created to meet central office expectations. The building staffs are ready for more autonomy. Staff is aware of and feels the tension as the district seeks to find the balance between accountability, making sure “nothing is taken for granted” and extending trust and empowerment at the building and classroom level.

Teachers are at varying levels of using data conversations to actually build capacity to improve the classroom instruction and pace curriculum. Not all staff is able to meaningfully use data to design curriculum and instructional changes to address the student needs identified through data analysis. Interviews and focus groups pointed out that bringing staff development to a site based structure would help with building capacity based on specific need.

Guthrie Public Schools building principals are instructional leaders. They understand the importance of facilitating change and improved instructional delivery skills. Principals, teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches know that data drives differentiated instruction. There is keen awareness that teachers’ desire continued input in planning their time to get better at understanding differences in student learning needs. Principals see the need for staff to tailor planning time for building the capacity to adapt, modify, and adjust instruction and curriculum pacing. Principals want to build teacher capacity through facilitating teacher-to-teacher dialog that uncovers student needs, and uses data to ignite change. As instructional leaders, the principals see the need for grade level and content area teachers to establish baseline data to measure student progress. The next level is to design curriculum and instruction to elevate student achievement. GPS building principals are responsive to their staff’s varying levels of expertise and are capable of managing those differences. Principals generally know which teacher teams are not functioning professionally and which are highly capable. Overall, principals understand the need to lead and nurture the capacity building process.

Research literature speaks to capacity building as teachers using good data to differentiate and diversify curriculum instruction. Differentiated instruction provides students with active, project based learning experiences and tasks that improve their performance. Under the principal's leadership, teachers need time, empowerment, and trust to build their capacity to find out how students learn differently and plan instruction beyond "one size fits all".

Differentiating instruction asks teachers to continually grow and strive to know more about their students. Then, teachers respond to each student's needs to maximize learning experiences. This takes time and corporate planning.

The building principal is a catalyst and key player in successful professional learning and capacity building. Research has shown the importance of the principal's belief that teachers have the capacity to respond to the needs of students, that this belief provides moral strength for principals to meet difficult political and educational challenges along the way. It is the principal's job to create an environment in which the staff can learn continuously.¹³

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to build teacher and principal capacity that deepens, sustains, and drives the curricular and instructional delivery work based on student need.

The district has resources in place that can support building principals and teachers as they grow in professional expertise and build individual teacher capacity. The University of Virginia (UVA) training has provided building principals with leadership skills and expertise to lead change. As they facilitate the capacity building process for improving and differentiating instruction, time to do the work is vitally important. Continued use of PLC time, common planning periods, and staff meetings are vehicles already in place. Principals should expand time for teachers sharing with teachers.

At the building level, principals should not look at capacity building in "silos". It is vitally important to interface and integrate all resources and programs that can help principals and teachers grow. At each site, the Response to Intervention (RtI) program, special education, and technology need to be woven into the all the capacity building, learning, and growing process. All programs and staff play a valuable support role in building capacity to diversifying instruction. The interventionist and instructional coaches have access to the RtI research-based strategies and interventions for teachers. These videos show the flexibility and value of differentiated instruction:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzbklzOFPbo>; and
- <http://www.schooltube.com/video/cb83856191f9470e8937/>.

Principals, teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, and teachers should dialog about how formative assessments are used to form small groups, and what are the ground rules for re-do's,

¹³Several researchers http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61/supportive_leadership.html; Snyder, K.J., Acker-Hocevar, M. & Snyder, H.M. (1996, Winter). Principals speak out on changing school work cultures. *Journal of Staff Development*, 17 (7), 14-19; Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline*. New York, NY: Doubleday Currency.

re-takes, and do-overs. Revisiting Gardner’s work on multiple intelligences where he addresses “not how smart students are, but how students are smart” would be useful. Gardner’s work interfaces and works in concert with differentiation. The following resources provide useful background knowledge for staff:

- The GoodWork Toolkit;¹⁴
- The Good Collaboration Toolkit: Getting Started;¹⁵
- Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences;¹⁶
- Gardner on Good Work and Bruner;¹⁷
- Concept to Classroom Workshop: Tapping into Multiple Intelligences. What do M.I. lesson plans look like?¹⁸
- Concept to Classroom Workshop: Tapping into Multiple Intelligences. What are some benefits of using the multiple intelligences approach in my school?¹⁹ and
- David Sousa Brain Research²⁰.

The principals and teaching staff must keep in mind; they cannot do everything at once. When building capacity and making instructional changes, leadership must be sensitive to letting changes take root, and not move too quickly. The quality of school instructional leadership at GPS is foundational evidence that building professional capacity throughout is highly possible.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

B. INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

High-achieving districts have curriculum maps that clearly define standards and learning objectives for each subject and grade level so that teachers know the content expectations and instructional timelines for student mastery of objectives. It takes instructional leadership to implement the curriculum. The principal and teachers, working collaboratively, are responsible for the consistency of curriculum implementation on the campus, the quality of the instruction in the classroom, and student performance.

The College of Education at Washington University, Center for Educational Leadership, has developed a framework for instructional leadership. According to their website, the framework is not the sum total of the work of instructional leaders. It is a description of the most important aspects of instructional leadership. **Exhibit 2-5** describes the five core beliefs that drive the work

¹⁴<http://www.thegoodproject.org/toolkits-curricula/the-goodwork-toolkit/>

¹⁵<http://www.thegoodproject.org/collaborationtoolkit/>

¹⁶http://www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/guide/learning/howard_gardner_theory_multiple_intelligences.pdf

¹⁷<https://howardgardner.com/videos/>

¹⁸http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/demonstration_sub1.html

¹⁹http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/index_sub5.html

²⁰<http://www.schoolimprovement.com/experts/david-sousa/>

in school leadership at the Center for Educational Leadership, and **Exhibit 2-6** describes the four dimensions of instructional leadership.

Exhibit 2-5
Core Beliefs - Center for Educational Leadership

Beliefs	
1	Instructional leadership is learning-focused, learning for both students and adults, and learning which is measured by improvement in instruction and in the quality of student learning.
2	Instructional leadership must reside with a team of leaders of which the principal serves as the “leader of leaders”.
3	A culture of public practice and reflective practice is essential for effective instructional leadership and the improvement of instructional practice.
4	Instructional leadership addresses the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and learning diversity in the school community.
5	Instructional leadership focuses upon the effective management of resources and of people – recruiting, hiring, developing, evaluating – particularly in changing environments.

Source: <http://info.k-12leadership.org/4-dimensions-of-instructional-leadership>, March 2016

Exhibit 2-6
Dimensions of Instructional Leadership

Dimensions	
Vision, Mission, and Culture Building	School leaders, committed to collective leadership, create a reflective, equity-driven, achievement-based culture of learning focused upon academic success for every student.
Improvement of Instructional Practice	Based upon a shared vision of effective teaching and learning, school leaders establish a focus on learning; nurture a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and public practice; and monitor, evaluate, and develop teacher performance to improve instruction.
Allocation of Resources	School leaders allocate resources strategically so that instructional practice and student learning continue to improve.
Management of People and Processes	School leaders engage in strategic personnel management and develop working environments in which teachers have full access to supports that help improve instruction.

Source: <http://info.k-12leadership.org/4-dimensions-of-instructional-leadership>, March 2016

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), from the *Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL)*, synthesized the body of research on the effects of leadership practices on student achievement. In their research, *McREL* identified 21 leadership responsibilities and 66 practices that are notably associated with student achievement. These characteristics and responsibilities are now integrated into a Balanced Leadership Framework.²¹ Much of the

²¹<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0404MCREL.pdf>

Teacher Leader Effectiveness (TLE) evaluation process adopted for Oklahoma administrators uses this research.²²

School administrators must have pragmatic knowledge, skills, strategies, and tools to positively affect student achievement. They must move their instructional leadership skill set past abstract and theoretical thinking to concrete, day-to-day practices to be effective leaders. Instructional leaders understand the need for multi-faceted strategies that enable them to know when, how, and why leadership action must be taken.

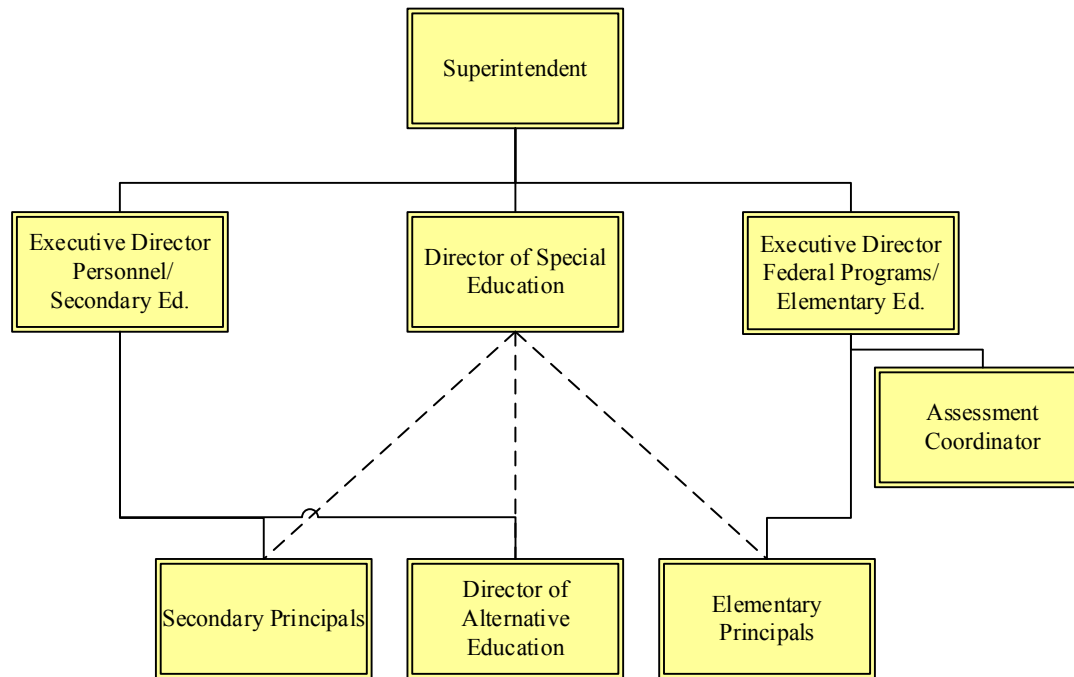
Superintendents and principals form the core of educational leadership in school districts. Over the past two decades, the role of the school leader is no longer that of a building manager who makes sure that schedules are met, the school is maintained, and that discipline is properly enforced. Today, the educational leader is responsible for consistency of implementation of an aligned curriculum, the quality of instruction in the classroom, and student performance. Recent research contends that school leaders influence classroom teaching, and consequently student learning, by staffing schools with highly effective teachers and supporting those teachers with effective teaching and learning environments.²³

Exhibit 2-7 provides the current organizational structure for instructional delivery at GPS.

²²<http://sde.ok.gov/sde/tle-qualitative-components>

²³Hornig, E. & Loeb, S. (2010). New Thinking About Instructional Leadership. Retrieved from <http://www.youblisher.com/p/110815-New-thinking-about-educational-leadership/>

**Exhibit 2-7
Instructional Delivery Organizational Chart**



Created by Prismatic, February 2016

Oklahoma School Testing Program

Student assessment is an integral part of measuring student performance. The Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) continues implementation of the current standards-based tests that students must take during the school year. The Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) consist of Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) designed to measure student attainment of skills established for core subjects. The OCCT helps monitor student and school performance relative to the PASS. The OSTP program uses a phase-in process to increase tested grades and subjects. CRTs are currently administered in third through eighth grade, and end-of-instruction (EOI) exams are administered for selected high school courses in this manner:

- third grade: Reading and Mathematics;
- fourth grade: Reading and Mathematics;
- fifth grade: Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Writing;
- sixth grade: Reading and Mathematics;
- seventh grade: Reading, Mathematics, and Geography;
- eighth grade: Reading, Mathematics, Science, U.S. History, and Writing; and
- high school: End-of-Instruction (EOI) tests in English II, English III, Biology I, U.S. History, Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry.

All students in the tested grades and subjects must participate in the OSTP. The test results for all students who attend a full academic year (FAY) and are “first opportunity EOI test takers” are included in the calculation of school and district grades in the Oklahoma A-F Report Card Grading System. Current administrative rules define FAY as any student who has enrolled by October 1st.

Student test scores fall into one of the following four categories:

- Advanced – student demonstrates superior performance on challenging subject matter;
- Proficient– student demonstrates mastery of appropriate grade level subject matter and is ready for the next grade, course, or level of education, as applicable;
- Limited Knowledge – student demonstrates partial mastery of the essential knowledge and skills appropriate to his or her grade level, course, or level of education, as applicable; or
- Unsatisfactory – student does not perform at least at the limited knowledge level.

State law, *Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE)*, requires high school students to pass four of the seven EOI tests and earn a minimum of 23 credits in order to graduate from high school. All students must pass the Algebra I and English II tests and must then pass at least two additional EOI assessments from the other five areas (Biology I, U.S. History, Algebra II, Geometry, English III). Passing means the student scored at the Proficient or Advanced levels.

To assist teachers and districts in teaching the PASS and preparing students for the OCCT, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) provides a variety of resources on its website. These resources include the following:

- the PASS by subject and grade level;
- test blueprints for each grade level and subject area test that show what percentage of the test each skill will represent;
- test/item specifications highlight important points about the items' emphasis, stimulus attributes, format, content limits, distracter domain, and sample test items;
- released test questions;
- writing samples;
- a list of words, called the academic vocabulary that are used on each test; and
- depth of knowledge (DOK) levels and percentage weights for all OCCT test questions in test specifications.

The official standards (PASS), along with the blueprints, performance level descriptors (PLDs), item specs, DOK, writing samples, and released items define the testing requirements for 2014 through 2017.²⁴

Test Results for 2013-14

Exhibits 2-8 through **2-16** reflect Guthrie test results for the 2013-14 Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT). **Exhibit 2-8** shows that Guthrie third grade students had the lowest scores in both math and reading when compared to their peers, community group, and state.

Exhibit 2-8 Percentage of Guthrie and Peer District Grade 3 Regular Education, Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above 2013-14

Entity	Math	Reading
Guthrie	58%	71%
Altus	85%	89%
Guymon	91%	93%
Noble	84%	88%
Tahlequah	80%	84%
Woodward	67%	72%
Community Group	75%	81%
State	75%	80%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

²⁴ Oklahoma State Department of Education website: <http://ok.gov/sde/documents/2013-09-05/blue-prints-plds-item-specs>

Exhibit 2-9 shows that Guthrie fourth grade students scored higher than their peers, the community group, and state for math. However, in reading, they scored second lowest among their peers and lower than the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-9
Percentage of Guthrie and Peer District Grade 4 Regular Education,
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above
2013-14

Entity	Math	Reading
Guthrie	84%	74%
Altus	82%	87%
Guymon	83%	81%
Noble	78%	79%
Tahlequah	75%	81%
Woodward	68%	65%
Community Group	74%	76%
State	74%	76%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-10 shows the scores for Guthrie fifth grade students. GPS students consistently scored the lowest in all subjects, compared to the peers, community group, and state. The fifth graders tied for lowest score in math, reading, and science with several other peers. The score in writing was substantially lower than any of the comparison groups.

Exhibit 2-10
Percentage Guthrie and Peer District Grade 5 Regular Education,
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above
2013-14

Entity	Math	Reading	Social Studies	Science	Writing
Guthrie	72%	66%	70%	50%	28%
Altus	86%	79%	85%	52%	41%
Guymon	95%	66%	84%	50%	52%
Noble	79%	80%	87%	63%	48%
Tahlequah	72%	74%	85%	56%	54%
Woodward	78%	67%	86%	50%	37%
Community Group	75%	74%	84%	56%	51%
State	75%	76%	85%	60%	54%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-11 compares sixth grade test scores. Guthrie sixth graders scored the lowest in all subjects compared to the peers, community group, and state.

Exhibit 2-11
Percentage Guthrie and Peer District Grade 6 Regular Education,
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above
2013-14

Entity	Math	Reading
Guthrie	74%	72%
Altus	90%	80%
Guymon	92%	79%
Noble	75%	78%
Tahlequah	91%	74%
Woodward	83%	79%
Community Group	78%	75%
State	76%	75%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-12 compares seventh grade test scores. In math, Guthrie students scored the second highest among all of the comparison entities. In reading, Guthrie students had the highest score compared to their peers, the community group, and the state.

Exhibit 2-12
Percentage Guthrie and Peer District Grade 7 Regular Education,
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above
2013-14

Entity	Math	Reading	Geography
Guthrie	82%	83%	**
Altus	90%	78%	**
Guymon	90%	78%	**
Noble	79%	77%	**
Tahlequah	71%	79%	**
Woodward	61%	76%	**
Community Group	75%	78%	**
State	74%	81%	**

***Field test in 2013-14; no scores available*

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-13 shows the results of eighth grade testing. In math, Guthrie had the second-highest score of all the comparison entities, was in the middle of the peer group in reading, and scored higher than the community group and the state in reading. In both history and science, the eighth graders had the second-lowest scores among all comparison groups and ranked last in writing.

Exhibit 2-13
Percentage Guthrie and Peer District Grade 8 Regular Education
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above
2013-14

Entity	Math	Reading	History/ Constitution/ Government	Science	Writing
Guthrie	69%	84%	68%	58%	25%
Altus	78%	92%	83%	60%	77%
Guymon	45%	75%	74%	59%	68%
Noble	56%	77%	81%	63%	60%
Tahlequah	27%	84%	66%	61%	52%
Woodward	53%	85%	70%	66%	63%
Community Group	62%	81%	73%	57%	61%
State	63%	82%	74%	59%	65%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-14 shows that, over a five-year period, Guthrie math scores have improved overall. However, progress has been inconsistent.

Exhibit 2-14
Five-year Data Trend in Math

Grade	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State
3 rd	69%	73%	65%	74%	72%	74%	64%	75%	58%	75%
4 th	81%	70%	77%	75%	83%	77%	89%	78%	84%	74%
5 th	84%	72%	73%	73%	77%	74%	80%	75%	72%	75%
6 th	66%	67%	66%	70%	71%	74%	76%	77%	74%	76%
7 th	78%	68%	81%	71%	73%	73%	64%	74%	82%	74%
8 th	83%	69%	88%	70%	84%	71%	73%	72%	69%	63%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-15 shows reading scores over a five-year period. Guthrie students have shown improvement in reading for all cohorts, with the 2009-10 fifth graders showing the most consistent gains from year to year and the sixth grade cohort making the largest improvement.

Exhibit 2-15
Five-year Data Trend in Reading

Grade	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State	Guthrie	State
3 rd	66%	74%	62%	75%	69%	77%	73%	78%	71%	80%
4 th	72%	69%	62%	68%	67%	68%	77%	74%	74%	76%
5 th	65%	70%	67%	72%	72%	72%	72%	75%	66%	76%
6 th	67%	68%	67%	69%	83%	73%	74%	72%	72%	75%
7 th	77%	71%	79%	75%	71%	79%	79%	77%	83%	81%
8 th	77%	74%	84%	81%	89%	83%	80%	82%	84%	82%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-16 displays results for the 2013-14 EOI assessments. In Algebra I, Guthrie was in the middle of the peers, but lower than the community group and the state. In English II Guthrie's score fell near the middle of the peers, tied the community group, and was lower than state. GPS also scored in the middle of the peer districts in U.S. History but scored better than the community group and state. In Biology I, Guthrie placed near the middle of the peers but was lower than the community group and state. Guthrie ranked in the middle of its peers for Algebra II, tied with the community group and scored lower than state. In geometry, GPS had the lowest score among all comparison entities. Guthrie's best score was in English III, which was consistent with the scores in the comparison entities.

Exhibit 2-16
Percentage of Regular Education,
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Satisfactory or Above on EOI Tests
2013-14

Entity	Algebra I	English II	U.S. History	Biology I	Algebra II	Geometry	English III
Guthrie	77%	87%	89%	49%	76%	82%	93%
Altus	77%	89%	88%	47%	78%	85%	96%
Guymon	72%	83%	91%	46%	71%	83%	91%
Noble	79%	88%	90%	49%	70%	85%	96%
Tahlequah	81%	87%	84%	67%	95%	92%	97%
Woodward	77%	90%	92%	55%	82%	89%	97%
Community Group	79%	87%	86%	53%	76%	86%	94%
State	82%	90%	86%	56%	80%	87%	94%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

A-F School Grading System

In 2011, the Oklahoma Legislature adopted the A-F Report Card Grading System and at the time of this report, the system is still the subject of much statewide concern and conversation. The system has undergone some revision as cited below. The A-F Report Card Grading System replaced the Academic Performance Index. The intent of the school reform legislation was to challenge schools to motivate all students to meet high levels of college and career readiness.

The A-F report card process gives schools data to highlight areas of success and determine areas that need improvement. This system is also based upon the concept that parents and community members should be able to quickly and easily determine how schools are performing, making it a user-friendly way for parents to determine their child's school performance.

Currently a school's grades are derived as follows:

- 50 percent on overall student performance on the OSTP assessments;
- 25 percent on overall student growth; and
- 25 percent on student growth of the bottom 25 percent of students.

Depending on the school level, schools can also earn up to 10 bonus points for things such as graduation rate and year-to-year growth. At the elementary level, attendance is the only factor considered for bonus points.

Exhibit 2-17 shows the 2014-15 report card for Guthrie High School. The lowest grade was an F in Biology I, and the overall final grade was a C-. Guthrie High School earned only one bonus point, for advanced coursework. These grades indicate that instruction and curriculum may require attention and improvement.

Exhibit 2-17
Guthrie High School A-F Report Card, 2014-15

2015 Student Achievement (50%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
English II/English III	468	81	B
Algebra I/Algebra II/Geometry	635	70	C
Biology I	203	30	F
US History	230	60	D
Overall Student Performance Grade	1,536	67	D
Overall Student Growth (Progress Towards Proficiency (25%))			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
English II	208	88	B
Algebra I	221	80	B
Overall Student Growth Grade	429	84	B
Bottom Quartile Student Growth (Progress Towards Proficiency) (25%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
English II	52	65	D
Algebra I	55	55	F
Overall Bottom Quartile Grade	107	60	D
Final Grade: C- (including one bonus point)			

Source: SDE, <http://afreportcards.ok.gov/>, December 2015

Exhibit 2-18 displays the high school performance grade scores of Guthrie and its peers, with and without bonus points. With bonus points, Guthrie was tied with one of its peers for the lowest grade. Without bonus points, Guthrie was the second lowest among its peers.

Exhibit 2-18
Guthrie and Peers High School Comparison of A-F Report Card
School Performance Grading System, 2014-15

School	With Bonus Points		Without Bonus Points	
	Score	Grade	Score	Grade
Guthrie High School	71	C-	70	C-
Altus High School	77	C+	74	C
Guymon High School	71	C-	68	D+
Noble High School	78	C+	76	C
Tahlequah High School	82	B-	80	B-
Woodward High School	75	C	72	C-

Source: <http://afreportcards.ok.gov/>, December 2015

Exhibit 2-19 shows the Guthrie Junior High School (grades 7-8) performance scores. While the overall final grade was a B, without the bonus points, the final grade was a C. As with the high school results, this may indicate that instruction and curriculum require some attention.

Exhibit 2-19
Guthrie Junior High School A-F Report Card, 2014-15

2015 Student Achievement (50%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
Reading	465	79	C
Mathematics/Algebra I	465	82	B
Science	233	60	D
Social Studies/Geography/US History	465	66	D
Writing	*	*	*
Overall Student Performance Grade	1628	73	C
Overall Student Growth (Progress Towards Proficiency) (25%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
Reading	443	84	B
Mathematics/Algebra I	445	87	B
Overall Student Growth Grade	888	85	B
Bottom Quartile Student Growth (Progress Towards Proficiency) (25%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
Reading	110	60	D
Mathematics/Algebra I	110	71	C
Overall Bottom Quartile Grade	220	65	D
Final Grade: B (including ten bonus points)			

* Insufficient data.

Source: SDE, <http://afreportcards.ok.gov/>, December 2015

Exhibit 2-20 displays the junior high school grade scores of Guthrie and its peers, with and without bonus points. In both cases, Guthrie had the highest grades, scoring well above the peers.

Exhibit 2-20
Guthrie and Peers Junior High School Comparison of A-F Report Card
School Performance Grading System, 2014-15

School	With Bonus Points		Without Bonus Points	
	Score	Grade	Score	Grade
Guthrie Junior High School	84	B	74	C
Altus Junior High School	74	C	64	D
Central Junior High School (Guymon)	60	D-	52	F
Curtis Inge Middle School* (Noble)	69	D+	65	D
Tahlequah Middle School*	75	C	67	D+
Woodward Middle School*	68	D+	58	F

* Includes grades 6 through 8

Source: <http://afreportcards.ok.gov/>, December 2015

Exhibit 2-21 shows the composite A-F report card scores for Guthrie's four elementary schools, with and without bonus points. While the overall final grade was a C, without the bonus points, the final grade was a D.

Exhibit 2-21
Consolidated Guthrie Elementary School A-F Report Card, 2014-15

2015 Student Achievement (50%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
Reading	225	65	D
Mathematics	226	69	D
Science	58	58	F
Social Studies	58	67	D
Writing	*	*	*
Overall Student Performance Grade	569	66	D
Overall Student Growth (Progress Towards Proficiency) (25%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
Reading	161	43	C
Mathematics	162	82	B
Overall Student Growth Grade	324	78	C
Bottom Quartile Student Growth (Progress Towards Proficiency) (25%)			
Subject	# of Students	Performance Index	Letter Grade
Reading	40	48	F
Mathematics	40	58	F
Overall Bottom Quartile Grade	80	53	F
Final Grade: C (including ten bonus points)			

* Insufficient data.

Source: SDE, <http://afreportcards.ok.gov/>, December 2015

Exhibit 2-22 displays the elementary school A-F report card scores for Guthrie and its peers, with and without bonus points. In both cases, Guthrie had grades that were the second lowest among its peers, with Woodward having the only lower scores.

Exhibit 2-22
Guthrie and Peers Elementary School Comparison of A-F Report Card
School Performance Grading System, 2014-15

School	With Bonus Points		Without Bonus Points	
	Score	Grade	Score	Grade
Guthrie Elementary Schools*	76	C	66	D
Altus Elementary Schools**	91	A-	81	B-
Guymon Elementary Schools**	79	C+	69	D+
Noble Elementary Schools**	84	B	77	C+
Tahlequah Elementary Schools**	79	C+	69	D+
Woodward Elementary Schools**	70	C-	60	D-

*Consolidated

**Average of multiple elementary schools

Source: <http://afreportcards.ok.gov/>, December 2015

In this examination of Guthrie's A-F Report Card, it should be noted that there has been continual growth in the lower grades, as reflected in **Exhibit 2-23**. On average, Guthrie elementary schools have made considerable progress with an increase of 14 points since 2013. The junior high has likewise made substantial progress with an increase of 20 points. The high school has not yet experienced similar growth.

Exhibit 2-23
Guthrie Public Schools A-F Grade Card Three-Year Progress

Guthrie Schools	2013	2014	2015	Change
Guthrie Elementary Schools*	62/D-	70/C-	76/C	+14 points
Guthrie Junior High	64/D	82/B-	91/A-	+27 points
Guthrie High School	77/C+	76/C	79/C+	+2 points

*Combined Average of Elementary Schools

Source: <http://afreportcards.ok.gov/>, June, 2016

Exhibit 2-24 shows that, over the last five years, the percentage of Guthrie students completing a college-bound curriculum has increased. For 2013-14, Guthrie's rate fell near the middle of its peers and was higher than the rates for the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-24
Percentage of Guthrie and Peer District Graduates Completing
Regents' College-Bound Curriculum, 2009-10 to 2013-14

Entity	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Guthrie	78.0%	77.9%	72.9%	77.2%	88.2%
Altus	88.2%	88.2%	81.7%	95.1%	87.0%
Guymon	66.1%	94.0%	92.8%	5.2%	100.0%
Noble	77.5%	87.9%	84.2%	82.6%	94.1%
Tahlequah	57.1%	62.4%	56.3%	67.9%	78.9%
Woodward	78.9%	84.2%	94.0%	76.6%	82.0%
Community Group	80.9%	77.7%	79.7%	75.2%	85.7%
State	81.0%	80.6%	82.8%	85.3%	83.7%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-25 compares the trends in the district's ACT composite scores over time. Guthrie's composite score has remained flat for the past five years. In 2013-14, Guthrie's score was in the middle of the peers, better than the community group, but below the state.

Exhibit 2-25
Trend in ACT Composite Scores, 2009-10 to 2013-14

Entity	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Percentage Change
Guthrie	20.2	19.7	20.1	20.0	20.3	0.5% ▲
Altus	20.8	20.7	20.8	20.7	21.1	1.4% ▲
Guymon	19.9	20.2	19.5	18.7	18.9	(5.0%) ▼
Noble	20.6	21.6	20.8	21.2	18.8	(8.7%) ▼
Tahlequah	20.0	20.9	20.8	21.3	20.8	4.0% ▲
Woodward	20.8	21.2	20.7	20.6	20.3	(2.4%) ▼
Community Group	20.6	20.6	20.6	20.8	20.2	(1.9%) ▼
State	20.8	20.8	20.8	20.9	20.8	0.0% ●

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

In 2013-14, Guthrie had a dropout rate that was higher than all of its peers, the community group, and the state. Consequently, it had the lowest senior graduation rate among all of the comparison groups (**Exhibit 2-26**).

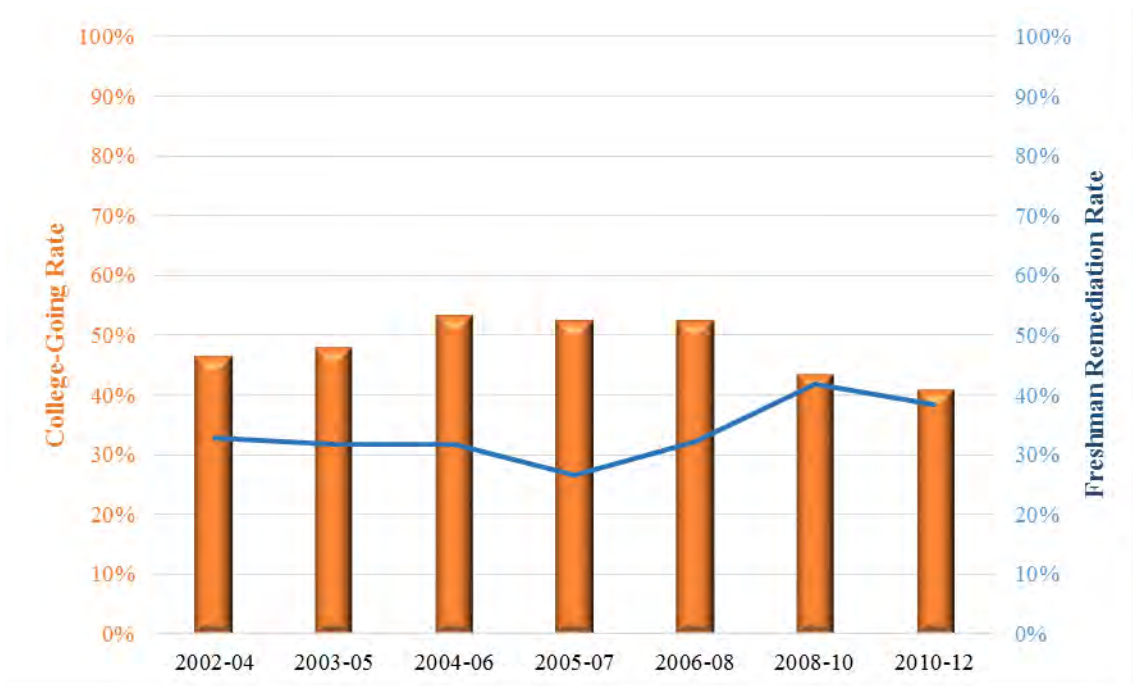
Exhibit 2-26
Guthrie and Peer District Four-Year Dropout and Senior Graduation Rates
2013-14

Entity	Four-Year Dropout Rate	Senior Graduation Rate
Guthrie	17.6%	97.7%
Altus	12.6%	98.6%
Guymon	15.8%	98.0%
Noble	4.5%	98.3%
Tahlequah	8.6%	99.1%
Woodward	8.9%	100.0%
Community Group	11.3%	98.1%
State	8.7%	98.1%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Since 2002, in only three years did a small majority of Guthrie seniors go on to college. Of those who did, on average, one-third took at least one remediation course as freshmen in math, English, science, or reading (**Exhibit 2-27**).

Exhibit 2-27
Trend in GPS Graduates Attending College and Seeking Remediation



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-5

The Guthrie superintendent, central office personnel, principals, and select staff have completed a three-year training course with the University of Virginia’s (UVA) School Turnaround

Program. The training has positively influenced the instructional leadership skills of the central office and building principals. It has opened doors to positively change the district's school culture.

According to the UVA website, the research guiding the School Turnaround Program centers on the following:

- identifying and supporting turnaround leaders;
- leadership selection process;
- organizational conditions necessary for turnaround success;
- rationale supporting aggressive turnaround leader assessment and seven critical action steps to increase the success rate of turnaround schools;
- competencies of school turnaround leaders who succeed in driving rapid, dramatic change; and
- key principles and processes for guiding the design and use of leading indicators in education.²⁵

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for a strong administrative team with expertise and leadership skills to initiate positive organizational change and sustain its success.

FINDING 2-6

The district has implemented professional learning communities (PLC) at each building site. Each site has created their own plan for when the PLCs meet. It was the intent of the district to implement PLCs based on best practices and research. The primary focus of the Guthrie PLCs is based on the premise that the core mission of education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn.

This simple shift—from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning—has profound implications for schools. As a school moves forward, every educator must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?²⁶

²⁵<http://www.darden.virginia.edu/darden-curry-ple/turnaround/curriculum/>

²⁶<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/What-Is-a-Professional-Learning-Community%C2%A2.aspx>

Research is clear that establishing professional learning communities within a school does not occur quickly or spontaneously. It requires dedicated and intentional effort on the part of the administrator and the professional staff.

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for the establishment of professional learning communities.

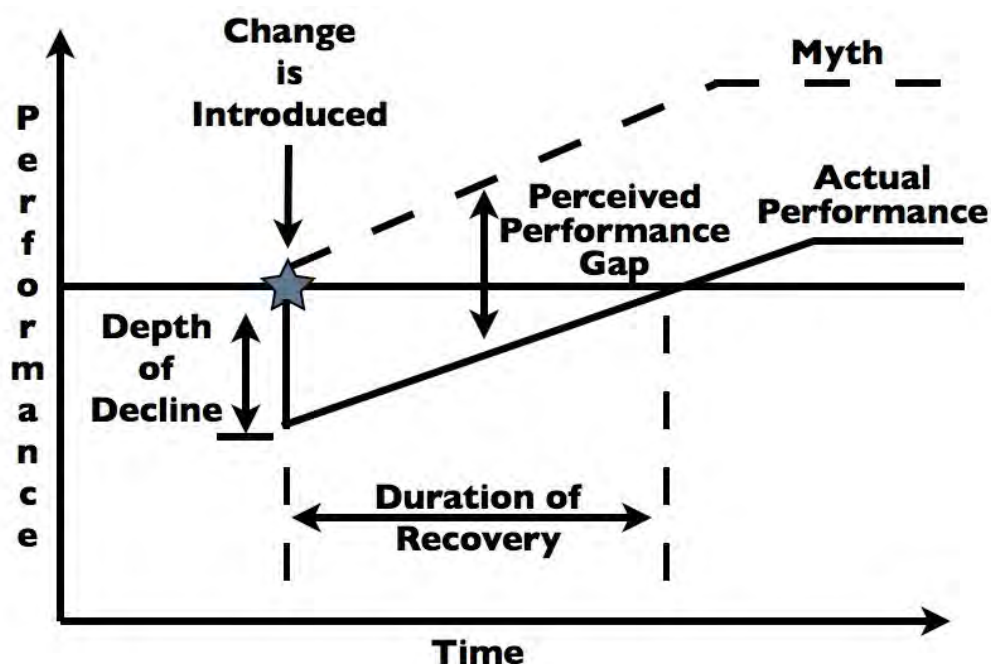
FINDING 2-7

Interview dialog and focus group discussions indicated diverse opinions in how the PLCs were evolving at each Guthrie school site. Across the district, building sites are functioning at varying proficiency levels, thus affecting the quality of PLC work. Some reoccurring issues reported that affected PLC work were degree of buy-in, paperwork accountability, monitoring and trust factors, scheduling and time allotment, prescriptive agendas, and agendas not focused on immediate student and teacher needs.

Principals were candid and understood the PLC process still had barriers and there was a need for continued improvement. The principals understand the need for accountability but also need autonomy to grow and build with their teachers. The central office directed the first three years of PLC implementation. GPS has highly qualified principals who need the freedom and self-direction to lead site-based changes for the next steps with PLCs.

Exhibit 2-28 articulates change insights from Fullan's *The Six Secrets of Change* (2008). The implementation dip is expected as change is introduced. However, after recovery, actual performance is better than before the change.

Exhibit 2-28
Change Implementation



Source: <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/images/handouts/2008SixSecretsofChangeKeynoteA4.pdf>, March 2016

The district needs to continuously be mindful that capacity building is more important than accountability because the former is the route to the later. Clearly you need both. Finding the right combination and integration of the two is the trick.²⁷ In all cases, the building principals were aware of the importance to continuously improve and fine-tune the PLC process in each of their buildings. Being the change agent in successful schools means that growing and learning are ongoing phenomenon.²⁸

Exhibit 2-29 illustrates Fullan's insights regarding change.

²⁷Fullan, M. (2008). *The Six Secrets of Change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

²⁸<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>

Exhibit 2-29
Insights on Change for Continuous Improvement

Change Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation dip is normal • Behaviors change before beliefs • The size and prettiness of the planning document is inversely related to the quantity of action and student learning (Reeves, 2002) • Shared vision or ownership is more of an outcome of a quality process than it is a precondition • Feelings are more influential than thoughts (Kotter, 2008)
Change Savvy Leadership	<p>Change savvy leadership involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful entry into the new setting • Listening to and learning from those who have been there longer • Engage in fact finding and joint problem solving • Carefully (rather than rashly) diagnosing the situation • Forthrightly addressing people’s concerns • Being enthusiastic, genuine and sincere about the change circumstances • Obtaining buy-in for what needs fixing • Developing a credible plan for making that fix

Source: <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/images/handouts/2008SixSecretsofChangeKeynoteA4.pdf>, March 2016

Generally, the literature on professional learning communities identifies five organizational arrangements:

- supportive and shared leadership;
- collective creativity;
- shared values and vision;
- supportive conditions; and
- shared personal practice.²⁹

*Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*³⁰ is another helpful body of research that provides a road map to narrow the “knowing-doing gap” with regard to PLCs. This book outlines the importance of common vocabulary and common understandings of PLC concepts and characteristics. It provides rationale for implementing PLC’s that benefit students. DuFour, et al., lays out purposeful steps to guide leaders in assessing

²⁹*Issues ...about Change* Volume 6, Number 1, Professional Learning Communities: What Are They And Why Are They Important? (1997). Retrieved from <http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>

³⁰DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R. & Many, T. (2006). *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

perceptual reality in their school. It is a helpful guide to foundational information and the improved capacity for staff to function as a professional learning community.

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993)³¹ suggested that when teachers had opportunities for collaborative inquiry and the learning related to it, they were able to develop and share a body of wisdom gleaned from their experience. Darling-Hammond (1996)³² cited shared decision-making as a factor in curriculum reform and the transformation of teaching roles in some schools. In such schools, structured time is provided for teachers to work together in planning instruction, observing each other's classrooms, and sharing feedback. These and other attributes characterize professional learning communities.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a process to assess site-based progress towards high functioning professional learning communities then put into operation the needed modifications.

Each of the GPS building sites is unique in implementing the PLC process. The structures, schedules, and commitment differ. The principals need to reflect on trends and patterns that have emerged during the implementation season. They need to assess where their staff is functioning on their journey to develop, deepen, and sustain the PLC process.

Each building principal needs the autonomy to review and assess his or her own staff with regard to PLC's. They need site-based input from all staff.

The National College for School Leadership has developed a rubric that GPS principals should use to assess their professional learning community. A copy is available in **Appendix H**.

As some teaching staff is reluctant to share candid opinions when electronic surveying is used, GPS principals should use paper-based methods in completing the assessment. As building principals determine their buildings level of PLC implementation, they will find strength and support by sharing with other building principals. As they collaborate, they will find similarities and differences. Working together, principals will find it to be a beneficial and "systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results."³³

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

³¹McLaughlin, M.W. & Talbert, J.E. (1993). *Contexts that matter for teaching and learning*. Stanford: Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching, Stanford University.

³²Darling-Hammond, L. (1996, March). The quiet revolution: Rethinking teacher development. *Educational Leadership*, 53(6), 4-10.

³³Dufour, R., Dufour, R., & Eaker, R. (2002). *Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

FINDING 2-8

The district has scaled back Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing to the lower 25 percent. This translates to approximately 40 percent when all students needing some kind of progress testing are included in the testing population. Kindergarten through grades two take the Measures of Academic Progress for Primary Grades (MPG). The consulting team learned there is concern with the validity and correlation of MAP results with other district data. Some of the other MPG and MAP concerns related to technology requirements, test formatting, time allocated for test prep and taking the test, and the cost versus the academic value of MAP results. There was discussion about having to find other testing options that satisfy the universal screening and progress.

The district is using MAP/MPG for beginning, middle, and end-of-year assessments. The consulting team heard discussion that MAP results, interim assessments (IAs), and OCCT data vary widely. Because of the variations, it is difficult for some teachers to get a true read on student learning levels. Teachers were analyzing differing sets of data to satisfy universal screening requirements and IAs that had a more realistic assessment on a student's current level of mastery. It was continually reported the MAP technology, format, time allocated for test prep and testing, compromise the validity of the tests. MGP at the primary level requires computer skills most GPS students do not have. There is concern about the validity of testing results because students just "click" with the mouse until the test allows the student to move on. Central Elementary purchased technology to help familiarize students with the MPG testing environment. Nonetheless, staff reported the length of the test, the test being read to students, the graphics in the test, and the overall alignment between the test and the curriculum needed review.

Staff using MAP test results in grades two and above also expressed concern about the correlation the test has with state standards, curriculum, and pacing documents. They too were concerned about the technology skills or computer adaptive requirements needed in the lower grades. The time allocated for test prep and getting students acclimated and familiar with the test taking process was troublesome. There was concern that the cost justified the information gleaned from MAP. Staff also questioned whether other tests could meet state and federal requirements.

In Guthrie, MPG and MAP are used to satisfy universal screening and monitoring requirements for state and federal programs. MAP results provide the baseline data in these programs.

In theory, MAP and MPG test results help teachers differentiate instruction for every student, pinpoint intervention and enrichment needs, accelerate students' academic growth and achievement, and maximize classroom instructional time, staff resources, and budget. By pairing MGP and MAP assessments, the district was supposed to have a seamless measuring of Kindergarten–12 student growth.³⁴ This is no longer true, as not all students are assessed with MAP/MPG any longer.

³⁴<https://www.nwea.org/assessments/>

The district also uses the Aurora Learning Community Association (ALCA) database for benchmark and interim assessments (IAs). There are some teacher-made tests. No single assessment can tell educators all they need to know to make well-informed instructional decisions, so researchers stress the use of multiple data sources. Research has shown that using data in instructional decisions can lead to improved student performance.³⁵

RECOMMENDATION

Assess the need to continue MAP/MPG testing.

Data are vital to improved student learning. GPS staff and students need valid and reliable data that tightly correlates to state standards and genuinely measures student learning.

The assessment coordinator, building principals, RTI coordinator, special education director, instructional coaches, interventionists, and teachers should meet to address the MAP concerns. It is the districts responsibility to determine if MAP and MGP need to stay in place. The essential question for review is, do teachers have reliable data? Without valid student performance data, teachers cannot make appropriate decisions about student learning needs.

The data must be solid and lead teachers to have good data discussions and lead to appropriate learning adjustments. The review needs to ask such questions as:

- Are the MAP findings consistent with findings from other data sources used by the district (ALCA and OCCT)?
- Do the performance levels, subgroup performance levels, and achievement gaps have a measured congruence?
- Does the district have assessments in place that can meet state and federal requirements and provide data that are more reliable?

The process should also determine suitable replacements if the MAP and MGP are not deemed appropriate. The district's teachers cannot afford to make instructional decisions based on misaligned data. The primary concern is that the test reliably measures the specific skills and content that students are to learn and that the resulting data is valid.

The district should understand that student performance data derived from MAP and MPG should not be the sole indicator. All performance assessments should be aligned sufficiently so that legitimate inferences can be reached regarding student learning needs. The assessments should provide compelling evidence that supports curricular and instructional targets or gives direction to needed curricular changes.

The end goal of the in-depth review is ensure the staff has sound data to inform the school's instructional decisions. The test data must be dynamic enough so that drilling down into the data the teachers get a deeper understanding about student performance levels. The data should clearly identify student and curricular problems.

³⁵Wayman, J. C., Cho, V., & Johnston, M. T. (2007). *The data-informed district: A district-wide evaluation of data use in the Natrona County School District*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with current monies budgeted for student testing. The review process can be implemented with existing resources.

C. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School districts offer educational services to students through a variety of programs including regular education programs and special programs. Special programs are designed to provide quality services for student populations such as those in Gifted and Talented Education and Special Education programs.

Special Education

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B* is the federal law that supports special education and related service programming for children and youth with disabilities ages three through 21. The major purposes of *IDEA* are:

- to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living;
- to ensure that the rights of children and youth with disabilities and their parents are protected; and
- to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

Oklahoma statutes require that each school district provide special education and related services for all children with disabilities who reside in that district, in accordance with *IDEA*. This duty may be satisfied by:

- directly providing special education for such children;
- joining in a cooperative program with another district or districts to provide special education for such children;
- joining in a written agreement with a private or public institution, licensed residential child care and treatment facility, or day treatment facility within such district to provide special education for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, children who are blind or partially blind, or other eligible children with disabilities; or
- transferring eligible children and youth with disabilities to other school districts pursuant to the provisions of the *Education Open Transfer Act*.

Districts must develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child receiving special education services under *IDEA*. The IEP must include input from the parent and regular education teachers and be aligned with education plans for children in regular education classrooms.

IDEA requires districts to provide educational services in the “least restrictive environment” and to include students with disabilities in state and district assessment programs. Instructional arrangements for students may include:

- all instruction and related services in a regular classroom in a mainstreamed setting;
- a resource room where the student is removed from the regular classroom less than 50 percent of the day;
- a self-contained classroom where the student is removed from the regular classroom more than 50 percent of the day; or
- a separate “self-contained” classroom for those whose disability is so severe that a satisfactory education cannot take place for any part of the day in a regular classroom.

Under *IDEA*, a school district can only place a student in a more restrictive setting such as a day treatment program or residential treatment placement if the student’s needs and educational program cannot be satisfactorily provided in the regular classroom with supplementary aids and services.

The reauthorization of *IDEA* in 2004, which went into effect in 2005, includes provisions substantially changing the way learning-disabled students are identified. One change in the law addresses early intervention services and creating opportunities to determine a student’s Response to Intervention (RtI). This approach was adopted in 2010 by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE). With RtI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes; monitor student progress; provide evidence-based interventions; and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student’s responsiveness. Based upon the results of these interventions, the district may need a referral for additional testing to determine if there is a specific learning disability.

IDEA now allows a school district to use up to 15 percent of its *IDEA* allocation to support services to students who have not been identified as needing special education services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. Funds may be used for professional development in scientific research-based interventions, literacy instruction, and the use of adaptive or instructional technology. It also permits use of funds for educational and behavioral assessments.

An effective special education program is defined by *IDEA* as having the following elements:

- pre-referral intervention in regular education;
- referral to special education for evaluation;
- comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation;
- initial placement through an IEP meeting;
- provision of educational services and supports according to a written IEP;
- annual program review;

- three-year re-evaluation; and
- dismissal from the special education program.

Exhibit 2-30 shows comparison data on the percentage of special education students and the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in special education for 2013-14. The district had a special education student-to-teacher ratio that was the lowest among all the comparison entities and also had the highest number of special education teachers/FTEs.

**Exhibit 2-30
Students and Teachers in Special Education Programs, 2013-14**

Entity	ADM	Special Education Percentage of All Students	Special Education Teachers FTEs	# of Special Education Students per FTE
Guthrie	3,514.3	13.6%	25.7	18.6
Altus	3,710.8	12.0%	23.0	19.4
Guymon	2,831.0	10.9%	12.6	24.5
Noble	2,844.5	15.0%	17.0	25.1
Tahlequah	3,478.5	14.7%	21.5	23.8
Woodward	2,993.2	11.1%	15.2	21.9
Community Group	2,960.8	14.8%	20.7	21.2
State	1,292.2	15.1%	8.6	22.7

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-31 provides an overview of the district’s revenues for special education over time. As shown, overall special education funding has increased by 14.6 percent, with the majority of funding coming from state aid.

**Exhibit 2-31
Trend in Funding for GPS Special Education**

Category	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Total state aid for children with disabilities	\$1,346,028	\$1,500,036	\$1,573,519	\$1,546,927	\$1,569,274	16.6% ▲
IDEA Funding	\$596,812	\$1,001,012	\$525,393	\$866,663	\$658,083	10.3% ▲
Other sources of aid for children with disabilities ³⁶	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A
Total	\$1,942,840	\$2,501,048	\$2,098,912	\$2,413,590	\$2,227,357	14.6% ▲

Source: OCAS Impact Aid Letters, 2010-11 through 2014-15, March 2016

Exhibit 2-32 compares district special education revenues as a percent of special education expenditures for 2014-15 for GPS and the peers. At 70.9 percent, GPS special education expenditures exceeded the revenues designated to cover them. GPS had the lowest revenue-expenditure ratio among its peers.

³⁶Other sources include federal programs such as Medicaid and other specialized governmental allocations.

Exhibit 2-32
Comparison of Special Education Revenues and Expenditures
2014-15

Entity	Total Revenues for Special Education	Total Expenditures for Special Education	Revenues as Percent of Expenditures
Guthrie	\$2,227,357	\$3,139,600	70.9%
Altus	\$1,884,289	\$2,310,802	81.5%
Guymon	\$1,221,464	\$1,597,297	76.5%
Noble	\$1,605,110	\$1,736,425	92.4%
Tahlequah	\$2,423,457	\$2,914,423	83.2%
Woodward	\$1,800,676	\$1,926,166	93.5%
Peer Average	\$1,786,999	\$2,097,023	85.2%

Source: OCAS District Impact Aid Letters and Prismatic calculations, March 2016

Exhibit 2-33 provides a comparison of GPS expenditures on special education with those of the peer districts. As shown, GPS spent more than any of its peers in both years, and its expenditures increased by 4.7 percent from 2013-14 to 2014-15.

Exhibit 2-33
Overall Special Education Expenditure Comparison

Entity	Total Expenditures 2013-14	Total Expenditures 2014-15	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$2,998,366	\$3,139,600	4.7%▲
Altus	\$2,311,029	\$2,310,802	0.0%●
Guymon	\$1,598,102	\$1,597,297	(0.1%)▼
Noble	\$1,713,339	\$1,736,425	1.3%▲
Tahlequah	\$2,798,243	\$2,914,423	4.2%▲
Woodward	\$1,770,639	\$1,926,166	8.8%▲
Peer Average	\$2,038,270	\$2,097,023	2.9%▲

Source: OCAS Impact Aid Letters, 2013-14 and 2014-15, March 2016

Exhibit 2-34 compares the 2013-14 total expenditures at the weighted per pupil level. GPS's per-pupil spending was in the middle of its peers and slightly above the peer average.

Exhibit 2-34
Overall Special Education Expenditure Comparison

Entity	Total Expenditures 2013-14	Special Ed Weighted Pupils 2013-14	2013-14 Per Pupil Spending
Guthrie	\$2,998,366	501.8	\$5,975
Altus	\$2,311,029	375.9	\$6,148
Guymon	\$1,598,102	214.0	\$7,468
Noble	\$1,713,339	332.1	\$5,159
Tahlequah	\$2,798,243	511.5	\$5,471
Woodward	\$1,770,639	359.6	\$4,924
Peer Average	\$2,038,270	358.6	\$5,684

Source: OCAS Expenditure Comparison Report and SDE Weights for Special Education

FINDING 2-9

The district is implementing Response to Intervention (RtI) for all students K-11. In many school districts, RtI is implemented solely in lower grades using only the academic component. GPS is implementing both the academic and behavioral components in reading, math, and writing. GPS is not using RtI solely for the purpose of screening and identifying students eligible for special education. The district is using the program as a multi-tier program of support for students struggling with learning and behavior needs. District leadership reported that in Tier I they expect all teachers to deliver high-quality instruction in the general classroom and provide interventions for all struggling learners. Tiers II and III provide additional interventions at increasing levels of time and intensity.

The research behind RtI is extensive and ongoing. The RtI Model is designed to provide quality instruction and interventions. It uses student learning in response to that instruction to make instructional and important educational decisions (Batsch, 2005). The focus of RtI is to address student needs in reading and math from a tiered perspective. Tier I is high quality core instruction, Tier II is supplemental interventions, and Tier III is individualized interventions. The RtI research is extensive and investigated over all content areas. The National Reading Panel (2000) and National Mathematics Advisory Panel (2008) have both conducted meta-analyses to determine what constitutes quality instruction in those core areas. Individual studies of math³⁷ and reading³⁸ have used strong research designs and found that the quality of the curriculum and the explicitness of the instruction led to improved student learning and reduced future student failures.³⁹

GPS is working hard to implement RtI in both the elementary and secondary levels. They have focused on both academic and behavioral interventions.

³⁷Crawford & Snider (2000)

³⁸Foorman, Francis, & Fletcher (1998)

³⁹<http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/research/response-to-intervention-research-is-the-sum-of-the-parts-as-great-as-the-whole>

COMMENDATION

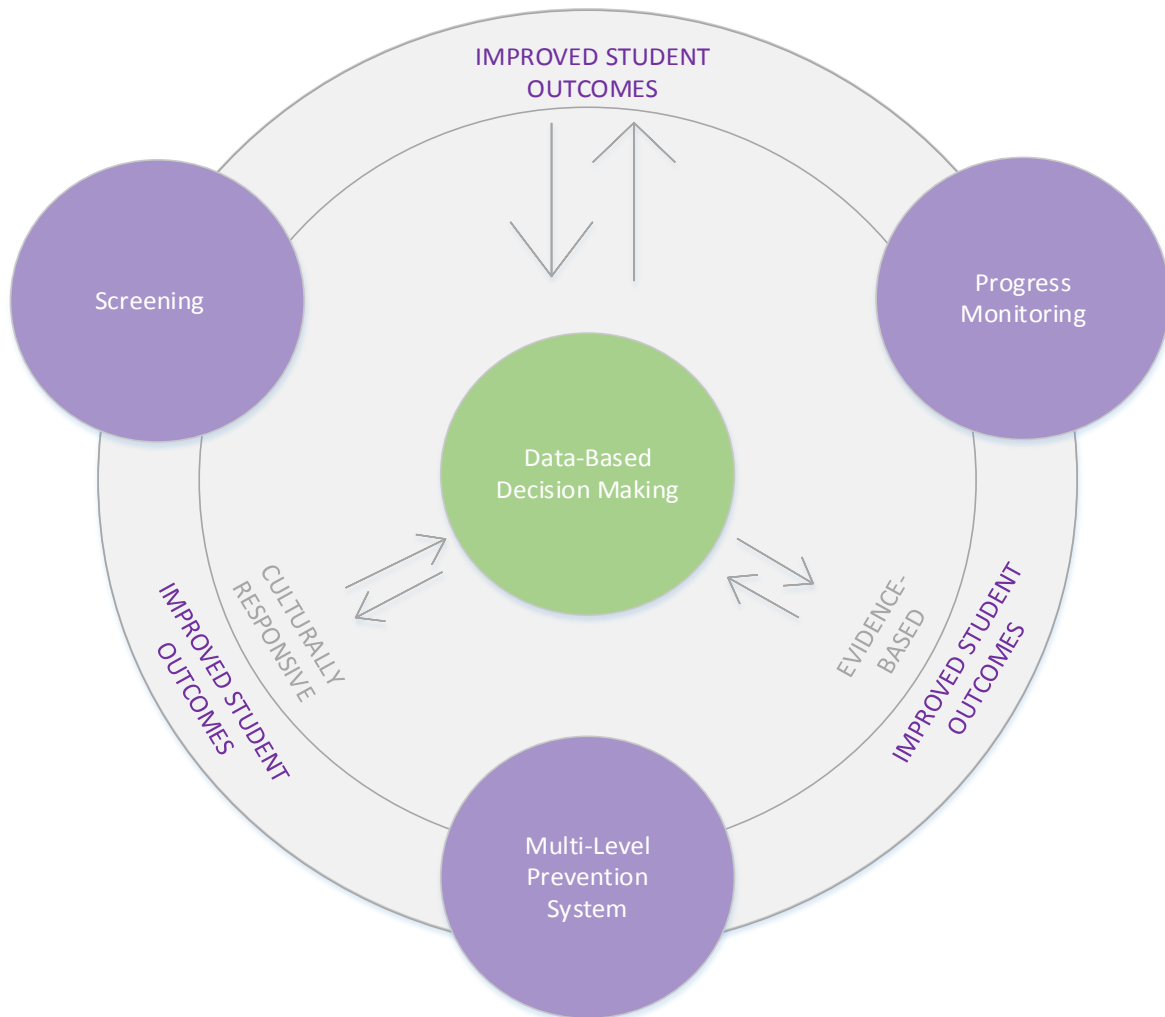
The district is commended for implementing both the academic and behavioral RtI Model for grade levels K-11.

FINDING 2-10

The district initiated the RtI Program as a pilot site with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) special education program. RtI has evolved as a standalone program providing academic and behavioral interventions for all students K-11. However, because of the recent programmatic changes transitioning from a pilot project to a standalone program for interventions, concerns have been raised. The district is in the process addressing these concerns and streamlining procedures to meet accountability requirements for the district, RtI, and special education.

Based on focus groups and interviews, the consulting team found that teachers need to revisit the foundational components of RtI – screening, data-based decision, multi-level interventions, and progress monitoring. Staff is not yet clear as to how the district envisions implementing these components. Even though the four components (**Exhibit 2-35**) remain the same from the district's pilot program, there is confusion among the staff as to how they are implemented now that they are no longer part of the pilot project.

Exhibit 2-35
Basic RtI Components



Source: <http://www.rti4success.org/essential-components-rti/data-based-decision-making>, re-created by Prismatic, March 2016

It is also important for the staff to have a deeper understanding of what RtI looks like when successfully implemented across all grade levels. The research behind RtI implementation with school-wide fidelity indicates that staff will see:

- a valid and reliable assessment system in place;
- curriculum that is evidence based and includes grade level components across tiers;
- instructional practices are evidence based and follow set parameters;
- staff following clear data-based decision-making rules;
- predetermined fidelity checks are applied routinely;

- integration and sustainability practices are followed, and
- staff regularly communicate using same vocabulary.⁴⁰

A district implementing RtI successfully has clearly defined procedures, techniques, feedback loops, and decision-making processes within each component. The district's plan will:

- clearly define responsibilities of specific persons (coaches, teachers, administration);
- create a data system for measuring operations, techniques, and components;
- link fidelity data to improved outcomes data;
- approach instructor observation in a positive manner emphasizing problem-solving; and
- create accountability measures for noncompliance.⁴¹

RtI provides structure for lesson planning and instructional delivery. **Exhibit 2-36** summarizes the essential questions teacher teams need to address in lesson planning and planning for delivering instruction.

Exhibit 2-36 **RtI lesson Planning and Instruction**

Adherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do you “stick to the plan?” • How well do you stay true to the intervention and not drift from the core elements? • Did you make sure all pieces of the intervention have been implemented as intended?
Duration/Exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often does a student receive an intervention? • How long does an intervention last? • In elementary schools: Providing 90 minutes of reading instruction five days a week? Progress monitoring a minimum of every two weeks.
Quality of Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well was the intervention or instruction delivered? • Were good teaching practices used? • Is teacher enthusiasm evident? • Is there adequate time for student questions and exposure to differentiation? Student groups and transitions effectively managed?
Program Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do you differentiate one intervention from another? • How well do you avoid inserting pieces from other interventions?
Student Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How engaged and involved are the students in this intervention or activity? • Amount of time students spend on task? • Levels of enthusiasm for activity? • Extent students feel they learned what was expected? • Number of students meditating with their eyes closed and heads on their desks?

Source: http://www.rti4success.org/sites/default/files/FidelityImplementation_10-20-09_FINAL.pdf, March 2016

⁴⁰http://www.rti4success.org/sites/default/files/FidelityImplementation_10-20-09_FINAL.pdf

⁴¹Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006; Pierangelo & Giuliani (2008)

There are a number of research-based tools that principals can use in the monitoring school-level RtI implementation fidelity. The *RtI Essential Components Integrity Rubric* and the *RtI Essential Components Integrity Worksheet* are provided in **Appendix H** and are useful for school self-appraisal. They were not designed for compliance monitoring. They designed to be used together and are aligned with the essential components of RtI.⁴² Other resources to support RtI fidelity include:

- Intervention Fidelity Across the Tiers;⁴³
- Ensuring the Fidelity of the “P” in RtI;⁴⁴ and
- Fidelity of Implementation within a Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework: Tools for Schools.⁴⁵

RECOMMENDATION

Continue refining RtI programmatic processes and procedures with widespread input from all stakeholders.

The RtI coordinator, building principals, instructional coaches, interventionists, and teachers should provide input into how to refine and improve the RtI program. At the time of this report, the external consultants hired to assist in the process were scheduled for another visit. This will facilitate the review process, which should be focused on how to increase the effectiveness of RtI implementation and improve student achievement.

The review needs to provide explicit feedback on all components of the RtI. The *RtI Essential Components Integrity Rubric* and the *RtI Essential Components Integrity Worksheet* are useful appraisal tools. The framework will provide GPS with data to help with decisions for refining process and procedures for overall improvement. All stakeholders should provide qualitative input. Quantitative feedback should come from school-specific data and the completed rubric and worksheet. These tools will provide comparisons across schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 2-11

The district implements the special education Discrepancy Model. They have paired the Discrepancy Model with RtI. The RtI structured interventions and progress monitoring complement the Model and support inclusionary practices. Recent GPS successes with inclusion merit further study and expansion of these best practices.

⁴²<http://www.rti4success.org/resource/essential-components-rti-integrity-rubric-and-worksheet>

⁴³http://www.escambia.k12.fl.us/pbis/rtib/Guide_Intervention%20Fidelity.pdf

⁴⁴<http://rtinetwork.org/professional/rti-talks/transcript/talk/46>

⁴⁵<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/rti/dl11/11-Fidelity%20of%20Implementation%20guidev5.pdf>

The district leadership's vision is to increase the number of inclusionary classrooms. GPS is implementing mainstreaming and inclusionary practices at all of the building sites. There are also pullout and resource rooms in each building. Among the teaching staff, the consulting team found reluctance to have mainstreamed/inclusionary students in their classrooms but also some openness and willingness to include all students. The administrative staff understands the need to increase inclusionary practices.

Several teachers at the middle school are team teaching, and students are experiencing academic success. The high school provides services for the severe and profound grades six through age 21. There is an autistic classroom located in Cottoral Elementary School. Staff at Guthrie Upper Elementary School practices inclusion with the severe and profound students. The special education students eat in the lunchroom, participate in specials, and interact with all students. These successes with inclusion provide momentum for more inclusionary practices. Focus group and interview discussions from staff participating in the inclusion process found it to be beneficial for all students.

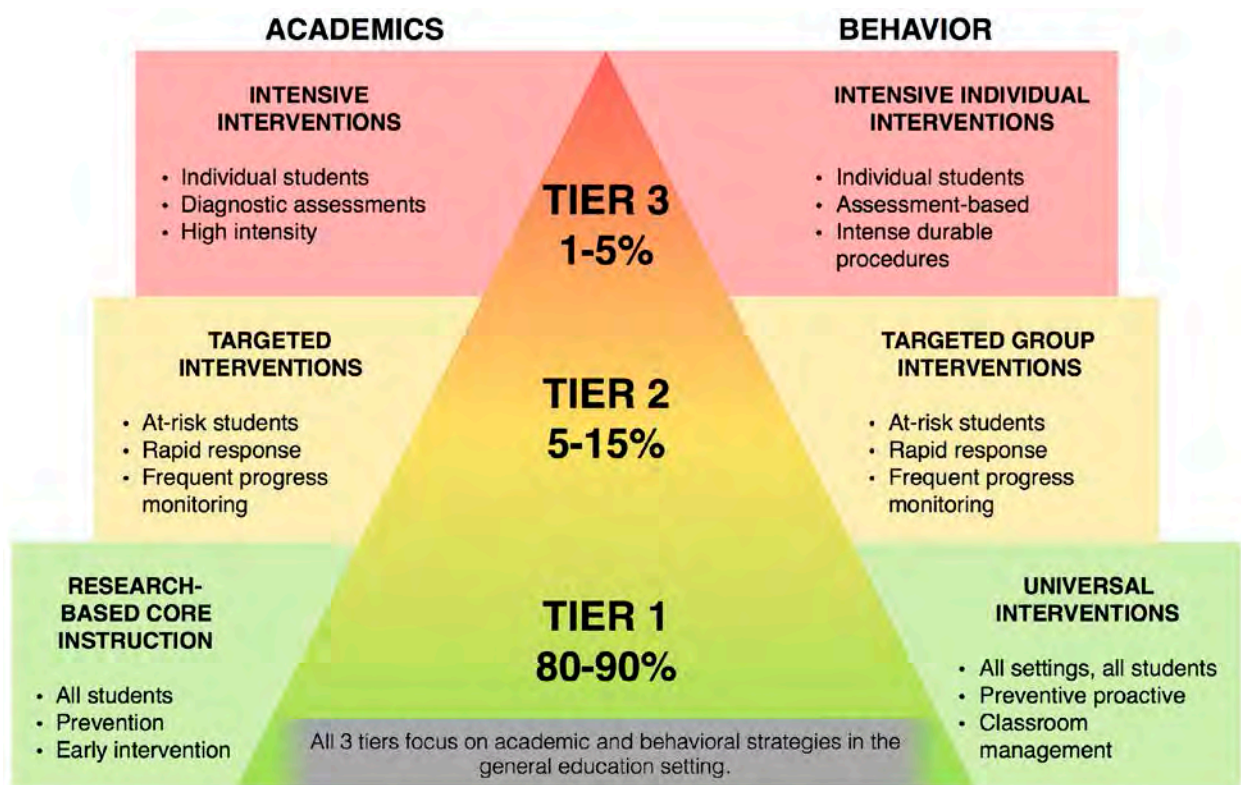
The district's discrepancy model identifies a learning disability primarily through a combination of cognitive (intellectual) and academic (achievement) testing. The discrepancy model identifies a learning disability as a student having significant difficulty learning and 'underachieving' because his/her brain has difficulty processing, understanding, or coping with certain types of information. When a 'severe discrepancy' between ability and achievement is found, along with indication of underlying information processing issues, a learning disability can be identified and special education services can be provided. This delays the inclusionary process. Often a child may have a two-year learning deficit before qualifying under the discrepancy model. Due to developmental appropriateness, it is difficult to determine accurately what is deemed a 'severe discrepancy' for young students prior to second or third grade.

In 2004, a significant change in *IDEA* was that the law no longer mandated the need for an IQ-achievement discrepancy and permitted the use of RtI for determining a student's need for special services.⁴⁶ Some states still have latitude and continue to allow schools to use the discrepancy model, but the state cannot require school districts to do so. **Exhibit 2-37** is a graphic presentation of Oklahoma's RtI model.

⁴⁶Retrieved from <http://ejop.psychopen.eu/article/view/244/pdf>

Exhibit 2-37

Response to Intervention School-wide Systems of Prevention for Academics and Behavior



Source: <http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov/sde/files/RtIGuidanceDoc.pdf>, March 2016

GPS has paired the discrepancy model with RtI. The RtI structured interventions and progress monitoring compliment inclusionary practices. The RtI spotlight is on student learning in the regular classroom and is intended to develop an environment of early academic and behavioral interventions without pulling students from the regular classroom. Thus, RtI minimizes the discrepancy model's "wait-to-fail" that may delay appropriate intervention services until a significant deficit occurs. At GPS early intervention and support is available to all learners. All students have access to a tiered menu of inclusionary interventions made possible through the coordinated resources and services of RtI.

There is general agreement that inclusive education programs can be successful only if special and general educators work together as a team to support students.⁴⁷ Most of what has been written on professional teaming has focused on collaboration at the elementary level. However, the case studies and qualitative studies that have been conducted at the secondary level have confirmed the importance of teaming to the long-term success of inclusive education for middle or junior high school students and high school students.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Downing (1996); Rainforth & England (1997)

⁴⁸Fisher et al. (1999); Jorgensen (1998); Park, Hoffman, Whaley, & Gonsier-Gerdin (2001); Wallace, Anderson, & Bartholomay (2002)

At the secondary level, inclusion may be more difficult from both the student and the teacher point of view. By this time, students can become co-dependent on the pullout classroom and use it as a refuge and retreat. Teachers often feel inept at adapting and modifying the curriculum to meet student special needs. However, there is research that supports inclusion at the secondary level. Some of the documented benefits of including secondary students in content-area classes are:

- increased opportunities to participate in the extracurricular activities of the school;⁴⁹
- improved social interactions and relationships with peers without disabilities, especially when appropriate contextual arrangements and supports are provided;⁵⁰
- increased access to the general education curriculum;⁵¹
- improved performance on alternate assessments tied to the mandates of IDEA 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act;⁵² and
- improved post-school adjustment to employment, especially if students have taken general vocational education classes.⁵³

Shapiro (2000) noted that the problem with segregated special education is that “youngsters will not learn in segregated settings how to function in a non-disabled world.” Shapiro also detailed these benefits for disabled students:

- **Inclusion improves learning for both classified and non-classified students.** When youngsters who have learning problems are included, students without disabilities often do better academically. A teacher is more apt to break instruction into finer parts or repeat directions if he or she has a youngster in the room who deals with deafness, blindness, or a developmental disability.
- **Children learn to accept individual differences.** The best way to help children overcome their misconceptions about kids who have disabilities is to bring them together in integrated settings.
- **Children develop new friendships.** Children with disabilities who are included in regular education develop friendships in their home communities. Special education students sent to regional special education programs may become oddballs in their communities.
- **Parent participation improves.** When children with disabilities are integrated into local schools, parents have more opportunity to participate in that school and in the community where the school is located.⁵⁴

⁴⁹Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Marder (2003)

⁵⁰Carter & Kennedy (2006); Schwartz, Staub, Peck, & Gallucci (2006)

⁵¹Wehmeyer, Lattin, Lapp-Rincker, & Agran (2003)

⁵²Roach & Elliot (2006)

⁵³Benz et al. (2000); Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell (1997)

The research on the effects of inclusion on regular education students also provides evidence of the positive effects on students without disabilities. John McDonnell, Ph.D., Department of Special Education in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Utah has stated, “Both research and anecdotal data have shown that typical learners have demonstrated a greater acceptance and valuing of individual differences, enhanced self-esteem, a genuine capacity for friendship, and the acquisition of new skills.”⁵⁵

Since GPS is implementing RtI across elementary and secondary classrooms, the inclusionary process has a strong support system in place. Moving to classrooms that are more inclusive will benefit all GPS students.

RECOMMENDATION

Continue the focus on expanding inclusionary practices.

Implementing classrooms that are more inclusionary takes intentional planning, vision, and training. The district staff must spend time creating the foundations of inclusive programs for students with disabilities. Careful thought goes into scheduling co-taught classes, creating balanced classroom rosters, training co-teaching partners, developing collaborative relationships, and providing appropriate supports for students with disabilities.⁵⁶

The special education director, principals, instructional coaches, interventionists and select special education and general education teachers should organize a task force to develop a special education inclusion model. According to a research brief on inclusion models from the The Principals’ Partnership⁵⁷, the following general characteristics should be in place when planning and implementing an inclusionary model:

- **Input from stakeholders:** Especially in regards to the utilization of resources, funds, and the type(s) of program(s) to be offered. Stakeholders should include: faculty, administration, parents, students, and community.
- **Leadership:** This must come from more than just the director of a district’s special education program, it needs to include the site administrators and representative members from the stakeholders group, who should make decisions based on what is academically sound in order to meet the needs of every student.
- **Curriculum organization:** Curriculum should be based around appealing and stimulating topics that tie into the students’ lives and areas of interest. It should include a variety of pedagogy.

⁵⁴Shapiro, A. (2000). *Everybody Belongs: Changing Negative Attitudes Toward Classmates With Disabilities*. New York: Routledge.

⁵⁵<http://pmct.org/articles/0304/inclusionsept03.html>

⁵⁶Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams (2000)

⁵⁷<http://www.principalspartnership.com>

- **Collaboration:** Quality time for staff, including paraprofessionals, to work together to develop their skills, as well as design and develop curriculum, should be an integral part of the school's schedule.
- **Staff development:** This should be continuous and long-term. It should address the staff's needs and interests as well as the diverse needs of students, and the school's goals and priorities. Paraprofessionals should be active participants in this.
- **Parental support:** Encourage parental support through more than just meetings. Activities such as plays, sports, academic awards, and special presentations can be venues to help make parents feel comfortable about coming to school.
- **Partnerships:** To become an integral part of the community, schools should work to develop active and meaningful partnerships with local businesses and universities.⁵⁸

The district should also interface special education inclusion closely with RtI. The tiered interventions academic and behavioral interventions can serve as natural segue for increased inclusionary classrooms.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with staff development monies, RtI, and special education monies.

FINDING 2-12

Not all special education classrooms are equipped with an area for students to de-escalate from disruptive behavior. This presents special education students with an unnecessary challenge.

Special education students often need a quiet spot to decompress and calm down. Often if one student becomes disruptive, it triggers misbehavior in other students in the classroom. Across the district some classrooms use a designated area for calming students down and restoring acceptable behaviors. One teacher created her own space. Other teachers shared they walked the halls with students, while another had an adjacent room that could be used. However, some staff indicated they had no quiet area to isolate disruptive students. Not all special education classrooms are equipped with areas where students can retreat if needed.

There are a number of resources available to assist both teachers and students in de-escalating unacceptable behavior, including:

- Best Practice Guide to Intervention;⁵⁹
- Cracking the Behavior Code;⁶⁰ and
- How to Manage Disruptive Behavior in Inclusive Classrooms.⁶¹

⁵⁸http://oemanagement.com/data/_files/spedinclusion.pdf

⁵⁹<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/pubdocs/bestpractices.pdf>

⁶⁰<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct12/vol70/num02/Cracking-the-Behavior-Code.aspx>

They include recommendations for creating space within the educational environment for students to regroup and calm down.

RECOMMENDATION

Equip all special education classrooms with appropriate space dedicated to de-escalating disruptive behavior.

The special education director, principals, interventionists, instructional coaches, special education teachers, general education teachers, and paraprofessionals should dedicate time to address the issues surrounding disruptive student behavior. Together they can determine if there are district- or site-based facility issues, training and professional knowledge needs, or both. As always, all the processes and procedures must align with statutory requirements, student IEPs, and overall best practices.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with special education monies. These monies are for making minor facility changes or purchasing equipment to provide appropriate space and privacy for students to decompress. These are not major purchases or major remodel needs. All improvements can be done within the existing budget.

FINDING 2-13

The district's special education paraprofessionals need additional training, periodic updates, and increased communication regarding student needs. The consensus among all the support staff is a willingness to improve, but need ongoing support and training to make that happen.

While some paraprofessionals have been with the district for more than five years, there is also frequent paraprofessional staff turnover. Several paraprofessionals came to the district with relevant training acquired in a previous position outside the district. The district lacks ongoing training to update and equip paraprofessionals to perform their daily functions. The day-to-day communication between paraprofessionals and teachers is sporadic and random regarding individual student circumstances.

District staff noted that it is difficult to find substitutes for paraprofessionals, perhaps because of a lack of training for substitutes. Several GPS paraprofessionals indicated they feel pressured to not ever miss work, as there is no one available to meet the needs of their students.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement job-embedded training and communication processes for paraprofessionals.

The director of special education, along with principals and select teaching and paraprofessional staff, should develop processes and procedures to standardize ongoing training for all paraprofessionals. This would include:

⁶¹<https://www.teachervision.com/classroom-discipline/resource/2943.html>

- orientation training;
- updating the staff regarding specific student needs; and
- providing a regularly scheduled time for the paraprofessionals to meet.

Along with new training, there is also a strong experiential knowledge base for staff to share. Each paraprofessional has strategies and techniques that work and can be adapted to fit the needs of students.

The district can access a number of resources for developing a standardized training process, including *The Role of Paraprofessional in Special Education*.⁶² In addition, the SDE has partnered with the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education to develop required training resources for special education paraprofessionals.⁶³

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Library and Media Resources

Effective libraries and media resources support a strong instructional program. As noted on the SDE website:

*School libraries launch students into a world of new knowledge by providing instant access to exciting books, online resources, and emerging technologies. They provide equal opportunities to all students for learning.*⁶⁴

The Oklahoma accreditation standards (210:35-7-74 p.63) outline what should be included in annual expenditures for library resources:

In establishing a balanced print and nonprint collection...The following may be included: books, periodicals, pamphlets, manuscripts, reports, prints, posters, microforms, multimedia packages or kits, specimens, realia, models, audio and video recording, online databases, slides, computer disks, films, compact discs, video discs, and computer software.

FINDING 2-14

Guthrie Public Schools librarians lack designated time to meet as a professional team. As a result, they are not working as effectively as possible to provide the full spectrum of library services, nor are they engaged in planning for the upcoming move to community schools.

GPS librarians have customized their services in each building. Each program differs, based on grade levels served and the building's academic and cultural environment.

⁶²<http://education.ufl.edu/spense/files/2013/05/parasFinal.pdf>

⁶³<http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/03-14-2014%20Parapro%20Flyer.pdf>

⁶⁴<http://ok.gov/sde/library-media>

All librarians understand the need for direct involvement with the curriculum and supporting the teachers with resources and materials. In some buildings, librarians have multiple classes of students while classroom teachers are attending PLC meetings. This leaves them out of the instructional loop with teachers. The librarians understand the need to keep their facilities student and teacher friendly. In discussions, the desire to help each other and share ideas was evident. However, the librarians have no structure enabling them to meet and address both programmatic and logistical issues.

Exhibit 2-38 shows student and staff survey results regarding library services. Based on survey results, approximately half the students feel their needs are not being met, while the staff is mostly satisfied with the library services. It is important the librarians explore the differences in staff and student perceptions.

Exhibit 2-38
Survey Results Regarding Library Services

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students	The school library meets my needs for books and other resources.	15%	34%	33%	8%	10%
Staff	The school library meets the needs of the teachers and students.	13%	61%	11%	12%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a regularly scheduled time for librarians to meet and review programmatic issues and share professional expertise.

Grade levels and departments have regularly scheduled meetings. Librarians need that same professional opportunity.

The GPS librarians understand the need for improvement. The librarians and building principals should schedule time at the beginning of each semester to review program activities over the previous semester and make needed adjustments or improvements for the upcoming semester.

Sharing best practices, resources, and professional dialog raises the level of excellence across the district. Accordingly the district should endeavor to include librarians in grade level, departmental and/or PLC meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

D. STUDENT SERVICES

Student services are comprised of counseling, health services, and social services in most Oklahoma districts. Services provided include:

- college and career counseling;
- health education and services;
- substance abuse and psychological counseling;
- social services; and
- graduate follow-up.

Student services are evolving into a more powerful tool to assist students that will continue to grow. They are becoming increasingly more valuable in providing needed support and guidance for students' college questions, career options, and individual needs.

Guidance and Counseling

Oklahoma State Board of Education Accreditation Standards for guidance and counseling are as follows:

- Accreditation Standard 6.02. The counseling staff, parents, administrators, and others shall provide guidance and counseling program direction through involvement in assessment and identification of student needs.
- Accreditation Standard 6.04. The school shall develop a written description of a guidance and counseling program with special provisions for at-risk students. The program shall address assessed needs of all students, including those who are identified as at-risk and shall establish program goals, objectives, and evaluation.
- Accreditation Standard 6.06. Each school shall provide an organized program of guidance and counseling services that include: counseling services available to students; a planned sequential program of guidance activities that enhance students' development; appropriate referrals to other specialized persons, clinics, or agencies in the community; and coordinated services.
- Accreditation Standard 6.08. Each counselor shall follow a planned calendar of activities based upon established program goals and provide direct and indirect services to students, teachers, and/or parents.

