

Oklahoma

School Performance Review



Wewoka Public Schools



OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

June, 2021

Fellow Oklahomans:

The Office of Educational Quality & Accountability is pleased to present the Wewoka Public Schools Performance Review upon the request of Wewoka Public Schools (WPS).

Wewoka Public Schools (WPS) 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 WPS 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 WPS board, administration, staff, parents, and students for their input into this review. The administration and staff are also to be commended for their dedication toward improving educational opportunities for all students.

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

Wewoka Public Schools

June 2021



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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 Wewoka Public Schools (WPS) in September 2020. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability contracted with Prismatic Services to assist with the review. The Prismatic consulting team conducted individual and focus group interviews with district personnel. The team also reviewed operations by touring facilities, observing cafeteria operations, and following school bus routes. Administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, community members, and secondary 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 Atoka, Haworth, Haskell, Porter, and Vian. These districts are called peer districts throughout this report.

For further comparison, a Community Group average is also used throughout the report. WPS falls into community group F2, which includes districts with an Average Daily Membership (ADM) of between 500-999 students. The “2” indicates that the percentage of WPS students eligible to receive free or reduced price meals is above the state average.

During this review, 62 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 efficiency or effectiveness. A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 6**.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and Prismatic wish to express their appreciation to the Board of Education of Wewoka Public Schools, its superintendent, Dr. Shellie Gammill, its principals, Ms. Vickita Slovacek, Mr. Cody Barlow, and Mr. Steven Howard, and the many district employees, students, parents, and community residents who supported and provided input for this review.

WEWOKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Located in east-central Seminole County in northern Oklahoma, Wewoka is situated at the junction of State Highway 56 and U.S. Highway 270. One of the oldest and most historic

communities in Oklahoma, the city of Wewoka was originally located in the Seminole Nation, Indian Territory. In 1849 a group of Seminole slaves led by Gopher John (a.k.a. John Horse), seeking safety and autonomy from the Creek Nation, established a community near the present Wewoka.¹ In 2018-19, the fall enrollment in WPS was 622, comprised mostly of Caucasian, Native American, and multiracial students (**Exhibit 1**).

Exhibit 1
WPS Student Enrollment and Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2018-19

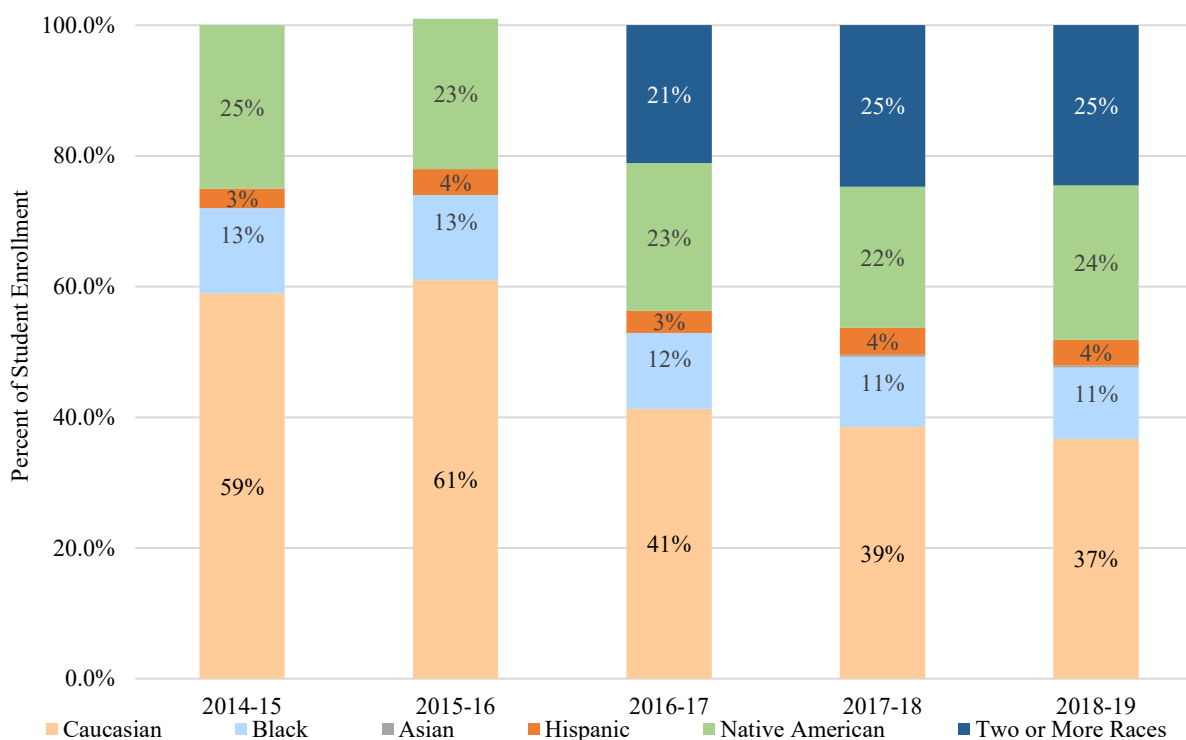
School	Grade Span	Fall Enrollment	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Two or More Races
Wewoka Elementary	EC-6	308	39.6%	9.1%	0.3%	2.6%	21.1%	27.3%
Wewoka Middle School	7-8	135	35.6%	12.6%	0.0%	5.9%	23.0%	23.0%
Wewoka High School	9-12	179	32.4%	12.8%	0.6%	5.0%	28.5%	20.7%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2 shows the trend in student changes over the last five years in WPS. Over that time span, the district has become more diverse, less Caucasian. The category of “two or more races” was not collected and reported until 2016-17.

¹ <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=WE023&l=W>

Exhibit 2
Trend in WPS Student Demographics²

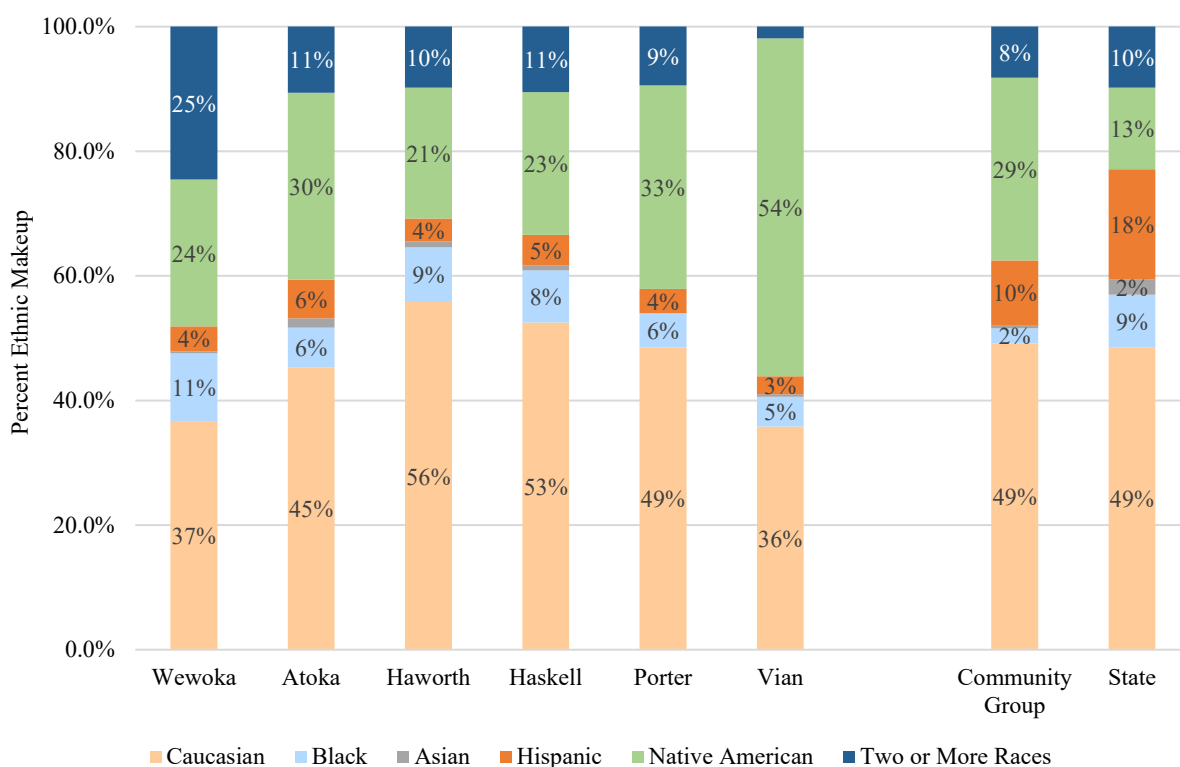


Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3 provides a 2018-19 comparison to the peer districts. While all the districts were diverse, WPS was slightly more diverse than the peers, with the highest proportion of students identified as being two or more races.

² “Two or More Races” was not reported as a category until 2016-17.

Exhibit 3
Comparison of Student Demographics, 2018-19



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

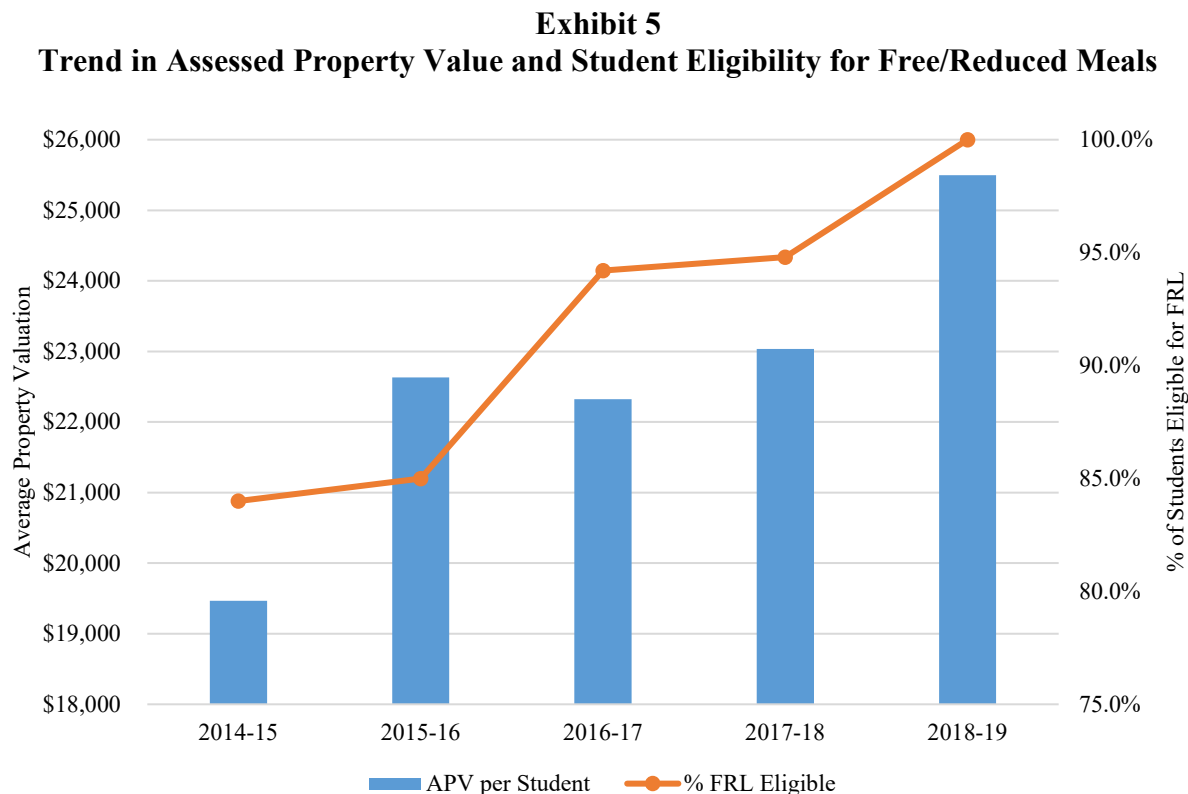
The data in **Exhibit 4** reflect average daily membership (ADM) trends in WPS compared to the peers, community group, and state. While all of the districts and state saw decreases in ADM, WPS experienced the most severe decline, with a 17 percent drop from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Exhibit 4
Wewoka, Peer Districts, and State Student ADM Trends, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Entity	ADM					Percent Change
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
Wewoka	769	728	700	679	638	(17.0%) ▼
Atoka	941	996	929	870	884	(6.1%) ▼
Haworth	614	583	546	537	543	(11.6%) ▼
Haskell	808	836	847	798	740	(8.4%) ▼
Porter	545	559	530	507	533	(2.2%) ▼
Vian	1,025	971	923	931	881	(14.0%) ▼
Community Group	784	779	679	702	703	(10.3%) ▼
State	1,299	1,305	1,267	1,280	1,289	(0.8%) ▼

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 5 shows the trend in WPS assessed property value per student and percent of students eligible for free/reduced-price meals over the last five years. Over that time span, the assessed property value has generally increased (up 31 percent), but so has the proportion of the student body eligible for free/reduced-price meals (up 19 percent).



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

COMMENDATIONS

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability School Performance Review identified “exemplary” or “best practices” in Wewoka Public Schools that led to 40 separate commendations. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability School Performance Review 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 superintendent is commended for exemplary leadership and gaining the trust and confidence of the district’s board of education, staff, and community.

The WPS Board of Education, superintendent, and administrative leadership team are commended for their philosophy to improve the educational opportunities for all students, which leads to overall improved academic achievement.

WPS board of education meetings are well organized, conducted according to established procedures, and public input is welcomed.

The district has implemented the OSSBA evaluation tool for ongoing conversations and feedback between the board and superintendent.

The superintendent has created a positive working environment that fosters collaboration and communication.

The district has implemented the McRel model to provide effective principal and administrator evaluations.

The district has implemented the TLE model to provide an effective teacher evaluation framework and site administrators had systematic processes in place to complete evaluations.

WPS and the Wewoka community are commended for maintaining strong school community relationships.

WPS is commended for operating a food pantry to support students.

The district's teachers and administrators are commended for heightened efforts of frequent, meaningful, effective communication with parents and community.

Chapter 2: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM

The district recently adopted a consistent math series for grades K-4 to support growth in student achievement.

Wewoka Elementary School reviews systematically data from the DIBELS assessments and tracks student progress.

WPS is commended for implementing staffing changes in order to prioritize instructional leadership.

The district is commended for employing two full-time counselors.

Chapter 3: BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The superintendent's initiative and the efforts she puts in to find grant opportunities – and then complete the paperwork usually required for grants – is commendable.

WPS does a good job of keeping its principals and activity fund sponsors informed as to the status of their respective accounts, thereby enabling the various activities to use the dollars in their accounts to enhance their activities.

WPS has developed outstanding procedures for the handling of cash.

WPS has good processes and procedures in place to prevent violations of its purchasing rules.

Chapter 4: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

WPS has achieved a commendable level of maintenance and repair throughout its building stock and grounds over the past five years.

WPS has maintained an important community resource and outreach program in its well-established community use of facilities program.

WPS has initiated and implemented an exemplary community outreach program to families in poverty by opening a food pantry, laundry and shower facilities, as well as access to shoes, clothing, and holiday gifts for student.

The district's custodians do a commendable job keeping the facilities clean.

WPS has demonstrated a commendable attention to the safety of students, faculty, staff, and other building users.

WPS operates with low utilities costs.

WPS is implementing two of the most cost-effective energy conservation measures currently available: LED lamping and an HVAC energy management system.

Chapter 5: SUPPORT SERVICES

WPS is commended for closing all school campuses at lunch times.

WPS started serving Breakfast in the Classroom to all students at the beginning of the school day when COVID-19 serving restrictions were put in place. This practice should continue as a standard meal service for all grades after the restrictions are lifted.

The Child Nutrition program is to be commended for maintaining staffing levels that follow SDE recommended guidelines.

The WPS child nutrition program is paying its fair share of utility costs for the cafetorium.

WPS is commended for participating in USDA programs designed to meet the additional nutritional needs of low income communities.

WPS is commended for securing funding through grants and E-Rate to fund technology equipment, networking, and connectivity.

WPS is commended for implementing a one-to-one initiative district-wide.

WPS has implemented a student technical assistant internship model to provide additional onsite support and valuable student training.

WPS has staffed a technology coach position at each site to provide additional onsite support and training.

WPS has implemented a robust technology equipment inventory system.

The WPS transportation director has improved the efficiency of the transportation operation by maintaining necessary records, re-organizing the shop area, incorporating SDE forms, and improving bus routes.

The WPS transportation department effectively supports the district's special needs students.

WPS has developed safe and efficient bus routes.

WPS has developed good policies and procedures for ensuring that a student is not left on an unattended bus.

WPS has replaced aging buses, likely reducing operational costs and improving fleet reliability.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECTED COSTS AND SAVINGS

A list of recommendations with their associated costs or savings is provided in **Exhibit 6**. 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 should be understood that not all of the recommendations can begin to be implemented at once. 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 School Performance Review recommends that the Wewoka Board of Education ask district administrators to review the recommendations, develop an implementation plan, and monitor its progress.

Exhibit 6
Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	
Chapter 1	Management, Personnel, and Communications						
1	Explore options to ensure that all WPS board members meet training requirements; the protocols of Professional Conduct are adhered to; and board members have a common knowledge base for legal, visionary governance, policy making, and financial oversight.						\$0
2	Implement procedures to ensure the board of education minutes are better available for public review.						\$0
3	Create a comprehensive budget guide that provides transparency and understanding of the financial structure and budgeting process of the district.						\$0
4	Implement an ongoing strategic planning process involving community stakeholders, administration, faculty, and staff that defines decision-making processes and provides governance and direction for long range goals, implementation strategies, and accountability measures.	(\$10,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)			(\$20,000)
5	Complete a demographics study.	(\$6,000)					(\$6,000)
6	Adopt policies and procedures related to annual program evaluation.						\$0
7	Develop processes and procedures to ensure all board policies are updated in a timely manner and available to the public.						\$0
8	Work with OEQA to identify resources to assist emergency certified teachers in gaining standard certification.						\$0
9	Improve recruiting by building relationships with surrounding universities and developing an intentional recruiting program.						\$0
10	Develop policies and forms that outline processes in order to fairly and consistently place administrative and support employees on the district approved pay scales.						\$0
11	Improve the availability and preparedness of substitutes.						\$0
	Subtotal	(\$16,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	(\$26,000)

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	
Chapter 2	Instructional Delivery System						
12	Review curricula and supplemental resources to determine relevancy and alignment with Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS).	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$25,000)
13	Develop and implement Pre-K-12 core standards-based core curriculum alignment frameworks, along with teacher accountability measures.						\$0
14	Develop and implement district-wide processes and procedures to horizontally and vertically align and pace the core curriculum from Pre-K through 12 th grade.						\$0
15	Implement a district-wide process for analyzing student performance data throughout the school year using the analysis results to monitor and adjust curricula and instruction.	(\$3,000)					(\$3,000)
16	Continue to improve teacher instructional delivery skills and practices as both a teacher and a facilitator.	(\$2,000)					(\$2,000)
17	Implement district-wide Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for teachers and administrators, with regularly scheduled release time, standardized norms, support structures, and a focus on continuous school improvement.						\$0
18	Explore additional offerings to support student interests and college-and career-ready needs.	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$100,000)
19	Review resource room practices and procedures making sure the transition from the inclusionary classroom to the resource room best supports each student's learning needs.						\$0
20	Implement a tiered interventions model for remediation.						\$0
21	Continue to strengthen the Gifted and Talented Program and establish clear procedures for identifying students who qualify.						\$0
22	Explore options for offering supportive instructional resources, digital learning opportunities, and collaborative learning activities between the library and the regular classroom.						\$0
	Subtotal	(\$30,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$25,000)	(\$130,000)
Chapter 3	Business Operations						
23	Improve the organization of district financial functions to provide more in-house expertise and reporting.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	
24	Involve campus principals and stakeholders formally in the budget development process.						\$0
25	Develop summary overall budget and year-to-date summary reports that can be posted to the district's website.						\$0
26	Develop a board of education policy that requires direct deposit of employee pay.						\$0
27	Approve a permanent board policy that the superintendent has the authority to approve purchases up to a fixed dollar amount, such as \$10,000, per purchase order.						\$0
28	Put some types of bills, such as utility bills, on Automatic Pay so that the utility company can draft the district's bank account on the due date.						\$0
29	Invest a portion of the district's idle cash into a larger investment pool such as the Oklahoma Liquid Asset Pool, if the yields in the pool exceed the yield from the CDs.						\$0
30	Summarize and post bond information to the district's website so that stakeholders have ready access to it.						\$0
31	Seek to join one or more purchasing co-ops.						\$0
	Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Chapter 4	Facilities Use and Management						
32	Use the facilities master plan outline prepared by the superintendent as the start for an ongoing facilities master planning process.	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)			(\$90,000)
33	Include, schedule, and budget various needed major capital improvements projects into the facilities master planning process, and into specific programs and plans for bond referenda.						\$0
34	Prepare and conduct bond referenda with a facilities master plan foundation.	(\$50,000)					(\$50,000)
35	Review the community use of facilities program every five years.						\$0
36	Develop proactively a list of vetted expertise in all the trades areas.						\$0
37	Develop and adopt a work order management system for WPS.						\$0
38	Address minor maintenance issues regularly.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	
39	Reassign the current child nutrition custodian to work only half-time for the child nutrition department, freeing him to work half-time in other areas of custodial need.	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$30,000)
40	Address life safety issues regularly.						\$0
41	Request a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment to be conducted by staff of the Oklahoma School Security Institute (OSSI).						\$0
42	Invite Energy Systems Companies (ESCOs) to propose performance contracting arrangements and potentially uncover additional energy cost savings.						\$0
43	Involve staff, faculty, and students actively in conserving energy by their personal behavior and actions.						\$0
44	Explore alternatives to heat the bus barn and reduce usage of engine block heaters.	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000
45	Close unnecessary electrical meters.	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$6,120
	Subtotal	(\$82,776)	(\$32,776)	(\$32,776)	(\$2,776)	(\$2,776)	(\$153,880)
Chapter 5	Support Services						
46	Reposition the POS to the end of the serving line so the cashier can determine if the selected meal contains all the required components and is eligible for reimbursement.						\$0
47	Develop strategies for increasing breakfast participation rates at the middle and high school.						\$0
48	Develop strategies for increasing lunch participation rates at the high school.	\$15,949	\$15,949	\$15,949	\$15,949	\$15,949	\$79,745
49	Purchase additional meal-purchasing and POS equipment: a laptop and small cart for the POS; and a pin pad for student use at the POS.	(\$3,000)					(\$3,000)
50	Develop a technology director job description.						\$0
51	Improve the technology planning process and create a long-term strategic plan for technology with input from a variety of stakeholders.						\$0
52	Provide teachers and staff with technology-related professional development opportunities and hold them accountable for implementing technology for both instructional and administrative uses.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	
53	Develop policies and procedures for the use of Chromebooks and other technologies.						\$0
54	Develop a replacement cycle for equipment.	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)	(\$17,500)	(\$20,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$97,500)
55	Develop procedures to assess existing resources for communication and instruction.						\$0
56	Continue to update and expand the district website.						\$0
57	Consolidate the reports for maintenance, custodial services, transportation, and outsourcing under one director of maintenance and transportation.	\$47,361	\$47,361	\$47,361	\$47,361	\$47,361	\$236,805
58	Create a WPS bus driver's notebook that includes pertinent transportation departmental and operational information.						\$0
59	Develop a larger pool of school bus drivers.						\$0
60	Purchase a lift system for support vehicle maintenance.	(\$7,500)					(\$7,500)
61	Regularly clean buses.						\$0
62	Establish a two-way radio network for emergency situations.	(\$1,400)					(\$1,400)
	Subtotal	\$36,410	\$48,310	\$45,810	\$43,310	\$33,310	\$207,150
	Total savings	\$66,534	\$66,534	\$66,534	\$66,534	\$66,534	\$332,670
	Total costs	(\$158,900)	(\$81,000)	(\$83,500)	(\$51,000)	(\$61,000)	(\$435,400)
	Total net savings and costs	(\$92,366)	(\$14,466)	(\$16,966)	\$15,534	\$5,534	(\$102,730)

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 School Performance Review has identified the most likely “tipping point” recommendations for each area reviewed. These are recommendations that the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability School Performance Review believes are the most important to implement and most likely to have the greatest organizational impact.