The SDE publishes *The School Counselor's Guide: Developing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program Using Accreditation Standard VI*. This publication is designed to assist school districts in strengthening existing programs or developing new ones. The major components of the defined guidance curriculum include Guidance Curriculum Domains (Academic Development, Career Development, and Personal/Social Development); Student Competencies; and Guidance Curriculum Delivery.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) states:

School counseling programs are collaborative efforts benefiting students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the overall community. School counseling programs should be an integral part of students' daily educational environment and school counselors should be partners in student achievement.

ASCA recommends that school counselors divide time between four components:

- Guidance Curriculum – The guidance curriculum is structured developmental lessons designed to assist students. The guidance curriculum is infused throughout the school's overall curriculum and presented systematically through K – 12 classrooms.
- Individual Student Planning – School counselors coordinate ongoing activities designed to assist students individually in planning.
- Responsive Services – Responsive services are activities meeting individual students' immediate needs that may require counseling.
- Systems Support – School counseling programs require administration and management.

FINDING 2-15

The GPS counselors work hard to provide services to all students. However, they find themselves responsible for numerous duties that infringe on their time and work as counselors. There is no district-wide counseling plan that guides and defines their work.

The counselors indicated that effective school counseling programs are a collaborative effort. They indicated there is little time to engage collaboratively with other counselors, more students, families, and district staff. The discussion included dialog to increase the counseling staff, but in lieu of the fiscal cuts being imposed, it was apparent this was probably not feasible.

The counselors play a key role in creating a positive learning environment and promoting student achievement. They are responsible for understanding the value of and responding to the diversity and individual differences in the student population. Comprehensive school counseling programs ensure equitable access to learning opportunities, a rigorous and developmentally appropriate curriculum for all students. They support all students fully participating in all aspects of the educational process.⁶⁵

Research and best practice report the school counselor's role is to focus their skills, time, and energy on both direct and indirect services to students. To achieve maximum program effectiveness, the ASCA recommends a school-counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 and that school counselors spend 80 percent or more of their time in direct and indirect services to students. School counselors participate as members of the educational team and use the skills of leadership, advocacy, and collaboration to promote systemic change as appropriate. The

⁶⁵http://schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_ComprehensivePrograms.pdf

framework of a comprehensive school counseling program consists of the following four components: foundation, management, delivery, and accountability.

GPS counselors reported their workloads exceed these numbers and their direct and indirect times do not align with the 80 percent.⁶⁶

Exhibit 2-39, Student Survey results, illustrates students' feelings regarding counseling. As shown, 45 percent of students do not feel they received sufficient college and/or career counseling.

Exhibit 2-39
Student Survey Results Regarding Counseling

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have received sufficient college and/or career counseling.	7%	27%	22%	23%	22%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement a comprehensive counseling program with clear job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, and programmatic goals and expectations.

The building principals, select teachers, and counselors should develop and implement a comprehensive counseling plan. The counseling plan should outline goals, objectives, job descriptions, direct and indirect student services, and delivery systems. With the pending move to neighborhood schools, the counselors need to review and plan for changing the grade spans.

The plan should include national and state standards. ASCA has a wealth of information and databases that can be used to support the development of the plan.⁶⁷ Other resources include:

- Oklahoma Resources for Counselors;⁶⁸
- Education World;⁶⁹
- Hudson Middle School Comprehensive Guidance Plan;⁷⁰
- Chatham Central School District K-12 Comprehensive Guidance Plan;⁷¹
- Commack Union Free School District School Counseling Plan;⁷² and
- American School Counselor Association Facebook Page.⁷³

⁶⁶https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_ComprehensivePrograms.pdf

⁶⁷<http://schoolcounselor.org/>

⁶⁸<http://sde.ok.gov/sde/counseling#Resources-Counselors>

⁶⁹<http://www.educationworld.com/counseling/>

⁷⁰http://www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com/plans/HMS_Comprehensive_Guidance_Plan.pdf

⁷¹http://www.chathamcentralschools.com/district/nys_district_plans/K-12_Comprehensive_Guidance_Plan.pdf

⁷²<http://www.commack.k12.ny.us/District/schoolcounselingplan.pdf>

FISCAL IMPACT

The counselors and select teachers need stipend dollars outside the school day, or during the summer to develop a district-wide counseling plan and also an implementation timeline. Administrators would have contract time to do this.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Develop and Implement comprehensive counseling plan.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

⁷³<https://www.facebook.com/AmericanSchoolCounselorAssociation/>

Chapter 3:
Business Operations

Chapter 3

Business Operations

This chapter addresses the business operations of Guthrie Public Schools (GPS) and is divided into the following sections:

- A. Planning and Budgeting
- B. Financial Processes
- C. Asset and Risk Management
- D. Activity Funds
- E. Auditing and Internal Controls

Financial, asset, and risk management in school districts require thoughtful planning and decision-making. Public school districts must meet or exceed increasingly rigorous academic standards without exceeding their budgetary resources. The superintendent and board of education must ensure that the district receives all available revenue from local, state, and federal sources and expends those funds in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies so that the district can best meet or exceed the established academic standards.

Background

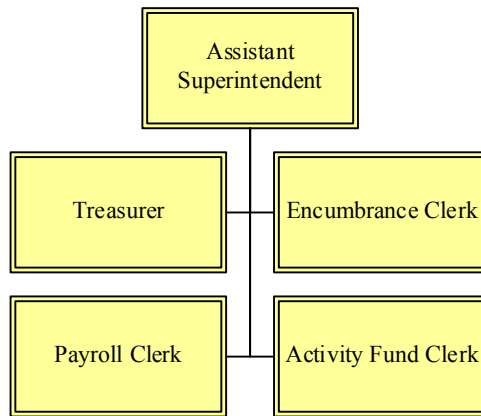
Oklahoma law entrusts a school district's board of education with specific responsibilities, including the oversight of investments and funds. The school board is allowed to contract with the county treasurer for the management of its accounts, or it may choose to appoint a treasurer.

Business services for GPS are under the direction of the assistant superintendent who is assisted by four employees:

- treasurer – performs duties associated with receiving and depositing cash and serves as the health insurance program coordinator;
- encumbrance clerk – processes payments and serves as the secretary to the assistant superintendent;
- payroll clerk – handles all documents associated with employee pay; and
- activity fund clerk – processes financial transactions pertaining to student activity funds.

Exhibit 3-1 shows the district's organizational chart for business operations.

**Exhibit 3-1
Guthrie Business Operations Organization**



Source: Created by Prismatic, February 2016

Financial Statements

Financial statements for GPS are prepared based upon Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) that requires funds to be combined by fund type and for the financial statements to be prepared on the basis of these combined funds. The accounts of the district are organized on the basis of funds, each of which is considered to be a separate entity. The operations of each fund are accounted for by providing a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprise its assets, liabilities, fund balances, revenues, and expenditures.

The district’s financial statements are prepared on a prescribed procedure of accounting that demonstrates compliance with the cash basis and budget laws of the State of Oklahoma. Revenues are recorded as received in cash, except for revenues susceptible to accrual and material revenues that are not received at the standard time of receipt. Expenditures are recorded in the accounting period in which the fund liability is incurred and encumbered. GPS prepares financial statements that include the fund types illustrated in **Exhibit 3-2**.

**Exhibit 3-2
Funds Contained in the 2015 GPS Annual Financial Report**

Type	Purpose
General Fund	To account for all revenue and expenditures applicable to the general operations of the district.
Special Revenue Funds	To account for resources restricted to, or designated for, specific purposes by the district or a grantor in a special revenue fund.
Debt Service Fund	To account for the revenue received from ad valorem taxes dedicated to the repayment of bonds and the subsequent payment of debt service.
Agency Fund	To account for the activities of various student groups.

Source: Guthrie Public Schools Annual Financial Report, June 30, 2015

Oklahoma Cost Accounting System

Oklahoma Statutes, Title 70, Section 5-135.2, require school districts to report financial transactions for all funds using the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System (OCAS). Policies and procedures set forth in OCAS describe the basis of funding of Oklahoma public schools, the duties, and procedures for the financial operations of the district, and the role of the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) and the district in receiving, dispensing, reporting, and accounting for school funds.

School boards, superintendents, business managers, encumbrance clerks, treasurers, independent auditors, and other parties with responsibilities for school budgets and the administration of school district funds must be familiar with OCAS policies and procedures. A district's annual audited financial statements must include all necessary financial information and related disclosures as prescribed by OCAS.

Revenue Sources

General fund revenues from state sources for current operations are governed primarily by the State Aid Formula under the provisions of Title 70, Article XVIII. B. Section 200 of the Oklahoma School Code. The Oklahoma State Board of Education administers the allocation of state funding to school districts based upon state aid factors, the weighted average district membership, and several categories of prior year revenues.

Intermediate revenue sources primarily represent a four mill levy assessed on a countywide basis and distributed to the county school districts based upon average daily membership for the preceding school year. Local sources of funding are derived from ad valorem (property) taxes assessed each year by the district pursuant to Article X, Section 9 of the Oklahoma Constitution. These taxes consist of the following components:

- no less than five mills of a total of 15 mills levied for county, municipal, and school district purposes;
- 15 mills levied specifically for school district purposes;
- an emergency levy of five mills; and
- ten mills levied for local support.

State funds and ad valorem taxes are accounted for in the general fund of the district, which is authorized pursuant to Title 70, Section 1-117, Oklahoma Statutes 2001, as amended pursuant to Article X, Section 9, of the Oklahoma Constitution. The purpose of the general fund is to pay for operations. School districts are not authorized to use these revenues for capital expenditures as defined in the statutes.

Ad valorem taxes for bond issues are required by statute to be collected by the county treasurer and remitted to the school district for deposit into the sinking fund. The total debt service requirements may be reduced by any surplus from the prior fiscal year or any direct contributions made into the sinking fund.

Ad valorem tax rates for sinking fund purposes are determined by ascertaining the actual dollars of revenues required for payment of principal and interest on indebtedness, fees, and judicial judgments. A reserve for delinquent taxes, in an amount of not less than five percent and not more than 20 percent of the net required tax collections, is added to the required debt service collections.

The revenue requirements for both debt service and general fund are then divided by the total assessed valuation of all taxable property within the district. Multiplying the resulting quotient by 100 results in the tax rate expressed as a percent; multiplying the resulting quotient by 1,000 results in the tax rate expressed in mills.

Over the past five years, the average assessed property value per student for Guthrie has decreased by 2.9 percent. Guthrie was the only entity among the comparison groups to see a decrease over the five-year period (**Exhibit 3-3**).

Exhibit 3-3
Assessed Property Value per Student, 2009-10 through 2013-14
Guthrie, Peers, Community Group and State

Entity	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$37,115	\$37,212	\$37,506	\$37,692	\$36,044	(2.9%) ▼
Altus	\$22,288	\$24,546	\$25,350	\$25,818	\$27,049	21.4% ▲
Guymon	\$36,652	\$36,500	\$37,386	\$44,061	\$46,084	25.7% ▲
Noble	\$21,443	\$21,805	\$23,239	\$23,857	\$24,618	14.8% ▲
Tahlequah	\$21,707	\$21,944	\$23,300	\$23,239	\$24,394	12.4% ▲
Woodward	\$45,225	\$51,083	\$51,302	\$52,942	\$51,242	13.3% ▲
Community Group	\$33,032	\$34,427	\$34,950	\$36,141	\$38,898	17.8% ▲
State	\$39,903	\$41,038	\$42,215	\$43,631	\$45,248	13.4% ▲

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-4 shows the percentages of local and county, state, and federal revenues for Guthrie and its peers. The district's revenue percentage from local sources was in the middle of its peers and lower than the community group and state. The district revenue percentage from state sources was near the middle of the peer districts and higher than the community group and state. The district revenue percentage from federal sources was in the middle of the peers and lower than the community group and the state.

Exhibit 3-4
Breakdown of Revenues by Source, All Funds, 2013-14
Guthrie, Peers, Community Group and State

Entity	Local and County	State Revenue	Federal Revenue
Guthrie	30.7%	58.3%	11.0%
Altus	21.3%	64.4%	14.3%
Guymon	32.5%	53.3%	14.2%
Noble	29.7%	60.8%	9.5%
Tahlequah	25.7%	59.5%	14.8%
Woodward	46.5%	44.2%	9.3%
Community Group	33.9%	53.4%	12.7%
State	40.3%	48.0%	11.7%

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-5 shows the percent of revenue received from 2009-10 to 2013-14 by GPS, the community group, and state. The district's local and county revenue percentage was higher than the community group until 2012-13, but it was consistently lower than the state. The percentage of revenue from state sources increased from 49.4 percent in 2009-10 to 58.3 percent in 2013-14. GPS's percentage of federal funding was near or below the state each year.

Exhibit 3-5
Sources of Revenue as a Percentage of Total Revenue, All Funds
Guthrie, Community Group, and State

Source of Revenue	Entity	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Local and County	Guthrie	33.0%	32.2%	32.0%	30.7%	30.7%
	Community Group	28.8%	29.6%	31.8%	31.7%	33.9%
	State	36.1%	37.4%	38.6%	39.6%	40.3%
State	Guthrie	49.4%	53.2%	54.4%	58.4%	58.3%
	Community Group	52.0%	51.8%	53.4%	53.9%	53.4%
	State	46.5%	45.5%	47.8%	48.0%	48.0%
Federal	Guthrie	17.5%	14.5%	13.7%	10.9%	11.0%
	Community Group	19.2%	18.7%	14.8%	14.4%	12.7%
	State	17.4%	17.0%	13.6%	12.5%	11.7%

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database

Expenditures

Exhibit 3-6 compares 2013-14 expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures.

- Guthrie was the lowest of all comparison groups in its percentage spent on instruction.
- The percentage that Guthrie spent on student support was the second lowest among its peers and was lower than the community group and the state.

- The percentage that Guthrie spent for instructional support was higher than any peer district, the community group, and the state.
- The percentage that Guthrie spent on district administration was in the middle of its peers, above the community group, and below the state.
- The percentage that Guthrie spent for school administration was in the middle of its peers but was higher than both the community group and the state.
- The percentage that Guthrie spent for district support was higher than any peer district, community group, and the state.

Exhibit 3-6
Percentage Breakdown of 2013-14 Expenditures by Type, All Funds
Guthrie, Peers, Community Group, and State

Entity	Instruction ¹	Student Support ²	Instruction Support ³	District Admin. ⁴	School Admin. ⁵	District Support ⁶	Other
Guthrie	49.2%	5.9%	5.1%	2.7%	6.4%	22.6%	8.1%
Altus	57.9%	6.6%	3.1%	1.7%	4.9%	14.2%	11.8%
Guymon	55.9%	7.0%	3.8%	3.2%	5.3%	16.6%	8.2%
Noble	55.5%	5.5%	2.5%	3.9%	6.5%	18.7%	7.5%
Tahlequah	51.5%	7.7%	4.7%	1.4%	5.2%	21.4%	8.2%
Woodward	51.4%	6.3%	3.7%	4.0%	6.6%	17.8%	10.3%
Community Group	54.7%	7.0%	4.0%	2.5%	5.7%	17.7%	8.5%
State	52.7%	6.9%	3.8%	2.9%	5.7%	17.9%	10.2%

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-7 shows the trend in GPS expenditures per student and overall for the past ten years. Both the total district expenditures and the expenditures per student have fluctuated over that time period. The highest total district expenditures occurred in 2013-14, when the district spent slightly more than \$25 million. The highest expenditure per student occurred in 2008-09, when the district spent \$7,340 per student.

¹ Instruction – Activities dealing directly with the interaction between teachers and students

² Student Support – Activities designed to assess and improve the well-being of students and to supplement the teaching process

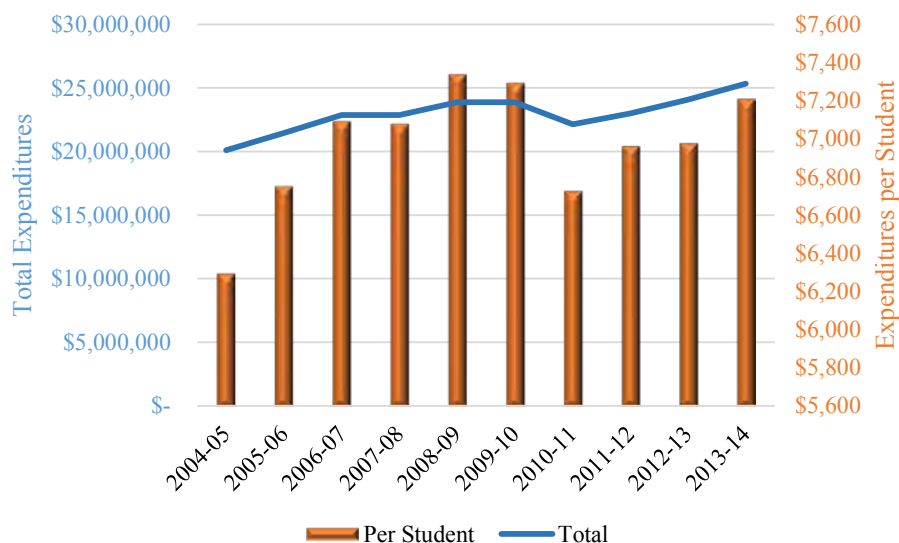
³ Instruction Support – Activities associated with assisting the instructional staff with the content and process of providing learning experiences of students

⁴ District Administration – Activities involving the establishment and administration policy in connection with operating the entire school district

⁵ School Administration – Activities concerned with overall administrative responsibility for a single school or a group of schools

⁶ District Support – Consists of central services (activities that support other administrative and instructional functions, fiscal services, human resources, planning, and administrative information technology), operation and maintenance of plant services (activities concerned with keeping the physical plant open, comfortable, and safe for use, and keeping the grounds, buildings, and equipment in an effective working condition and state of repair), and student transportation services (activities concerned with the conveyance of students to and from school as provided by state law)

Exhibit 3-7
Trend in GPS Expenditures per Student and Total Expenditures, All Funds



Source: OEQA, Profiles Database, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 3-8 shows GPS expenditures for the past three fiscal years, disaggregated by function code. **Exhibit 3-9** provides the same data graphically. The function code is a dimension used to describe the service or commodity obtained as a result of the expenditure. As the exhibit shows, total expenditures increased by 3.5 percent over the three years. Spending on instructional support and district support has both increased more than any other category (by 23.7 percent and 23.9 percent, respectively).

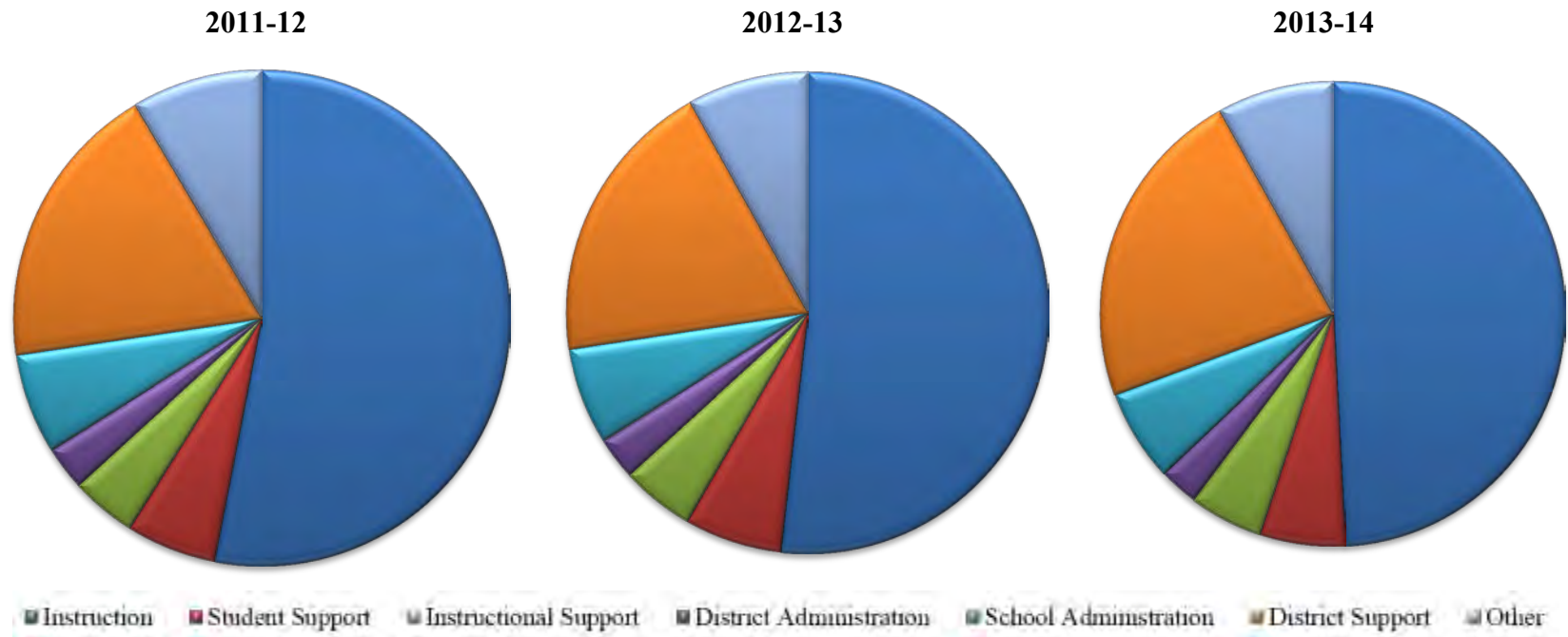
Exhibit 3-8
Trend in Guthrie Expenditures per Student by Classification, All Funds

Expenditure Classification	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Percent Change
Instruction	\$3,694	\$3,614	\$3,546	(4.0%) ▼
Student Support	\$408	\$455	\$425	4.2% ▲
Instructional Support	\$300	\$344	\$371	23.7% ▲
District Administration	\$200	\$198	\$198	(1.0%) ▼
School Administration	\$456	\$454	\$460	0.9% ▲
District Support	\$1,312	\$1,350	\$1,626	23.9% ▲
Other	\$593	\$563	\$583	(1.7%) ▼
Total	\$6,963	\$6,978	\$7,210	3.5% ▲

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database, and Prismatic Calculations

***Special Note:** By not receiving additional revenues from bonding, GPS has had no other choice but to support a much broader array of expenditures from its general fund than would normally be expected. Increased spending under District Support (+23.9%) is a telling example of this as over the past three years, GPS has made expenditures under this category not just for school bus maintenance but for school bus replacement.

Exhibit 3-9
Guthrie Expenditures per Student by Classification, All Funds



Source: OEQA, Profiles Database, and Prismatic Calculations

Fund Balance

The fund balance, often referred to as “carryover,” is defined as the excess of assets over liabilities and is used in future years to offset any revenue shortfalls or negative midyear adjustments that may occur. Fund balance is seen as the amount of cash that is not obligated by purchase orders, contracts, outstanding warrants, or other obligations. A healthy fund balance can be beneficial to a school district by permitting longer investment terms and bridging periods of low cash flow during the year. Perhaps more importantly, it helps the district maintain cash flow to get through the first part of the new school year until state aid distribution can catch up with the district’s obligations.

A school district’s fund balance policy can provide guidance for the development and implementation of an annual budget. Oklahoma public school laws provide guidance regarding the allowable year-end balances. Title 70, Section 18 of Oklahoma Statutes provides the maximum amount, as a percentage of total general fund collections, that a school district is allowed to maintain as a fund balance. **Exhibit 3-10** shows the table of maximum allowable balances expressed as a percentage of their general fund collections.

Exhibit 3-10
Maximum Allowable Balances at Year End

General Fund Collections	Allowable Percentage of Collections
less than \$1,000,000	40%
\$1,000,000 - \$2,999,999	35%
\$3,000,000 - \$3,999,999	30%
\$4,000,000 - \$4,999,999	25%
\$5,000,000 - \$5,999,999	20%
\$6,000,000 - \$7,999,999	18%
\$8,000,000 - \$9,999,999	16%
\$10,000,000 or more	14%

Source: SDE Technical Assistant Document, July 2009

Based upon general fund collections of \$10,000,000 or more for 2014-15, GPS would be able to reserve up to 14 percent as a fund balance. Title 70, Section 18 of Oklahoma Statutes allows a school district to exceed the allowable percentage of carryover for two consecutive years before a general fund balance penalty is assessed. Title 70, Section 18 also allows districts to exclude federal revenues received in a year from the total fund balance when calculating if a general fund balance penalty is assessed. **Exhibit 3-11** provides the GPS fund balances for the last three years. Between 2012-13 and 2014-15 the fund balance decreased by 9.8 percent.

Exhibit 3-11
GPS General Fund Balances

	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Actual
General Fund Collections	\$20,790,818	\$21,804,364	\$22,197,636
Fund Balance	\$3,105,330	\$2,745,439	\$2,799,561
Percentage of General Fund Collections	14.9%	12.6%	12.6%
Fund Balance Year-Over-Year Change		(11.6%) ▼	2.0% ▲
Fund Balance Three-Year Change			(9.9%) ▼

Source: Guthrie Public Schools Annual Audit Reports, 2012-13 through 2014-15, and Prismatic calculations

***Special Note:** By not receiving additional revenues from bonding, GPS has had no other choice but to support a much broader array of expenditures from its general fund than would normally be expected, e.g. school bus replacement. In doing so, GPS's general fund balance declined from 14.9% to 12.6%.

Bonds

Article X, Section 26 of the Oklahoma Constitution prohibits school districts from issuing debt without approval of "60 percent plus one" of the district's voters. A district's outstanding debt is limited to ten percent of its assessed valuation. The issued debt may be used for the purpose of acquiring or improving school sites, constructing, repairing, remodeling, equipping buildings, or acquiring school buses, technology, furniture, fixtures, or equipment. **Exhibit 3-12** compares the district's average daily membership (ADM), assessed property value, and bonding capacity for the last five years. The district's ADM has increased along with the district's property value and bonding capacity.

Exhibit 3-12
GPS Trends in ADM, Assessed Property Value, and Bonding Capacity

School Year	ADM	Assessed Property Value	Bonding Capacity
2009-10	3,274	\$121,514,510	\$12,151,451
2010-11	3,290	\$122,431,201	\$12,243,120
2011-12	3,303	\$123,871,066	\$12,387,107
2012-13	3,449	\$129,988,400	\$12,998,840
2013-14	3,514	\$126,669,429	\$12,666,943
Percent Change	7.3% ▲	4.2% ▲	

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database, and Prismatic calculations

The debt service expenditures per student are based upon the amount of outstanding debt and number of students a district has during a particular school year. Districts must structure their annual expenditures toward instruction, facilities, and equipment based upon the form and amount of tax money district patrons are willing to provide. In 2013-14, GPS had no debt service (no outstanding bonds), making it one of only two comparison districts to be debt-

free (**Exhibit 3-13**). Most peer districts and districts in GPS's community group had debt service expenditures of approximately \$550 per student.

Some communities have collaborated even further with their local school district and have agreed to a local sales tax that is dedicated, partially or entirely, to the needs of the local school district. Such is the case in both Lawton and Altus.

Exhibit 3-13
2013-14 Debt Service Expenditures per Student
GPS, Peers, Community Group, and State

Entity	Debt Service per Student
Guthrie	\$0
Altus	\$0
Guymon	\$275
Noble	\$585
Tahlequah	\$588
Woodward	\$578
Community Group	\$530
State	\$813

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database

A. PLANNING AND BUDGETING

An organization's budget development and management establishes the foundation for all other financial operations. The budget process should be strategic in nature and consist of activities that encompass the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive plan for student success.

The National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB) has identified four essential principles of effective budgeting. The specific principles include the following tasks:

1. Set broad goals to guide decisions.
2. Develop strategies and financial policies.
3. Design a budget supportive of strategies and goals.
4. Focus on the necessity of continually evaluating goal achievement.

FINDING 3-1

The district provides considerable budget information on its website. In addition to the board adopted operating budget that contains numerous schedules and charts and explains the budget development process for each fund, the website includes the district's estimate of needs and a document titled Guthrie Budget – Frequently Asked Questions.

The budget document provides easily understood information and includes:

- Table of Contents;
- Budget Philosophy;
- Timetable;
- Budget Guidelines by Fund;
- Function Expenditure Code Definitions;
- General Fund Revenues – Comparative Analysis;
- General Fund – Fixed Cost Analysis;
- General Fund Budget by Project Reporting; and
- 2014-15 Condensed Financials.

The document titled Frequently Asked Questions includes answers to a number of questions:

- how the district receives money;
- the impact of local real estate taxes and the Oklahoma lottery to the district;
- what a fund balance carryover is;
- how funds are expended; and
- what unfunded mandates are.

Assembling easily understood budget information and explanations on the district's website provides all interested parties with an authoritative source for district budget information. This provides all stakeholders with an opportunity to understand how the district funds operations and how funds are expended to support the district's educational responsibilities.

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for providing expanded and useful budget information on its website.

FINDING 3-2

There is no public, and limited or no staff involvement in the budget development process. The public is not provided any means to be involved in the budget development process and meetings are not held to obtain principal and department head involvement. A budget calendar is not produced for the budget development process except for one that shows local board of education and state deadlines.

The district does not have a process for involving community members and district employees in the budget development process. Interviews indicate the school staff is not involved or consulted for input during the budget development process. The practice has been that the school board adopts the budget at a regular board meeting. Involving community members and school district

staff in budget development would help to ensure an understanding of and support for the adopted budget. Implementing a comprehensive calendar that details what steps are to be followed and when involvement of all parties is to occur would allow for input from the parties and encourage support for district initiatives.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that the budget be developed using a results and outcomes approach. Using this approach, the budget should be developed to address the highest priorities of the district that could be achieved with the available resources. For example, if the district identified a need for additional staff members, the budget would be developed to incorporate this need, and, subsequently, be communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

Many districts have a budget committee comprised of community members, business leaders, and district employees who provide input to the board of education and superintendent on the priorities that should be addressed. Some Oklahoma public school districts use a budget committee that provides regular input to the superintendent and treasurer during the budget process. Other districts publish their budget materials and related information on their websites to ensure that all stakeholders are informed of budget processes and decisions that are being made.

Clinton Public Schools has a transparent budget development process that has a commendable level of public input. The normal process for budget development in Clinton involves these steps:

1. Preliminary Budget: Prior to the end of the current fiscal year, the superintendent and other key administrators prioritize items for the following fiscal year. Many contributions for this process come from school employees and the public.
2. Preparation of Proposed Budget: After the school board approves the estimate of needs, proposed budgets are devised within the approved revenues and expenditures for the budget year.
3. Receipt of Public Comments: The school board conducts a public hearing to take all comments on financial matters, both past and future, in the district.
4. Adoption of a Final Budget: This includes any revisions due to public comments and potential program allocations received prior to this date.
5. Amending of Final Budget: Changes are made throughout the year to ensure that all expenditures have an appropriate amount of budgeted funds available and to adapt the current budget to reflect midterm allocation changes.

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a budget development process that provides for input from the public and district employees.

The superintendent and school board should adopt and publish an annual budget calendar and create a budget advisory committee. The budgetary process and timeline should be communicated throughout the district in order to foster transparency. Budget discussions for the upcoming school year should begin early in the spring semester at the latest. Budget discussions should include opportunities for input from district and community stakeholders.

Posting the budgetary process, timeline, and documents in public places and online will facilitate better communication, understanding, and support of the adopted budget. A sample budget calendar is provided in **Exhibit 3-14**. Each year, the district adjusts these dates by one or two days to match the new work calendar, but the process typically follows this schedule.

Exhibit 3-14
Sample Budget Calendar

Date	Budget Activity
October 3	Introduction of budget process to principals and administrative staff
October 16	Submission of budget calendar to school board (regular meeting)
	Establishment of December date for public hearing on budget
October 20	Preliminary administrative staff budget committee meeting #1
	Review of budget process assignments and calendar
October 30	Administrative budget committee meeting #2
	Establish preliminary overall budget priorities
October 31	Submission of budget requests by principals and administrative staff
November 20	Public reminder concerning December date for public hearing on budget
November 27	Administrative budget committee meeting #3
	Analysis of budget requests and review of preliminary priorities
	Preliminary report on market analysis of cohort school districts
November 29	Advertise for December public hearing
December 4	Advertise for December public hearing
December 4	Annual school board legislative work session
December 8	Administrative budget committee meeting #4
	Refinement and alignment of projected expenditures
December 11	Public hearing on proposed budget (regular meeting)
	Report to school board on preliminary budget priorities (regular meeting)
	Invitation for school board member input on preliminary budget priorities
December 18	Administrative budget committee meeting #5
January 8	Analysis of preliminary budget priorities
	Review of projected state revenues based on the state proposed budget
January 11	Administrative budget committee meeting #6
	Refinement of budget priorities based on school board work session
January 22	Presentation of projected state revenues based on state proposed budget
	Invitation for further school board member input on budget
January 25	Administrative budget committee meeting #7
	Refinement of budget priorities based on public hearing and board member input
February 5	Presentation of first formal draft of budget
February 7	Administrative budget committee meeting #8
	Refinement of budget priorities
February 19	Presentation of second formal draft of budget (regular meeting)
	Update on projected state revenues
March 8	Administrative budget committee meeting #9
March 19	Target date for school board approval of budget (regular meeting)
May TBD	Called meeting for school board certification of final budget April 25-May 4
May 7	Target date for issuance of professional personnel contracts
May 21	Target date for issuance of classified personnel contracts

Source: Created by Prismatic, based on records from an Oklahoma school district, November 2015

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-3

The district does not have specific goals or plans to increase the percentage of funds expended on instruction. Currently, the percentage of funds expended on instruction is low – lower than the peers, community group, and state (**Exhibit 3-15**).

Exhibit 3-15
Percentage of Funds Spent on Instruction

Entity	Instruction ⁷
Guthrie	49.2%
Altus	57.9%
Guymon	55.9%
Noble	55.5%
Tahlequah	51.5%
Woodward	51.4%
Community Group	54.7%
State	52.7%

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database

A review of the percentage of expenditures for instruction from 2010-11 through 2013-14 shows that there has not been an improvement in the percentage of total expenditures spent on instructional programs, in fact there has been a decrease. By not receiving additional revenues from bonding, GPS has had no other choice but to support a much broader array of expenditures from its general fund than would normally be expected. Unfortunately for GPS, this situation has existed for an extended period of time and during an economic downturn, the result being that money has had to be directed away from the district's primary mission of instruction.

Exhibit 3-16 shows the percent of funds expended by expenditure classification for 2010-11 through 2013-14. The percent expended on instruction has decreased each year from 55.5 percent in 2010-11 to 49.2 percent in 2013-14. Although the district's total expenditure per student has increased from \$6,963 in 2011-12 to \$7,210 in 2013-14, the expenditure per student for instruction has decreased from \$3,694 in 2011-12 to \$3,546 in 2013-14.

⁷ Instruction – Activities dealing directly with the interaction between teachers and students

Exhibit 3-16
Expenditures by Classification

Expenditure Classification	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Change
Instruction	55.5%	53.1%	51.8%	49.2%	▼
Student Support	6.3%	5.9%	6.5%	5.9%	▼
Instructional Support	2.3%	4.3%	4.9%	5.1%	▲
District Administration	2.5%	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%	▲
School Administration	6.6%	6.5%	6.5%	6.4%	▼
District Support	18.4%	18.8%	19.3%	22.6%	▲
Other	8.4%	8.5%	8.1%	8.1%	▼
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database, and Prismatic Calculations 2015

Although activities other than classroom instruction certainly are necessary and support the education of students, they must be kept in perspective. The primary focus of GPS must be on providing the highest quality, most cost-effective public education available to its students.

It is important to review historical expenditures when developing the budget and identify any trends that should be closely monitored or reversed. In reviewing the actual expenditure trends, any incorrect classifications or changes in how the district classifies expenses can also be identified and corrected.

Districts review historical expenditures, not only the dollar amount of the expenditures, but also the dollar amount as a percentage of the total. If one category is out of line, such as other support services, districts should make an adjustment. The priority should always be on classroom instruction and the students.

RECOMMENDATION

Place special emphasis on the percentage of district funds being budgeted for instruction during budget development and in future budget years establish a target percentage for instruction.

The assistant superintendent should analyze historical expenditures and establish recommended budget targets for board approval in order to increase funding percentages for classroom instruction. The district should also establish a budget target for each category of expenditures. The target should involve two components; the percentage of the total budget that should be allocated to each function and the percentage change over time in the allocation to each function. If the district closely monitors these indicators, it can manage its expenditures and ensure that the dollar allocation shifts closer to the board adopted targets.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-4

Although the district has a general fund balance policy that provides general intent for the fund, routine status reports are not provided to the board. This leaves board members with incomplete information as they are making other expenditure decisions.

The state allows districts that have general fund revenues of more than \$10 million to maintain a fund balance that does not exceed 14 percent. At the end of 2014-15 the district's general fund balance was 12.6 percent. The district's general fund balance policy states:

An adequate level of general fund balance is required in order to maintain efficient cash flow, cover emergency expenditures, adjust for revenue shortfalls and avoid paying interest on non-payable warrants. In order to maximize the efficient use of this fund, the board of education establishes the fiscal management priority objective of achieving and maintaining a general fund balance of twelve percent (12%). Should the general fund balance drop below a minimum level of eight percent (8%), the administration shall give first priority to restoring this minimum level with any additional funding received and with the development and implementation of an appropriate expenditure strategy.

Each year beginning in January or February, the assistant superintendent prepares an informative monthly document titled Fund Balance Projection. The report is provided to the finance committee periodically, but not regularly and it is not provided to the entire board. **Exhibit 3-17** shows a summary of the data included in the report dated February 8, 2016. The actual report has more than 50 revenue and 100 expenditure classifications. As shown, as of February 2016, the district anticipates a reduction in the fund balance of more than \$970,000 by the end of 2015-16. As funding decreases, it becomes more and more important that all board members are provided with current financial data, especially the district's general fund balance.

Exhibit 3-17
Fund Balance Projection (Summary), February 8, 2016

Expenditure Classification	2014-15 Activity	2015-16 YTD Activity	2015-16 Projected Activity	2015-16 Total Activity	Increase/ (Decrease)
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE					
Current year	\$2,745,439	\$2,776,000	\$0	\$2,776,000	\$30,561
Lapsed From Prior Year	\$0	\$23,560	\$0	\$23,560	\$23,560
REVENUES					
Local Sources	\$4,758,920	\$3,894,754	\$938,950	\$4,833,704	\$74,784
Intermediate Sources	\$849,719	\$617,776	\$227,224	\$845,000	(\$4,719)
State Sources	\$15,047,772	\$7,707,310	\$5,737,251	\$13,444,562	(\$1,603,210)
Federal Sources	\$1,541,225	\$1,023,399	\$516,958	\$1,540,357	(\$868)
Non-Revenue Receipts	\$223,533	\$48,579	\$161,421	\$210,000	(\$13,533)
Total Revenues	\$22,421,169	\$13,291,818	\$7,581,805	\$20,873,623	(\$1,547,546)
EXPENDITURES					
Total Expenditures	\$22,390,608	\$21,329,397	\$540,382	\$21,869,778	(\$520,830)
ENDING FUND BALANCE	\$2,776,000	(\$5,238,018)	\$7,041,424	\$1,803,405	(\$972,595)

Source: GPS, February 2016

Keeping all board members informed on the status of the general fund is extremely important in order to manage the finances of a district. Reports that not only show the financial activity that has occurred but also includes projections to the end of the year based upon actual year-to-date data prepared by an informed district official are effective in providing board members with an understanding of the status of the general fund balance.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide the board and finance committee with monthly general fund status reports to enable all board members to monitor the fund's current balance.

The assistant superintendent should provide the committee with a Fund Balance Projection Report at each meeting and to the entire board of education at least quarterly.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-5

Although the district was successful in passing a \$16.2 million bond issue, it has not developed plans for future bonding needs. Building on the current community support for schools could help make passing future bond issues easier.

The current bond issue is expected to raise the tax burden for a \$100,000 home by \$13.06 a month and on a \$150,000 home by \$20.24. The current bond will put Guthrie millage rate at about 15 mills.

The district and its financial advisor have begun to discuss and identify when additional bonds could be sold that would allow tax rates to remain stable at the current (new) rate and also provide ongoing resources for capital needs. However, no firm plans have been made.

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a stable ongoing millage rate as a target.

Based upon the data currently available from the district's financial advisor, the consulting team recommends that an initial target be a stable millage rate of at least 20 mills. This ongoing rate could be achieved gradually over a period of years.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

B. FINANCIAL PROCESSES

Day-to-day financial processes should be efficient and effective. They should also be documented, transparent, and rational. Accounting and payroll are among the most important business functions performed by a school district. Although guidelines such as the OCAS and other accounting standards exist, actual practices can vary widely among Oklahoma school districts.

A sound accounting and payroll system can provide numerous benefits including:

- providing internal controls and safeguards;
- providing timely reporting on the status of funds; and
- allowing systematic disbursements to maximize available funds.

FINDING 3-6

Staff in business services does not have a complete set of desk procedures and cross-training between employees is not sufficient. Few staff members are cross-trained and there is no formal or comprehensive plan in place to get staff cross-trained in all critical procedures.

Should a key staff member be absent from work for an extended period of time, it would be difficult for GPS to fully complete its business operations. The payroll clerk is the only business services employee that has desk procedures, but they have not been reviewed or approved by the assistant superintendent. Although the district understands the benefits of cross-training staff, few procedures can be completed by anyone other than the individual assigned the primary responsibility.

For internal controls to operate effectively, all employees need a documented reference detailing how they perform their assigned daily duties. An employee's desk procedures are in much more detail than an employee handbook and are basically a step-by-step written document approved by administration that describes how an employee is expected to complete their individual daily assignments. Desk procedures facilitate the cross-training of employees and training of new employees since they provide the step-by-step instructions needed to perform specific tasks. This increases internal control by helping to ensure procedures are performed correctly.

A thorough desk procedure covers a task's steps in a sufficient degree of detail that an individual attempting a task for the first time can perform it with little additional instruction. The procedure also lists forms to be used, computer screens that are accessed, fields on the screens in which information is to be entered, as well as identifying other positions that supply information, or other positions which receive information once a procedure has been completed.

Without approved desk procedures, employees complete their duties based upon verbal directions that may have been received quite some time ago and may have since become stale. Additionally, without a written guide, employees are left to improvise and develop their own ways to complete tasks, often leading to errors.

Some business offices have developed excellent desk procedures for their employees to use when completing their assigned duties. The Chesterfield (VA) payroll department developed desk procedures that are placed on the office's server with individual folders for each staff member, but all employees of the office have access to them. Detailed explanations on a step-by-step basis for how to complete the numerous procedures accurately and timely are included. An example of an entry for a payroll procedure called "COBRA changes" has steps that include:

1. Receive from benefits, yellow form with the box next to COBRA marked and the change reflected.
2. Pull file. (it will either be in the file cabinet or COBRA basket).
3. Ask xxx if individual on COBRA has paid anything.
4. Make a copy of the payment sheet or check.
5. Run calculator tape of what individual has paid.
6. Go to Excel, payroll server, open health insurance folder, health calculation 2003, cobra and cobra-newchgehealthcal03. (enable macros)
7. Complete spreadsheet. (referring to yellow form and individuals file)
8. Next to number of payments, enter number of months going to have coverage. (will be based on effective date until the end of the year)
9. Note: if individual is an employee, next to employee, enter yes. If not, enter no and next to employee, in the next cell, enter employee's name.
10. Note: next to coverage for, the start date would be based on the effective date. The end date remains the end of the year.
11. Enter the amount the individual paid next to less amount paid.

12. New monthly payment date will always be the first of the month (the individual pays monthly.) Also adjust the number of pays.
13. Next to total payment due by, give the individual 5 to 10 days.
14. The bottom of the spreadsheet may not need to be hidden depending on if they owe us any money.
15. Print two copies of the calculation sheet. One copy will go to xxx, one copy is put in individual's COBRA file and the original is mailed.
16. If the individual owes us money, a letter needs to be sent.
17. Go to word, payroll server, health insurance and health letters.
18. Use the information from the calculation sheet to complete the letter.
19. Make two copies of letter. One copy goes to xxx, one copy goes in individuals file and the original is mailed.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop desk procedures for each business services employee and establish a formal process for cross-training.

The assistant superintendent should develop a list of critical duties performed by each of the employees of business services for which desk procedures should be developed. A standard format for documenting desk procedures should be developed and each employee trained on the format. The assistant superintendent should develop a timetable for when the procedures are to be completed and then monitor their development.

Each staff member should develop desk procedures for each of their duties. Once they have developed the desk procedures, the assistant superintendent should determine which staff members should be cross-trained on what duties. Staff being cross-trained should review the procedures to help ensure that they are easily understood and provide sufficient guidance to whoever performs the duties.

A matrix should be created that lists the critical procedures for which a cross-trained backup is needed. For each critical procedure the employee to be cross-trained should be instructed in the proper desk procedure and then be kept up-to-date with regard to changes in procedure.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-7

The district does not have mandatory participation by employees in the direct deposit of payroll warrants. Direct deposit of payroll is efficient for both employees and the district.

Only 71 percent of the district's employees have their warrants direct deposited into their bank accounts. Hard copy warrants are printed each month for the employees who do not participate in the direct deposit program. Representatives from each building must come by the payroll office and pick up the hard copy warrants. Employees sign for their warrant and the signature sheets are sent back to the payroll office.

Direct deposit expedites the availability of funds to the employees' bank accounts, reduces the possibility of warrants being lost or stolen, and is efficient for district staff. Direct deposit benefits both the organization and its employees. A school district benefits because bank account reconciliation is made simpler and funds are debited from an organization's account on a precisely known date. The district also enjoys reduced processing costs because direct deposited warrants eliminate the need to print and distribute hard copy payroll warrants. Direct deposit saves employees time spent in making trips to the banks; moreover, electronically transferred funds are generally available immediately.

Veribest ISD in Texas requires that all employees be paid through direct deposit. Each employee designates an account at any bank in the county where his or her paycheck should be directly deposited each month. The district realizes direct deposit streamlines the payroll process and saves money by eliminating the need to handle and safeguard physical checks. Also, check stock is more costly than regular paper, and requires special handling and security to avoid irregularities.

Trinity ISD, also in Texas, realized the benefits of direct deposit and implemented several initiatives to encourage its employees to use direct deposit. As a result of the initiatives the number of employees using direct deposit increased, but not to the level the district desired, and direct deposit is now mandatory for all new employees.

RECOMMENDATION

Require mandatory direct deposit of employee pay to improve efficiency for both the district and employees.

The assistant superintendent should develop and propose a board policy requiring employees to participate in a direct deposit program. The payroll clerk should provide employees not participating with the necessary information and documents to implement the policy. Implementation of the policy should provide sufficient time for the employees not participating to complete required documents and for the treasurer to complete transactions with their respective banks.

FISCAL IMPACT

The expectation of this recommendation is that everyone on staff would enroll in direct deposit. There are, however, always few staff members who refuse or cannot comply; necessitating that some alternate means of payment, such as a debit card, be established. It is reasonable to expect that a local bank already doing business with the district or already processing the district's direct deposits would waive or absorb these debit card fees, but under a worst-case scenario they

might charge \$3 per month, per card. Assuming 50 GPS staff would require this service, it would cost the district \$1,800 per year (\$3 fee per month x 12 months x 50 staff = \$1,800).

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Provide debit cards to staff not participating in direct deposit.	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)	(\$1,800)

FINDING 3-8

Staff members in the schools and departments outside the business services department are not provided sufficient instructions and training on business related processes. Except for a few hours of financial secretary training at the beginning of the year, routine training on business related processes and procedures is not provided.

Financial secretaries are provided a couple of hours training at the beginning of the year in a secretaries meeting. The training, however, is generally just a reminder at a high level and does not include detailed procedures. New staff members with financial responsibilities are not routinely provided with detailed training and normally learn by asking questions. School financial secretaries do not meet as a group to discuss their common duties related to financial processes. Financial secretaries stated in interviews that since they perform similar duties it would be beneficial to meet and discuss how they go about performing those duties and overcome difficulties. Staff in the schools, including principals and secretaries, indicated that they too need additional information and training pertaining to business office procedures. Specific training is also not provided in managing contracts, such as the ones for child nutrition and transportation, for which district leaders are responsible to manage and certify contract compliance.

The district does have a comprehensive activity fund manual and a purchasing manual. Beyond that, departments and schools are not provided with detailed instructions to guide them in completing duties related to their finance and budget responsibilities. Without a comprehensive manual of business and financial related duties, school and department staffs do not have a resource to use when they encounter an unfamiliar task. Staff members have to call or email either the finance office or another employee to assist them with their situation. Employees new to their job, having not received sufficient training for their assigned duties, often struggle to complete them.

Many school districts provide school and department staff with a user manual and training to provide policy and direction on completing financial and operational duties. These manuals routinely include guidance for the tasks they complete related to:

- purchasing policy and procedures;
- vendor payments;
- payroll activities;

- leave reporting;
- fixed asset inventory processes;
- mail delivery;
- travel;
- workers' compensation; and
- other topics that impact district employees and administrative staff duties.

The manuals are normally discussed at orientation for new employees and discussed each year in work sessions prior to school beginning for returning employees. Administrative staff better understand the processes and requirements for various finance-related topics that impact their responsibilities when they have manuals available for reference. Errors occur less often and administrative staff spends less time asking how to perform a process. Manuals also provide a means of documenting acceptable processes that enable accountability to be enforced.

Fluvanna Schools in Virginia initiated meetings for school bookkeepers (financial secretaries) to attend. The meetings allow bookkeepers to discuss issues and procedures that impact their schools and responsibilities. It allows a bookkeeper to obtain assistance from the other bookkeepers and to discuss how similar duties are performed and also to obtain information on what resources and systems may be available. Prior to the monthly meeting, bookkeepers would periodically talk by phone but never meet as a group. Fluvanna bookkeepers indicated that the meetings are beneficial and were appreciative for the opportunity to meet on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve information provided to schools and departments including training materials pertaining to the administrative processes and schedule training for all staff involved in the processes.

Business services staff should meet with school and department staff that have responsibilities related to business or financial processes to discuss improving information and instruction available on the processes. The group should also discuss training needs, including what training is needed and when it should be provided.

Based on the input received from school and department staff, the assistant superintendent should develop a list of the additional and enhanced information that is needed. The assistant superintendent, treasurer and encumbrance clerk should develop written guidelines to help ensure schools and departments are performing financial related processes in a standard and efficient manner. The manuals should not only provide detailed steps on how to complete a particular form, but also include policies such as delegated purchasing and the associated penalties for not following the policies. Manuals should be made available on the website and training sessions should be routinely offered where processes covered in the manual are discussed and questions answered.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-9

Financial reports to the board provide limited information to enable board members to adequately monitor funds. The reports do not make it easy for the board or other interested parties to adequately monitor the district's financial operations.

Included in monthly board reports is a treasurer's report, activity fund fundraiser requests, purchase order register, change order register, activity fund revenues and expenditures, and activity fund reconciliation. There are no reports that compare budgeted-to-actual revenues and expenditures.

Reports prepared for the board do not contain data for the amounts expended on expenditure classifications such as salaries, materials and services, or purchased services by function. There are no comparison of revenues and expenditures to prior periods. The reports also do not include any narrative to explain or describe what the reports are intended to show.

It is difficult for most individuals, including school board members, to understand financial reports unless the reports are formatted and presented in an easily understood manner. Without routine reports that present comparative financial data, school board members and the public have limited information with which to assess current year operations and compare it to previous months and years. Financial reports are especially critical in keeping school board members and the public informed on situations that impact the district's general fund.

As an example of monthly financial reporting, Broken Bow Public Schools, prepares monthly financial reports for the school board that list revenue by source and expenditures by function for the period. Comparative totals are presented for the previous two years along with the budget for the current year. The monthly financial report also provides information on the district's cash and investment positions. This presentation allows board members and administration to monitor the district's current financial status in relation to prior year activity. It also assists the school board as they look forward to budget adoption for the upcoming fiscal year.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide current monthly financial reports to the school board that include comparative revenue and expenditure data by function and other categories.

The assistant superintendent should obtain copies of routine financial reports prepared by peer districts and other comparable districts and develop additional reports for the school board. Monthly financial reports should include types of revenues and expenditures and a comparison with the previous year's financial information. Proposed reports should be presented to the board for their review and recommendations to make the reports easier to understand and more useful.

Exhibit 3-18 illustrates a sample format that could be used for the general fund. Revenues and expenditures shown use the OCAS coding structure and can be expanded with more detail as

needed. Similar reports using the sample format could be prepared for the building fund and other funds.

Exhibit 3-18
Sample Budget Document

Description	Current Year Budgeted		Prior Year Actual	
	Detail	Total	Detail	Total
Fund Balance, July 1, XXXX		\$x,xxx		\$x,xxx
Revenues:				
Local Sources	\$x,xxx		\$x,xxx	
Intermediate Sources	x,xxx		x,xxx	
State Sources	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Federal Sources	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Total Revenues:		\$x,xxx		\$x,xxx
Expenditures:				
Salaries	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Benefits	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Purchased Property Services	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Other Purchased Services	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Supplies & Materials	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Property	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Other	x,xxx		x,xxx	
Total Expenditures:		\$x,xxx		\$x,xxx
Estimated Fund Balance, June 30, XXXX		\$x,xxx		\$x,xxx

Source: Created by Prismatic, February 2016

Exhibit 3-19 provides a sample of another report that could be prepared monthly. A report of this nature that uses the function categories on the OCAS, along with charts and graphs, and a written analysis would provide the school board and other stakeholders the necessary financial information to understand the district's ongoing financial position. Such an understanding of the district's financial position will help establish and maintain confidence in the Guthrie Public Schools system of accountability.

**Exhibit 3-19
Sample Monthly Financial Report**

Category	Previous Year Actual	Previous Year to Date	% YTD to Actual	Current Year Budget	Current Year to Date	% YTD to Budget
BEGINNING BALANCES	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx		\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	
REVENUES:						
Local	x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Intermediate	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%
State	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Federal	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Non-Revenue Receipts	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%
TOTAL REVENUES:	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%
EXPENDITURES:						
Instruction:						
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Professional Services	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Supplies and Materials	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Other Expenses	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%	x,xxx,xxx	x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Total Instruction:	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Student Services:						
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%
Supplies and Materials	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%
Other Expenses	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%
Total Student Services:	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%
Support Services:						
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%
Professional Services	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%
Travel, Postage, Std. Transp.	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%
Supplies and Materials	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%
Other Expenses	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%	xxx,xxx	xxx,xxx	xx%
Total Support Services:	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%
ENDING BALANCES:	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%

Source: Created by Prismatic, February 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-10

Sufficient reports are not prepared that show the financial position of the district’s child nutrition fund at intermediate times during the year. Monthly board reports do include a bank balance, total receipts for the month, total warrants paid for the month, and a purchase order register. The

district lacks a comprehensive report that combines child nutrition fund balances, receipts, and expenditure data in an easily understood format for district administrators and the board.

The district's annual audited financial statements include separate information for the child nutrition program, but they are only available once a year after the annual audit is completed. **Exhibit 3-20** shows the district's child nutrition program revenues and expenditures for 2012-13 through 2014-15, as reported in the district's audit reports. In 2012-13 revenues exceeded expenditures but in 2013-14 and 2014-15 expenditures exceeded revenues*.

Exhibit 3-20
Guthrie Child Nutrition Program Revenues and Expenditures
2012-13 through 2014-15

Category	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Beginning Balance	\$182,467	\$202,685	\$151,091
Revenues			
Local	\$339,163	\$345,397	\$312,147
State Reimbursement	\$119,559	\$149,578	\$164,356
Federal Reimbursement	\$930,749	\$965,035	\$974,924
Total Revenues	\$1,389,471	\$1,460,010	\$1,451,427
Expenditures			
Non-Instructional Expenditures	\$1,373,284	\$1,394,563	\$1,349,776
Other Outlays	\$1,300	\$119,403	\$121,826
Repayments		\$678	
Total Expenditures	\$1,374,584	\$1,514,644	\$1,471,602
Other Financing Sources	\$5,331	\$3,040	\$1,980
Revenues Over/(Under)–Expenditures	\$20,218	(\$51,594)	(\$18,195)*
Ending Balance	\$202,685	\$151,091	\$132,896

Source: Guthrie Annual Financial Reports 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15

***Special Note:** The above information came from GPS's Annual Financial Report which is an official document of record as of a specified date. It should be noted that after the books closed for the 2014-15 school year, GPS received a check from their contracted food service management company to cover losses incurred during the course of the 2014-15 school year. This was in keeping with the contract and the amount of the check was \$18,317.11, which placed the GPS child nutrition program in a positive position going into the next school year.

Reports are not prepared monthly that show financial position for the district's child nutrition program. Compiling monthly revenue and expenditure data would enable administrators and the board to provide better oversight of the program. Without reports available, the superintendent and board members do not have financial data that show if the child nutrition program is operating in a financially prudent manner.

Districts that provide best practice oversight to their child nutrition program normally account for the financial activity of the program in a separate fund where a fund balance can be maintained separate from the general fund. They also prepare informative monthly reports of their child nutrition program's financial activities so administrators can provide oversight of the program.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop reports for the child nutrition fund that show monthly fund balances, revenues, expenditures, and whether the program is making or losing money.

The assistant superintendent should prepare monthly reports that show a limited number of revenue and expense categories to provide staff, administrators, and board members with easily understood financial information for the child nutrition program. **Exhibit 3-21** provides an example of a format that the superintendent and business manager could use for monthly or quarterly reports.

**Exhibit 3-21
Sample Child Nutrition Fund Report for Period XX**

	Current Period	Year-to-Date	Previous Year's Total
Beginning Balance:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Current Revenue:			
Federal	\$x,xxx	\$xx,xxx	\$xx,xxx
State	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Local	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Total Current Revenue:	\$x,xxx	\$xx,xxx	\$xx,xxx
Current Expenditures:			
Salaries	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Benefits	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Food Products	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Supplies	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Other	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Total Current Expenditures:	\$x,xxx	\$xx,xxx	\$xx,xxx
Revenue Over/(Under) Expenditures:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Adjustments to Prior Year:			
Estopped Warrants	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Lapsed Encumbrances	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Total Adjustments:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Revenues Over/(Under) Expenditures & Adjustments:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Ending Balance:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx

Source: Prepared by Prismatic Services, February 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Asset management involves managing the district's cash resources and physical assets in a cost effective and efficient manner. Effective cash and investment management involves forecasting cash requirements timely and accurately so that funds are made available when needed. Effective asset management involves the safeguarding of property from loss, damage, theft, and obsolescence. Proper safeguarding of district assets requires an effective system of accountability and a culture of adherence to established policies and procedures.

FINDING 3-11

The district's fixed assets are not being managed effectively. The district has not completed a physical inventory to verify the custody of the items for which its funds have been expended.

The assistant superintendent maintains a spreadsheet with fixed asset information and updates it each year for the annual financial report. Items acquired costing \$5,000 or more are added to the listing and items known to have been sold, lost, or are no longer useful are removed from the listing. As payments are made for purchase orders containing items costing \$5,000 or more the encumbrance clerk makes a copy of the invoice and places it in a folder for the assistant superintendent to use at the end of the year to update an Excel spreadsheet.

The district's investment in total net assets as of June 30, 2015 was \$11,274,892 – an increase of \$512,358 from June 30, 2014 (**Exhibit 3-22**). As shown, the district has a sizeable investment in fixed assets.

Exhibit 3-22
GPS Fixed Assets as of June 30, 2015

Type	Balance June 30, 2014	Additions/ Deletions	Balance June 30, 2015
Building and Structures	\$19,066,570	\$250,957	\$19,317,527
Vehicles	\$2,649,352	\$860,000	\$3,509,352
Equipment	\$896,630	\$68,740	\$965,370
Accumulated Depreciation	(\$11,850,018)	(\$667,339)	(\$12,517,357)
Net Assets	\$10,762,534	\$512,358	\$11,274,892

Source: GPS Annual Financial Report, June 30, 2015

There are no board policies to direct the management of the district's investment in fixed assets. The assistant superintendent does maintain an Excel spreadsheet of fixed assets for annual financial reporting purposes. An annual inventory of fixed asset items and policies are essential for districts to properly manage their fixed assets.

Policies normally address many issues pertaining to an entity's investment in fixed assets. Policies include guidelines for all fixed assets and regularly address the following:

- responsibility for accounting for the district's investment in fixed assets and the system that is used for the accounting;

-
- responsibility and accountability for the property and equipment owned;
 - a requirement for annual physical inventories;
 - capitalization thresholds for property, equipment, land, and infrastructure;
 - depreciation methods, salvage value, and a schedule of estimated useful lives;
 - capitalized improvements versus maintenance expenses;
 - reporting junked, stolen or missing property, and what approvals are required to delete these items from the inventory;
 - receiving donated property; and
 - transferring assets between schools and departments.

To protect their investment in fixed assets, school districts track their assets and have policies that provide direction on how the assets are to be managed. As items are acquired, they are immediately added to the listing and when the district disposes of an item through an approved process it is taken off the listing. When an item cannot be found, the situation is reviewed and appropriate action taken. Normally, the school board is required to approve all deletions.

Districts also take annual 100 percent comprehensive physical inventories. In order not to spend valuable employees' time managing items with low dollar value, districts do not require items costing less than a specific amount to be added to inventories. Many districts do not include items costing less than \$500 while others establish much higher limits. While inventoried items receive tracking stickers, items with values below the inventory limits many times receive stickers that simply say that they are the property of the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve management of the district's investment in fixed assets by creating additional policies, revise requirements for placing lower cost items on the listing, and take a 100 percent simultaneous annual physical inventory of all buildings.

The assistant superintendent should develop and prepare a revised set of fixed asset policies to provide guidance on how district fixed assets are to be managed. During the development of the policies, the assistant superintendent should obtain sample policies from districts similar to GPS. Once developed, the policies should be reviewed with the superintendent and then presented to the board for approval. With school board approval the assistant superintendent should then communicate the new policies to staff and begin implementation.

After establishing the dollar limit for items to be included on the inventory, the assistant superintendent should then develop procedures for conducting a physical inventory of all buildings. Listings should be created for each location from information on the current spreadsheet. The listings should be sent to the person responsible for each campus with instructions on how to conduct the physical inventory along with when the inventory should be completed. Once the inventories have been completed and returned to business services, they should be reviewed, compared and reconciled. Once the reconciliation of the two lists has been

completed, the assistant superintendent should determine what actions to take for all discrepancies.

After all adjustments are made to the inventory lists the assistant superintendent should send a revised listing to the employee responsible for each campus. Along with the item list, the board policies should be attached that prescribe that person's responsibilities and accountability for the management of the fixed asset items.

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team recommends allocating \$3,000 for a one-time purchase of inventory software and barcode scanning equipment. Developing policies and inventorying guidelines can be completed with existing resources.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Develop a fixed asset inventory system.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

D. ACTIVITY FUNDS

Activity funds are defined as funds that consist of resources received and held by the school as trustee to be expended or invested in accordance with conditions of the trust. Specifically, they are funds accumulated by district-affiliated organizations from various fundraising activities, membership fees, commissions, interest income, and donations. These funds are to be used to promote the general welfare of the school and the educational development and morale of students.

Oklahoma Statute Title 70 O.S. § 5-129 outlines the procedures to be used to account for activity funds. Specifically, the statute requires that the board of education of each school district exercise control over all funds and revenues on hand, received or collected from revenue-generating sources such as student organizations or extracurricular activities that are conducted on school campuses. The statute further defines that deposits are to be made daily or when the cash on hand exceeds \$100. Under the law, the school board is required to approve all school activity sub-accounts, all fundraising activities, and all purposes for which monies collected in each subaccount may be expended.

FINDING 3-12

The district publishes a comprehensive manual that provides guidance for managing school activity funds. The manual titled "Activity Fund - Policies and Procedures Handbook" provides instructions and guidelines that cover over 30 topics along with forms, board policies, and examples.

The manual provides instructions and guidelines that cover many topics, including:

- procedures for purchasing;

- receiving and depositing cash;
- accounts payable;
- administrator responsibilities;
- receipts and deposits; and
- expenditures.

The handbook also includes Oklahoma state laws and Department of Education regulations pertaining to activity funds. The manual is reviewed annually and updated as needed. It provides a valuable resource to principals and sponsors, as they manage activity funds and prepare various documents related to activity funds.

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for providing its principals and activity sponsors with the “Activity Fund – Policies and Procedures Handbook”.

E. AUDITING AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

Internal and external audits provide a review of the district’s compliance with established standards and practices. External audits are required of all Oklahoma school districts and are performed by state-approved public accounting firms. The external audit provides:

- an annual financial and compliance report;
- an examination of the expenditure of federal funds (as applicable); and
- a report to management on internal accounting controls (as applicable).

The internal audit function supplements the work of the external auditor. The internal audit function examines specific areas to determine:

- the adequacy of internal controls;
- compliance with adopted policies and procedures and adherence to applicable law and regulation; and
- efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

FINDING 3-13

Internal controls over payroll processing are inadequate to ensure employees are paid accurately. This weakness could result in incorrect payroll expenditures.

All payroll information is entered into the district’s payroll system by the payroll clerk. Although data used by the payroll clerk for employee pay comes from the district’s personnel office, there is no standardized method used for communicating these data. Sometimes pay information is

communicated by email from the personnel clerk, which does not include any approvals from administration. Other times, pay information is communicated via an administrator. The payroll clerk then enters all payroll data into the payroll system but no one reviews the data that have been entered prior to the payroll being run.

Monthly payrolls are processed by the payroll clerk with little involvement of other staff and little oversight by administration. There is no separation of duties as all payroll information is entered directly into the Municipal Accounting System (MAS) payroll module by the payroll clerk. Internal controls are weakened when the payroll clerk who processes payroll does so with little oversight. The payroll clerk has the ability to make changes directly in the MAS payroll module, thereby affecting employee pay. Although no improprieties have been noted, inappropriate changes to an employee's amount of pay could go unnoticed for an extended period.

Staff believe that MAS will allow the personnel module to interface directly with the payroll module. The interface will allow personnel to enter employee information into the personnel module when employees are hired and information is updated as needed. Certain information maintained in the personnel module is needed by payroll in order to process employee payroll. Employee information contained in the personnel module and needed for payroll processing can be electronically transmitted to the payroll module. If the district used this functionality, the information needed for processing payrolls would not have to be reentered into the payroll module by the payroll clerk.

Payroll systems that have strong internal controls normally have HR staff enter data pertaining to new employees, change data for existing employees, and enter close-out information when employees terminate. The personnel system then electronically sends data directly to the payroll system. Hard copies of entries made into the system by personnel staff are forwarded to payroll staff, where data entries are checked for accuracy.

Personnel and payroll systems that contain proper security and internal controls provide a partition between the two systems. Only information needed to process employee payrolls is passed from the human resources system to the payroll system. Access to data contained in either system is restricted to only staff that have a specific need to access the data. Certain employee information contained in personnel and payroll systems is confidential and must be protected from unauthorized access and distribution. Payrolls are calculated each month using data maintained in the payroll module, and changes to these data must be restricted to ensure accurate payrolls are processed for district employees.

RECOMMENDATION

Modify the interface between the MAS personnel and payroll modules to reduce data entry by payroll and improve internal controls.

The assistant superintendent should work with MAS representatives to allow data entered into the personnel module to automatically populate payroll module fields. The payroll staff would then be in a position to identify incorrect data when running payroll and would serve as an internal control function. The assistant superintendent should review the need for employees to

have access to the payroll system and limit the access to only authorized staff with a specific need based upon their job duties. Employees who only need to access payroll data for information purposes should be restricted from having the ability to make changes in the system.

The assistant superintendent should work with the executive director of personnel and secondary education and the director of technology to improve the payroll-related duties between personnel and payroll. The assistant superintendent and executive director of personnel and secondary education should also develop a standard form to document approval signatures for all personnel/payroll changes.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4:
Facilities Use and Management

Chapter 4

Facilities Use and Management

This chapter addresses the facilities use and management of Guthrie Public Schools (GPS) in the following sections:

- A. Facilities Planning and Construction
- B. Maintenance and Custodial Operations
- C. Energy Management
- D. Safety and Security

Facilities use and management includes the planning, construction, and maintenance of buildings, the safety of students and staff using those buildings, and the security of facilities before, during, and after school hours. More specifically, this area includes the following:

- planning and designing facilities to meet educational standards and to provide a physical framework that enhances learning conditions;
- properly maintaining and cleaning facilities so that teaching and learning can take place in a healthy and clean environment;
- ensuring that the facilities are safe when students and teachers are present;
- creating proper safeguards to ensure the security of the facilities during and after school hours; and
- having safety plans in the event of a crisis or natural disaster so that students and staff members are protected.

Background

Schooling in Guthrie and the “Unassigned (Oklahoma) Lands” has a rich history. The first schools (subscription schools) were funded by a monthly tuition fee paid by the parents to the teachers. In turn, the teachers were responsible for securing a place of study and for paying the rent from their earnings. It was not uncommon for classes to be conducted in a tent, dugout, home, or church. Nanitta Daisey, a land claimant in the land run and a teacher, started a subscription school in Guthrie in 1889, with pupils attending classes in a tent. Although subscription schools offered education early on, Guthrie citizens promptly opened public schools in the fall of 1889. The first public school in Guthrie, Central School was opened June 11, 1889, in a storefront building (**Exhibit 4-1**). In 1894, the city built the first two-story, brick-and-mortar public school (**Exhibit 4-2**).

Exhibit 4-1
First School in Guthrie



Source: Robert E. Cunningham Oklahoma History Collection, downloaded February 2016 from <http://drc.nationalcowboymuseum.org/exhibits/cunningham/default.aspx>

Exhibit 4-2
First Dedicated Public School Building in Guthrie



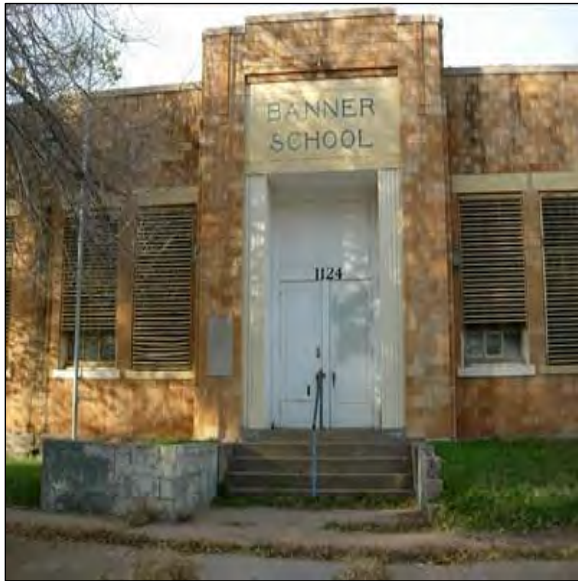
Source: <http://www.okgenweb.org/~oklogan/photo/oldcapital.html>

In 1901 the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature passed a law that allowed any county with a population of at least 6,000 and with the approving vote of qualified electors to build and operate a county high school. Only five counties opted to build and operate a high school, with Logan County being the first. The Logan County High School opened in 1903 but closed in 1911 after high schools were organized in other county communities.

There were separate schools for black students: the Lincoln School, the Douglass School, and the Faver High School. The first black high school class graduated in 1906. Six years later, classes began at a building on Grant Street in a school building donated by a county commissioner, Stonewall J. Faver, for whom the school was named. Classes continued there until 1951, when the school moved into its current location in the 1000 block of East Perkins. It remained a black school until May 1967, when its final commencement was held. After that, all schools integrated. Faver is now an alternative high school in the Guthrie school system.

Banner School, a one-story elementary school, was constructed in 1935 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (**Exhibit 4-3**). Unlike the red native stone buildings so prominent in the region, Banner was constructed with several shades of tan, rug face brick. The exterior of the windows were equipped with movable metal horizontal sun shades. In May 2014, the building was gutted by fire. In 1935, the WPA also built the similarly-styled Capitol School, which is currently home to the Board of Education and other GPS administrative offices (**Exhibit 4-4**).

Exhibit 4-3
Banner School Constructed by WPA



Source: downloaded March 2016 from www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMDCWE_Banner_School_Guthrie_OK

Exhibit 4-4
Capitol School Constructed by WPA



Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

Fogarty Junior High School, a one- and two-story building, was constructed by the WPA in 1939. Fogarty is constructed of multi-toned light colored brick, with portions of the ground level being of native stone. It is currently an elementary school (**Exhibit 4-5**). Guthrie Junior High School was constructed in 1924 as the Guthrie High School, with an addition constructed by the WPA (**Exhibit 4-6**).

Exhibit 4-5
Fogarty School Constructed by WPA



Source: Creative Commons BY-NC-ND downloaded
February 2016 from
<https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/fogarty-school-guthrie-ok/>

Exhibit 4-6
**Addition to (former) Guthrie High School
Constructed by WPA**



Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

Jelsma Stadium (**Exhibits 4-7 and 4-8**), constructed by the WPA, was deemed by ESPN to be the 13th-best high school stadium in the nation in 2008. The facility, constructed at an original cost of \$48,500, underwent a \$3 million renovation in 2005.¹

¹ http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMFCCD_Jelsma_Stadium_Guthrie_OK

Exhibit 4-7
Jelsma Stadium Constructed by WPA



Source: downloaded February 2016 from http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMFCCD_Jelsma_Stadium_Guthrie_OK

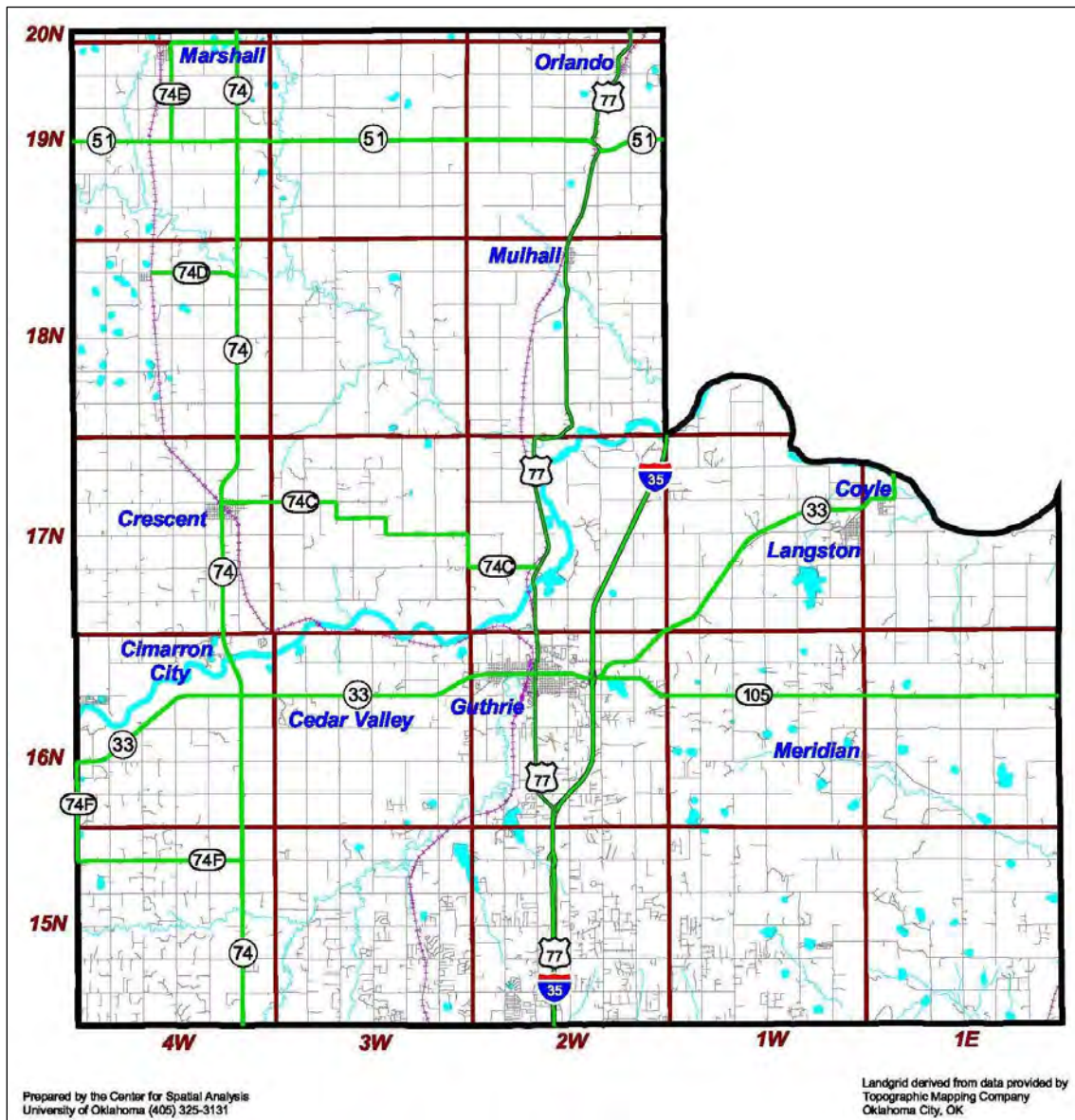
Exhibit 4-8
North Rock Wall at Jelsma Stadium



Source: downloaded February 2016 from http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMFCCD_Jelsma_Stadium_Guthrie_OK

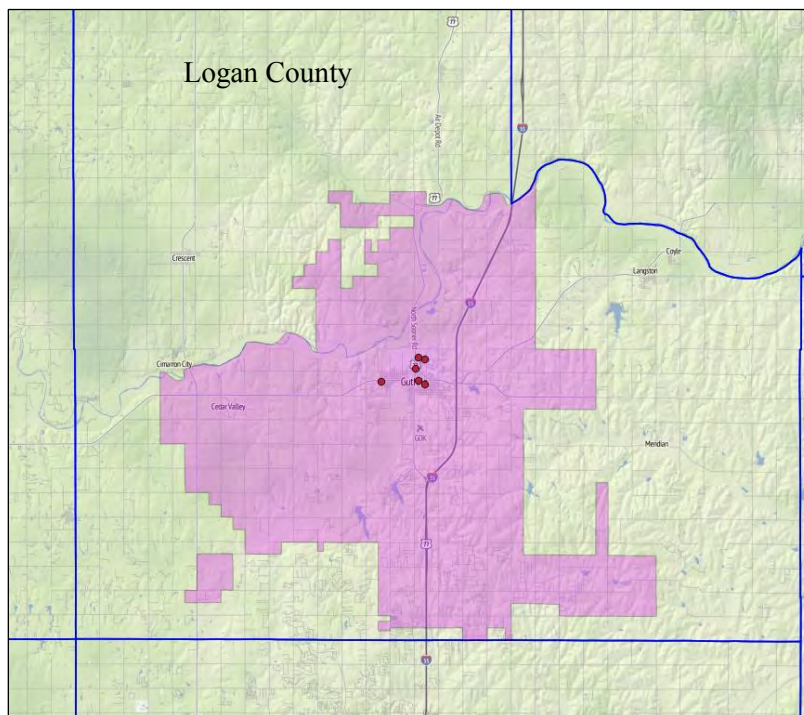
The City of Guthrie is the county seat for, and principal city of Logan County. Located about 30 miles north of Oklahoma City, it is one of the several cities comprising the Oklahoma City metroplex. According to the 2010 census, Guthrie's population was 10,191. **Exhibit 4-9** shows a map of the City of Guthrie within Logan County. Today, GPS is one of several school districts within Logan County. **Exhibit 4-10** shows the boundaries of GPS.

Exhibit 4-9
Map of City of Guthrie in Logan County



Source: Prismatic, February 2016, prepared from County Base MAPS
Provided by University of Oklahoma Center for Spatial Analysis (CSA)

Exhibit 4-10
Map of Guthrie Public School District in Logan County



*Source: Oklahoma Office of Geographic Information (OGI),
and Prismatic, November 2015*

GPS has a total of 53 facilities, including one high school, one alternative high school, one junior high school, four elementary schools, vocational/agricultural buildings and barns, a maintenance building, a transportation building, storage buildings, an athletic complex, and an administration building. In addition, GPS has nine portable classroom buildings located on various campuses throughout the district. **Exhibit 4-11** provides an inventory of GPS facilities, including the address, the year built, the years of renovations, and the square footage. In total, the district has approximately 572,758 square feet of facilities in inventory.

Exhibit 4-11
GPS Facilities

Facility	Address	Yr. built	Yr. Renovated	Sq. Ft.
Administration Board Office	802 E. Vilas	1935		13,796
Central Elementary School	321 E. Noble	1929		20,159
Central Elementary Addition	321 E. Noble	2006		10,084
Cotteral Elementary School	2001 W. Noble	1950		38,371
Cotteral Library	2001 W. Noble	2012		864
Cotteral West Portable	2001 W. Noble	2012		864
Cotteral Quad	2001 W. Noble	1972		4,270
Cotteral South Portable	2001 W. Noble	1977		1,780
Cotteral South Portable	2001 W. Noble	1977		1,780
Cotteral Southwest Portable	2001 W. Noble	1977		1,780

Exhibit 4-11 (continued)

Facility	Address	Yr. built	Yr. Renovated	Sq. Ft.
Faver Alternative School	1021 E. Perkins	1950		16,519
Faver Gym	1021 E. Perkins	1984		4,000
Faver N. Portable	1021 E. Perkins	1986		864
Faver S. Portable	1021 E. Perkins	1986		832
Faver Annex	929 E. Perkins	1975		3,984
Fogarty Elementary School	902 N. Wentz	1937		44,690
Fogarty Annex	902 N. Wentz	2006		4,320
Fogarty N & S Portable	902 N. Wentz	1982		1,440
Fogarty N & S Portable	902 N. Wentz	1982		1,440
Guthrie Upper Elementary (GUES)	702 Crooks Dr.	1989		89,100
Guthrie (GUES) N. Portable	702 Crooks Dr.	2012		864
High School & Gym	200 Crooks Dr.	1967	1971, 1978, 1985	130,000
High School SE Annex	200 Crooks Dr.	1983		3,600
High School Industrial Arts	200 Crooks Dr.	1967		15,000
High School Vo Ag	200 Crooks Dr.	1967		7,500
High School Vo Ag Farm	455 W. Beemer Rd.	2015		2,400
High School Greenhouse	200 Crooks Dr.	1988		2,400
High School Potting Shed	200 Crooks Dr.	1967		880
High School Vo Ag storage Bldg.	200 Crooks Dr.	2007		1,200
HS Track Concession/RR	200 Crooks Dr.	2001		336
Building For Champions	200 Crooks Bldg. 3	2004		5,625
East addition	200 Crooks Bldg. 3	2011		4,500
Jr. High Main Building	705 E. Oklahoma	1924		71,094
Tech Ed	705 E. Oklahoma	1924		8,750
Jr. High Gym	705 E. Oklahoma	1953		15,322
Jr. High Portable Bldg.	705 E. Oklahoma	2010		1,904
Jr. High ISS house	722 E. Harrison	1935		1,485
Storage Bldg. (old Maintenance)	802 E. Oklahoma	1938		3,850
Maintenance Bldg.	200 Crooks Bldg. 4	2005		5,000
Information Technology	200 Crooks Bldg. 5	2005		3,200
Transportation	520 Crooks Dr.	1984		5,000
Transportation Annex	520 Crook Dr.	1986		864
Transportation storage Bldg.	520 Crooks Dr.	2012		1,650
Softball Dressing Rm Portable	200 Crooks Dr.	2003		1,960
Softball Concession & Fence	200 Crooks Dr.	1994		210
Indoor Baseball Facility	317 E. Grant	1952		5,940
Athletic Locker/Dressing	200 E. Springer	1958	2006	2,871
Baseball Grandstands/Press	200 E. Springer	?		60
Football Press box	107 E. Harrison	2006		1,018
Football Home Public Rest Rm.	107 E. Harrison	2006		1,659
Football Visitors Public Rest Rm.	107 E. Harrison	2006		1,659
Football Visitors Locker Rm.	107 E. Harrison	2006		1,620
Total				572,758

Source: GPS insurance carrier's "property schedule" report, April 2015

With the passage of a bond proposal in 2015, the district plans to construct a new elementary school in the southeastern portion of the district to accommodate a growing population in that area. The district elementary schools are currently grade centers. Cotteral has pre-K and Kindergarten students. Central houses first grade students only. Fogarty has second and third grade students. Guthrie Upper Elementary School (GUES) has fourth through sixth grade students. With the construction of the proposed new elementary school, the district is considering reconfiguring the elementary schools to be community elementary schools, each housing all elementary grades from the surrounding neighborhood.

A. FACILITIES PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION

Well-planned facilities are based upon the educational program and on accurate student enrollment projections. The design process should have input from stakeholders including administrators, principals, teachers, security specialists, parents, students, and the maintenance and operations staff. The selection of building materials, interior finishes, hardware, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and other major building components should be made according to life cycle cost analyses for an optimum total cost of construction, operations, and maintenance.

This, coupled with the functional need of providing the best physical learning space possible for students, should lead a district to recognize the absolute necessity of developing, presenting, and implementing a long-range facilities master plan. Failure to implement a long-range facilities master plan will eventually lead to dissatisfaction and facility concerns.

Having a long-range facilities master plan will ensure that building projects are prioritized, begun, and completed according to a studied, developed, and logical process. As administrators, faculty, staff, and school board members change, having a long-range facilities master plan will add stability and cohesiveness to the district's construction, use, and management of facilities.

A school district's long-range facilities master plan is a compilation of district policies, information, and statistical data that provide a basis for providing educational facilities to meet the changing needs of a community. A valuable resource in developing a quality long-range facilities master plan can be obtained from the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE), formerly CEFPI.² Effective long-range school facilities master planning incorporate the following elements:

- **Facility Capacity:** Districts establish the capacity of each school facility by setting standards that govern student/teacher ratios and the amount of square feet required per student in a classroom. These standards deal with the minimum size of core facilities, such as classrooms, gyms, cafeterias, and libraries, so that schools do not overload these facilities or overuse portable classrooms.

² Council of Educational Facility Planners International. (2004). *Creating Connections: The CEFPI Guide for Educational Facility Planning*. Contact Edi Francesconi at 480.391.0840 to purchase a copy.

In 2008, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) published the second edition of *Planning for Education: Space Guidelines for Planning Educational Facilities*.³ The guidelines were developed to assist local school boards, school administrators, architects, engineers, and planners in planning and designing educational facilities. The guidelines arrange space information by the major activities of instructional spaces, auxiliary spaces, and service and structure spaces for the various grade ranges. They also provide suggested methods of calculating preliminary net and gross square footage for school buildings by grade and major activity. Another excellent resource for facility construction is *An Administrator's Guide to School Construction Projects*, also published by SDE.⁴

- **Facility Inventory:** An accurate facility inventory is an essential tool in managing the use of school facilities. The inventory identifies the use and size of each room, which enables planners to accurately set the capacity of each school. Modifications to schools are noted in the inventory so it can be kept up to date.
- **Enrollment Projections:** Effective planning requires accurate enrollment projections at least five years into the future (**Appendix E**). Accurate projections require planners to examine district demographics and track any new construction activity in the district. Many school planners work in coordination with county and city planners to track growth patterns.
- **Capital improvement program:** Effective planning requires the district to anticipate its future needs and balance these against expected resources. A capital improvement program charts future improvements to school facilities and identifies funding sources for them. An effective planning process involves the community at large, identifies district goals and objectives, and prioritizes projects based upon those goals and objectives.
- **Facilities Maintenance Plan:** School facility planning necessitates identifying links between facilities maintenance and facilities construction and renovation. Capital outlay for school construction is generally a more palatable proposition for taxpayers and public officials when a school system demonstrates that existing facilities receive appropriate care and maintenance. Good plans include short- and long-term objectives, budgets, and timelines – all of which demonstrate organizational commitment to facilities maintenance.

FINDING 4-1

In 2015, the district passed a bond proposal for facilities improvements and construction of a new elementary school. This was the first successful bond proposal in 10 years.

Exhibit 4-12 provides the five-year trend in calculated total assessed property valuations for Guthrie Public Schools and its peer districts. As shown, GPS and all of its peers saw increases in property valuations; however, GPS's increase was smaller than all peers and the peer average. Additionally, GPS's annual increases closely matched those of the peer districts with the exception of 2013-14, which saw GPS total assessed property valuation fall.

³ <http://digitalprairie.ok.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/stgovpub/id/9456/rec/4>

⁴ <http://ok.gov/EQA/sites/ok.gov.EQA/files/CI-AdministratorsGuide.pdf>

Exhibit 4-12
Trend in Total Assessed Property Valuation by Year

School District	Total Assessed Property Valuation					Percent Change
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	
Guthrie	\$121,514,974	\$122,428,632	\$123,871,801	\$129,988,512	\$126,666,452	4.2%▲
Altus	\$75,576,833	\$78,466,230	\$82,104,252	\$81,819,645	\$84,854,894	12.3%▲
Guymon	\$62,771,517	\$63,588,216	\$65,654,283	\$67,537,857	\$70,026,677	11.6%▲
Noble	\$88,300,004	\$94,534,042	\$96,568,842	\$98,630,679	\$100,372,302	13.7%▲
Tahlequah	\$98,819,540	\$102,888,065	\$104,821,976	\$123,847,963	\$130,464,764	32.0%▲
Woodward	\$118,402,931	\$135,903,720	\$139,145,552	\$149,358,562	\$153,378,076	29.5%▲
Peer Average	\$88,774,165	\$95,076,055	\$97,658,981	\$104,238,941	\$107,819,343	21.5%▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database, December 2015

Although the total valuation increased between 2009-10 and 2013-14, the average assessed property value per student for Guthrie decreased by 2.9 percent (**Exhibit 4-13**). This was the only decrease among the peers and the state.

Exhibit 4-13
Trend in Assessed Property Value per Student

Entity	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$37,115	\$37,212	\$37,506	\$37,692	\$36,044	(2.9%)▼
Altus	\$22,288	\$24,546	\$25,350	\$25,818	\$27,049	21.4%▲
Guymon	\$36,652	\$36,500	\$37,386	\$44,061	\$46,084	25.7%▲
Noble	\$21,443	\$21,805	\$23,239	\$23,857	\$24,618	14.8%▲
Tahlequah	\$21,707	\$21,944	\$23,300	\$23,239	\$24,394	12.4%▲
Woodward	\$45,225	\$51,083	\$51,302	\$52,942	\$51,242	13.3%▲
State	\$39,903	\$41,038	\$42,215	\$43,631	\$45,248	13.4%▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database, December 2015

Exhibit 4-14 provides the debt service expenditures per student for Guthrie and the peers. As shown, Guthrie and Altus had no debt service in 2013-14.

Exhibit 1-14
Debt Service per Student 2013-14

Entity	Debt Service per Student
Guthrie	\$0
Altus	\$0
Guymon	\$274
Noble	\$448
Tahlequah	\$723
Woodward	\$578
Peer Average	\$405

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database, December 2015

Oklahoma school district bonding capacity is capped at 10 percent of the assessed property valuation, which includes real, personal, and public service property, minus homeowner's exemptions. **Exhibit 4-15** shows the calculated bonding capacities of GPS and its peers. GPS had the third highest bonding capacity among its peers in 2013-14, with a capacity that was nearly \$2 million more than the peer average.

Exhibit 4-15
Bonding Capacity Based On Total Assessed Property Valuation 2013-14

School District	ADM	Average Property Valuation per ADM	Total Assessed Property Valuation (Calculated)	District Bonding Capacity = 10% of Assessed Property Valuation (Calculated)
Guthrie	3,514.3	\$36,044	\$126,666,452	\$12,666,645
Altus	3,478.5	\$24,394	\$84,854,894	\$8,485,489
Guymon	2,844.5	\$24,618	\$70,026,677	\$7,002,668
Noble	3,710.8	\$27,049	\$100,372,302	\$10,037,230
Tahlequah	2,831.0	\$46,084	\$130,464,764	\$13,046,476
Woodward	2,993.2	\$51,242	\$153,378,076	\$15,337,808
Peer Average	3,171.6	\$34,677	\$107,819,343	\$10,781,934

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database, December 2015

Since 1977, GPS has conducted a total of 18 bond propositions. The bond propositions that passed in 1977, 1987, 1996, 2003 (two propositions), 2005, and 2015 had an average of 70.7 percent voter approval compared to the ten propositions that failed with an average of only 47 percent voter approval. The State of Oklahoma requires a super-majority of 60 percent voter approval to pass a bond proposition. Three of the failed bond propositions received less than 50 percent approval. **Exhibit 4-16** provides a list of the bond elections conducted since 1977.

Exhibit 4-16
GPS Bond Election History

Bond Election Year	Proposed Amount	Proposed Bond Scope	Pass/Fail	Passed Approval Vote %	Failed Approval Vote %
1977	\$1,500,000	9th Grade Wing of High School and Tennis Courts	Pass	77%	
1987	\$4,000,000	Construction of GUES	Pass	64%	
1996	\$4,400,000	HVAC at Cotteral, Central and Fogarty, New Track	Pass	72%	
1999	\$1,970,000	Cotteral renovations and classroom expansion to eliminate portables	Fail		42%
2002	\$5,000,000	High School renovations, Elementary Classrooms	Fail		51%
2003	\$3,800,000	High School Roof	Pass	73%	
2003	\$1,000,000	Paid off Leases on Buses (many still in use)	Pass	68%	
2005	\$4,850,000	Jelsma Stadium Renovation, Classrooms at Central and Fogarty, Maint. & Trans. Bldgs.	Pass	64%	
2005	\$655,000	Artificial Turf for Jelsma Stadium	Fail		53%
2007	\$16,850,000	Junior High Renovation	Fail		50%
2007	\$31,370,000	Junior High Renovation, Southern Elementary, Convert GUES to Middle School	Fail		24%
2008	\$5,560,000	Junior High Renovation	Fail		58%
2008	\$2,270,000	Junior High Gym Renovation, Districtwide Technology	Fail		55%
2008	\$1,400,000	High School HVAC and Pave Parking Lots	Fail		54%
2009	\$5,835,000	Junior High Renovation	Fail		57%
2010	\$89,745,000	New High School and modify High School to be a Middle School	Fail		22%
2014	\$2,400,000	Roofs for 3 Elementary Schools, Districtwide Technology	Fail		53%
2015	\$16,200,000	Facilities Renovations, Construction of a New Elementary School	Pass	77%	
Average	\$10,741,471			71%	47%

Source: GPS Data, December 2015

The district passed a bond proposition in 2015 for \$16,200,000 to fund district-wide construction needs and to build a new elementary school in the southeast area of the district. Fourteen of the 15 precincts approved the bond initiative. **Exhibit 4-17** shows the timeline the district has released for the three series in this bond initiative.

Exhibit 4-17
GPS 2015 Bond Timeline

Date/Anticipated Date	Action
July 13, 2015	Series I Bond Sale \$2 million
August 20, 2015	\$2 million in bond funds become available for GPS
Early September 2015	Open sealed bids for Phase I
Mid-September 2015	Accept bids at regular meeting of Board of Education
October/November 2015	Begin Phase I
April/May 2016	Stakeholder input on Southern Elementary School Design/Development
Summer 2016	Phase I completed
July 2016	Series II Bond Sale \$11.5 million
August 2016	\$11.5 million in bond funds become available for GPS
November 2016	First Property Tax Statements with increased millage are sent out
December 2016	Open and accept bids for Southern Elementary School
January 2017	Southern Elementary School construction begins
July 2017	Series Bond III Sale \$2.7 million
August 2017	\$2.7 million becomes available for GPS
September 2017	Technology/Safety Updates begin
Summer 2018	Phase III Renovations Begin
Fall 2018	Southern Elementary School Opens

Source: GPS, December 2015

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for engaging community members to achieve the first successful bond proposal in 10 years.

FINDING 4-2

The district has successfully preserved some of its historic facilities. GPS repurposed the Capitol School building. Originally built in 1935 by the WPA as the Capitol Elementary School, the building today houses the district administration and boardroom (**Exhibit 4-18**). The building lies within the Guthrie Historic District, bounded roughly by 14th, College Avenue, Pine Street, and Lincoln Avenue.

Guthrie Public Schools renovated Jelsma Stadium, a WPA project also located in the Guthrie Historic District. The bond proposition that passed in 2005 was used for the Jelsma Stadium renovation along with classrooms at Central and Fogarty Elementary Schools and construction of the maintenance and transportation buildings.

Exhibit 4-18
Capitol School Building Now Serves as the GPS District Administration Building



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/19848639@n04/3264712564>

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for preserving the historic Capitol Elementary School and renovating Jelsma Stadium.

FINDING 4-3

Several areas in GPS schools have murals which contribute to a positive ambiance in those buildings. During the site visit, the consulting team found excellent examples of murals adorning various walls in Central and Cottler Elementary Schools, and Faver Alternative High School (**Exhibits 4-19** through **4-25**). Ceiling art was found in the GUES library (**Exhibit 4-26**).

Exhibit 4-19
Wall Art in Faver Alternative High
Computer Room



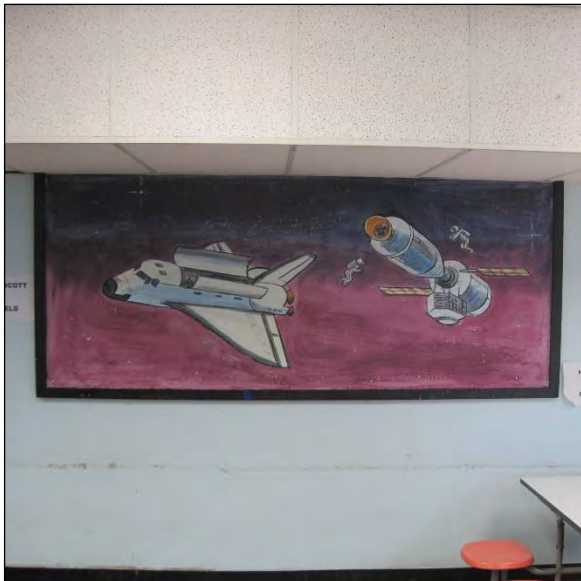
Source: Prismatic, January, 2016

Exhibit 4-20
Wall Art in the Cottler Elementary
Cafeteria



Source: Prismatic, January, 2016

Exhibit 4-21
Wall Art in Cottler Elementary
Cafeteria



Source: Prismatic, January, 2016

Exhibit 4-22
Wall Art in Cottler Elementary
Cafeteria



Source: Prismatic, January, 2016

Exhibit 4-23
Wall Art in Central Elementary Media Center



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-24
Wall Art in Central Elementary Media Center



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-25
Wall Art in Central Elementary Cafeteria



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-26
Ceiling Art in GUES Library



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Wall art provides visual stimulation and is an attractive addition to otherwise potentially drab surroundings. Research notes:

Since the 1950's, researchers have known that visually unattractive rooms produce feelings of discontent, fatigue and a desire to escape (Maslow & Mintz, 1956). More recently an ever-growing body of research concludes that soft aspects of a classroom, such as climate, color palette of walls and wall decorations, adjustable lighting systems, and seating have the ability to positively influence students' emotions and have important effects on students' attitudes and behaviors such as attendance, class participation, and rapport with the instructor (Graetz, 2006; Sommer & Olsen, 1980; Wong et al., 1992).⁵

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for using well-executed wall art in some of its facilities.

FINDING 4-4

The district does not have a long-range strategic plan which would include a long-range facilities master plan. The district established a Long Range Planning Committee in 2013 with a focus on facilities improvements. The committee was composed of citizens from all different backgrounds with an objective of analyzing needs and brainstorming for the district. The goals of the committee were to:

- become familiar with the current state of facilities as well as past bond issue history;
- identify and prioritize the physical needs of the school district for the next five to 10 years;
- examine funding options to meet the identified physical needs;
- develop recommendations for the future plans of the school district; and
- present the recommendations to the Board of Education.

The committee toured each of the district's facilities and presented a report to the board of education on June 10, 2013. Since reporting, the GPS committee has not conducted any further work.

Reported priorities of the committee were:

Priority #1 – Construct an elementary school in the southern portion of the school district. Since this is the area of greatest student growth, the location will assist the district in addressing overcrowding at elementary sites. Hopefully, this action will allow closure of at least one of our oldest elementary sites.

Priority #2 – With the opening of the elementary site in the southern portion of the school district, begin a system where attendance at an elementary site is based on geography determined by attendance zones.

⁵ Hubenthal, M., & O'Brien, T. (2009). *Revisiting Your Classroom's Walls: The pedagogical power of posters*. Retrieved from: https://www.iris.edu/hq/files/programs/education_and_outreach/poster_pilot/Poster_Guide_v2a.pdf

Priority #3 – Commission an architectural/engineering feasibility study for the current Junior High School building. The goal of the study will be to better determine a cost/benefit analysis of renovation as an expanded school site or the need of a new site for the Junior High School.

Priority #4 – Continue to maintain our oldest sites (Cotteral, Central, Fogarty, Junior High, Faver and Administration) while they are open through the building fund. Seek additional funds from taxpayers to enhance our infrastructure and maintain our two newest sites (High School built in 1967 and GUES built in 1989) which are in need of further attention for long-term sustainability.

The committee stated five goals for GPS capital planning:

Goal #1 – We must begin to address maintenance items at the newest sites. The High School is in need of electrical, plumbing and HVAC upgrades, while GUES is in need of a new roof.

Goal #2 – Develop a purchase rotation of school buses which includes 10 new buses every three years.

Goal #3 – Improve our technology access for each teacher by providing laptops.

Goal #4 – Improve our technology access for each student by developing a rotation purchase of desktop computers for the secondary sites so no computer is over five years old.

Goal #5 – Provide a safety seal for glass on the sites we are planning to maintain.

The committee discussed educational facility obsolescence and how it is difficult to effectively serve students with facilities in their present condition:

Cotteral—utilizes numerous portable buildings many of which are at the end of their life. Due to the numerous outbuildings, securing the student spaces is quite difficult. This building would be cost prohibitive to bring to current accessibility standards. The proximity to a state highway is also a safety concern.

Central—is in the best condition of the three but lacks the necessary space to effectively serve elementary students with a playground. The parking lot south of the building is not owned by the district. The proximity to a state highway provides a safety concern.

Fogarty—utilizes numerous portable buildings that create challenges to provide a secure environment for students. This building would be cost prohibitive to bring to current accessibility standards. The proximity to a state highway is a safety concern.

Facility planning, by necessity, involves a current condition assessment of buildings and structures to provide a baseline from which a facilities master plan can be developed. The current condition would include an assessment of the facilities and their student capacity, a realistic enrollment projection, and a defined concept for construction and development for at least a ten year window into the future. In addition to The CEFPI Guide for Educational Facility Planning, the Seattle [Washington] Public Schools' 2012 Facilities Master Plan is a superb example of a

well-thought-out and researched plan for the future.⁶

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a long-range facilities planning committee and, in conjunction with the development of a strategic plan, develop a long-range facilities master plan.

While some initial steps were taken in 2013, the district lacks a complete plan. There are two steps that are vital for continuing the process for developing a facilities master plan. First, the district must take stock of what it currently has in the way of facilities, with a detailed analysis of the condition of each of its facilities. Second, an accurate and realistic student enrollment projection will be necessary to weigh against the capacity of facilities. For the facilities assessment, it may be necessary to contract with an engineering firm that can assess not only the soundness of a facility's structures but also the remaining longevity of a facility's mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

To identify trends and prepare for adequate facilities, equipment, and teachers, there are several methods in use for projecting enrollment. Some of the most commonly-used models are average percentage annual increase, cohort survival, linear regression, and student-per-housing unit. It is important to understand that all enrollment projection models can only provide estimates of future student enrollment. The district may use the enrollment projections provided by the state, but for a more complete set of projections that also predict lower grade enrollments by utilizing birth records, the district may choose to contract with a company that specializes in school enrollment projections.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost to hire a consulting firm to conduct the facilities assessment could range from \$3,000 to \$50,000. This estimate is based upon the consulting team's experience in the field. The cost to hire a consultant to conduct a demographic study and produce 10-year enrollment projections for all grades could range up to \$6,000. This estimate is from one of the consulting team's partner companies that routinely do this kind of work.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Prepare enrollment projections.	(\$6,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Conduct a facilities assessment.	(\$30,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	(\$36,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 4-5

The district lacks design standards and educational specifications. Without standards and specifications, the district runs the risk of constructing overly expensive schools in the future or constructing new schools that are not appropriately comparable, which could raise concerns of

⁶ <https://www.seattleschools.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=627&pageId=18257>

equity. Without such standards, the district may have inconsistencies in the final design and construction of renovations and new facilities. This could result in inequities between facilities and systems and potential operational cost inefficiencies.

The district plans to spend \$11,500,000 of bond money to construct a new elementary school in the southeast portion of the district. As advertised in the bond initiative, the proposed school is planned to accommodate approximately 500 students with a footprint of approximately 50,000 square feet. The proposed site for the new school is a 25-acre parcel on East Charter Oak Road, one-quarter of a mile east of the Woodcrest Volunteer Fire Department on South Douglas Boulevard.

Many districts in the United States have developed design and construction standards as part of their overall long-range facility master plans. These standards typically include requirements to use specified types of building materials for similar spaces such as carpet for certain types of classrooms, vinyl composition tile for science labs, etc. Oklahoma has promulgated numerous facility guidelines and standards for the construction of educational facilities; these include minimum square footage guidelines for classroom sizes in elementary and secondary schools. Desirable elements in design standards include:

- minimum square footage and/or dimensions for primary programmed building spaces such as classrooms, computer labs, science labs, instrumental music, vocal music, vocational classrooms and shops, physical education spaces, libraries, restrooms, kitchen, and dining areas;
- number of students each space is designed to accommodate;
- secondary spaces to be included in the overall building design such as workrooms, administration areas, counselor and nursing areas, student commons, mechanical rooms, service closets, custodial closets, store rooms, etc.;
- types of wall, floor, and ceiling material to be used in the various programmed spaces;
- furniture and equipment to be furnished by the district such as desks, chairs, tables, computers, printers/copy machines, and interactive whiteboards;
- fixtures, furniture, and equipment to be furnished in construction contract such as upper and lower cabinets and countertops;
- specific HVAC, plumbing, and electrical requirements, such as electrical outlets and sinks, for various programmed spaces;
- technology requirements to include number of computers, printers, data, and voice networking;
- acoustical requirements, especially for music rooms and gymnasiums;
- space adjacency, such as science prep rooms directly adjacent to science labs and art labs with window exposures to the north;

- material manufacturers and model numbers that are approved to be used in the district for door hardware, plumbing fixtures, HVAC equipment, lighting fixtures, communication systems, and security systems; and
- general requirements such as total number of student, staff, and visitor parking spaces, bus driveway and canopy requirements, and special needs access requirements.

Districts that implement these various standards for design, construction, and educational specifications are better able to provide equitable school facilities across the district. “Educational specifications” is a term referencing the programming of spaces needed to support the educational programs and curriculum to be taught within a school facility. Cost efficiencies are able to be achieved through the use of standard types of materials and systems. By standardizing the various building materials and components, maintenance and custodial staff members can be more effective in the performance of their duties because they are familiar with the maintenance, operational, and cleaning requirements of these systems and materials.

A source of design guidelines for planning new school facilities is published by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS).⁷ School districts can become members of CHPS free of charge. Numerous school districts across the country are members.

RECOMMENDATION

Include design standards and programmatic square footages within published guidelines for square footage per student in planning for the new elementary school and later construction renovation projects.

Moving forward, development of districtwide design standards and educational specifications should be addressed by the facilities master planning committee. As part of the development of a long-range facilities master plan, the district should contact other districts to obtain sample educational specifications that address programmatic square footage allocations for building spaces. This would enable the district to have a base program to build from in meeting with teachers, administrators, and architects when designing new facilities or additions and renovations to existing facilities. This will also assist the district in comparing their existing facilities to determine what improvements are needed to bring these buildings up to the agreed-upon programmatic square footages.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

⁷ <http://www.chps.net/dev/Drupal/node>

FINDING 4-6

The district has not created a comprehensive database of critical information for each of its facilities. The director of facilities maintains all of the building plans that are available. Many of the original plans for WPA structures and earlier buildings have been lost to time, but plans for more recent additions, renovations, and constructions are available.

GPS has several additional documents that contain basic facilities information, but staff does not maintain facility records that would enable leaders to effectively develop and maintain a long-range facilities master plan. Not having this critical information, GPS is at risk for incurring additional costs related to future renovations/additions projects that may be included in a future bond election. In addition, GPS could have increased maintenance costs due to lack of information on warranties, operations, and maintenance manuals.

A basic facilities database would include:

- building year built, dates of major renovations, and square footages;
- building construction and renovation history with a description of work performed and associated costs;
- work order history;
- furniture and playground equipment inventory;
- parking data;
- room utilization chart;
- schematics and building systems; and
- warranty history and data for building components and equipment for HVAC, electrical, and plumbing systems.

As an example, Broken Arrow Public Schools (BAPS) developed a standard format for compiling historical records for each facility within the district. This critical information is inserted into three-ring binders and tabbed in an organized format in 15 sections. Each of the sections contains various types of information including spreadsheets, photographs, etc. to document the history and condition of each BAPS facility (**Exhibit 4-28**). A similar gathering of documents could be maintained electronically as well.

Exhibit 4-28**Sample Format of Facility Historical Records Maintained in Broken Arrow Public Schools**

1. **Executive Summary on Facility Needs:** An overall executive summary of the facility, along with recent recommendations/analysis performed.
2. **Facility Analysis – Interior and Exterior:** A principal’s facility review form that lists the various facility functions and key design elements, along with a rating from 1-5 (low to high) for each with a comment section.
3. **Photo Analysis of School Site:** Photographs of the school site, buildings, etc.
4. **Demographics:** Enrollment projections for campus.
5. **Parking:** Spreadsheet that includes: enrollment data; total staff; total number of visitor and handicap spaces; number of special events; and number of cars on adjacent streets.
6. **Playground:** Assessment sheet that includes: listing of playground equipment; brand name and model number; type of materials; year installed; cost; condition of equipment; type of fill material and border; comments; and recommendation section.
7. **Furniture:** An inventory of the building’s standard classrooms that includes: type of furniture and equipment; quantity; age; condition; and estimated replacement costs.
8. **Facility History:** Copies of floor plans from original construction and additions; year of construction; square footage; and modular classroom locations.
9. **History – Bond & Building Fund:** Spreadsheet that includes: the history of past bond issue projects; year of bond issue; project description; and estimated costs.
10. **Work Order History:** Printouts of work order history for the facility.
11. **Current Room Utilization:** Spreadsheet that includes: total number of classrooms; how each is used; by room analysis of student occupancy per hour/per day; and a comments section.
12. **Security Cameras:** Spreadsheet that includes: quantity of existing cameras; future new cameras; locations and/or descriptions; and floor plan indicating locations.
13. **HVAC/Painting:** Spreadsheet that itemizes for HVAC/Electrical/Plumbing Systems: year installed; last major replacement/upgrade; number of repairs over a three-year period; and the next scheduled replacement year. Painting projects listing includes: year of last painting; area last painted; cost of painting project; and the next scheduled repainting.
14. **Roofing:** Spreadsheet that includes: age of roof; year of last roof or roof section update; repair history over three year period; and the next scheduled replacement.
15. **Insurance Analysis:** Analysis performed by the district’s insurance carrier as to the buildings history, size, type of construction, and replacement cost analysis.

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Broken Arrow Public Schools Performance Review, September 2010

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a comprehensive database to maintain accurate records of all facilities and properties.

By maintaining facility records in an organized format such as this, GPS would be able to update information efficiently when facility repairs, upgrades, etc., are performed. A comprehensive facilities database would enable the district to be more effective in developing, maintaining, and updating the district's long-range facilities master plan.

The director of facilities should compile all available facility records in an organized format and then determine what data remain to be developed. This database will help the district maintain and update its long-range facilities master plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-7

Central Elementary School has carpet tiles in its classrooms (**Exhibit 4-29**). When carpet tiles become soiled, they are removed, sent to a professional dry cleaning company, returned, and reinstalled. The addition of carpet tiles in the classrooms has improved room acoustics and reduced the number of injuries due to falls. The carpet tiles look great, and with the ease of tile exchange, provide an easier floor to maintain overall.

Exhibit 4-29
Carpet Tiles in Central Elementary Classrooms



Source: Prismatic, January, 2016

Compared to their traditional counterparts, carpet tiles can be installed by district maintenance staff. They do not require stretching or kicking as wall-to-wall carpeting does. Carpet tiles allow custodial staff to remove one damaged or soiled tile and replace it with another tile quickly and cost-effectively.

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for using carpet tiles that can be exchanged, cleaned, and reused.

B. MAINTENANCE AND CUSTODIAL OPERATIONS

The objective in maintaining and cleaning school facilities is to provide safe and cost-effective buildings, a sound educational environment, increased longevity of buildings and equipment, and the protection of school property. The maintenance and cleaning of the facilities must be accomplished in an efficient and effective manner in order to provide a safe and secure environment that supports the educational program and reflects proper stewardship for district resources.

Efficiencies and economies of maintenance and cleaning are critical to ensure that resources for direct instruction are maximized. However, extreme actions to reduce the cost of maintenance and cleaning can result in higher than acceptable costs of repair and replacement in the years to come. Consequently, a balance must be achieved between reasonable economies and unreasonable cost-cutting.

Maintenance

The proper maintenance of facilities is critical to ensuring support for an effective instructional program. Research has shown that appropriate heating and cooling levels, building and room appearances, the condition of restrooms and other facilities, as well as occupant safety, all impact how students and staff members are able to carry out their respective responsibilities.

Ineffective or inadequate maintenance provisions have proven to lead to increased costs of facility operations by shortening the useful life span of equipment and buildings. Many school districts have adopted rigorous preventive maintenance programs. They maintain a record of the performance of equipment and the costs of regular maintenance in order to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

The district's operations and maintenance expenditures over the past five years as compared to the peer districts are shown in **Exhibit 4-30**. GPS's O & M expenditures increased by 22.7 percent over the time period, which was just below the peer average increase of 24.5 percent.

Exhibit 4-30
Trend in Operations and Maintenance Expenditures

Entity	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$2,258,987	\$2,435,767	\$2,678,030	\$2,591,496	\$2,771,340	22.7%▲
Altus	\$2,505,787	\$2,759,058	\$2,892,560	\$2,738,236	\$2,542,871	1.5%▲
Guymon	\$2,042,043	\$2,424,527	\$2,620,114	\$2,468,153	\$3,227,683	58.1%▲
Noble	\$2,077,161	\$2,559,348	\$2,422,089	\$2,331,681	\$1,977,698	(4.8%)▼
Tahlequah	\$2,658,605	\$2,582,390	\$3,126,369	\$3,971,574	\$3,485,404	31.1%▲
Woodward	\$1,793,547	\$1,750,954	\$1,859,089	\$2,707,711	\$2,562,347	42.9%▲
Peer Average	\$2,215,429	\$2,415,255	\$2,584,044	\$2,843,471	\$2,759,201	24.5%▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2011-2015, and Prismatic calculations

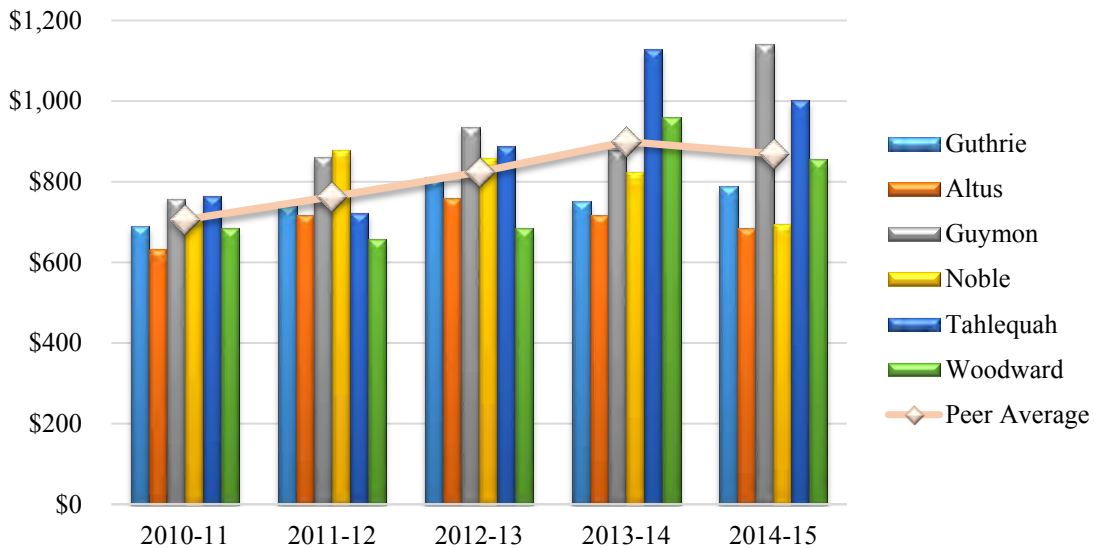
For per-student expenditures of maintenance and operations funds from 2010-11 to 2014-15, GPS's increase was the lowest among the peers (**Exhibit 4-31**). However, GPS expenditures per student were less than the peer average in every year of the five-year period (**Exhibit 4-32**).

Exhibit 4-31
Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures per Student

Entity	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$690	\$740	\$811	\$751	\$789	8.9%▲
Altus	\$632	\$716	\$759	\$717	\$685	13.3%▲
Guymon	\$757	\$860	\$934	\$878	\$1,140	15.9%▲
Noble	\$710	\$878	\$857	\$824	\$695	16.1%▲
Tahlequah	\$764	\$722	\$887	\$1,128	\$1,002	47.7%▲
Woodward	\$685	\$658	\$685	\$960	\$856	40.1%▲
Peer Average	\$706	\$763	\$824	\$900	\$870	27.4%▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2011-2015 and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 4-32
Comparison of Maintenance and Operations Expenditures per Student over Time



Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2011-2015, and Prismatic calculations

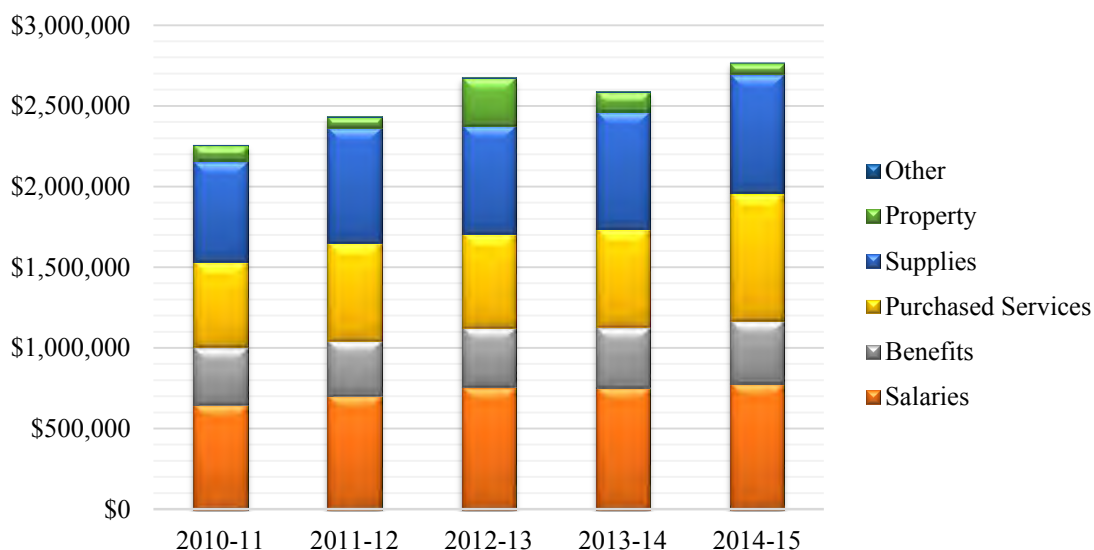
Exhibit 4-33 shows GPS maintenance and operations expenditure amounts by category over time. All categories except “property” and “other” generally increased in each year of the period. Property expenditures increased in 2012-13 and then decreased in 2014-15. Other expenditures declined in 2011-12 and then increased in 2014-15. The same data are shown graphically in **Exhibit 4-34**.

Exhibit 4-33
Trend in GPS Maintenance and Operations Expenditures, All Funds

Expenditure by Category	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Salaries	\$650,100	\$704,284	\$757,377	\$754,461	\$782,437	20.4% ▲
Benefits	\$356,083	\$343,913	\$368,477	\$376,690	\$387,122	8.7% ▲
Purchased Services	\$528,457	\$603,905	\$582,269	\$609,204	\$792,489	50.0% ▲
Supplies	\$622,897	\$716,916	\$671,975	\$726,759	\$736,445	18.2% ▲
Property	\$99,266	\$66,596	\$297,155	\$124,263	\$69,161	(30.3%) ▼
Other	\$2,184	\$154	\$777	\$120	\$3,687	68.8% ▲
Total	\$2,258,987	\$2,435,767	\$2,678,030	\$2,591,496	\$2,771,340	22.7% ▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2011-2015, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 4-34
Trend in GPS Maintenance and Operations Expenditures



Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2011-2015, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 4-35 shows GPS maintenance and operations expenditure amounts by fund over time. As shown, expenditures in each fund except for the school activity fund increased over the five years.

Exhibit 4-35
GPS Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures by Fund

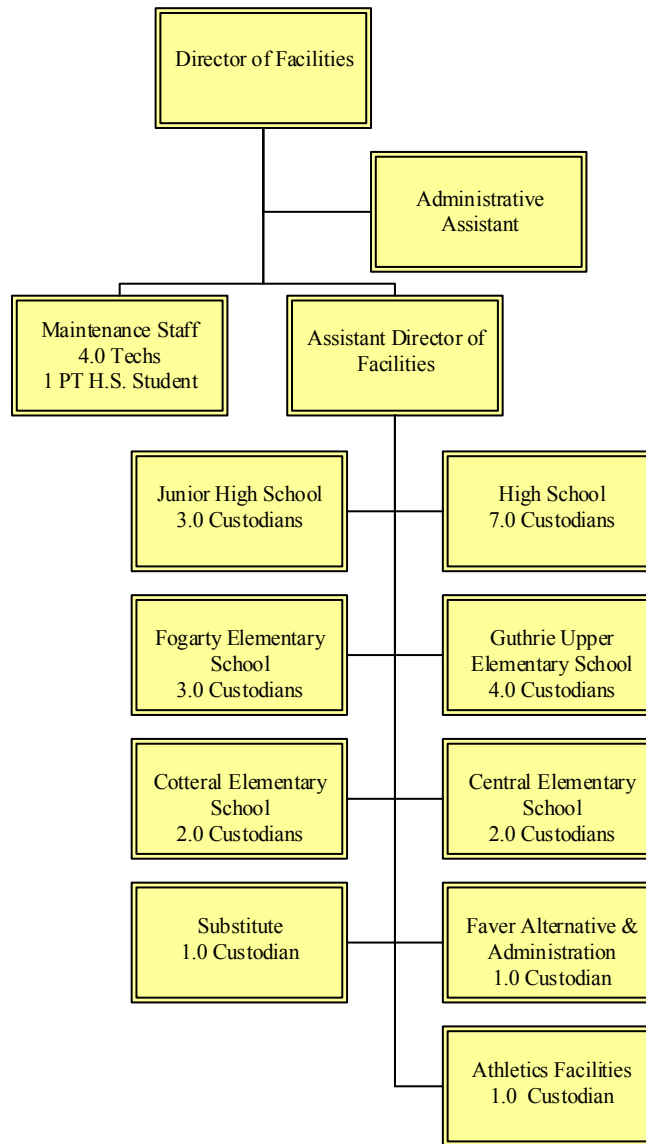
Fund	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
General Fund	\$1,804,089	\$1,941,385	\$2,124,872	\$2,005,471	\$2,111,106	17.0%▲
Building Fund	\$442,444	\$477,188	\$530,485	\$568,843	\$626,208	41.5%▲
School Activity Fund	\$3,179	\$9,195	\$14,573	\$17,182	\$30,013	844.0%▲
Trust & Agency Funds	\$9,275	\$8,000	\$8,100	\$0	\$4,013	(56.7%)▼
All Funds	\$2,258,987	\$2,435,767	\$2,678,030	\$2,591,496	\$2,771,340	22.7%▲

Note: Column sums may not match the total shown due to rounding.

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2011-2015, and Prismatic calculations

The Guthrie maintenance organization is shown in **Exhibit 4-36**. The director of facilities is responsible for supervising both maintenance and custodial support staff. Custodial staff report to the director of facilities for administrative and training purposes through the assistant director of facilities. Custodians report to their respective principal for day-to-day operations.

**Exhibit 4-36
Guthrie Maintenance Organizational Structure**



Source: Created by Prismatic, February 2016

FINDING 4-8

The district uses a computerized maintenance management system for work order entry and processing. GPS procured SchoolDude computerized maintenance management system several years ago for use in the maintenance department. This software allows end users (teachers, custodians, and other support staff) to enter work requests from their desktop computers. The work requests are then routed to the principal or other appropriate supervisor for approval or disapproval. When approved, the work request is routed to the maintenance department secretary. The work request is printed out and given to a maintenance technician for completion.

The consulting team obtained two SchoolDude reports: a “work order summary” report and a “work in progress” report, both printed on January 26, 2016. The work order summary report (all open work orders) contained 88 open work orders with an average age of 59 days. The work in progress report (all open work orders over 30 days old) contained 39 open work orders with an average age of 104 days. The oldest work order, from Central Elementary, to move a projector screen to a new location in the classroom, was 319 days old. When questioned by the consulting team about the work order and what had been done, the director of facilities stated that it had been determined that it would be infeasible to move the projector screen because of power requirements. There was no reason given for why the work order had not been cancelled. Another work order, a leaking toilet in the maintenance department, was shown as being 284 days old.

The importance of using computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS) in a school district cannot be overemphasized. A fully-implemented CMMS allows for standardization of all information and assessments of equipment reliability and performance using measures such as:

- Down Time (DT)
- Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF)
- Mean Time To Repair (MTTR)
- Life Cycle Cost (LCC)

It can be used to identify user training needs based on failures due to user error and track maintenance staff performance. A CMMS minimizes equipment downtime because it improves maintenance practices and aids maintenance staff in responding faster.

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for implementing SchoolDude computerized maintenance management system.

Moving forward, district staff should make greater use of the “canned” reports available in SchoolDude to analyze department progress over time.

FINDING 4-9

The district does not have a preventive maintenance program. Objective A4 in the district's safety plan is to "Perform preventive maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer of the equipment. [and] Check the condition of all critical parts of the equipment."⁸ However, other than changing filters periodically, there is no mechanism to schedule, assign, track, and report back on preventive maintenance actions. A preventive maintenance program is a necessary part of a viable facility maintenance program. In turn, a facility maintenance program provides critical data input to the facility master plan.

Without a preventive maintenance program, it is impossible to schedule maintenance activities so as to prevent equipment breakdowns. A strong preventive maintenance program is essential to the smooth operation of any facility.

In the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) publication *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities*, Chapter 5 contains an excellent discussion as to why preventive maintenance is so important. Included in the guide are topics such as maintenance checklists, preventive maintenance, job descriptions, employee training, managing supplies, and employee evaluations:

Under the guise of "saving money", many school districts (and other organizations for that matter) practice what is known as "breakdown maintenance"- a maintenance program in which nothing is done to a piece of equipment until it breaks down. And then, after the equipment breaks, the least expensive repair option is used to return the equipment to service. While this may sound like a cost-saving approach to maintenance, precisely the opposite is true.

Breakdown maintenance defers repairs and allows damage to accumulate, compounding an organization's problems. On the other hand, regularly scheduled equipment maintenance not only prevents sudden and unexpected equipment failure, but also reduces the overall life-cycle cost of the building.

Maintenance entails much more than just fixing broken equipment. In fact, a well-designed facility management system generally encompasses four categories of maintenance: emergency (or response) maintenance, routine maintenance, preventive maintenance, and predictive maintenance. The one everyone dreads is emergency maintenance (the air conditioner fails on the warmest day of the year or the main water line breaks and floods the lunchroom). When the pencil sharpener in Room 12 finally needs to be replaced, that is routine maintenance. Preventive maintenance is the scheduled maintenance of a piece of equipment (such as the replacement of air conditioner filters every 10 weeks or the semiannual inspection of the water fountains). Finally, the cutting edge of facility management is now predictive maintenance, which

⁸ Guthrie Public Schools Safety Plan, page 5.

uses sophisticated computer software to forecast the failure of equipment based on age, user demand, and performance measures.”⁹

A complete maintenance program involves the following elements:

- timely attention to emergency and corrective maintenance conditions. Emergency and corrective maintenance occur when equipment fails, typically requiring more time and resources to correct than preventive maintenance;
- a preventive maintenance program to keep equipment running at peak efficiencies, to avoid equipment breakdowns, and to prevent minor problems from escalating into major ones; and
- a long-range plan to address HVAC, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and low-voltage systems and/or component replacements required at the end of their expected useful life. The plan will typically indicate the current age of the components, what year to expect replacements to occur, and anticipated costs using a Consumer Price Index multiplier or estimated inflation rate.

As an example, Spring Independent School District (SISD) in Texas developed a comprehensive preventive maintenance program that includes the maintenance schedules shown in **Exhibit 4-37**. This schedule could be modified to meet the needs of GPS.

⁹ <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/maintenance/chapter5.asp>

Exhibit 4-37
SISD Preventive Maintenance Program Schedule

Preventive Maintenance Activity	Activity Frequency
Clean A/C unit filters	Bi-monthly
Change A/C unit filters	3 to 12 week intervals
Clean chiller condenser coils	Bi-annually
Clean fan coil and air handler evaporator coils	Annually
Clean ice machine condenser coils	Every 4 months
Inspect and capacity test chillers	Annually
Change chiller compressor oil and cores	Every 2 years
Check chemical levels in closed loop chilled and hot water piping	Monthly
Clean grease traps	Every 3 months
Inspect and test boilers	Annually
Check roofs, downspouts, and gutters	Monthly, repair as needed – 20 year roof warranty
Inspect exterior lighting	Semi-annually
Inspect elementary play gym lighting	Annually
Inspect and clean gym gas heaters	Annually
Inspect playground equipment	Monthly, repair as needed
Clean fire alarm system smoke detectors	Semi-annually
Inspect all interior and exterior bleachers	Annually, repair as needed
Clean, tighten, and lubricate roll out bleachers	Annually
Check exterior building and concrete caulking	Annually – 8 year replacement
Stripe exterior parking lots	Annually
Check condition of asphalt parking lots	Annually – 12 year replacement
Check carpet	15 year replacement
Check vinyl composition tile floors	20 year replacement
Spray wash exterior soffits and building	Every 2 years or as needed
Replace glass and Plexiglas	As needed
Paint interior of facilities	Every 5 years
Paint exterior of facilities	Every 8 years
Perform general facility inspections	Annually

Source: SISD Facilities Department, November 2010

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a preventive maintenance program that addresses not only filters but also life safety inspections and tests as well as equipment preventive maintenance inspections and tests based upon manufacturer’s recommendations and best engineering practices.

The district should decide whether to procure an off-the-shelf preventive maintenance program or develop a program in-house. As the district has already purchased modules of the SchoolDude system, including the corrective maintenance module, and as the maintenance department is understaffed based upon national standards, it is logical that the district would look to SchoolDude for a preventive maintenance module. Once the preventive maintenance module has been procured, data will be input into the system such as equipment type, manufacturer and location, preventive maintenance requirements and frequencies, and other details required by the

system. An accounting of life safety equipment will be made with location of device and required tests and maintenance as stipulated by the state fire marshal and local authority having jurisdiction.

The director of facilities should develop the preventive maintenance system structure, and it can be implemented by the maintenance department’s administrative assistant. As noted in *The Real Cost of Deferred Maintenance*:

Facilities problems in rural schools that aren’t addressed may seem to disappear but they don’t go away—like molds and mildew they just multiply out of sight. Poor conditions can affect the health and safety of everyone who uses the facility, damage the morale of students and teachers, and impair their ability to teach and learn, and threaten the facility itself.

Proper maintenance of rural schools is vital not only because facilities are often old, and have suffered deferred maintenance for years or even decades, but because the consequences of improper and inadequate maintenance are so serious. If a leak in the roof isn’t repaired, it can—like the leak in the fabled dike in Holland—wash away the entire structure. If the district doesn’t allocate funds to fix such leaks, or do other necessary preventive work and if state policies are predisposed to new construction, deferring maintenance may force the closure of a good rural school. Therefore, a thorough program of preventive maintenance with regularly scheduled inspections is critical.¹⁰

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team contacted SchoolDude for a price to add the preventive maintenance module into the existing computerized maintenance management system. The district is currently paying an annual fee of \$2,090 for the corrective maintenance module. Adding the preventive maintenance module, PM Direct, with enhancements including ongoing lifetime support and training, will cost approximately an additional \$3,210 per year.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Procure SchoolDude’s preventive maintenance module.	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)	(\$3,210)

FINDING 4-10

Guthrie Public Schools does not employ sufficient maintenance personnel to maintain its facilities. The district employs 4.0 FTE maintenance technicians. One technician is currently out on extended workman’s compensation, leaving 3.0 FTE technicians to maintain 572,758 square feet of facilities.

Additionally, one of the maintenance technicians spends on average five to six hours per day receiving and delivering packages and supplies, picking up district mail from the post office,

¹⁰ Lawrence, B. K. (2003). *The real cost of deferred maintenance*. The Rural School and Community Trust.

delivering district mail to the superintendent's office for sorting, and then delivering mail to and from the district's buildings. The resulting manpower available to the maintenance department for facilities maintenance is thus reduced to approximately 2.3 FTE.

A comparison of GPS and peer district's salaries and benefits for operations and maintenance funds is shown in **Exhibit 4-38**. The district's salary and benefits exceeded every peer district's expenditures in each of the five years. GPS salary and benefits rose 16.2 percent, which was a greater rise than all other districts other than Noble.

Exhibit 4-38
Salaries and Benefits Paid from O&M Funds

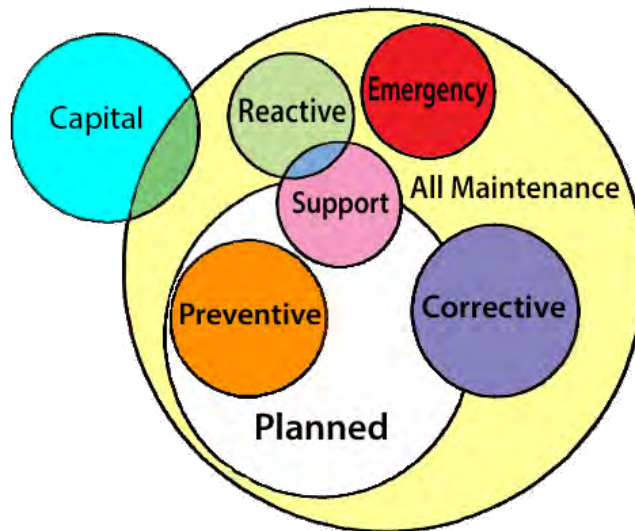
Trend in District	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$1,006,183	\$1,048,196	\$1,125,853	\$1,131,151	\$1,169,559	16.2%▲
Altus	\$1,098,483	\$1,019,447	\$1,116,186	\$1,081,496	\$982,696	(10.5%)▼
Guymon	\$833,696	\$803,122	\$826,683	\$858,601	\$878,471	5.4%▲
Noble	\$758,875	\$818,558	\$826,957	\$877,018	\$904,095	19.1%▲
Tahlequah	\$938,366	\$898,186	\$1,011,184	\$1,055,149	\$1,024,764	9.2%▲
Woodward	\$837,826	\$835,708	\$886,011	\$930,405	\$966,169	15.3%▲
Peer Average	\$893,449	\$875,004	\$933,404	\$960,534	\$951,239	7.7%▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2011-2015, and Prismatic calculations

The APPA standard for maintenance is one FTE for approximately 45,000 square feet of facilities. With 572,758 square feet of facilities to maintain, the district should have approximately 13 maintenance staff. Since quite a few of GPS's schools are older buildings, its need for maintenance is even greater.

Maintenance in a school is not merely replacing equipment when it quits working. There are various types of maintenance that should be performed to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of equipment and systems, and to reduce replacement costs. J. Thomas Becker, PE, EFP, associate vice president for operations at Philadelphia University, wrote that maintenance can be depicted through the use of a Venn diagram (**Exhibit 4-39**).

Exhibit 4-39
Overlap and Interrelationships in Types of Maintenance



Source: APPA Operational Guidelines for Educational Facilities: Maintenance, February 2011

As Becker stated:

The large circle represents all maintenance activities that the operations and maintenance staff may perform in a year. The next smaller circle, entirely within maintenance, is planned work. These include preventive or predictive maintenance and some corrective work – those tasks that customers request that have some time requirements associated with them and are not fully within the facilities operation’s control to schedule. Finally, hanging off to the side and trying to be part of maintenance, is capital work.¹¹

The older a building, the more corrective maintenance it will require, and all buildings, regardless of age, require regular preventive maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION

Hire nine additional maintenance technicians.

The suggested staffing formula and existing district conditions point to a shortage of designated maintenance staff in the district. The district should hire nine additional maintenance technicians to help ensure that preventive and corrective maintenance tasks are completed in a timely fashion. However, to provide adequate training of newly-hired technicians, the district should hire these positions over a series of years. Hiring two additional technicians in each of the subsequent four school years and one in the fifth year will allow for better integration and will lessen the impact on operations and maintenance funds.

¹¹ Becker, T. J., (2011) What Constitutes Maintenance? *Operational Guidelines for Educational Facilities: Maintenance*, second edition (July/August), pp.14-15.

The district, in its hiring decision, should consider the trades that would be most beneficial for the district. With the number of facilities that the district owns, and the ages of the facilities, it would be beneficial to have an HVAC contractor, or HVAC-certified technician on staff. With the age of many of the electrical systems, and the scope of electrical work in the district, a licensed electrician would be a huge benefit. A licensed plumber who has wastewater certification would be a bonus, in anticipation of the new elementary school that will require a lagoon for wastewater management.

FISCAL IMPACT

The lowest maintenance salary and benefits from the support staff list for the district is \$32,693. Two new hires in each of the four subsequent years would cost the district an additional \$65,386. The fifth year, the district would pay an additional \$32,693.

Recommendation	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Hire 9.0 FTE maintenance technicians.	(\$65,386)	(\$130,772)	(\$196,158)	(\$261,544)	(\$294,237)

FINDING 4-11

The district has numerous equipment and facilities deficiencies that need to be corrected. By not maintaining facilities, the district is faced with increased expenditures in later years as the facilities continue to deteriorate and equipment continues to fail.

During the site visit, the consulting team noted significant problems in the district's buildings and structures. Problems noted include structural, life safety, and general safety items. A general list of maintenance that should be addressed was developed based upon the walk-through and interviews with district and school personnel. This list is summarized in **Exhibit 4-40**. An "X" in a column means that the facility had a particular problem or need. Only those facilities visited by the consulting team are listed.

**Exhibit 4-40
Summary of GPS Maintenance and Facility Needs**

Building Name	Site¹²	Life Safety¹³	ADA¹⁴	HVAC¹⁵	Plumbing/ Water Leaks¹⁶	Electrical¹⁷	Misc. Finishes/ Other¹⁸
Administration Building		x			x		x
Central Elementary		x					x
Cotteral Elementary	x	x	x		x	x	x
Faver Alternative High School		x		x			x
Fogarty Elementary	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
GUES Elementary				x			
High School							x
Junior High School	x	x	x	x	x		x
High School Vo Ag Buildings	x	x					
Maintenance		x					x

Source: Prismatic walk-through of GPS facilities, January 2016

A complete list of deficiencies is found in **Appendix G**. Some of the maintenance deficiencies noted by the consulting team and staff interviews include:

- Drinking water fountains do not work or the flow of water needs to be adjusted (**Exhibit 4-41**).
- Several deep sink and mop basins have faucets with hoses attached. The faucets of the older variety do not have integral back flow preventers, and the hoses are attached directly to the faucet (**Exhibit 4-42**).
- Numerous classroom doors have door locks that can only be key-locked from the outside. The keyed lock activates a deadbolt so that during the school day the door must remain unlocked to allow entry/exit for the room (**Exhibit 4-43**).
- Several floors in the buildings have deteriorated tile or carpeting due to heavy traffic (**Exhibit 4-44**).
- Several ramps, installed to provide handicapped access, do not meet *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* requirements (**Exhibit 4-45**).
- Refrigerator door gaskets require replacement to maintain proper seal (**Exhibit 4-46**).

¹² Site refers to degraded conditions of the land on which the district buildings are situated

¹³ Life Safety refers to maintenance conditions that do not conform with the Life Safety Code (NFPA 110)

¹⁴ ADA refers to conditions that do not conform with the accessibility code

¹⁵ HVAC refers to issues with heating, ventilation or air-conditioning systems

¹⁶ Plumbing/Water Leaks refers to plumbing problems or water leaks, which could come from plumbing or roofing systems

¹⁷ Electrical refers to issues that do not conform with the National Electric Code

¹⁸ Misc. Finishes/Other refers to wall systems, flooring systems or roofing systems that exhibit conditions that should be corrected

Exhibit 4-41
Water Fountain in Administration
Overshoots and Needs Adjustment



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-42
Cotteral Elementary Deep Sink Missing
Handles and Backflow Preventer



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-43
Classroom Door Lock at Fogarty Must be
Locked from Outside



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-44
Deteriorated and Torn Carpet in Junior
High School Addition



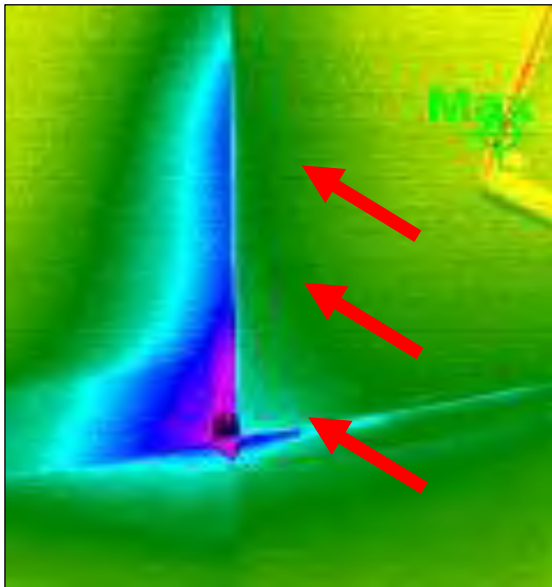
Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-45
Wheel Chair Ramp at Cottoral Portables Does Not Meet ADA Code



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-46
Refrigerator in High School Kitchen Needs a New Gasket



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, January 2016

A properly staffed and well-organized maintenance department, with the tools necessary to maintain equipment and facilities, should be able to effectively and efficiently maintain just about any commercial facility. Inspection, documentation, and accurate recordkeeping are also essential to facility maintenance. Numerous facilities assessment tools are available to aid the

maintenance staff in inspecting and documenting deficiencies. A safe schools checklist can be found at <http://www.ncef.org/checklist/index.cfm>.

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct an inspection of all facilities, document all deficiencies using the existing work order system, and correct them.

The director of facilities should conduct a complete facility inspection, documenting each general safety, life safety, and facility problem. Each problem should be prioritized as:

- 1 – life safety;
- 2 – general safety;
- 3 – facility urgent; and
- 4 – facility routine.

Problems should then be categorized as:

- 1 – in-house capable;
- 2 – contractor assist; and
- 3 – bond fund required.

Once all problems have been prioritized and categorized, work should begin on correcting deficiencies, with life safety – in-house capable and contractor assist coming first, followed by general safety – in-house capable and contractor assist coming second. The safety of building occupants must always be the first concern.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-12

Maintenance technicians are required to provide their own hand tools while working on school district equipment and facilities. This is a financial burden for technicians as well as a potential safety hazard and liability problem for the district.

When asked whether maintenance technicians were allowed to bring their own tools to work, the director of facilities stated that they are required to have their own hand tools. The director of facilities provides heavy industrial tools as necessary, but all smaller hand and electric tools must be purchased, maintained, and replaced by the maintenance technicians. Neither district policy, maintenance personnel contracts, nor job descriptions state that the employee is required to provide, maintain, and replace his/her own personal hand tools and/or equipment.

Conditions of employment should be clearly stated in writing. For a maintenance person to be required to supply their own personal tools, that requirement should be made up front in the job description, the annual contract, or a policy either at the district or maintenance department level. There should also be an analysis of the district's insurance provisions as to whether the district is insured against loss or theft of personal tools. While a "verbal understanding" between employer and employee regarding the employer's liability in the event of loss or theft of personal tools may be sufficient to immunize the district against a claim, it also may not. Additionally, personal tools must be inspected and approved by the district as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rules. There may also be liability issues if an employee is injured on the job while using their own equipment.

RECOMMENDATION

Procure and issue all tools for use by maintenance personnel.

The district should conduct an assessment of the typical tools and equipment requirements of maintenance personnel on a day-to-day basis. This can be accomplished by questioning the maintenance personnel, shadowing the maintenance personnel, and studying the work in progress reports from SchoolDude. During this assessment the following steps should be noted:

- Determine the hand tools required to safely accomplish the work requirements. Often there will be several tools required for one work requirement, and these should all be listed.
- Prepare a comprehensive list of those tools that would routinely be needed for a daily work load. This list may contain both non-electrical tools (e.g. hammers, screwdrivers, wrench or socket sets) and small handheld electrical tools (e.g. cordless drills or hammer-drills). Include in this list all personal protective equipment (PPE) that the district is willing to supply (e.g. safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, welding helmets).
- Contact Lowes and Home Depot in Edmond and other tool supply stores in the area to find the best prices for the tools required. Bear in mind that the cheapest tools may, in the long run, cost the most due to breakage and required replacement.
- Develop a check-in/check-out system so that when tools are issued to the maintenance person, they will sign acceptance. Provide a suitable tool belt or bag for the maintenance person to carry the tools when transiting from the truck to the work site. An example of the costs associated with outfitting each maintenance technician with basic hand tools is shown in **Exhibit 4-47**.

Exhibit 4-47
Sample Basic Hand Tool Costs

Tool	Lowe's Cost
18-volt NiCad Battery 1/2 –inch drill with soft case	\$129.00
Kobalt 22-piece tool set (Includes knife, hammer, pliers, wrench, scissors, tape measure, saw, screwdriver, plastic case, and tool bag)	\$49.98
Kobalt 40-piece standard and metric mechanic's tool set with hard case	\$49.98
Southwire one size fits all leather belt	\$17.98
Total	\$246.94

Source: www.lowes.com, as of January 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

The mix of tools determined to be appropriate by the district director of facilities may be significantly different from the preceding list. However, if this list is adopted it would cost approximately \$988 the first year to outfit all four maintenance technicians, and an additional \$247 for each new technician hired, assuming two additional technicians hired in each of the next two years and one technician hired in 2020-21.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Provide basic hand tools for technicians	(\$988)	(\$494)	(\$494)	(\$247)	(\$247)

Custodial Operations

Safe, clean, and sanitary facilities are essential elements of the education environment. School systems across the United States use different means to address these elements. Typically, school boards either contract out (outsource) custodial services or organize a comprehensive in-house program with staff to provide custodial services. Personnel will be employed by either the outsourced company or the school board.

Management responsibility, if the program is totally in-house, may reside partially or wholly with the central office, the individual school, or maintenance department. Determining the desired structure usually involves a number of criteria, including minimizing costs to the school district, improving services to schools, and reducing (or increasing) the span of control of district or school-based administrators.

FINDING 4-13

Guthrie Public Schools employs a sufficient number of custodians to allow its facilities to be cleaned to an acceptable level based upon national standards. The consulting team observed cleanliness levels to be acceptable throughout the district.

The district employs 22 custodians to clean 572,758 square feet of facilities. Applying the APPA standards of cleanliness, the district is generally capable of cleaning all areas to level three and most areas to level two standards of cleanliness.

The nationally recognized APPA developed a standard for cleanliness in educational facilities is based upon numerous studies with its constituent school districts and higher educational facilities. Their standard is just one of several standards available, and has been used by the consulting team for several years. The levels of cleanliness in the APPA standard are shown in **Exhibit 4-48**.

According to studies conducted by APPA, one custodian should be capable of cleaning between 20,000 and 30,000 square feet of school facilities to achieve level 2 or level 3 standard of cleanliness, respectively. GPS has approximately 572,758 square feet of facilities. However, since the kitchens and cafeterias, storage facilities, bus barn, maintenance shop, and various other areas are either not cleaned or cleaned by their own employees, the actual area to be cleaned by the custodial staff is approximately 506,683 square feet. Reapplying the APPA standards of cleanliness to the revised square footage, GPS should employ approximately 25.3 FTE custodians for level 2 cleanliness or 16.9 FTE custodians for level 3 cleanliness. The district employs 22 custodians, which is mid-range.

Exhibit 4-48 Appearance Factors and the Five Levels of Clean

Level 1— Orderly Spotlessness

- Floors and base moldings shine and/or are bright and clean; colors are fresh. There is no buildup in corners or along walls.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have a freshly cleaned or polished appearance and have no accumulation of dust, dirt, marks, streaks, smudges, or fingerprints.
- Lights all work and fixtures are clean.
- Washroom and shower fixtures and tile gleam, and are odor-free. Supplies are adequate.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners hold only daily waste, are clean and odor-free.

Level 2 — Ordinary Tidiness

- Floors and base moldings shine and/or are bright and clean. There is no buildup in corners or along walls, but there can be up to two days' worth of dust, dirt, stains, or streaks.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces are clean, but marks, dust, smudges, and fingerprints are noticeable upon close observation. Lights all work and fixtures are clean.
- Washroom and shower fixtures and tile gleam, and are odor-free. Supplies are adequate.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners hold only daily waste, are clean and odor-free.

Level 3 — Casual Inattention

- Floors are swept or vacuumed clean, but upon close observation there can be stains. A buildup of dirt and/or floor finish in corners and along walls can be seen.
- There are dull spots and/or matted carpet in walking lanes. There are streaks or splashes on base molding.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have obvious dust, dirt, marks, smudges, and fingerprints. Lamps all work and fixtures are clean.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners hold only daily waste, are clean and odor-free.

Level 4 — Moderate Dinginess

- Floors are swept or vacuumed clean, but are dull, dingy, and stained. There is an obvious buildup of dirt and/or floor finish in corners and along walls.
- There is a dull path and/or obviously matted carpet in the walking lanes. Base molding is dull and dingy with streaks or splashes.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have conspicuous dust, dirt, smudges, fingerprints, and marks.
- Lamp fixtures are dirty and some (up to 5 percent) lamps are burned out.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners have old trash and shavings. They are stained and marked.
- Trash containers smell sour.

Level 5 — Unkempt Neglect

- Floors and carpets are dull, dirty, dingy, scuffed, and/or matted. There is a conspicuous buildup of old dirt and/or floor finish in corners and along walls. Base molding is dirty, stained, and streaked. Gum, stains, dirt, dust balls, and trash are broadcast.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have major accumulations of dust, dirt, smudges, and fingerprints, all of which will be difficult to remove. Lack of attention is obvious.
- Light fixtures are dirty with dust balls and flies. Many lamps (more than 5 percent) are burned out.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners overflow. They are stained and marked. Trash containers smell sour.

Source: Fichter, G., (2011). *Maintenance of buildings, operational guidelines for educational facilities: Custodial. APPA, third edition, pp. 72-73.*

As reported in surveys conducted by the consulting team, only 13 percent of high school students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the high school is clean. Only 37 percent of parents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their child's school is clean and only 43 percent of staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the district's facilities are kept clean (**Exhibit 4-49**).

Exhibit 4-49
GPS Survey Results Regarding School Facility Maintenance

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
High School Students	My school is clean.	3%	10%	11%	27%	49%
Parents	My child's school is clean.	9%	28%	14%	35%	15%
Staff	The district's facilities are kept clean.	2%	41%	9%	31%	17%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

However, during the site visit, the consulting team observed cleanliness throughout GPS, applying the APPA standard. Classrooms typically were considered to be at a level 3 standard of cleanliness and school hallways were near a level 3. The cafeteria and kitchen area were near a level 2 standard of cleanliness. The administration building was near a level 2 standard of cleanliness. The locker rooms in the junior high school gymnasium was lower than a level 3.

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for employing the proper number of custodians to maintain school facilities at an acceptable level of cleanliness based upon national standards.

C. ENERGY MANAGEMENT

General energy consumption can be one of the most expensive operational areas for a school district. Due to the large infrastructure required for education, schools use large quantities of electricity, water, and natural gas. Implementing an energy management program can assist in reducing a school district's operational costs associated with otherwise excessive utility use.

Energy management programs can be implemented in a wide variety of ways, from hiring full-time energy managers to sending out simple shut-down reminders before school dismissal or before a break. One of the most beneficial practices of energy management is the recording of monthly utility bills and the communication of usage and costs to the general staff. Tracking utility use can give a bird's eye view of how much each school is spending on its utilities compared to other schools. The energy manager can then target the most expensive utilities and work to reduce consumption. This communication helps foster awareness of the expenses of running a school and brings attention to energy conservation measures by both students and staff.

The American Society for Hospital Engineers (ASHE) has developed a list of ten components necessary for a successful energy management program. Although this list was originally

intended for hospital organizations, they are applicable to all energy management programs. As recommended by ASHE, the items to consider are:

1. Measure/benchmark current energy consumption.
2. Develop an energy use profile.
3. Complete a greenhouse gas emissions inventory.
4. Build teams, get leadership support, and assign dedicated resources.
5. Set targets/goals.
6. Develop strategic action plans for improvement.
7. Consider adopting a strategic energy management plan.
8. Implement projects.
9. Track, measure, and report.
10. Train, educate, and celebrate.

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO), in their publication *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities*¹⁹ suggests that the following guidelines will help a school system accomplish more efficient energy management:

1. Establish an energy policy with specific goals and objectives.
2. Assign someone to be responsible for the district's energy management program and give this energy manager access to top-level administrators.
3. Monitor each building's energy use.
4. Conduct energy audits in all buildings to identify energy inefficient units.
5. Institute performance contracting (i.e., contracts requiring desired results rather than simply a list of needed products) when replacing older, energy inefficient equipment.
6. Reward employees of schools or buildings that decrease their energy use.
7. Install energy efficient equipment including power factor correction units, electronic ballasts, high-efficiency lamps, set-back thermostats, and variable-speed drives for large motors and pumps.
8. Install motion detectors that turn lights on when a room is occupied and off when the room is unoccupied.

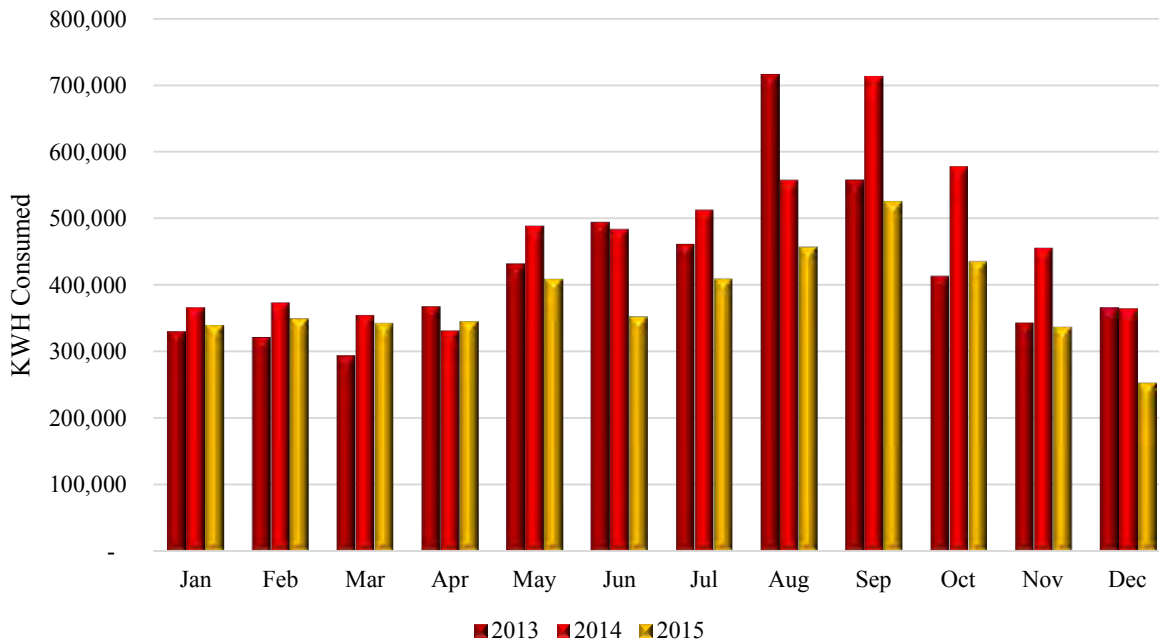
Additional information about energy management can be found through the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities' Energy Page²⁰ which provides a list of links, books, and journal articles on various methods of heating, cooling, and maintaining new and retrofitted K-12 school buildings and grounds.

¹⁹ Available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003347.pdf>

²⁰ Available at <http://www.ncef.org/rl/energy.cfm>

The district receives electricity from Oklahoma Gas and Electric (OG&E). Total electricity consumption by month for the period January 2013 through December 2015 is shown in **Exhibit 4-50**.

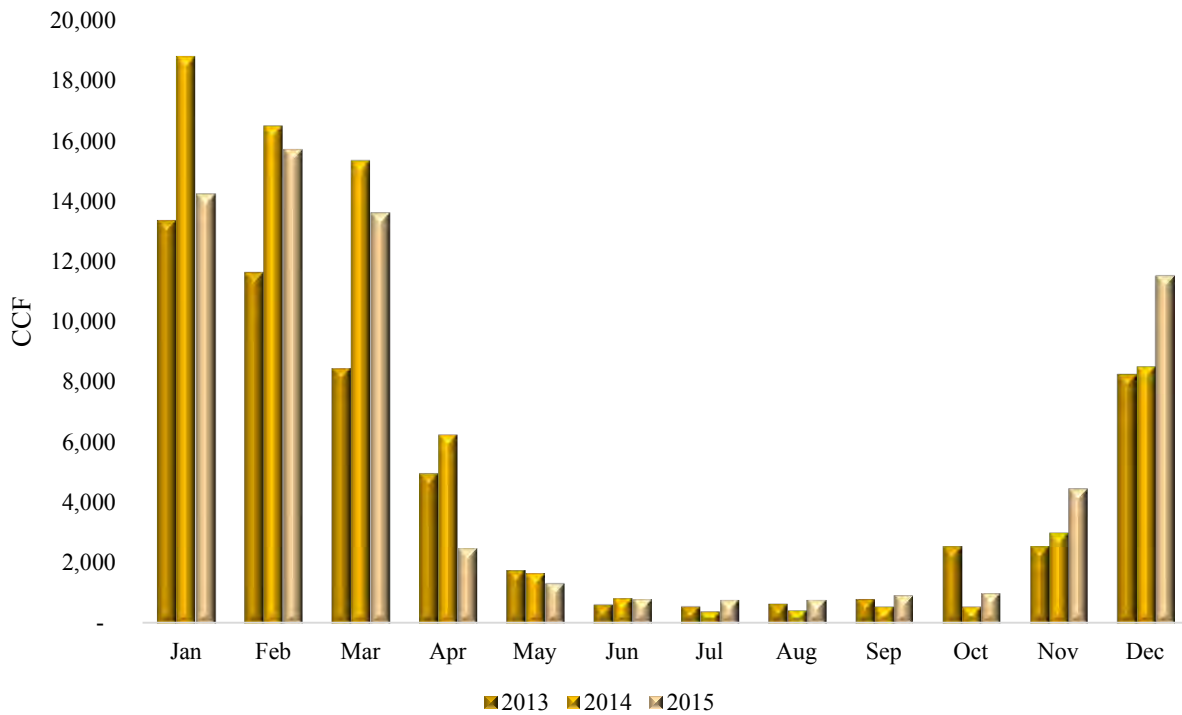
Exhibit 4-50
GPS Electricity Consumption in Kilowatt-Hours



Source: GPS Invoices from OG&E and Prismatic Calculations

The district receives natural gas from Oklahoma Natural Gas (ONG) for the five largest natural gas consuming facilities in the district. The district negotiated with a third party supplier, Clearwater Gas, for a more competitive pricing structure for the other facilities in the district. In addition to the invoicing from Clearwater for those lesser consuming facilities, the district receives invoicing for transportation of natural gas from ONG, as ONG owns the transmission lines used by Clearwater. Total consumption for the period January 2013 through December 2015 is shown in **Exhibit 4-51**.