Of the 62 recommendations made, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability School Performance Review believes these seven recommendations to be the most critical:

- **Explore options to ensure that all WPS board members meet training requirements; the protocols of Professional Conduct are adhered to; and board members have a common knowledge base for legal, visionary governance, policy making, and financial oversight.** The superintendent and WPS school board are committed to continuous growth and improvement. Foundational to this occurring, the district should explore options to ensure that all WPS board members meet training requirements; and have a common knowledge base for legal, visionary governance, policy making, and financial oversight.
- **Review curricula and supplemental resources to determine relevancy and alignment with Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS).** Across the district, there are no defined efforts to routinely collect data to determine the efficiency and cost effectiveness of instructional resources and the impact on student achievement. There is no evaluation process to determine how digital software, websites, supplemental and remedial interventions, instructional strategies, and enrichment activities are aligned with student data results. Assessing the value of the curricula and resources is foundational to improving student achievement.
- **Involve campus principals and stakeholders formally in the budget development process.** As a best practice, districts should include a variety of stakeholders in the budgetary process. These stakeholders should include the principals, facilities/transportation director, and cafeteria manager. A teacher and parent representative could also be included in the process. The goal should be to have more transparency, communication, and input regarding the process.
- **Use the facilities master plan outline prepared by the superintendent as the start for an ongoing facilities master planning process.** The district has not seen the need for having a facilities master plan. This has led to some unfortunate outcomes: the poorly planned open plan elementary school, the reworked elementary school with excessive circulation space, insufficient toilets, and condensation in the mechanical equipment attic of the new building, the poorly located middle school now leading to newly planned middle school facilities in the only remaining open space on the campus. Planning looks at all the options. It takes more time but usually yields better results.
- **Develop strategies for increasing breakfast participation rates at the middle and high school.** Meal participation in the high school has been lower than industry best practices for the past three years.

- **Improve the technology planning process and create a long-term strategic plan for technology with input from a variety of stakeholders.** Planning has been conducted by the superintendent and technology director, but no actual technology plan exists. Improve the technology planning process and create a long-term strategic plan for technology with input from a variety of stakeholders.
- **Develop a formal bus and support vehicle replacement plan.** As school buses get older the cost for and the replacement of parts becomes very expensive; it becomes counter-productive to continue to spend on an older vehicle. Implementing a replacement schedule will reduce costly repairs on older vehicles.

Chapter 1:
Management, Personnel, and
Communications

Chapter 1

Management, Personnel, and Communications

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

- A. Governance
- B. Organization and Management
- C. Planning and Evaluation
- D. Personnel Management
- 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 board of education 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.

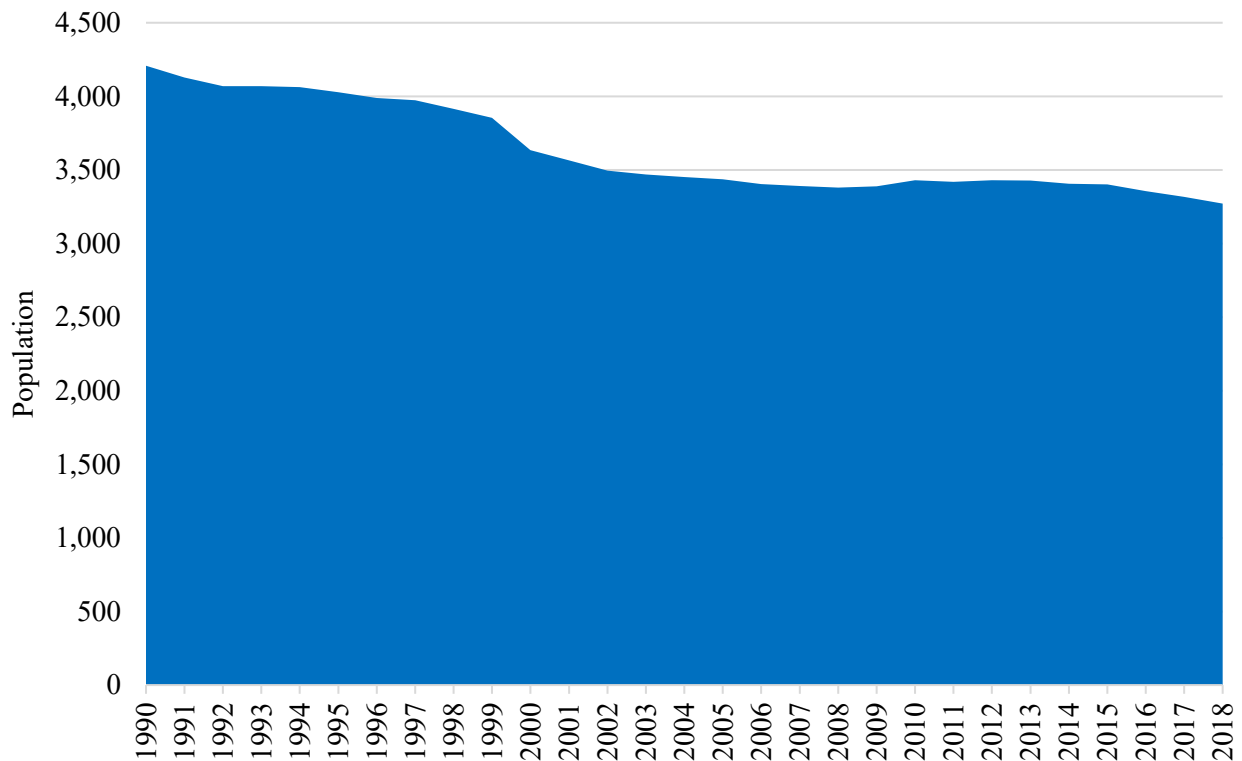
Background

Located in east-central Seminole County in northern Oklahoma, Wewoka is situated at the junction of State Highway 56 and U.S. Highway 270. One of the oldest and most historic communities in Oklahoma, the city of Wewoka was originally located in the Seminole Nation, Indian Territory. In 1849 a group of Seminole slaves led by Gopher John (a.k.a. John Horse), seeking safety and autonomy from the Creek Nation, established a community near the present Wewoka.¹

Historically, the town has hosted clothing, steel, and aircraft parts manufacturing companies. Wewoka's population peaked in 1930 at more than 10,000 but has generally declined since then (**Exhibit 1-1**).

¹ <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=WE023&l=W>

Exhibit 1-1
Wewoka Trend in Overall Population

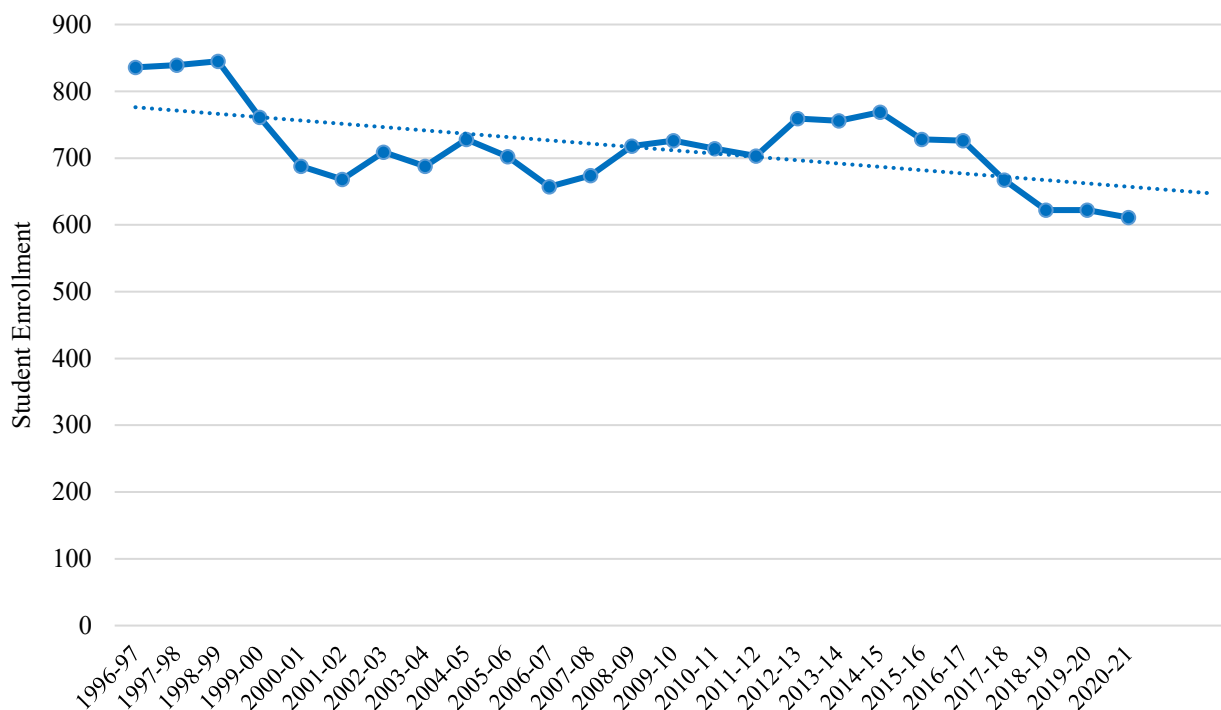


Source: U.S. Census Bureau Website²

WPS operates three campuses that currently serve more than 600 students from Pre-K through 12th grade. As with the trend in the town population, student enrollment has been decreasing for a number of years (**Exhibit 1-2**).

² www.census.gov

Exhibit 1-2
Wewoka Trend in Enrollment



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability Profiles Database

The data in **Exhibit 1-3** reflect average daily membership (ADM) trends in WPS compared to the peers, community group, and state. While all of the districts and state saw decreases in ADM, WPS experienced the most severe decline, with a 17 percent drop from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Exhibit 1-3
Wewoka, Peer Districts, and State ADM Trends, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Entity	ADM					Percent Change
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
Wewoka	769	728	700	679	638	(17.0%) ▼
Atoka	941	996	929	870	884	(6.1%) ▼
Haworth	614	583	546	537	543	(11.6%) ▼
Haskell	808	836	847	798	740	(8.4%) ▼
Porter	545	559	530	507	533	(2.2%) ▼
Vian	1,025	971	923	931	881	(14.0%) ▼
Community Group	784	779	679	702	703	(10.3%) ▼
State	1,299	1,305	1,267	1,280	1,289	(0.8%) ▼

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

In 2018-19, the fall enrollment in WPS was 622. It was comprised mostly of Caucasian, Native American, and multiracial students (**Exhibit 1-4**).

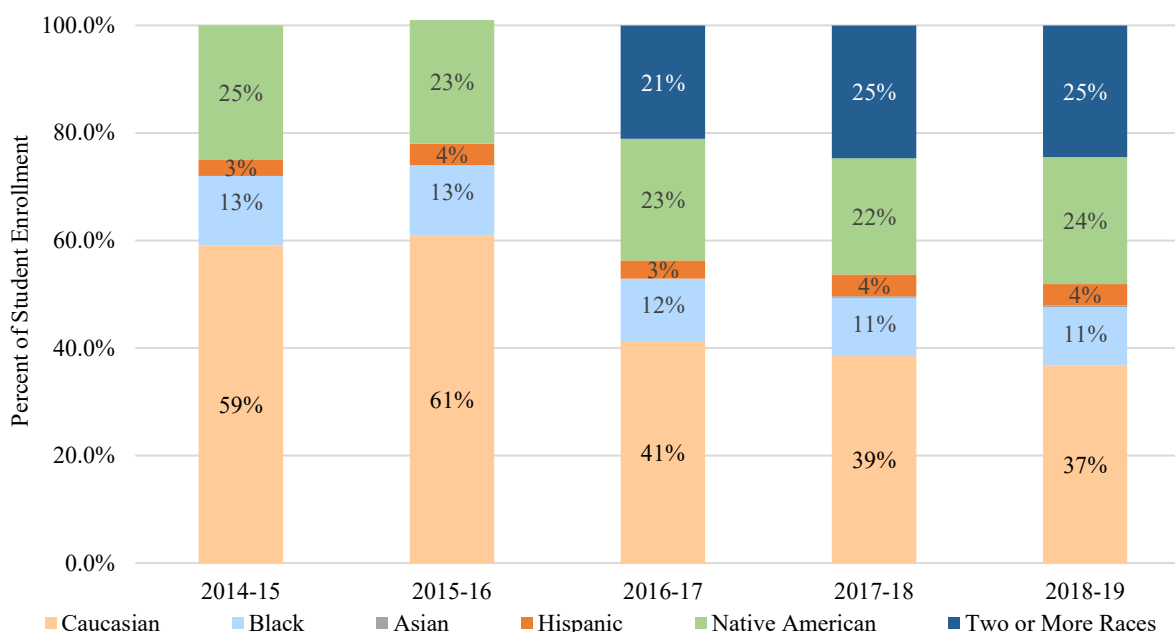
Exhibit 1-4
Wewoka Student Enrollment and Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2018-19

School	Grade Span	Fall Enrollment	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Two or More Races
Wewoka Elementary	EC-6	308	39.6%	9.1%	0.3%	2.6%	21.1%	27.3%
Wewoka Middle School	7-8	135	35.6%	12.6%	0.0%	5.9%	23.0%	23.0%
Wewoka High School	9-12	179	32.4%	12.8%	0.6%	5.0%	28.5%	20.7%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 1-5 shows the trend in student changes over the last five years in WPS. Over that time span, the district has become more diverse, less Caucasian. **Exhibit 1-6** provides a 2018-19 comparison to the peer districts. While all the districts were diverse, WPS was slightly more diverse than the peers, with the highest proportion of students identified as being two or more races.

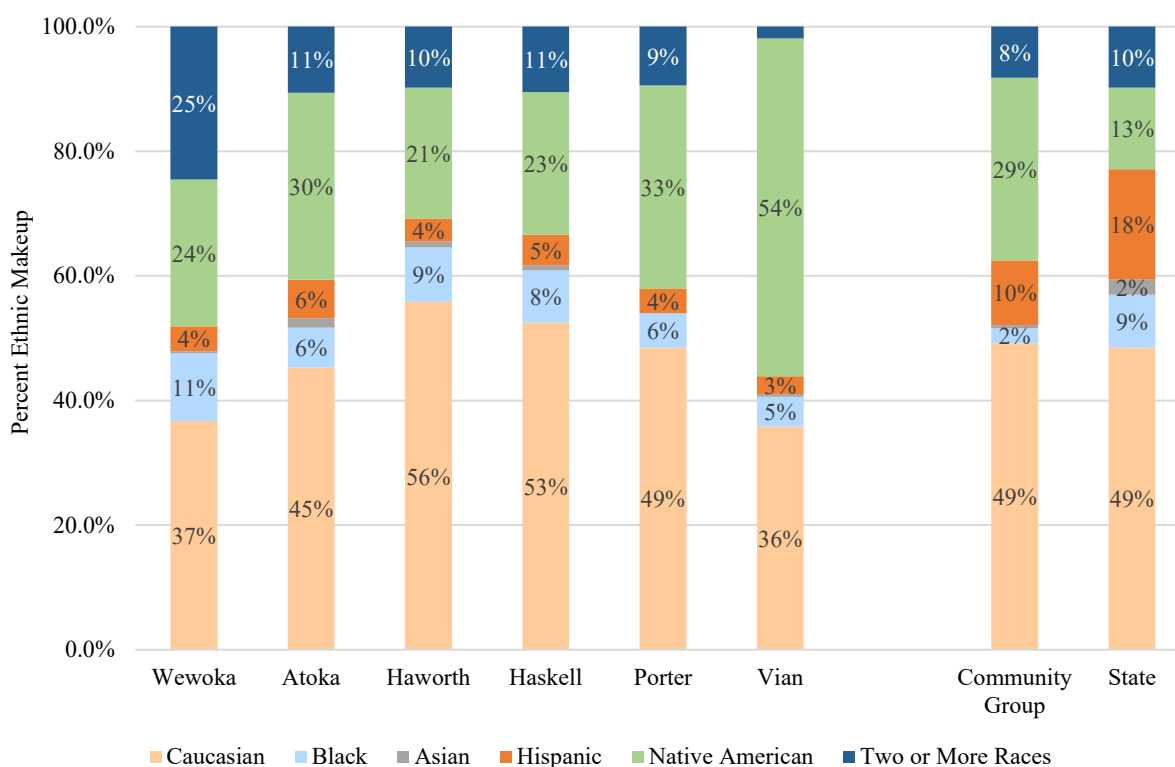
Exhibit 1-5
Wewoka Trend in Student Demographics³



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

³ "Two or More Races" was not reported as a category until 2016-17.

Exhibit 1-6
Wewoka, Peer Districts and State Comparison of Student Demographics, 2018-19



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

WPS is supportive of diversity in its student population. The district includes a diversity statement in its student handbook (**Exhibit 1-7**).

Exhibit 1-7
Wewoka Diversity Statement

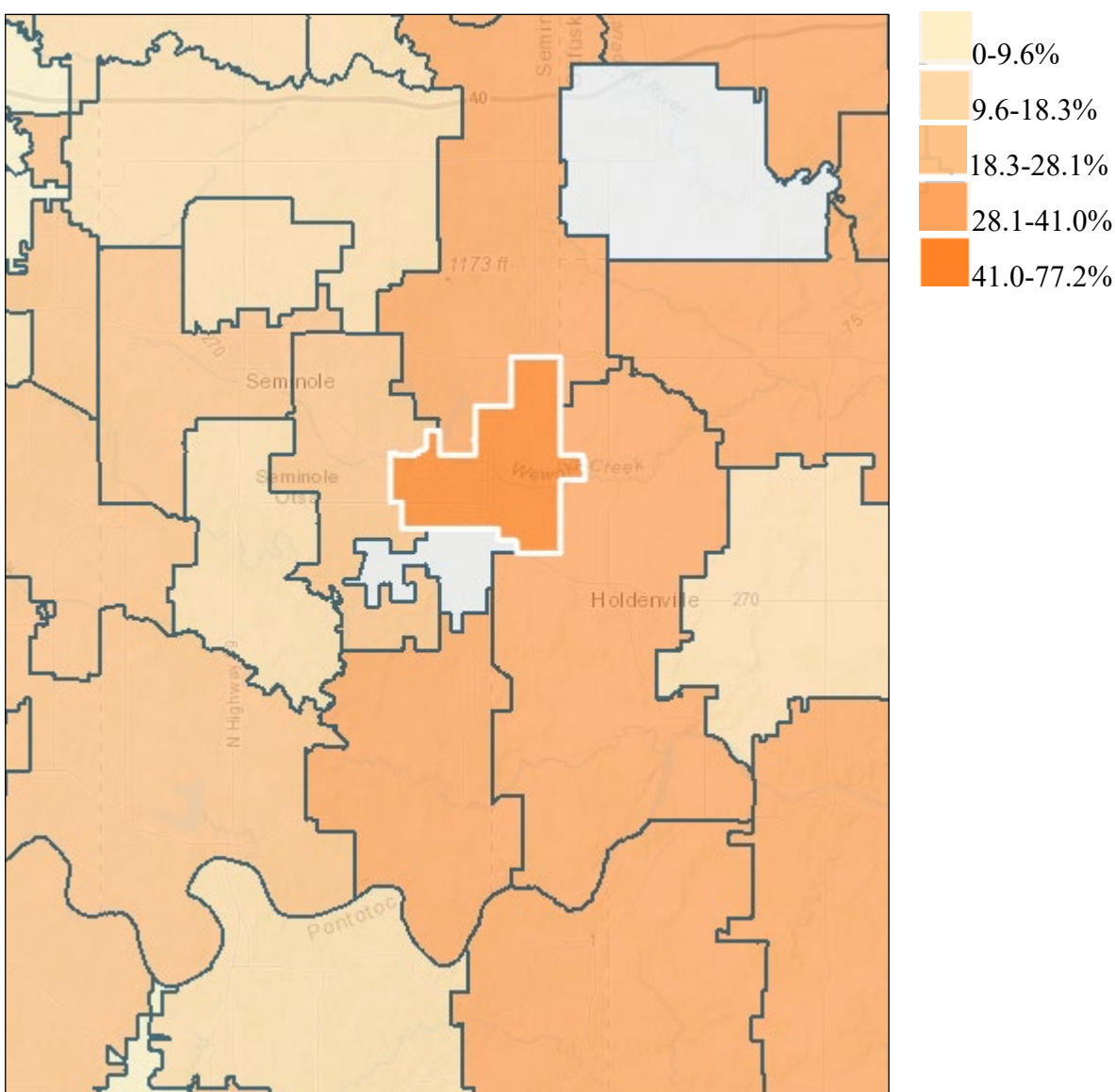
Wewoka Public Schools is committed to creating a campus environment that is diverse and to building a culture that fosters understanding and respect for differences.

Diversity is at the heart of Wewoka Public Schools. Many ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, cultural traditions, languages, and religions are represented among our students. WPS is committed to including families from all walks of life and socioeconomic levels. The experience of diversity is itself an education for the members of the WPS community and allows us to build a culture that fosters understanding and respect for differences.