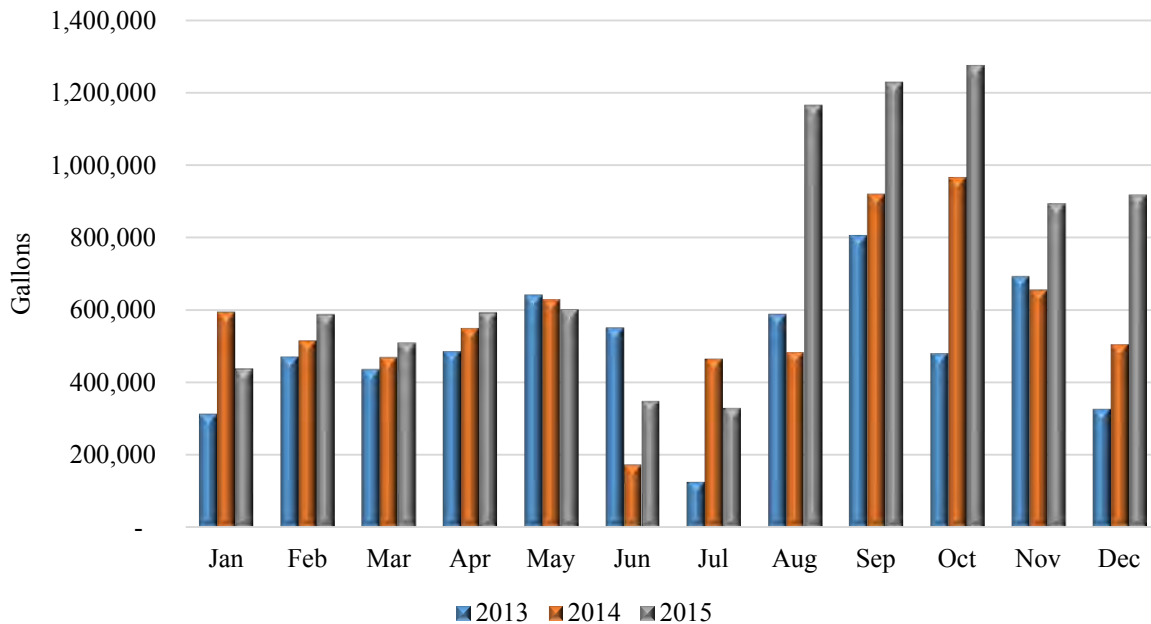
Exhibit 4-51
GPS Gas Consumption in Hundreds of Cubic Feet of Gas



Source: GPS Invoices from ONG and Clearwater and Prismatic calculations

The district receives water from City of Guthrie utilities. District consumption of water for the period January 2013 through December 2015 is shown in **Exhibit 4-52**. In reviewing these data, the consulting team found that a number of water meters across the district registered higher-than-previous water consumption from August 2015 through December 2015. The overall spike in water consumption during that period does not appear to have been an isolated leak but rather an increase in usage.

**Exhibit 4-52
GPS Water Consumption in Gallons**



Source: GPS Invoices from Guthrie City Utilities and Prismatic calculations

FINDING 4-14

The district administration had the gas meter servicing a storage facility disconnected. This is saving the district money.

The residential building due south of the junior high school was in use as the in-school suspension facility. However, the district discontinued its use in the recent past and repurposed it as a store room for supplies and equipment. The district paid a basic monthly connection fee for natural gas ranging from \$29.31 to \$31.23 from January 2013 until January 2015, when it had the meter disconnected.

Disconnecting utility meters that are no longer needed is a good practice. Not only does it save money for the district in monthly connection charges; it also allows an upgraded, state-of-the-art meter to be installed at a later date if the service needs to be restored.

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for having unused natural gas meters disconnected in order to save utility costs.

FINDING 4-15

GPS has entered into a financed six year lease purchase agreement to retrofit the entire district with Light Emitting Diode (LED) light fixtures. The work is scheduled to be completed over the summer of 2016.

LED light fixtures are superior in their energy efficiency, giving up only 20 percent of their energy to heat loss (incandescent bulbs lose 80 percent) and operating at only 10 to 20 percent of the energy required by incandescent bulbs of similar brightness. Also, an LED light bulb's expected lifespan is twice that of a typical fluorescent tube and twenty times that of a conventional incandescent bulb.

For GPS, investing in LED retrofitted fixtures should prove to be wise. District estimates show that due to projected savings they should be in a cash forward position throughout the period of the lease purchase. Additionally, Oklahoma Gas and Electric (OG&E) will be providing rebates toward the project.

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for energy and financial savings by retrofitting light fixtures throughout the district with LEDs bulbs.

FINDING 4-16

The district does not have a viable energy management program. Without a program, the district is likely overspending on utilities.

Until a few years ago, the GPS maintenance department employed a half-time energy manager. When the position became vacant, the district chose not to fill it. There are widespread areas within the district that could use the expertise of an energy manager who is trained in the latest energy saving technologies.

Examples of deficient areas noted by the consulting team include:

- Several closets and other spaces within the schools have incandescent lamps installed (**Exhibits 4-53 and 4-54**).
- Numerous hand washing lavatories have faucets with flow rates in excess of eight gallons per minute (**Exhibit 4-55**).
- GPS has inefficient T-12 fluorescent lamps installed in many of its rooms (**Exhibit 4-56**).
- Several buildings in the district have single-pane window systems that allow significant heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer (**Exhibit 4-57**).
- Several exterior doorways in the buildings leak conditioned air because of ill-fitting doors in frames, deteriorated or missing weather stripping, lack of door sweeps, etc. (**Exhibit 4-58**).

Exhibit 4-53
Incandescent Bulb in Closet in Faver
Alternative High School



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-54
Incandescent Bulb in Custodian Closet in
Cotteral Elementary School



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-55
Handwashing Sink in Boys Bathroom in
Junior High School Does Not Have Low
Flow Aerator



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-56
Eight Foot T-12 Lights in Faver
Alternative High School



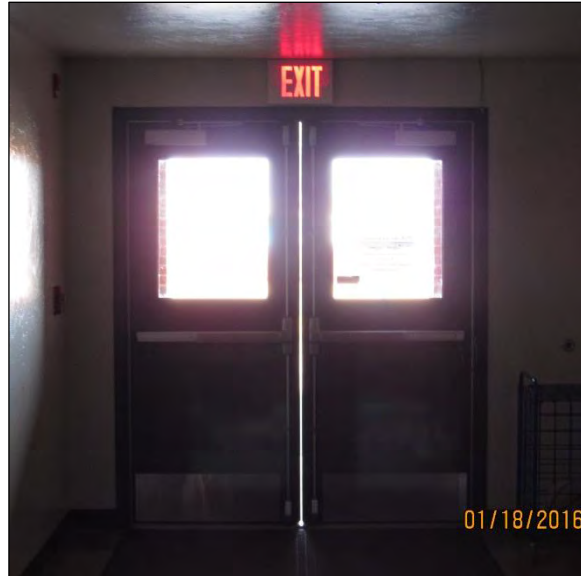
Source: Office of Educational Quality and
Accountability, January 2016

Exhibit 4-57
Single Pane Windows in Junior High School



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 4-58
Ill Fitting Door in South Wing of Central Elementary School

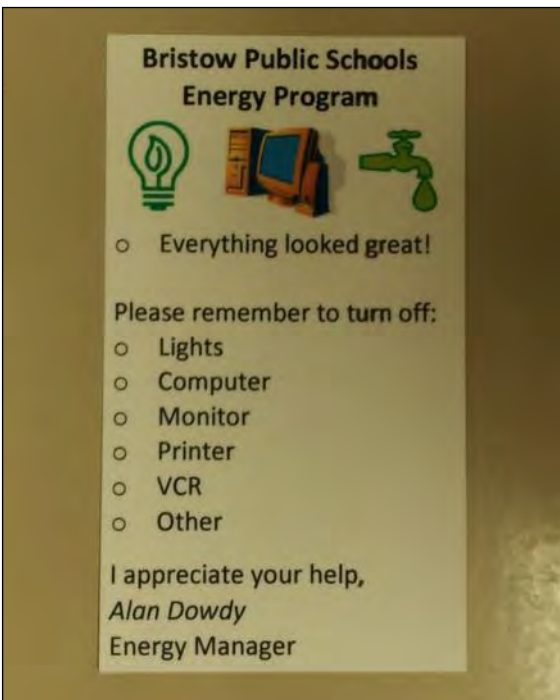


Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, January 2016

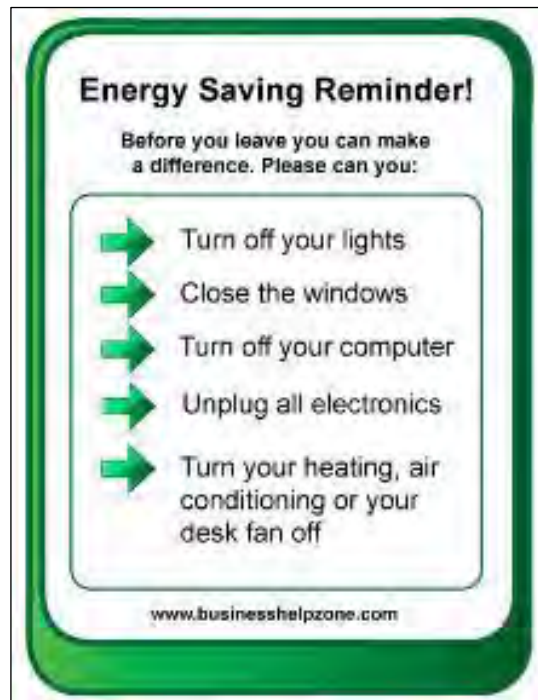
Many districts around the country use a number of techniques to keep energy costs down. The following are some examples of these conservation efforts:

- entering monthly energy bill data into a spreadsheet to maintain a history of expenditures and to use in detecting problems;
- performing building checks to see if lights are turned off, doors are closed, water faucets are not dripping, etc.; and
- leaving “OOPS” notes reminding teachers or staff of the proper procedure, such as those shown in **Exhibit 4-59**, if problems are found during building checks;
- establishing set points for thermostats at 76 degrees in the summer and 69 degrees in the winter;
- purchasing set-back thermostats and programming them to turn down cooling or heating in advance of daily adjournment and over the weekends;
- setting water heaters or boilers at a maximum temperature of 140 degrees, except in areas requiring higher temperatures for sanitation purposes, such as kitchens; and
- replacing worn-out and damaged equipment, windows, and lighting with more energy-efficient units.

Exhibit 4-59
Examples of Energy Saving Reminder Stickers



Source: Prismatic Archives, April 2012



Source: BusinessHelpZone.com, December 2015

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a comprehensive Energy Management Program (EMP) to reduce energy consumption and decrease costs associated with energy.

The director of facilities should inspect each space within each building and generate a list of energy deficiencies that can then be integrated into a master maintenance list. Goals for an energy management program, as with any program, should be specific, realistic, and achievable:

- reducing energy consumption in each school facility by at least (a specified percentage) at the end of the (specific) school year and maintaining the achieved level of consumption for five years after attainment;
- establishing energy awareness training for all school employees; and
- obtaining and making available energy education materials, such as those offered by the U.S. Department of Energy,²¹ for all teachers for incorporation into their subject matter.

GPS should also develop energy awareness training to support stated objectives. As a result of energy audits and facility/systems inspections, GPS should develop an “energy conservation project list” in conjunction with planned capital projects. Other things to consider in developing the EMP are as follows:

²¹ <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/education/lessonplans/>

-
- developing a means to evaluate the success of the overall program;
 - developing a means for recognition of success in the program both internally and externally;
 - informing the community that the EMP exists, what has been accomplished, and how they can reduce their own energy bills; and
 - regularly updating the program to reflect changing conditions, successes, and/or failures.

Typical areas on which GPS can concentrate:

- Consider building a vestibule at the front entrances of the high school, junior high school, and the three older elementary schools. When properly used, vestibules significantly reduce heat gain/loss which equates to energy savings. The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers has developed standards for heating, ventilation, and the air conditioning of buildings (ASHRAE 90). This has caused California to adopt the following code concerning vestibules:

Vestibule doors at a building entrance would reduce the flow of unconditioned air into the conditioned space. Additionally, air trapped inside the vestibule would act as a buffer to the transfer of heat through the vestibule, thereby increasing the thermal resistance of the passageway.²²

- Install low-flow aerators in handwashing sinks to minimize water use. Low-flow is defined as 0.5 to 1.0 gallons per minute (gpm). Currently, some handwashing sinks observed by the consulting team either have no flow control (no aerator) or have aerators used in residential application (2.2 gpm standard). The Georgia Environmental Protection Division is recommending that commercial facilities install a super-low-flow aerator of just 0.5 – 1.0 gpm in order to maximize water savings.
- Replace all incandescent exit signs with LED exit signs (**Exhibit 4-60**). New LED exit signs are available with a life expectancy of ten years. Each exit sign replaced will pay for itself in energy savings in fewer than four years.

²² 2008 California Building Energy Efficiency Standards, found at <http://www.energy.ca.gov/title24/2008standards/index.html>

Exhibit 4-60
Efficient LED Emergency Egress Lights and Exit Sign



Source: File Photo by Prismatic, August 2008

FISCAL IMPACT

The exact fiscal impact of this recommendation would depend upon the specific energy management measures implemented. Estimates of the payback period and actual savings include the following:

- **Vestibules.** The cost of each vestibule will depend upon the materials specified. The savings to be realized will be in reduced costs in cooling in the summer and heating in the winter. Assuming the use of similar brick-face composite construction, with a steel, full-vision, six-foot-wide, double-door system, the cost according to RSMeans “Square Foot Costs”, 2015, would be on average \$11,720 for each of the five enclosures, or a total of \$58,600 if installed in one year.
- **Double-pane windows.** The cost of each double-pane window that is properly caulked will be between \$150 and \$1,800 depending on the size of the window and the cost of labor to re-caulk or replace the window. As an example, replacing eight windows with 2’ X 4’ double insulated windows would cost \$528 per window, or \$4,224 for all eight. The savings to be realized will be in reduced costs of cooling in the summer and heating during the winter.
- **Low-flow Aerators.** In a typical school environment, a handwashing lavatory is used 25 times per day. Each hand washing lasts approximately 15-20 seconds. If one assumes a modest 15-second encounter, then each handwashing event at a lavatory with a 2.2 gpm aerator consumes 0.55 gallons of water. Multiplying this by the 25 encounters per day, one finds consumption of 13.75 gallons of water per day per lavatory. At an assumed cost of approximately \$0.01 per gallon, the cost of handwashing in one sink is \$0.14. If there are 150 sinks in GPS, GPS would be spending \$21 per day. On a monthly basis, this equates to \$420.

By reducing the flow rate of the handwashing lavatories from 2.2 gpm to 1.0 gpm, the cost would be reduced to \$190, a savings of \$230 per month, or more than \$2,300 each year. If the aerators were replaced with super-low-flow 0.5 gpm aerators, the savings would be greater. Each low-flow aerator costs approximately \$1.50. Replacing 150 aerators would cost \$225 initially.

- **Incandescent bulbs.** Replacing incandescent bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL) will achieve an energy saving of up to 35 percent over current consumption. Replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs, though higher in initial cost, can save up to 70 percent over current energy consumption. The consulting team calculated that replacing 50 incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents would cost \$125 the first year and would save \$554 each subsequent year.
- **LED or LEC exit signs.** Replacing existing incandescent lit exit signs with the new energy-saving LED (light emitting diode) or LEC (light emitting capacitor) exit signs will achieve a payback in energy savings in approximately two years. However, the big advantage of LED and LEC over incandescent is that they will operate for ten years without maintenance and without having to replace bulbs. They only require mandatory monthly and annual tests. One LEC exit light retrofit kit costs approximately \$28 on Amazon,²³ fits most incandescent exit light fixtures, and uses less than 1/5th watt of energy. A new LED exit light costs approximately \$18 on Amazon.²⁴ Compared to an incandescent exit sign which consumes 40 watts of power, an LED exit sign consumes 2 watts. Replacing 100 incandescent exit signs with LED exit signs would cost approximately \$1,800, with an energy savings of \$2,663 each year.
- **Waterless Urinals.** Replacing water-consuming urinals with new waterless urinals saves money in two ways: eliminates cost of water to flush the urinal and eliminates most maintenance costs in repair/replacement of flush-o-meters and other plumbing parts. The consulting team calculated by using the ZeroFlush Waterless Urinal Cost Saving Calculator,²⁵ with an initial outlay of \$19,980 to install 45 Sloan WES-5000 waterless urinals, a minimal net savings of \$17,442 per year can be realized. The payback for these 45 urinals is 13.7 months.²⁶

²³ <http://www.amazon.com/TCP-20714-Light-Retrofit-Adaptors/dp/B001DMMK80>

²⁴ http://www.amazon.com/eTopLighting-Emergency-Lighting-Battery-Back-up/dp/B005DN7DB8/ref=pd_sim_60_2?ie=UTF8&dpID=31OOvbn3aCL&dpSrc=sims&preST=_AC_UL160_SR160%2C160_&refRID=1G9CN7WSDN2HRNQ3SQ85

²⁵ http://www.zeroflush.com/cost_saving_analysis.php

²⁶ Prior to installing waterless urinals, the district should contact the authority having jurisdiction to inquire whether their use is approved. Some AHJs require urinals to have plumbed water.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Install five vestibules: one at school building entrances.	(\$58,600)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Install eight 2' X 4' double insulated aluminum frame windows.	(\$4,224)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Replace 150 aerators in hand washing sinks.	\$2,075	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$2,300
Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.	\$429	\$554	\$554	\$554	\$554
Replace 100 incandescent exit signs with LED exit signs.	\$863	\$2,663	\$2,663	\$2,663	\$2,663
Install 45 Sloan WES-5000 waterless urinals.	(\$2,538)	\$17,442	\$17,442	\$17,442	\$17,442
Total	(\$62,718)	\$23,286	\$23,286	\$23,286	\$23,286

D. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Today, more than ever, school districts are expected to provide a safe and secure environment for their students and staff. While districts are largely insulated from violent crime, it is incidents of violence at schools that draw national attention. School districts must take proactive measures in safety and security even in incident-free schools. Students, teachers, and other district employees deserve a safe school environment in which to work and learn.

In 2003, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) initiated the development of a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and requires its use by public sector agencies, including school districts. The intent of this system is to provide a common template and language for responding organizations to work together in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from incidents. As noted by FEMA, NIMS represents “a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes that enables effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management.”

NIMS emphasizes that true preparedness requires a commitment to continuous review and improvement. Most districts understand the continuous nature of emergency management as well as the four phases that comprise the process circle (**Exhibit 4-61**).

Exhibit 4-61
Continuous Process of Emergency Management



*Source: The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools' Practical information on
Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities, January 2007*

The Oklahoma Commission on School Safety, which was created in response to the Newtown killings, submitted a number of recommendations to the Oklahoma Legislature. Based upon the commission's recommendations, the Legislature passed four new laws. Among other things, the laws require schools to update their safety plans every year and have frequent "intruder drills," with students taking cover while the doors are locked and the windows covered. The state also created a new Oklahoma School Security Institute to help schools keep their policies up to date.

Guthrie Public Schools has three school resource officers assigned one each in the high school, junior high school, and GUES. City of Guthrie police will respond to calls from the schools to back up the school resource officers. As the school resource officers are sworn city police officers assigned to the district, they are subject to being called away from the district to assist city police on other matters. When the new elementary school is constructed in the southeast portion of the district, it will reside in Logan County beyond the Guthrie city limits. Discussions with the county Sheriff should be conducted prior to finalizing plans for construction to help ensure adequate security is planned.

As reported in surveys conducted by the consulting team, parents and staff generally agree that facilities are secure from unwanted visitors and that the children feel safe. However, a higher percentage of high school students feel unsafe than safe (**Exhibit 4-62**).

Exhibit 4-62
Guthrie Survey Results Regarding Safety in the Schools

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	My child feels safe and secure at school.	11%	44%	13%	24%	8%
Parents	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	5%	36%	16%	29%	15%
Students	I feel safe and secure at school.	5%	26%	24%	23%	22%
Students	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	6%	25%	28%	22%	18%
Staff	The district's facilities are secure from unwanted visitors.	8%	47%	7%	29%	10%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

The district has an anti-bullying policy, contained in district policy F-31. The policy requires that “A full copy of this policy will be posted on the district’s website and included in all district handbooks.” A search of the district website does not locate the policy F-31, and only if one knows that it resides in the “Information” tab, under “Handbooks and Policies” with a Link to the District Policies, on a site away from the district site, would one be able to find the policy. The Guthrie Public Schools Safety Plan does not discuss bullying, and the Central, Cottler, and Fogarty student handbooks do not mention the word “bullying”. The GUES, Junior High, and High School student handbooks only mention that bullying will result in the following disciplinary actions:

- 1st Offense: Parent conference/phone contact and suspension from school for three (3) days;
- 2nd Offense: Parent conference/phone contact and suspension from school for five (5) days; and
- 3rd Offense: Suspension for the remainder of the semester and the following semester.

As reported in surveys conducted by the consulting team (**Exhibit 4-63**), half or nearly half of parents and students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that bullying is a problem in the district. Additionally, eight comments on the parent and student surveys specifically referred to bullying in the district.

Exhibit 4-63
Guthrie Survey Results Regarding Bullying

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	Bullying is a problem in this district.	25%	23%	31%	18%	2%
Students	Bullying is a problem in this district.	24%	26%	23%	15%	12%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

Guthrie Public Schools has a contract drug dog that sweeps the high school and other schools on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. GPS has also instituted mandatory drug testing of participants in all extra-curricular activities beginning with the 2015-16 school year. As reported in surveys conducted by the consulting team (**Exhibit 4-64**), more than half of parents and students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that drugs are a problem in the district. Though less than half of staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that drugs are a problem in the district, 47 percent of staff had no opinion on the question. This leads the consulting team to conclude that there is a problem with drugs in the district.

Exhibit 4-64
Guthrie Survey Results Regarding Drugs

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	Drugs are a problem in this district.	28%	23%	33%	15%	2%
Students	Drugs are a problem in this school.	35%	23%	23%	9%	9%
Staff	Drugs are a problem in this district.	6%	36%	47%	9%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

FINDING 4-17

The district schools were evaluated for refuge areas within the last three years by the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM). This is a proactive step to ensuring student safety.

None of the district schools were constructed with dedicated safe rooms that meet today's FEMA safe room standards. This is not uncommon as many schools across the nation were constructed prior to the 1980s. GPS schools were also originally constructed prior to the 1980s. However, the district schools (except for Faver Alternative High School) were reviewed by the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management under the Safe Schools 101 program to determine the best available refuge areas.

OEM uses the FEMA 361 Extreme-Wind Refuge Area Evaluation Checklist to evaluate areas within the schools for suitability as safe areas for students, staff and visitors. Low scores on the

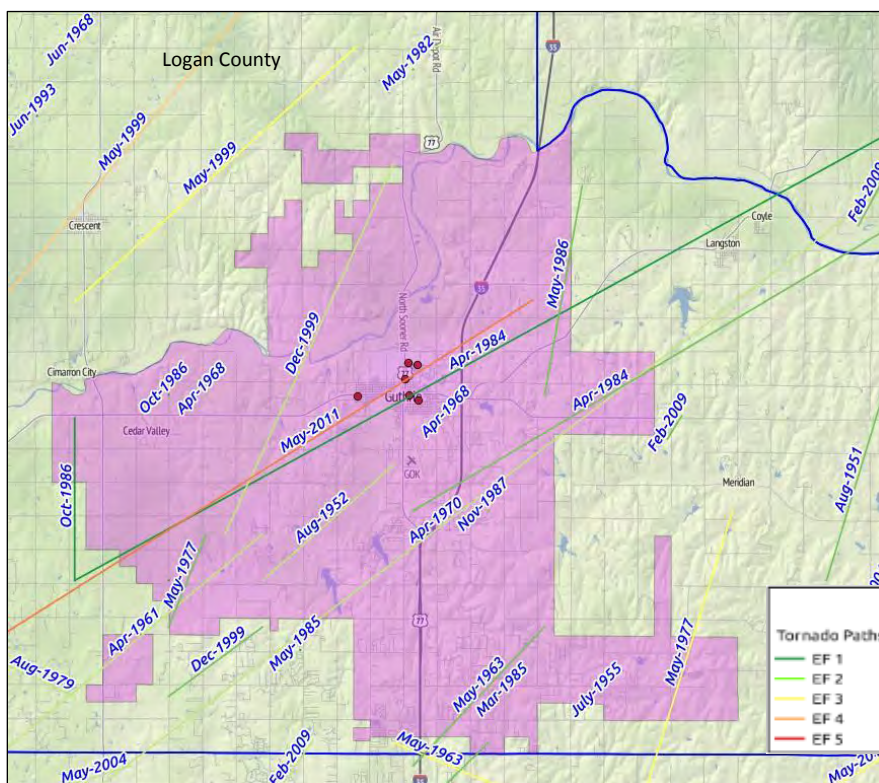
checklists indicate structural features that provide considerable levels of protection. Higher scores indicate that a refuge area is more vulnerable to wind damage and less able to provide adequate life-safety protection.

The lowest possible cumulative score for Zone IV (region most vulnerable to tornado hazards) is 20 and a safe room or refuge area with this score would likely provide significant protection from an extreme-wind event; however, it is very unlikely that any building would have this score. A pilot study of 10 schools in Wichita (located in Zone IV) resulted in scores ranging from 56 to 161.

Ten areas in the high school were evaluated with scores between 137 and 161. Four areas in the junior high school had scores between 154 and 183. Four areas in GUES had scores of 137 to 143, ten areas in Cotteral had scores of 185 to 205, five areas in Central had scores of 135 to 181 and ten areas in Fogarty had scores of 171 to 191. With the data obtained from the OEM refuge area evaluations, GPS knows the areas in the six schools that are the “best available refuge areas” for students, staff and visitors.

Providing safe rooms for schools in tornado-prone areas, such as Guthrie, is an excellent way of communicating to students, staff, and the community that GPS takes safety seriously. Since 1950, there have been numerous tornadoes of varying strength that have touched down in or tracked across GPS (**Exhibit 4-65**). The EF-4 tornado in May 2011 tracked directly across the property containing the High School and GUES, destroying portables to the north of GUES and rolling back the roofs of both the High School and GUES. An athletic building on the property was also damaged. The damaged portables at GUES were removed, and a new portable was moved in and is currently in use.

Exhibit 4-65 Tornado Tracks at GPS Since 1950



Source: Oklahoma Office of Geographic Information (OGI), the National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center, and Prismatic resources, November 2015

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for having OEM conduct refuge assessments for its schools.

FINDING 4-18

GPS's schools have safety problems of several types. During the site visit, the consulting team reviewed the district facilities for life safety, ADA, and general safety problems. A comprehensive list of safety deficiencies can be found in Appendix G. Examples that the consulting team found includes:

- Several areas in the facilities do not have exit signs, and in other areas, the exit signs and/or the egress lights do not work (**Exhibits 4-66 and 4-67**).
- Four of five sets of fire doors in the Guthrie Upper Elementary School failed the six-month operational test.

- Several electrical closets throughout the facilities have materials stored directly in front of electrical circuit distribution panels (**Exhibits 4-68**).²⁷
- The two rolling fire doors in the basement of Cottler elementary school do not close properly when tested, and the rolling fire door in basement of Central elementary school has a weight chain that is obstructed by a newly installed electrical conduit (**Exhibit 4-69**).
- The two fire hoses mounted in the rear of the stage of the GUES auditorium have not been tested every three years as required by NFPA 1962.²⁸

Exhibit 4-66
Combination Emergency Egress Lights & Exit Sign in Maintenance is Inoperative



Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

Exhibit 4-67
Exit Sign Not Installed in Cottler Portable Classroom

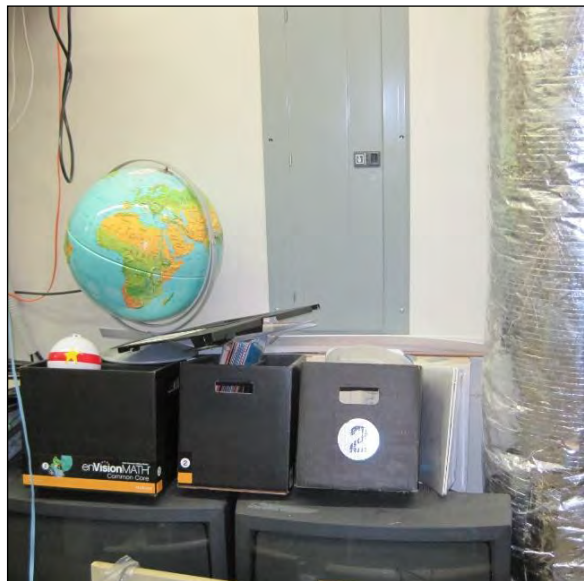


Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

²⁷ Section 14.3 of the Guthrie Public Schools Safety Plan states...”A clear approach and 3 foot side clearance shall be maintained for all distribution panels.”

²⁸ NFPA 1962, Section 4.2.2: “In-service hose designed for occupant use only shall be removed and service tested as specified in Section 4.8 at intervals not exceeding 5 years after the date of manufacture and every 3 years thereafter.” Section 4.8: “4.8.2 Occupant-use hose shall be tested to the service test pressure marked on the hose.”

Exhibit 4-68
Material and Equipment Stored in Front of
Electrical Circuit Distribution Panel



Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

Exhibit 4-69
Weight Chain of Rolling Fire Door in
Basement of Central Elementary is
Obstructed by Electrical Conduit



Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

A widely used facilities inspection tool is the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) Guide for School Facility Appraisal, 1998 Edition. Other facilities inspection guides are available, including the American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities' Educational Facilities Vulnerability/Hazard Assessment Checklist that was published in 2011.²⁹ A comprehensive list of safety deficiencies can be found at Appendix G.

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct a safety inspection of all facilities, document all deficiencies, and correct deficiencies quickly.

The director of facilities should conduct a safety inspection of all facilities, document all safety deficiencies, develop a prioritized work list, and correct safety deficiencies. Beginning with the observations of the consulting team in this report, district staff should record each deficiency in SchoolDude that requires repair or remedy, provide for documented follow-up in order to correct deficiencies, and report on work progress. As part of the process, each deficiency should be categorized as to whether it can be corrected with existing funds or requires additional monies, whether the deficiency presents a life/safety hazard (and therefore should be corrected immediately), and whether delaying correction may result in greater expense later.

²⁹ <http://online.tarleton.edu/ACEF/VulnerabilityHazardChecklist/index.html#/2/>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-19

Several bottles of sterile water in first aid kits and eye wash stations are expired, and AED pads are expired or will expire in a month or two. During the site visit, the consulting team found expired bottles of water in various first aid kits and eye wash stations (**Exhibits 4-70**). All of the electrode pads in AED stations viewed by the consulting team were due to expire either in January or February of 2016 with the exception of the child/infant pads in the AED in the Junior High School. Those pads had already expired in November of 2015 (**Exhibit 4-71**).

Exhibit 4-70
Expired Eye Wash Solution in Faver
Alternative High School Custodian Closet



Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

Exhibit 4-71
Expired Padi-Pads in Junior High School
AED



Source: Prismatic Services, January 2016

Sterile bottled water is available in most first aid kits for use in irrigating open wounds prior to applying sterile gauzes or bandages. Saline solution (0.9 percent sodium chloride in sterile water) is found in first aid kits and eye wash stations. Both types of water have expiration dates stamped on the bottle and must be replaced on or before their expiration date. The small bottles of eye wash solution found in first aid kits and small eye wash stations are for irrigating the eyes to remove grit that may have gotten into them. These bottles of eye wash solution are not sufficient for cases when chemicals may have been splashed in the eyes.

For emergency showers and eyewash stations to be effective, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard for Emergency Eyewash and Shower Equipment (ANSI Z358.1-2004) recommends that the affected body part must be flushed immediately and thoroughly for at least 15 minutes using a large supply of clean fluid under pressure. This means that either plumbed

eyewash stations should be provided wherever chemicals being splashed into the eyes is a possibility (e.g., chemistry labs, custodian closets where chemicals are mixed, maintenance or transportation facilities, vocational agriculture facilities, beauty schools, etc.).

Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death. It can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere and at any age. Many school districts have purchased and installed Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) as the only effective treatment for restoring a regular heart rhythm during sudden cardiac arrest. The AED is an easy to operate tool for someone with no medical background. AEDs contain both adult-sized and child/infant-sized electrode pads and batteries that have shelf lives.

RECOMMENDATION

Inspect all eyewash stations, first aid kits, and AEDs to remove out-of-date materials and replace them with fresh materials.

The district should develop a procedure of inventorying all first aid kits, eye wash stations (both portable and plumbed), and AEDs. The inventory should include the date of installation, type of equipment, a list of contents and the expiration dates of all dated materials. This information should be entered into the preventive maintenance database for scheduling of preventive maintenance service.

The district should assign responsibility for maintaining first aid kits, eyewash stations, and AEDs so that when materials are used from the kits, the responsible person is informed so that replacement materials can be obtained and restocked expeditiously. The responsible person should be charged with inspecting all first aid kits, eyewash stations, and AEDs on at least an annual basis, correcting any deficiencies that might be found.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5:
Support Services

Chapter 5

Support Services

This chapter reviews several areas of support services in Guthrie Public Schools (GPS). It is divided into these sections:

- A. Child Nutrition
- B. Technology
- C. Transportation

A. CHILD NUTRITION

Successful administration of the child nutrition program depends upon consistent program organization, strong financial reporting, and precise personnel management. All of these administrative areas must align and support the district's goals for student achievement.

School meal programs began in 1946, when the *National School Lunch Act* was signed, authorizing the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to “safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children.” The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is open to all public and nonprofit private schools, as well as all residential childcare institutions. The NSLP also offers afterschool snacks for sites that meet the eligibility requirements.

The *Child Nutrition Act of 1966* established the School Breakfast Program (SBP). This is a federally-assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free breakfasts to children in public schools, nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions.

Districts that participate in these federal programs receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each eligible meal they serve. In return, the district must serve student meals that meet federal guidelines for nutritional value, offer free or reduced price meals to eligible students, and accurately keep required records.

Students in the lowest socioeconomic bracket qualify for free lunches, while others qualify for reduced price lunches. Meals served according to federal guidelines receive some level of reimbursement, including those served to students who pay full price. School districts do not receive federal reimbursement support for teacher or guest meals. **Exhibit 5-1** shows the applicable 2013-14 and 2014-15 federal reimbursement rates for breakfast and lunch. GPS also receives an additional six cents per meal for meeting the meal pattern requirements.

Guthrie participates in the NSLP, the SBP, and the Child Nutrition USDA Foods program, all of which are managed by a contracted Food Service Management Company (FSMC).

Exhibit 5-1
School Meals: Federal per Meal Reimbursement Rates 2013-14 and 2014-15

Meal Type	School Breakfast Program - Severe Need ¹		National School Lunch Program	
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15
Free	\$1.89	\$1.93	\$3.01	\$3.06
Reduced Price	\$1.59	\$1.63	\$2.61	\$2.66
Paid	\$0.28	\$0.28	\$0.36	\$0.36

Source: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/NAPs14-15.pdf>

The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA)* provided sweeping modifications to the school nutrition programs and made significant changes in the required meal components. The new regulations require districts to charge equitable prices for full-pay meals and non-reimbursable à la carte items, establish nutritional requirements for all foods sold on campuses at any time during the school day, provide free water where meals are served, provide nutrition education to students in the district, and require school nutrition directors/managers to meet education, training, and certification requirements.

Exhibit 5-2 provides the new nutritional requirements as specified in the *HHFKA*. Both the breakfast and lunch menus now must offer more fruits and vegetables. Milk must be low-fat or fat-free. Sodium levels must be reduced, and trans fats must be eliminated. In the last year, while many districts have successfully implemented the requirements of *HHFKA*, there have been discussions at the federal level about rolling back some provisions and delaying the implementation of others. At the time of this report, it was uncertain what the final decision would be. Until a final decision on possible revisions, all the provisions of *HHFKA* are in effect.

¹Guthrie is eligible to receive severe-need reimbursements for breakfasts served to eligible students in sites where 40 percent or more of the lunches claimed at the site in the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price, and the site is participating or initiating a school breakfast program.

Exhibit 5-2
Summary of Nutritional Requirements for Breakfast and Lunch

	Breakfast		Lunch	
Fruit and Vegetables	1 cup per day (vegetable substitution allowed). Students are allowed to select ½ cup under Offer Versus Serve.		¾-1 cup vegetables plus ½-1 cup fruit per day.	
Grains	Daily minimum of 1 ounce equivalent minimum per day; weekly minimum ranges, varying by grade: K-5: 7-10 ounces 6-8: 8-10 ounces 9-12: 9-10 ounces		Daily minimums varying by grade: K-5: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (8-9 oz. weekly) 6-8: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (8-10 oz. weekly) 9-12: 2 oz. eq. min. daily (10-12 oz. weekly)	
Meat/Meat Alternate	May substitute meat/meat alternates after minimum daily requirement for grains is met.		K-5: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (8-10 oz. weekly) 6-8: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (9-10 oz. weekly) 9-12: 2 oz. eq. min. daily (10-12 oz. weekly)	
Whole Grains	All must be whole grain rich unless exemption granted.		All must be whole grain rich unless exemption granted.	
Milk	1 cup, 1% (unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored/flavored)		1 cup, 1% (unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored/flavored).	
Sodium*	Target 2 (2017-18): K-5: ≤ 485 mg 6-8: ≤ 535 mg 9-12: ≤ 570 mg	Target 3 (2022-23): K-5: ≤ 430 mg 6-8: ≤ 470 mg 9-12: ≤ 500 mg	Target 2 (2017-18): K-5: ≤ 935 mg 6-8: ≤ 1035 mg 9-12: ≤ 1080 mg	Target 3 (2022-23): K-5: ≤ 640 mg 6-8: ≤ 710 mg 9-12: ≤ 740 mg
Trans Fat	Zero grams per serving (nutrition label)		Zero grams per serving (nutrition label)	

Source: USDA, January 2012

**Target 1 was set to be implemented by 2014-15.*

Exhibit 5-3 shows the district's child nutrition program revenues and expenditures for 2012-13 through 2014-15, as reported in the district's audit reports. In 2012-13 revenues exceeded expenditures but in 2013-14 and 2014-15 expenditures exceeded revenues.

Exhibit 5-3
Guthrie Child Nutrition Program Revenues and Expenditures
2012-13 through 2014-15

Category	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Beginning Balance	\$182,467	\$202,685	\$151,091
Revenues			
Local	\$339,163	\$345,397	\$312,147
State Reimbursement	\$119,559	\$149,578	\$164,356
Federal Reimbursement	\$930,749	\$965,035	\$974,924
Total Revenues	\$1,389,471	\$1,460,010	\$1,451,427
Expenditures			
Non-Instructional Expenditures	\$1,373,284	\$1,394,563	\$1,349,776
Other Outlays	\$1,300	\$119,403	\$121,826
Repayments		\$678	
Total Expenditures	\$1,374,584	\$1,514,644	\$1,471,602
Other Financing Sources	\$5,331	\$3,040	\$1,980
Revenues Over/(Under)–Expenditures	\$20,218	(\$51,594)	(\$18,195)*
Ending Balance	\$202,685	\$151,091	\$132,896

Source: Guthrie Annual Financial Reports 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15

**Special Note: The above information came from GPS's Annual Financial Report which is an official document of record as of a specified date. It should be noted that after the books closed for the 2014-15 school year, GPS received a check from their contracted food service management company to cover losses incurred during the course of the 2014-15 school year. This was in keeping with the contract and the amount of the check was \$18,317.11, which placed the GPS child nutrition program in a positive position going into the next school year.*

An important measurement of program efficiency is the analysis of expenditures to revenue, referred to as an operating ratio. Operating ratios are calculated by dividing each expenditure category in a given time period by the total revenue for the same time period, which yields a percentage. Operating revenue generated by the child nutrition program was \$1,304,739 for 2014-15. **Exhibit 5-4** shows a breakdown of expenditures by category and what percentage of the total revenue it represents. Industry best practices exist to guide operators toward ensuring financial soundness of the program. Recommendations suggest that no more than 40 to 45 percent of revenue be spent on labor and benefits, and the same recommendation exists for food and supplies. No more than 85 percent of revenue should be spent on labor, benefits, food and supplies combined. For 2014-15, GPS spent less than recommended on food and supplies.

Exhibit 5-4
Guthrie Child Nutrition Operating Ratios, 2014-15

Category	Expenditures	Percentage of Revenue	Industry Standard
Labor/Benefits ²	\$557,766	43%	40-45%
Food/Supplies	\$459,817	35%	40-45%
Other	\$200,679	15%	15-20%
Total Expenditures	\$1,218,262	93%	N/A

Source: OCAS and Prismatic calculations, 2015

Exhibit 5-5 shows GPS and peer district lunch prices for 2014-15. As shown, GPS's lunch prices were higher than the peer averages at all school levels. GPS's elementary school lunch price was the second highest among the peers, the middle school price was tied for highest with four of the peers, and the high school price was the highest among the peers. While GPS's prices are highest across the board, it is unclear how far the other districts may have progressed toward meeting the 2011-12 requirements of HHFKA.

Exhibit 5-5
GPS and Peer District Lunch Prices, 2014-15

Entity	ES	MS/JS	HS
Guthrie	\$2.30	\$2.50	\$2.60
Altus	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$2.50
Guymon	\$2.05	\$2.50	\$2.50
Noble	\$2.35	\$2.50	\$2.50
Tahlequah	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$2.50
Woodward	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.50
Peer Average	\$2.18	\$2.45	\$2.50

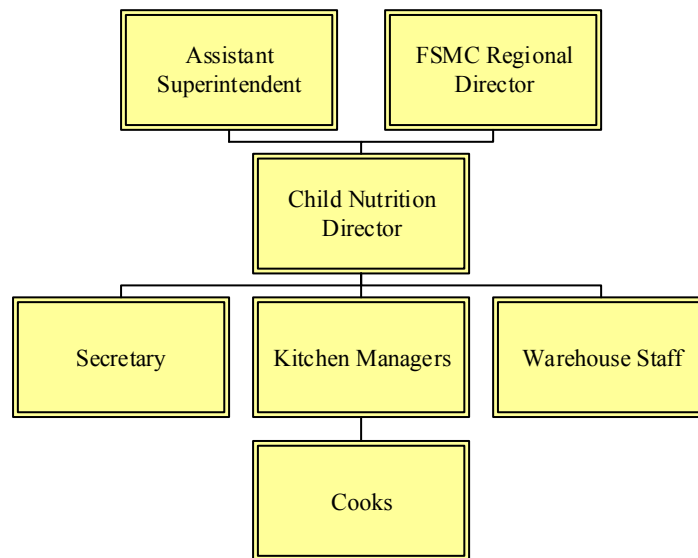
Source: USDA FNS Paid Lunch Prices Database, 2014-15

Exhibit 5-6 shows the organization of staff within the Guthrie child nutrition department. As shown, most child nutrition staff (including kitchen managers, the secretary, and warehouse workers) report to a child nutrition director who is an employee of the FSMC and reports to both an assistant superintendent for the district and the regional director of the FSMC. It should be noted that the person holding the child nutrition director's position was changed at the district's request mid-way through the 2015-16 school year.

As is typically the case, the cooks in the kitchens at the various schools report to their respective kitchen managers.

² OCAS figures adjusted to eliminate the reported \$144,909 spent on employee retirement benefits and the \$1,806 spent on salaries for employment of special needs students that are then reimbursed by the state and reported in OCAS as revenues.

**Exhibit 5-6
GPS Child Nutrition Organization**



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2016

FINDING 5-1

The child nutrition department managed by the contracted FSMC is not adequately managing its staffing. It has not established standards to guide allocation of labor hours by kitchen. Current Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH) are below industry standards.

The contracted FSMC is not using the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) recommended staffing guidelines to set goals for productivity relative to meals served. OSDE guidelines provide productivity goals based upon the number of meal equivalents served and the number of labor hours needed to prepare those meal equivalents. The student reimbursable lunch meal is the standard unit of conversion for determining meal equivalents. Therefore, all meal types are converted to meal equivalents for the purposes of measurement. A meal equivalent is not a unit of production, but a calculation that allows a child nutrition manager to equate all meals to a standard. By converting all food sales to meal equivalents, a director can determine production rates. The OSDE uses the following conversions to meal equivalents:

- one lunch equates to one meal equivalent;
- two breakfasts equate to one meal equivalent;
- three snacks equate to one meal equivalent; and
- à la carte sales of \$2.99 equate to one meal equivalent.

The most common means of measuring employee productivity in child nutrition is the Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH) measure. This is calculated by dividing the number of meal equivalents produced and served in a day by the number of labor hours required to produce those meal equivalents. The OSDE guidelines for MPLH staffing are shown in **Exhibit 5-7**. The OSDE

provides MPLH guidelines for both conventional and convenience systems of food preparation. The consulting team found Guthrie's child nutrition program to be largely using a conventional system of food preparation.

Exhibit 5-7
Oklahoma Staffing Guidelines for Onsite Production

Number of Daily Meal Equivalents	Recommended for Conventional Systems ³		Recommended for Convenience Systems ⁴	
	Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH)	Total Hours	Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH)	Total Hours
10 – 100	12	< 8	16	< 6
101 – 150	12	8 – 12	16	6 - 9
151 – 200	12	12 – 16	16	9 – 12
201 – 250	14	14 – 17	17	12 – 14
251 – 300	14	17 – 21	18	14 – 16
301 – 400	15	20 – 26	18	17 – 21
401 – 500	16	25 – 31	19	21 – 25
501 – 600	17	29 – 35	20	25 – 30
601 – 700	18	33 – 37	22	27 – 31

Source: OSDE Child Nutrition Manual Compliance Section, July 2014

Exhibit 5-8 shows the 2013-14 and 2014-15 monthly MPLH for all Guthrie cafeterias combined. As shown, the MPLH was lower than recommended standards. The consulting team found labor hours in all kitchens to be in excess of OSDE recommendations. While Guthrie cafeterias produced an average of 14.7 meals per labor hour in 2014-15, the state staffing guidelines suggest that GPS's MPLH should be closer to 16, and the average hours per site should be between 25 and 31 rather than 32.4.

³ a system where meals are generally prepared from scratch onsite.

⁴ a system where meals are generally only re-heated from frozen prepared onsite.

**Exhibit 5-8
GPS Meals per Labor Hour, 2013-14 and 2014-15**

2013-14										
Month	Lunches Served ⁵	Breakfasts Served	Snacks Served	Meal Equivalents	# School Days	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Labor Hours	Daily Labor Hours	MPLH
August	18,935	7,137	220	22,577	9	2,509	502	162	32.4	15.5
September	42,114	17,554	440	51,037	20	2,552	510	162	32.4	15.8
October	44,924	18,748	572	54,489	21	2,595	519	162	32.4	16.0
November	40,413	17,207	490	49,180	18	2,732	546	162	32.4	16.9
December	24,916	10,486	330	30,269	12	2,522	504	162	32.4	15.6
January	40,213	16,301	462	48,518	19	2,554	511	162	32.4	15.8
February	33,958	13,018	0	40,467	16	2,529	506	162	32.4	15.6
March	29,974	11,509	450	35,879	14	2,563	513	162	32.4	15.8
April	47,374	19,088	644	57,133	22	2,597	519	162	32.4	16.0
May	31,384	13,949	446	38,507	17	2,265	453	162	32.4	14.0
TOTAL	354,205	144,997	4,054	428,055	168	2,548	510	162	32.4	15.7
2014-15										
Month	Lunches Served	Breakfasts Served	Snacks Served	Meal Equivalents	# School Days	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Labor Hours	Daily Labor Hours	MPLH
August	14,824	6,385	0	18,017	8	2,252	450	162	32.4	13.9
September	41,493	18,185	0	50,586	21	2,409	482	162	32.4	14.9
October	40,779	18,369	0	49,964	21	2,379	476	162	32.4	14.7
November	33,926	15,099	0	41,476	17	2,440	488	162	32.4	15.1
December	29,656	13,036	0	36,174	15	2,412	482	162	32.4	14.9
January	36,182	14,888	0	43,626	18	2,424	485	162	32.4	15.0
February	36,751	14,957	0	44,230	18	2,457	491	162	32.4	15.2
March	29,434	12,335	0	35,602	15	2,373	475	162	32.4	14.7
April	43,746	19,352	0	53,422	22	2,428	486	162	32.4	15.0
May	28,143	13,026	0	34,656	16	2,166	433	162	32.4	13.4
TOTAL	334,934	145,632	0	407,750	171	2,385	477	162	32.4	14.7

Source: GPS data and Prismatic calculations, March 2016

Costs for labor and benefits are major expenditures for child nutrition programs. To maintain a sound financial position, goals for staffing must be established based upon industry standards. OSDE has established guidelines for districts to calculate meal equivalents and assign labor hours. MPLH must be calculated and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that each kitchen has adequate labor hours but are not overstaffed.

RECOMMENDATION

The contracted FSMC should staff kitchens using the Oklahoma State Department of Education staffing standards based upon MPLH calculations.

There are two ways to increase the productivity rate and produce more meals per hour of paid labor:

⁵ Lunch meals shown include a la carte sales at a conversion factor of \$2.72.

- decrease the number of labor hours – the number of staff in each school could be reduced or the number of staff hours worked daily can be reduced by adjusting work schedules; and
- increase the number of meal equivalents – implement measures to increase participation and à la carte sales. Unless the child nutrition program is feeding all of the students, faculty, and staff every day, there are possibilities for increasing participation. Every student who is enrolled and every adult who is employed by the school is a potential customer.

The FSMC’s child nutrition director should analyze labor hours in all kitchens and determine where staff can be reduced or labor hours cut. The consulting team observed one position that could be cut at Fogarty. The cashier and POS is located at the beginning of the line, which requires a person to stand at the fruit vegetable bar at the end of the line and check plates for components. Labor could be cut by one person (6.5 hours) if the cashier, POS and plate checking duties are completed by one person positioned at the end of the serving line. Positions being vacated due to retirement or resignation should not be replaced until productivity is more in line with OSDE guidance.

GPS has low breakfast and lunch participation rates at all schools, with the secondary rates being significantly lower. The FSMC’s child nutrition director should focus on changes and improvements at the secondary level to increase participation. **Findings 5-8** and **5-9** provide implementation steps to increase participation.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is an excess of approximately 22 labor hours across all kitchens at GPS. Assuming an average of seven working hours per kitchen worker per day, reducing three kitchen staff positions will bring the district within range of optimal productivity. The average salary of a kitchen worker in GPS is \$9.68 per hour, so this reduction should save approximately \$34,761 per year ($\$9.68 \times 7 \text{ hours} \times 171 \text{ working days} \times 3 \text{ eliminated positions}$).

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
The FSMC should reduce kitchen staffing by three positions districtwide.	\$34,761	\$34,761	\$34,761	\$34,761	\$34,761

FINDING 5-2

The FSMC’s child nutrition program for Guthrie is not in compliance with requirements of USDA Professional Standards, which is one of the components of *HHFKA* and became effective in school year 2015-16. Provisions require there be a minimum number of annual training hours delivered to all managers and staff. The child nutrition program is not providing training classes to meet this requirement.

There is no formalized training program for CN staff. New staff members learn how to perform their duties from current employees while on the job. Managers learn their duties from other

managers. There is in-service training at the beginning of the year for all staff, with its primary focus being on updates from the health department.

During focus groups held with managers and staff, the majority of attendees indicated a desire for additional training. The managers stated they had been sent to the Oklahoma School Nutrition Association (OSNA) conference in past years. This practice was discontinued when a different FSMC was hired to manage the CN program. They felt that these training meetings were beneficial and expressed a desire for the practice to be reinstated.

The purpose of the Professional Standards provision of *HHFKA* is to establish minimum continuing education standards for all school nutrition professionals. These training standards will ensure that CN personnel have the knowledge, training, and tools they need to plan, prepare, and serve nutritious meals to students.

Exhibit 5-9 outlines the minimum training hours required for each employee group. The training must be job-specific, apply to the employee's work duties, and assist them in optimal performance of their assigned job duties.

Exhibit 5-9
Professional Standards Annual Training Hours Required

CN Employees	SY 2015-16	SY 2016-17
Directors	8 hours	12 hours
Managers	6 hours	10 hours
Staff	4 hours	6 hours
Staff (less than 20 hours)	4 hours	4 hours

Source: USDA, January 2012

The regulation requires documentation to demonstrate compliance with the training requirements. Records must be available to OSDE and are now part of the administrative review. USDA provides a training tracking tool on their website to assist districts with the recordkeeping requirement. Training records must be kept for three years plus the current school year.

In addition to USDA requirements for training, The School Nutrition Association (SNA) in their *Keys to Excellence: Standards of Practice for Nutrition integrity*⁶ recommend the following as a best practice: "Orientation and training that enhances learning and improves job skills is available to all school nutrition personnel."

RECOMMENDATION

The FSMC for the Guthrie child nutrition program should provide training for all CN staff to ensure compliance with the requirements of Professional Standards and ensure that proper training records are maintained.

A formalized training program for all staff should be developed by the FSMC to meet or exceed the requirements of the USDA Professional Standards. The child nutrition director should

⁶ <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=20206>

determine training needs for all employees that are job specific for both managers and staff. Staff members should be surveyed to gauge their specific training needs. The director should determine sources of the training – whether provided in-house or by sending staff to training such as that provided by the OSDE Child Nutrition Unit or the OSNA. A variety of delivery methods, such as online courses, classroom training, and conferences, should be evaluated. An electronic system for tracking the training should be established and maintained by the FSMC.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. If staff is sent to conferences, the budget should include a line item for staff training.

FINDING 5-3

There is a lack of consistent monitoring and oversight of school kitchen operations by the FSMC, which has led to inconsistent food preparation and serving procedures across the district. The FSMC child nutrition director does not visit the school kitchens on a regular basis. There are no regularly-scheduled meetings for managers to be given updates, receive training, discuss issues, and provide input.

Focus groups with kitchen staff generated the following examples:

- junior high staff rotates through different job duties and receives cross-training, while high school staff does not;
- not all understood that they were supposed to wear department-issued uniforms;
- when discussing a new menu item (yogurt parfaits), staff indicated that some schools served in individual portion cups and others served from a steam table pan onto the student tray;
- some thought it was permissible to serve leftovers, and others thought any food remaining at end of meal service must be discarded; and
- all mentioned that they rarely received site visits from the director.

The consulting team observed the following examples of a lack of monitoring and consistency:

- one cafeteria had POS at the beginning of the line (still in compliance because manager stood at end of line to ensure students selected required number of components), while in all other schools POS was at end of line;
- to implement offer versus serve, some schools asked each student what they wanted and others served a variety of offerings and let students choose;

- one school prepared a certain number of servings of each menu item and did not restock, and others continued to batch cook so that all students had the same choices; and
- a cashier who was unsure of what constituted a reimbursable meal.

In her seminal textbook, *School Foodservice Management*,⁷ VanEgmond-Pannell discusses the role of the director or supervisor. “A supervisor is responsible for evaluating programs, aiding the foodservice manager, and generally directing the individual foodservice units.” The importance of monitoring and oversight cannot be underestimated, as child nutrition programs in schools are federal programs with comprehensive regulations and requirements. Cafeteria managers are responsible for ensuring that all regulations are being followed. Infractions can result in fiscal penalties. Child nutrition operates as an enterprise within the school district with fiduciary responsibility to manage public funds in an accountable manner. Cafeteria managers play a key role in ensuring the financial success of the department as they control many of the expenditures and all of the revenue streams. And finally, employees perform at a higher level and are more motivated if they receive onsite evaluation, training, guidance, and coaching and understand the role they play toward program success and accountability.

RECOMMENDATION

The FSMC should schedule the child nutrition director to perform regular onsite monitoring, oversight, coaching, and sharing of best practices in the school kitchens.

Manager meetings should be held at least once a month. The director should visit all schools on a regular basis (a minimum of twice a month). She should maintain a log of issues needing attention and note follow-up. Inconsistencies from school to school should be noted. The director should address these variations by developing standard procedures and providing this information to managers. Observations of staff performance should be used for coaching, sharing of best practices, and development of future training needs. All staff should be provided with the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. The child nutrition director should schedule monthly manager meetings where she provides updates and training, receives input, and provides opportunity for sharing of best practices.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Special Note: Information contained in Findings 5-1 through 5-3 are based upon GPS's child nutrition structure at the time of the onsite visit. It should be noted that immediately prior to the review team's onsite visit, GPS requested and received a new child nutrition director from their contracted FSMC. At the time of the onsite visit, the new child nutrition director had not yet reported for duty.*

FINDING 5-4

The district does not adequately monitor and manage the FSMC contract for the child nutrition program. In April 2009, the USDA published a document titled *Contracting with Food Service*

⁷ VanEgmond Pannell, Dorothy. (1990). *School Foodservice Management* (4th ed.). Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Management Companies: Guidance for School Food Authorities to aid districts in the management of their contracts with food service management companies. Chapter seven of this document addresses the monitoring/recordkeeping responsibilities of the school food authority (SFA).

The SFA must monitor the operation of the FSMC through periodic onsite visits in order to ensure that the FSMC complies with the contract and any other applicable Federal, State, and local rules and regulations. The SFA should maintain documentation of its monitoring and whether or not corrective action was taken.⁸

The SFA's contract monitoring responsibilities include, but are not limited to, evaluating:

cycle menu	civil rights	revenue records
meal pattern	free and reduced policy	outside activities
claim documentation	offer versus serve	preparation facilities
cost records	USDA donated foods	SFA policies
meal count records	competitive foods	recordkeeping

The consulting team found no one in the district has been assigned the duties of monitoring the program and evaluating the FSMC's performance in the above-mentioned areas with the exception of the administration of the free and reduced price applications and preparation of the meal claims. These duties are performed by the child nutrition secretary, who is a district employee. The secretary stated she goes into the schools at the beginning of the school year, but there are no periodic onsite visits by GPS staff to observe and monitor the school meals program at individual sites. The consulting team did not find evidence of documentation of onsite visits as required by the USDA.

When hiring an outside company to manage the USDA food service program, the district is the SFA and is required to appoint someone to act in their behalf. While the child nutrition secretary fulfills a small portion of what the district should do as the SFA by reconciling receipts and invoices, the full responsibility would be mismatched to her clerical position. She reports to and is evaluated by the child nutrition director, who is an employee of the FSMC. The secretary does not meet with the assistant superintendent who oversees the child nutrition program. The child nutrition director does not regularly meet with the assistant superintendent on an individual basis to report on and discuss the child nutrition program. The assistant superintendent stated that he does not visit the schools to observe and monitor the meals program.

The FSMC submits a monthly invoice to the district. This document contains a monthly summary of meals served by category, revenues and expenditures by category, costs incurred by the management company such as labor, benefits, mileage and marketing, and the administrative and management fees. There is no analysis of participation levels and student customer

⁸ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/FSMCGuidance-sfa.pdf>

satisfaction, staff satisfaction, whether maximum revenues are being realized, or the level of cost controls.

The consulting team found several objectives of the contract were not being met, providing further evidence of a lack of district monitoring. These include:

- Establish a formal structure to routinely and continuously gather input from food service employees to ensure the most effective and efficient operation possible.
- Establish and conduct management and staff training programs that will ensure staff development, proper supervision, and consistent quality control, both in productions and service.
- Increase participation at all levels by upgrading equipment and facilities, and by seeking student and parent input.

In addition, per the contract, the FSMC assumes cost responsibility for equipment repairs. The consulting team on their site visits found several pieces of equipment inoperable due to the lack of repairs.

USDA cautions that outsourcing the foodservice program does not relieve the school district of its oversight responsibilities. They go on to state that the district must have a system in place to ensure full compliance with the law, as well as be responsible for the quality of the program being offered. They advise districts that the cost of this oversight, including the need for the district to continue to directly employ an administrator with signature authority for the program, should be weighed into the costs of the contract.

RECOMMENDATION

Appoint district employee(s) to monitor and provide oversight of the child nutrition FSMC contract as well as the program's operations. Set up a system to evaluate performance (quality and service) and assess cost effectiveness and profitability.

A formal program should be developed by GPS to monitor the FSMC performance and provisions of the contract. Duties should include periodic visits to schools to assess the performance of the FSMC as it relates to the quality and service of the school meals program. A monitoring form should be developed to assist in this effort in order to meet the documentation requirement of USDA. The form should include space for corrective action to be noted and the subsequent changes to correct the infraction. The document should include lines for both the district and FSMC employee to sign and date. The assistant superintendent should perform an annual assessment and return on investment (ROI) of the FSMC contract costs to the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-5

There are no financial reports prepared showing activities of the individual cafeterias. The program operations are analyzed at the district level but not by individual site. Managers are not receiving sufficient information about the financial status of their operation.

The child nutrition department uses Municipal Accounting System (MAS) software for their financial reports. These reports reflect district-level data, but they are not broken out by individual cafeterias. Revenue and expenditure data are available by individual site and could be used to prepare monthly site level reports. Participation and sales data is available from individual sites from their automated POS. These data are tabulated by the secretary to prepare the required monthly claim for reimbursement, which is submitted to the OSDE. Kitchen managers place orders for their operation with vendors who provide an invoice upon delivery. Managers bring these invoices to the child nutrition office where they are tabulated and prepared for payment. These invoices could be used to determine food costs by site. Staff is paid on a contract basis, so labor costs could be broken out by individual school.

Management is focused on how the overall program is performing. There is no analysis of individual operations to determine if all sites are performing at a fiscally-sound level. The child nutrition director stated that she does not know how individual sites are performing. There is no evaluation by site of potential increased revenue opportunities or cost cutting measures. Food costs and other expenditures are calculated at the district-program level, and there is no determination of individual site-level expenditures. Managers stated during interviews that they are not aware of how their program is doing financially. They have not received any training on financial management.

NFSMI recommends preparing and distributing site-level performance reports in their class *Financial Management: A Course for School Nutrition Directors*.⁹ SNA's self-assessment tool, *Keys to Excellence*, includes the following best practices and indicators:

- A statement of revenue and expenditures (profit and loss statement) is prepared for child nutrition on a monthly basis for the department and for each serving site.
- Statements of revenue and expenditure for child nutrition are distributed to each serving site.
- School nutrition personnel at the school level receive training on controlling costs and revenue generation.
- School nutrition personnel at the school level are encouraged to develop and implement practices that increase revenue and control costs.¹⁰

One cafeteria-level report distributed by another school district is shown in **Exhibit 5-10**. This sample provides a variety of data, including financial and performance data, in a format that is easy to read and understand. Additional sample reports can be found in the NFSMI financial management class materials.

⁹ <http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=63>

¹⁰ <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=20206>

**Exhibit 5-10
Sample Monthly Cafeteria Report**

Revenue:		Current Month	Year to Date
Meal Revenue		\$2,411.40	
Supplemental Sales		\$1,648.90	
Other Revenue		\$75.34	
Total Reimbursement		\$15,061.75	
TOTAL REVENUE:		\$19,197.39	\$139,903.44

Expenses:		Current Month	Year to Date
<i>Inventory/Food Cost</i>			
Beginning Inventory		\$5,973.00	
Purchases		\$7,167.00	
Transfers		(\$70.00)	
Ending Inventory		\$5,932.00	
<i>Total Food Usage:</i>		\$7,138.00	\$51,686.00
<i>Inventory/Supply Cost</i>			
Beginning Inventory		\$1,413.00	
Purchases		\$753.00	
Transfers		\$311.00	
Ending Inventory		\$1,564.00	
<i>Total Supply Usage:</i>		\$913.00	\$6,618.00
Labor Costs			
School Staff		\$8,186.19	
Temporary Labor		\$0.00	
<i>Total Labor:</i>		\$8,186.19	\$67,638.24
Overhead		(\$108.37)	\$6,207.11
TOTAL EXPENSES:		\$16,128.82	\$132,149.35
GAIN or (LOSS):		\$3,068.57	\$7,754.09
% GAIN or (LOSS):		15.98%	5.54%

Supervisor Comments/Suggestions:

Percent of Revenue			
	Total Cost	% of Total Revenue	Goal Less Than
Food	\$7,138.00	37.18%	40%
Supplies	\$913.00	4.76%	5%
Labor	\$8,186.19	42.64%	40%
Overhead	(\$108.37)	-0.56%	7%
Total Cost	\$16,128.82	84.02%	92%

Total Meal Equivalents Per Day	
Total Breakfasts:	56
Total Lunches:	264
Supplemental Sales:	36
Total Meal Equivalents:	357

% of Eligible Meals Served			
Average Daily Attendance:		426	
	# Eligible	% Served	Goal
Free	223	85.67%	
Reduced	14	88.72%	
Paid	219	26.56%	

Current Month Plate Cost			
	Total School Cost	Cost Per ME	Goal
Food	\$7,138.00	\$1.05	\$1.08
Supplies	\$913.00	\$0.13	\$0.13
Labor	\$8,186.19	\$1.38	\$1.08
Overhead	(\$108.37)	(\$0.02)	\$0.19
Total Cost	\$16,128.82	\$2.55	\$2.48

YTD Plate Cost			
	Total School Cost	Cost Per ME	Goal
Food	\$51,686.00	\$1.05	\$1.08
Supplies	\$6,618.00	\$0.13	\$0.13
Labor	\$67,638.24	\$1.37	\$1.08
Overhead	\$6,207.11	\$0.12	\$0.19
Total Cost	\$132,149.35	\$2.67	\$2.48

Source: Prismatic files, December 2013

RECOMMENDATION

Develop site-level reports that will provide meaningful data in a format that can be used for analysis and management decision-making.

The child nutrition director should work with the accounting software company, MAS, to develop monthly financial reports by individual cafeterias. The reports should contain sufficient data for a thorough analysis by site to determine if each is operating in a cost-effective manner or if any are experiencing a loss. The child nutrition director should then work with appropriate kitchen staff to implement changes that will improve the financial status. The reports should be distributed to managers on a monthly basis, and they should be trained on how to interpret and use the data for program improvement. The reports should be ready for use in 2016-17.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-6

The FSMC is not operating the child nutrition program according to standard business practices in an enterprise system. The district is not being reimbursed by the child nutrition program to the full extent allowable. The child nutrition program is not paying for its share of utilities. USDA regulations consider utilities to be an allowable cost to the program, as the kitchens need utilities such as electricity and gas to operate equipment. As an enterprise, the child nutrition program should be responsible for paying all allowable costs.

A district may charge the child nutrition program directly for utilities if there is a methodology to quantify how much energy is used by the program. The best method is to install separate utility meters for each cafeteria area; however, GPS does not have separate utility meters for the cafeterias. Another acceptable method is to use a prorating system that allocates utility use based upon what percentage of the total square footage is represented by the kitchen and lunchroom areas. To provide a true picture of the cost to operate the child nutrition program, all allowable costs should be included.

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure the child nutrition program pays its fair share of the district utility costs as a direct expense.

Utility costs should be assessed to the child nutrition program based upon its collective portion of the district's total square footage. The consulting team determined the proportion to be an average of 8.2 percent as shown in **Exhibit 5-11**. This percentage should be applied to the district annual utility costs and charged to the child nutrition program. Implementation should begin in 2016-17. This expenditure should be included in the child nutrition budget.

Exhibit 5-11
GPS Total and Child Nutrition Square Footage

Site	School Sq. Ft.	CN Sq. Ft.	CN %
Central Elementary	20,159	2,846	14.1%
Cotteral Elementary	38,371	2,250	5.9%
Fogarty Elementary	44,690	4,536	10.1%
Guthrie Upper Elementary	89,100	6,650	7.5%
High School & Gym	130,000	8,571	6.6%
Jr. High Main Building	71,094	7,541	10.6%
Average	65,569	5,399	8.2%

Source: Prismatic January 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team was not able to develop actual utility costs to be allocated to child nutrition because of a lack of specific information as to what utility meters feed what areas in the facilities.

FINDING 5-7

In Guthrie, 65.4 percent of students are approved for free and reduced meals, compared to the state average of 62.0 percent. The approval rate is higher than three peer districts as shown in **Exhibit 5-12**.

Exhibit 5-12
GPS and Peer District Approval Rates 2014

Entity	Approval %
Guthrie	65.4%
Altus	62.4%
Guymon	74.2%
Noble	61.7%
Tahlequah	71.5%
Woodward	60.9%
Peer Average	70.6%
State Average	62.0%

Source: OK EQA District Socioeconomic Data 2014

Guthrie has a thorough process for qualifying students for free and reduced price meals. Applications are on the district website, and parents can apply online or by submitting a paper application in person or by fax. Applications are available at all schools in the main office and are prominently displayed. They are provided at back-to-school nights at the beginning of the school year. The child nutrition secretary calls parents of students with excessive charges to encourage them to apply for benefits if they are eligible.

COMMENDATION

Guthrie has implemented a thorough process for approving applications for free and reduced price meals, resulting in an approval rate that is higher than the state average.

FINDING 5-8

Guthrie Public Schools has low meal participation rates. Breakfast participation rates for all schools except Central Elementary are below industry standards as shown in **Exhibit 5-13**. Lunch participation rates for all schools are below industry standards as shown in **Exhibit 5-14**.

Exhibit 5-13
Best Practice Breakfast Participation Rates Compared to Guthrie

School	Best Practice	GPS Rate (2014-15)
Central Elem	35%	40%
Fogarty Elem	35%	33%
GUES	35%	31%
Junior HS	35%	20%
High School	25%	11%

Source: HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria, 2014, and GPS, January 2016

Exhibit 5-14
Best Practice Lunch Participation Rates Compared to Guthrie

School	Best Practice	GPS Rate (2014-15)
Central Elem	75%	63%
Fogarty Elem	75%	63%
GUES	75%	61%
Junior HS	75%	48%
High School	65%	32%

Source: HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria, 2014, and GPS, January 2016

The consulting team found several practices contributing to rates lower than industry best practices:

- student input is not solicited to gauge satisfaction with the program;
- staff input is not solicited to provide feedback on student satisfaction with menu items and service;
- items were not replenished on lines or in condiment bars at the high school, so all students did not have the same choices;
- food quality (taste and appearance) was not good at the junior high;
- managers are not able to customize food offerings for their students;

- there are no alternative breakfast service approaches used (such as breakfast in the classroom or breakfast after the first bell); and
- the director does not visit schools to observe student satisfaction levels, food quality, and customer service.

Results from student surveys indicated an extremely low proportion (18 percent) like the food in the cafeteria. Only 20 percent think the cafeteria serves a good variety of food. **Exhibit 5-15** shows the responses from the 571 students who responded. These survey data substantiate the need for major improvements to the meals programs, which should result in improved participation levels.

Exhibit 5-15
Student Survey Results Regarding Child Nutrition

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	8%	31%	27%	18%	16%
I have enough time to eat my lunch each day.	11%	30%	9%	18%	32%
I like the food served in the cafeteria.	4%	14%	17%	18%	47%
The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	4%	16%	20%	18%	42%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

There are a variety of resources and training materials available to assist child nutrition programs in increasing participation. The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement at the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs has an assortment of training materials, best practices, research articles, and self-assessment forms. The School Nutrition Association has a self-assessment section on menu planning and marketing in their *Keys to Excellence*. NFSMI has a publication *Best Practices for Marketing the School Nutrition Program* as well as training courses for staff such as *Focus on the Customer*. USDA's Team Nutrition has a toolkit *Fruits and Vegetables Galore* that contains a workbook titled *Meal Appeal Attracting Customers*.

RECOMMENDATION

The FSMC and the child nutrition director should develop strategies for increasing student participation rates.

There are several areas where the child nutrition director should make changes to increase participation levels. Managers should be involved in the process of menu development. Managers should be trained in how to customize menu offerings while remaining within nutritional guidelines. Menu items should be tracked closely on production records and plate waste to assess acceptance levels and items with low numbers then removed. Standards of meal service should be established and monitored such as same menu items available for all students and self-service bars kept replenished. Student feedback should be used to plan menus.

Alternative breakfast service models should be implemented at the secondary level in an attempt to increase their extremely low participation rates.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-9

There is no formalized opportunity for students to provide feedback of the meals programs. Kitchen staff and managers stated that occasionally students will provide unsolicited feedback about the food offered that day. They reported that there is not a formalized program to solicit student feedback and opinions. They also stated the director does not ask them about students' reaction to the menus or new food items.

The director stated at present there is no program to involve students and get feedback. She does not track participation by menu item and use that information to develop menus. Students are not involved in testing or evaluating new recipes and food items. The consulting team observed a new item, yogurt parfaits, offered at breakfast. Staff did not solicit feedback and did not monitor plate waste for those who selected this item.

Principals reported during interviews that there is no student involvement or opportunity for feedback in their school. When asked, they were positive and agreeable to starting a student advisory group for the purpose of involving students and getting feedback on the meals program.

Approximately 17 percent of the GPS student population responded to the online survey administered by the consulting team. This response rate indicates a some interest in providing feedback.

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) recommends several best practices regarding student feedback in its self-assessment tool, *Keys to Excellence*:

- School nutrition personnel solicit feedback from students about meal choices and report feedback to the manager.
- Students are included in panels and/or committees used to select products and/or plan menus.
- Students, parents, and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the menu (e.g., via email, suggestion boxes, comment cards, surveys, Website, social media).¹¹

SNA's 2015 School Nutrition Trends Report discussed several programs or initiatives to promote healthier school food choices. They stated the most prevalent program implemented is student taste tests and sampling as cited by nearly 75 percent of districts overall.

In *School Food & Nutrition Service Management*, Pannell-Martin recommends getting feedback from students, as it is more definite than using production records to determine student

¹¹ <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=20206>

preferences. She goes on to indicate the following as good techniques for gathering feedback from students:

- formal questionnaires and surveys;
- informal interviews;
- small-group discussions;
- suggestion boxes;
- asking for immediate feedback using texts from mobile devices; and
- tasting parties and sampling.¹²

RECOMMENDATION

Organize and implement a student feedback program using a variety of methods, such as advisory groups, testing and evaluation, and surveys at the elementary and secondary level.

GPS should develop a formalized program to solicit feedback from student customers. Activities should be tailored to both the elementary and secondary levels. The child nutrition director should work with principals to organize advisory panels at all schools. Meetings should be scheduled on a regular basis to solicit feedback on the current program and menus as well as test new food items and recipes. Managers should be trained on methods to gather student feedback.

FISCAL IMPACT

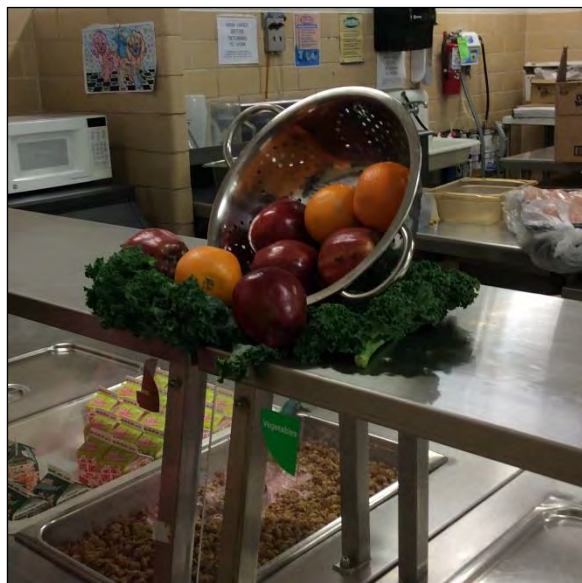
This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-10

The FSMC operating the child nutrition program makes excellent use of marketing and decorating materials in the lunchrooms. Serving lines are attractive, and decorations are changed on a frequent basis. Signage is used to post menus and provide nutrition information. Attractive serving carts are used for fruit and vegetable bars. Themed names are painted on the walls to indicate different serving areas (**Exhibit 5-16**).

¹² Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. (2014). *School Food and Nutrition Management for the 21st Century* (6th ed.). School Nutrition Association

Exhibit 5-16 Decorating and Marketing Examples



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

In a discussion about dining facilities, VanEgmond-Pannell states “The dining room should be attractive, bright colored, cheerful, non-institutional in atmosphere and interesting”.¹³ She identifies atmosphere as one of the prime inducements for people to dine out. Though students are not dining out, they frequent the lunchroom for numerous meals and the atmosphere or ambiance will have an impact on participation. It should be pleasant, attractive to the age group it serves, and a fun place to eat.

¹³ VanEgmond-Pannell, Dorothy. (1990). *School foodservice management (4th ed.)* Van Nostrand Reinhold.

COMMENDATION

The FSMC operating the child nutrition department is proficient in the use of marketing and decorating materials in the lunchrooms.

FINDING 5-11

The FSMC operated child nutrition program integrates several best practices when developing menus and determining food offerings. Examples include:

- several choices at both breakfast and lunch;
- choices at all grade levels;
- fruit and vegetable bars at all grade levels;
- extensive use of scratch food preparation;
- widespread use of an extensive variety of fresh fruits and vegetables; and
- condiment bars at the secondary level.

Exhibit 5-17 provides examples of the vibrant and varied options at various GPS serving lines. The prevalence of self-serve bars at all grade levels is increasing and has been proven to be an effective method to offer more fresh fruits and vegetables as required by the *HHFKA* requirements.

Exhibits 5-17
Options at Select GPS Serving Lines



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

In a discussion about food and beverage trends, The School Nutrition Association (SNA) 2014 Operations Report stated 62.9 percent of all schools are using salad or produce bars. *Keys to Excellence*, SNA's self-assessment of best practices, recommends concepts such as self-service and food bars as a best practice. The SNA 2011 Operations Report stated that more than 75 percent of school districts offer bakery items made from scratch-cooking methods, and more than 20 percent make at least half of all entrée items from scratch.

COMMENDATION

The FSMC operating the child nutrition department incorporates several best practices in its menus and food offerings.

FINDING 5-12

The FSMC operated child nutrition program has made good use of technology. It is using automated processes for POS, nutritional analysis, menus, recordkeeping, recording payroll information, and orders from outside vendors. While the use of technology in school food service has become mainstream in large operations, smaller programs have been slower to embrace the full automation of all functions, often due to a lack of district technology infrastructure, skilled manpower to implement, or cost.

There are two functional areas where parents are benefiting from the use of technology in the child nutrition program. The first is being able to apply online for meal benefits. Parents can access the application from the district's website, fill out the form, and electronically send it back to the child nutrition office, where it is processed in a timely manner. This software also assists in the USDA-required verification process. The second area is the ability to make meal payments online. Parents may put money in their child's account, view purchase history, check balances, and get low-balance warnings via their email.

Parents and students have a keen understanding of technology, use it in their daily lives, and come to expect it when they participate in the school meals program. Providing automated processes for parents, such as online payments and meal applications, is an effective way to ensure that all eligible students are enrolled in the free and reduced price meal program and that paying students do not have to bring cash to purchase meals. An online payment system provides the added benefit of parents being able to monitor their child's purchases and make payments before a child has to charge their meal. Providing this kind of data to parents can serve to prevent overcharging and problems in the collection process.

COMMENDATION

The FSMC operated child nutrition department makes good use of technology for efficient and effective systems.

FINDING 5-13

The FSMC operating the district's child nutrition program is not adequately managing the kitchen equipment. Equipment is not repaired in a timely manner, in part, due to the scarcity of parts for the aged equipment. It has been determined that some equipment is no longer repairable, but this equipment has not been removed from the kitchens or is being used for another purpose. For example, the consulting team observed that the unrepairable chest freezer at Fogarty was being used for storage. In the high school, two ovens do not work (**Exhibit 5-18**). In the junior high school, one oven has not worked for two years. Attachment G, page 2 of the Agreement between GPS and the FSMC indicates the FSMC should be responsible for the equipment repair costs.

Exhibit 5-18
Example of Aged Equipment



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

There is no inventory of kitchen equipment. There is no tracking of equipment repairs. There is no equipment replacement plan. The child nutrition budget does not include a line item for capital replacement.

The director develops an equipment “wish list” every year that is given to the assistant superintendent. He prepares the budget and estimates a budgeted amount for kitchen equipment expenditures; however, the budget line item and expenditures are put in the building fund rather than in the child nutrition fund. Expenditures for kitchen equipment are a direct operating expense and should be included in the total expenditures of the child nutrition program.

Cost Control for School Food Service Directors and Administrators recommends budgeting 2.6 percent of revenue for large equipment.¹⁴ *School Food and Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century* recommends 3.8 percent.¹⁵ It is advised that these amounts are budgeted and expended on an annual basis so that equipment is replaced before its useful life expires.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement an equipment replacement plan.

The child nutrition director should inventory all kitchen equipment and determine the age and frequency of repair for each piece. These data should be used to develop and implement an equipment replacement plan. Strategic planning should include development of a prioritized list

¹⁴ VanEgmond-Pannell, D. (1992). *Cost Control Manual for School Food Service Directors*. Kentucky: Kentucky Department of Education, Division of School and Community Nutrition.

¹⁵ Pannell-Martin, D., & Boettger, J. (2014). *School Food and Nutrition Management for the 21st Century* (6th ed.). School Nutrition Association.

of equipment needing to be replaced based upon frequency of repair and estimated age. Equipment should then be purchased, as allowed by the budget, and installed. Finally, the old equipment should be removed in a timely manner and disposed of properly.

FISCAL IMPACT

The district should budget 2.6 percent of projected revenue for large equipment in the 2016-17 child nutrition fund budget. Based upon revenue projections in the 2015-16 budget (\$1,420,334), this amount would be \$36,929.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Budget for equipment replacement.	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)	(\$36,929)

FINDING 5-14

Guthrie Public Schools has an excellent, detailed, and complete board policy (G-8 & G-9) titled *Use of School Property* that addresses the use of cafeteria and kitchen facilities. A written application must be submitted to the superintendent's office at least ten days in advance of an event. Payments for the use of the facility must be submitted to the superintendent's office at least 72 hours in advance of an event.

The following is noted in the board policy regarding the use of cafeterias:

Cafeterias

Use of cafeterias will be granted with or without use of kitchen facilities. No organization will have access to the cafeteria kitchen area unless the cafeteria manager is present and in charge, together with such additional paid help from the cafeteria manager's staff as may be required. In planning an event which will use the cafeteria kitchen equipment, the area dietitian, the cafeteria manager, and whatever number of helpers they deem necessary, must all be involved in the planning, operation, and supervision of such project. Because of the food supplies and expensive equipment, and because of the rigid requirements of health and sanitation authorities, the use of cafeteria facilities must be under the direct control of the cafeteria department.

Refreshments will be served only in cafeterias unless other areas have been approved by the principal.

Rental fees and charges for labor are addressed as noted:

- Cafeteria w/ Kitchen \$75 (2 hour minimum) + custodial fees + cafeteria employee fee (one cafeteria employee must be present); \$40 each add'l hour
- Cafeteria w/o Kitchen \$50 (2 hour minimum) + custodial fees; \$25 each add'l hour
- Cafeteria Employee Fee \$15 / hour per person

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools has an excellent policy that comprehensively addresses all aspects of the use of school kitchens and cafeterias.

B. TECHNOLOGY

Oklahoma is striving to further implement technology into all classrooms. For example, the first goal of the 2004 Oklahoma Plan for Instructional Technology/Telecommunications was that all Oklahoma students would achieve technological literacy by the eighth grade.

The Foundation for Excellence in Education's Digital Learning Council introduced the *10 Elements of High Quality Digital Learning*¹⁶ in the fall of 2010. These elements identify action to be taken by lawmakers and policymakers to promote a high quality education for all students. The Digital Learning 2014 State Analysis compares Oklahoma with the national average on each of the elements (**Exhibit 5-19**). Overall, Oklahoma earned a 77 percent or C+ on this report card. Oklahoma's biggest areas of concern were:

- Assessment and Accountability – non-use of evaluative outcomes-based student performance data for virtual charter schools, online providers, and online courses, and subsequent closure due to poor performance; and
- Delivery – lack of state actions to ensure all students have access to devices that can reach the Internet.

However, Oklahoma scored high in providing student access to quality digital content.

¹⁶ <http://www.digitalllearningnow.com/10Elements/>

Exhibit 5-19
Digital Learning 2014 State Analysis: Oklahoma

10 Elements of High Quality Digital Learning	Oklahoma Grade and Percentage		National Average Grade and Percentage	
	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
1. Student eligibility: All students are digital learners.	C+	77%	C-	71%
2. Student access: All students have access to high-quality digital content and online courses.	A	100%	C	75%
3. Personalized learning: All students can customize their education using digital content through an approved provider.	C	75%	C+	77%
4. Advancement: Students progress based upon demonstrated competency.	B-	81%	F	59%
5. Quality content: Digital content, instructional materials, and online and blended learning courses are high quality.	A-	92%	A-	93%
6. Quality instruction: Digital instruction is high quality.	B-	82%	B-	84%
7. Quality choices: All students have access to multiple high-quality providers.	C+	79%	C-	74%
8. Assessment and accountability: Student learning is the metric for evaluating the quality of content and instruction.	F	58%	D	68%
9. Funding: Funding creates incentives for performance, options, and innovation.	C	75%	F	54%
10. Delivery: Infrastructure: Infrastructure supports digital learning.	F	56%	D-	60%

Source: <http://digitalllearningnow.com/report-card/state/2014/oklahoma-3/>

Oklahoma has transitioned to Measured Progress for all Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) to assess student mastery of the Oklahoma Academic Standards. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) has released technology guidelines¹⁷ for the Measured Progress assessments of schools so they will be properly equipped and ready to administer the tests this spring and in future retesting sessions.

Exhibit 5-20 illustrates the most current assessment technology specifications that districts in Oklahoma must consider as they administer assessments. These include:

- **Minimum Specifications** – These specifications represent the oldest operating systems and lowest levels of hardware capacity acceptable for administering OCCT in 2014-15. Computers with these minimum specifications have to be verified thoroughly using the workstation readiness test to identify any performance related problems.
- **Recommended Specifications** – These specifications provide the levels of computer and network capacity that are more likely to provide a smooth testing experience for students.

¹⁷ http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/2014-15_MP_OCCT_Technology_Guidelines_0.pdf

Exhibit 5-20
Oklahoma Spring OCCT Assessment Technology Specifications

Component	Minimum	Recommended
Connectivity	Must be able to connect to the Internet via wired or wireless networks	
CPU	1.2 Ghz	1.2 Ghz
Memory	512 MB	1 GB
Screen Size	9.7” screen size or large/”10-inch class” tablets or larger	
Screen Resolution	1024 x 768	1024 x 768
Windows Desktops/Laptops	Windows XP – Service Pack 3 32-bit	Windows 7-8.1 32-bit, 64-bit
Mac Desktops/Laptops	10.5.6	10.7 – 10.9
Linux Desktops/Laptops	Ubuntu 10.4, Fedora 14 32-bit, 64-bit	Ubuntu 11.10, Fedora 16 32-bit, 64-bit
Android Tablets	Android 4.0 (with 512 MB RAM or greater)	Android 4.0-4.4 (with 1 GB RAM or greater)
Apple iOS	iPad 2 running iOS 6 (with 512 MB RAM or greater)	iPad 2 running iOS 6-7 (with 512 MB RAM or greater)
Windows Touch-enabled Desktops and Laptops	Not supported for security reasons	
Chrome OS for Chromebooks	31	31-34
Browsers	Internet Explorer 9 Firefox 24 Chrome 29 Safari 5	Internet Explorer 10-11 Firefox 24-29 Chrome 29-34 Safari 5-7
Input Device Requirements for All Desktops/Laptops	Keyboard – wired or wireless/Bluetooth Mouse or Touchpad	
Headphone/Earphone/Ear Buds	Headphones/Earphones/Ear Buds are only required for students who need them for the Read Aloud accommodations	

Source: http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov/sde/files/documents/files/2014-15_MP_OCCT_Technology_Guidelines_0.pdf

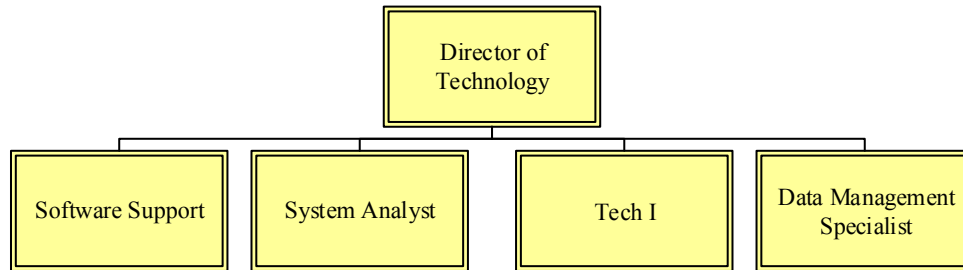
The stated technology requirements further illustrate the importance of an adequate technology infrastructure and effective long-range planning to accommodate an increasing number of students participating in online testing in the coming years.

Guthrie Public Schools has made efforts to provide and expand access to technology while also considering budgetary limitations. Guthrie has equipped classrooms with interactive whiteboards and made iPads, tablets, and Chromebooks available. The district has purchased student computers for computer labs and classrooms to increase efficiency with student technology use. A district-wide wireless network is in place and this infrastructure can help increase efficiency in the administration of state assessments.

The current technology staff organization for Guthrie Public Schools is shown in **Exhibit 5-21**. The district receives technology support from five full-time staff members including a technology director, a software support staff person, a system analyst, a technician and a data management specialist. The technology director leads efforts in acquiring technological tools throughout the district and makes purchasing decisions at the district level. The district buys used

equipment from other school districts in an effort to maximize district funds. However, the increased maintenance needs of out-of-date equipment impact the technology department staff, as well as, impede the use of technology by instructors, students and staff.

Exhibit 5-21
Guthrie Technology Organizational Structure



Source: Created by Prismatic, February 2016

FINDING 5-15

Guthrie Public Schools lacks adequate staff to meet the district’s technology needs. Currently, GPS employs a technology director, a network PC support specialist, a network systems engineer, a network systems technician, and a PC support specialist. While the full-time staff at Guthrie mirrors the staff at peer districts, Guthrie increases the challenge of maintenance by purchasing out-of-date equipment from other districts. This impacts staff’s ability to provide consistent and reliable access for teachers and students.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), an internationally recognized nonprofit 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. According to ISTE, “the Technology Support Index is designed to provide school districts with models for an efficient and effective technology support system based upon best practices in nationally recognized school districts. With the TSI framework and self-assessment tool, school districts can appraise the quality and efficiency of their current technology support program and learn about possible improvements they can employ”.¹⁸

In a recent version of the ISTE Index, four domains are assessed including equipment standards, staffing and processes, professional development, and enterprise management. School districts are ranked into one of four categories for various aspects of technology use and support. The assessment levels of efficiency are:

- low efficiency — a strategy or domain that needs attention and improvement;
- moderate efficiency — these strategies address major technical support issues but with incomplete implementation or inadequate resources;

¹⁸ <http://tsi.iste.org/>

- satisfactory efficiency — these strategies are generally effective in sustaining the technology infrastructure and promoting the integration of technology in teaching and learning; and
- high efficiency — these strategies make the most of available technology support resources, emergent problems are rapidly detected, solutions are quickly implemented, and problem sources are identified and corrected.

Exhibit 5-22 shows the ISTE Technology Support Index.

Exhibit 5-22
ISTE Technology Support Index

Index Area	Efficiency of Technology			
	Low	Moderate	Satisfactory	High
Computer to Technician Staffing Ratio (# of computers : technician)	250:1	150:1 to 250:1	75:1 to 150:1	Less than 75:1

Source: www.iste.org, 2008

GPS reports a total of 1,384 desktop computers, 539 laptops, 218 smartboards, 36 tables, 860 iPads, and 68 Chromebooks in the district computer inventory. Five full-time staff members supporting the existing technology fall in the low efficiency range of technology support. A teacher working part-time or after school for the technology department improves the ratio, but the efficiency rating remains in the low category.

Staff surveys asked about equipment repairs and servicing; 62 percent agreed that equipment was quickly repaired or serviced, and 30 percent disagreed (**Exhibit 5-23**). During onsite interviews and focus groups, school personnel indicated that support issues are not always handled in a timely manner.

Exhibit 5-23
Staff Survey Results Regarding Equipment Repair

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When necessary, the district's technology equipment is quickly repaired or serviced.	4%	58%	8%	21%	9%

Source: *Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016*

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement a “students as technicians” program in cooperation with Meridian Technology Center and a teacher technician program paid with stipends that supplement technology support at the sites.

In a 2002 National School Boards Foundation survey, 54 percent of school leaders reported that students were successfully providing support within their schools. Additionally, the ISTE Index

addresses student support for district technology. A satisfactory efficiency rating is given for the existence of a curricular program designed to train students in technical support where students are used to replace some of the technical support system. A high efficiency rating is given where students support district technology as a part of their instructional program.

Maintaining district equipment and providing troubleshooting assistance should be primarily handled through the technology department. Given current budget constraints, hiring additional staff is not feasible. To assist with basic troubleshooting at the sites, the district should implement a student technical assistance program. Currently, the district hires students as technicians during the summer months. This recommendation would be an expansion of that practice.

GPS is encouraged to work in conjunction with the Meridian Technology Center to create and implement a student as technicians program that benefits GPS students and staff. The technology director should work with the site principals to identify the kinds of skills that would be most helpful in a “students as technicians” program. Having sufficient technical support is critical to successful technology use, both in classrooms and in administrative offices.

FISCAL IMPACT

GPS has over 3,000 technology devices to maintain. If a student technician program was created to provide five student technicians for four hours per day at a rate of \$10 per hour during the course of the 175 day school year it would cost the district \$35,000. Were the teacher technician program expanded it could cost an additional \$2,400 per year in stipends. These estimates are highly variable as the programs could be phased in over time and work load on a weekly basis will change considerably.

Recommendation	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Develop and implement a “students as technicians” program.	(\$35,000)	(\$35,000)	(\$35,000)	(\$35,000)	(\$35,000)
Expand the current “teachers as technicians” program.	(\$2,400)	(\$2,400)	(\$2,400)	(\$2,400)	(\$2,400)

FINDING 5-16

The district purchases used equipment from other school districts instead of purchasing new equipment. While this practice initially saves money, the cost and staff required to maintain and support the equipment impacts the viability of such a practice.

In staff surveys when asked about the lifespan of district technology equipment, 83 percent agreed that equipment was used past its usefulness (**Exhibit 5-24**). According to research from The Gartner Group, an independent technology research and consulting firm, the useful life of

computers in public education is four to five years.¹⁹ GPS currently purchases most computers from neighboring Edmond and Putnam City Public Schools. Since Edmond surpluses computers after five years, this indicates that Guthrie's technology is outdated at the time of purchase.

Exhibit 5-24
Staff Survey Results Regarding Equipment Lifespan

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district's technology equipment is often used past its useful lifespan.	41%	42%	11%	4%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2016

As a result, the district's computers are limited in the types of educational software that can be used, the reliability of the equipment, and the ability and speed of Internet access. Some computers are still running Windows 98, according to district documents. These factors and more impact the volume and timeliness of technology support.

The district has already invested in the cost of setting up a wireless network. The maintenance costs of a wireless network are minimal. Security is built in because the network resides within the school networking system. Given that the district has the wireless infrastructure in place and no funds for additional devices at this time, a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) initiative should be considered as a means to achieve the one-to-one goal. Numerous publications on BYOD implementation are available. The district might consider reviewing:

- Scholastic Administrator's *A Practical Guide to Implementing 1:1*;²⁰
- *Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Guidebook* from ClassLinkBlog;²¹ or
- Blackboard's *Embracing the Inevitable: How to Create K-12 Acceptable Use Policies that Harness the Power of Mobility*.²²

RECOMMENDATION

Maximize district resources by creating and implementing a plan to use a BYOD initiative and beginning purchases of new equipment in lieu of used equipment.

Using inventory information, the technology director should establish a priority list of which computers are to be replaced first (e.g., student use and then in what order others will be replaced) and with what type of device. The technology director should also establish an initial expected lifespan and replacement target for each type of computer category.

Once these replacement cycles are established, the technology director should annually link

¹⁹ <http://www.gartner.com>

²⁰ <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3755881>

²¹ <http://www.classlink.com/blog/2012/10/the-bring-your-own-device-byod-roadmap/>

²² <http://bbbb.blackboard.com/AUP>

existing district General Funds designated for computer replacement to the number of computers to be replaced. Funds are currently available in the technology budget. Funds should be redirected to purchase smaller numbers of new computers instead of larger numbers of used equipment.

Further consideration needs to be given to BYOD implementation steps, policies development, and budgeting for additional wireless equipment and updates. A technology planning committee with guidance from the technology director and superintendent can lead the planning of both the purchasing cycle and BYOD initiatives. Including a cross-section of stakeholders ensures not only buy-in but also brings a wide array of ideas and considerations to deployment, strengthening the likelihood of success.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-17

Guthrie Public Schools does not currently have a district standard for technology purchases. Equipment is purchased from other districts. No framework for equipment replacement or lifespan exists, resulting in equipment that is past its usefulness being in classrooms.

In the district, there are no minimum technology (network, hardware and software) standards and protocols in place. A lack of coordination and guidelines results in equipment and software that no longer meets user needs or are obsolete and unusable for the designated purpose. This absence of standards and protocols leads to additional costs and an increased backlog of support requests.

Technology guidelines for the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT) list the following requirements for student workstations in 2015-16:

- Device Types: desktops, laptops, iPads[®], Chromebook[™] notebook computer, Windows-based tablets/netbooks/2-in-1
- CPU: 1.2 GHz
- Memory: 1 GB (2 GB is strongly recommended for best performance)
- Screen Size: 9.7 inches or larger/10-inch class tablets or larger with resolution of 1024 x 768
- Operating System: Mac OS 10.6.8 – 10.11 (64-bit only), Windows Vista, Windows 7-10 (32-bit and 64-bit), Linux (Ubuntu 12.04 LTS – 14.04 LTS (64-bit only) or Fedora 21, 22 (64-bit only)), Chrome OS 42 - 49, Windows-based tablets/netbooks/2-in-1 Windows 8.1 – 10, iPad[®] 8.1.3 – 9.3
- Connectivity: Must be able to connect to the Internet via wired or wireless networks
- Browsers (Used for Practice Test Only): Chrome 46 or newer, Firefox 42 or newer, Safari 8 or newer, Internet Explorer 10 – 11, Edge

- Headphone/Earphone/Ear Buds: Headphones/earphones/ear buds are required for students who have a text-to-speech accommodation²³

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt district equipment standards that include an equipment replacement schedule for computers and other technology equipment.

The responsibility and technical expertise needed to meet user demands can no longer be performed in a fragmented fashion. All district technology needs must be identified, prioritized and addressed in a systematic and well thought-out manner beginning with the development of equipment standards.

The district should develop district standards for all hardware, software, and network equipment. The technology guidelines developed by the State Department of Education and Measured Progress should be the starting point of the discussion on district standards.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-18

Funds for technology at Guthrie Public Schools are limited. The district has not sufficiently sought to identify and seek additional funding sources and grants for technology purchases, upgrades, and associated training.

Currently, the district relies on purchasing outdated equipment from other districts using general fund dollars, funds from donations, or E-Rate for technology support and infrastructure enhancement. All funding sources are limited.

According to administration and staff, computer equipment is out of date and at least five years old when purchased. The district has not maximized its efforts to identify and approach additional funding sources and grant providers for technology purchases, upgrades, and professional development. Although the district has technology available, the technology is outdated.

In addition, interviews and focus groups conducted onsite indicate a need for professional development in several areas related to technology, including using existing equipment, effective curriculum integration, technology support and troubleshooting, and the use of technology to enhance communication with students and parents. As state funding continues to be an issue for districts in Oklahoma, the district has limited funding for the intensive professional development that is needed to establish a high level of comfort with technology. Acquiring additional funding through grants and outside funding sources could help the district enhance professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.

²³ Retrieved from <https://oklahoma.onlinehelp.measuredprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/04/Spring-2016-OCCT-Technology-Guidelines-v6-Final.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION

Seek additional funding sources and grants to support improved technology equipment and professional development.

Given the current needs in technology and professional development and the impact of decreasing school funding, Guthrie should continue to identify and pursue grants. Technology grants are available through a number of sources, including the K20 Center, the Oklahoma State Department of Education, and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. Updated lists of grants can be found at the following sites in addition to many other sites:

- <http://oklahoma.grantwatch.com>
- <http://schoolfundingcenter.com>
- <http://www.getedfunding.com>

Some specific grants that are available to supplement the district's funding for technology are:

- Wal-Mart Community Grants;²⁴
- Best Buy Community Grants-Helping Teens Build 21st Century Technology Skills,²⁵ and
- Chesapeake Energy Corporate Giving Program.²⁶

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-19

The district has a cooperative agreement with Rose State College to provide concurrent enrollment via IETV for high school students. This collaboration increases student access to more rigorous course offering, a greater variety of elective courses, and college credit for students through an IETV distance learning interface.

Students in Guthrie Public Schools have access to additional college-level coursework through IETV distance learning as a result of a partnership with Rose State College. The district provides classroom connectivity, a monitoring teacher, and offers a variety of courses. Students from neighboring districts participate in the same college courses and add to the community spirit of the class.

According to district documents and interviews, six college classes are offered each semester through Rose State College. There is a tuition charge to juniors, but there is no cost to seniors enrolled in the courses.

²⁴ <http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/local-giving-guidelines>

²⁵ <http://www.bby.com/community-grants/>

²⁶ <http://www.chk.com/Corporate-Responsibility/Community/Corporate-Giving/Pages/How-To-Apply.aspx>

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for entering into a cooperative agreement with Rose State College to provide students with access to college coursework and credit.

FINDING 5-20

The district has enhanced communication mechanisms with internal staff and with external stakeholders. School Messenger is used to communicate with students, parents and staff. This system, in addition to the district website and a mobile app, Remind, is an effort to update all district stakeholders and address needs for timely contact, information sharing, and emergency notification.

Through the alert notification system, administrators have the ability to send out voice calls, emails, or SMS text messages. School Messenger also provides the ability to push notifications, in addition to links to the district website, schedules, and calendars.

A report by Civic Enterprises, *Raising Their Voices: Engaging Students, Teachers, and Parents to Help End the High School Dropout Epidemic*,²⁷ points to the importance of communication in achieving student success. The report emphasizes using technology capabilities to provide access to information for parents, students, and school personnel. The report also highlights the importance of communicating with parents not only to address a problem but also to share positive aspects of the school experience. GPS is making efforts to address these specific communication issues through the alert notification system, smartphone app, and the district website.

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for implementing School Messenger and other tools to increase communication with stakeholders including students, parents, and staff.

FINDING 5-21

GPS uses an automated substitute teacher calling system, Frontline, to assist in the management and access of substitutes. The substitute system eases the need for teachers or other staff to call substitutes to cover classrooms.

A continuing challenge for districts is providing substitute teachers to cover classrooms when instructors are absent. GPS has worked to alleviate the paperwork and increase the efficiency of staffing classrooms with substitute teachers by implementing Frontline, an absence management and substitute placement solution. Frontline manages employee leave and automatically schedules pre-approved, qualified substitutes. Administration can know at any time what teachers are absent and why. Reports can be generated in Excel format for easy data gathering.

²⁷ Bridgeland, J. M., Balfanz, R., Moore, L. A., & Friant, R. S. (2010). Raising their voices: engaging students, teachers, and parents to help end the high school dropout epidemic. Retrieved from <http://www.americaspromise.org/News-and-Events/News-and-Features/APB-2010/Vol-10/~media/9E9DFF8BB38A48D9BCC2AA9BD9E7DABC.ashx>

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for using Frontline, an automated substitute teacher calling system, to assist in the access and management of substitute teachers.

FINDING 5-22

The district has a formal process for including multiple stakeholders on a technology committee for planning purposes. Including stakeholders such as parents, students, community members, and businesses provides additional perspective in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

According to the District Technology Plan, information is sought and shared with a number of stakeholders. Surveys are conducted to determine parent/community involvement in technology as well as school-to-community communication. Additionally, teachers are surveyed as to how Internet access has impacted curriculum for their specific grade-level and subject area. Staff is asked to appraise the formal technology training offered through professional development and data are collected on how well technology is integrated into classroom instruction.

When establishing a feedback mechanism that includes staff and outside stakeholders such as parents, students, community members and businesses it provides additional perspectives on planning, implementation and the evaluation of technology. Including teacher leaders on a technology committee also enhances opportunities for strategic planning and could increase buy-in among staff members and increase their understanding of what is possible.

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for including multiple stakeholders in the planning, implementation and evaluation of technology.

FINDING 5-23

Guthrie Public Schools uses an online work order system. Addressing support requests in a timely fashion is a challenge for any school district. Using SchoolDude to document and assign responses to technology issues increases the efficiency of technical support and communication to users.

The technology department has initiated steps to document support requests. SchoolDude improves help desk functionality and allows select staff to enter work orders to be addressed by the district technicians. SchoolDude also enables staff to submit requests online and receive email updates on the status of their request. Technology staff has the capability to analyze data gathered through the help desk system. They can monitor and assign work order requests, thereby expediting service deployments.

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for implementing an online work order system to manage the district's technology maintenance and service needs.

FINDING 5-24

The district lacks an instructional technology plan. The district does not currently provide professional development or training on the use of technology in the classroom and improving instructional practices beyond initial experiences.

While teachers have received some initial professional development in the use of interactive whiteboards and other technology tools, staff interviews and focus groups indicate a desire to become more specialized in better using the existing technology as a meaningful part of the curriculum. In most cases, the interactive whiteboards are being used more as a teacher-centered device for imparting information to students. If teachers are not innovative in integrating student-centered use of technology, they will be unable to use technology effectively to support instructional delivery and student achievement.

The consulting team found in onsite observations and interviews that technical knowledge among teachers is lacking across the district. Additionally, equipment is in place but is not used to its fullest capacity. Implementing technology effectively into classroom instruction requires a teacher to have a higher level of understanding, redirected teaching methodology, much practice, and training at regular intervals.

Exhibit 5-25 illustrates the four stages of skill with respect to utilizing interactive whiteboards. During the onsite visit, the consulting team found that, in most cases where teachers were using interactive whiteboards, the beginning stage was the only one evident. Classroom observations revealed little use of graphics to accompany text, minimal use of smart tools, and little use of other multimedia that was directly connected to the curriculum. At all levels, interactive whiteboards were being used as projectors. In many of the classrooms observed where teachers were utilizing the interactive whiteboards, the same lesson or objective could be taught without smart tools. There was little or no evidence of collaboration among students through use of technology or student-centered instruction with technology.

Exhibit 5-25
Interactive Whiteboard Rubric for Teacher-Created Lessons

	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Transformative
Design	Little to no use of graphics with text. There is minimal evidence of new ideas and insight.	Conservative use of text and graphics. There is evidence of original thinking.	Strong use of text and graphics. Work shows new ideas and insights.	Strong effective use of text and graphics. Ideas are creative and enhance lesson design.
Content	Lesson objective not identified. Little or no relation to state curriculum standards.	Lesson objective not clearly identified. Objective directly relates to state curriculum standards.	Lesson objective clearly identified for students. Objective directly relates to state curriculum standards.	Lesson objective is clearly identified and aligned with preferred learning styles, work strategies, and abilities. Objective directly relates to state curriculum standards.
Use of Technology	Minimal use of Smart tools. Little to no use of other multimedia. Same lesson or objective could be taught without Smart tools.	Conservative use of Smart tools. Limited use of other multimedia. Little impact of technology on lesson or objective.	Effective use of Smart tools to ensure student engagement. Varied use of other multimedia. All technology directly impacts lesson and objective.	Highly effective use of Smart tools to ensure student engagement. All technology directly impacts lesson and objective.
Interactivity	Very little incorporation of student participation. Few opportunities for interactivity are incorporated into the lesson.	Student participation limited. Some opportunities for interactivity are incorporated into the lesson.	Lesson strongly incorporates student participation. Many opportunities for interactivity are incorporated into the lesson.	Lesson activity involves all students. Extensive opportunities for interactivity are incorporated into the lesson.
Organization	Sequence and transition interrupt the flow of the lesson. Directions are not stated or are unclear.	Lesson is loosely organized. Sequence and transitions may interrupt the flow of lesson. Directions are stated for some activities.	Lesson is organized. Sequence and transitions enable the flow of the lesson. Directions are clearly stated for each activity.	Lesson is organized. Sequence, transitions, and graphics enhance the flow of the lesson. Directions are clearly stated for each activity and allow students to work independently.

Source: Adapted from Bowling Green State University, January 2014

The National Education Technology Standards (NETS), an ongoing initiative of the ISTE, has defined standards for students, describing what students should know and be able to do with technology. The OSDE has developed its own standards based on the NETS standards.

Building on NETS for Students (NETS•S), the ISTE has also developed NETS for Teachers (NETS•T)²⁸ and NETS for Administrators (NETS•A),²⁹ which define standards for classroom

²⁸ <http://www.iste.org/standards/standards-for-teachers>

²⁹ <http://www.iste.org/standards/standards-for-administrators>

teachers and administrators with accompanying performance indicators. While the State of Oklahoma has not adopted the standards for teachers and administrators at this time, it should be considered a best practice, as many states and districts have already incorporated NETS into training programs and established technology proficiency skill levels for teachers and administrators.

Data from the National Science Foundation (NSF)³⁰ indicates that the actual impact technology has on classroom instruction is directly related to the amount of quality professional development an educator receives in a targeted context. NSF studies indicate that at least 80 hours of professional development provided over a period of time were needed to develop, enhance, and change the practices of teachers.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement an instructional technology plan in conjunction with the district's professional development plan.

The impact of technology on student achievement revolves around how well technology is integrated into everyday activities that support student instructional objectives. This requires not only placing computers in schools and classrooms but also providing the resources needed to incorporate technology into lesson plans and other educational activities. Professional development provided at regular intervals in a systematic fashion that emphasizes both technology applications and its integration into curriculum and classroom instruction is necessary for successful integration of technology in the classroom.

Professional development should focus on the specific needs of individual staff and be sustained through coaching and periodic updates. A technology training plan should outline the opportunities afforded to district staff for learning job specific technology skills. This information should be considered in developing the technology professional development plan that meets the needs of Guthrie Public Schools and is aligned with data-driven goals supported by long-term professional development activities. The district should move beyond technology acquisition and basic level integration and ensure that the hardware and software tools are being used in ways that result in ongoing improvement of classroom instruction and improved student achievement. This includes differentiated support according to the type of device utilized in the classroom.

A technology leadership committee and a cross-section of teachers should work to develop a district-wide program for teacher training and technology integration. Consideration should also be given to providing training opportunities for all staff in their specific job needs. This technology-training program should be part of an overall professional development plan. A first step should be for each staff member to complete a needs assessment. The committee might consider *Taking a Good Look at Instructional Technology*,³¹ which is a suite of assessment tools designed to help principals and other school leaders gather, analyze, and report information about how technology is used for teaching and learning in their schools. If administered more

³⁰ <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind06/c1/c1s3.htm - c1s3l2>

³¹ <http://www.testkids.com/taglit/>

than once, it provides measurements of progress over time.

A second step should be to discuss and define technology integration for classrooms in GPS. Based upon this definition and interview results, the program should seek to increase teacher competencies and levels of technology integration. The program should also identify software and hardware needs necessary for successful integration. The program should be submitted to the superintendent and school board for approval.

A number of online professional development resources should be considered, including:

- TED: Ideas Worth Spreading;³²
- Classroom 2.0 Live;³³
- the K12 Online Conference;³⁴
- the Global Education Conference;³⁵ and
- Simple K12 Webinars.³⁶

The district should also consider expanding instructional technology efforts using additional resources offered through the K20 Center, the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. Additionally, area colleges and universities provide customized training, continuing education, professional development and other resources for K-12 teachers and administrators.³⁷ GPS should consider forming partnerships with neighboring school districts and implementing a shared professional development initiative.

According to the Florida Center for Instructional Technology, the Technology Integration Matrix (TIM) illustrates how teachers can use technology to enhance learning for K-12 students (**Exhibit 5-26**). The TIM incorporates five interdependent characteristics of meaningful learning environments: active, constructive, goal directed (i.e., reflective), authentic, and collaborative.³⁸ The TIM associates five levels of technology integration (i.e., entry, adoption, adaptation, infusion, and transformation) with each of the five characteristics of meaningful learning environments.

³² <http://www.ted.com/>

³³ <http://live.classroom20.com/index.html>

³⁴ <http://k12onlineconference.org/>

³⁵ <http://globaleducation.ning.com/>

³⁶ <http://simplek12.com/tlc/webinars/>

³⁷ <http://www.okhighered.org/econ-dev/business-services/>

³⁸ Jonassen, Howland, Moore, & Marra, 2003

Exhibit 5-26 Technology Integration Matrix

Levels of Technology Integration into the Curriculum

	Entry	Adoption	Adaptation	Infusion	Transformation	
Characteristics of the Learning Environment	Active	Information passively received	Conventional, procedural use of tools	Conventional independent use of tools; some student choice and exploration	Choice of tools and regular, self-directed use	Extensive and unconventional use of tools
	Collaborative	Individual student use of tools	Collaborative use of tools in conventional ways	Collaborative use of tools; some student choice and exploration	Choice of tools and regular use for collaboration	Collaboration with peers and outside resources in ways not possible without technology
	Constructive	Information delivered to students	Guided, conventional use for building knowledge	Independent use for building knowledge; some student choice and exploration	Choice and regular use for building knowledge	Extensive and unconventional use of technology tools to build knowledge
	Authentic	Use unrelated to the world outside of the instructional setting	Guided use in activities with some meaningful context	Independent use in activities connected to students' lives; some student choice and exploration	Choice of tools and regular use in meaningful activities	Innovative use for higher order learning activities in a local or global context
	Goal-Directed	Directions given, step-by-step task monitoring	Conventional and procedural use of tools to plan or monitor	Purposeful use of tools to plan and monitor; some student choice and exploration	Flexible and seamless use of tools to plan and monitor	Extensive and higher order use of tools to plan and monitor

Source: <http://fcit.usf.edu/matrix/matrix.php>, December 2014

Conducting a needs assessment to determine which stages teachers are currently in with their technology instruction should be an initial activity before designing a tiered system of professional development. The TIM can provide a tool for facilitating this process. Once this is determined, the superintendent, technology director, and other lead teachers or staff responsible for supporting professional development should analyze the data and make appropriate recommendations for addressing instructional technology training needs.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-25

The district lacks a written data backup and disaster recovery plan. In the event of a natural disaster or severe power surge, the district does not have procedures documented to ensure that its critical data, systems, and programs can be brought back to pre-disaster status. The district relies on a vendor and an external hard drive to store data through virtual servers. By failing to document a backup and recovery plan, system knowledge, recovery information, and responsibility are left to the outside vendor. A disaster recovery plan would aid the district in reloading data, programs, and systems, as well as recovery of hardware and software, in the event of a loss. **Exhibit 5-27** defines the process of developing an effective disaster recovery plan.

**Exhibit 5-27
Key Considerations in Disaster Planning**

Area	Considerations
<p>Planning for the impact of an unexpected or catastrophic event on your school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a coordinator and/or team with defined roles for preparedness and response planning. Potential team members may include: Information Security, Operations, Systems, Police/Security, Physical Plant, Insurance, Legal Affairs, Public Affairs, Personnel Department, Comptroller, Audit Division, Safety Office, and/or Emergency Response Team. • Conduct a business process and services inventory to understand which processes are mission-critical to the school. • Determine acceptable levels of service during the recovery period, and what processes need to be maintained or restored first to keep the school running. • Identify essential employees and other critical inputs (sub-contractors, services, logistics, etc.) required to maintain business operations by location and function during the event. • Conduct a technology asset inventory to determine and document the mission-critical technology components, their location, how they're configured, and who is responsible for management. • Once key components are identified, determine what measures should be taken to protect and recover them. • Understand the rules or regulations governing your business operations. If you had a business failure, would you be able to maintain compliance? (HIPAA, FERPA, CIPA, etc.).
<p>Assessing your data and technology needs in the event of a failure in operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the status of the existing disaster recovery plan. Do you have one and is it maintained? Have you tested the plan? • Determine vulnerability of your organization's technology infrastructure to natural disasters, including floods, fires, earthquakes, as well as flu pandemics. • Set clear recovery time objectives for each of your business/technology areas. • Determine the need for off-site data storage and backup. • Develop a technology plan that includes hardware, software, facilities, and service vendors. • Secure clear understanding and commitment from vendors on your plan. • Secure a backup vendor to perform that critical function if your primary vendor is impacted by a business failure. • Perform security risk assessments around specific threats where possible. Examples of data security include: virus protection, intrusion detection, hacker prevention, network events, component failures, and systems crashes. • Assess, if possible and per prior events, how quickly and accurately your operations were restored by existing staff. What were the lessons learned so they can be addressed in future planning? • Determine the effectiveness of your data backup and recovery policies and procedures. Are the procedures fully documented and an appropriate staff member responsible for the maintenance of that documentation? • Perform a data recovery test. Was the test successful? • Prepare an incident plan for mitigating a security breach. Audit annually, as security threats can change.

Exhibit 5-27 (continued)
Key Considerations in Disaster Planning

Area	Considerations
Communicating your plan to employees, students and their families, and vendor partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine who needs to be contacted with critical information. Build distribution lists and maintain for accuracy. • Develop a contact plan to reach employees: wireless, home, etc. • Ensure Student Information System (SIS) data is accurate to ensure alerts can be delivered to your community. • Ensure employees know where to receive information and updates about whether they can return to work, or if they are to report to a different location (Internet, conference bridges, etc.). • Ensure mission-critical employees know their role in the plan and have access from remote locations (i.e., home broadband, phone, VPN for security). • Make sure the plan can be executed by alternate employees who are not necessarily the “expert” in cases where those employees cannot be reached. • Ensure cross-functional training is established and refreshed on a regular basis. • Determine the need for a designated recovery site for your people to resume work. Plan for communications, data connectivity, desktops, and workspace at that site. • If you require support from vendor partners, ensure they also have a documented plan that complements your needs. Review periodically to keep the plan current.
Coordinating with external organizations and helping your community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other local government agencies, including first responders, to share your plans and coordinate mock emergency drills to ensure coordination in the event of an emergency. • Share best practices with business leaders in your community, chambers of commerce, and business associations to improve community response efforts.

Source: Consortium of School Networking, February 2015

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and test a disaster recovery plan that includes the district’s critical data, systems, and programs.

This problem should be addressed immediately. The district should develop and test a disaster recovery plan that includes the district’s critical data, systems, and programs. The district technology director and superintendent can lead the process of developing a plan adequate to meet the needs of GPS. The costs associated with losing vital information, services, and equipment in the event of a disaster could greatly impact the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-26

Guthrie Public Schools has implemented a district-wide wireless network. Access is available throughout the campuses and district sites.

Wireless provides an easy solution to technology access with limited resources for schools. Guthrie Public Schools has made great efforts to implement a wireless network across the district.

Students and staff benefit from the opportunity to use personal technology on the district network through wireless access. During the onsite visit, the consulting team observed a number of elementary students accessing the wireless network with iPads (**Exhibit 5-28**). Schools reap a number of benefits through the use of wireless networks in addition to increased student access. Those benefits include limitless connectivity. Everyone with a wireless device and password permission can access email, the Internet, and district servers through a high-speed connection. Additional access points and increased infrastructure can be added as needed.

Exhibit 5-28
Wireless Use in an Elementary Classroom



Source: Prismatic, February 2016

COMMENDATION

Guthrie Public Schools is commended for implementing a district-wide wireless network.

C. TRANSPORTATION

The primary objective of school transportation is to provide safe, timely, and efficient transportation services to students. Oklahoma's 7,600 school buses travel more than 67 million miles a year, carrying nearly 369,000 children every day.

School districts collectively operate the safest form of transportation in the country and, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; school buses are safer than any other form of public or private mode of transportation. Students are nearly 50 times more likely to get to and from school safely when riding school buses instead of riding in cars, and

school buses are built with crash-safety features unmatched by any other type of commuter vehicle. They also help ameliorate some of the adverse environmental effects of mass automobile commute – each school bus filled to capacity replaces 36 cars in America, saving over two billion gallons of fuel and nearly 45 billion pounds of carbon dioxide emissions each year.³⁹

The Oklahoma School Code (OSC) authorizes school districts to provide student transportation services between school and home, from school to career and technology location, and for approved extracurricular activities. The federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* requires districts to provide transportation services to students who must travel to receive special education services, if they provide regular school transportation services.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) provides some funding for regular transportation of students who live more than 1.5 miles from the assigned school. Oklahoma school districts receive a transportation supplement that is calculated based upon a per capita allowance, the district's student density, and the number of students who live more than 1.5 miles from school (considered the average daily haul or ADH). These factors are multiplied by a state funding figure of \$1.39 (transportation factor), a figure that has not been updated since 1988.

This level of funding does not begin to support all transportation expenses in a given Oklahoma school district. In general, the state transportation supplement provides just 16 percent of the funding needed to operate a district transportation program. Thus every dollar saved in a school district's transportation program can instead be spent in other district programs, including classroom instruction.

The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety requires bus drivers to obtain a specialized bus driver's license. The OSDE requires bus drivers to obtain bus driver certification and training and to pass a license history review. Guthrie Public Schools conducts criminal background checks on all new employees and annually evaluates the motor vehicle records of the personnel who drive school vehicles. New bus drivers also must pass an alcohol and drug test. Random drug tests are administered throughout the year.

Bus drivers receive written procedures or instructions concerning the district's transportation operational readiness and a transportation manual that is updated as needed. Presently, the transportation department offers a uniform booklet or information manual relating to the daily functions of student transportation.

The Guthrie transportation department provides route and extracurricular transportation for its students. With approximately 208 square miles to cover, the district operates 43 regular buses and three wheelchair lift buses (**Exhibit 5-29**).

³⁹ National Highway Transportation Safety Administration – <http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

**Exhibit 5-29
Guthrie Bus Fleet Use**

Bus Type	Number	% of Fleet
Regular	43	93%
Special Education	3	7%
Total	46	

Source: GPS, January 2016

Each of the three special education buses has a bus monitor. Currently, the district employs 30 Oklahoma CDL certified drivers to operate school buses.

Exhibit 5-30 compares Guthrie transportation costs over time. The exhibit includes all transportation expenses by category. When comparing 2010-11 with 2014-15, Guthrie's transportation expenses have increased by 59.3 percent. Purchased services expenditures decreased by 7.3 percent, while all other categories saw increases.

**Exhibit 5-30
Trend in Guthrie Transportation Operating Cost**

Expenditure Category	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Salaries	\$519,033	\$525,378	\$567,762	\$579,921	\$814,233	56.9%▲
Benefits	\$197,249	\$222,588	\$259,377	\$312,150	\$474,964	140.8%▲
Purchased Services	\$246,006	\$261,892	\$229,857	\$109,320	\$228,027	(7.3%)▼
Supplies	\$226,705	\$341,211	\$358,807	\$289,801	\$232,095	2.4%▲
Property	\$88,565	\$58,213	\$0	\$1,031,567	\$279,216	215.3%▲
Other	\$906	\$1,273	\$4,050	\$1,050	\$8,220	807.1%▲
Total	\$1,278,464	\$1,410,555	\$1,419,852	\$2,323,809	\$2,036,754	59.3%▲
Annual Percent Change		10.3%▲	0.7%▲	63.7%▲	(12.4%)▼	

Source: OSDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures and Prismatic calculations

Exhibits 5-31 through 5-33 compare the change in Guthrie and the peer districts' transportation costs over time. **Exhibit 5-31** includes all transportation expenses recorded in the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System (OCAS) by each district. **Exhibit 5-32** and its graphical representation in **Exhibit 5-33** exclude transportation property expenses, such as bus purchases. As shown, Guthrie's transportation expenses without property expenses have increased by 47.7 percent in five years compared to the peer average increase of 7.5 percent. The district's transportation expenditures are substantially higher than the peer average.

Exhibit 5-31
Comparison of Transportation Cost Over Time (Including Property Expenses)

Entity	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$1,278,464	\$1,410,555	\$1,419,852	\$2,323,809	\$2,036,754	59.3%▲
Altus	\$698,774	\$599,003	\$639,235	\$660,197	\$725,654	3.8%▲
Guymon	\$470,953	\$513,944	\$671,696	\$1,097,463	\$482,858	2.5%▲
Noble	\$997,712	\$992,900	\$920,455	\$955,400	\$921,288	(7.7%)▼
Tahlequah	\$1,434,675	\$1,594,118	\$1,796,919	\$1,533,653	\$1,374,749	(4.2%)▼
Woodward	\$709,521	\$728,042	\$776,081	\$786,654	\$1,227,030	72.9%▲
Peer Average	\$862,327	\$885,601	\$960,877	\$1,006,673	\$946,316	9.7%▲

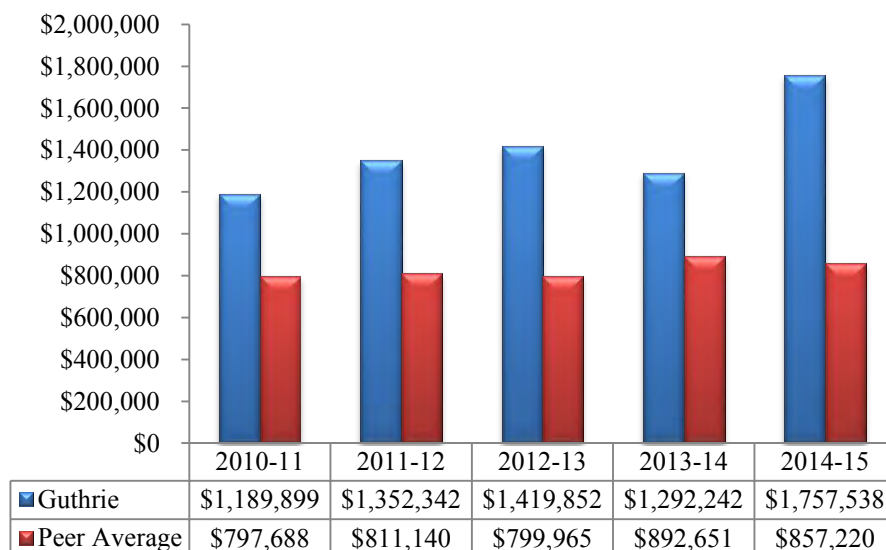
Source: OSDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures, All Funds, 2011 through 2015, OSDE State Aid Section, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-32
Comparison of Transportation Cost Over Time (Excluding Property Expenses)

Entity	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Percent Change
Guthrie	\$1,189,899	\$1,352,342	\$1,419,852	\$1,292,242	\$1,757,538	47.7%▲
Altus	\$661,133	\$599,003	\$639,235	\$639,232	\$663,354	0.3%▲
Guymon	\$470,953	\$513,944	\$477,511	\$548,317	\$482,858	2.5%▲
Noble	\$997,712	\$927,310	\$920,455	\$955,400	\$921,288	(7.7%)▼
Tahlequah	\$1,149,122	\$1,293,150	\$1,214,912	\$1,533,653	\$1,374,749	19.6%▲
Woodward	\$709,521	\$722,292	\$747,711	\$786,654	\$843,849	18.9%▲
Peer Average	\$797,688	\$811,140	\$799,965	\$892,651	\$857,220	7.5%▲

Source: OSDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures, All Funds, 2011 through 2015, OSDE State Aid Section, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-33
Guthrie Transportation Operating Costs Compared to Peer Average⁴⁰



Source: OSDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-34 compares the cost efficiency of GPS transportation operations with its peers. Although the daily cost per rider can be negatively affected by factors beyond the control of the transportation department, a low cost generally indicates a more efficient department. As the exhibit shows, the cost per rider was \$5.76 for GPS. This was substantially higher than the cost per rider for any of the peer districts and was \$3.32 higher than the peer average.

Exhibit 5-34
Comparison of Cost per Rider per Day, 2014-15

Entity	Total Annual Operating Cost ⁴¹	ADH	Attendance Days	Overall Cost per Rider per Day
Guthrie	\$1,757,538	1,763	173	\$5.76
Altus	\$663,354	1,730	175	\$2.19
Guymon	\$482,858	1,092	175	\$2.53
Noble	\$921,288	2,263	164	\$2.48
Tahlequah	\$1,374,749	3,043	170	\$2.66
Woodward	\$843,849	2,155	169	\$2.32
Peer Average	\$857,220	2,057	171	\$2.44

Source: OSDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures and Prismatic calculations

The consulting team calculated the cost per route mile for GPS and the peer districts in **Exhibit 5-35**. As shown, GPS's cost per mile was \$4.64, which was higher than all but one of the peers. A lower cost per mile generally indicates greater efficiency.

⁴⁰ Excluding property expenses.

⁴¹ Excluding property expenses.

Exhibit 5-35
Guthrie and Peer Districts Annual Cost Per Mile, 2014-15

Entity	Total Annual Operating Cost ⁴²	Activity Miles	Route Miles	Total Miles	Cost per Mile
Guthrie	\$1,757,538	73,631	304,898	378,529	\$4.64
Altus	\$663,354	133,086	110,381	243,467	\$2.72
Guymon	\$482,858	75,094	88,961	164,055	\$2.94
Noble	\$921,288	35,828	307,237	343,065	\$2.69
Tahlequah	\$1,374,749	84,377	205,968	290,345	\$4.73
Woodward	\$843,849	76,017	117,162	193,179	\$4.37
Peer Average	\$857,220	80,880	165,942	246,822	\$3.47

Source: OSDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures and Prismatic calculations

**Special Note: Information contained in Exhibits 5-30 through 5-35 are based upon GPS's current school organization structure of grade centers which require shuttle services to be provided to all schools. Once GPS's new elementary school is completed, the district will shift the elementary school structure to neighborhood or area schools and this will substantially reduce, if not eliminate, the need for the current shuttle service. Once this occurs, GPS should enjoy significant savings in the area of transportation.*

The district has a fleet of 46 school buses (**Exhibit 5-36**) as well as support vehicles and equipment (**Exhibit 5-37**). Most of the school buses are used on regular bus routes; six are set aside for special education assignments.

⁴² Excluding property expenses.

**Exhibit 5-36
Guthrie School Bus Fleet**

Bus #	Year	Make (Model)	VIN
1	2011	Freightliner	4UZABRDT7BCAR8323
2	2011	Freightliner	4UZABRDT5BCAR8322
3	2011	Freightliner	4UZABRDT1BCAR8320
4	2014	Freightliner	4UZABRDU1ECFF9895
5	2011	Freightliner	4UZABRDT2BCAR8326
6	2012	Freightliner	4DRBRABP52B947116
7	2011	Freightliner	4UZABRDT3BCAR8321
8	2014	Freightliner	4UZABRDU8ECFF9800
9	2002	International	4DRBRABP12B947100
10	2014	Freightliner	4UZABRDU3ECFF9901
11	2013	Freightliner	4UZABRDU5DCBT1248
12	2011	Freightliner	4UZABRDT9BCAR8324
13	2013	Freightliner	4UZABRDI7DCBT1249
14	2013	Freightliner	4UZABRDU1ECFF9898
15	2014	Freightliner	4UZABRDU4ECFF9891
16	2014	Freightliner	4UZABRDU8ECFF9778
17	2014	Freightliner	4UZABRDU4ECFF9888
18	2014	Freightliner	4UZABRDU0ECFF9886
19	2014	Freightliner	4DRBRABP52B947102
20	2013	Freightliner	4UZABRDU7DCBT1249
21	2011	Freightliner	4ZABRDT0BCAR8325
22	2014	Freightliner	4DRBRABPX2B947094
23	2002	International	4DRBRABP32B947101
24	2002	International	4DRBRABP12B947095
25	2002	International	4DRBRABP02B947119
26	2002	International	4DRBRABP32B947115
27	2002	International	4DRBRABP92B947099
28	2002	International	4DRBRABP12B947114
29	2002	International	4DRBRABP72B947117
30	2002	International	4DRBRABP82B947109
46	2012	Freightliner Thomas	4UZABRDU9CCBA2099
47	2012	Freightliner Thomas	UZABRDU8CCBA2269
48	2002	International	4DRBRABP92B947121
49	2002	International	4DRBRABP02B947122
50	2002	International	4DRBRABM52B947123
51	2012	Freightliner Thomas	4UZABPDT2CCBM8891
52	2008	*Freightliner Lift Bus	4UZABRDT08CZ54311
53	2006	*Freightliner Lift Bus	4UZAAXDCX6CV23480
54	2010	Freightliner	4UZABPDT2ACAR5820
55	2002	International	4DRBRABP12B947125
56	2002	International	4DRBRABM72B947124
57	2000	*Freightliner Lift Bus	4UZ6CJAC8YCGO1259

* = Used for Special Education

Source: Guthrie Transportation documents, January 2016

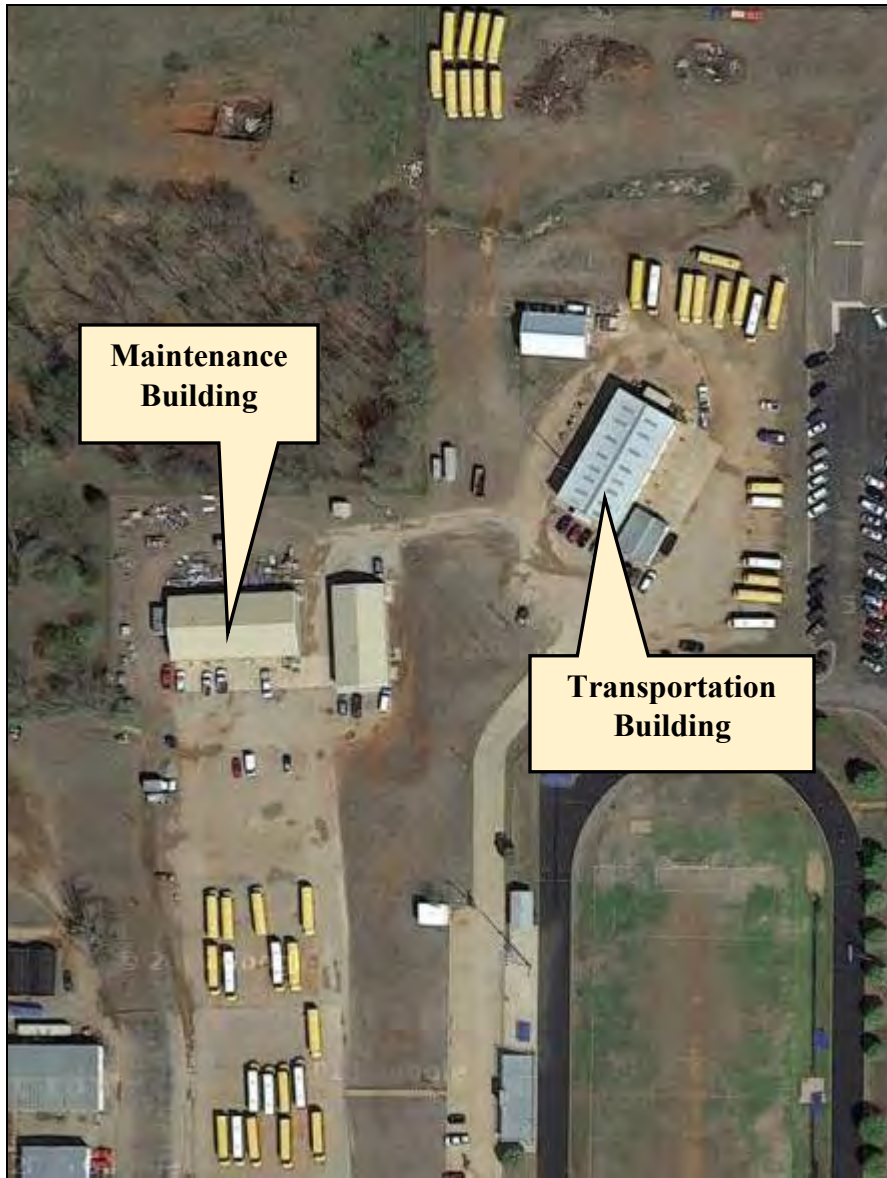
**Exhibit 5-37
Support Vehicles and Equipment**

Vehicle #	Year	Make (Model)	VIN
37	2013	Ford Expedition	1FMJK1FTXDEF60149
35	2013	Ford Expedition	1FMJK1F5XDEF33758
36	2013	Ford Expedition	1FMJK1F58DEF33757
62	1999	Chevrolet S-10 Pickup	1GCCS1446XK206349
63	2005	F350 Ford Flatbed	1FDWF36545EA59541
61	2013	Ford Econoline Van	1FTNE1EW8DDB18029
64	2012	Dodge Ram Pickup White	3C7WDSAT6CG213234
68	1999	Chevrolet S-10 Pickup	1GCCS1442XK205117
73	2005	F350 Ford 1 Ton Dually	1FTWW32P15EA61579
74	2002	Dodge Ram Pickup White	1D7HA16N12J218895
75	2012	Ford F-350 Crewcab White	1FT8W3CT1CEC95643
77	1996	Ford Passenger Van (Tan)	1FMEE11H5THB10979
78	2005	E150 White Ford Van	1FMRE11L25HA23243
80	2008	Ford F350 Crewcab Blue Truck	1FTWW32Y18EA78508
81	1999	Ford F-150 Pickup	1FTZF1721XKA97842
82	1967	Kaiser Jeep	NK004C7225547
83	2012	Ford F-350 Crewcab White	1FT8W3CT1CEC95643
85	2005	Ford F-350 Shop Truck	1FDWF36585EA31502
88	2006	Dodge White Caravan	1D4GP24R46B723011
89	2006	Dodge White Caravan	1D4GP24R66B723012
90	1997	Ford Green Escort (Drivers' Ed)	1FALP13P7VW407606
91	2004	Chevrolet Malibu WH	1G1ND52FO4M570533
92	1995	Ford F-700 Foodservice Truck	1FDNF70J7SVA9643
Equipment and Trailers			
100	2007	Skaggs Tiger Mower	C6600522
101		Jacobsen mower/stadium	028883G
102	2003	Golf Cart (EZGO)	2020428
103		Golf Cart (EZGO)	2244081
104	2000	White Mower (white)	IL079H10065(lt-2150)
105	1999	Skaggs Mower	4340101
106	2012	Kubota Tractor-L3200HST	Serial # 68901
T3	1973	Bullmobile Trailer	3819
T4	1983	Sooner Trailer	3043
	2008	Haulmark Band Cargo Trailer	1GHGB20238A029320
T5	1980	Shopmade Trailer	GFFA
	1988	Van Trailer	1732
	1991	Barrett Trailer	4201
GPSA		Washer Trailer	
T6	1990	WW Stock Trailer	9094
	1998	Flatbed Trailer	6927

Source: Guthrie Transportation, January 2016

Guthrie school buses are parked in the vicinity of the maintenance and transportation buildings and behind the Guthrie High School (**Exhibit 5-38**). The parking area is paved and amply sized to accommodate the fleet of buses.

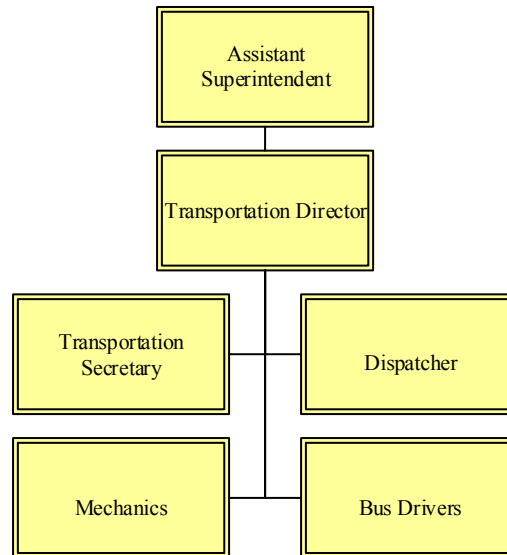
Exhibit 5-38
Guthrie Bus Parking at the Maintenance and Transportation Facilities



Source: Google Maps and Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 5-39 shows the current organization of the GPS transportation department.

**Exhibit 5-39
Guthrie Transportation Organization Chart**



Source: Created by Prismatic, November 2015

FINDING 5-27

The district has not assessed the value it receives from outsourcing its transportation operations. The transportation director has a limited knowledge of state and federal policies and procedures that affect pupil transportation. The transportation director does not routinely coordinate with state and local peers to gain knowledge about standards and practices that govern pupil transportation.

GPS outsourced the function of managerial oversight to TransPar Group, Inc., with a three-year contract beginning in July 2014. The total value of the contract is approximately \$350,000.

The director of transportation assigned to fulfill the obligations of the contract had worked in the pupil transportation arena directly for only one year prior to coming to Guthrie. The director does not appear to have an understanding that certain portions of pupil transportation are regulated by the OSDE and the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety but rather relies on other TransPar affiliates to garner information about certain operational practices. During the onsite visit, many buses were missing the required mechanical safety devices and proper paperwork. In addition, the district ran short of fuel for its buses. Many student conduct reports had not been addressed. The director did not appear to be in a position to advance specific information required for daily operations in an efficient, informative manner.

During the onsite visit with operational staff, the general consensus was one of frustration and discontent. Transportation staff does not feel supported by the director, nor do employees feel he has taken time to learn about pupil transportation in Guthrie.

On the parent survey conducted for this review, more than half of parents had no opinion on each of the four questions related to bus transportation. This indicates that many parents are not using available transportation, a situation that was underscored during the onsite visit when the consulting team observed long lines for car-riding students each day.

RECOMMENDATION

Assess the value of continuing to outsource transportation management and acquire proper training for the director and other staff by mentoring with local industry peers, attending OSDE workshops, seminars, and collaborating with local peers on Oklahoma standards.

GPS should re-evaluate the terms and conditions of the current contract and set benchmark standards to ensure the terms and conditions are met if subsequent outsourcing is pursued. The director of transportation should partner with local peers (beyond other TransPar constituents) to gain a better understanding of best practices as they relate to pupil transportation.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-28

Several operational areas of transportation are left unattended or incomplete:

- OSDE compliance standards;
- student discipline reports; and
- bus routing.

These are critical areas and required information is currently left unresolved, incomplete or falsified.

During the onsite visit, the transportation director was unaware that OSDE-required pre-trip inspection sheets contained false information and that many student conduct reports had not been resolved. In several instances OSDE records were submitted and filed without verification of their accuracy. **Exhibit 5-40** shows a bus missing a front crossing arm; however, the filed pre-trip inspection paperwork gave the bus a “pass” rating for this item.

**Exhibit 5-40
Guthrie School Bus and Pre-Trip Form**



F. 12/32 RR 14/32 LMA 15/32
RF 16/32 LR 18/32 18/32

ANNUAL SCHOOL BUS INSPECTION REPORT
Note: This report must be kept on file at the school district for 6 years.

County of school: LOGAN School District: GUTHRIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Tag No. Bus No. 14 Mileage: 24313 Date: [redacted]

ITEMS TO BE INSPECTED	RESULTS	REMARKS	REPAIRS	REMARKS
1. Service Brake	Pass			
2. Parking Brake	Pass			
3. Emergency Brake	Pass			
4. Brake Hoses, Tubing	Pass			
5. Brake Shoes & Pads	Pass			
6. Low Pressure & Warning	Pass			
7. Air Compressor	N/A			
8. Air Supply Tank	N/A			
9. Compressor Cut Out	N/A			
10. Shock Adjuster	N/A			
11. Brake Drums, Rotors	Pass			
12. Hydraulic Brakes	Pass			
13. Master Cylinder	Pass			
14. Brake Vacuum System	Pass			
15. Brake Controls	Pass			
16. Axle, Column, U-Bolts	Pass			
17. Tie Rods, Clevis Bar	Pass			
18. Steering Knuckle	Pass			
19. Spring Assembly	Pass			
20. Tires, Flats, Tread	Pass			
21. Suspension, Shocks	Pass			
22. Axle Assembly	Pass			
23. Shock, U-Bolts	Pass			
24. Frame, Subframe	Pass			
25. Exumpers	Pass			
26. Fuel Tank	Pass			
27. Fuel Tank Cap	Pass			
28. Fuel Tank Cap	Pass			
29. Exhaust & Tail Pipe	Pass			
30. Muffler	Pass			
31. Brackets, Chassis, Bells	Pass			
32. Tires	Pass			
33. Wheels and Hubs	Pass			
34. Balljoint & Chassis	Pass			
35. Steering Wheel	Pass			
36. Service Door	Pass			
37. Chassis, Gas Panel	Pass			
38. Transmission, Controls	Pass			
39. Hood/Deflector	Pass			
40. W. Wiper & Washer	Pass			
41. Open/Close/Clasp	Pass			
42. Horn	Pass			
43. Hi/Low Beam Lights	Pass			
44. Warn. Light, Buzzer	Pass			
45. Turn Signal Light	Pass			
46. Brake & Tail Light	Pass			
47. Red & Amber Lights	Pass			
48. "Stop Sign" Arm	Pass			
49. Crossing Arm	Pass			
50. Clearance Light	Pass			
51. Brake Light	Pass			
52. Reflectors	Pass			
53. Cassette/Mirrors	Pass			
54. Exterior Mirrors	Pass			
55. Interior Mirror	Pass			
56. Washers and Glass	Pass			
57. Laddering	Pass			
58. Floor & Covering	Pass			
59. Driver Seat	Pass			
60. Driver Seat Belt	Pass			
61. Passenger Seater	Pass			
62. Passenger Seat Belt	Pass			
63. Emergency Exit	Pass			
64. First Aid Kit	Pass			
65. Body Flashing	Pass			
66. Fire Extinguisher	Pass			
67. Emergency Reflector	Pass			
68. Wheelchair Lift	N/A			
69. Wheelchair Tie-downs	N/A			
70. Interlock System	Pass			

NAME OF INSPECTION FACILITY: GUTHRIE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADDRESS, CITY, ZIP CODE: 802 E. YALE, GUTHRIE, D.L.A., 73044
(PRINT) NAME OF INSPECTOR: [redacted]
SIGNATURE OF INSPECTOR: [redacted]

Missing Crossing Arm

Crossing Arm Passed

Source: Prismatic and GPS, January 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Show greater attention to all areas of pupil transportation.

The transportation director should become familiar with OSDE publications and implementation practices. Further, the transportation department should incorporate required standards from OSDE in the areas of safety and regulation; for example, do not allow drivers to “line through” multiple items on the safety check list. Provide materials to the staff during mandated in-service meetings. Some of the information and training should include:

- Emergency Evacuation of Bus Passengers (OSDE);
- Oklahoma School Bus Inspection Guide (OSDE);
- Evaluations of Bus Routes (OSDE);
- Pre-Trip/Post-Trip Bus Inspections Forms (OSDE); and
- Guidelines for Transportation of Students with Special Needs (OSDE).

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-29

The transportation director is tasked with handling minor discipline problems, but there is a backlog of completed incident reports that have not been given attention or been resolved. In addition, drivers appear insufficiently trained to safely handle discipline issues as they arise on their buses.

School bus incident reports for minor infractions on the school bus are submitted to the director of transportation for resolution (**Exhibit 5-41**). During the onsite visit, the consulting team learned that 80 or more incident reports have gone unresolved.

**Exhibit 5-41
GPS School Bus Incident Report**

Guthrie Public Schools
School Bus Incident Report

The purpose of this report is to inform you of an incident of misbehavior on the school bus involving your student. Any misbehavior, which distracts the driver, is a very serious hazard to the safe operation of the vehicle, and as such, jeopardizes the safety of all passengers. Please appreciate the action taken to provide the district's students with a safe ride to and from school.

DATE OF INCIDENT: _____ TIME: _____ AM PM Driver: _____

Student's Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____ Route: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Work/Emergency Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Drivers Report		
<input type="checkbox"/> Chronic misbehavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Disturbing others	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate display of affection
<input type="checkbox"/> Not seated properly	<input type="checkbox"/> Throwing objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Weapons or potentially dangerous items
<input type="checkbox"/> Rude-disrespectful	<input type="checkbox"/> Damaged school property	<input type="checkbox"/> Eating-drinking-littering-spitting
<input type="checkbox"/> Violation of safety procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable language	<input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco-drugs-alcohol possession
<input type="checkbox"/> Opening emergency door/window	<input type="checkbox"/> Getting off at wrong stop	<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal to obey driver
<input type="checkbox"/> Bullying, sexual harassment, or fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Hitting-pushing-tripping	<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal to identify oneself
<input type="checkbox"/> Refused to take off hat or hoodie	<input type="checkbox"/> Cursing the driver or other transportation official	

Explain: _____

Current Action: (For Transportation Director use Only)
 NUMBER OF WRITE-UPS _____

Conference with student Student to pay for damages. \$ _____
 Student denied bus privileges from _____ Thru _____ () Days
 Parent contacted

Comments: _____

 Transportation Director/Principal

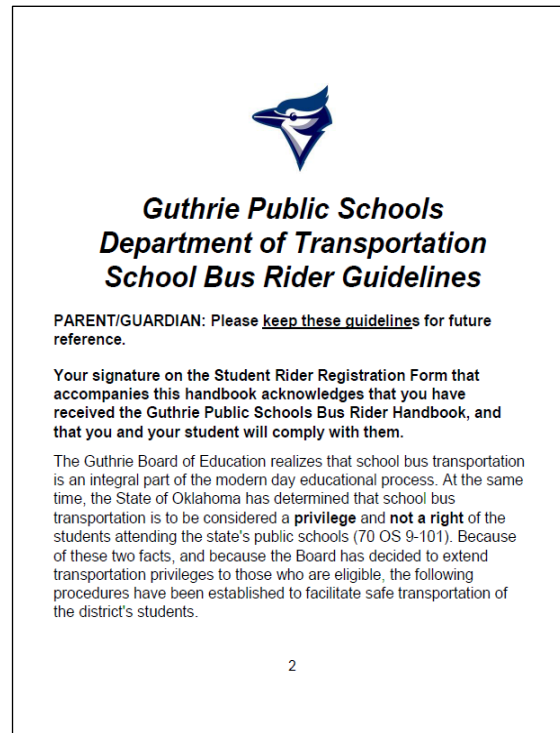
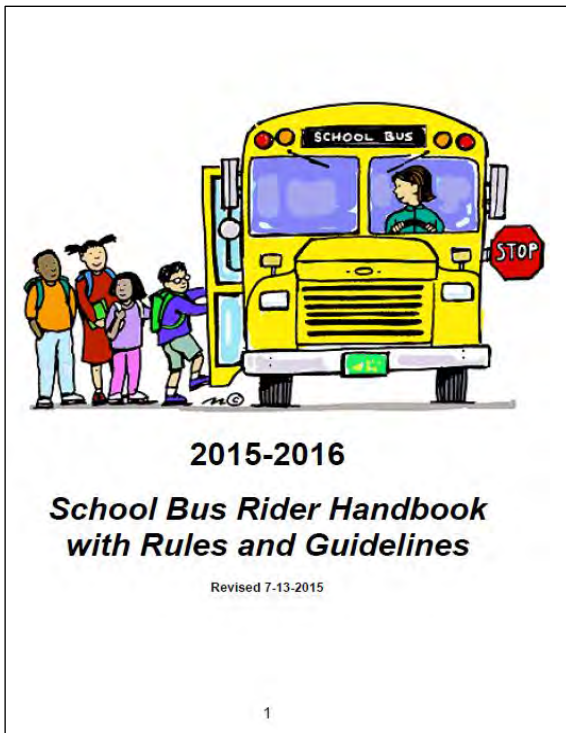
Source: GPS, January 2016

The standard by which school bus discipline is delivered is divided into two categories. The first category of student discipline is for what would be considered “minor” offenses. For minor offenses, the director of transportation is singularly allowed to render a consequence or resolution for poor behavior. The second category of student discipline would be considered a

“major” offense. For major offenses the director of transportation acts with the assistance of the building administrator in determining the proper consequence or resolution for this heightened level of poor behavior. The director of transportation’s non-response to repeat requests to have discipline addressed has created an atmosphere of discontent among the bus drivers.

The district has a School Bus Rider Handbook with Rules and Guidelines (**Exhibit 5-42**) that outlines the behavior expectations for students riding a GPS school bus.

Exhibit 5-42
GPS School Bus Rider Handbook with Rules and Guidelines



Source: GPS, January 2016

In addition, the consulting team observed that at least some GPS drivers lack knowledge on how to safely address some types of bus discipline issues that occur on their buses. During the onsite visit, it was reported that a disruptive student would not stay seated, but rather insisted on sitting in the stairwell of the bus during transport. In an attempt to calm the student, transportation staff offered the student cupcakes and allowed the student to remain seated in the stairwell for the bus ride to the transportation building. Offering a student food rewards for desired behavior is inappropriate and allowing a student to sit in the stairwell while the bus is in operation is a safety hazard.

Incident reports submitted to the proper authority by bus drivers should receive attention in a timely manner and each report should be filed for records management. Delaying the address of discipline reports or ignoring them altogether creates an environment where students feel that the rules do not apply to them. The Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual provides guidance for establishing and maintaining discipline on a school bus (**Exhibit 5-43**).

Exhibit 5-43 Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual Excerpt

Situations That Create Risk

School bus drivers have a duty to operate their school bus safely. However, there are situations inside a school bus that could distract the driver and compromise the driver's ability to operate the bus safely. A distraction is something that takes a driver's concentration away from driving. It is usually something that will make you have to look in the rear-view mirror.

Many situations on a school bus can be distracting. A partial list of potentially distracting situations is below.

- Loading and unloading
- Pushing, shoving, running down the aisle
- Fighting/bullying
- Use of loud and abusive language
- Throwing objects
- Smoking
- Lewd behavior
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Vandalism
- Weapons
- Inappropriate or sexual misconduct

As much as possible a school bus driver needs to handle these situations in a way that will not compromise the safe operation of the school bus.

How to Maintain Control

The first step to maintaining control of the student's behavior on the bus is to remember what students need. Just like adults, students need:

- Respect,
- Recognition,
- To feel in control of their circumstances
- To associate with their peers
- To feel important to their peers.

Some things bus drivers do help maintain control of their bus. Things like a one-on-one talk, a friendly smile, reward programs, concentrating on the ringleader, calling the difficult person to the front of the bus, and telling the good students they really are good can help a driver get or maintain control.

Some things bus drivers do don't help maintain control of their bus. Things like screaming or yelling, disciplining a student in front of the whole group, being grumpy, threatening, and not saying good morning can cause problems for a school bus driver.

General Guidelines

Remember a school bus driver should never hit or touch a child unless there is a danger to you or to other students. Some exceptions may be when a small child initiates a hug. Regardless, it is essential that you know and follow your districts guidelines on these matters. Below is a list of guidelines that will help you avoid pitfalls as you maintain discipline on your bus.

1. Save discipline for safety-related behavior; don't nitpick.
2. Don't get drawn into an argument with a student.
3. Don't threaten to do something you cannot do.
4. Don't threaten something and then not do it.
5. Don't discipline the whole group; take the ringleader aside.
6. Handle negative comments away from other students.
7. Don't let the situation get out of hand.

Handling a Serious Problem

1. Stop the bus.
 - Park in a safe location off the road.
 - This may be a parking lot or a driveway.
2. Secure the bus.
 - Take the Ignition key with you if you leave your seat.
3. Stand up and speak to the offender or offenders.
 - Speak in a courteous manner with a firm voice.
 - Remind the offenders of the behavior expected of them.
 - Don't show anger but do show that you mean business.
4. If a change of seating is needed, move the student to a seat near you.
5. NEVER put a student off the bus except at school or at his or her residence/school bus stop.
 - If you feel that the offense is serious enough that you cannot safely drive the bus, call your dispatcher.
6. Know and follow your district's student discipline procedures for the school bus.

Although maintaining order on a school bus is a challenging task, there are drivers who have learned how to be successful. If you face challenges that are difficult, find someone who can help you be successful too. This could be an experienced driver or a supervisor.

RECOMMENDATION**Establish a standard timeframe by which incident reports are received, reviewed and translated into disciplinary action.**

The transportation director should integrate review of incident reports into part of his daily operation. Deadlines for turn-around on those forms should be set and then met. The transportation director should also review with staff the acceptable courses of action to be taken in handling student misbehavior on buses, emphasizing what is allowable and safe.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

**Special Note: Information contained in Findings 5-27 through 5-29 are based upon GPS's transportation structure at the time of the onsite visit. It should be noted that since the review's onsite visit, GPS has terminated their contract with TransPar Group, Inc. and has returned to in-house management of their student transportation division.*

FINDING 5-30

The transportation department offers 6-hour contracts for regular drivers and 7.5-hour contracts for special needs drivers. Bus drivers have the opportunity to earn additional wages by taking on unassigned field trips.

There are currently 30 bus drivers contracted to drive school buses. All drivers are given the opportunity to pick-up field trip assignments on a rotating basis.

The size of the Guthrie transportation workforce allows drivers that are willing and unassigned the opportunity to do additional work. If the number of field trip requests is greater than the transportation office can fulfill, licensed teachers and coaches can drive for the requested trip.

COMMENDATION**GPS is commended for allowing bus drivers to earn additional wages through extra-duty field trip assignments.****FINDING 5-31**

Guthrie school bus drivers are cross-trained on all classifications of buses used by the transportation department. This includes the special needs buses with wheelchair lifts.

During the in-service training session before the start of the school year, regular bus drivers are trained in the operation of the special education bus. The opportunity to learn the mission and functionality of these buses is stressed for operational awareness and future drivability. The department uses a hands-on approach for learning. Supplementary training is provided by the current drivers of the special needs buses (**Exhibit 5-44**), and training is available during the course of the school year. The GPS transportation department also has two Oklahoma-certified school bus driver trainers.

Exhibit 5-44
Guthrie Special Needs Bus



Source: GPS, January 2016

COMMENDATION

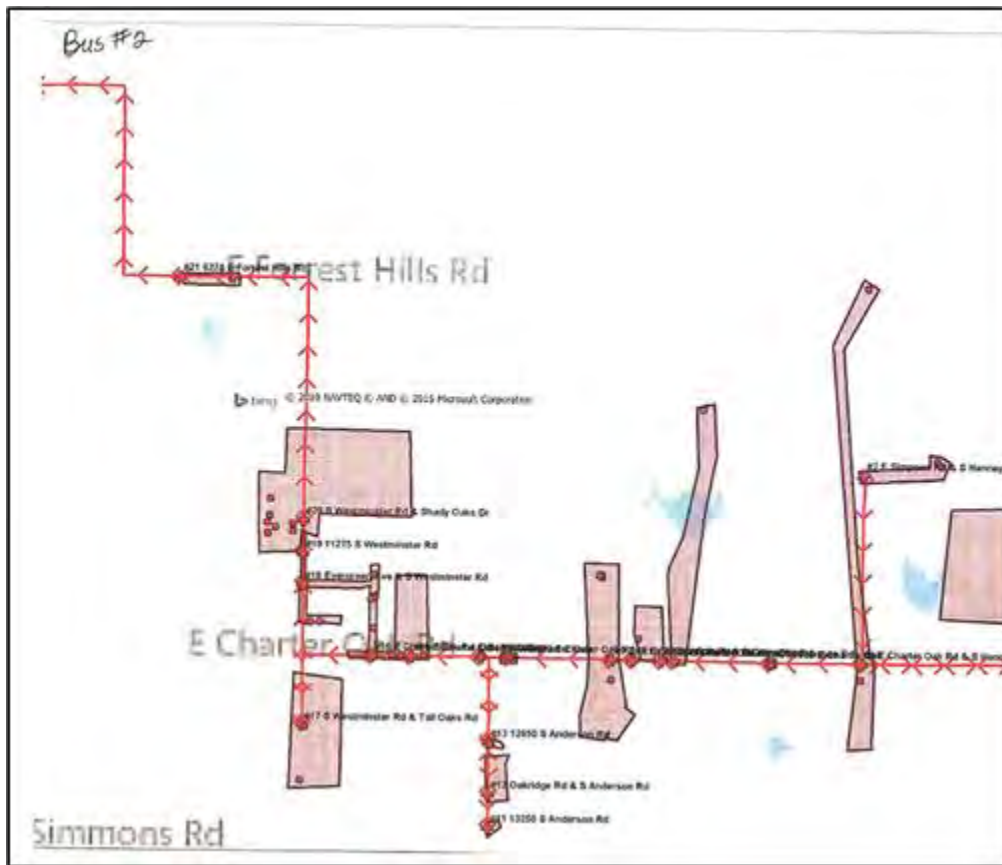
The transportation department is commended for providing ongoing training for all classes of school buses.

FINDING 5-32

The GPS transportation department has attempted to use automated routing software to streamline and make bus routes more efficient. However, the process is not yet working well and the regular and special needs bus routes regularly take between one and two hours to complete.

The Guthrie transportation department began using Transfinder routing software approximately four years ago to develop its bus routes (**Exhibit 5-45**). The transportation department has one full-time employee assigned to be the routing software specialist, but this job position is not being used in this capacity. Instead, the transportation director has assumed all responsibility for bus routing, even though he lacks training in the routing software. Additionally, the routing software specialist has been instructed not to contact the Transfinder helpdesk for any form of user support.

Exhibit 5-45
Example Transfinder Route Map



Source: Guthrie Transportation Route Map, January 2016

These practices have resulted in routing tasks being left undone. Bus routes currently take between one and two hours each day (one way). Given the size of the district, these ride times are too long. Routes are not evaluated on a regular basis, as recommended on the OSDE bus route evaluation form, (Exhibit 5-46) and route information is not part of the information kept on file for each bus.

Exhibit 5-46 Oklahoma School Bus Route Evaluation Form

Revised November 2012

JANET BARRESI, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Oklahoma State Department of Education - 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105-4599

EVALUATION: School Bus Stop Areas for Student Pickup/Discharge

School district personnel may use this form for evaluating local school bus route service to assure all conditions are the safest possible for student school bus transportation. *(Do not submit to the SDE.)*

Date: _____ City: _____ District Name: _____

Person Conducting Evaluation: _____ Bus Number: _____

Route: _____ Bus Stop Location: _____

Use the answers to the following questions to guide you in determining the best bus stop location for your students. Very few school bus stops will comply with all of the ideal characteristics listed below. In spite of that, attempt to balance the conditions of each stop to provide the optimum level of safety.