Source: WPS Student Handbook, November 2020

Poverty is a bigger challenge for children in Wewoka compared to other nearby areas (**Exhibit 1-8**). In 2018-19, all students enrolled in WPS were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

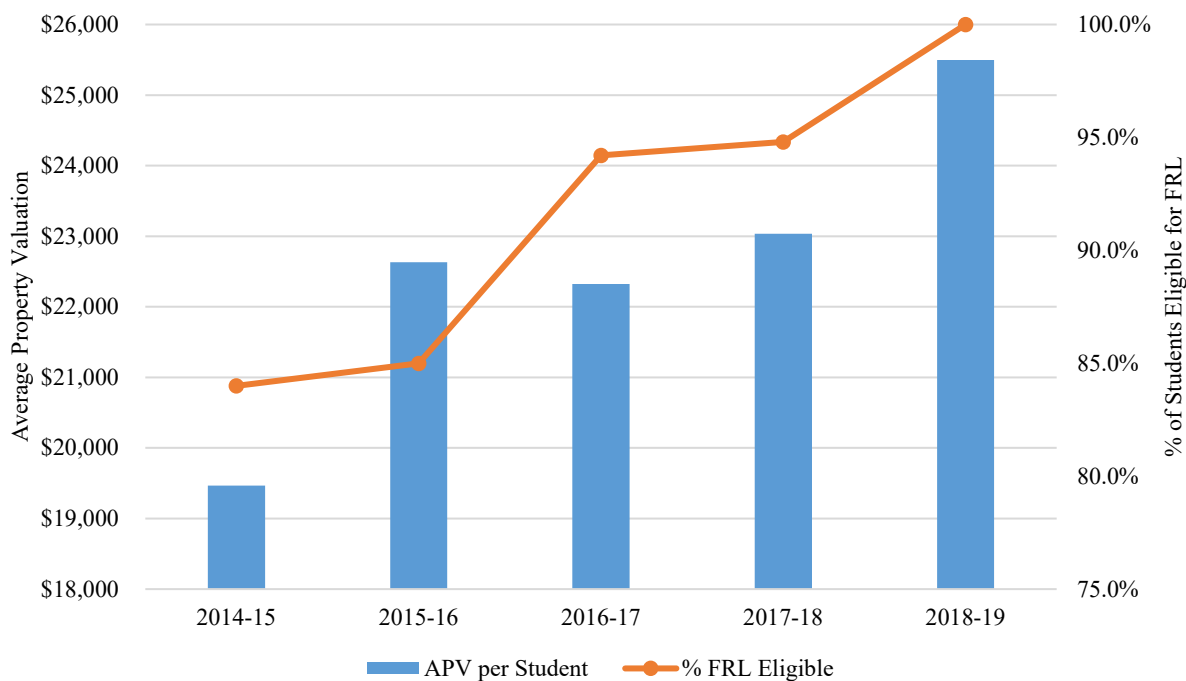
Exhibit 1-8
Wewoka Area Rate of Child Poverty



Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/maped/ACSMaps/>

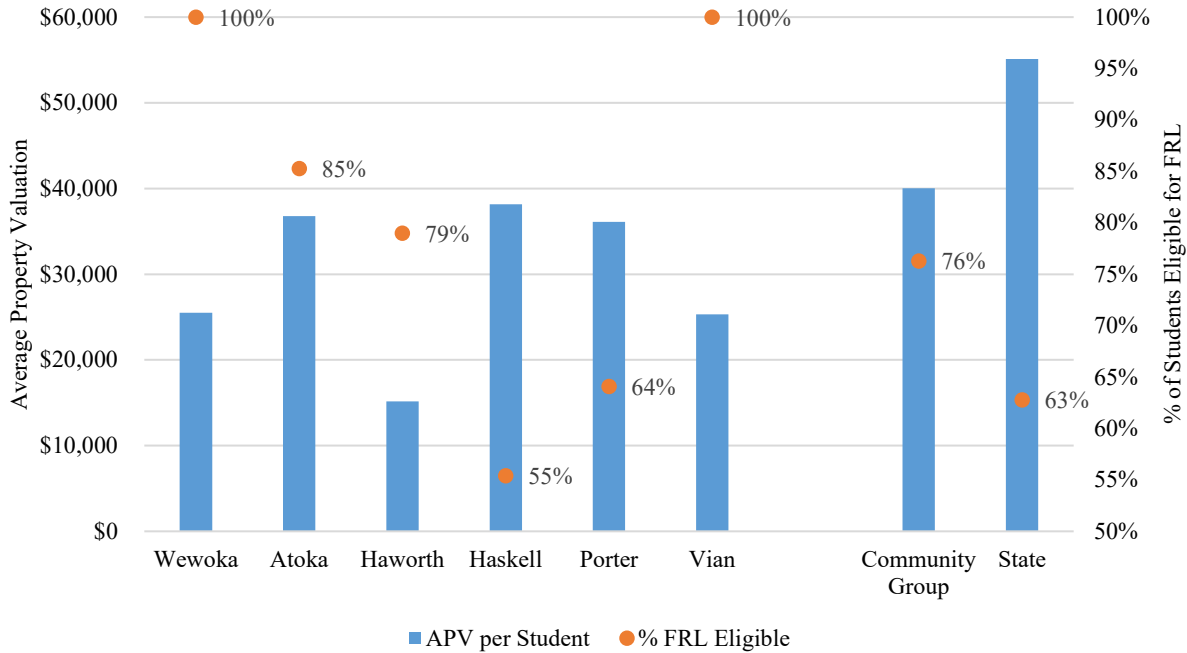
Exhibit 1-9 shows the trend in WPS assessed property value per student and percent of students eligible for free/reduced-price meals over the last five years. Over that time span, the assessed property value has generally increased (by 31 percent), but so has the proportion of the student body eligible for free/reduced-price meals (up 19 percent). **Exhibit 1-10** provides a 2018-19 comparison to the peer districts on the same measures. WPS had one of the lowest assessed property valuations per student. All of the peers were below the community group and state in assessed property valuation and most had higher rates for students eligible for free/reduced-price meals.

Exhibit 1-9
Wewoka Trend in Assessed Property Value and Student Eligibility for Free/Reduced Meals



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 1-10
Wewoka, Peer Districts, and State Comparison of Assessed Property Valuation and Student Eligibility for Free/Reduced Meals, 2018-19



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

A. GOVERNANCE

Oklahoma state education laws, as codified in the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) and district policies, establish the powers and responsibilities of the district board of education and the superintendent. The School Law Book contains 1,469 sections numbered consecutively and each section provides legal guidance for school district governance and operations. The information provided in **Exhibit 1-11** reflects sections relevant to board of education organization and basic governance principles.

Exhibit 1-11
OSC: Board of Education Governance and Organization

Topic	Section
School District – Definition	8
School System – Administered by State Department of Education, etc.	17
Positions in School System – Definitions	18
General Fund – Definition	22
Building Fund – Definition	23
State Board of Education – Powers and Duties	32
Governing Body of School District	117
Independent and Dependent School Districts – Board of Education – Members Election	130
Expansion of Board	133
Workshops for New Board Members – Expenses of Members Attending	133
Relation by Affinity or Consanguinity Prohibition	136
Employment of Relative of Member of Board of Education	137
Excluding Litigious Board Member from Proceedings	138
School District Treasurer – Assistant Local Treasurer	138
Local Treasurer – Surety Bond – Duties – Cash Investment Ledgers	139
Oath of Office	141
Requirements for Bonds for Employees and Officers	141
Powers and Duties	142
Meetings of Board – Executive Sessions – Compensation of Members of Boards of Districts with ADA Exceeding 15,000 or Population Exceeding 100,000	159
Officers of Board	160
President – Duties	160
Vice President – Duties	160
Clerk – Duties	161
Oklahoma Open Meeting Act	509
Executive Sessions	511

Source: Oklahoma School Law Book, 2019

Powers and duties of the board of education are contained in Section 32 of the School Law Book. These powers and duties cover all activities related to operating public school districts. Key powers and duties include:

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

Section 126 addresses the size and election of board of education in Oklahoma, and Section 149 provides a description of the required officers for board of education. The school board consists of five members, each of whom is elected to a five-year term. **Exhibit 1-12** reflects the year elected and the next election date for each WPS board of education member. In the recent past WPS went to open seating for board member elections.

Exhibit 1-12
Wewoka School Board of Education Members

Board Member	Board Position	Year of Election or Appointment	Term Expires
Michael Weatherly	President	2019	2024
Chase Powell	Vice President	2018	2023
Erika Seeley	Clerk	2017	2022
Keith Barkhiemer	Member	2020	2025
Shawn Island	Member	2020 ⁴	2021

Source: WPS, February 2021

The district holds board of education elections each February unless otherwise changed by state directives. The board members swear in elected members and vote on officers at the next meeting. Sections 157, 158, and 159 list the duties of each officer of the board of education. The board must elect a clerk, who may or may not be a member of the board.

Section 127 outlines the training requirements for school board members. Within 15 months following election, new 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).

The 12 hours must include one hour of instruction in school finance, one hour of instruction in the *Oklahoma Open Records Act* and the *Oklahoma Open Meeting Act*, and one hour of instruction in ethics. The remaining hours may be satisfied by attending a two-day workshop to be held by the SDE or other workshops held by another organization or association approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education.

Reelected board members are required to complete six hours of instruction within 15 months of reelection. Included in these six hours is one hour of instruction in the following:

⁴ Board member was selected in 2020 to fill the term of a member who resigned.

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

The remaining hours may be satisfied by attending a workshop, class, or seminar addressing the education issues set forth above for new members.

Wewoka Board of Education Meetings

The Wewoka Board of Education meets at 6:30 pm on the second Monday of the month in the elementary school library. 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 meeting.

As noted in the district's student handbook, "The mission of Wewoka Public Schools is to establish an atmosphere that empowers each student to develop character and confidence, provide the opportunity for exemplary academic experiences, and promote a lifelong pursuit for personal success."

FINDING 1-1

The consulting team found that the superintendent has earned the confidence of the WPS Board of Education, administrators, staff, and community. She is described as upfront, transparent, honest, and accessible. Her willingness to talk with and listen to all stakeholders and being innovative was mentioned in interviews. She is open to bringing new programs to the district and is primarily responsible for implementing one-to-one technology. Evidence that she is willing to do any work that needs to be done was verified when she helped a new teacher paint her classroom. It was reported she spent a day bringing a family to the food pantry and assisted in washing clothes, making sure the family took showers, and distributed food items.

The superintendent is grooming the building principals to work and function as a team and has regular weekly meetings along with routine team leadership training. The parent survey reported 68 percent of the parents strongly agree or agree the superintendent is a respected and effective leader. A majority of the staff (96 percent) reported that the superintendent communicates effectively. (**Exhibit 1-13**).

Exhibit 1-13
Staff and Parent Survey Results Regarding the Superintendent

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parent	The superintendent is a respected and effective leader.	28%	48%	20%	5%	0%
Staff	The superintendent effectively communicates with district staff.	48%	48%	3%	2%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Trust among those you lead is essential to success at both the school and district levels. While the presence provides no guarantee to organizational success, it's absence reliably predicts failure. The board-superintendent relationships and the superintendent-staff relationships can have substantial effect on the trust level of the organization.⁵

Steven Covey (2008) attested:

There is one thing that is common to every individual, relationship, team, family, organization, national economy, and civilization throughout the world—the one thing which, if removed will destroy the most powerful government, the most successful business, the most thriving economy, the most influential leadership, the great friendship, the strongest character, the deepest love. On the other hand, if developed and leveraged, that one thing has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life. Yet, it is the least understood, most neglected, and most underestimated possibility of our time. That one thing is trust.

Every school leader, whether at the school site or the district office, has an opportunity to leverage trust to support the complex work of educating students. Determining how to best leverage this trust remains a challenge. Leadership is much more than the complex work of educating students; it also includes meeting the needs of those who work to set the vision of the district (Battle, 2007).⁶

COMMENDATION

The superintendent is commended for exemplary leadership and gaining the trust and confidence of the district's board of education, staff, and community.

FINDING 1-2

The board, along with the superintendent, and administrative leadership team are focused on raising the academic performance level of all students in the district. This was validated in interviews with three board members, the superintendent, and the building principals. It was

⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338083065_Exemplary_Superintendents'_Experiences_with_Trust

⁶ https://digitalcommons.brandman.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1327&context=edd_dissertations

clear all were realistic about the districts challenges of teacher turn over, high poverty, and historically low academic performance. With these issues in the forefront, the consulting team learned through interviews and focus group dialog there was unity and strong commitment to proactively address these challenges and improve the districts academic education. It was clear that the board is motivated and expressed satisfaction with the performance of the superintendent and the principals and embraced the mindset of raising the academic performance of all students. There is confidence among the district's leadership in the current direction of the schoolwide improvement and bringing the system forward. The board's philosophy of improved academic performance leads the district's decision-making.

The mutual trust developed by the superintendent and board of education is having a positive impact on WPS. The development of mutual trust is a best practice and improves the leadership exhibited by both the board members and the superintendent. Cohesiveness in beliefs and action is a best practice that starts with the board and leads to more productive decision-making in all areas of school district operations.

It is important that the board and superintendent ensure that a vision and goals are in place for the district and that these are used to guide their work and the decisions they make. In doing so, the board-superintendent team confirm their commitment to the vision and goals and ensure that the vision is used to coordinate the all the efforts within the district.⁷

COMMENDATION

The Wewoka Board of Education, superintendent, and administrative leadership team are commended for their philosophy to improve the educational opportunities for all students, which leads to overall improved academic achievement.

FINDING 1-3

Three of the WPS board members are new to the board and are at various levels in meeting the training requirements. Oklahoma law requires board members to annually complete training requirements within 15 months of appointment/election to remain in good standing. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Oklahoma State School Board Association (OSSBA) did not offer the in-person training conference for new and returning school board members in August 2020. The superintendent recently scheduled OSSBA onsite training for the board in school finance and professional ethics but not all board members attended.

In addition to meeting state mandated requirements, school board training is often designed to provide pertinent information for overall board member effectiveness. The training gives the board members a common knowledge base for adhering to a set of protocols and ethics for professional conduct, guidelines for governance and sound financial and policy decisions, and leverages comprehensive school improvement. Board training provides direction in setting policy to improve student achievement. All training should contain relevant and timely

⁷ <https://www.tasb.org/services/board-development-services/resources/vision-and-goals/vision-in-the-audit.aspx>

information to help members be responsive to changing community dynamics yet honoring the values, beliefs, and priorities of the community they serve.

An effective school board plays an important watchdog role in keeping the local school on track and setting policies that affect all students. The following study identifies characteristics of effective boards and can be used as a filter for determining additional training needs and best practices:

- **Effective Boards Focus on Student Achievement.** Policies and resources are targeted to promote achievement for all students. All school policy is targeted to high standards, a rigorous curriculum, and high-quality teachers.
- **Effective Boards Allocate Resources to Needs.** Not all students have the same needs. Good school boards recognize this fact and allocate resources of time, money, and personnel and adjust practices to reach all student-learning priorities.
- **Effective Boards Watch the Return on Investment.** Productive school boards are mindful of their own accountability to their communities. They routinely measure and report the return on investment. As effective policy makers, they recognize the importance of being good stewards of tax dollars.
- **Effective Boards Use Data.** Informed policy making is complex and requires using data. Data assure that all students are progressing and reaching high standards. Accountability and reports about return on investments are unconvincing without data.
- **Effective Boards Engage the Communities They Serve.** There are established mechanisms for community involvement in setting the district's vision, representing the values of the community, and identifying the district's short-term and long-term priorities.⁸

Research published by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) Center for Public Education makes it clear that school boards in high-achieving districts exhibit habits and characteristics that are markedly different from boards in low-achieving districts. WPS board members were clear in their intent to govern with the focus of raising the achievement level of all students. The board can use the information in **Exhibit 1-14** as an operational guide and filter for adopting policy that supports strategic overall school improvement planning.

⁸ <https://www.edutopia.org/five-characteristics-effective-school-board>

Exhibit 1-14
Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board

1. Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
2. Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
3. Effective school boards are accountability driven; spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
4. Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
5. Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
6. Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
7. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
8. Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Source: [cpe-eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards-report-december-2019.pdf \(nsba.org\)](https://www.nsba.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/cpe-eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards-report-december-2019.pdf)

RECOMMENDATION

Explore options to ensure that:

- **all WPS board members meet training requirements;**
- **the protocols of Professional Conduct are adhered to; and**
- **board members have a common knowledge base for legal, visionary governance, policy making, and financial oversight.**

The superintendent and board members should explore all options available to meet state requirements and provide members with relevant training for being a productive and responsible board of education. Even though OSSBA is not offering onsite training conferences for school board members, many online workshops and seminars are available.

Board members can earn their credits and deepen their expertise regarding the roles and responsibilities of effective board members through digital offerings. Until in-person training is available, OSSBA offers online workshops and webinars, including a new Online Board Bundle that provides unlimited training for members and superintendents via subscription.⁹ The pricing of the training is equal to the annual August conference costs.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The superintendent should assess the training requirements needed and keep new and returning board members apprised of their training needs and base cost accordingly.

FINDING 1-4

Observation, review of documents, and interviews indicate that WPS school board meetings are handled legally and efficiently. Hard copy school board agendas are posted appropriately, and agenda items include appropriate proceedings and timely reports. Along with meeting legal requirements, the consulting team learned of the board's focused intent to make sure their meetings continuously make governing decisions that improve all educational aspects for students.

On the Friday prior to the Monday board meeting, the superintendent provides a hand delivered board packet containing relevant material. Board members noted that this afforded them ample time to prepare and review important information. The reviewed board minutes and interviews indicated the superintendent presents an oral report at the meetings. The school treasurer also reports the current financial status to the board members at each meeting.

How a school board conducts its meetings can speak to the board's competence, abilities, and motivations. Running effective meetings is a fundamental and essential responsibility of school boards. Leading smooth and effective board meetings gives the community and district staff confidence in the board and paves the way for effective governance practices. School board members serve as representatives of the community and their goal is to make decisions that benefit the district and improve student achievement.

Effective meetings by good school boards lead to informed decision-making, community transparency and trust, and improved student achievement. School board members fulfilling their responsibilities includes conducting effective meetings in order to do their best work for the district and community.¹⁰

COMMENDATION

WPS board of education meetings are well organized, conducted according to established procedures, and public input is welcomed.

⁹ <https://www.ossba.org/training-events/webinars/>

¹⁰ <https://insights.diligent.com/meeting-management-public-education/how-run-school-board-meeting-effectively/>

FINDING 1-5

Although WPS board meetings are aligned with state requirements, board minutes are not routinely posted for open public inspection. At the time of the onsite review, the electronic versions were not available to the public. Icons appear on the school website indicating that board minutes and agenda are posted electronically. However, the links were inoperable and did not open to the appropriate documents. There was no evidence presented that hard copies of the minutes are posted elsewhere for public viewing. Minutes of school board meetings are the official public record and require public access.

The Oklahoma Open Meeting Act Section 312-Written Minutes cites the following:

The proceedings of a public body shall be kept by a person so designated by such public body in the form of written minutes which shall be an official summary of the proceedings showing clearly those members present and absent, all matters considered by the public body, and all actions taken by such public body. The minutes of each meeting shall be open to public inspection and shall reflect the manner and time of notice required by this act.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement procedures to ensure the board of education minutes are better available for public review.

In order to be as transparent as possible, the superintendent should ensure that board minutes are routinely and readily available on the district website. This would allow any interested stakeholder to review minutes whenever they wished. Providing only paper-based copies for inspection in the central office presents an unnecessary barrier to stakeholder involvement.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-6

Wewoka uses the OSSBA evaluation tool to evaluate the superintendent. This tool is designed to be a formative tool that engages the board and superintendent in ongoing conversations and feedback. The evaluation instrument provides an opportunity for the board to participate in frequent, meaningful communication and feedback with the superintendent.

The evaluation instrument encourages conversations and evaluations in a number of categories:

- Board/Superintendent Relationship;
- Community Relationship;
- Staff Relationship;

- Professional Community;
- Finance;
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment;
- Human Resources; and
- Student Services.

Operations (Facilities, Transportation, Child Nutrition, Technology in the Operations tab) or broken out separately:

- Facilities;
- Transportation;
- Child Nutrition;
- Technology;
- Personal Qualities; and
- District Goals.

The board and superintendent began using the OSSBA evaluation instrument in 2020-21. The board members and superintendent have attended OSSBA training on the instrument and have begun the conversations. The superintendent stated in interviews that she was happy with the evaluation process.

A strong, effective relationship between superintendents and their board is the foundation that supports a successful district. Productive collaboration between the superintendent and board requires frequent diplomatic communication and clear definitions of goals and responsibilities. Utilizing a formative evaluation process that allows the board to give feedback based on goals and expectations supports a healthy board-superintendent partnership. Oklahoma statute 70 O.S. § 6-101.10 mandates an annual evaluation of superintendents; however, the evaluation process should do more than meet statute. It should foster meaningful communication and encourage growth and opportunities for improvement.^{11, 12}

¹¹ Hanover Research. (2014). *Effective board and superintendent collaboration*. Retrieved from: www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Effective-Board-and-Superintendent-Collaboration-Featured.pdf

¹² Oklahoma State School Boards Association. *Teamwork: The superintendent evaluation*. Retrieved from: www.ossba.org/events/teamwork-the-superintendent-evaluation/

COMMENDATION

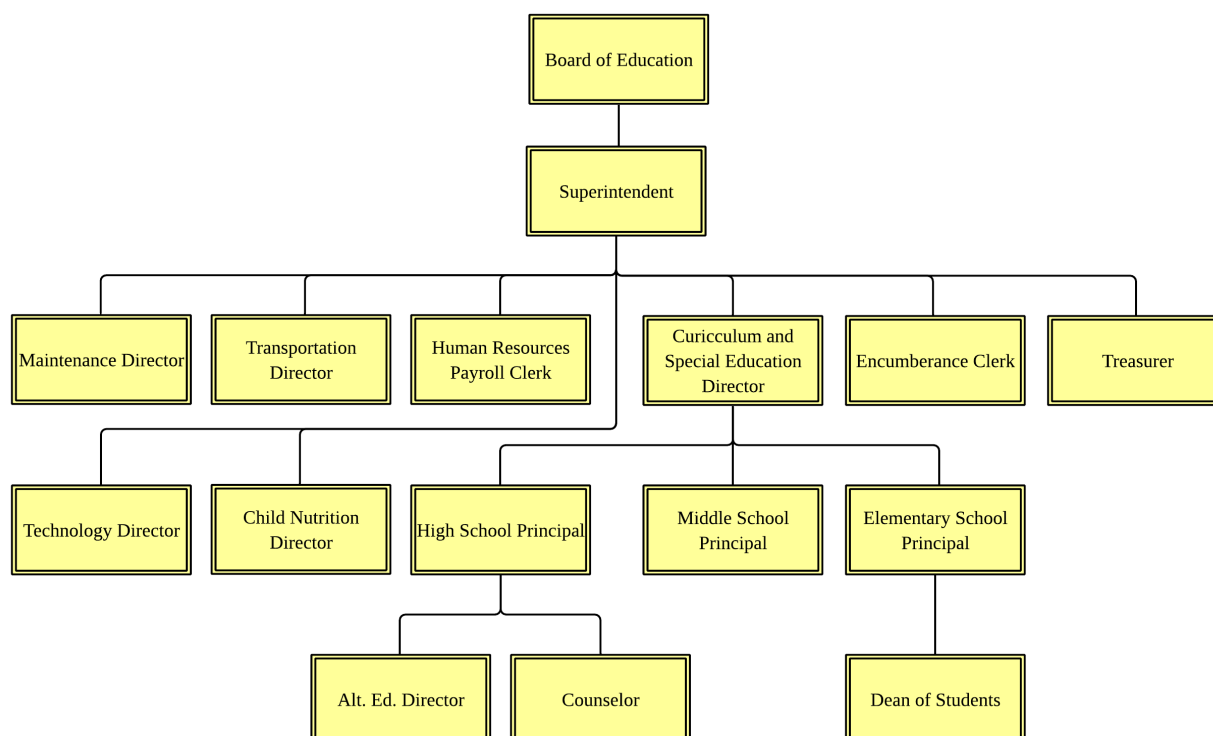
The district has implemented the OSSBA evaluation tool for ongoing conversations and feedback between the board and superintendent.

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 organizational charts. Effective central office structures encourage communication at all levels.

The current WPS superintendent is in her third year at the helm, having begun midway through 2018-19. **Exhibit 1-15** reflects the current district organization under her.