Ideally the following answers will be yes;

1. Does this bus stop location allow all approaching drivers a **clear vision area** of at least 500 feet, about 1 ½ blocks, to allow traffic to stop safely? _____
2. Is there a **vehicle pull-out area** at this bus stop location? _____
3. Is the designated student waiting area a **safe distance from traffic**? _____
4. Is this bus stop area **well-lighted**? _____
5. Are **signs** posted to advise motorists of a school bus stop area? _____
6. Is the **speed limit posted** at/near this bus stop area? _____

Ideally the following answers will be no;

7. Is this bus stop area at/near a busy **intersection**? How close? _____
8. Does the bus stop area have a **registered sex-offender** living within 2000 feet of a school bus stop area? _____
9. Do the students have to **cross a street** to board or exit the bus at this location? _____
10. Do students have to cross **multiple-lane streets** to get to the bus stop area? _____
11. Is there evidence of **illegal drug or gang activity** near this school bus stop? _____

1 of 5

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, Part 1 of 5, January 2016

The district's outsourcing contract with the transportation management company includes deliverables related to bus routing (**Exhibit 5-47**). It does not appear that the district is receiving those services.

**Exhibit 5-47
TransPar Transportation Management Services Agreement**

**EXHIBIT C
DELIVERABLES**

TRANS PAR GROUP Management Services Deliverables Prepared for: Guthrie Public Schools				
Jul / Aug / Sep		Oct / Nov / Dec		Jan / Feb
Performance	Ongoing Services			
	Weekly Conference Calls to Measure Progress and Adherence to Management Principles			
	Monitor On-Time Performance, Monitor Driver Recruiting Plan Progress, Provide Monthly "Directors" Report			
	Receive, Process & Respond to Requests for Information, TransFinder Software			
	Provide Daily / Weekly / Monthly Support for District Transportation Manager & Team			
	Accident/Safety Progress Review	Accident/Safety Progress Review	Accident/Safety Progress Review	Accident/Safety Progress Review
Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review
Scheduled Services	Co-Author Annual Progress Report			
	Perform TransPar's Route Yield	Conduct Principal's Service Survey	Review Fleet Maintenance Controls	
Planning	Scheduled Services			
	Identify Cost Reduction Targets		Assess Bell Time Schedule	
	Manager Training in NAFT Conf.		Budget Preparation & Support	
	On-Site Visit & Program Review	On-Site Visit & Program Review	On-Site Visit & Program Review	On-Site Visit & Program Review
	Confirm Bus Replacement Plan		Develop Driver Recruiting Plan	
Preparation	Scheduled Services			
	School Startup Planning & Goals		Review Labor Agreement (optional)	
	Convert TransFinder to the 'cloud'		Determine Costs of Trans Programs	
	Perform Safety Climate Analysis		Review Rider Eligibility Rules	Assess Routing Practices & Rules
Misc	Other As-Needed Support Services			
	General Q&A, Attendance Boundary Analysis, Crisis Communication, Routing Software Issues, School Board Presentation Content Note: Services not addressed may be negotiated and performed in a mutually agreed to timeframe and rate.			

Source: GPS, January 2016

A number of suburban school districts have fully implemented computerized routing software. Districts typically evaluate their routes annually. One feature of the routing software is to determine if any students are living beyond one-and-one-half miles from their assigned school. If so, this could lead to more students being counted as eligible for school bus transportation, which will then increase the transportation funding from OSDE. Information from the automated routing system, such as bus stop information, can also be made available to parents and schools on the district website.

RECOMMENDATION

Re-evaluate each bus route and improve the process by which bus routes are generated.

The district should return routing responsibilities to the routing software specialist and develop a timeline for optimizing its bus routes. In addition, the district should re-evaluate and re-establish the terms and conditions of its outsourcing contract to ensure it is receiving all services for which it has contracted.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-33

The transportation department receives no training or information with regard to the students with IEPs currently being transported on the special education buses. Bus drivers do not receive any information on students that may require special consideration. During the onsite visit, the consulting team did not find any information or information-sharing with regard to students and transportation services.

At this time, there are approximately 83 students with IEPs that are transported daily on the Guthrie special education buses. During the site visit, the consulting team requested information on the students' intervention strategies and general notations supplied to each driver. Due in part to privacy concerns, this information was not made available to individual drivers, nor was the transportation department certain if any students with special needs were being transported on the regular buses.

Bus drivers are usually only given limited, word-of-mouth explanations of a student's situation. The transportation department has no direct dialogue with the special education program about the students being transported; rather, it merely receives and fulfills indirect transportation requests. Beyond this, bus drivers are not trained on specific techniques to manage special education students on an individual basis. The transportation department does not participate in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and the transportation department does not have any direct input toward their transportation-related outcomes.

In Byng Public Schools, bus drivers and aides receive ongoing training and information with regard to any students with individual education plans (IEPs) currently being transported on regular bus routes. The Byng transportation department has direct dialogue with the special education department about the students being transported and participates in IEP meetings. The Byng transportation director has taken additional steps to promote eLearning with the OSDE and has distributed and revised the current student transportation manual so as to include a section for drivers who may be required to transport students with special needs.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide information, training and intervention strategies from the special education program to the transportation department on any student with special needs.

The transportation department should receive educational training and information on each student's individual situation. Each driver should receive supplemental training on how to understand, monitor, report and interact with any student assigned to his or her vehicle.

The transportation director or a transportation representative should attend all IEP meetings, as each student's individual program has a direct implication for the transportation department. The special education department should educate drivers and debrief with the transportation department on a regular basis to report, plan and review any problems that a student is experiencing. The transportation department should work with the special education department to inform and educate all employees that may have direct interaction with special education students. The transportation department should receive a written intervention strategy for each special education student as well as peer monitoring from the special education department on a regular basis.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-34

The transportation department's main office staff receives no additional training on office procedures or general office applications. Several transportation office staff members do not receive clear directions about their assigned area of responsibility or daily tasks.

Notably, several staff members are working in areas beyond their assigned duties. Mechanics are assigned full-time bus routes, and the dispatcher/map coordinator does not have a clear sense of job requirements or functions.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop, document and implement specific areas of responsibility for each member of the transportation administrative team.

The transportation office should develop a system that gives clear direction to each individual employee with regard to their assigned function. Employees that are tasked to work beyond their original job assignments should receive training and additional assignments should be documented. In addition, GPS should consider whether additional compensation is warranted on the basis of these additional assignments.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-35

Due to absenteeism and bus driver positions not being filled, the transportation office is using personnel that are assigned to other operational areas to drive school buses on a daily basis. The

transportation department experiences absenteeism on a regular basis. Routes without substitutes are assigned to one of the three full-time mechanics.

There are approximately 30 bus drivers assigned to drive school buses on a daily basis for Guthrie Public Schools. On an average day, there are two or three drivers absent from work. The district covers a portion of the routes by assigning them to the three full-time mechanics. During the onsite visit, the three full-time mechanics shared that they were regularly assigned bus runs for the morning and the afternoon routing assignments. This is inefficient, as the mechanics already have full-time work loads.

District staff noted that driver shortages used to be more severe than they are currently. Staff attributed the improved filling of driver positions to the district's decision to offer benefits to drivers rather than specific actions taken by the transportation contractor. However, absenteeism remains regular and higher than desirable.

As part of the deliverables included in the agreement with the outsourced transportation management firm, the contractor has responsibilities to support driver recruitment (**Exhibit 5-48**). The district did not have documentation from the contractor as to its efforts to address the driver shortfall.

**Exhibit 5-48
TransPar Transportation Management Services Agreement**

**EXHIBIT C
DELIVERABLES**

Monitor On-Time Performance,
Driver Recruiting Plan Progress,
 Provide Monthly "Directors" Report

TRANS PAR GROUP		Management Services Deliverables Prepared for: Guthrie Public Schools				Jun-14
Jul / Aug / Sep		Oct / Nov / Dec		Jan / Feb / Mar		Apr / May / Jun
Performance	Ongoing Services	Weekly Conference Calls to Measure Progress and Adherence to TEAMS Management Principles				
		Monitor On-Time Performance, Monitor Driver Recruiting Plan Progress, Provide Monthly "Directors" Report				
		Receive, Process & Respond to Requests for Information, TransFinder Software				
		Provide Daily / Weekly / Monthly Support for District Transportation Manager & Team				
		Accident/Safety Progress Review	Accident/Safety Progress Review	Accident/Safety Progress Review	Accident/Safety Progress Review	Accident/Safety Progress Review
		Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review	Financials vs Budget Review
Scheduled Services	Co-Author Annual Progress Report			Conduct Principal's Service Survey		
	DP		Perform TransPar's Route/Yield		Review Fleet Maintenance Controls	
Planning	Scheduled Services			Assess Bell Time Schedule		
	Identify Cost Reduction Targets			Budget Preparation & Support		
	Manager Training in NAPT Conf.		On-Site Visit & Program Review	On-Site Visit & Program Review	On-Site Visit & Program Review	On-Site Visit & Program Review
	START		Confirm Bus Replacement Plan		Develop Driver Recruiting Plan	
	On-Site Visit & Program Review					
Preparation	Schedule	Develop Driver Recruiting Plan				
	School Sta			Review Labor Agreement (Optional)		
	Convert TransFinder to the 'cloud'			Determine Costs of Trans Programs		
	SCHOOL		Perform Safety Climate Analysis		Review Rider Eligibility Rules	Assess Routing Practices & Rules
Misc	Other As-Needed Support Services	General Q&A, Attendance Boundary Analysis, Crisis Communication, Routing Software Issues, School Board Presentation Content				
		Note: Services not addressed may be negotiated and performed in a mutually agreed to timeframe and rate.				

Source: Guthrie Public Schools, January 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Take steps to reduce driver absenteeism.

The transportation department should fill all vacant bus driving positions, allowing the mechanics to concentrate on their assigned duties. Given the rate of absenteeism, the district should consider creating one or more permanent substitute driver positions. Alternatively, the district should consider whether other part-time employees in the district would be interested in expanding their position to a full-time position, with time split between bus driving and their current duties.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-36

During the Guthrie High School afternoon dismissal, students board the buses in an open and active traffic pattern and/or in the travel lanes behind parked cars. Students regularly walk between parked cars and moving traffic in order to board buses. Some bus drivers do not activate their warning lights when receiving students at dismissal or upon arrival.

Exhibit 5-49 shows GPS high school students about to cross an active traffic pattern at dismissal. While this is unfolding, school buses routinely pick-up and drop-off students in the access lanes behind parked cars (**Exhibits 5-50** and **5-51**). With the exception of four buses, none were using their warning lights when picking up students.

Exhibit 5-49
GHS Students Walking Towards Roadway



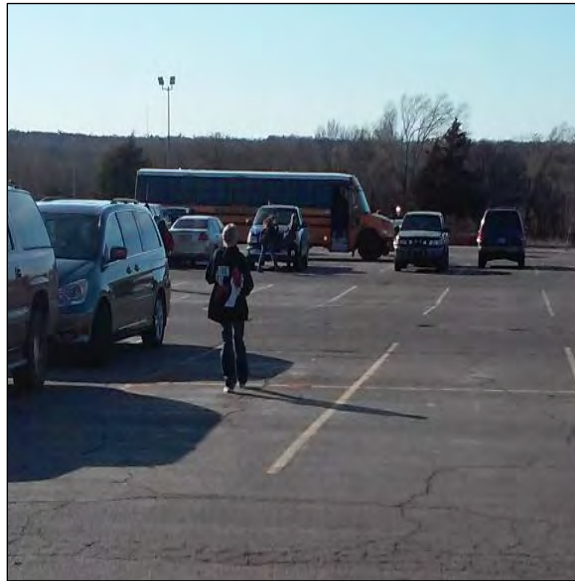
Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 5-50
GHS Students Picked-Up in Parking Lot



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 5-51
GHS Students Picked-Up in Parking Lot



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

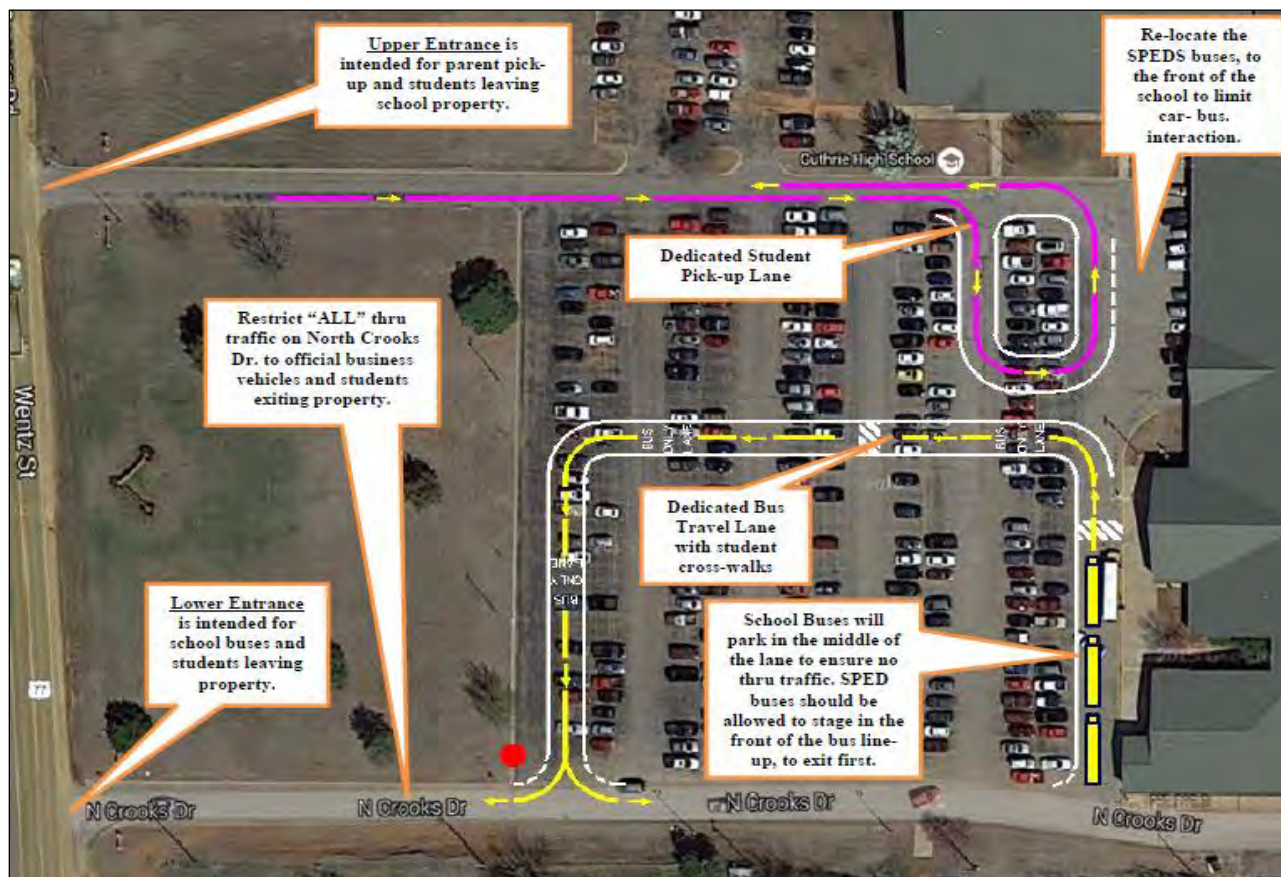
In general, the interaction of student pedestrian movement, cars, and school buses should be minimized. For the utmost safety, warning lights on school buses should be activated anytime students are entering or leaving the bus, regardless of location. School buses and cars should not share the same area when students are being picked-up or dropped-off.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop an alternate location for parent pick-up and reroute the buses to make the pick-up and drop-off of students as safe as possible.

For the high school the district should develop a pattern of vehicle and student movement and segregation as shown in **Exhibit 5-52**. The option is presented using dedicated traffic lanes, but the same effect may be generated with temporary traffic cones or other less-costly means. The district should instruct drivers to always activate warning lights when students are entering or leaving the bus.

Exhibit 5-52 Proposed GHS Dismissal



Source: Google Maps and Prismatic, January 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

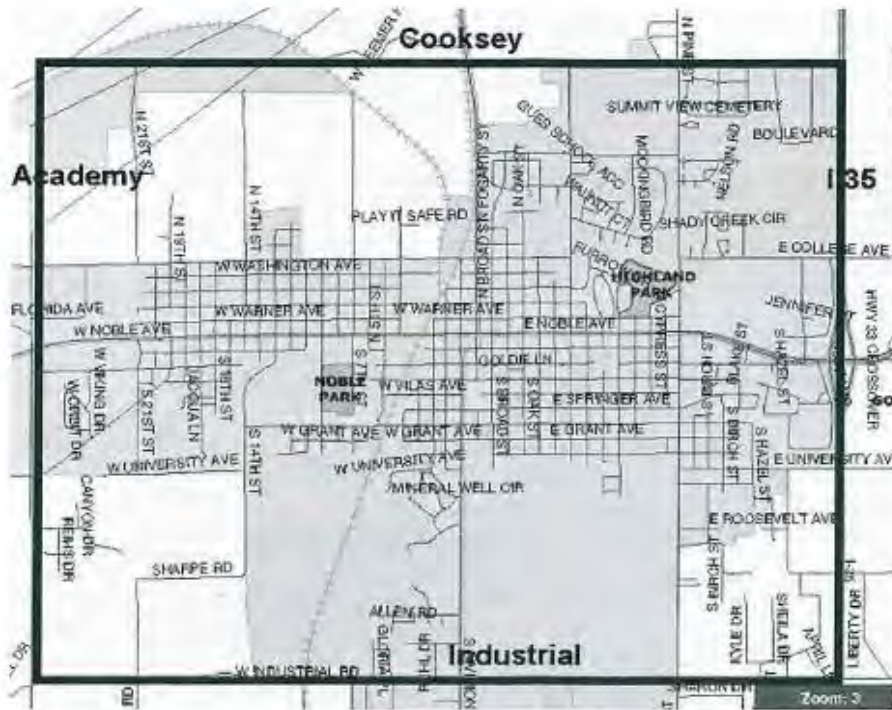
This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-37

Guthrie Public Schools has established a walk zone around its schools. Students circumvent this zone by getting to a central school (walking or being driven) and then taking a shuttle bus to their assigned school. This negatively impacts loading/unloading times, increases ride times, inflates bus occupancy levels and reduces bus capacity for students who have a legitimate need for transportation.

GPS does not enforce the existing walk zone policy but rather allows students living in the walk zone or "no ride zone" (**Exhibit 5-53**) to catch a bus at the nearest school and then shuttles the students to the correct school. More often than not, this method of student transportation causes bus routes to be unnecessarily long. During the onsite visit, drivers expressed concerns that the current routing scheme increases the ride times for students.

Exhibit 5-53
Guthrie Public Schools Transportation Boundary Map



Source: GPS, January 2016

The state provides little reimbursement for student transportation. It provides no reimbursement for students living within 1.5 miles of a school, as outlined by the Oklahoma School Finance funding formula (**Exhibit 5-54**).

Exhibit 5-54
Oklahoma School Finance, Sources of Revenue
State Aid Formula with Penalties/Adjustments

D. The *Transportation Supplement* shall be equal to the average daily haul (ADH) times the per capita allowance times the appropriate transportation factor. The ADH is the number of children in a district who are legally transported and who live one and one-half (1 ½) miles or more by commonly traveled road from the school attended. Students living less than one and one-half (1½) miles from school may be transported, but shall not be counted in determining state aid.

The *Area Served*, which is the total square miles in each school district, is required for calculating the transportation supplement. For independent districts with an elementary transportation area, the area served is the total square miles in the district plus the total square miles in the assigned transportation area outside the independent district.

The district ADH of the preceding year, divided by the district Area Served will provide a Density Figure*. Use the density figure in the chart below to determine the Per Capita Allowance.

ADH _____ x Per Capita Allowance _____ x Transportation Factor 1.39 (an appropriation level [factor] set by the Legislature) = Transportation Aid (transportation supplement) _____ for a school. The current formula transportation factor is 1.39 and has been unchanged in statute for many years.

Source: Oklahoma School Finance Manual, Technical Assistance Document page 21, section D

RECOMMENDATION

Once the district has built the new elementary school and changed over to neighborhood schools, they should review the existing no-ride-zone policy and possibly establish new bus rider criteria.

GPS should avoid providing transportation to students who live within the unreimbursable 1.5 mile no-ride-zone. GPS will need to review and perhaps update its no-ride-zone policy and educate all bus drivers and administrators about any revised policies in order to ensure proper compliance.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-38

The maintenance section of the transportation department employs a number of commendable practices. These include:

- GPS has three full-time mechanics that are cross-trained to diagnose, service, and repair diesel and gasoline engines.
- The maintenance shop area is adequate in size for the operational bus fleet and support vehicles (**Exhibit 5-55**). Complex repairs are completed using private vendors.

- Preventive maintenance inspections are performed each day on all buses and support vehicles. The shop mechanic prepares a list of repairs based upon what is most needed. The transportation department maintains daily inspection records for the school year.

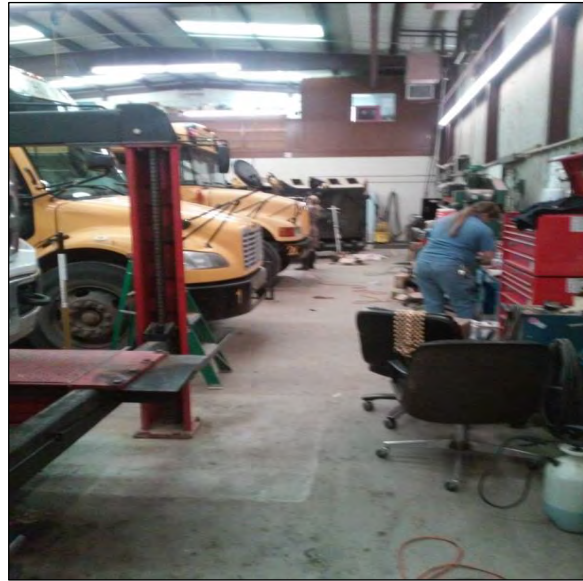
Vehicle parts are ordered by the lead mechanic working from a list of local vendors. The lead mechanic compares prices in order to purchase parts at the best and lowest possible price.

**Exhibit 5-55
Guthrie Transportation Garage**

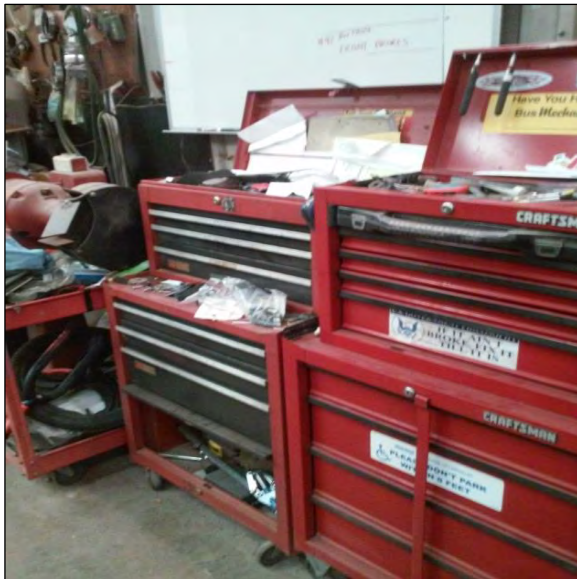
Parts Wash Area



Front End Work Area



Tool Boxes



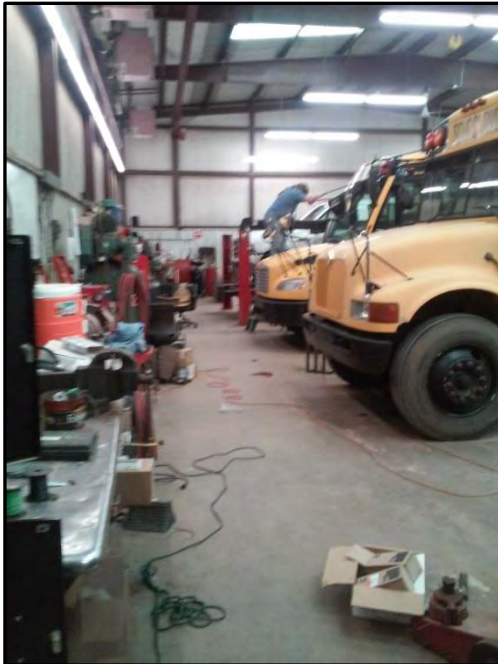
Rear Door of Bay One



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 5-55 (continued)
Guthrie Transportation Garage

Front End Work Area



Interior of Bus Shop



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

COMMENDATION

GPS is commended for employing best practices for bus maintenance.

FINDING 5-39

Bus drivers are required to clean and inspect the buses for any and all mechanical malfunctions on a daily basis. Defects are reported by means of the daily inspection sheet. However, the consulting team found several buses to be missing required equipment and mechanical parts.

During the onsite visit and subsequent fleet inspection (**Exhibit 5-56**), several buses were found to be missing required mechanical equipment and proper paperwork.

Exhibit 5-56
Guthrie Fleet Inspection

Bus #	10	11	13	14	15	16	18	21	22	24
Mirrors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glass	✓	<i>N/R</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tires	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Body Damage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flooring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency Door	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clean Inside	<i>N/R</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>N/R</i>	✓	<i>N/R</i>	<i>N/R</i>
Clean Outside	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fire Ext.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
First Aid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Body Fluid Kit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>N/R</i>	✓
Triangles	<i>N/R</i>	✓	✓	✓	<i>N/R</i>	✓	<i>N/R</i>	✓	✓	✓
Alarm (Sleeping Kids)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>NA</i>

Index: ✓ = OK, N/R = Needs Review, NA = Not Applicable

Source: Prismatic fleet inspection, January 2016

Buses 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, and 24 were all found to be missing functional crossing arms. In bus 24 the consulting team found a potentially explosive aerosol canister. In bus 16 the exit door was partially blocked by a trash can. **Exhibit 5-57** shows photos from the consulting team's inspection.

**Exhibit 5-57
Guthrie Fleet Inspection Photos**

Bus 10



Bus 10 Driver's Seat



Bus 11



Bus 11 Entrance Door



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

**Exhibit 5-57 (continued)
Guthrie Fleet Inspection Photos**

Bus 13



Bus 13 Top of Stairwell



Bus 14



Bus 11 Name Tags



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

**Exhibit 5-57 (continued)
Guthrie Fleet Inspection Photos**

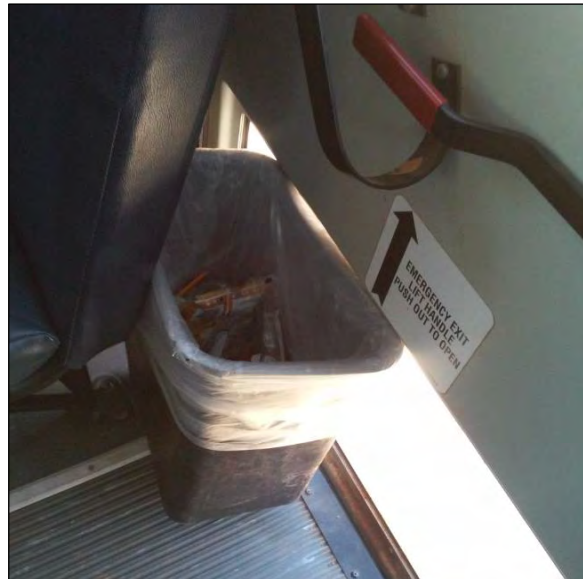
Bus 15



Bus 16



Bus 16 Rear Emergency Exit



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

**Exhibit 5-57 (continued)
Guthrie Fleet Inspection Photos**

Bus 18



Bus 18 Under Seats



Bus 18 Entrance Door



Bus 18 Driver's Seat



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

**Exhibit 5-57 (continued)
Guthrie Fleet Inspection Photos**

Bus 21



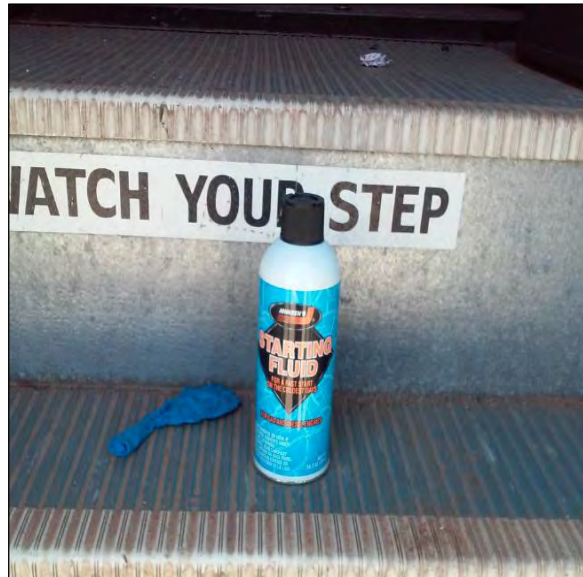
Bus 22



Bus 24



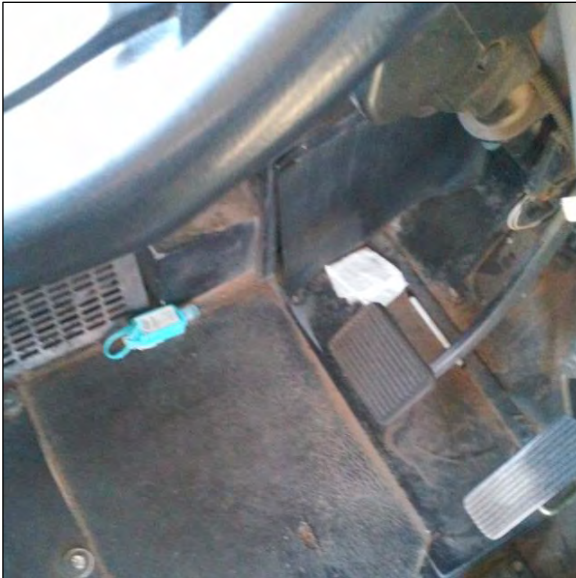
Bus 24 Stairwell



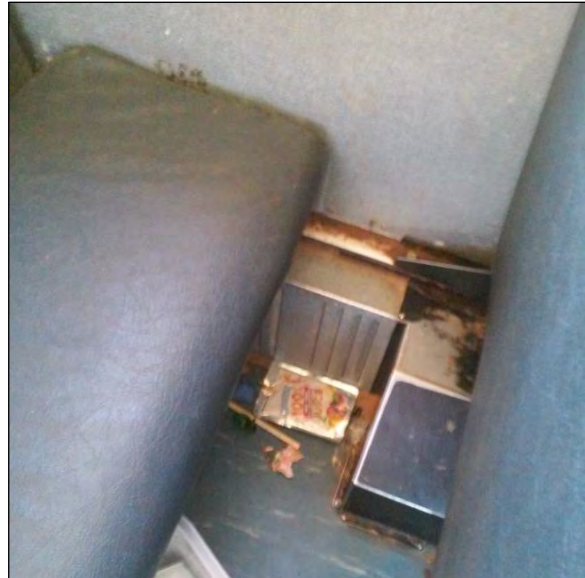
Source: Prismatic, January 2016

Exhibit 5-57 (continued)
Guthrie Fleet Inspection Photos

Bus 24 Driver's Area



Bus 24 Seat Behind Driver's Seat



Source: Prismatic, January 2016

As mandated by Oklahoma state law and as outlined in the 2015 Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual (**Exhibit 5-58**), daily pre-trip forms must be completed and retained for up to 90 days. Required paperwork should be checked for accuracy according to policy and procedure. School buses should be swept, cleaned and trash cans emptied on a daily basis.

**Exhibit 5-58
2015 Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual Excerpt**

* Begin fanning off the air pressure by rapidly applying and releasing the foot brake. Low air warning devices (buzzer, light,

dows should open and close freely. The latches should open easily and shut firmly. The buzzer should sound when emergency exit

Daily Report Sheets

State School Board regulations require that a pre/post trip inspection form be completed daily and retained on file for three months. It is very important these forms are properly completed and turned in.

1. Fill out a Daily Report Sheet for your regular routes each day. Make sure to complete it fully and place it where specified by the district.
2. If you discover something on your bus that needs immediate attention, write the problem on the bottom of the form and notify a mechanic. If you don't write it down it won't get fixed.

Continue the Interior Check

- * Oil Pressure Gauge – Confirm that the oil pressure gauge is working. Make sure the gauge shows increasing or normal pressure. If the vehicle is equipped with an oil temperature gauge, it should begin to gradually rise to a normal operating range.
- * Temperature Gauge – Confirm that the temperature gauge is working. It should begin to climb to and then stabilize at the normal operating range.
- * Ammeter, Voltmeter – The gauges should show the alternator and/or generator charging.
- * Speedometer – The speedometer should not be obscured or obviously broken.
- * Steering Play – Power steering equipped vehicles: With the engine running, play should not exceed 10 degrees (or about 2 inches on a 20-inch wheel) before the front left wheel barely moves when you turn the steering wheel back and forth.
- * Horn – Check that the horn is operational.
- * Heater and Defroster – Check that the blower motors are working.
- * Seats – Make sure the seat frames are securely fastened to the floor. Make sure each seat cushion is securely fastened to the frame. Make sure the seats are not cut or torn in a way that exposes the flammable padding material.
- * Emergency Exits – The emergency exit door, hatches and win-

younger students may slip out of their seat floor of the bus. Because of this, a thorough check is necessary. Many districts have electronic detectors to the back of the bus every time the bus is used. Remember, just walking to the back of the bus is no guarantee you will find a student. Other districts are required to use some system to assure that the driver has checked the child check at the end of each trip or route.

Fill out Pre-Trip and Post Trip Inspection

Each driver is required by law to perform a pre-trip inspection on his or her vehicle before leaving on a field trip. The procedures for field trip pre and post trip inspections are exactly the same as for a route bus.

Daily Report Sheets

State School Board regulations require that a pre/post trip inspection form be completed daily and retained on file for three months. It is very important these forms are properly completed and turned in.

1. Fill out a Daily Report Sheet for your regular routes each day. Make sure to complete it fully and place it where specified by the district.
2. If you discover something on your bus that needs immediate attention, write the problem on the bottom of the form and notify a mechanic. If you don't write it down it won't get fixed.

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL BUS DRIVER MANUAL • OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education-Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual, January 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Review the current recommended and required forms from the OSDE and incorporate them into daily operations to ensure that each driver is performing and submitting an accurate pre-trip inspection.

The transportation office should randomly check paperwork and buses for accuracy and completion. During the course of monthly preventive maintenance inspections, the mechanics should check all paperwork to ensure that any mechanical defect is reported properly.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-40

The Guthrie bus mechanics are classified as full-time mechanics, but spend considerable time functioning in areas unrelated to vehicle maintenance, such as being assigned to drive a bus route. These assignments delay vehicle repairs.

During the onsite visit, all three mechanics were assigned to drive a full bus route each morning and afternoon. As witnessed during the onsite evaluations, bus repairs or service was left for a later time.

An effective organization has sufficient trained personnel for each critical position. While personnel can occasionally be asked to fill-in for someone who is absent, doing so on a regular basis compromises the overall operations of the organization.

RECOMMENDATION

Reallocate the mechanics' time solely to fleet maintenance and repair to allow adequate time to care for all GPS vehicles.

The district should reaffirm that the primary duty of vehicle mechanics is maintenance and repair of the fleet, as per the responsibilities and assignments outlined in the job description. The transportation director should take other steps to fill open bus driver positions and assignments.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-41

Currently, the transportation department does not have a formal vehicle replacement plan. As a result, a number of the district's buses are old.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education does not mandate a policy regarding the replacement cycle or service life of school buses, nor is there a set policy outlining the purchase of support vehicles as they relate to pupil transportation. Currently, the district has 14 buses that are model year 2002 and one bus that is a 2000 model year (**Exhibit 5-59**). The average mileage on these buses is 121,420. While many are used as spares, others are in active service as route, special education, and activity buses.

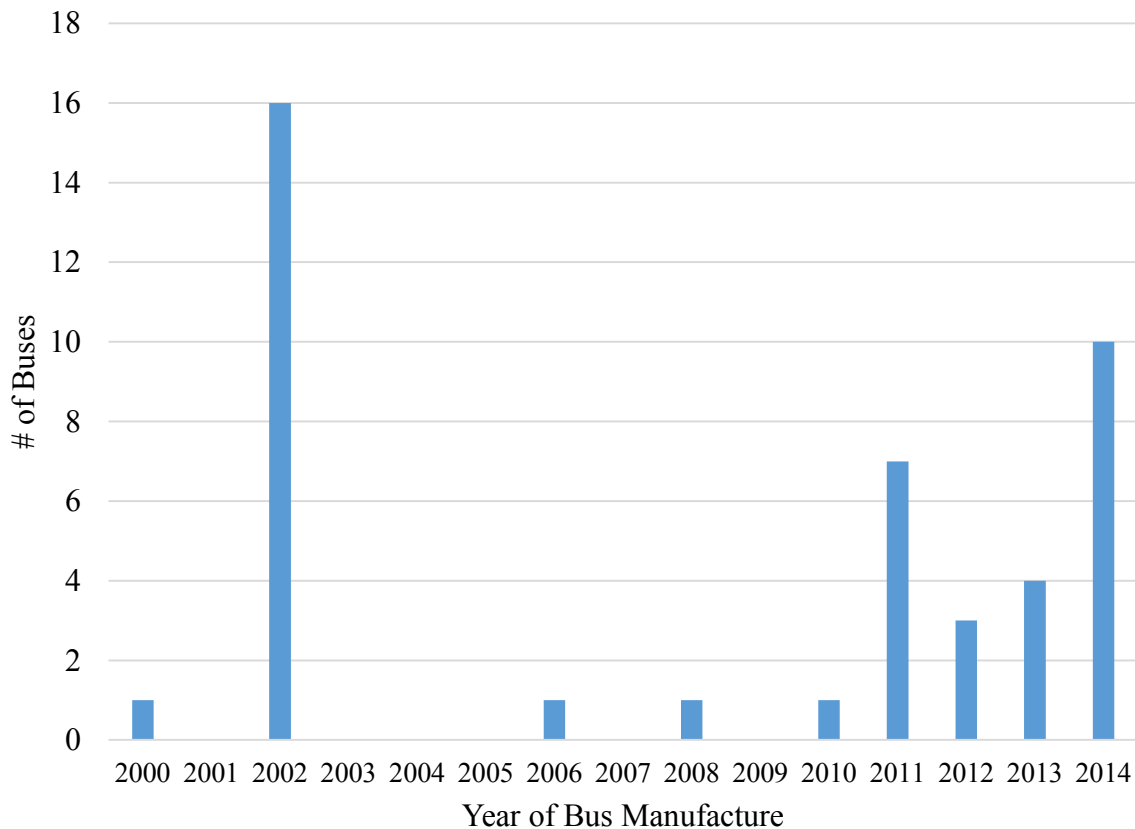
Exhibit 5-59
Oldest Buses in the Guthrie Transportation Fleet

Bus #	Year	Make (Model)	Primary Use	Mileage
57	2000	*Freightliner Lift Bus	Special Education	167,309
9	2002	International	Route	142,704
23	2002	International	Route	104,138
24	2002	International	Route	122,358
25	2002	International	Spare	99,172
26	2002	International	Spare	106,659
27	2002	International	Spare	106,601
28	2002	International	Spare	113,516
29	2002	International	Spare	101,809
30	2002	International	Spare	113,414
48	2002	International	Spare	149,959
49	2002	International	Spare	141,267
50	2002	International	Activity Bus	171,790
55	2002	International	Activity Bus	42,698
56	2002	International	Special Education	137,911

Source: GPS, January 2016

Exhibit 5-60 charts the current GPS school bus fleet by age. As shown, the district has not made regular bus purchases. Instead, it has purchased a great number in some years and none in other years.

Exhibit 5-60
Number of GPS School Buses by Year of Manufacture



Source: GPS, January 2016

One of the deliverables outlined in the district’s agreement with the transportation management contractor is “confirm bus replacement plan”. It does not appear that the contractor has proposed or provided a bus replacement plan to GPS.

Buses are a high-dollar expenditure for a school district. The current cost of a bus from each of the seven approved Oklahoma vendors is shown in **Exhibit 5-61**. On average, a new bus will cost more than \$79,000. According to *70 O.S. § 9-109 Section 219*, “Price List and Description of Transportation Equipment”, “all bus purchases shall be made under a sealed bid and contracts will be awarded to the lowest and best bidder”.

Exhibit 5-61
Current Costs of New/Used School Buses in Oklahoma as of March 2015

Entity	Condition	Model	Cost per Unit
American Bus	Used	Blue Bird	\$76,800
Blue Bird	New	Blue Bird	\$82,460
I.C. Corporation	New	International	\$79,700
Mid Bus	New	Thomas	\$80,000
Starcraft	New	Thomas	\$79,200
Thomas Freightliner	New	Thomas	\$82,680
Transnational	Used	International	\$73,000
Average Cost			\$79,120

Source: vendor quotes compiled by Prismatic, January 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a formal bus and support vehicle replacement plan.

The district should create a policy to replace buses with more than 16 years of service. Policy should include considerations for mileage, use and condition for buses that are less than 16 years old. This standard will ensure buses are compliant with current regulations and vehicle specifications. In addition, the policy should have a goal of weighing new bus purchases against ongoing repair costs, so as to minimize the total cost of ownership (life cycle costing). Then, the district should develop procedures to replace buses on a more regular cycle.

Guthrie's transportation director should make a formal "condition of the fleet" report each budget cycle with a request for replacement buses being delivered every other year. The funding for new buses should be implemented to replace three buses biannually.

FISCAL IMPACT

Replacing three buses every other year will cost the district approximately \$237,360.

Recommendation	2016-17	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Purchase replacement buses.	(\$237,360)	\$0	(\$237,360)	\$0	(\$237,360)

Appendix A:
Staff Survey Results

Staff Survey

Surveys Completed: 210
Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Statistical Data

How long have you been employed by the school district?	
5 years or less	54%
6 – 10 years	13%
11 – 15 years	12%
16 – 20 years	9%
21 years or more	12%
What is your role in the school district?	
School Administrator	8%
Classroom Teacher	65%
Other Certified (Librarian, Guidance Counselor)	11%
School Aide/Nurse	1%
Instructional Aide	4%
Other Support Staff (Cafeteria, Office, Custodial)	11%

Survey Questions

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The district has a long-range strategic plan that guides the decision-making process.	13%	57%	24%	4%	1%
2	I understand the district's policies and procedures.	23%	69%	3%	4%	0%
3	I have an accurate, written job description to guide me in my work.	20%	58%	7%	14%	2%
4	I understand the district's organizational structure.	21%	58%	14%	6%	1%
5	I know to whom I report for all my job functions.	49%	46%	2%	2%	0%
6	I understand the district's salary schedule and justification for paying extra-duty stipends.	24%	52%	11%	10%	3%
7	I receive adequate training overall to perform my job functions.	20%	62%	4%	10%	4%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	I received an annual personnel evaluation last year.	47%	43%	8%	2%	0%
9	I received adequate training on the new TLE evaluation instrument our district has adopted.	23%	48%	19%	8%	2%
10	The district has an adequate number of staff to carry out its operations.	3%	29%	10%	43%	15%
11	The district actively recruits high quality staff to fill vacant positions.	11%	58%	15%	12%	4%
12	The district has a pool of quality substitutes to fill positions when necessary.	1%	15%	13%	48%	23%
13	The district effectively communicates with parents and community members.	9%	68%	12%	11%	0%
14	The central office effectively communicates with district staff.	13%	66%	10%	9%	2%
15	The superintendent effectively communicates with district staff.	19%	63%	10%	7%	1%
16	The principals effectively communicate with their staffs.	27%	57%	7%	8%	1%
17	The teachers effectively communicate with students and parents.	18%	66%	10%	6%	0%
18	The district effectively uses volunteers to assist with meeting district goals.	3%	41%	33%	17%	6%
19	The district gives student needs a high priority when making major decisions.	12%	60%	11%	15%	2%
20	School board members listen to the opinions of parents and the community members.	9%	45%	33%	10%	2%
21	The school board understands the needs of the district.	9%	52%	24%	12%	3%
22	The superintendent is accessible to district staff.	15%	62%	14%	7%	2%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	The principals are accessible to their staffs.	41%	53%	4%	2%	0%
24	The teachers are accessible to students and parents.	39%	57%	3%	1%	0%
25	Teachers often collaborate on projects related to the curriculum.	29%	53%	12%	6%	0%
26	Teachers know what is to be taught and when because they have access to a district-adopted Pacing Calendar that reflects the current Oklahoma Academic Standards (PASS)	33%	50%	15%	2%	0%
27	Teachers have scope and sequence documents that determine what is taught and when.	27%	54%	17%	2%	0%
28	Teachers understand the PASS objectives, test blueprints, and Item Specifications that are provided by the state.	28%	53%	16%	3%	0%
29	Test data from district-adopted benchmarks and mandated end-of-year tests are used to improve the district's curriculum.	21%	56%	16%	5%	1%
30	Teachers effectively use student data to improve instructional practices.	25%	58%	14%	2%	0%
31	The principals are effective instructional leaders.	24%	57%	8%	10%	0%
32	There is adequate high quality professional development for the principals and teachers.	12%	55%	15%	13%	4%
33	The needs of the special education students are being met.	10%	42%	22%	20%	5%
34	The needs of the gifted and talented are being met.	4%	36%	37%	16%	6%
35	Teachers adequately prepare students for state mandated tests.	17%	65%	16%	2%	1%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36	Students are adequately prepared for college, if they choose that path.	4%	44%	36%	13%	3%
37	Students receive timely information on college entrance requirements and scholarship offers.	2%	25%	54%	11%	7%
38	Students receive adequate vocational training to prepare them for the workforce, if they choose that path.	5%	34%	53%	7%	0%
39	The district provides students with adequate counseling services.	4%	42%	17%	27%	10%
40	The school library meets the needs of the teachers and students.	13%	61%	11%	12%	2%
41	District stakeholders provide input into the budgetary process.	3%	31%	55%	10%	0%
42	I understand the district's budgetary process.	3%	35%	43%	17%	3%
43	The district actively applies for competitive state and federal grants.	3%	32%	58%	5%	2%
44	I complete an annual inventory of the equipment in my work area.	34%	50%	13%	4%	1%
45	The district wisely manages its revenues and expenditures.	10%	44%	38%	6%	2%
46	The district has a long-range plan to address facility needs.	17%	62%	16%	5%	1%
47	The district's facilities are well-maintained.	1%	33%	8%	45%	13%
48	The district's facilities are kept clean.	2%	41%	9%	31%	17%
49	The district has an energy management program in place to minimize energy consumption.	3%	45%	39%	9%	4%
50	There are facility and/or equipment concerns throughout the campus.	25%	54%	12%	7%	2%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
51	The district's facilities are secure from unwanted visitors.	8%	47%	7%	29%	10%
52	I know what to do during a crisis or an emergency.	22%	65%	4%	9%	1%
53	Student discipline is well-maintained.	7%	58%	11%	17%	8%
54	Drugs are a problem in this district.	6%	36%	47%	9%	2%
55	I often purchase a meal from the cafeteria.	4%	28%	6%	30%	32%
56	The cafeteria facilities and equipment are sanitary and neat.	11%	62%	15%	8%	5%
57	I find the cafeteria meals appealing and appetizing.	2%	33%	19%	29%	17%
58	I understand how to use technology as it relates to my job functions.	24%	69%	4%	2%	1%
59	District staff and administrators often use email to communicate with one another.	42%	55%	2%	1%	0%
60	The district has adequate technology to support its operations.	7%	44%	10%	31%	9%
61	When necessary, the district's technology equipment is quickly repaired or serviced.	4%	58%	8%	21%	9%
62	Technology is readily accessible and easy to use in the performance of my job duties.	9%	60%	5%	24%	3%
63	District staff and administrators often use email to communicate with one another.	39%	59%	2%	1%	0%
64	The district has adequate technology to support its operations.	4%	51%	10%	29%	7%
65	The district's technology equipment is often used past its useful lifespan.	41%	42%	11%	4%	3%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
66	The district website is a useful tool for staff, parents, and students.	18%	69%	7%	7%	1%
67	Buses arrive and depart on time each day.	7%	57%	24%	10%	2%
68	There are enough working buses to meet the needs of the district.	7%	37%	41%	12%	3%

Written Responses

If you would like to provide any additional comments on the school district, please do so here. Where is the district doing well? In what areas could it be improved?

- There is need to be more accountability in the maintenance departments.
- Maintenance Dept is in desperate need of qualified competent director and assistant director.
- The district has worked very hard to provide training to both administrators and teachers to effectively utilize shared practices in regards to PLC's, MAP testing for growth, and teacher made Benchmarks. Data is tracked and understood at a site and district level, which is a great improvement from past practices. EdCamp has been a valuable professional development model as it is driven by our district employee's needs. Having the same administrators at the site and central office, has allowed a visibility and partnership that fosters teamwork and support.
- There have been many improvements in the district over the last few years, one 'biggie' is communication with community and staff. One area that I see that needs help is the cleanliness of the buildings. It's hard to be proud of your work place when it's so filthy. The other area is our special ed department, GPS is not serving these children to the best of their ability. We DO NOT have high quality staff in special ed positions and have overcrowded the classrooms that we do have.
- Maintenance Dept needs better help and supervisor.
- We are working proactively to improve our district both academically and structurally. However, I think too much of an emphasis is being placed on a score on a school report card rather than the individual needs of the students. Students who want to succeed are doing very well. We need to explore more programs to assist students who come from disadvantaged homes and lack an interest in school. Our teachers are working very hard to ensure student success and get punched in the face when school report cards are released. We need to offer support and encouragement if we expect teachers to stay in the district over an extended period of time.
- We sure could use some better computers for the Cafeteria and also we need to see about

getting some freezers put in the schools that don't have a walk in freezer kind of crazy to have to go to High school or Jr high freezer because the schools don't have them.

- Administration is completely out of touch with what goes on in the classroom. Way too much emphasis is placed on serving the needs of low performing students. All the other students are ignored.
- Positives are that this school district feels like a family. I could talk about the improvements all day and write about 20 things. With that being said, with the budget the way it is they simply can't be fixed. No point in listed them and complaining.
- Facility cleanliness needs to improve! We need counselors desperately.
- Work in progress, each year is getting better.
- The building facilities are in bad shape. The students/teachers are trying to learn/teach in extreme heat or extreme cold classrooms/libraries. The whiteboards are out of date--the expo markers won't erase clearly. The lockers are falling apart. There is no hot water in the restrooms to wash hands, no hot water in the school, except cafeteria. The computers are used/old computers from other school districts. We need a computer lab with at least 30 computers for teachers to take their students to do activities. Poor parking at some of the schools, for teachers and visitors/parents.
- I know you are trying to give us every opportunity to be successful. I just hope you take our class size into consideration when looking at our test scores. We're working like crazy to come to the aid of every kid in every way, but there's only so much of us to go around. I know funding is finite, but it seems to me that class size should be a paramount topic of concern.
- I feel the Maintenance and Technology Departments severely lack leadership and oversight. Many mistakes and excuses have been made in both departments. However, although it is easy to criticize, I will also be the biggest supporter of this school district, as it has been the best I have ever worked with.
- I believe that Guthrie Public schools is moving in the right direction in many areas with the limited resources we have. As a whole, each staff that I have worked with in this district does what they can to help their students. My greatest concern has to do with state level budget cuts and how that will affect a district that has already made so many cuts and can't afford more without affecting our students in a major way.
- We've had technology problems in our classroom on & off all year. Our class smart board still isn't even hooked up, despite work orders & promises. It's easy to feel like we're just unwanted stepchildren because we're a special education class.
- "In what areas could it be improved?" We desperately need an additional school counselor to help with the load of PreK-3rd grades. In my opinion, Fogarty needs one full-time school counselor and Cotteral/Central could make things work with one full-time school counselor split between the two schools. But, (1) school counselor to address the needs of the district's PreK-3rd grade students is just simply not enough support for the many, many mental health needs of our students, and also too much for (1) school counselor to realistically handle/address effectively and adequately. I do realize this comes down to our

budget, and we all understand. But, it's still important to me to share my input as a voice for students. If/when funding ever becomes available again, I'd put my money on hiring another elementary school counselor to offer this much needed mental health support and help prevent some pretty dire student situations from becoming even bigger as they get older. Thank you for offering this section to add comments.

- Our facilities need to be improved, but everyone already knows that!
- There seems to be a large amount of district funds spent on personnel at the district office that could be better spent in the classroom.
- Technology needs to be more dependable. We also need new computers, not hand me downs from other districts. It would be nice to have a computer person available in the computer lab and/or the building to help with the simpler tech problems. It would also be nice to have less morning/recess/lunch duties so we can focus on student learning, have more time to process data and complete paperwork.
- Passing the bond issue was a great morale builder in our district and we need to have more support from administration in supporting the faculty members and meeting the needs of our students. We are overstaffed in some elective areas, but understaffed in tested core subject areas. We all feel the evaluation process is way too long and involved and is not an accurate reflection of us as professionals. It takes the principals 5 times longer to evaluate our staff and is an unnecessary waste of their valuable time. Our teachers are being inundated with mandatory meetings/testing/PLC's/remediation that we feel are taking away from classroom instruction instead of adding to it. We all see the potential in this district and we need to work together to achieve it.
- I feel like the school district is exceptionally resourceful. We don't have a lot of extra money to spend, but I feel like we stretch every dime we do have to maximize it for our students. The communication from the board office is exceptional, but I feel like the communication from our head site principal to our faculty and staff should greatly improve. I feel like many things planned by the teachers are well executed and planned in advance, but that things planned by our administrators may be last minute at times. I feel like our special ed department is suffering in many ways, mainly due to the shortage of special ed teachers. Our English and science teachers are incredible and very creative in their teaching styles. Our building is often dirty, and our cafeteria staff is under appreciated and has a shortage of workers sometimes.

Appendix B:
Parent Survey Results

Parent Survey

*Surveys Completed: 136
Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Survey Questions

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of parents and community members.	7%	26%	33%	29%	5%
2	School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the district.	8%	29%	22%	33%	9%
3	The Superintendent is a respected and effective leader.	23%	35%	21%	14%	8%
4	District and school staffs are accessible to parents.	18%	43%	14%	18%	8%
5	I feel welcome at my child's school.	26%	38%	12%	16%	9%
6	I receive timely communications from my child's teachers regarding his/her progress in school.	25%	31%	10%	22%	13%
7	My child's school has sufficient volunteers to help student and school programs.	6%	20%	32%	32%	11%
8	Parents play an active role in decision-making in our school.	8%	14%	17%	45%	16%
9	Education is the main priority in our school district.	11%	26%	8%	39%	15%
10	Students learn the necessary material to be prepared for the next grade.	8%	36%	11%	30%	14%
11	I am satisfied with the education my child receives.	13%	25%	9%	33%	20%
12	Teachers are held accountable for ensuring that students learn.	13%	28%	22%	20%	17%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13	I receive enough information from the district regarding academic expectations for my child (i.e. student testing, retention, etc.).	12%	31%	22%	26%	9%
14	Our school can be described as a “good place to learn.”	9%	28%	14%	33%	16%
15	My child’s school is clean.	9%	28%	14%	35%	15%
16	My child’s school is attractive and welcoming.	2%	29%	18%	35%	16%
17	My child’s school is well maintained.	3%	16%	16%	42%	23%
18	District facilities are open for community use.	6%	25%	40%	17%	11%
19	My child feels safe and secure at school.	11%	44%	13%	24%	8%
20	Bullying is a problem in this district.	25%	23%	31%	18%	2%
21	Drugs are a problem in this district.	28%	23%	33%	15%	2%
22	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	5%	36%	16%	29%	15%
23	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered in my child’s school.	6%	32%	23%	26%	13%
24	My child’s school bus runs on time nearly every day.	10%	16%	60%	7%	8%
25	My child feels safe riding the bus.	5%	15%	61%	8%	10%
26	Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the bus.	5%	14%	65%	8%	8%
27	The length of my child’s bus ride is reasonable.	5%	13%	54%	16%	13%
28	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	5%	28%	47%	15%	5%
29	Students have enough time to eat their lunches.	6%	26%	18%	36%	14%
30	My child likes the food served in the cafeteria.	5%	20%	21%	27%	27%
31	The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	5%	25%	31%	18%	20%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32	The district website is a useful tool for me and/or my child.	18%	43%	19%	17%	4%
33	My child regularly uses computers at school.	18%	46%	17%	15%	4%
34	Teachers know how to use technology in the classroom.	21%	40%	23%	11%	5%

Written Responses

If you would like to provide any additional comments on the school district, please do so here. Where is the district doing well? In what areas could it be improved?

- I think the district does well in that they strive to make sure the test scores from the district as a whole are sufficient. Improvement could be made in every area, my biggest concern is the low educational standards we have set for our kids.
- need better teachers, they are lazy. functions are not well planned.
- Glad the bond passed as all schools need care as they are all old (older)! Parental involvement w/all kids & activities that the children are involved in is much needed and needs to be voiced somehow/somewhat.
- Secretaries are cold and unwelcoming, they tend to treat parents like they are a bother. (This goes for all schools - with maybe the exception of Cotteral). Parents I talk to tend to feel the school is hiding things by the way the secretaries and principals act. When the only communication you hear is on testing - that's all parents feel like the district cares about.
- Fence around front of Jr. High where kids can feel safe and secure.
- What I am not happy about is the benchmark test counts as a grade, 70% for my 7th grader and 80% for my 8th grader, completely unacceptable!! This is why our students are stressed out! This is something that can be changed and needs to be changed immediately. The schools need to be set up as community schools. We are big enough and have the buildings to do this. It would help with traffic and getting kids to school on time.
- Our teachers and staff are excellent! They always go that extra step to take care of the kids. They are so creative and my kids are always looking forward to going to school!!
- I think the district has strong leadership and is headed in the right direction. I hope the community will continue to support the district so the current momentum can be maintained. The district is doing well by maintaining current facilities and adding a school in the Southern district (due to latest bond election). Additionally, the administrators and teachers we have been associated with have been impressive; so I think hiring practices and employee support must be considered positive. The improvement areas are mainly better facilities and more teachers (teacher/student ratios are too high, especially for the

early grades where the foundation is built for learning). I realize the aforementioned improvements are directly relating to funding. Additionally, it seems that the primary reason the districts grade ratings aren't better is because lack of parental support (certainly not fault of district employees); but I wonder what can be done to change that. Movies have been made about worse off districts creating a revolutionary change in their public schools. Maybe the right person will get inspired and help lead this community to greater things; as we know it all starts with education.

- Staggered start times for the district would be greatly welcomed. I have 3 children at 3 different schools.
- Kids go without eating because they run out of food in the cafeteria, the school is disgusting when you walk in they have mold on ceiling tiles. Everything is focused on the football kids when the other groups and sports get put on the back burner. What the band kids have to work with is sad but they do their best and still win awards. Guthrie needs a lot of improving especially since losing this funding.
- Please do not cut the GT or advanced placement program in the budget cuts. It would be as detrimental as cutting the special ed program.
- All schools in Guthrie district are in dire need of maintenance, repair, and cleaning.
- I know it's something that probably can't be helped but if it can, please don't cut off any of the few programs these kids have. It is so important to have these programs to bring out creativity and passion, it brings out hard work and dedication. I don't think any child can afford to lose any of the programs that may be cut with budgeting.
- Teachers need to get off their phones and teach. All of my kid's classrooms have been very loud because the teachers do not control the classroom. It is difficult for my children to learn in this environment. Friendlier staff when entering the buildings would make me feel more inviting.
- I based some of the questions off of GUES. While I have felt welcome at every other elementary school, GUES does not give that same feeling. Also, every other elementary school is great at communicating with parents; however, GUES teachers do not communicate with parents. This is not just me; it has been a concern voiced by many moms. I recommend remind.com to GUES teachers. Many of the other schools are utilizing remind.com. I get wonderful updates from [deleted] at Fogarty. I would also like to see more emphasis placed on how to properly write a sentence, paragraph, and essay. The lack of grammar is disturbing. I'm not asking for perfection, but my sixth grader should know when to use a comma, a period, capitalization, and indentation.
- It could improve on ways to help families with children who are academically on point but have behavioral issues. This seems to limit their resources.
- Communication regarding extracurricular activities (i.e. GUES Honor Choir) would be appreciated. Notification of try-outs, notification when a child is accepted, notification of rehearsal times, etc.
- Guthrie Public Schools desperately needs to improve on diversity and inclusion. GHS has only one teacher that is African American. GHS does not have any African American male

teachers or coaches. That is a problem in the 21st century as an educator that is disheartening. I became an educator because I saw African American males both teachers and administrators during my time in GPS. Statistics show that African American males do better when they have that authoritative figure in schools. Disciplinary issues among students of color is a problem within GPS it is cultural. I returned for Homecoming this year for my class reunion and that caught my attention. As a Black male there is more to us than our athletic abilities. Those young people need to see individuals that look like them in both the classroom and counselor's office, as well as the principal's office. They will become what they see I am living proof of that! This is not just a problem for GHS but for GPS as a whole.

- Facilities are terrible. Continue to press the community for more bond initiatives to better the learning environs for our youth. Specifically the Jr. High needs to be condemned.
- At the high school there is a door which will not stay locked and closed. Reported numerous times to principal [deleted], never, ever fixed this. Anyone who has a gun could enter. District DOES NOT take seriously teachers who stay on their phones and internet instead of teaching. Reported all the way up to asst superintendent
- I would like for the teachers to make an extra effort to listen to students and help them if they are asking for it. Teachers are supposed to TEACH. Also, if a teacher is going to be gone for an extended period of time, the substitute needs to be qualified to teach the class. Especially if it is a class that is needed to graduate.
- I like GPS, except I wish the school were updated, especially for the younger kids!
- The schools are doing the best they can but it would be beneficial to have more communication.
- My kids are starving when they get home. Most lunches consist of 2 items (sandwich and cheese stick) and a milk. I've had teachers misplace work and tell my student they can't turn it in again but when I talk to them they admit they saw it and lost it and the child may redo it... bullying is a big problem on the playgrounds and in cafeteria. Students are not given adequate time to eat because of another student acting up. It took 3yrs for me to get a child reading intervention help or on an iep. At a parent teacher conference the teacher knew nothing about my child because they couldn't get their tablet to work. Nearly every parent teacher conference I've been to with one child in the past 5yrs, the special needs and intervention teachers are not there. Drugs, cigarettes, and sex are ridiculously worse in our schools now than 15yrs ago. I rarely receive any form of communication from teachers, I write notes in the binders and may not hear back for 3 days or maybe ever. Not everyone has a computer, printer, smart phone...all of the digital reminders, miss a day get your homework online, check grades, class dojo, etc What happened to communication?? Parking and school lines are ridiculous. Every school other than high school needs an additional parking lot. There needs to be a sidewalk from Oklahoma and 19th to Silver Valley for the 50+ kids walking in the road to get to and from school or buses need to start dropping off at the neighborhoods. Buildings are old, falling apart, no heat or air half the time. Parents are not being notified when an intruder goes on school property, police are called, and makes news. Notes should be sent home at least. Too many students per class. School zones need to be patrolled daily. It is difficult to pick up children at 3 different

schools when they all let out at same time, I could go on and on... Staff are always friendly. Some teachers excel in what they do, but you have to be lucky to get one of the 3 or 4 at each school.

- I'm sure the new bond will help improve the areas of the jr high that I have concerns with. [Deleted] could ease up on the kids a little too. I think it's terrible he doesn't allow the students to dress up for certain things: homecoming, red ribbon week. The students feel like they're in boot camp. If they were allowed to do fun activities they just might enjoy school more.
- More accountability across the board. As in accountability for learning, teaching and taking care of the school including care and respect for each other and the property.
- The district does a good job of making sports the priority over academics. The district needs to improve in how their general fund and building fund are prioritized. The elephant in the room is what can be done to make the superintendent's resume look better. Doing what's best for kids is not the priority.
- I believe GHS has a lot of wonderful teachers that are working very hard with the limited number of supplies and time that they have. I would love to see our district step up and handle discipline issues better. Our teachers deserve respect in their positions and our kids deserve an environment that is catered to learning. Disruptive kids need to be dealt with accordingly.
- Good teachers who call Guthrie home are employed elsewhere. This is disappointing. Politics should not play a role in hiring.
- needs many improvements, beginning with security and communication to the parents.. you have resources via the call log and email...
- Disappointing that we don't even have warm water at all our schools. Also High School counselors should focus on all students and not just the ones that they favor.
- Students need more technology, like laptops or pads. HS cafeteria needs better foods and a salad bar would be nice. The HS is not very clean. Lazy janitors? Teachers are hardworking and do a great job with not enough resources. Teachers are A+
- My children's teachers are amazing. When you walk into a school, you can tell the entire staff cares for the children. There is always room for improvement anywhere you go, but Guthrie Public School staff works well with what they have.
- "Teachers are held accountable for ensuring that students learn." I do not believe teachers at the high school level should be accountable for learning. They are teachers. It's the students responsibility to learn through discipline, attendance and studying. The teachers are wonderful, cooperative, and easy to contact and meet with. The high school is filthy. I don't know who is cleaning the bathrooms but they are disgusting and unsanitary. The lunch menu is a sham. What is posted online is NEVER a representation of what is being served in the high school cafeteria. The only "bar" is a condiment bar, there is and has never been a fruit and vegetable bar, and the quality of food is so bad, my children would rather pack PB&J than eat what is served. They are not on free lunch, they have lunch accounts but do not use them, it's really that bad.

-
- We have had experiences at the high school with bullying which led to suspension for self defense. Several freshman I know have reported not feeling safe at times. Lunches in the cafeteria are reportedly when most bullying happens. GUES is great, no problems that I've aware of. Our bus is great, driver [deleted] is the best. I would like to know the rationale behind morning pickup of 6:30, arriving back at the school by 7:20 with the entire route picked up and waiting at the first school to open at 7:30. Adjustment of 15-20 minutes is likely needed. I know staff do an astounding job of maintaining the buildings, however new facilities are needed. Our community knows this, but needs encouragement to make it happen. Keep the cracking bricks, drafty windows, leaking roofs, etc in full view so the citizens are reminded of the students' needs. The schools are well beyond the "want" list, and fully in the "needs" list at this point. Thank you for all you do regardless of what you have.
 - <http://oklahomawatch.org/2015/01/07/state-ranks-among-worst-in-educations-outcomes-report/> Maybe biased report, but Oklahoma ranking 48 out of 50 states indicates a bigger problem. Maybe instead of a survey, a look at the top ranking states would be a better course of action. What are the best ranking states doing right?
 - Traffic is an issue that I feel could be solved by going back to staggered start times of the school sites. Some teachers have better response times to issues than others. Most issues I've had with teachers have been solved by the principals.
 - I like [deleted]'s newsletters and text messages. I feel out of the loop with my child's learning however. Until conferences I have no clue how they are learning. Cotterel looks like it is one swift wind away from collapsing. The cafeteria smells awful. The bus ride time is way too long and I dislike them riding the same bus as high schoolers.
 - it would be better if the school just asked me for money instead of pumping the kids up at a pep rally... to earn junk (keychains). Then the child is upset and disappointed because they didn't earn whatever it is. I'd rather just give the school \$50-100 instead of sales fundraisers.
 - The safety of our kids doesn't seem to be a priority. Schools are way too accessible & easy to get into. It's way too hard to volunteer & be involved at the school. I ask the office, they say that's done by the teacher. The teacher won't commit to what I can do. Working parents can't do a lot via PTA as meetings / activities are all mid-day.
 - I feel the children would benefit from alternative learning styles. More parent teacher availability/access for working parents with teachers. A website with ease of use and interactive, in order to communicate and voice complaints anonymously. Building community involvement and change the stereotype attitude both parents and teachers hold..
 - A committee should be started on how to get parents more involved, the food service should change to more homemade items and less reheated things while adding more attractive healthy options. Playgrounds should be open to community members.
 - Administration at the high school needs to be changed. Horrible
 - The schools are not maintained very well and it falling apart
 - Drugs are being dealt at the high school on a daily basis. Bullying is horrible from Guess

School through High School. Teachers don't like you asking them questions without them getting offended. Teachers stand around and tell kids "do you think I get paid enough for this job, no we don't".....My thoughts are get a different job...you signed up for it. Teachers also don't like helping the child even after the child tells them they don't understand, the teacher gets rude with them if they still don't understand. Teaching is an art and if teachers don't understand how to help a child then they themselves should resign and get a different job. Teachers need to stay off their cell phones and quit standing around gossiping about others....students do see and hear them. I hope these schools get better but I am betting they don't. Guthrie schools just keep going downhill.

- In many cases it is known that students have smoked drugs either in the bathroom or in their cars, but nothing is done to the student. Also, the website is useful but NOT user friendly. You should be able to scroll when looking at grades after clicking on them. Opening and using on a mobile device is very difficult and should be reviewed because I would think that is how most parents view them. Should have mobile app reviewed/updated/created appropriately.
- Shorter bus routes, bus drivers need to be more aware of what is happening on the bus especially in the back of the bus.
- I strongly feel that our kids go to guthrie schools with mold growing and they are falling apart and because of this it's hard for children to learn. If I could drive my kids to edmond schools I would. It's all about fixing the old buildings that are falling apart because they are historical but we need new schools. That don't fall apart all the time. And as for the bond issue we bought the souths votes buy building a new school out there for them. It's not going to fix anything. We have the worst schools in Oklahoma buy far. I don't believe the kids get the learning they should. It's all about testing testing. My son is in k and he went to prevent k and still is having prob. They are going bye so fast that the kids can't learn than they want to say we think they need summer school. We have the worst drop out. Are schools don't just need a little help but a lot.
- Spelling words for 3rd grade ridiculously too hard. Compare them to grades 6, 7, 8.
- Stop giving so much funding to sports (specifically football) and help out our BEST IN THE STATE fine arts programs that literally don't even have a place to perform. While you're at it put some mouse traps in the schools because they have a serious rodent and roach problem. Teachers only "teach to the test" and it's really annoying how they could care less about my students' future
- The teachers only focus on making sure that the academic children are learning and don't worry about the other students. The teachers do not punish minority students for bad behavior because of fear out of backlash from the public. They remove the victim from the situation instead of problem. School is getting worse every year.
- Please improve grades, my student is not doing work. I know teacher are not babysitters but at home I make sure homework is done when its brought home. I think teachers need to make sure papers are done in class.
- This survey was taken with GUES and the Jr. High in mind...
- Most of the schools are not disabled friendly. In fact they are horrible for one with a

physical impairments. There is easy access to unwanted individuals on playgrounds which leads to safety concerns. Discipline isn't fair and some teachers play favorites. Teachers gossip about the children and it makes it hard for a child to have a new start the next year. IEP meetings are a nightmare and often times parents feel on the defensive for their children. It needs to be understood by special Ed teachers that an IEP has a team with the teachers and that the parent is part of that team. When a parent has a special needs child they shouldn't have to fight so hard for what should naturally be done.

- Special Ed services need improvement. Hoping that the recent bond approval is a trend of good things to come. GPS teachers fight an uphill battle, whether it's from test prep or from an administration member not acting in the best interests of the students (not [deleted] - he's the best thing to happen to our school sons long time) The callous treatment of a particular pre-k teacher should make anyone associated with the decisions made at Willow Creek ashamed of themselves.
- I feel the teachers for the most part enjoy their job and the kids. The schools are not very welcoming to parents. So much emphasis is placed on safety that schools feel like an us (parents) against them (schools) sometimes.
- The buildings need to be renovated, updated and mold free.
- My child has been in GPS for 4 years now, all of the teachers have been great the staff is very welcoming and we have never had an issues any of them, however, I feel there is not enough staff per the number of student's. We have had previous problems with physical bullying but I am pleased to report the issue was taken care of immediately, but the smaller things that need to be addressed right then I feel need some improvement. Mainly things happen at recess and it seems as though when a child complains to a teacher that something happened no punishment is rendered. I feel this could be because again there is not enough staff to number of children. My biggest concern is that my child is starting GUES next yr and I have heard some horror stories about all of the schools from gues to the HS. I do consider the source which is why I am not too worried about it, however, I will have my guard up when my child starts Gues and I am hoping and praying things work out for the best. Thank you for your time and listening to my concerns I greatly appreciate it.
- The child pick up (for parents who walk up) needs a lot of work. It is very unorganized and very poorly set up. I honestly don't know how to fix it, but there has to be a better solution. Other than that our child enjoys her time spent at school and loves her teacher.
- Facilities could be updated to be more handicapped accessible for both students and parents. Student retention should be a priority and more efforts should be taken to keep teens in school. Drug testing should be expanded to include all students and not just those that participate in extracurricular activities.
- The biggest problems are: 1. - Communication (parents don't know how to get info, and faculty is rude when asked), and 2. - Pressure put on students to excel in tests meant to determine teacher ability. It's shameful to pressure them to make you look good.
- While I do not have a child in the Guthrie Schools at this time, I will have in a few years. The school board is receptive and readily available when questions arise. I do believe a

home-town atmosphere is needed. We support our athletics (and I am just as guilty as the next to travel and support our teams) but we must prioritize educational opportunities. Grants are great but when grants require modification of teaching styles and strategies that do nothing but interrupt the day, teachers are at a loss. Teachers should be given the opportunity to teach and not be dictated HOW to teach. Losing this creates a loss for the educator as well as a dumbing down of the system. How many national merit scholars has Guthrie had in the past 15 years? Teach the children to think and not worry about test scores.

A few suggestions:

- Hire local people and Guthrie graduates.
- Stop using "buzzwords" and get back to the basics.
- Learning has not changed. There is nothing new in education, only the delivery methods are updated and retooled with the new technology. There is nothing wrong with memorization of math facts and chalk boards. Not every child will succeed and that's part of life. Some children cannot do well with math, while others can. Some cannot read well but others can. Some read extremely fast but retain very little while others read slowly but can recount the entire story and the minute details.
- I feel like the districts number one priority is sports and not on education. The teachers do not have the tools to give my children a proper education and the technology is so old and poor the children will never even understand the software that is currently supported.
- I love the teachers at all 4 schools my children go to. I believe they teach the children well. Gues has a very smelly odor as you walk in. Jr. high is very dirty (this was last year we were at jr high) I believe the school lacks providing a great place for music and musicals to be watched. I believe we should better our facilities and invest in a place to watch our children perform. The small town of Luther has a great auditorium all schools use. We have an awesome football stadium. We need to have something awesome for choir, band, and elementary school programs as well. Also I believe the schools do not have a program that helps with challenging the advance students. When you take biology out for a child who scores high 90's in both algebra and science and don't offer a higher level of science it hurts children. Puts them behind and wastes an entire class. I was a bluejay and my children are bluejays. I believe there is always room for improvement.
- Coaches should not teach upper level math courses (AP) because they miss so much of the semester due to games. Students should be given the opportunity to be put in a class that will actually benefit them in life rather than "filling seats."
- School does not provide tutoring services for those who need it and request it. They don't care about the students who need help to understand classwork, and are only interested in test scores. They are passing kids through without properly preparing them for "real life" outside of school.
- MORE TEACHERS BETTER SCHOOLS MORE BUSES CAUSE OF OVER

CROWDING NEED MORE PRINCIPLE INVOLVEMENT

- Most of our teachers are very good, but feel like not enough is done to get rid of those who are bad or quit trying to teach. Keeping a burned out teacher just because they are close to retirement is not acceptable. Do the job or be replaced.
- If a child has a learning disability as in adhd and struggles to keep up with the class, don't push that kid a side and expect him to learn on his own.
- Get good administration in the district, stop paying them so much. The current administration don't look out for the kids. Start keeping good teachers in the district buy paying them more. Get parents more involved. Get new buildings, I keep waiting for one of them to be condemned.
- I have four children currently in the Guthrie school system. The only area of concern I have is the class sizes at the high school. In some classes, there aren't enough desks for the students assigned to the class, and they are forced to sit on couches, etc. Other than that, I think the district is doing well.
- Could do a better job using parents who are willing to volunteer their time, the PTO at Cotteral is really sad, they hold meetings in the middle of the work day and don't do much for the school. There is no name sale or any other fundraiser done for the benefit of the school by the PTO. There are a lot of parents willing to help but meetings need to be done in the evening, and there needs to be more done for the benefit of the schools
- Since all of the separate schools are so far from each other, parents with multiple children, which are all at different buildings...it makes it very hard that they all start at the same exact time. Even dropping one off at the earliest time (7:30am) it is very hard with the school traffic to get everyone to school on time.

Appendix C:
Student Survey Results

Student Survey

*Surveys Completed: 571
Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Survey Questions

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Education is the main priority in our school district.	11%	38%	17%	24%	10%
2	Students learn the necessary material to be prepared for the next grade.	8%	40%	20%	19%	13%
3	I am being academically prepared for life after high school.	11%	28%	18%	22%	20%
4	Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	6%	26%	24%	26%	18%
5	I knew what to expect on the state tests.	11%	39%	20%	19%	12%
6	There is at least one adult at school to whom I can go when I have a problem.	33%	35%	11%	7%	14%
7	The school library meets my needs for books and other resources.	15%	34%	33%	8%	10%
8	I have received sufficient college and/or career counseling.	7%	27%	22%	23%	22%
9	My teachers communicate regularly with my parents about my academic progress.	6%	14%	26%	28%	26%
10	My school is clean.	3%	10%	11%	27%	49%
11	My school is attractive and welcoming.	5%	19%	20%	21%	35%
12	My school building is well maintained.	5%	18%	18%	31%	28%
13	I feel safe and secure at school.	5%	26%	24%	23%	22%
14	Bullying is a problem in this district.	24%	26%	23%	15%	12%
15	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	6%	25%	28%	22%	18%
16	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered in this school.	8%	26%	20%	18%	27%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17	Teachers and staff respect students in this school.	7%	24%	20%	28%	21%
18	Drugs are a problem in this school.	35%	23%	23%	9%	9%
19	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	8%	31%	27%	18%	16%
20	I have enough time to eat my lunch each day.	11%	30%	9%	18%	32%
21	I like the food served in the cafeteria.	4%	14%	17%	18%	47%
22	The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	4%	16%	20%	18%	42%
23	The district has made online classes available to students.	8%	27%	42%	8%	16%
24	I regularly use the school district website.	11%	30%	15%	24%	20%
25	I regularly use computers at school.	15%	36%	12%	22%	15%
26	The district's technology is new enough to be useful to me.	8%	35%	21%	17%	19%
27	Teachers know how to use technology in the classroom.	12%	38%	21%	14%	15%
28	Teachers effectively integrate technology-based resources into instruction, such as online videos.	11%	39%	23%	13%	14%
29	I have regular Internet access at home.	42%	30%	8%	8%	11%
30	My bus runs on time nearly every day.	9%	12%	59%	7%	13%
31	Students feel safe riding the bus.	6%	11%	52%	13%	18%
32	Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the bus.	7%	13%	49%	11%	20%
33	The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	5%	11%	51%	7%	26%

Written Responses

If you would like to provide any additional comments on the school district, please do so here. Where is the district doing well? In what areas could it be improved?

- The improvements that they have made to the school pond is great. The tables and car port were a great addition. One thing that I don't like is the school food. It's very dry and sometimes it's very hard. Also they switched it there are only two lunches now so the lunch line is crazy it takes about 15-20 minutes each day to get through the line and it only leaves you with a few minutes to eat your food very fast so you don't run out of time, maybe next year we can have the three lunches back. It was much more convenient to have the three lunches. Another thing that really bothers me is the dress code. I don't mind the rules those are great and I love that they are being enforced. But still some girls get tagged and others don't and they get away with it that is not ok everyone should be required to follow the dress code because if they get away with it once they thing they can get away with if forever. The Bathrooms are nasty is really bad when you have to use a different stall because the one you want to use is out of toilet paper. Sports, softball made it to state this which was a great accomplishment for them and they received lots of recognition for it. However with other less popular sports like golf we have made it to state the past two years and I don't even think I have heard it go over the intercom either time. The announcements are great to hear every morning but teaches need to be reminded that the announcements are important to some people so to keep the class quite so the students can hear them. The teachers also need to be told you can't turn them off because many times in my class the teacher has turned them off. I hope these comments will be looked over.
- Hardly anyone even knows how the grading system works. Guthrie education hardly prepared me for the pre engineering program I am currently taking and discipline is a joke. One friend of mine defended himself against another student and was suspended. That sure is justice! –[deleted]
- Guthrie high school literally has cockroaches and mice that run around and mold under the floors. This school is nasty and teachers only teach to the test and not to help further our education. It is also very upsetting that anytime any athletics need anything they get it and the arts get absolutely nothing and it really stinks because our fine arts always win first place and sports hardly ever do. Sorry if this seems harsh, but it all needed to be said. Have a nice day :-)
- I would like to have off campus lunch for at least 30 minutes, and for the kids that don't come back could be disciplined with Saturday school.
- It would be nice to have off campus lunch since the food here at school sometimes is not very well cooked or clean.
- Personally, the school needs to care more about the students. Teach us what we need, not what you want for a paycheck. Teach us how to do taxes and how to save money, not hard math that we don't need. Some teachers are good, others should not be teaching.
- This School is a [deleted] place, and all the athletes get special treatments. But you guys won't do nothing about it.