Exhibit 1-15
WPS Organizational Chart



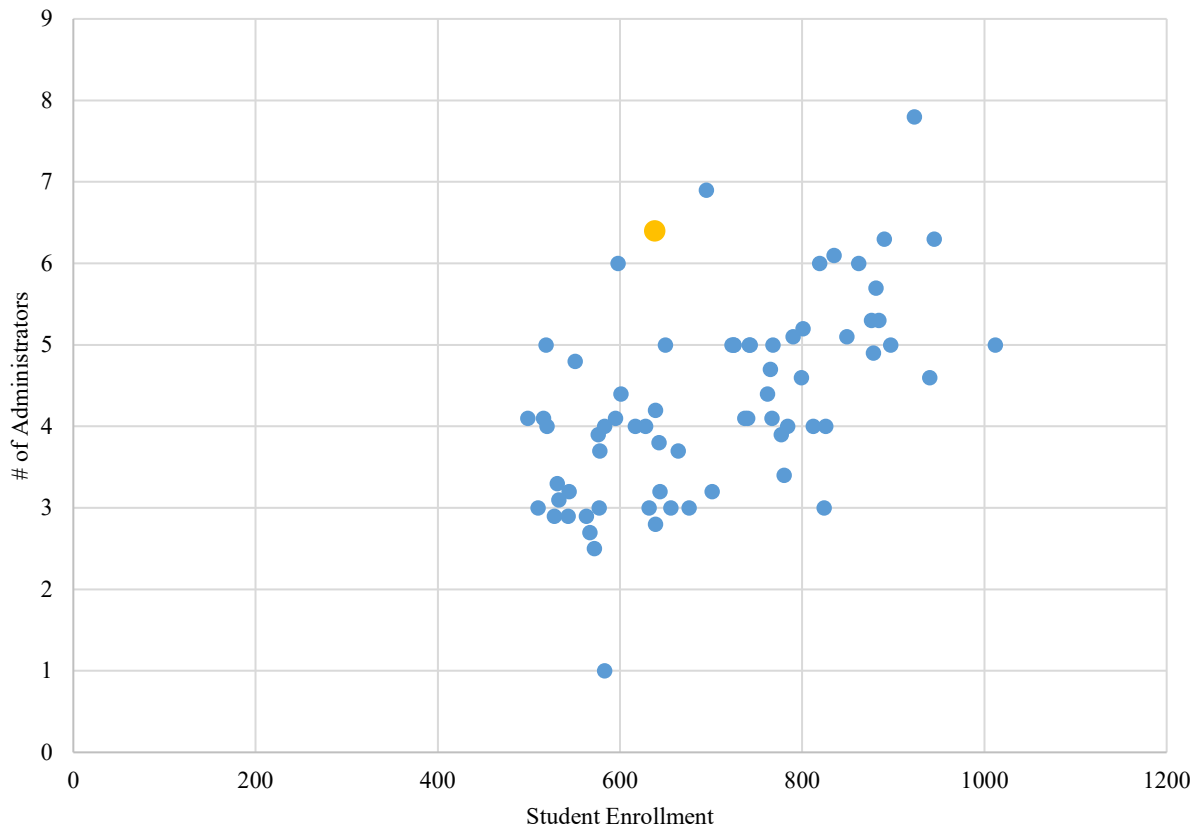
Source: Created by Prismatic, November 2020

Considering all districts in the F2 Community Group and the district's current enrollment, having 6.4 administrative positions is somewhat high, compared to similarly sized Oklahoma districts.

Exhibit 1-16 compares the number of administrative positions with student enrollment for all 70

of the F2 districts. The WPS data point is shown in orange. As shown, WPS' 2018-19 administrative staffing was higher than many peers and below that of only a few.

Exhibit 1-16
Administrative Staffing as a Function of Enrollment
All F2 Oklahoma School Districts, 2018-19



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 1-17 compares the WPS ratio of administrative staff to teaching staff with those of the peers. WPS had the lowest ratio of teachers to administrators and was well below the peer average.

Exhibit 1-17
Comparison of Teacher and Administrator Staffing, 2018-19

Entity	ADM	Number of Administrators (FTE)	Number of Classroom Teachers (FTE)	Ratio of Teachers to Administrators
Wewoka	638	6.4	43	7:1
Atoka	884	5.3	52	10:1
Haworth	543	2.9	38	13:1
Haskell	740	4.1	49	12:1
Porter	533	3.1	33	11:1
Vian	881	5.7	54	9:1
Peer Average	716	4.2	45	11:1

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

Exhibit 1-18 compares WPS' per-student spending on administrator salaries with that of its peer districts. As shown, WPS' administrator cost per student was the highest of its peers, despite having only the third largest gross salary total.

Exhibit 1-18
Administrative Expenditures Comparison, 2018-19

Entity	ADM	Number of Administrators (FTE)	Total Salary	Salary Cost per FTE	Administrator Cost per Student
Wewoka	638	6.4	\$491,770	\$76,839	\$771
Atoka	884	5.3	\$521,716	\$98,437	\$590
Haworth	543	2.9	\$286,488	\$98,789	\$528
Haskell	740	4.1	\$348,377	\$84,970	\$471
Porter	533	3.1	\$295,669	\$95,377	\$555
Vian	881	5.7	\$500,432	\$87,795	\$568
Peer Average	716	4.2	\$390,536	\$92,985	\$545

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

FINDING 1-7

The WPS superintendent and principals engage in supportive behaviors that foster cooperative decision-making, sharing of knowledge, and collective problem solving. Interviews and focus group results reflected an overall positive perception that faculty and staffs have about their district, the leadership, and their working environment.

Based on interview and focus group responses, principals support their faculty and staffs by creating common plan periods and fostering open communication. The superintendent intentionally keeps an open door to staff and the community.

Exhibit 1-19 provides staff survey results on school leadership and communication practices. A large majority of staff indicated that principals are accessible (97 percent), effective

communicators (88 percent), and effective instructional leaders (85 percent). Similar results were expressed by staff regarding the superintendent. Nearly all staff indicated that the superintendent is accessible (96 percent) and an effective communicator (96 percent).

Exhibit 1-19
Staff Survey Results Regarding District Leaders

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The principals effectively communicate with their staff.	37%	51%	14%	6%	2%
The principals are effective instructional leaders.	27%	58%	10%	5%	0%
The principals are accessible to staff.	52%	45%	2%	2%	0%
The superintendent effectively communicates with district staff.	48%	48%	3%	2%	0%
The superintendent is accessible to district staff.	56%	40%	2%	0%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Establishing a positive school culture is critical to achieving high levels of student success. When people feel valued, they are more motivated and productive. Leadership committed to creating motivating conditions that will encourage teachers to learn and optimize their practices contributes to higher levels of performance and well-being. Open communication, accessibility and strong leadership are key components for establishing this positive culture.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent has created a positive working environment that fosters collaboration and communication.

FINDING 1-8

The district's budgeting process is not widely understood by staff. The district does not have an open and inclusive budgeting process. Some staff questioned recent purchasing priorities. A lack of understanding of the budget process and rationale for purchasing decisions can undermine staff confidence in district management.

Survey results indicate that the majority of staff have confidence in the district's management of revenues and expenditures (74 percent). However, 56 percent of staff *disagreed* or were neutral about understanding of the budget process. (**Exhibit 1-20**).

Exhibit 1-20
Staff Perceptions of District Budgeting Practices

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district wisely manages its revenues and expenditures.	26%	48%	26%	0%	0%
I understand the district's budgetary process.	7%	38%	50%	4%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Currently, the superintendent and board hire a consultant to help build budgets and provide the Estimate of Need (EON). The district utilizes the EON as the documentation for the budget. In the past, the district did provide a separate expense budget but has not prepared that document for the past few years.

In interviews and focus groups, the faculty and staff stated they had adequate or even more resources than they needed. However, some staff also noted that funds are not always targeted to the areas of greatest need. For example, the district purchased several expensive reading curricula that are somewhat duplicative. At the same time, some administrators would like to redirect funding priorities towards increasing human resources.

A comprehensive budget guide outlining the financial structure and budget allocations can build understanding and clearly communicate with stakeholders' budget priorities and realities. Developing transparent budget processes and a comprehensive financial overview allows stakeholders to provide meaningful input that supports the successful administration and financial stability of the district.

Education is in an era of many challenges and changes that all come at a cost. The financial stability of districts requires strategic and deliberate school budgeting. Effective districts develop data-driven budgets that link school spending to educational outcomes. Their budgets and budget processes are transparent and accessible to stakeholders, building trust and stakeholder support. Transparent budget processes are critical to the successful administration of a school district. Understanding what the expenses are and how they relate to goals is essential.

RECOMMENDATION

Create a comprehensive budget guide that provides transparency and understanding of the financial structure and budgeting process of the district.

The district can begin with an already made template or model budget guide.¹³ The Cooperative Counsel of School Administrators has developed a budget guide template that districts can use by just filling in their numbers.¹⁴ Most of the language and tables are already set up. Their

¹³ Association of School Business Officials International. *MBA and pathway resources*. Retrieved from: network.asbointl.org/viewdocument/award-winning-budget-examples-2019-5

¹⁴ Zockoff, N. (2012). *Smart school budgeting: Resources for districts*. Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy. Retrieved from: www.renniecenter.org/sites/default/files/2017-01/SmartSchoolBudgeting.pdf

budget guide provides a comprehensive overview of the district, district initiatives and budget. In addition, the Association of School Business Officials International has several model budget guides that can be used as a resource.¹⁵

There will likely be background research and data collection necessary to begin the budgeting guide. However, once the document is created, maintenance should be straightforward.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Minimal funds may be needed to attend training if applicable.

C. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Planning, evaluating, correcting weaknesses, and supporting strengths through practice and re-teaching is common in the lexicon and repertoire of educators. However, planning and evaluation takes on a different meaning when it involves planning for change and improvement in a large entity like a school district. In that case, there is a need to strategically plan when and how to change in order to improve the student learning experience.

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's 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 changes in 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.¹⁶ 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.

FINDING 1-9

The district lacks a formal, multi-year strategic plan. The superintendent, principals, and school board have engaged in initial dialog and set short-term goals. Responses on the staff survey indicated there was long-range planning in place, but no evidence was presented to validate this existed. There is no working long-term comprehensive plan available that details the district's

¹⁵ Association of School Business Officials International. *MBA and pathway resources*. Retrieved from: network.asbointl.org/communities/community-home/librarydocuments?LibraryKey=2b71a389-95c7-49ea-b57e-0fc2c63bb0f3

¹⁶ Cook, Jr., W. (2000). *Strategics: The art and science of holistic strategy*. Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books.

projected future plans which incorporate aspects of the school and community. Planning and evaluation remain an informal, as needed, process with mostly administrative involvement.