- We need better food and for teachers to not think that they have the power to discipline anyone for any reason just because there teachers doesn't mean they has the right to be dicks.
- You need to do a lot better this school is wacky ah.
- I think the school needs to improve on their food because uncooked food can make people sick
- Better transportation, high school, middle school, and elementary students should have their own buses.
- I feel like with the trust in your students we should have the allowance of being able to leave for lunch. If a problem were to occur, the person responsible should be the ones taking the discipline not the whole entire class. Thank you.
- Lunch time increased, better food served, open campus for seniors, fire [Deleted].
- Open campus. Let us spend our own money and gas to get good food. Thanks.
- I believe that this school is very well maintained and is a good safe place to be most of the time. I don't know of any way to improve it I have no real say in what goes on, it does not matter what's other person say only how a few select respond to other people.
- When I walk into this school fear fills me. I sit at the back of the class so I can see the door and close to a window just in case I got to make a break for it.
- People are mean to others and the teachers don't do anything about it. That truthful needs to change.
- The cleanest of the school could should be improved ASAP, the discipline a lot of time isn't equally fair. The education not to be rude but isn't very good at all. It's actually concerning as a student that wants to go to college and be someone. A lot of the teachers don't have the right education to teach what they are supposed to be teaching their students.
- We need a whole new school. There is mold everywhere and cockroaches and rats, not to good if you ask me.
- I personally enjoy my electives thoroughly, but I do not enjoy most of my other classes. I do not know what to do after graduation, or how that even works. I do not understand how to pay taxes or to buy a house or to get a career. Some of the teachers at our school treat students in a very negative way. I feel that some of our teachers do not see any potential in me as a successful adult.
- There is a lot that needs to be improved in our school. I would recommend putting more money into education instead of football.
- This school blows

- [Deleted]
- This School sucks!!!
- The high school could be completely rebuilt. That's what is needed.
- Please recognize and act on our surveys.
- Our district sucks. All areas could be improved!
- Stop caring so much about football and help other teams instead.
- What I think needs to be improved is the cleanliness of this school! I had to pick up a dead rat in the main gym with my own bare hands because no one else would. A student should never have to take out a dead animal of his learning environment!!!! Also, inside the cafeteria and the kitchen of Guthrie high school, there are cockroaches EVERYWHERE!!! I had is once and I had seen at least five in the dish washer itself! There's one that's been squished so many times it's stuck on the counter and can't be removed! This school is a disgrace to the state, community, and Guthrie's reputation!
- Serve better food
- Allow SENIORS off campus lunch, make sure kids obtain the knowledge being taught, make sure every kid has a chance to learn what they're interested in and not what the teacher likes.
- In areas we can improve is keep the school cleaner. The teachers sometimes disrespect, we test WAY too much. School rules are different for everyone. We need to improve the school dress code, it is unfair to most girls. Where the district is doing well, most of the kids are passing. We need to learn more about what we actually need after high school and college instead learning stuff we will probably won't ever need. Homework can be insane, some kids don't have ways to do their work at home. The grading system is not very good. Some of the teachers don't know how to grade correctly, and they need to give extra credit.
- This school is a prison...
- Fix the sinks
- The teachers have an extreme lack of respect for students except Mrs. [Deleted] and Mrs. [Deleted]
- Let students leave for lunch.
- Everything
- Prepare for ACT better and help with filling out college stuff one on one....
- I do not feel safe coming to this school, knowing I go to school with felons.

-
- This place is prison
 - The School can suck a big fat [Deleted]
 - Our food is not always completely cooked, it's not always clean, we need higher quality bathroom utensils, and we have a discipline issue.
 - The only thing I think we need is better bathrooms and sinks that's all
 - I don't like the food at all. It's not good at all. I don't even know this teacher but I heard that she wasn't good at all.
 - This school needs to be a lot more cleaner and teachers here are not useful at all because I have not learned anything in most classes this school is not good in so many ways I'm leaving this school if it don't change and we need a longer lunch
 - My algebra 2 teacher is not helping me learn & there is a huge mouse problem that's disgusting!!!
 - I really think we should have open campus lunch for everyone. The principals let the popular kids go and don't say anything but when the average kid goes they get ISS or Saturday school if they get caught.
 - Worst survey ever 10/10
 - I do not like how we cannot get individual help
 - The areas our school district that could be improved is actually caring for our education. 4/7 of my teachers this year seem like they care, but in reflection to my high school career, most of my teachers only want us to pass, not to learn. Plus our councilors don't prep our juniors/seniors for college or any after high school type of programs/ plans. I feel lost in my future, that I'm going to have to accomplish everything without my schools help. PLUS THIS SCHOOL IS ABSOLUTELY DISGUSTING! INVEST IN SOME BLEACH. That is all.
 - This year after entering a college concurrent class I have come to realize that the Guthrie Public School System does NOT prepare you for life after high school. The teachers are put under so much stress to get higher pass rates on state testing that they can't actually teach fundamentals and that is the complete opposite of how college is. Not only does this school system not prepare you academically, they do not encourage equality here at Guthrie High School either, and might I add academics are not the main priority here at GHS either. Football is honestly the most important thing here and football players can be excused for not being up to speed with other kids because of their athletic abilities. They are allowed to leave campus and break other rules that other kids aren't allowed to do. Guthrie also isn't clean. The school system has mold on classroom ceilings and rats crawling around in classroom lights which is disgusting. Thank you.

- It wasn't the worst survey I've ever taken. 10/10 I'd take it again.
- 10/10 would take survey again.
- There is rats everywhere the technology is old not useful and the discipline is handed out on whether you are popular or not
- I don't ride the bus
- This school has mice and cockroaches it's disgusting and the food is horrible and my bus ride is over an hour long
- I don't feel safe on the bus because there was a guy smoking on it...
- Maybe try different teaching techniques for different types of learners. "A fish will feel stupid if told to climb a tree"
- Guthrie High School is a bit trashy. The district is doing well in not succeeding. I think it's too far in doody to improve. Word up though bro.
- And [Deleted] this school
- Teachers are not worried about teaching us correct stuff. Especially my [deleted] teacher who was pregnant. We didn't get taught for over a month.
- The district is doing great especially the resources we are given at this point in time, with the limited resources and funds we are given throughout the year. Some areas of improvement mainly evolve around additional student organizations like a debate team or even political groups for those with political beliefs.
- Cleaner school and better looking school. Also a lot of drug problems in our school
- New school and new staff would be best
- I feel like the counselors are not very helpful when you are trying to prepare you for college or helping you apply for college. I think that some of the counselors should go on the college visits day with the kid's to interact with them and make them more comfortable with going to college.
- This School Sucks... @Guthrie High School
- If you would actually put REAL food in the cafeteria and not cardboard I think I would actually consider eating in there, BUT I would rather starve than eat this school's cafeteria food. Also teachers do not take the time that most students need to learn the course and all the things in it, which is probably the school boards fault. You expect Guthrie to go from a horribly graded school to an A+ overnight? No. Guthrie has too many issues and honestly sometimes I'm ashamed to say that I am from this school.

- It's actually not a bad school except there's a lot of fighting and complaining by other students. Honestly the students are just annoying. The school is fine.
- I Don't Ride a bus, because I live in town and even though it is a mile away and takes me at the very least 30 minutes to get to or from school I still have to walk with no option of riding a bus
- DO NOT MAKE THE WHOLE SCHOOL YEAR AROUND STUCO KIDS!!! ALLOW EVERY STUDENT HAVE THEIR OWN OPINION... THAT'S WHY WE DISLIKE THIS SCHOOL!!!
- The district is doing well in teaching us to take a test like teaching a dog to sit. I hardly feel that this lets us expand our horizons and be prepared for the future. Druggies are also way too common, and it would be great not to have to see drug deals happen, and cover up for those who do so I don't get decked.
- School district is doing poorly and needs to be completely renovated in every aspect
- You guys can improve the water. It is truly disgusting. This place gave me bad diarrhea once. So please wrap it up and get new water. The food is not hot when b lunch gets their food. Discipline is very harsh and the teachers are very mean at the JR. High. The school is falling apart there. There are rats running through all of the classrooms at the high school. There was a cock roach seen in the vending machine
- The Library needs more fiction book and manga and anime
- This school is trash and the staff is trash and the teachers are trash and our education is trash[Deleted] the people here really suck. The teachers are very rude in some subjects, they belittle their students and just do not care. The school building is disgusting, trash everywhere. The halls are way too small for how many students there are here and the roofs are too low.
- This High school is honestly crap. Our heater and air conditioning unit barely works and the food makes me want to throw up. If a tornado was close to the school, without even hitting it yet, the school will fall over.
- The lunch is incredible. Keep it up!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- The lunch two years ago was a lot better!! Now I'm pretty sure we eat dog food/horse meat!!!
- Our school technology is spent on iPads that we rarely use, we need to buy new computers and not ones from Edmond. Every day I come to school I feel like I am endangered and not safe. You can smell the weed in the air everywhere you go. We do not learn things that we need to learn in life! We take too many test and need to stop benchmarks! We can't afford heaters or air conditioners that work so we are not comfortable. The food at the school is so

bad also. When I graduate from Guthrie High School, I feel like I will not be ready for college.

- Our school as mold fix it please!!!!!!!!!!!!
- I hear kids have to get up at 4 just to get from Seward rd. to the schools here
- I h8 school
- This school district really needs to train their teachers on how to talk to with respect. There is a lot of mold in this school and roaches, this could also be fixed to improve this school.
- Heaters
- Have a joke of the day!!
- Entire Guthrie community needs more money before it gets better. Good healthy food is unaffordable with Guthrie's budget. We also have many rules that make new no sense, such as not being able to leave for lunch while only disgusting food is served in the cafeteria. I've seen multiple mice and cockroaches with my own eyes in classrooms. The school feels crowded. I have classes that I can blow off with no consequences because the classes themselves teach nothing of use. I've learned almost the same material for since the 6th grade, only each year the textbooks word it slightly different. Guthrie public school is a perfect example of the joke that American schooling is, I wish it wasn't I wish I went to a school where my fellow students strived to learn and wanted to do good on their tests and tried, instead of cheating which is an activity that I often help my friends with because if I do not, the students will fail because of bad teaching techniques that don't apply to every student. There is a reason that America is not higher ranked in a endemic progress, this school is one of them.
- I think we should have longer lunch time because we don't have enough time to eat
- Need more food choices and better internet access and also a better snack choice
- I don't learn anything in Spanish 1
- The food is gross
- You could maybe not care so much about what we're wearing and realize nobody has a clue what they're doing and actually teach us something we can learn. K thanks.
- Give students more freedom
- Some teachers are haters and some are careless. Other than that, the rest are moderately okay teachers.

- What could be better: A basketball court outside, heaters, better computers not cheap junk, free time would be nice, a basketball coach that lets you play.
- Don't care
- WE NEED HEATERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
I GRADUATED WITH THAT GUTHRIE EDUMACATION
- Favoritism is a huge thing here. If your last name is [Deleted] you are immediately on the football team, and immediately allowed to skimpy clothing, and also to leave campus any time you like.
- Not that you're going to read these but we need better food and (Deleted)sucks -drops the mic.-
- Better food would be great
- The district focuses on cramming for state tests, but not as much on actual learning and getting things to stick. I think there should be a stronger focus on learning in general and not just what *could* be on the End of Instruction exams.
- I would recommend giving each student a dollar.
- The school district needs help. We have some good teachers, but mostly the teachers do not care about our education and just need job. The school needs to step up.
- I hate the teachers and staff at our school they teach us nothing we need to know I hate this school program and every person place or thing in this school
- Test all the kids that aren't in extracurricular activities for drugs not the one who are trying to get involved I have seen kids smoke weed in class! Just something to think about!
- There is mice in every since class room. Our food is really nasty. We need new computers have if them don't work. Teachers are strict on if you have to use the bathroom. If you play sports and do something you don't get disciplined the right way. They don't turn the heater on for a long time so it's freezing cold in the classrooms. I had a class a couple weeks ago and it was 52 degrees
- We could get better wi-fi for the school.
- Everything is wrong
- We could be improved on the level of bullying seen daily, and we need to have stricter monitoring. Thanks.
- When the teacher tell us to put our phones away they get on their phones!

- Dress code promotes rape culture :-)
- This school does very well in providing for the football team, in fact multiple football players are allowed to roam the halls, interrupt classrooms to talk with coaches about sports and nothing important, distracting the teachers with their shenanigans, getting away with bullying people they think are lower than, and getting a helping hand from teachers because their “special”.
This school district also does very poorly in sanitization, there are vermin visibly running amuck everywhere, practically out numbering the students 2 to 1. Not to mention our mold problems, I personally had 0 allergies before going to these schools, now every time it gets a little muggy outside the moisture in the causes the mold to spore, and now suddenly I am entering horrendous sneezing fits. I, after 7 years of being surrounded by mold infested buildings, now have mold allergies, coincidence? I think not.
Now on to bus routes, the busses are terrible. They are unnecessarily long. Ex: If let’s say we have 32 people get off at Cotteral from the high school. Why have 3 different busses take the SAME route, going to 2 DIFFERENT schools before stopping at Cotteral; when you could have 1 bus let off at Cotteral immediately? Just saying.
- I believe the janitors can do a better job, all I see them doing is standing around or just sitting and maybe sometimes, sweeping or pushing a trashcan. The school is completely disgusting, the ladies in the cafeteria are not sanitary at all, and they have kids in ISS usually are the ones serving the food and washing dishes, and I do not trust them. Also in [Deleted] room, in my class a rat fell from the ceiling and that was gross and shouldn’t even have to happen. They shouldn’t blame the kids all the time, due to food, they should make sure of other problems first. There was a sign up on the girls bathroom says, “Temporarily closed for cleaning” and it was up all day, and I didn’t see one person going in there to clean all day. The principals play favorites, completely with the sport kids, or someone that has a known last name. It makes other kids feel like crap, because they feel they don’t matter here, if you notice, kids like that say such good things about this school, but the other ones that have seen this school for what it really is, don’t want to be here, don’t feel safe here, and feel like nobody cares about them. A friend of mine said, “I never have had mold allergies until I got to this school,” and that’s saying something. Also they send out a paper every year saying they have asbestos in the walls and stuff, but never take care of it, ever since I got here my freshman year, I’m now a junior and it still has not been taken care of, also previous people that were here before I ever was, there was problems of it as well as mold. The school needs major improvements, such as getting rid of the asbestos in the walls, the black mold in the floors, trash everywhere, they need to actually clean the bathrooms and floors, there always is something stopped up in the girls bathroom. Also about the lunch ladies, I hardly ever see them wearing gloves or hairnets.
- This school has a lot of problems and it needs to be looked into. My main concern is the teachers respect for us students. A lot of the teachers are very disrespectful and I myself rarely talk to anyone and I do not have conflicts with my peers or teachers. Then we I do need help with certain particulars I ask a teacher and the outcome is me being highly offended.

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- This school is disgusting & I hate it. There's mold & students that are allergic to it, there's rats, there's bugs, there's been asbestos here & rumors that it wasn't properly taken care of, the cafeteria ladies don't wear gloves or hairnets most of the time, the food that is served is disgusting, the janitors don't clean anything very well AT ALL, the bathrooms are GROSS, the water from the water fountains tastes weird, teachers don't teach & do their job & make sure the students have learned, a lot of kids fail the e.o.i.s because of the teachers not teaching the things they need to know for that specific e.o.i. There's so many things wrong with this school. I feel like I'm going to get diseases from just attending this nasty school. I dislike touching my desk because there very much could have been rat droppings on it. There's problems with bullying so badly. The counselors don't help at all. They shout at you for trying to talk to them. They're intimidating to some students because of this. They don't genuinely care about the students' well-being. The ladies in the main office are so rude almost all the time. I legitimately HATE Guthrie High School because of all these things.
 - I think that the school should be cleaned better then what it is because the girl bathroom looks like it doesn't get clean and sometimes there is no soap and no toilet papers in some of the bathrooms so I always go report that because not having soap in the bathroom that's how kids get sick and the classroom floors look like they're not getting cleaned they look dirty.
 - It could be improved in everything and there needs to be open campus
 - They need better janitors and the school needs to be cleaner as well as a better and more prepared lunch. The food is either undercooked or overcooked. There is no in-between. There was also instances where rats fell from the classroom ceilings. There are also spots of mold in the school. The bathrooms are disgusting. There is always piss all over the floor, never being cleaned. There are even spots where u can tell that piss has been sitting for a long while.
 - The school district is not terrible but then again it could be improved. Rodents have been an issue and on many cases a mouse has happen to fall from the ceiling into the classroom.
 - The school is not clean.
 - I don't ride a bus. I don't eat school lunch because in this school we have rats and , mice and roaches
 - Flavor the food!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 - The teachers are great I know I can talk to them about problems in school and outside of it. The teachers are respectful to the students but the students could be more respectful to the teachers. Love the school spirit
 - Making sure that they teachers stay in better contact with parents. Some parents get upset when they have to pry information from students. There's a greater chance of something to be misleading or incorrectly said when it's being transferred from teacher to student to parents. But, the district is doing well in the Ag program, band, choir, and sports. Those kids are thriving. We just have to get the other kids who aren't in those programs to thrive as well.

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- The school is disgusting. The bathrooms smell terrible and I walk in pee all over the floor. Nobody can use the bathroom because there is pee all over the stool. We don't learn anything until finals. Also drugs are all over the school and kids smoke weed in the bathroom. There is also fighting in hallways and cafeteria almost every other day.
 - Have an automotive class
 - There is a major problem with disciplinary action . . . In that there's not enough of it. Drugs & drinking are openly & indiscreetly discussed between students as though it were an accolade, which I find such illicit and illegal behavior quite offensive.
 - This district is absolute trash, the schools are all decaying and need to be bulldozed, I hate being here, and the disciplinary actions are almost always wrongful and unnecessary.
 - I do not feel as if I am being prepared for after high school we have; as I have seen mice/rats black mold (pretty sure that's against health and safety regulations) I'm vegetarian and I don't eat here because I feel like I have no "vegetarian friendly." Choices. Our heating and air systems need fixing last year the band room reached 110 degrees and other parts of the building were cold. Though we have good principals they are against LGBT+ students. When students from the LGBT+ community formed a club for socialization and got approval was shut down immediately after the first meeting. When student inquired as for the reason behind it, it was met with intimidation tactics and punishment via Saturday school which was both unnecessary and an abuse of power. The student was explained to that we live in a Christian region of the U.S and so it wouldn't look good to have a lgbt+ club. However they did see it perfectly fine to leave Christian institutions in a PUBLIC SCHOOL clearly favoring the Christian dynamic over the harmless alternative. As consequence to cover up their prejudice and homophobia the following year (this year) all non-education related clubs have been banned WITH THE EXCEPTION of FCA faithful.christian.athletes. Clearly favoring the Christian student body over the rest. Though it does not say in the student handbook that they cannot discriminate by sexual orientation, they have however effectively discriminated via religion and/or lack of religious beliefs. This school needs serious help that so far it has not gotten, and from the appearance of things at the current time will not receive.
 - Have teachers that get along with ALL the students. Principals that take care of business whenever I am getting threatened. Clean so there are no more mice. Clean so that way kids don't get sick. Teachers that care about your felling. Suspending kids for threatening other kids. Teachers being better at teaching and being better prepared no matter their situation. Kids getting in more trouble for drugs and more drug checks. Kids not being able to have as much privilege. Administration taking care of students need. Getting more substitutes and teachers that know what they are talking about and know how to help students understand whatever way they have to understand, and kids being able to like the teachers and kids getting to have better food. They also need more activities, and they need a lot of other thing. They also need to add a lot more variety in their food, and not close up ala-cart as soon. Because if I want an ice cream ala-cart is already closed by the time I finish more food.
 - It needs better food and more activities

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- We should have a gender neutral bathroom at the school, this would be for transgender/gender non-conforming students who feel uncomfortable in the other bathrooms.
 - I believe the Guthrie School District should make students wear uniforms and donate money to our JROTC Program so JROTC cadets can have every resource needed. I'm seeing girls in VERY Inappropriate clothing and it sickens me. Please either make the dress code stricter or make every student wear uniforms. Also there are some teachers who are unfair to students. You may get this a lot but teachers have given suspensions and Saturday school for the most unreadable reasons. Please do something.
 - Teachers don't educate us. They teach us towards a test. We are not, nor do I expect to be prepared for life after high school. Our school is not clean, there was a rat in our classroom earlier today and we see one almost every day. Half of the students here are drug addicts and they all smoke at lunch time and the teachers don't care, some of them dip in class along with the teachers. This school cannot be fixed.
 - Fire everyone and burn this [Deleted] hole down!
 - Our school is disgusting!! We need a new one! We have some caring teachers which I appreciate. We don't need 900 point tests either.
 - I wish the teachers would challenge the students a little more. I don't feel like I am working to the best of my ability.
 - My chair just broke
 - Need a new school
 - Fix our schools floors and the food the amount of healthy food we eat doesn't over power or is bigger than the amount of junk food we eat at home it doesn't change anything we want normal food and not healthy crap
 - I think we need to discuss the dress code. I think when it comes to dress code the school is being sexist towards women.
 - Get the mold off our floor!!! No more mice!!!! Serve pickles!!!! No low fat that's yucky!!!!!! Add salt, our foods are bland!!!!!! Plus soy sauce!!!!!! Fix the AC!!! Let us leave the school for lunch!!!!!!!
 - CLEAN THE SCHOOL, have more food, lets us go out for lunch.
 - The bus rides are terrible
 - [Deleted] too much drugs
 - No more mold, add salt, give fatty food, serve not cold food

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- It's a good school
 - The freshman math teachers could use to learn how to teach more instead of just expecting us to teach ourselves.
 - One of the things that our district doesn't take care of well is drug and alcohol abuse. At least one in four students has come close to or already has engaged in these activities. I feel like all our district really cares about is our sports programs. I think that when a student has failed a drug test there should be more discipline than calling a parent or guardian. That does absolutely nothing. That still allows them to get high even if their parents do care. Heck I heard that a bunch of guys got high in the bathroom like five minutes ago.
 - [Deleted] is a bad teacher doesn't teach well at all. I learned a whole chapter in 30 min from a student and he couldn't teach me that in 3 weeks
 - There needs to be more food and the buses need to deliver the students to school faster.
 - Shorter classes 🗑️ [Deleted] [Deleted] [Deleted]
 - Longer lunches less class time
 - Longer lunch, Better food, Pizza, McDonald's, Chick fil A, Off campus lunch, PLEASE, AND, THANK, YOU
 - This school is very secure but the bus rides are ridiculous and so is our lunch time, plus the school looks like a trap house.
 - The district is doing well in all things
 - There are way too many druggies and potheads in this school and I think the school should crack down on a harsher punishment for these people.
 - My bus is so slow and the bus driver is a [Deleted] she should be fired and replaced
Sincerely,
Anonymous
 - What the [Deleted]!
 - This school is gross and it depends on who it is in the school to get in trouble if a non-popular girl wear small shorts she'll get in trouble if a popular girl won't get in any trouble also we don't have a good learning environment and we spend too much money on sports rather than the school and learning
 - Our district does well on Extra Curricular activities such as: Football, FFA, Band, Choir, etc.
 - We do not have enough substitute teachers, so students are forced to go the cafeteria unsupervised. Sometimes, students leave, or are counted absent even though they are there.

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- I wish we didn't have to take unnecessary tests. Besides that everything's great.
 - Our classes aren't about learning and the kids do whatever they want. and the school is not clean whatsoever
 - My school is terrible and the teachers are rude and hateful. Our classes aren't about learning and kids get to do whatever they want.
 - The bus arrives in the afternoon too early and the food in the cafeteria us not good
 - Ummm the mice that live in the classrooms? How the principles only in force the rules on certain people. The bathrooms are yuck. I don't know how to even pay bills, or how to real life things, but boy do I know how to find slope? The amount of fights that happen in a month? Or the amount of times the fire alarm has been pulled in one month. How almost all the books are falling apart, but we somehow are able to buy a new basketball court and let's do all of this stuff for the football team. :)
 - We need better substitutes.
 - I wish we didn't have to take tests that are unnecessary. Besides that I am fine with school.
 - Safety for LGBTQ+ youth and stronger discipline against racial slurs and slurs against people who are not heterosexual. Such as [Deleted], [Deleted], [Deleted], she/he, and so on. They are a problem as the word [Deleted] is used also and these are used in everyday conversation. People should be disciplined for their language.
 - Need better computers. With today's day and age of computing power, dual core 2.3GHz processors do not cut it.
 - Update the technology for one.
There is a huge drug problem that I expect to be taken care of soon.
Teachers all have very different teaching styles and ways of grading. Some teachers are way too relaxes while others are way too strict.
Also the 1234 system is kinda dumb. No teacher actually uses it.
 - Need computers that aren't dual core 2.3GHz.
 - This school lacks funding because we are a new building, but we need it. The bathrooms are disgusting and we lack custodians to clean anything.
 - The school is good because there's sports keeping out of trouble and makes me work for what I want
 - The School is good because I feel like there sports keep me out of trouble and makes me work for what I want

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- The desk are so uncomfortable, I spend over half of 180 days in these miserable desk. My hair gets caught in the screws and there is no comfortable position to sit in these things. We have a rat problem that is disgusting, rats carry diseases! [Deleted] [Deleted] [Deleted]
 - This school is trash we need more money
 - I think there is too many fights at school, we need a little more time to eat food
 - Better food
 - Teachers are disrespectful
 - They need better functions for the choir and band. We have crappy risers and an outdated room. Also, I think the chairs should be changed to a newer style. The back of the chairs pull our hair out and the seats are uncomfortable. There's a lot of fights during the school year. The library needs newer books, preferably supernatural books. We need better food in the cafeteria, it's the same stuff every day and it's outdated.
 - [Deleted] will not let us play football outside and they are racial
 - [Deleted] won't let us play catch at lunch.
 - The district can improve in many different areas, like the bus schedules, the lunches, the technology, and the amount of discipline that goes out to the students who seem to be a little more rambunctious. Otherwise, this school district is fairly decent and well prepared for any emergencies, especially fires.
 - We need better food and off campus lunch
 - The school lunches are terrible. I sometimes starve myself because it so bad. I also get sick from eating the school lunch. IT IS HORRIBLE
 - Open campus
 - Discipline, facilities, and new computers
 - The principals play favorites and do not effectively punish everyone who needs actual punishment.
 - It can improve if it got cleaned up more.
 - MAKE THE FOOD BETTER PLEASE!!!!!!!
 - Advisory should be with a teacher who understands what the student wants to do in life. (Mine has no clue what they are doing. So I have no help with college stuff)
 - Guthrie is terrible and trashy. No one ever cleans anything, the teachers never help me with anything, and the teachers are disrespectful of the students and couldn't care less about them.

We should all be treated equally, but we're not. Maybe the principals should spend more time interviewing the teachers and choosing good ones to actually help the students rather than get us all in trouble for ridiculous things. Kids bring guns to school, they don't even get in trouble. While I get in trouble for wearing a certain type of pants.

- I think we need more time for lunch and more time for walking to classes, because people like to just gather up in the hallway and it makes it harder for a lot of us to get around. We need more time for projects or finals. We need better surveillance. Everybody should be treated the same no matter what their last name is.
- Cleaning and mold control
- I would like to see the school actually care for the students and prepare them for life outside of school and not useless things such as learning what the author really meant by the color of a light in a book. Teach students life not lessons

Appendix D:
Community Focus Group

Community Input Focus Group Comments

The Community Input Focus Group was held on January 26, 2016. There were five participants (all parents) who were asked to provide their opinions and concerns regarding most areas of the school district. The comments below are those provided by the participants.

MANAGEMENT, PERSONNEL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

School Board

- There should be term limits. Fresh ideas are always needed.
- There are no problems with having seven members.
- Board members are responsive.

Superintendent

- He is a breath of fresh air in the district.
- He is passionate about Guthrie schools and that is something past superintendents were not.
- He's doing a good job.
- He has the best interest of the district in mind.
- We got the bond passed because of him.
- He is forward-thinking and solution-oriented.
- People have confidence in him.

Communications and Community Involvement

- There are questions about when the robocall is used or not. Is it still in use? Parents are confused. They seem to think that robocalls are no longer allowed.
- The district doesn't have an official spokesperson. When there are incidents, even minor ones, various district staff give different statements and parents are confused.
- There should be one official statement released for an incident and it should be released on a consistent platform.
- Communication is a big problem in the district. If a student goes to the principal's office, that should require a parent call. In another example, there are differences in curriculum implementation in some of the schools (different schedules). Parents are confused because they haven't been told, and other kids in the school are having spelling tests, while they are not.

- New this year, spelling tests on Friday in the second grade became optional but no one told parents who grew up here, and had other children going through the system. Parents were confused.
- This community has two parts – a lesser educated segment and a highly educated segment.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

- Teacher absenteeism is a noticeable problem in some schools on Fridays.
- Why isn't the syllabus for every class posted online? Parents want to know what the daily/weekly assignments and expectations are. Then they could better help their students at home.
- At the Junior High, the teacher teams do have their daily lessons posted. This is great. It should be done at all levels. It appears that some of the high school teachers post their lessons, but not all.
- Having access to class expectations is particularly important for parents of kids with special needs.
- Younger students switching classes is seen as a good experience for students.
- Different teacher teams at the same grade level appear to have completely different strategies on teaching. Kids in one team are doing homework for three hours a night, but their friends in another team never do homework. Kids see the disparity and don't think it is fair.
- The students appear to be obviously grouped. The new teachers are given all the "bad" kids.
- The district allows parents to request teachers and it does not work out well. Some classes are "stacked" with just awesome students. It also hurts teacher camaraderie because all the teachers know who is the most requested and who is not. If the teacher requesting process continues, parents would like teachers to publicize their teaching style or other things so that parents can try to match with a teacher that best suits their child. For example, some children need more structure versus less structure.
- To a large degree, many kids have almost exactly the same classmates every year. The classes are not mixed up from year to year.
- For the most part, we have really good teachers.
- Get rid of state testing. We spend too much time preparing for it. Kids are too stressed out about it.
- The state standards are off. Second grade is basically a review year, but then third grade is a huge testing year. We could be spending second grade better, preparing for third grade.

- Students who get individual attention have demonstrated great improvements in academics. Teachers are not as capable teaching in large groups.
- So much of the school day is just “fluff”. Every Friday, they watch a movie. It’s a waste of time. It appears to happen during PLC time, but parents have never been informed as to what teachers are doing during this time. Why not just do early release day instead? Parents would rather just pick up their kid.
- Academic standards seem to be higher in nearby alternatives, primarily Oklahoma Christian School.
- Teachers are always responsive to parent communications about their students. But teachers are not always proactive with the students whose parents don’t contact them.
- At the Junior High, there is a flex schedule. A teacher can request to see a student because the kid is struggling. It has been a big hit. The only drawback is that kids cannot request to go see a teacher if they think they need help. This part should be revisited. A student should be able to request help and get it during flex.
- Testing of some kind is necessary but there should be some joy in learning as well.
- Much of the extra work given to higher level kids at the high school (because they finished their regular work early) is more punishment. It’s not challenging or fun.
- Kids are being told to “put their book away” when they have finished their school work. A love of reading is being choked off.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS / FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Purchasing is very strict. We follow the process or it doesn’t get purchased.
- The budget management is “magic” here. It’s shameful that we have to be so cheap on everything.
- PTO cannot buy gift cards for teachers. PTO can only give POs to teachers so they can go buy something.
- Every penny of activity funds is watched.
- A lot more accountability with the activity funds than in the past.
- Football boosters have access to the QuickBooks accounts.
- The band boosters are the only 501(c)(3) organization in the district. Shouldn’t all the similar organizations be organized the same?

FACILITIES

- They utilize the space well at Fogarty. Every nook and cranny is used.
- The district is doing a lot with a little in this area.
- The physical environment is important and we have done the best we can to minimize the negatives.
- The Junior High is lousy. It was lousy 25 years ago and has not improved since then. However, the staff does not let it be a hindrance.
- The only true auditorium is at the Junior High School.
- The PTO at Fogarty is paying for library renovations and fixing the seats in the auditorium there. The PTO also has painting parties there. The girl's bathroom is really cute.
- We have not passed bond issues until now because the opposition has been extremely organized. They would like to see public education privatized.
- All the bond issue did was put a roof over what we have left in lousy facilities. We still need a great deal of basic repair work.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- The district does the best with what they have. But the buildings were built 100 years ago.
- The stairs at the Junior High are a hazard and kids fall all the time on them. They are steep, slick, and the rise is off.
- There are a lot of insecure access issues.
- The playground at Fogarty is secured by a half-height wall. It has the least secure playground.
- Generally, one always has to be buzzed in to access a school. There is a camera system, but if you look non-threatening, you'll get buzzed in.
- Many exterior doors are glass, so they could be easily broken into.
- There was active shooter training in the district about a month ago. Students report that intruder drills are taking place. It seems the district takes the drills seriously, which is good.
- Last week, there was some community emergency (maybe a high-speed chase) and the school enacted the shelter-in-place protocol. It seemed to go well, but some parents were angry that they didn't get an immediate phone call about it. There should be a policy and procedure in place more clearly stated. When there is an incident, the kids text everybody outside the school and parents panic.

SUPPORT SERVICES**Child Nutrition**

- Kids are packing lunch because they are such picky eaters. Most of the kids here take lunch, which probably says something about the food available in the cafeteria.
- In the last five years they stopped seasoning everything. It all tastes like baby food.
- One kid tried it once last year and never wanted to eat there again.
- Some kids eat some of the a la carte items.
- It's a hassle to keep the lunch account filled with money. Also, kids are buying other kids food on their accounts and accounts empty out quickly.
- One received a late fee notice, but the child never eats there.
- The accounting is separated by kids, instead of a family account.
- There is no soda available any longer. The food items in the vending machine are healthier, but not as appealing as BBQ chips etc.
- Kids complain about not having time to eat lunch and throwing food away as a result.
- Why is everything on disposable plates now?
- A lot of kids eat the lunch provided, but it's likely only the kids who have no other alternative (free & reduced eligible).
- Fogarty has a snack shack that appears to be operated by the child nutrition program. It is not run by the PTO. It is run by the PTO on Fridays and the money goes to the PTO on that day.
- Menus are not announced at school, so parents have to pull it up on the website so kid can decide whether to buy the next day or not.
- At the elementary schools it varies as to whether students are allowed to talk during lunch.
- The noise level is a problem in some schools and is more of a problem for some of the autistic kids. They need to bring back the stoplight they used to have.

Technology

- It stinks. We are way behind. The computers have Edmond initials on them. We buy their surplus but we need something better.
- There is not enough in the classrooms.
- We shouldn't get rid of all books in favor of iPads. We cannot eliminate all texts.

- The last testing episode in the high school this year, all the iPads crashed.
- Some of the coursework we have purchased has not been as advertised. More was promised than delivered.
- The computer labs are important and they are not up to par. It should be up to date.
- We are not teaching students to use Microsoft Office products and we should. Even a second grader can use Word to type a paper.
- They are doing an okay job of teaching computer usage at the high schools. But maybe this is too late.
- We shouldn't have XP computers in our schools.
- The network security is too tight.
- Kids love the smartboards in the classroom especially the lower elementary grades. PTO bought many of these. However, GUES doesn't have smartboards so that's a disconnect for students who start with them and then don't have them at GUES.

Transportation

- It's a mess. Everybody picks up their own kids.
- Central ES is much better run than other schools in this regard.
- Transportation was a really hot button issue when there was the bond.
- In-town busing has been reduced or eliminated.
- The buses don't keep to a schedule. It could vary by as much as 45 minutes each day.
- Some special education kids are picked up as early as 6:45 am.
- The bus routes are too long. Kids are on the bus too long.
- Some kids no longer ride the bus because there are discipline problems on the bus. Some kids don't feel safe.
- Building the new elementary school should help reduce student ride times.
- If there were more money to incent bus drivers to show up and do a consistent job, it would work better.
- Traffic in general is terrible in this town. There a lot of trucks. It takes 15 minutes to get from the high school to GUES during drop-off and pickup.

- Everyone is dismissed at the same time and it makes picking up kids difficult. It also contributes to the traffic problems. Staggering start/end times would help.

Appendix E:
Enrollment Projections

Guthrie Public Schools - Cohort Fall Enrollment Projection Model

SY	PK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Class of	PK to 8	9 to 12	TOTAL
96-97	0	208	278	232	224	241	253	268	299	283	329	284	219	198	1997	2,286	1,030	3,316
97-98	0	190	254	238	223	218	242	253	272	303	314	292	242	199	1998	2,193	1,047	3,240
98-99	0	167	249	230	235	222	218	244	264	282	350	268	246	227	1999	2,111	1,091	3,202
99-00	22	168	235	211	230	246	232	226	241	270	318	265	225	218	2000	2,081	1,026	3,107
00-01	0	170	242	199	229	228	255	229	235	256	355	258	210	200	2001	2,043	1,023	3,066
01-02	0	192	223	202	205	228	245	259	230	235	305	246	215	184	2002	2,019	950	2,969
02-03	119	189	246	218	215	212	240	266	256	221	271	241	222	219	2003	2,182	953	3,135
03-04	158	222	240	210	217	218	215	246	271	273	261	242	201	191	2004	2,270	895	3,165
04-05	160	266	244	221	220	218	221	228	255	270	303	238	204	181	2005	2,303	926	3,229
05-06	159	228	262	245	216	220	216	207	217	260	288	265	197	180	2006	2,230	930	3,160
06-07	158	231	239	273	258	220	230	214	217	233	277	293	228	188	2007	2,273	986	3,259
07-08	153	240	225	238	261	264	224	232	216	213	245	268	263	197	2008	2,266	973	3,239
08-09	174	233	240	245	244	257	264	221	242	221	239	254	233	231	2009	2,341	957	3,298
09-10	193	243	229	242	237	241	254	277	237	248	243	235	208	213	2010	2,401	899	3,300
10-11	189	257	252	229	245	237	253	261	278	246	269	234	197	200	2011	2,447	900	3,347
11-12	197	249	239	243	225	236	240	242	258	272	260	255	209	187	2012	2,401	911	3,312
12-13	206	271	270	233	249	225	243	250	255	259	293	257	236	196	2013	2,461	982	3,443
13-14	180	269	288	270	266	256	239	244	254	253	294	284	229	219	2014	2,519	1,026	3,545
14-15	189	250	297	279	261	256	249	230	250	251	291	255	246	205	2015	2,512	997	3,509
15-16	192	255	261	292	286	259	263	249	234	250	276	276	225	230	2016	2,539	1,007	3,546
16-17	200	260	266	256	299	283	265	262	253	234	275	262	243	210	2017	2,579	991	3,570
17-18	188	271	272	261	263	296	291	265	267	253	258	261	231	227	2018	2,626	977	3,603
18-19	197	255	283	267	268	260	304	290	269	267	278	244	230	216	2019	2,660	968	3,629
19-20	206	268	266	278	274	265	267	303	295	269	294	264	215	215	2020	2,692	988	3,680
20-21		280	280	261	285	271	272	266	309	295	297	278	233	201	2021		1,009	
21-22			292	275	268	282	278	272	271	309	325	281	245	218	2022		1,069	
22-23				287	282	265	290	278	276	271	340	308	248	229	2023		1,125	
23-24					294	279	272	289	282	277	298	322	272	232	2024		1,124	
24-25						291	286	272	294	282	304	283	284	254	2025		1,125	
25-26							299	286	276	294	311	288	250	265	2026		1,114	
26-27								298	291	276	324	294	255	233	2027		1,106	
27-28									303	291	304	307	260	238	2028		1,109	
28-29										303	320	288	271	243	2029		1,122	
29-30											334	303	254	253	2030		1,144	
30-31												316	268	238	2031			
31-32													279	250	2032			
32-33														261	2033			

Enrollment projections based on five year retention rate. Does not include non-graded or out-of-home placement.

	K to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 6	6 to 7	7 to 8	8 to 9	9 to 10	10 to 11	11 to 12
5 Year Retention	1.04	0.98	1.03	0.99	1.03	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.10	0.95	0.88	0.93

Appendix F:

Thermal Images

Thermal Images of Facilities at Guthrie Public Schools

Temp. Scale = Hot [white, red, orange, yellow, green, lt. blue, blue, purple, black] Cold

Exhibit 1

GPS – Administration Building – South Entrance

A vestibule door left open is like a 3'x6' hole in the building exterior

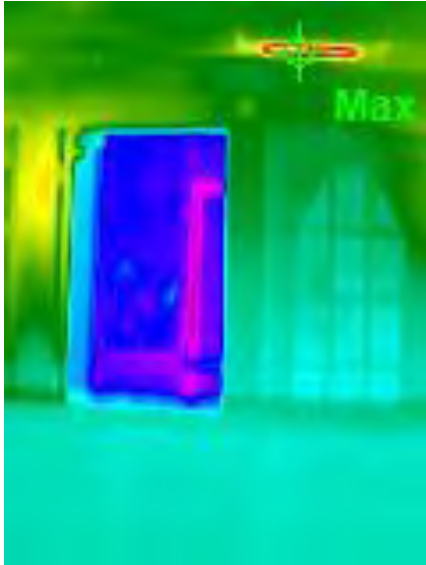


Exhibit 2

GPS – Administration Building – Typical Office (West Side)

Cold draft coming in at bottom of improperly secured window



Exhibit 3
GPS – Administration Building – E-W Hallway – West End
Insulation missing above ceiling tiles down entire length of hallway

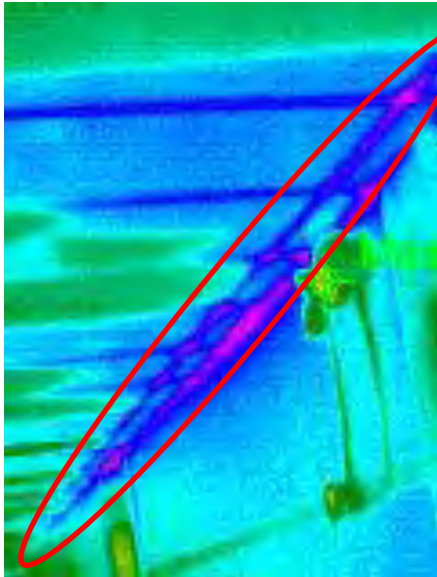


Exhibit 4
GPS – Administration Building – West Hallway – North Entrance
Door sweep and gaskets need to be replaced

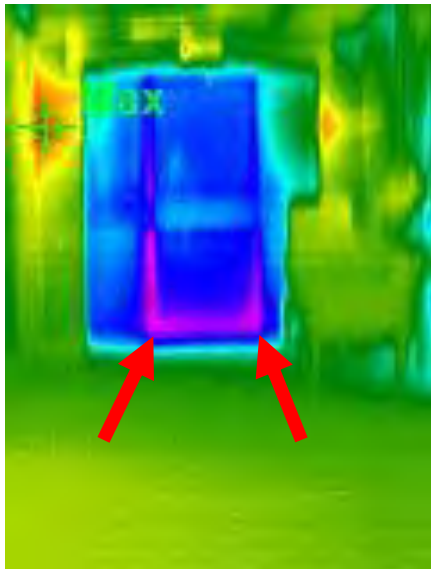
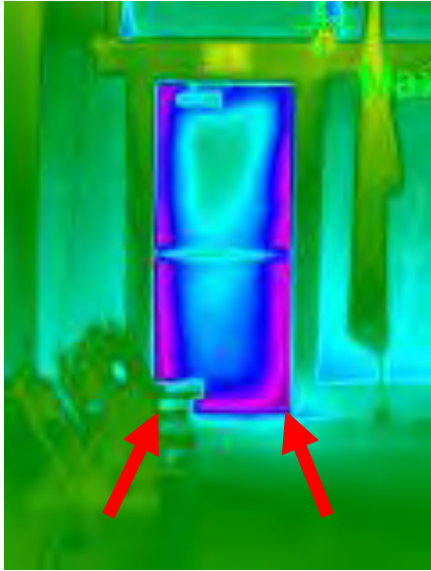


Exhibit 5
GPS – Administration Building – Board Room – North Entrance
Door sweep and gaskets needs to be replaced



**No
Digital
Image
Available**

Exhibit 6
GPS – Junior High School – Typical Classroom (Room B4)
Cold draft coming in at bottom of improperly secured window

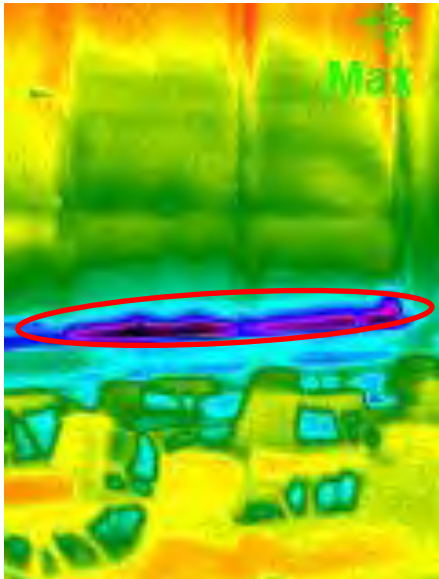


Exhibit 7
GPS – Junior High School – 3rd Floor Stairwell
Original steel-framed windows offer little resistance to outside air infiltration

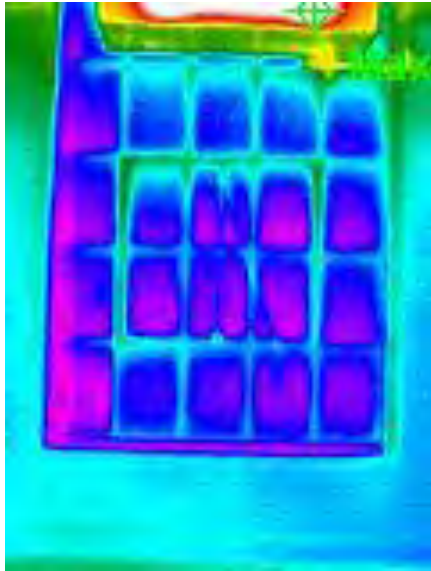


Exhibit 8
GPS – Central Elementary School – Typical Classroom
Aluminum-framed windows offer little resistance to outside air infiltration



Exhibit 9
GPS – Central Elementary School – Gymnasium
Tile ceiling forms a significant barrier to cold air

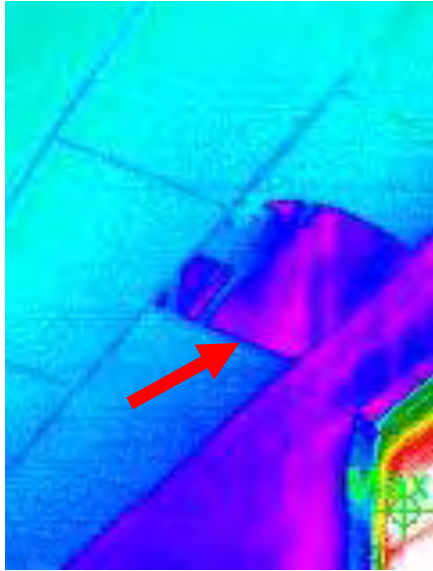


Exhibit 10
GPS – Central Elementary School – West Doors to South Addition
Door gasket needs to be replaced

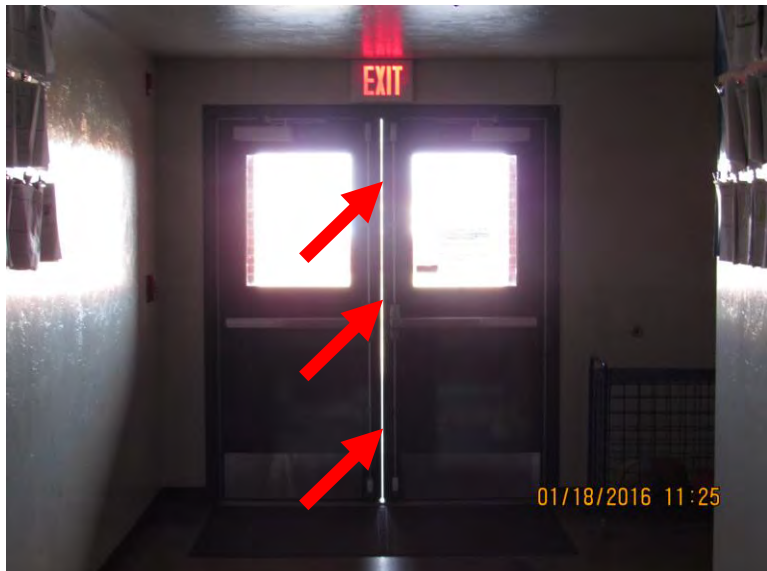


Exhibit 11

GPS – Central Elementary School South Addition – Typical Classroom

These typical windows are an example of higher quality windows that were well-installed

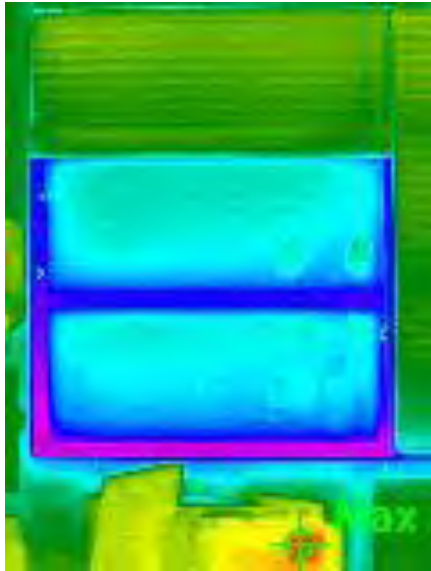


Exhibit 12

GPS – Cottler Elementary School – Northeast (Main) Entrance

Door gasket need to be replaced. These aluminum-framed doors and sidelights offer little resistance to outside air infiltration. A vestibule would make a big difference.

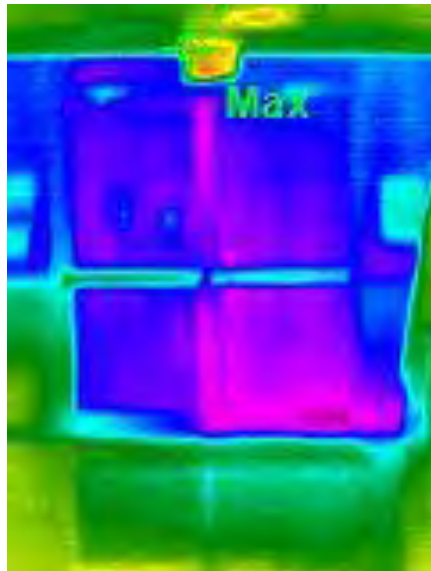


Exhibit 13
GPS – Cottler Elementary School – Typical Classroom
Original steel-framed windows offer little resistance to outside air infiltration

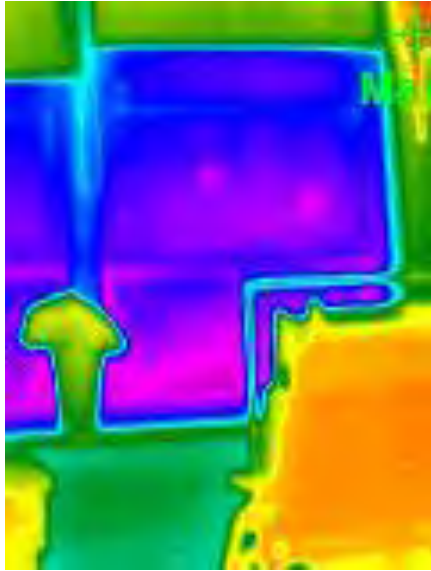


Exhibit 14
GPS – Cottler Elementary School – Custodial Closet
Out-going hot water line from water heater should be wrapped in foam insulation

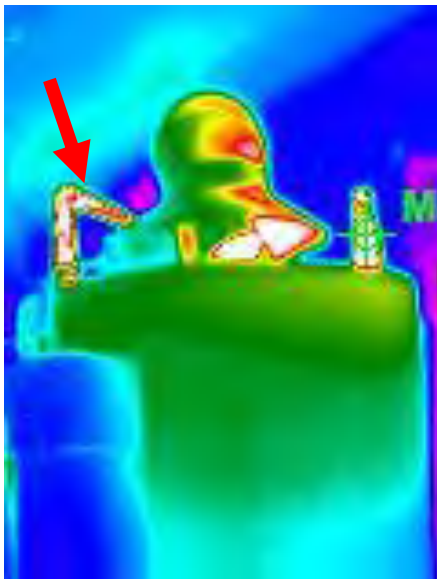


Exhibit 15

GPS – Cottler Elementary School – Gymnasium

Aluminum-framed windows offer little resistance to outside air infiltration but insulated window shades make significant difference compared to just the windows



Exhibit 16

GPS – Fogerty Elementary School – West (Main) Entrance

Aluminum-framed doors and sidelights offer little resistance to outside air infiltration. A vestibule would make a big difference.

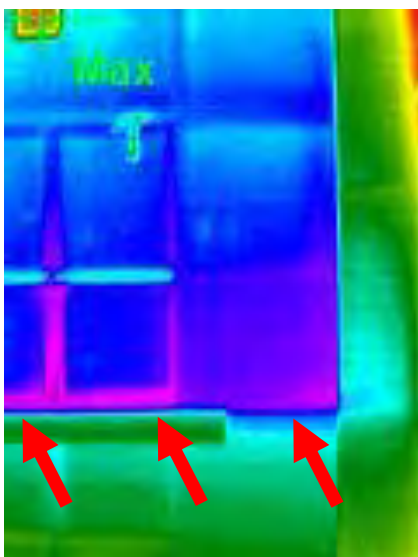


Exhibit 17
GPS – Fogerty Elementary School – Auditorium
Heavy drapes make significant difference compared to just the windows



Exhibit 18
GPS – Fogerty Elementary School – Typical Classroom
Aluminum-framed replacement windows offer little resistance to outside air infiltration but insulated window shades make significant difference compared to just the windows

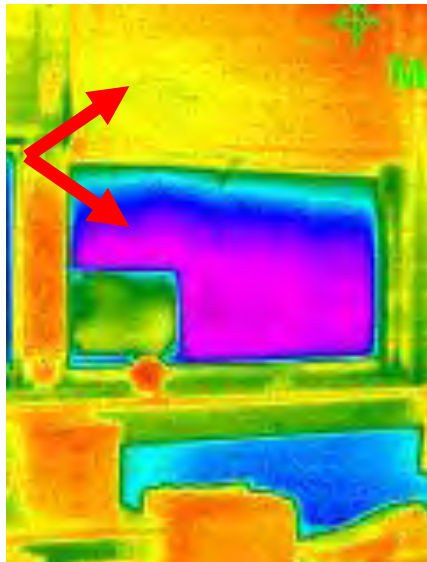


Exhibit 19
GPS – Fogerty Elementary School – Typical Classroom
Gasket material has failed and needs to be replaced

**No
Thermal
Image
Needed**



Exhibit 20
GPS – Fogerty Elementary School – Gymnasium
Aluminum-framed replacement windows offer little resistance to outside air infiltration but insulated window shades make significant difference compared to just the windows

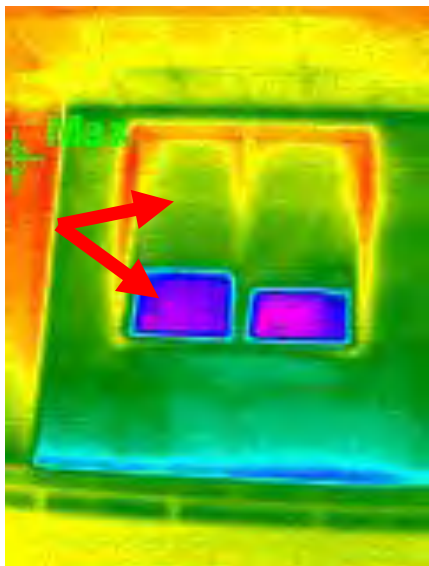


Exhibit 21
GPS – Fogerty Elementary School – Kitchen
Out-going hot water line from water heater should be wrapped in foam insulation

**No
Thermal
Image
Available**

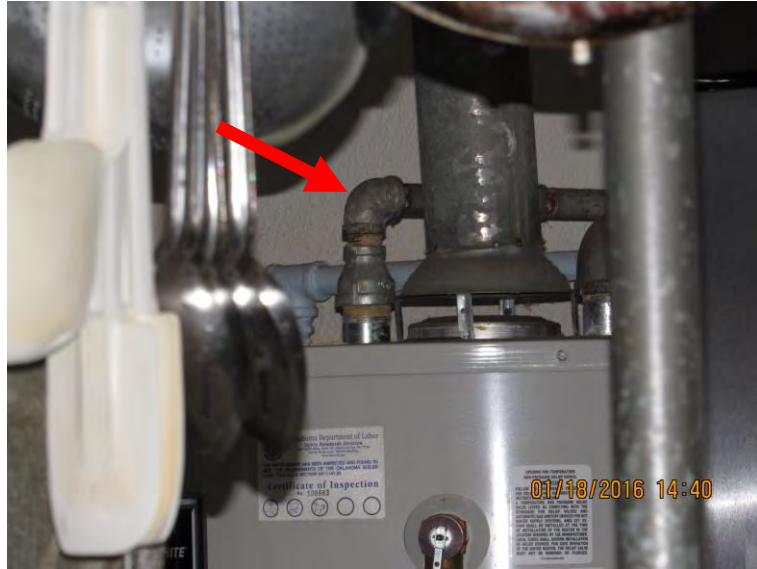


Exhibit 22
GPS – Fogerty Elementary School – Kitchen
Hot water line should be wrapped in foam insulation

**No
Thermal
Image
Available**



Exhibit 23
GPS – Upper Elementary School – Kitchen
Freezer door needs a new gasket

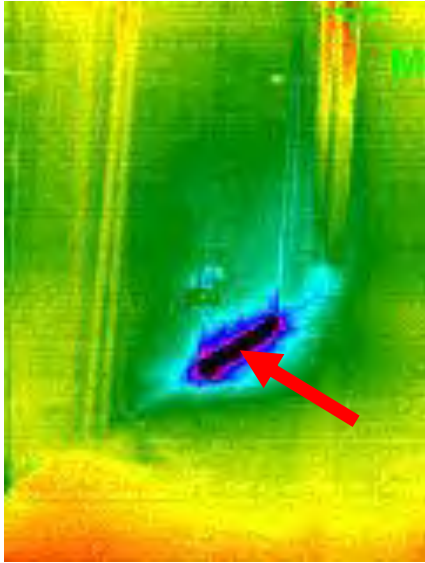


Exhibit 24
GPS – Upper Elementary School – Mechanical Room
Out-going hot water line from water heater should be wrapped in foam insulation

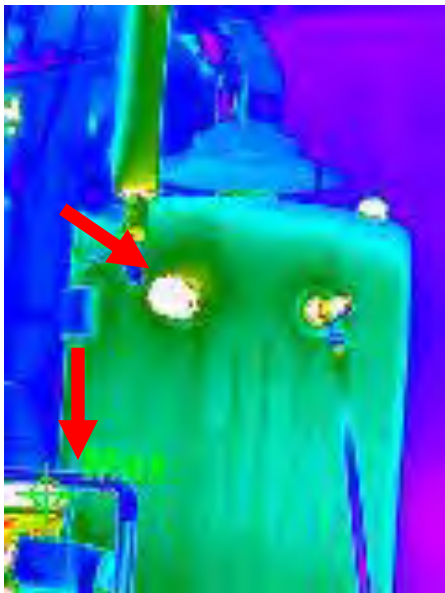


Exhibit 25
GPS – Upper Elementary School – West Entrance
Vestibule doors left open is like a 6’x6’ hole in the building exterior

**No
Thermal
Image
Needed**



Exhibit 26
GPS – Upper Elementary School – Typical Classroom
These typical windows are an example of higher quality windows that were well-installed

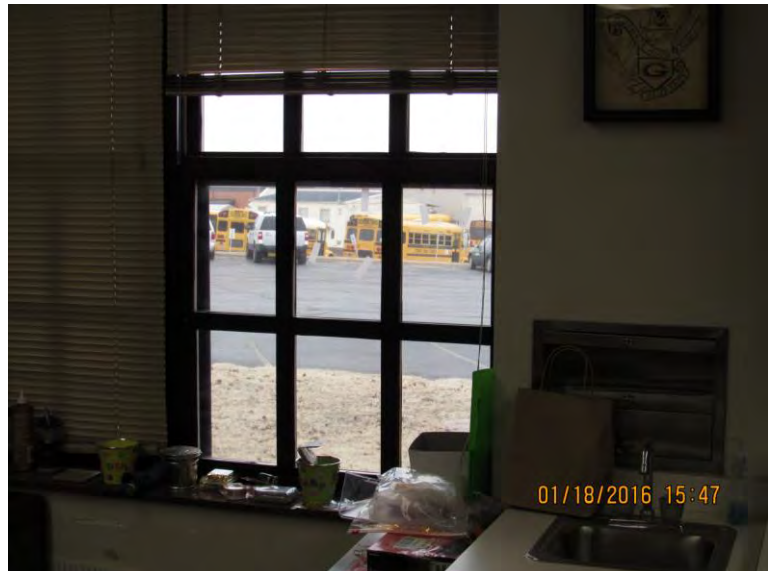
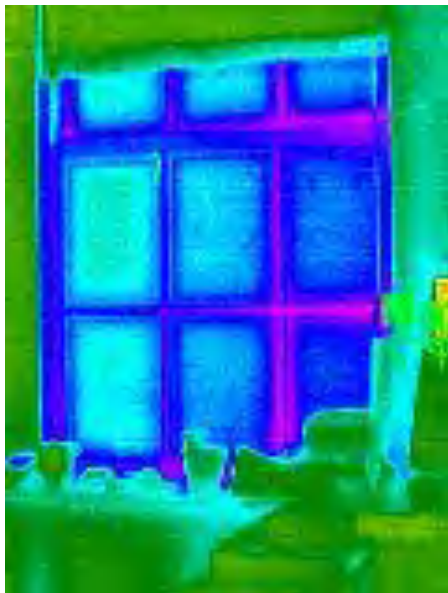


Exhibit 27
GPS – High School – Room 33
Insulation above the drop ceiling has been disturbed but not replaced

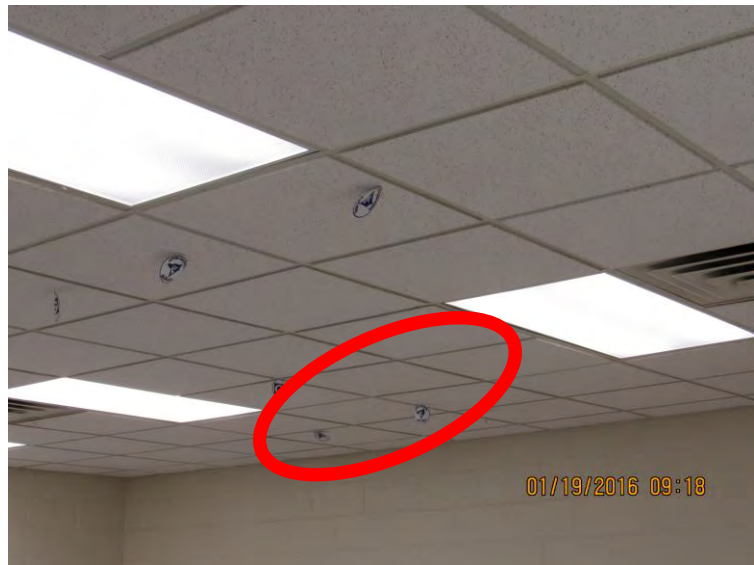
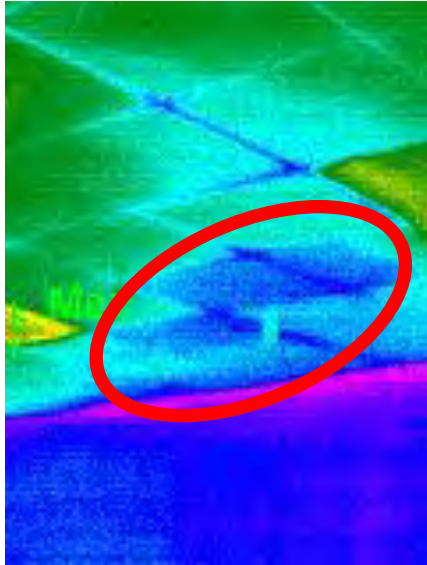


Exhibit 28
GPS – High School – Band Room
Insulation above the drop ceiling has been disturbed but not replaced

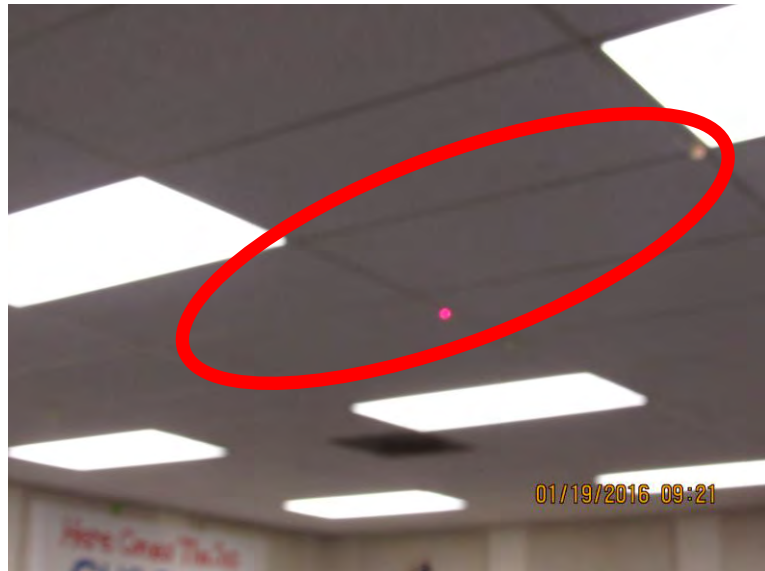


Exhibit 29

GPS – High School – Lunch Room

Many places where insulation above the drop ceiling has been disturbed but not replaced

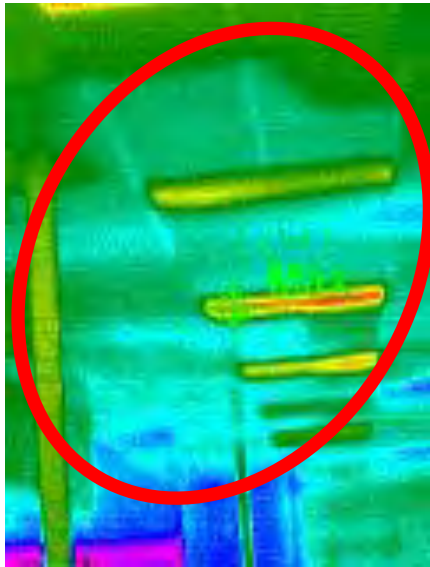


Exhibit 30

GPS – High School – Kitchen

Freezer door needs a new gasket (door corner could also be damaged)

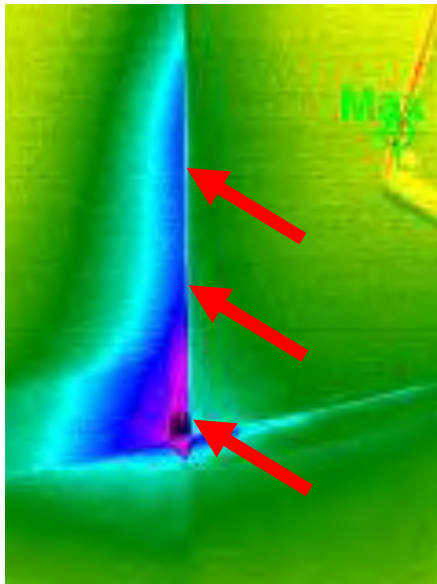


Exhibit 31
GPS – High School – Mechanical Room behind Kitchen – Right Breaker Box
Breakers 4 through 8 are running at 185° and should be checked

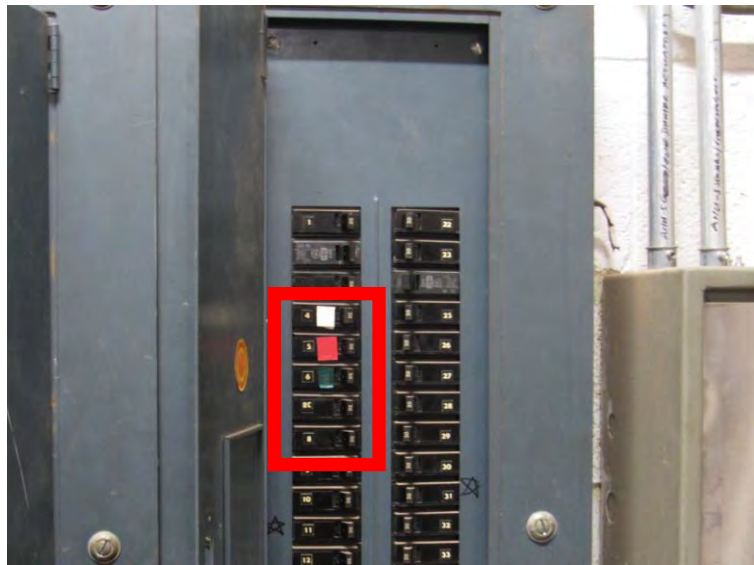
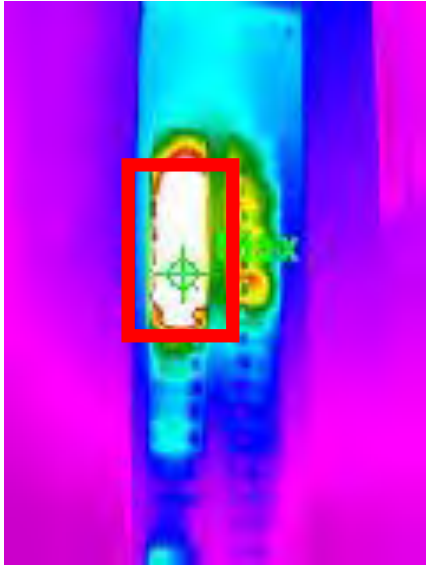


Exhibit 32
GPS – High School – Mechanical Room behind Kitchen (north wall)
Out-going hot water line from water heater should be wrapped in foam insulation

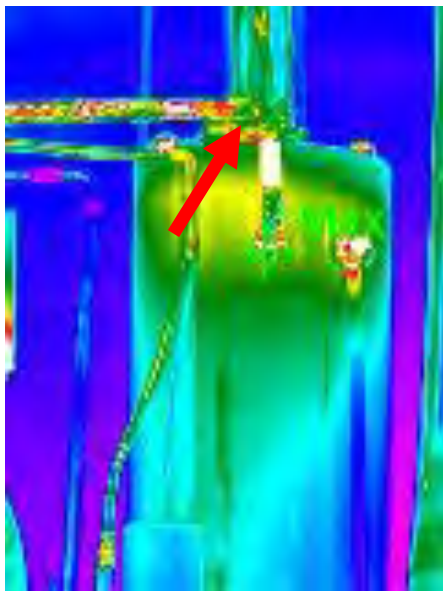


Exhibit 33
GPS – High School – Typical Exterior Door
Exterior doors have received weather stripping around their perimeters

**No
Thermal
Image
Available**



Exhibit 34
GPS – High School – Northwest Mechanical Room
Out-going hot water line from water heater should be wrapped in foam insulation



Exhibit 35
GPS – High School – Gymnasium – Typical Air Handling Unit (4)
In-coming hot water lines should be wrapped in foam insulation

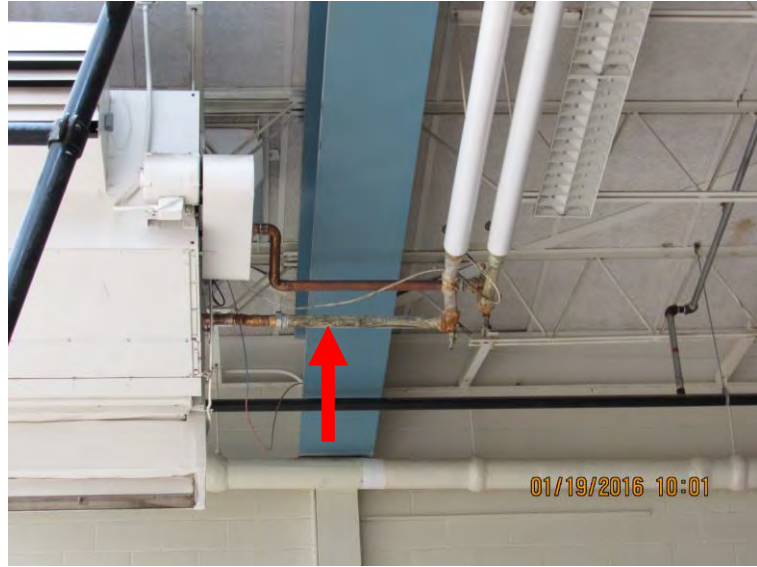


Exhibit 36
GPS – High School – Library
All supply vents are cold and room temperature is 58° - The System may require service

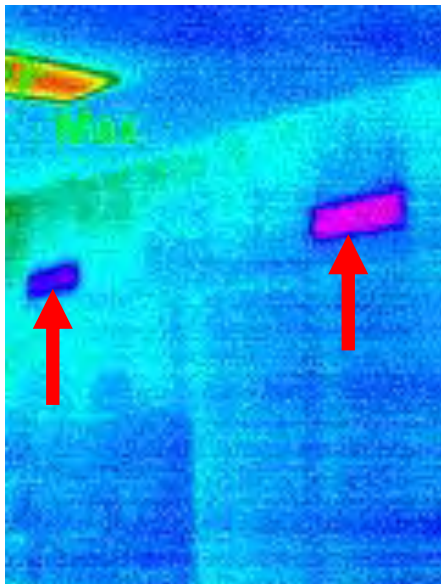


Exhibit 37
GPS – High School – West (Main) Entrance Lobby
Doors are performing well but this would still be an ideal application for a vestibule

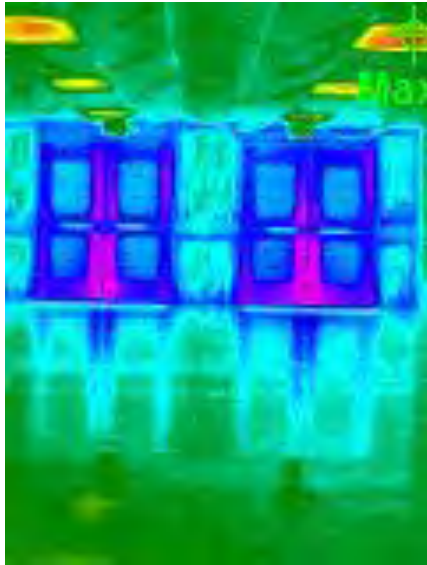


Exhibit 38
GPS – Building of Champions – West Entrance
Door sweep needs to be replaced

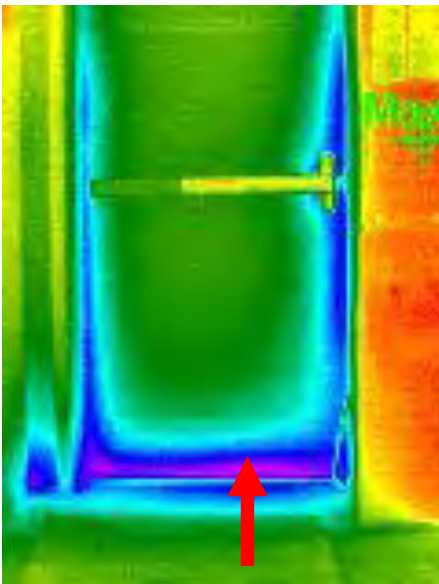


Exhibit 39
GPS – Building of Champions – North Entrance
Door sweep needs to be replaced

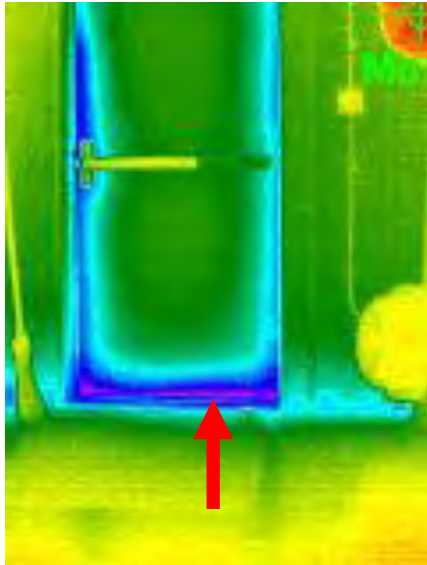


Exhibit 40
GPS – East Transportation Building – Driver's Room
Several locations in this room show moisture within the wall from roof leaks

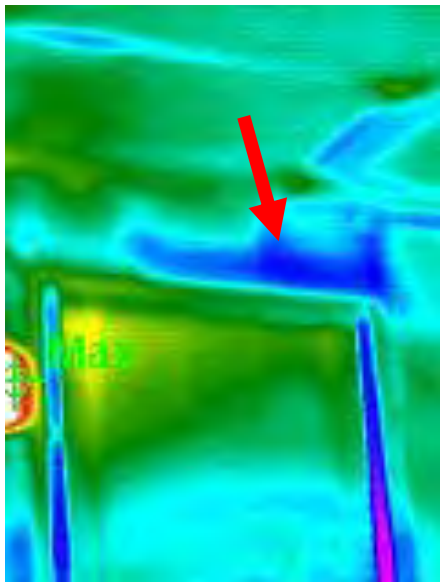


Exhibit 41
GPS – East Transportation Building – Driver’s Room
Several locations in this room show insulation missing from above the ceiling tiles

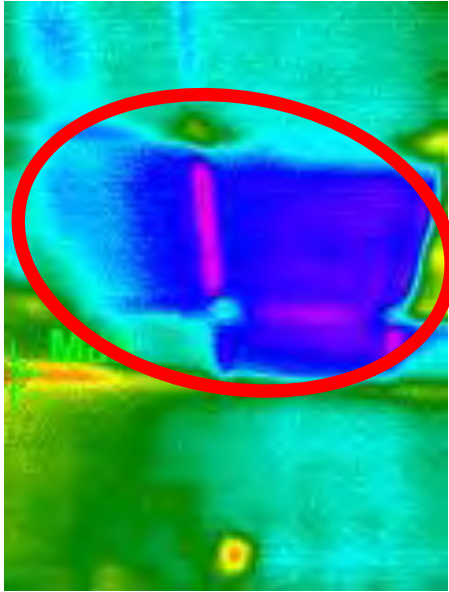


Exhibit 42
GPS – West Transportation Building – Main Office
South-facing windows get very hot – recommend installation of thermal window film

**No
Thermal
Image
Needed**

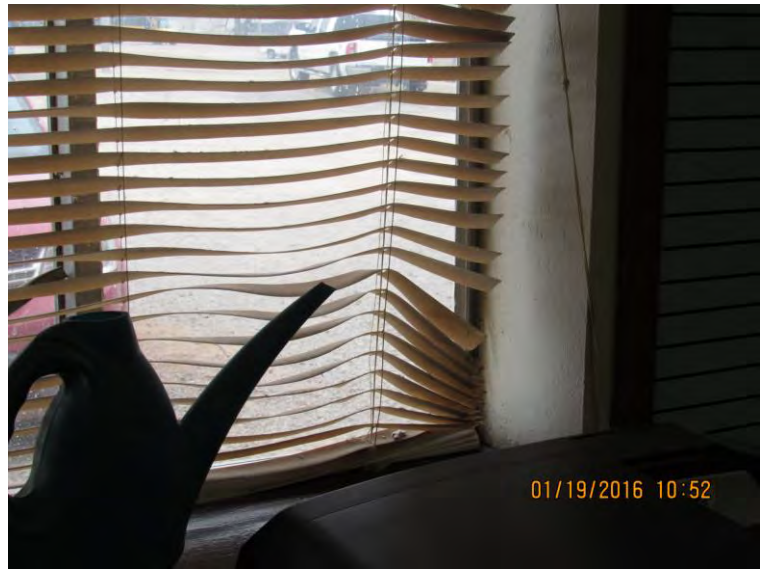


Exhibit 43
GPS – Technology Building – West Entrance
Door sweep needs to be replaced

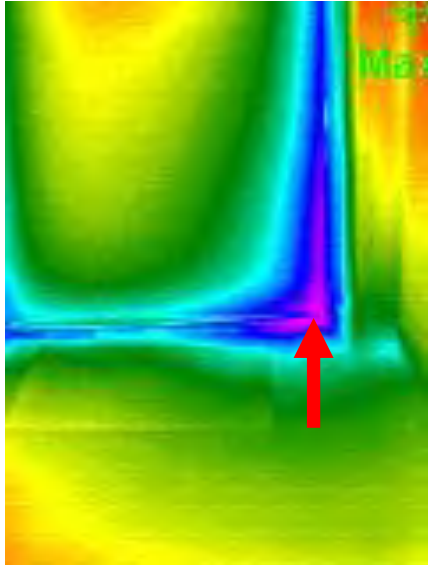


Exhibit 44
GPS – Technology Building – East Entrance
Door sweep needs to be replaced

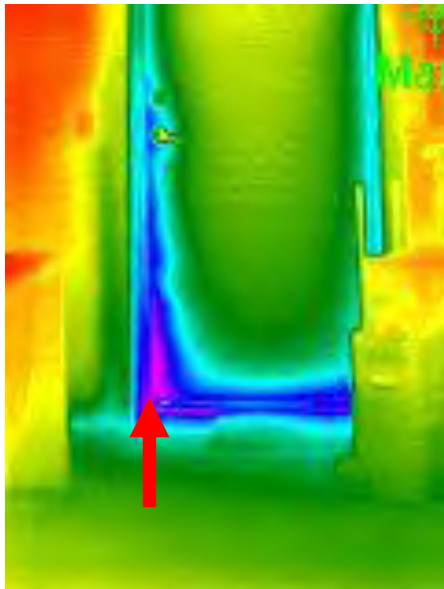


Exhibit 45
GPS – Faver Alternative School – NW Classroom of NW Building
Several locations in this room show insulation missing from above the ceiling tiles

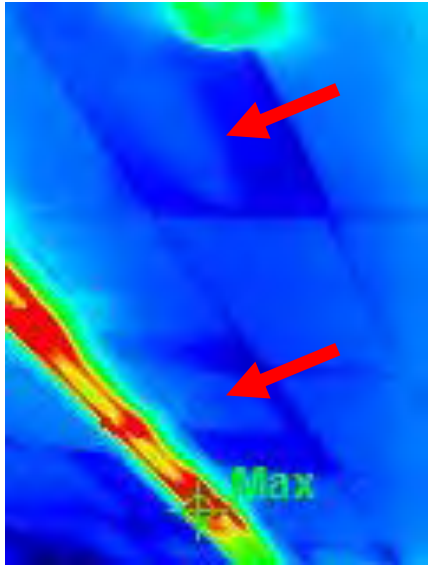


Exhibit 46
GPS – Faver Alternative School – NW Classroom of NW Building
Windows hidden behind ceiling tile are allowing outside air and water to infiltrate

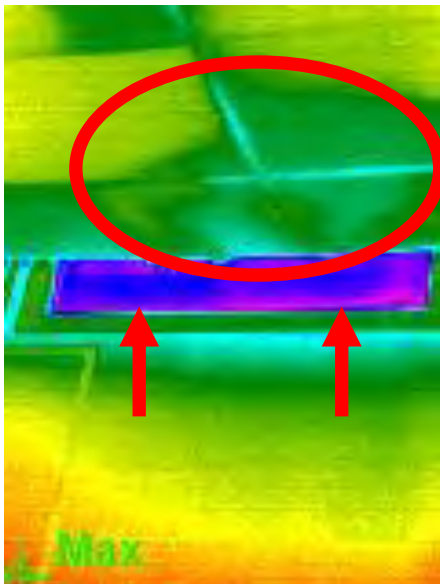


Exhibit 47

GPS – Faver Alternative School – Main Hallway

Many places where insulation above the drop ceiling has been disturbed but not replaced

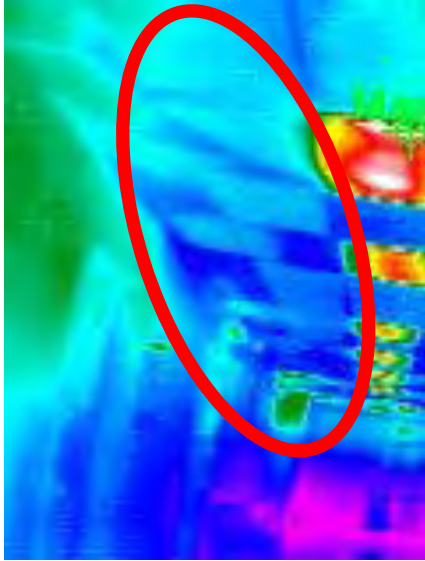


Exhibit 48

GPS – Faver Alternative School – South Entrance Doors

Door sweeps need to be replaced

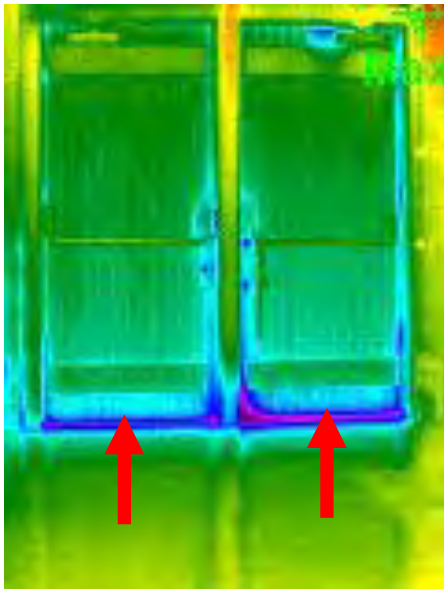


Exhibit 49
GPS – Faver Alternative School – Gymnasium South End-Wall
Building’s insulation blanket has been damaged

**No
Thermal
Image
Needed**



Exhibit 50
GPS – Faver Alternative School – Gymnasium Ceiling
Building’s insulation blanket has been damaged

**No
Thermal
Image
Needed**



Appendix G:
Detailed List of Facilities Problems

**Exhibit G-1
Life Safety Problems**

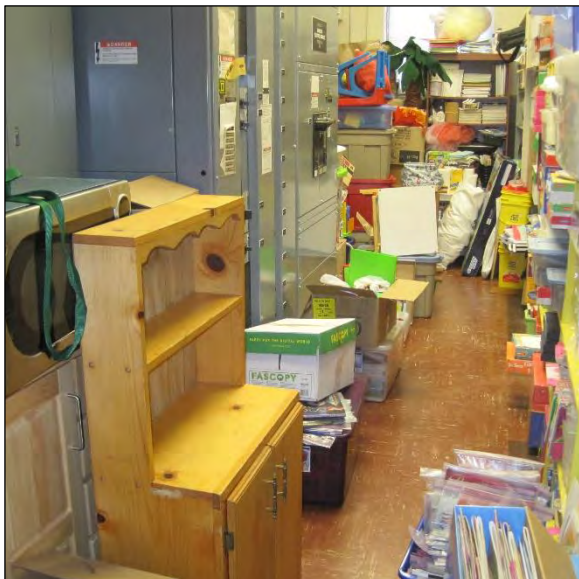
Materials Stored in Front of Electrical Panel in Fogarty Elementary School



Materials Stored in Front of Electrical Panel in Cottler Elementary School



Materials Stored in Front of Electrical Panel in Cottler Elementary School



Locks on Emergency Exit Door from Kitchen in Fogarty Elementary School



Chain Locks on Emergency Exit Doors in Faver Alternative High School



Deadbolt Lock on Sliding Fire Door in Basement of Cottrel Elementary School



Sliding Fire Door Chain Crimped by Electrical Conduit in Basement of Central Elementary School



Emergency Combination Light Inoperative in Maintenance Building



**Inoperative Exit Sign in Classroom
Portable in Cottler East**



**Missing Exit Sign in Classrooms in
Portables in Cottler**



**Exit Sign at North Exit from Board Room
Cannot be Tested as Installed**



**Missing Exit Signs in East-West Hallway in
Administration Building**



Missing Ceiling Tile in Fogarty Elementary School North Stairwell



Broken Suspended Ceiling in Fogarty Elementary School Custodian Closet



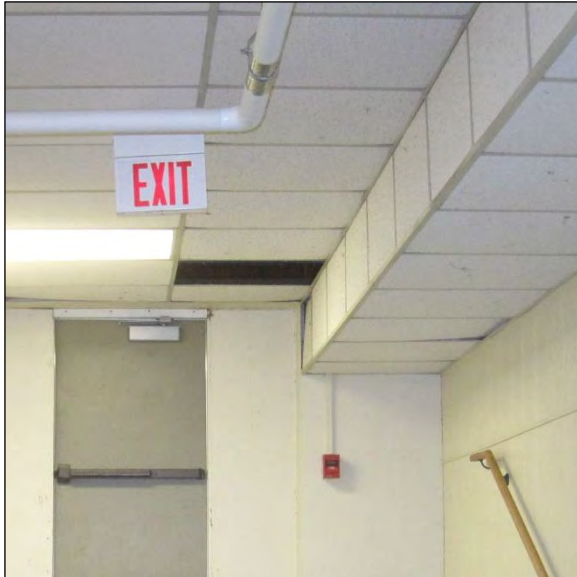
Broken Ceiling Tile in Central Elementary School Kitchen Storeroom



Dislodged Ceiling Tile in Central Elementary Gymnasium



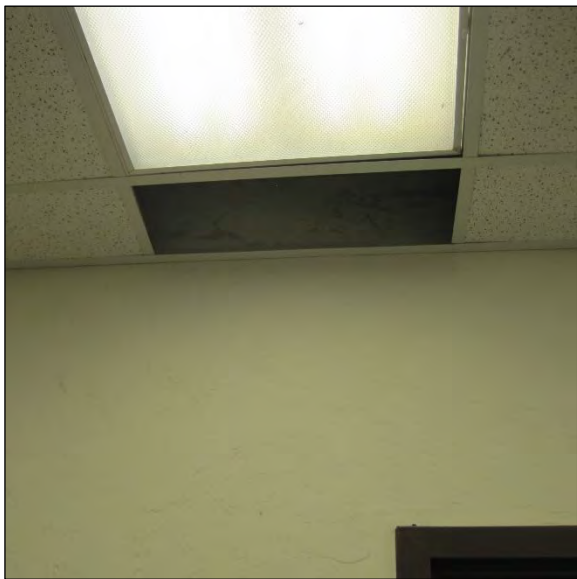
Missing Ceiling Tile in Junior High School Cafeteria Exit



Missing Ceiling Tiles in Junior High School



Missing Ceiling Tile in Maintenance Building Bathroom



Inoperative Emergency Light in Junior High School Gymnasium



Missing One Spare Sprinkler in Central Elementary School Riser Room



Custodian Closet in Central Elementary is Not a Fire Rated Structure



Source: Prismatic January 2016

**Exhibit G-2
General Safety Problems**

**AED Pads in Fogarty Elementary School
Nearing End of Shelf Life**



**AED Pads in Cottler Elementary School
Nearing End of Shelf Life**



**Pedi-AED Pads in Junior High School
Beyond Shelf Life**



**AED Pads in Junior High School Nearing
End of Shelf Life**



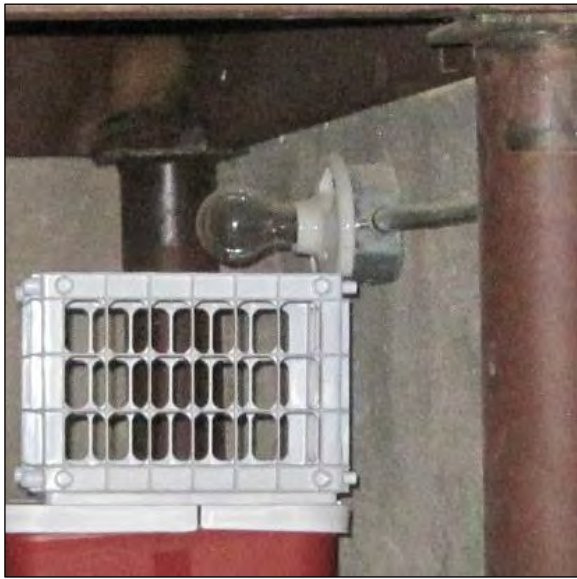
**Incandescent Bulbs in Fogarty Elementary
School Store Room**



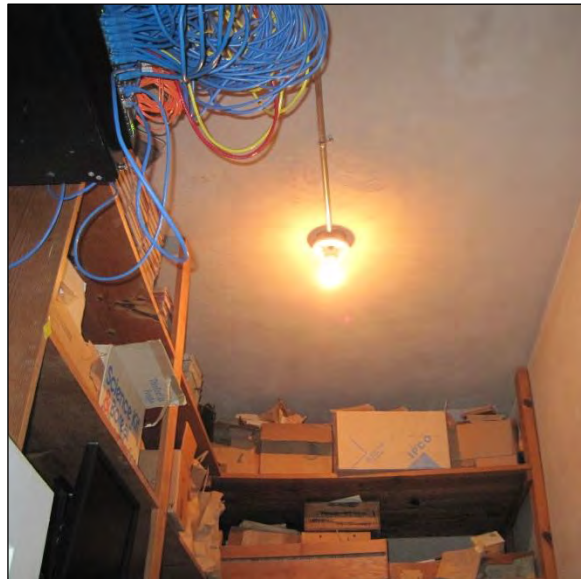
**Incandescent Bulb in Cottoral Elementary
School Custodian Closet**



**Incandescent Bulb in Central Elementary
School Custodian Closet**



**Incandescent Bulb in Junior High School
Store Room**



Incandescent Bulbs in Faver Alternative High School



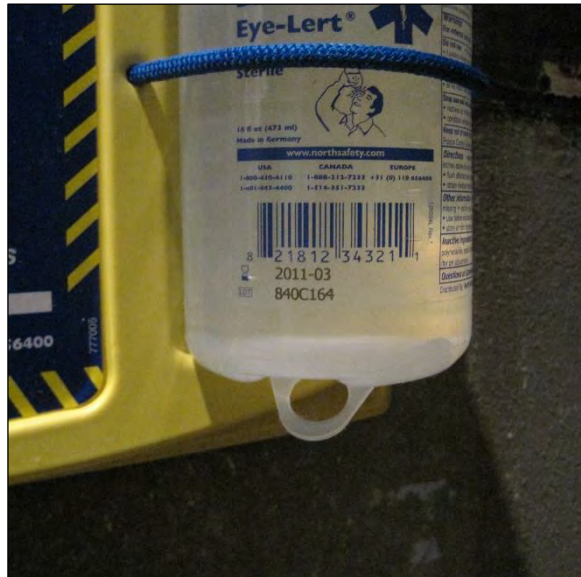
Incandescent Bulbs in Faver Alternative High School



Expired Eye Wash Solution in Fogarty Elementary School Mechanical Room



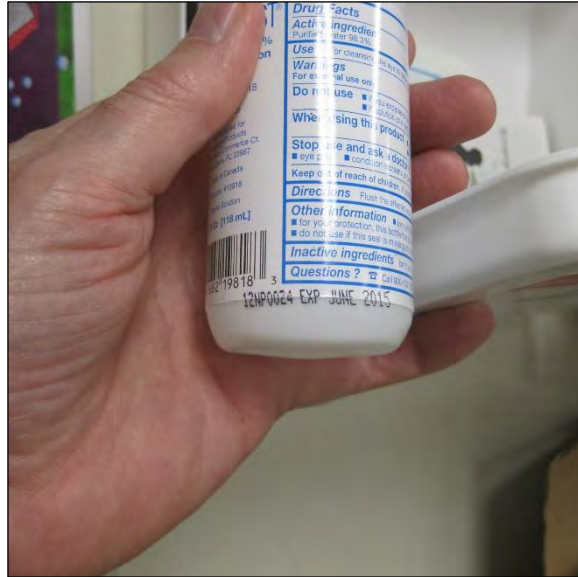
Expired Eye Wash Solution in Cottrel Elementary School Custodian Closet



Expired Eye Wash Solution in Faver Alternative High School



Expired Eye Wash Solution in High School First Aid Kit



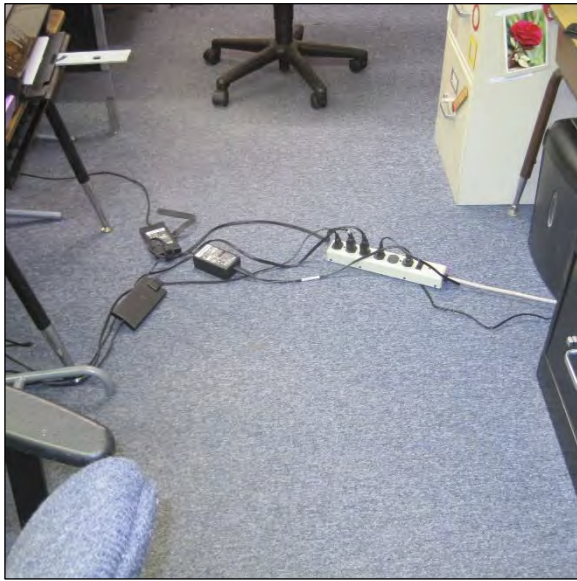
Missing Backflow Preventer on Faucets in Fogerty Elementary School Custodian Closet



Missing Backflow Preventer and Handles on Faucet in Cottoral Elementary School Custodian Closet



Surge Protector on Floor and Used for Non-Electronic Electrical Devices—Also a Trip Hazard



Handicap Elevator Jammed with Boxes in Cotteral Elementary School



Inoperative Eye Wash Station in Junior High School



Classroom Doors in Older Buildings Must be Key Locked from Hallway



Source: Prismatic January 2016

**Exhibit G-3
General Maintenance Problems**

**Exit Door at Fogarty Elementary School
Does not Close and Latch Properly**



**Deteriorated Ceiling in Exit from Kitchen
at Fogarty Elementary School**



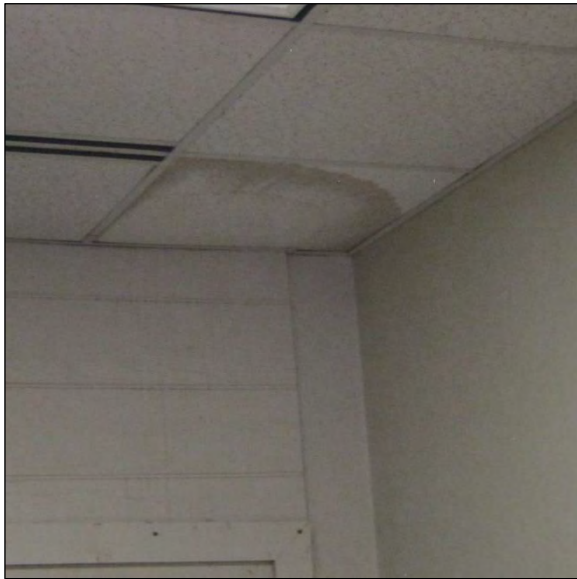
**Hole in Wall in Auditorium at Fogarty
Elementary School**



**Heavy Dirt in Ventilation System at
Fogarty Elementary School**



Stained Ceiling Tile at Central Elementary School



Water Damaged Wall at Mop Basin in Central Elementary School Custodian Closet



Stained Wall under Lavatory in Portable at Cotteral Elementary School



Eroded Asphalt under Down Comer at Cotteral Elementary School



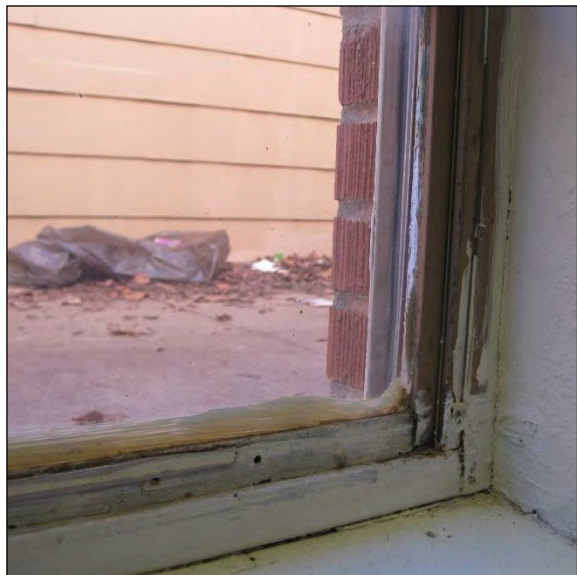
Broken Weather Stripping in Classroom Door at Portable at Cotteral Elementary School



Deteriorated Concrete at Cotteral Elementary School



Rusted Window Panes in Classroom at Cotteral Elementary School



Deteriorated Floor Tile in Cafeteria at Cotteral Elementary School



Water Damaged and Moldy Wall in Laundry Room at Cottler Elementary School



Extension Cord to Something, but No One Knows Where at Cottler Elementary School



Inoperative Sink and Water Bubbler in Physical Education Building at Junior High School



Deteriorated Floor Tile in Bathroom in Junior High School



**Deteriorated Carpet in Junior High School
WPA Addition**



**Deteriorated Toilet Seat in Boys Bathroom
in Junior High School**



**Broken Plaster in Boys Bathroom in Junior
High School**



**Deteriorated Floor Tile in Bathroom in
Junior High School**



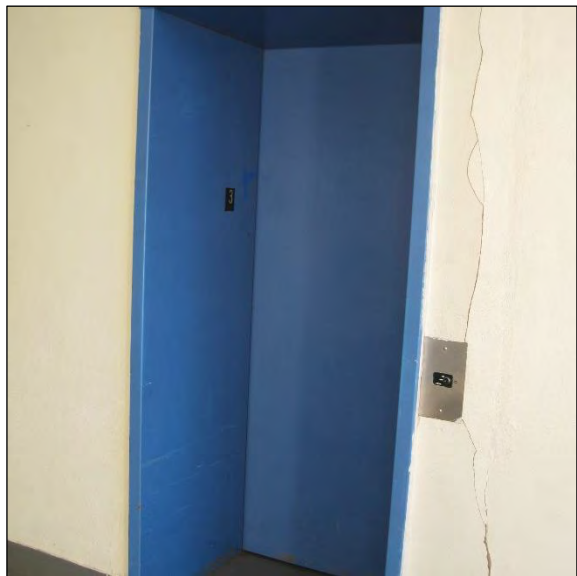
Inoperative Deep Sink in Boys Bathroom in Junior High School



Stained Ceiling Tiles in Junior High School



Broken Plaster Next to Elevator Door on Second Floor in Junior High School



Deteriorated Window Frame on Second Floor in Junior High School



Duct Tape Holding HVAC Blower Panel in Junior High School



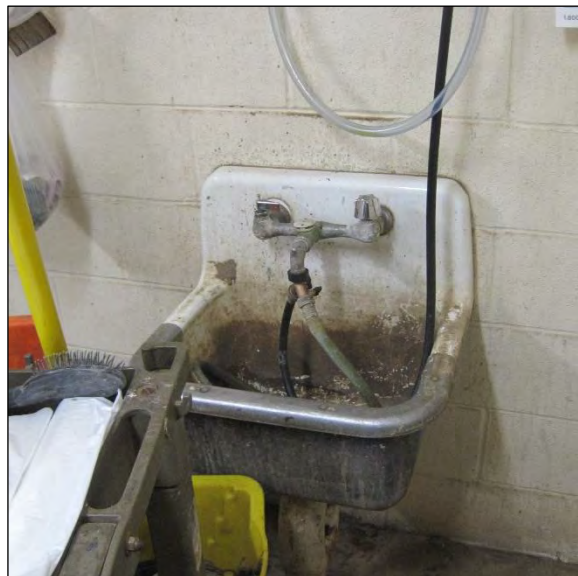
Broken Door Closer in Faver Alternative High School



Dangerous Erosion Around Sidewalk Along High School Vo-Ag Building



Severely Stained Deep Sink in Custodian Closet in High School



Graffiti on Walls in Boys Bathroom in High School



Rusty and Dirty Diffuser at Entrance to Band Room in High School



Peeling Paint in Riser Room in High School



Rust and Stains on Diffuser in Boys Bathroom in High School



Water Fountain Overshoots Drain Tray in Administration Building Hallway



Stained Ceiling Tile in Administration Building Hallway



Dirt Pattern Around Diffuser Indicates Vent System Needs Cleaning in GUES



Wall Separation with Daylight Showing in Junior High School



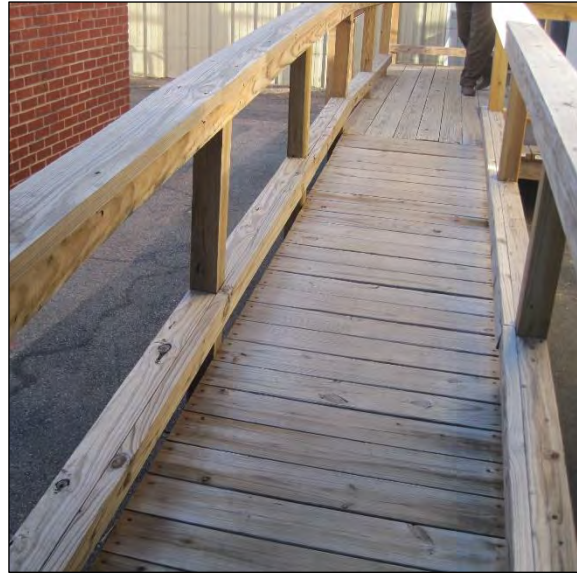
Source: Prismatic January 2016

**Exhibit G-4
ADA Issues**

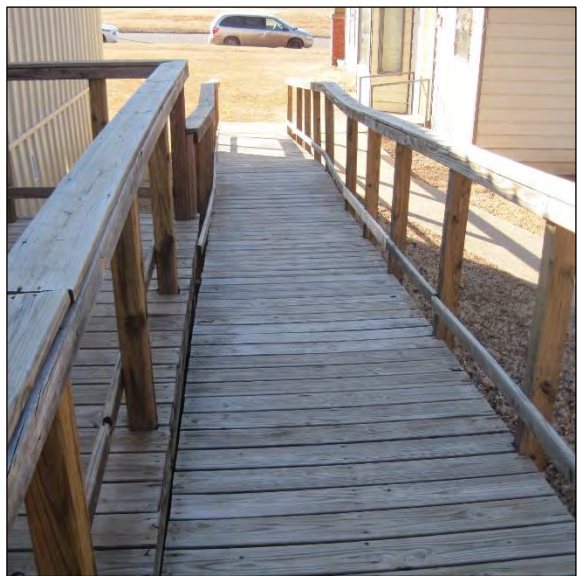
**Ramp and Handicapped Access Route
from Parking to H.C. Entrance at Fogarty
Does Not Meet ADA Code**



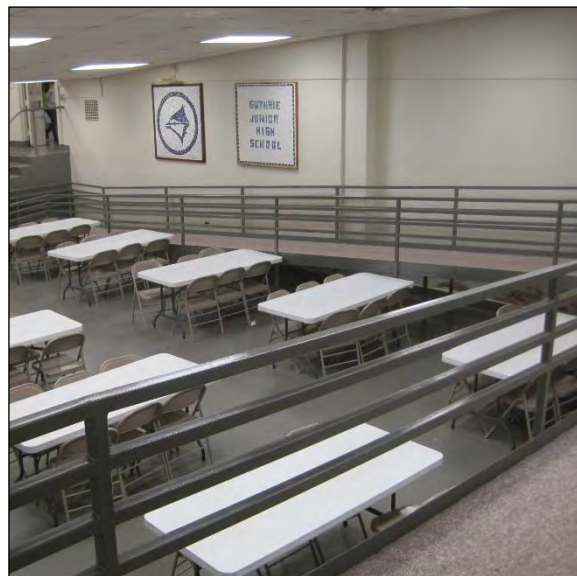
**Handicapped Ramp to Portable at Cotteral
Lacks Required Hand Rails**



**Handicapped Ramp from Junior High
School to South Portable Lacks Hand Rails**



**Handicapped Ramp in Cafeteria in Junior
High School Exceeds 30 Feet Without
Including a Five Foot Flat Resting Area**



Source: Prismatic January 2016

Appendix H:

Resources Referenced In Chapter 2

Audit



Professional Learning Communities:
source materials for school leaders and
other leaders of professional learning

Deciding where you are as a professional learning community

Louise Stoll, Ray Bolam, Agnes McMahon, Sally Thomas, Mike Wallace,
Angela Greenwood and Kate Hawkey

What is an implementation rubric?

Rubrics are usually used as assessment tools to measure pupils' work. They are scoring guides that don't depend on a numerical score. Instead, they list a full range of criteria or elements to assess a particular piece of work or performance. They describe varying degrees of quality

for each element, increasing from left to right. A benefit of rubrics is that they provide signposts to where you can get to as a result of development, and pointers to next steps that might be taken when trying to develop particular activities.

What is the purpose of this rubric?

This implementation rubric helps you see where colleagues think you are as a professional learning community (PLC) as they reflect on different criteria related to specific characteristics and processes of PLCs. The 12 topics down the left-hand side are the eight characteristics and four developmental processes of PLCs we identified in our study. For each of these, a number of key descriptors are mapped out horizontally, showing the development of each through four phases of their journey, highlighted at the top of the four columns. These range

from what might be happening when you are starting on the journey to develop a PLC to action taken when the PLC is self-sustaining:

Starting out; acquiring information and beginning to use ideas.
Developing; experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment.
Deepening; well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits.
Sustaining; introducing new developments, re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life.

How might you use the rubric?

You might choose to use the rubric in a range of ways. For example:

- individual staff members complete the rubric privately and give it to a designated person or team who collate(s) responses and feed(s) these back to the staff for discussion
- individual staff members complete the rubric before sharing and discussing their responses with each other
- small groups complete the rubric together and then compare and summarise their responses

The rubric on pages 3–9 and summary response sheet on page 10 can be photocopied for circulation. Each person completing the rubric needs to look at the descriptors, perhaps highlighting comments that represent your PLC. They can then decide which phase best

represents the PLC's current position, either highlighting the appropriate box in the table or marking the box in the blank response sheet included after the rubric. There is also a space labelled 'How do you know?' where people can note down evidence.

Looking through individual highlighted responses can help you see trends and patterns as well as differences in opinion. You can prepare a summary sheet of all the responses using the blank summary response sheet.

At the end of the activity, you will find some questions to discuss once you have pulled together the results.

The process can be repeated each year. You can look at changes people think have occurred and discuss the reasons for these changes.

Professional learning community implementation rubric



PLC characteristics

Starting out

Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas

Developing

Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment

Deepening

Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits

Sustaining

Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life

Shared values and vision

Staff have diverse values related to educational issues. They are beginning to recognise the need to attend to some PLC-wide issues. There are initial discussions about these issues.

Some smaller groups (PLCs) within the staff may share values about education and leadership.

An increasing number of staff share educational values, and participate actively in discussions about vision and values.

Shared educational vision is often stronger and more apparent in particular sections or departments of the PLC.

Educational values and vision are fairly widely shared throughout the PLC and generally demonstrated through practice.

The vision is revisited regularly and commitment to whole-school, centre or college-wide professional values is increasing.





Educational values and vision are widely shared throughout the PLC, regularly revisited and revised as appropriate by the whole staff, and demonstrated through practice.

There is a high degree of commitment to whole-school, centre or college-wide professional values and a strong sense of cohesion and consistency of approach.


How do you know this?


PLC characteristics	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
<p>Collective responsibility</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>Staff do not feel a sense of whole-school, centre or college-wide shared responsibility for <i>all</i> pupils.</p> <p>Some smaller groups, particularly those with common teaching or support responsibilities, feel a sense of shared responsibility.</p> <p>There are few whole-school, centre or college discussions about learning, progress, development and successes of pupils.</p>	<p>Some staff members feel a sense of collective responsibility for <i>all</i> pupils in the school, centre or college.</p> <p>Smaller groups (PLCs) feel a sense of shared responsibility for <i>all</i> pupils within their subject, year, key stage or phase.</p> <p>There are some whole-school, centre or college discussions about pupils' learning, progress, development and successes.</p>	<p>There is a growing sense of collective responsibility throughout the school, centre or college for the learning, progress, development and success of <i>all</i> pupils.</p> <p>Discussions of learning, progress, development and success of individual pupils.</p>	<p>A desire to do the best for all pupils pervades the school, centre or college.</p> <p>There is regular and deep whole-school, centre or college dialogue about learning, progress, development and successes of individual pupils.</p>
<p>Learning-focused collaboration</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>Many staff mainly work in isolation. They focus on their own goals, value self-reliance and rarely share practices and strategies.</p> <p>Some smaller groups or departments collaborate and share learning and teaching and support strategies.</p>	<p>Some staff work together across the PLC, with joint planning, sharing strategies, and engaging in whole-school, centre or college-wide projects.</p> <p>Some support staff or care workers and teaching staff collaborate closely but this is not a common feature.</p>	<p>Staff increasingly plan together, collaborate and share ideas through meetings, website resources, team teaching etc.</p> <p>There are examples of productive teamwork between teachers and support staff.</p>	<p>Collaborative planning of learning and teaching activities is taken for granted.</p> <p>Sharing of ideas and strategies and joint problem-solving are widespread.</p> <p>Teamwork involving teachers and support or care staff is widespread.</p>



PLC characteristics	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
<p>Existence of professional learning</p>	<p>Professional learning mainly consists of formal, short courses and whole-school, centre or college in-service training. Take-up is largely based on individual interest. Enthusiasm for whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences is limited. There are few work-based professional learning opportunities eg peer observation, coaching etc. There is mainly ad hoc talk about learning from external courses and visits.</p>	<p>A considerable number of staff are engaged in a variety of professional learning opportunities based on individual interest (eg courses, higher degrees etc) and increasingly this is also linked to school, centre or college aims. An increasing number of staff participate enthusiastically in whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences. Staff feed back on their learning to smaller groups and, sometimes, the whole staff.</p>	<p>Staff are generally interested in a diverse range of individual and group opportunities to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. Many staff participate enthusiastically in whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences. Staff generally feed back their learning to the whole staff.</p>	<p>All staff are enthusiastically involved in a diverse range of individual, group and whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences. The school, centre or college as a workplace is seen as an important site for learning by all staff. Staff devote effort and energy into incorporating valuable new strategies into their practice. Learning is widely shared across the whole staff.</p> 
<p>How do you know this?</p>	<p>There is little reflection on, or enquiry into, practice. Data collection and the use of learning and teaching practice are limited. Data may be seen as an end in itself and often as someone else's problem.</p>	<p>Some staff are involved in activities to investigate and improve learning and teaching, eg peer observation and coaching, action research, review and moderation of pupils' work etc. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are variable across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>Many staff are actively involved and show increasing confidence about using different methods to explore and improve learning and teaching. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are increasingly consistent across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>A questioning orientation to practice and 'need to know how we are doing and how we can improve' is pervasive. Staff confidently use a wide range of methods to investigate learning and teaching, using findings to inform and develop their practice. Data are collected, analysed and used to support this process.</p> 
<p>Reflective professional enquiry</p>	<p>There is little reflection on, or enquiry into, practice. Data collection and the use of learning and teaching practice are limited. Data may be seen as an end in itself and often as someone else's problem.</p>	<p>Some staff are involved in activities to investigate and improve learning and teaching, eg peer observation and coaching, action research, review and moderation of pupils' work etc. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are variable across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>Many staff are actively involved and show increasing confidence about using different methods to explore and improve learning and teaching. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are increasingly consistent across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>A questioning orientation to practice and 'need to know how we are doing and how we can improve' is pervasive. Staff confidently use a wide range of methods to investigate learning and teaching, using findings to inform and develop their practice. Data are collected, analysed and used to support this process.</p> 
<p>How do you know this?</p>	<p>There is little reflection on, or enquiry into, practice. Data collection and the use of learning and teaching practice are limited. Data may be seen as an end in itself and often as someone else's problem.</p>	<p>Some staff are involved in activities to investigate and improve learning and teaching, eg peer observation and coaching, action research, review and moderation of pupils' work etc. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are variable across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>Many staff are actively involved and show increasing confidence about using different methods to explore and improve learning and teaching. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are increasingly consistent across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>A questioning orientation to practice and 'need to know how we are doing and how we can improve' is pervasive. Staff confidently use a wide range of methods to investigate learning and teaching, using findings to inform and develop their practice. Data are collected, analysed and used to support this process.</p> 



PLC characteristics	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
<p>Openness, networks and partnerships</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>There is very little professional contact outside the school, centre or college.</p> <p>External networks and partnerships are limited, as is the seeking of external ideas and strategies.</p> <p>The school, centre or college is relatively isolated from its community.</p>	<p>Some staff are interested and engaged in networks and activities beyond the school, centre or college as a source of generating and sharing ideas and strategies.</p> <p>There is some involvement with the community.</p>	<p>External sources for generating and sharing ideas and strategies are generally perceived as valuable.</p> <p>Staff are increasingly taking up opportunities to become involved in networks and external partnerships. Some whole-school, centre or college networking is being explored.</p> <p>Community partnerships are generally welcomed and positive.</p>	<p>Staff look beyond the school, centre or college for new ideas and strategies. External input is sought out and welcomed.</p> <p>Links with other schools, centres, colleges and external agencies are seen as valuable, productive and important.</p> <p>Many staff are involved in individual and school, centre or college-wide external networks.</p> <p>Community partnerships are thriving.</p> 
<p>Inclusive membership</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>Membership of the PLC is confined to a small group of teaching staff and some or all school leaders.</p> <p>Input of support staff is not invited.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is limited.</p>	<p>Classroom support staff are increasingly involved as active members of the PLC.</p> <p>Other support staff are less involved.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is generally welcomed.</p>	<p>Many support staff (teaching and other) participate as active members of the PLC.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is welcomed.</p>	<p>The PLC includes all members of staff.</p> <p>All support staff are highly valued members of the PLC.</p> <p>The whole-school, centre or college PLC draws people together from across the organisation.</p> <p>Parental, pupil and governor or school council member involvement is welcomed and encouraged.</p> 

PLC characteristics	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
Mutual trust, respect and support	<p>Staff relationships highlight issues around trust and conflict.</p> <p>A blame culture may exist.</p> <p>Trust and respect exists among some members of smaller groups or departments.</p> <p>Development issues are viewed as a threat by a number of staff.</p>	<p>A moderate level of mutual trust exists school, centre or college-wide, with increasing mutual respect, although there is some anxiety about classroom observation etc.</p> <p>There is strong mutual trust and respect among some groups of staff who work closely together.</p>	<p>Trust, respect and positive professional relationships are developing school, centre or college-wide.</p> <p>Staff are increasingly open about their practice.</p>	<p>Staff relationships are characterised by openness, honesty, mutual trust, respect, support and care.</p> <p>Everyone's contribution is valued.</p>
<i>How do you know this?</i>				

PLC processes	<p>Attention is paid to trying to put into place the necessary structures, systems and policies that will help support PLC development: creating time; locating space; planning communication mechanisms; use of meetings and other procedures; arranging staff deployment etc.</p>	<p>Most of the necessary structures, systems and policies are in place to support PLC development.</p> <p>Attention is paid to dealing with resource and structural issues that get in the way of PLC development.</p>	<p>Time, money, space, meetings, communication procedures and staff deployment are targeted as a priority to promote the ongoing development of the PLC.</p> <p>Resource and structural issues are dealt with swiftly and actively.</p>
<i>How do you know this?</i>			



<p>PLC processes</p>	<p>Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i></p>	<p>Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i></p>	<p>Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i></p>	<p>Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i></p>
<p>Promoting professional learning</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>An explicit needs identification process is rarely used, either for individual staff or whole-school, centre or college needs.</p> <p>Co-ordination responsibility for continuing professional development is unspecified or unclear.</p> <p>Information for staff mainly comprises details about courses and training days.</p>	<p>A needs identification process has been developed and is being used for staff and whole-school, centre or college professional learning needs.</p> <p>Continuous learning of all staff is increasingly promoted.</p> <p>Attention is paid to strengthening the co-ordination of professional learning.</p> <p>Performance management is starting to be used as a process to support the PLC's development.</p>	<p>Staff and whole-school, centre or college professional learning needs are clearly identified.</p> <p>Continuous learning of all staff is promoted and carefully co-ordinated. A range of opportunities is planned to enable staff to learn from and with each other and facilitate the transfer of new learning into practice.</p> <p>Performance management is used as a positive process to support the PLC's development.</p> <p>Some staff are encouraged to take responsibility in promoting the professional learning of colleagues.</p>	<p>Staff and whole-school, centre or college professional learning needs are regularly and consistently identified.</p> <p>Continuous professional learning and development for all staff is actively promoted and carefully co-ordinated.</p> <p>Attention is paid to ensure that new learning is transferred into practice.</p> <p>Opportunities are automatically planned to ensure staff can learn with and from each other.</p> <p>Staff are actively encouraged to take responsibility in promoting the professional learning of colleagues.</p>

PLC processes	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
<p>Evaluating and sustaining the PLC</p> <p><i>How do we know this</i></p>	<p>There is little or no discussion about the concept of a PLC.</p> <p>There is little evaluation of how the process of the PLC operates or how its development progresses.</p> <p>There is little evaluation of continuing professional development's (CPD's) impact or of other PLC activities.</p>	<p>The idea of a PLC is introduced to staff.</p> <p>There is occasional evaluation of how the process of the PLC operates or how its development progresses.</p> <p>There is some evaluation of CPD's impact and of other PLC activities.</p>	<p>The PLC is consciously and actively developed.</p> <p>There is regular evaluation of how the process of the PLC operates or how its development progresses.</p> <p>CPD's impact on practice is evaluated, as are many other PLC activities.</p>	<p>Being a PLC is just 'part of the way we do things here'.</p> <p>People understand and support the idea of a PLC.</p> <p>Regular attention is given to evaluating the process, progress and impact of the PLC and all of its activities, including CPD.</p> 
<p>Leading and managing to promote the PLC</p> <p><i>How do we know this</i></p>	<p>The headteacher (principal) works to build trust and begins to develop and share a learning vision and focus.</p> <p>Senior leadership team members are encouraged to participate in PLC leadership.</p> <p>Few other staff are involved in leading any PLC activities.</p>	<p>Attention is given by senior leaders to developing and spreading a learning vision and focus and building trust.</p> <p>Senior leaders model teamwork and leadership of learning.</p> <p>Other staff are involved in leading some PLC activities.</p>	<p>Senior leaders maintain their attention to developing and spreading a learning vision and focus and building trust.</p> <p>Senior leaders model learning.</p> <p>Leadership for different PLC activities is increasingly taken up by other staff.</p>	<p>Senior leaders are deeply committed to the development and sustainability of the school's PLC and prioritise this as a major leadership and management task.</p> <p>Distributing leadership among staff is an accepted practice.</p> 

Summary response sheet

	Starting out	Developing	Deepening	Sustaining
Shared values and vision				
Collective responsibility				
Learning-focused collaboration				
Existence of professional learning				
Reflective professional enquiry				
Openness, networks and partnerships				
Inclusive membership				
Mutual trust, respect and support				
Optimising resources and structures				
Promoting professional learning				
Evaluating and sustaining the PLC				
Leading and managing to promote the PLC				

You can use this sheet to: a) mark down individual responses to the implementation rubric;
b) summarise all of the responses of individuals.



Questions for reflection and discussion



What did you notice as you were completing the rubric?

Which are the characteristics and processes, or aspects of these, where you feel you have progressed furthest along the route? What factors seem to have helped you?

Which are the characteristics and processes, or aspects of these, where you feel progression has been slower? What seems to have been holding back the PLC's development in these areas?

How will you move forward with this information? (You may also find it helpful to use *Investigating the culture of your professional learning community*, another *Audit* activity, to gather some different kinds of data. Alternatively, the *Planning* and *Action* materials may offer some ideas about next steps.)



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www.gtce.org.uk

Audit

Investigating the culture of your professional learning community
Comparing your preferred future and the current situation in your
professional learning community

Deciding where you are as a professional learning community

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E: info@gtce.org.uk
W: www.gtce.org.uk

DfES Innovation Unit

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E: innovation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
W: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/innovation-unit

Effective Professional Learning Communities

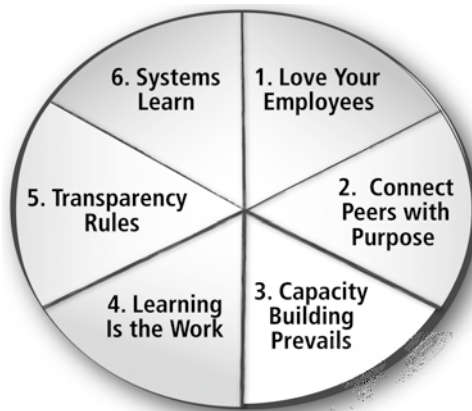
University of Bristol
Graduate School of Education
8-10 Berkeley Square
Bristol
BS8 1HH

W: www.eplc.info

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

MICHAEL FULLAN

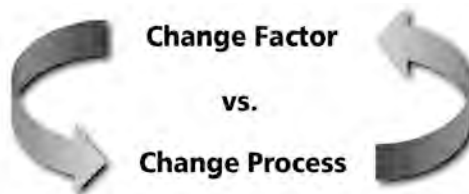
The Six Secrets of Change



— Fullan, 2008a

Learning to Lead Change

The Pathways Problem



What is Change?

- New materials
- New behaviors/practices
- New beliefs/understanding

The Implementation Dip



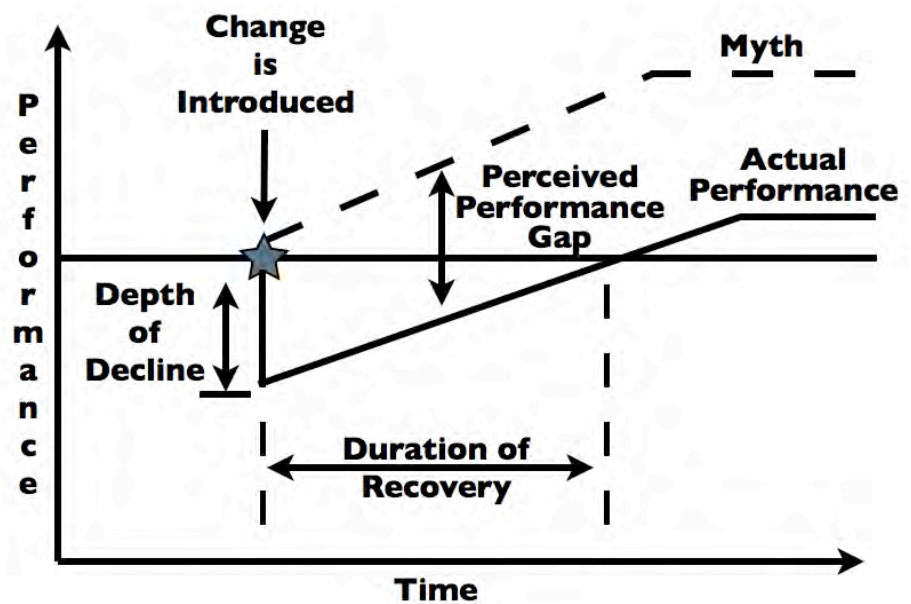
education in motion

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

Change Insights

- The implementation dip is normal
- Behaviors change before beliefs
- The size and prettiness of the planning document is inversely related to the quantity of action and student learning (Reeves, 2002)
- Shared vision or ownership is more of an outcome of a quality process than it is a precondition
- Feelings are more influential than thoughts (Kotter, 2008)

Implementation



— Herold & Fedor, 2008

Change Savvy

Change savvy leadership involves:

- Careful entry into the new setting
- Listening to and learning from those who have been there longer
- Engage in fact finding and joint problem solving
- Carefully (rather than rashly) diagnosing the situation
- Forthrightly addressing people's concerns
- Being enthusiastic, genuine and sincere about the change circumstances
- Obtaining buy-in for what needs fixing
- Developing a credible plan for making that fix

— Herold & Fedor, 2008

Influences on School Capacity and School Student Achievement



— Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000

School Capacity

The collective power of the full staff to improve student achievement.

School capacity includes and requires:

1. Knowledge, skills, dispositions of individuals
2. Professional community
3. Program coherence
4. Technical resources
5. Shared leadership

— Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000

What is Collaboration?

A systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results.

— Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2002

Tri-Level Reform



— Fullan, 2005

Secret One: Love your Employees

Explore the importance of building the school by focusing on both the teachers and staff, and students and the community. The key is enabling staff to learn continuously. Evidence will be provided from successful business companies as well as from education.

Theory X Assumptions

- The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he or she can.
- Because of their dislike for work, most people must be controlled and threatened before they will work hard enough.
- The average human prefers to be directed, dislikes responsibility, is unambiguous, and desires security above everything else.

— *McGregor, 1960*

Theory Y Assumptions

- If a job is satisfying, then the result will be commitment to the organization.
- The average person learns under proper conditions not only to accept but to seek responsibility.
- Imagination, creativity, and ingenuity can be used to solve work problems by a large number of employees.

— *McGregor, 1960*

Dimensions of Relational Coordination

Relationships	American	Southwest
Shared goals	"Ninety percent of the ramp employees don't care what happens, even if the walls fall down, as long as they get their check."	"I've never seen so many people work so hard to do one thing. You see people checking their watches to get the on-time departure ... then it's over and you're back on time."
Shared knowledge	Participants revealed little awareness of the overall process. They typically explained their own set of tasks without reference to the overall process of flight departures.	Participants exhibited relatively clear mental models of the overall process — an understanding of the links between their own jobs and the jobs of other functions. Rather than just knowing what to do, they knew why, based on shared knowledge of how the overall process worked.
Mutual respect	"There are employees working here who think they're better than other employees. Gate and ticket agents think they're better than the ramp. The ramp think they're better than cabin cleaners — think it's a sissy, woman's job. Then the cabin cleaners look down on the building cleaners. The mechanics think the ramp are a bunch of luggage handlers.	"No one takes the job of another person for granted. The skycap is just as critical as the pilot. You can always count on the next guy standing there. No one department is any more important than another."

Communications

Frequent and timely communication	"Here you don't communicate. And sometimes you end up not knowing things ... Everyone says we need effective communication. But it's a low priority in action ... The hardest thing at the gates when flights are delayed is to get information."	"There is constant communication between customer service and the ramp. When planes have to be switched and bags must be moved, customer service will advise the ramp directly or through operations." If there's an aircraft swap "operations keeps everyone informed. ... It happens smoothly."
Problem-solving communication	"If you ask anyone here, what's the last thing you think of when there's a problem, I bet your bottom dollar it's the customer. And these are guys who work hard every day. But they're thinking, how do I keep my ass out of the sling?"	"We figure out the cause of the delay. We do not necessarily chastise, though sometimes that comes into play. It is a matter of working together. Figuring out what we can learn. Not finger pointing."

— Gittel, 2003

Motivational Work

- Meaningful, accomplishable work
- Enabling development
- Sense of camaraderie
- Being well led

Characteristics of Firms of Endearment (FoEs)

What we call a humanistic company is run in such a way that its stakeholders — customers, employees, suppliers, business partners, society, and many investors — develop an emotional connection with it, an affectionate regard not unlike the way many people feel about their favourite sports teams. Humanistic companies — or firms of endearment (FoEs) — seek to maximize their value to society as a whole, not just to their shareholders. They are the ultimate value creators: They create emotional value, experiential value, social value, and of course, financial value. People who interact with such companies feel safe, secure, and pleased in their dealings. They enjoy working with or for the company, buying from it, investing in it, and having it as a neighbour.

— *Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2007*

FoEs Performance

- Over a ten-year horizon, FoEs outperformed the *Good to Great* companies: 1,026 percent return versus 331 percent (a 3-to-1 ratio).
- Over five years, FoEs returned 128 percent, compared to 77 percent by the *Good to Great* companies (a 1.7-to-1 ratio).

— *Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2007*

**Reflection on Content:
(Three-Person-Interview)**

In groups of three discuss the following questions:

1. Who are your stakeholders?
2. What does your organization believe in and stand for?
3. What conditions do you need to create a Theory Y (FoE) environment?

Worksheet

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

Secret Two: Connect Peers with Purpose

Purposeful peer interaction within the school is crucial. Student learning and achievement increase substantially when teachers work in learning communities supported by school leaders who focus on improvement.

Jersey Video

| Why is this a positive example of teaching connecting with peers?

Knowledge Sharing

| Literacy Learning Fair

Learning Fair Outcomes

- Forces schools to explain themselves
- Time for celebrating the work of the year
- Learn new ideas from other schools
- Friendly competition to outdo each other
- Fosters district identity

Results of Connecting

- Knowledge flows as people pursue and continuously learn what works best
- Identity with an entity larger than oneself expands the self into powerful consequences.

— Fullan, 2008a

We-We Commitment

| What are your two best strategies for connecting peers?

Secret Three: Capacity Building Prevails

The most effective strategies involve helping teachers and principals develop the instructional and management of change skills necessary for school improvement. The role of assessment for learning is essential in order to link data on learning to instructional practices that achieve student results.

Capacity Building | Capacity building concerns competencies, resources, and motivation. Individuals and groups are high on capacity if they possess and continue to develop these three components in concert.
— Fullan, 2008a

Judgmentalism | Judgmentalism is not just perceiving something as ineffective, but doing so in a pejorative and negative way.
— Fullan, 2008a

Non-Judgmentalism | Focused on improvement in the face of ineffective performance rather than labeling or categorizing weaknesses.
— Fullan, 2008a

Fear Prevents Acting on Knowledge | When people fear for their jobs or their reputation it is unlikely that they will take risks. Fear causes a focus on the short-term to neglect of the mid or longer term. Fear creates a focus on the individual rather than the group. Teamwork suffers.

Lincoln on Temperance | Assume to dictate to his judgment, or command his action, or mark him to be one to be shunned and despised, and he will retreat within himself, close all avenues to his head and his heart; and tho your cause be naked truth itself, transformed to the heaviest lance harder than steel can be made, and tho you throw it with more than Herculean force and precision, you shall no more be able to pierce him than to penetrate the hard shell of a tortoise with a rye straw.
— Quoted in Miller, 2002, pp. 148-149

Lincoln on Slavery | We can succeed only in concert. It is not 'can any of us imagine better', but 'can we all do better.'
— Quoted in Miller, 2002, pp. 224; italics in original

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

Judgmentalism

Is it possible to perceive something as ineffective and not be judgmental about it?

Letter off A, B

- Pick any of the four quadrants that represents a situation that you have experienced
- Make a few notations within the quadrant
- Do a two-step interview with your partner A, B

FEELING	FEEDBACK	
	Indirect	Direct
Belittled		
Not Belittled		

As a leader...

- Practice non-judgmentalism when you are giving feedback
- Practice non-defensiveness when you are receiving feedback

Capacity Building

People who thrive here have a certain humility. They know they can get better; they want to learn from the best. We look for people who light up when they are around other talented people.

— Taylor & LaBarre, 2002

Secret Four: Learning Is the Work

Professional development (PD) in workshops and courses is only an input to continuous learning and precision in teaching. Successful growth itself is accomplished when the culture of the school supports day-to-day learning of teachers engaged in improving what they do in the classroom and school.

Culture of Learning

If we were to identify the single greatest difference between Toyota and other organizations (including service, healthcare, and manufacturing), it would be the depth of understanding among Toyota employees regarding their work.

— Liker & Meier, 2007

Toyota’s Approach

The essence of Toyota’s approach to improving performance consists of three components:

1. Identify critical knowledge
2. Transfer knowledge using job instruction
3. Verify learning and success

— Liker & Meier, 2007

Breakthrough



— Fullan, Hill, & Crévola, 2006

The Container Store

The Container Store provides 235 hours of training to first-year employees and 160 hours every year thereafter, all with a view to creating a culture where people learn from experience.

— Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2007

Non-Judgmentalism ... Again

The objective is not to identify whom to blame for a problem, it is to find out where the system failed.

— Liker & Meier, 2007

Secret Five: Transparency Rules

Ongoing data and access to seeing effective practices is necessary for success. It takes up the dilemmas of 'de-privatizing practice' in which it becomes normal and desirable for teachers to observe and be observed in teaching facilitated by coaches and mentors.

Getting Started with Transparency

Data walls — elementary teachers
Data walls — high school teachers

— *Liker & Meier, 2007*

Medicine

To fix medicine we need to do two things: measure ourselves, and be open about what we are doing.

— *Gawande, 2007*

Classroom Improvement

Transparency + non-judgmentalism + good help = classroom improvement

— *Fullan, 2008a*

Statistical Neighbors

As part of the overall strategy, Ontario created a new database, which is called “Statistical Neighbors.” All four thousand schools are in the system. They are organized into four bands — students and schools from the most disadvantaged communities, two bands in the middle, and a fourth comprising students in the least disadvantaged communities. Schools can be examined using other categories as well — size of school, percentage of ESL students, geographical setting (rural or urban), and so on.

We are now in a position to use the data, and here is where the nuance of Secret Five comes into play. Simply publishing the results can possibly do some good, but more likely than not would have negative side effects. Instead we operate under a set of ground rules:

1. We do not condone league tables — displaying the results of every school from lowest to highest scores without regard to context. Instead we do the following:
 - a. Help schools compare themselves with themselves — that is, look at what progress they are making compared to previous years;
 - b. Help schools compare themselves with their statistical neighbors, comparing apples with apples;
 - c. Help schools examine their results relative to an external or absolute standard, such as how other schools in the province are faring and how close they are to achieving 100 percent success in literacy and numeracy.
2. We work with the seventy-two school districts and their four thousand schools to set annual “aspirational targets” based on their current starting point.
3. We focus on capacity building, helping districts identify and use effective instructional practices.
4. Although we take each year’s results seriously, we are cautious about drawing conclusions about any particular school based on just one year’s results. We prefer to examine three-year trends to determine if schools or districts are “stuck” or “moving” (improving or declining).
5. For schools and districts that are continuing to under-perform, we intervene with a program called Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP), which provides targeted help designed to improve performance. There are currently about 850 of the 4,000 schools in this program. We are careful not to stigmatize schools in OFIP (in keeping with Secret Three), because doing so gets people sidetracked into issues of blame.

Overall, we think that this approach to data-informed development is effective. There is quite a lot of pressure built into the process, but that pressure is based on constructive transparency. When data are precise, presented in a non-judgmental way, considered by peers, and used for improvement as well as for external accountability, they serve to balance pressure and support. This approach seems to work. After five years of flatlined results before beginning the program (1999 – 2003), the province’s literacy and numeracy scores have climbed by some ten percentage points, with OFIP schools improving more than the average.

In England, schools and LAs can also track their performance through a data system called RAISE in which they can trace their performance over time.

— Fullan, 2008a

Secret Six: Systems Learn

Continuous learning depends on developing many leaders in the school in order to enhance continuity. It also depends on schools being confident in the face of complexity, and open to new ideas.

Systems Learn

The fact that Toyota can succeed over decades ... and that the company shows no "leadership effects" — or changes from succession — speaks to building a robust set of interrelated management practices and philosophies that provide advantage above and beyond the ideas or inspirations of single individuals.

— *Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006*

Certainty

Some people I've encountered seem more certain about everything than I am about anything.

— *Rubin, 2003*

Wisdom

Wisdom is using your knowledge while doubting what you know.

— *Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006*

Leaders ...

... Have to be more confident than the situation warrants. They have to develop leadership in others. Be specific about the few things that matter and keep repeating them.

— *Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006*

Systems Learning

Confidence but not certitude in the face of complexity. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

— *Fullan, 2008a*

Leadership

Shackleton Video

What evidence did you see of Shackleton’s leadership style?

Scott

- Ambitious
- Naïve technically
- Hierarchical
- Arrogant
- Wary of colleagues more able than himself
- Indifferent selector
- Poor trainer
- Bad safety record
- Gifted writer

Shackleton

- Single-minded
- Excellent in crisis
- Technically sensible
- Gregarious
- Excellent public speaker
- Broadly objective
- Good conceptual planner
- Effective selector and trainer
- Good safety record
- Bored by administration
- Politically astute

— *Morrel & Capparell, 2001*

On Leadership ... Scott was dour, bullying and controlling; Shackleton was warm, humorous and egalitarian ... Scott tried to orchestrate every movement of his men; Shackleton gave his men responsibility and some measure of independence. Scott was secretive and untrusting; Shackleton talked openly and frankly with the men about all aspects of the work. Scott put his team at risk to achieve his goals; Shackleton valued his men’s lives above all else.

Scott’s men died. All of Shackleton’s men survived the wreck of their ship, *Endurance* in the crushing Antarctic ice, stranded twelve thousand miles from civilization with no means of communication. Isolated for almost two years on an Antarctic ice flow, Shackleton and a few of his men endured an eight-hundred-mile trip across the frigid south Atlantic in little more than a rowboat to get help for his men. All twenty-seven men in the crew survived in good health.

— *Morrel & Capparell, 2001*

Shackleton’s Leadership Traits:

- Cultivate a sense of compassion and responsibility for others.
- Once you commit, stick through the tough learning period.
- Do your part to help create an upbeat environment at work — important for productivity.
- Broaden your cultural and social horizons, learning to see things from different perspectives.
- In a rapidly changing world, be willing to venture in new directions to seize new opportunities and learn new skills.
- Find a way to turn setbacks and failures to your own advantage.
- Be bold in vision and careful in planning.
- Learn from past mistakes.
- Never insist on reaching a goal at any cost; it must be achieved without undue hardship for your staff.

— *Morrel & Capparell, 2001*

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

- | | |
|--|--|
| What's Worth Fighting
for in the Principalship:
Guidelines for Principals | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. De-privatize teaching2. Model instructional leadership3. Build capacity first4. Grow other leaders5. Divert the distractors6. Be a system leader |
|--|--|

— Fullan, 2008

- | | |
|---|--|
| What's Worth Fighting
for in the Principalship:
Guidelines for Systems | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Invest in the instructional leadership of principals2. Combine direction and flexibility3. Mobilize the power of data4. Use peers to change district culture5. Address the managerial requirements6. Stay the course |
|---|--|

— Fullan, 2008

Leadership Therapy

A. Rowley, 2007

The Leadership Circumplex

The circumplex is based upon two related dimensions of leadership behavior — conviction and connection.

Conviction measures the following behaviors:

- The ability to provide a compelling vision;
- The capacity to manage or lead change;
- Reality sense — the ability to grasp what is happening in the industry and a commitment to understanding and servicing the needs of the customer;
- The capacity to display passion, conviction, belief and authenticity; and
- A commitment to continuous learning.

Connection measures the following:

- Self-awareness — an understanding of how your behavior affects others and how to change it according to the person/situation;
- Effective communication — you demonstrate a sense of power and competence through communication;
- Developing people — you put developing people as a priority and ensure that people have personal development plans; and
- The capacity to revitalize the business values

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THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE



Michael Fullan is the former Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Recognized as an international authority on educational reform, Michael is engaged in training, consulting, and evaluating change projects around the world. His ideas for managing change are used in many countries, and his

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Michael Fullan led the evaluation team which conducted the four-year assessment of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in England from 1998-2003. In April 2004 he was appointed Special Advisor to the Premier and Minister of Education in Ontario.

Production and technology for this presentation provided by Claudia Cuttress & Associates.
Graphics and animations by www.blinkblink.to

Special thanks to Eleanor Adam and Joanne Quinn for training design contributions.

RTI Fidelity of Implementation Rubric

The Response to Intervention (RTI) Fidelity Rubric is for use by individuals who are responsible for monitoring school-level fidelity of RTI implementation. The rubric is aligned with the essential components of RTI and the infrastructure that is necessary for successful implementation. It is accompanied by a worksheet with guiding questions and score points for use in an interview with a school’s RTI leadership team.

<i>Assessments—Screening, progress monitoring, and other supporting assessments are used to inform data-based decision making.</i>			
Measures	1	3	5
<i>Screening—The RTI framework accurately identifies students at risk of poor learning outcomes or challenging behaviors.</i>			
Screening Tools	Insufficient evidence that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate.	Evidence indicates that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate, but staff is unable to articulate the supporting evidence.	Evidence indicates that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate, and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Universal Screening	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).	All of the following conditions are met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).
Data Points to Verify Risk	Screening data are not used or are used alone to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.	Screening data are used in concert with at least one other data source (e.g., classroom performance, curriculum-based assessment, performance on state	Screening data are used in concert with at least two other data sources (e.g., classroom performance, performance on state assessments, diagnostic assessment

		assessments, diagnostic assessment data, short-term progress monitoring) to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.	data, short-term progress monitoring) to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.
Progress Monitoring —Ongoing and frequent monitoring of progress quantifies rates of improvement and informs instructional practice and the development of individualized programs. Measures are appropriate for the student’s grade and/or skill level.			
Progress-Monitoring Tools	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet no more than one of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available.	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet two or three of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available.	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet all of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Progress-Monitoring Process	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).

Data-Based Decision Making—Data-based decision-making processes are used to inform instruction, movement within the multilevel system, and disability identification (in accordance with state law).

Measures	1	3	5
Decision-Making Process	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/ intervention levels meets no more than one of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/ intervention levels meets two of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/intervention levels meets all of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).
Data System	A data system is in place that meets two or fewer of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student- level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.	A data system is in place that meets three of the following four conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.	A data system is in place that meets all of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.
Responsiveness to Secondary and Intensive Levels of Intervention	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.

Multilevel Instruction—The RTI framework includes a school-wide, multilevel system of instruction and interventions for preventing school failure. Commonly represented by the three-tiered triangle, multilevel instruction also is known as the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

Measures	1	3	5
Primary-Level Instruction/Core Curriculum (Tier I)			
Research-Based Curriculum Materials	Few core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups).	Some core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups).	All core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups).
Articulation of Teaching and Learning (in and across grade levels)	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning is well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning is well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning is well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.
Differentiated Instruction	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) interviewed staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) interviewed staff can explain how most teachers in the school use student data to identify and address the needs of students.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) interviewed staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) interviewed staff can explain how most teachers in the school use student data to identify and address the needs of students.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) interviewed staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) interviewed staff can explain how most teachers in the school use data to identify and address the needs of students.
Standards-Based	The core curriculum (reading and mathematics) is not aligned with the Common Core or other state standards.	The core curriculum (reading and mathematics) is partially aligned with the Common Core or other state standards.	The core curriculum (reading and mathematics) is aligned with the Common Core or other state standards.

Exceeding Benchmark	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.	One of the following conditions is met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.
<i>Secondary-Level Intervention (Tier II)</i>			
Evidence-Based Intervention	Secondary-level interventions are not evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.	Some secondary-level interventions are evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.	All secondary-level interventions are evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.
Complements Core Instruction	Secondary-level intervention is poorly aligned with core instruction and incorporates different topics, even though those topics are not foundational skills that support core program learning objectives.	Secondary-level intervention incorporates foundational skills, but these only occasionally align with the learning objectives of core instruction.	Secondary-level intervention is well aligned with core instruction and incorporates foundational skills that support the learning objectives of core instruction.
Instructional Characteristics	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) secondary-level interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) secondary-level interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	All three of the following conditions are met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) secondary-level interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.
Addition to Primary	Secondary-level interventions replace core instruction.	Secondary-level interventions sometimes supplement core instruction and sometimes replace core instruction.	Secondary-level interventions supplement core instruction.

Intensive Intervention—Individualized with a focus on the academic needs of students with disabilities and those significantly below grade level (Tier III)			
Data-Based Interventions Adapted Based on Student Need	Intensive interventions are not more intensive (e.g., no increase in duration or frequency, change in interventionist, change in group size, or change in intervention) than secondary interventions.	Intensive interventions are more intensive than secondary interventions based only on preset methods to increase intensity (e.g., sole reliance on increased duration or frequency, change in interventionist, decreased group size, or change in intervention program).	Intensive interventions are more intensive than secondary interventions and are adapted to address individual student needs in a number of ways (e.g., increased duration or frequency, change in interventionist, decreased group size, change in instructional delivery, and change in type of intervention) through an iterative manner based on student data.
Instructional Characteristics	None of the following conditions is met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.
Relationship to Primary	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions are aligned to the specific skill needs of students to help them make progress toward core curriculum standards.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.

Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms—*Knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of RTI in a unified system to meet the established goals.*

Measures	1	3	5
Prevention Focus	Staff generally perceives RTI as a program that solely supports the prereferral process for special education.	Some staff understand that RTI is a framework to prevent all students, including students with disabilities, from having academic problems.	All staff understand that RTI is a framework to prevent all students, including students with disabilities, from having academic problems.
Leadership Personnel	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders undermine the effectiveness of the essential components of the RTI framework at the school.	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders are inconsistent and only somewhat supportive of the essential components of the RTI framework at the school; support for RTI implementation is not very evident.	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders proactively support the essential components of the RTI framework at the school, and help make the RTI framework more effective; support for RTI implementation is a high priority.
School-Based Professional Development	The school has no well-defined, school-based professional development mechanism to support continuous improvement of instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions.	Some forms of school-based professional development are available, but most are not consistent or job embedded to ensure continuous improvement in instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions.	School-based professional development is institutionalized and structured so that all teachers continuously examine, reflect upon, and improve instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions.
Schedules	School wide schedules are not aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; inadequate time is available for interventions.	School wide schedules are partially aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; some additional time is built in for interventions.	School wide schedules are aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; adequate additional time is built in for interventions.
Resources	Resources (e.g., funds, programs) are not allocated to support RTI implementation.	Resources (e.g., funds, programs) are partially allocated to support RTI implementation.	Resources (e.g., funds, programs) are adequately allocated to support RTI implementation.
Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness	One or none of the following conditions is met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting	Two of the following conditions are met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting	All three of the following conditions are met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting

	culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.	culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.	culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.
Communications With and Involvement of Parents	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI is shared with parents; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating parents on the progress of their child who is receiving secondary or intensive interventions; and (3) parents are involved during decision making regarding the progress of students receiving intensive intervention.	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI is shared with parents; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating parents on the progress of their child who is receiving secondary or intensive interventions; and (3) parents are involved during decision making regarding the progress of students receiving intensive intervention.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI is shared with parents; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating parents on the progress of their child who is receiving secondary or intensive interventions; and (3) parents are informed about decision making regarding the progress of students receiving intensive intervention.
Communication With and Involvement of All Staff	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI and data-based decision- making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.	At least two of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI and data-based decision-making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI and data-based decision- making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.
RTI Teams	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) the RTI team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.	At least two of the following conditions are met: (1) the RTI team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) the RTI team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.

<i>Fidelity and Evaluation</i> —System for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity and effectiveness of the RTI model.			
Measures	1	3	5
Fidelity	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum and secondary and intensive interventions; and (2) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.	One of the following conditions is met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum and secondary and intensive interventions; and (2) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum and secondary and intensive interventions; and (2) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.
Evaluation	None of the following conditions are met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the RTI framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the RTI framework.	At least one of the following conditions is met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the RTI framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the RTI framework.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the RTI framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the RTI framework.

RTI Essential Components Worksheet

School: _____ District: _____ Date: _____

Person(s) Interviewed: _____

Interviewer(s): _____

Purpose:

The purpose of this worksheet is to provide a tool for collecting relevant information and for recording a school's rating on various items related to response to intervention (RTI) implementation. Descriptions of ratings for each item are provided on the RTI Essential Components Integrity Rubric (the Rubric).

Information about school-level implementation (Grades K–8) may be collected through interviews with school personnel and through observations and document review. After all of the information has been collected, use your notes and the Rubric to rate the school on each item. The Rubric provides a five-point rating scale and descriptions of practices that would score a 1, 3, or 5. Data collectors may assign the school a rating of 2 or 4 if the information collected suggests the school falls between the rubric descriptions. For example, if the reviewer judges a school to be performing at a level higher than the Rubric describes for a 3 rating but not quite at the level described for a 5, then the reviewer should rate the school as performing at a 4.

<p>2. Universal Screening</p>	<p>Describe the process for conducting screening in your school. To what extent is this process consistently followed?</p> <p>Are all students screened?</p> <p>How many times during the school year are students screened?</p> <p>Do you use a well-defined cut score or decision point to identify students at risk?</p> <p>How do you ensure that administration of screening assessments follows the developer’s guidelines?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>3. Data Points to Verify Risk</p>	<p>Do you review other information to help verify that the results of the initial screening are accurate before placing a student in secondary-level or intensive intervention? If so, what other types of assessment data do you use?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

Progress Monitoring—Ongoing and frequent monitoring of progress quantifies rates of improvement and informs instructional practice and the development of individualized programs. Measures are appropriate for the student’s grade and/or skill level.

Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Progress Monitoring Tools	<p>What tools does your school use for progress monitoring (probe across content areas)?</p> <p>Did school or district staff consider the evidence from the vendor regarding the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the progress monitoring tool(s) when selecting it/them?</p> <p>Does your school have documentation from the vendor that the tool(s) have been shown to be valid, reliable, and accurate with subgroups in your school?</p> <p>Can staff articulate the evidence supporting the rigor of the tool(s)?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
Progress Monitoring Process	<p>Describe the process used for monitoring progress.</p> <p>How often is the progress of students in secondary level interventions monitored?</p> <p>How often is the progress of students in intensive intervention monitored?</p> <p>Does monitoring occur with sufficient frequency to show a trend in academic progress over time?</p> <p>How closely does administration of the progress monitoring tool(s) follow the developer’s guidelines?</p> <p>To what extent is this process</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

	consistently followed?		
<i>Data-Based Decision-Making—Data-based decision-making processes are used to inform instruction, movement within the multilevel system, and disability identification (in accordance with state law).</i>			
Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Decision-Making Process	<p>Describe how decisions are made to move students between tiers.</p> <p>Who is involved in decision making?</p> <p>What data are used to inform those decisions, and how are they used?</p> <p>What criteria and guidelines are used for making decisions?</p> <p>To what extent are the screening, progress monitoring, and other assessment data used to inform instruction at all tiers, including the core instruction?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
Data System	<p>Is there a system for collecting and organizing student academic data, screening data, progress monitoring data, and other forms of data? If so, please describe.</p> <p>Is the system used consistently across school staff?</p> <p>Are instructional decisions made about students tracked in the data system or through another method (including movement between tiers)?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Responsiveness to Secondary and Intensive Levels of Intervention</p>	<p>Describe how decisions about responsiveness to secondary-level interventions or intensive intervention are made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are progress monitoring data used? ▪ How is baseline performance established? ▪ What goal setting method is used? (e.g., end-of-year benchmarks, rate of improvement, intra-individual framework? Are rates or norms provided by the vendor/developer? ▪ What decision rules are used? <p>Are the criteria implemented accurately and consistently?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
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Multilevel Instruction—The RTI framework includes a school-wide, multilevel system of instruction and interventions for preventing school failure. Commonly represented by the three-tiered triangle, multilevel instruction also is known as the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Primary-Level Instruction/Core Curriculum (Tier I)			
Research-Based Curriculum Materials	Describe primary-level instruction (core curriculum) materials. What is the research base? When your school selected its core instructional materials, how much attention was paid to the research base?	Notes Evidence Sources Recommendations	Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Justification of Rating
Articulation of Teaching and Learning (in and across grade levels)	Describe the process that supports the articulation of teaching and learning from one grade to another. Describe the process that supports the articulation of teaching and learning among teachers in the same grade. How consistent is the learning experience among students in the same grade and subject with different teachers?	Notes Evidence Sources Recommendations	Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Justification of Rating

<p>Differentiated Instruction</p>	<p>To what extent do teachers in this school use student assessment data and knowledge of student readiness, language, and culture to offer students in the same class different teaching and learning strategies to address student needs?</p> <p>How consistent is this effort among the teaching staff?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Standards-Based</p>	<p>To what extent is the core curriculum in reading and mathematics aligned to state standards?</p> <p>Are the instructional materials aligned to the standards? Are model or sample lessons and activities that demonstrate effective teaching of the standards available to teachers?</p> <p>Have teachers been trained in the content of the standards and in how to use that content within their lessons?</p> <p>Are teachers utilizing their training and aligning their instruction to these standards?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Exceeding Benchmark</p>	<p>Are programs and activities provided to enrich or augment the curriculum for students exceeding benchmarks? If so, please describe.</p> <p>Are any of these programs and activities available above and beyond the core instruction?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Secondary-Level Intervention (Tier II)</p>			
<p>Evidence-Based Intervention</p>	<p>What program(s) does your school use for secondary-level intervention?</p> <p>How were these programs selected?</p> <p>Have these programs demonstrated efficacy with the target populations (e.g., has research shown that the interventions positively impact student achievement)?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Complements Core Instruction</p>	<p>How do instructors of secondary-level interventions ensure that the content they address is well aligned and complements the core instruction for each student?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Instructional Characteristics</p>	<p>Are the secondary level interventions always led by staff adequately trained to implement the interventions with fidelity?</p> <p>If not, who provides the secondary level intervention and what is their background?</p> <p>Are the secondary interventions always conducted with small groups of students?</p> <p>What is the maximum group size?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Addition to Primary</p>	<p>Are secondary-level interventions (i.e., Tier II) always implemented as supplements to the core curriculum?</p> <p>If not, please explain.</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

Intensive Intervention — <i>Individualized with a focus on the academic needs of students with disabilities and those significantly below grade level (Tier III)</i>			
<p>Data-Based Interventions Adapted Based on Student Need</p>	<p>How are evidence-based interventions intensified or individualized at the intensive level?</p> <p>How are the interventions used at this level developed?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Instructional Characteristics</p>	<p>Who provides intensive intervention? Can you describe their background and level of training in providing data-based individualized instruction?</p> <p>Does the group size allow for the interventionist to adjust and individualize instruction to address the needs of each student?</p> <p>Describe an example of a student experiencing intensive intervention.</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Relationship to Primary</p>	<p>Are intensive interventions always implemented as supplements to the core curriculum? If not, please explain. How do you decide if a student receiving intensive intervention should remain in primary-level instruction? How do you ensure meaningful connections between intensive intervention and the general education curriculum (e.g., the Common Core)?</p>	<p>Notes Evidence Sources Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Justification of Rating</p>
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<p><i>Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms—Knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of RTI in a unified system to meet the established goals.</i></p>			
<p>Item</p>	<p>Sample Interview Questions</p>	<p>Comments/Remarks</p>	<p>Ratings</p>
<p>Prevention Focus</p>	<p>To what extent do you believe the teaching staff views the purpose of RTI as primarily to prevent students from having academic and/or behavioral problems? What portion of the teaching staff view RTI as primarily a means for special education identification?</p>	<p>Notes Evidence Sources Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Schedules</p>	<p>Does the schedule reflect additional time beyond the core for secondary-level and intensive intervention?</p> <p>Is there time scheduled for teacher collaboration on instruction and interventions?</p> <p>Are all the pertinent teachers and interventionists available for these collaborative meetings?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Are there adequate materials, programs, and resources allocated to support interventions, assessments, professional development, staffing?</p> <p>Do the programs and materials match the needs of the students at each tier?</p> <p>Is there a process for monitoring the use of resources?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness</p>	<p>What efforts have been made to ensure that core instruction, secondary-level and intensive intervention, and assessments take into account cultural and linguistic factors?</p> <p>How are the demographic and academic data of subgroups represented in your school used to inform the RTI framework?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Communications With and Involvement of Parents</p>	<p>Are parents knowledgeable about the RTI framework in your school?</p> <p>Describe how you communicate with parents about RTI and student performance.</p> <p>How are parents involved in decision making regarding the participation of their child in secondary-level or intensive intervention?</p> <p>How are parents of students at the secondary or intensive level informed of the progress of their children?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Communication With and Involvement of All Staff</p>	<p>Are teachers in your school knowledgeable about the RTI framework?</p> <p>Describe how you communicate with teachers about the school’s RTI plan.</p> <p>How are teachers of students at the secondary or intensive level informed of their progress in the intervention?</p> <p>What process does your school use to ensure teacher collaboration in implementing RTI?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>RTI Teams</p>	<p>Does your school have an RTI team? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who composes that team? ▪ How often does the team meet? ▪ Are there established processes and protocols that help the team work effectively? What are they? <p>How does the team communicate and collaborate with other staff?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

Fidelity and Evaluation—System for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity and effectiveness of the RTI model.

Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Fidelity	<p>Are procedures in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum? Of secondary-level and intensive intervention? Of screening, progress monitoring, and the decision-making process? If so please describe.</p> <p>Who is involved in monitoring the fidelity of implementation?</p> <p>Does the evidence indicate that instruction, interventions, assessments, and decisions are implemented with fidelity?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
Evaluation	<p>How is RTI evaluated at your school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is a plan in place for evaluation? ▪ Is a process in place for reviewing student-level data for all students and for subgroups of students? ▪ Is a process in place to evaluate implementation fidelity? <p>How are evaluation data used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are teachers and interventionists involved in giving and receiving feedback on the effectiveness of the programs and materials? <p>Who is involved in evaluating RTI implementation?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

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