In 2007, Reeves summarized his work, which analyzed hundreds of strategic plans across 20 dimensions, controlled the study for school demographics, and compared student achievement to a baseline year. The study found that substantially higher student achievement was realized if strategic plans included:

- monthly monitoring of student performance, teacher strategies, and leadership practices;
- continued self-evaluation by teachers and administrators regarding every program initiative and strategy; and
- attribution by teachers and leaders that their work is the fundamental cause of student growth rather than demographics.¹⁷

Reeves concludes that school leaders must decide whether the strategic planning process is focused on achievement and therefore adds value. 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 ten 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:

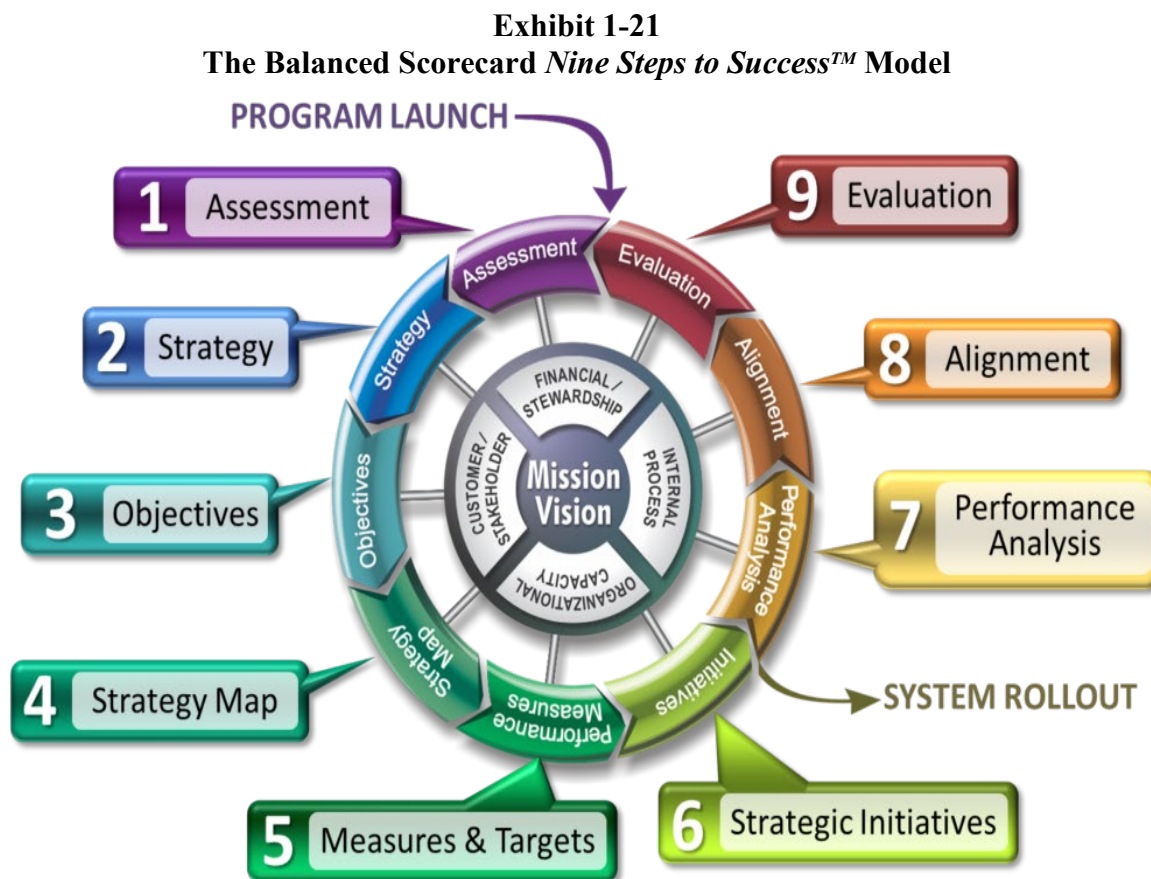
There are many different frameworks and methodologies for strategic planning and management. While there are no absolute rules regarding the right framework, most follow a similar pattern and have common attributes. Many frameworks cycle through some variation on some basic phases:

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

¹⁷ Reeves, D.B. (2007). Leading to change/making strategic planning work. *Educational Leadership*, 65(4).

4. evaluation or sustainment/management phase, where ongoing refinement and evaluation of performance, culture, communications, data reporting, and other strategic management issues occur.¹⁸

The graphic in **Exhibit 1-21** explains the logic of the balanced scorecard approach to strategic planning.



More strategic planning in all areas of WPS operations will assist the board's efforts at strategically planning for future school improvement. The district's challenges are myriad, including facility maintenance and construction needs, teacher turnover, and serving the high poverty student population. Clarifying the boards perceptions, setting goals, and adopting policies and procedures that address these issues are essential in strategic planning.¹⁹ Most importantly, communicating the goals and plans to all levels of the organization and the community will promote a positive perception that the board understands the needs of the

¹⁸ <http://balancedscorecard.org/Resources/Strategic-Planning-Basics>

¹⁹ https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://search.yahoo.com/&httpsredir=1&article=10-14&context=iped_techrep12

district. A successful, forward-looking school district is the best method of attracting students and quality teachers.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement an ongoing strategic planning process involving community stakeholders, administration, faculty, and staff that defines decision-making processes and provides governance and direction for long-range goals, implementation strategies, and accountability measures.

This performance review may provide a basis for more long-term planning and an opportunity to broaden the range of people involved in planning that guides continued positive district growth. A strategic planning process can start with an annual superintendent's report to the board detailing all facets of the school system. The basic steps for a strategic planning effort are:

- The superintendent convenes an internal administrative staff planning group. Decides who will chair the main committee and/or serve as liaison to the group.
- Establish a board of education approved strategic planning committee heavily weighted to include teachers and parents. As many as two of the board members can serve if so desired. Given the diversity in WPS, the committee should also be diverse.
- Develop a committee meeting schedule and open the meetings to the public. Develop agendas and reports that provide detailed data regarding strengths and weaknesses of the district to the committee and public. Each operational and instructional area should be included.
- Provide the committee with demographic studies.
- Establish sub-committees to dig into data as necessary and have them report back to the main committee with findings.
- Revise the existing vision statement, as needed.
- Develop short- and long-range goals for the district. Convert these goals into action steps.
- Assign staff to implement action steps.
- Determine how to evaluate the progress.
- Develop follow-up and review procedures.

Once a strategic plan is established, a follow-up annual retreat, attended by the board, superintendent, and other key administrative staff, should be scheduled in order to review the district's progress and adjust goals accordingly. Such a review may include creating more specific short-term goals that support established long-range goals. Short-term goals should be "SMART": specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

FISCAL IMPACT

The WPS school board and superintendent can undertake the process of launching the strategic plan process. This approach to planning has no fiscal impact.

Alternatively, the district may want assistance in working through a strategic planning process. This approach will have a fiscal impact. The school board can issue a request for proposals and enter a contract for services. Based on WPS' size and complexity, an estimated cost for facilitating this process would be around \$20,000. This is, of course, a negotiable fee which would include meetings with stakeholders, follow-up, and production of documents. Lastly, in the third year of strategic plan development, a communication strategy would be developed, including print ready public relations documents, and a final print ready strategic plan document.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Develop a strategic plan.	(\$10,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0

FINDING 1-10

The district lacks explicit, current, and data-driven demographic projections. An in-depth study of demographics would provide a sound basis for future decision-making regarding the school district's plans.

WPS student enrollment has been declining for a number of years. Even though the district leadership is aware of the changing aspects of its current population and some of its ramifications, a formal in-depth study of demographics would provide a sound basis for future strategic decision-making. The recent movement to open seating for school board elections is one indication community demographics are changing. Beyond that, the WPS school board has no formalized demographic information detailing historical, current, and projected student enrollment trends. These include changes in district ethnicity, current community economic conditions, longitudinal data on housing and home sales trends, student density information, historical and current assessed property valuation, and residential activity. Without a professionally compiled demographic study, it is impossible to know if the future student and community trends and patterns are likely to continue at the same rate, increase or decrease sharply, or increase or decrease at a slower rate.

Effective facilities and district planning require accurate enrollment projections at least five years into the future. 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. Unfortunately, there are currently no state-level resources to assist Oklahoma school districts in this area.

Effective strategic planning is largely based on an understanding of historical and projected student and community demographic changes. The district of Durant Independent School District recently published the results of a demographic study it undertook with an outside consulting

firm.²⁰ That study projected student enrollment growth of ten percent over the next five year and 18 percent over the next nine years. The results of the Durant study provide an example of the type of data a professional demographics study provides and how such a study can provide a firm footing for strategic planning.

RECOMMENDATION

Complete a demographics study.

Recent data with projections out five to ten years will help WPS plan better. The district should use the results to inform strategic planning, bond development, future classroom construction activities, transfer policies, and all aspects of instructional and operational decisions.

To implement the recommendation, WPS should find a contractor with experience in providing demographic studies for schools. This is typically accomplished through a request for proposals. Following board approval of a time-limited contract, a meeting should then be held with administrative staff and no more than two board member advisers. This meeting should profile WPS expectations and what will be needed from WPS by the researchers and what they will go out and get on their own. At the conclusion of the study, researchers should provide a complete written report, an explanatory meeting with administrative staff, and an oral report to the board in a public board meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team anticipates about 40 hours of work at approximately \$150 an hour will be required for a demographic analysis. This fee should include some onsite time to meet with local planners and builders.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Hire a firm or consulting team to conduct a demographic analysis.	(\$6,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 1-11

WPS does not have a formalized process for evaluation of its various academic and social programs. There are no policy-driven procedures that routinely and systematically collect, analyze, and use data to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of implemented programs. The consulting team found no evidence to indicate program evaluations are used to measure the cost-benefits, effects on student learning, and provide recommendations to improve program implementation.

In 2018-19, WPS schools earned a D, D, and F on the state Report Card (elementary, middle, and high school, respectively). Most district students face challenges due to poverty. The district is

²⁰ http://www.durantisd.org/web/district/DISD_growth2018.pdf. A copy of the DISD report presentation is contained in Appendix D.

making concerted efforts to help students overcome that challenge by running a food pantry, offering shower facilities, pursuing grants to obtain shoes, and implementing new instructional programs such as STEM and ROAR. However, with no evaluation process and frequent staff/teacher turnover, it is difficult to assess if programs are ineffective, used inappropriately, or not implemented with fidelity.

The district does not have a board policy to govern the program evaluation process and measure if the district's finances are invested appropriately. Evaluation policies help schools determine what programs work best and if changes and adjustments are needed.

Program evaluation is designed to assess the implementation and the effects of a program. The purposes for program evaluation include how and where to improve a program, assess the overall value of a program and the individual components, align cost with effectiveness and impact on student performance. Results of program evaluations are used for making decisions about whether to continue, improve, expand, or eliminate a program, allocate resources among competing programs, or accept or reject a program approach or theory. Sound policy drives thorough program evaluations and is viewed as deliberate means for managing and directing decision-making.²¹

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt policies and procedures related to annual program evaluation.

The superintendent and board should adopt policies and timelines for annual evaluations of all academic and social programs. The policies should include directives for identifying need, creating goals, and designing action plans with evidence-based practices. Implementation and reflecting on implementation are substantial components of the planning and evaluation process.^{22, 23}

The superintendent, administrators, and select faculty should review the following resources that provide basic information for initiating program evaluations:

- Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning Program Evaluation Overview.²⁴
- Using Program Evaluation to Enhance Student Success.²⁵
- Jump Start Your School's Program Evaluation.²⁶
- Getting the Information You Need from Your Evaluation.²⁷

²¹ https://education.nova.edu/Resources/uploads/app/35/files/arc_doc/progeval.pdf

²² <https://sde.ok.gov/search/node/low%20performing%20schools>

²³ <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/9EE%20Booklet.pdf>

²⁴ <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/EvaluatingPrograms#:~:text=Program%20evaluation%20looks%20at%20-the, various%20models%20of%20program%20review>

²⁵ <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/using-program-evaluation-enhance-student-success>

²⁶ https://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/school-program-evaluation-basics.shtml

²⁷ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/sst/evaluationmatters.pdf>

Another option available to the board initiating planning and evaluation is exploring resources provided by the SDE through its Office of School Support and Improvement. This office assists low-performing schools with support, assistance, and/or resources needed to build capacity and sustain change that positively impacts students and their achievement.




Program evaluation can also start with what the district is doing right and using that information to shed light on what needs improvement. Each building site could start by implementing the SDE Champions of Excellence initiative. The Champions of Excellence concept is simple: identify excellence, celebrate dedication, and share wisdom, based upon the belief that there are pockets of excellence in every school and good work happens daily. The aim of Champions of Excellence is to build a pathway for schools to evaluate what is working and build and learn from it. Rubrics are available for schools to evaluate what aspects of school programs ensure all students have access to a well-rounded education. **Exhibit 1-22** provides an overview of one of six categories to be considered when evaluating an English program through the Champions of Excellence lens. The results of implementing rubrics and provide policy input and assist WPS in evaluating the degree to which all student academic, social, and emotional needs are met.²⁸

Exhibit 1-22

Champions of Excellence Category 6: Teaming with Families and Communities

Category 6 Teaming with Families and Communities

Everyone in a student's life contributes to the development and learning of that student from birth through adulthood. For Oklahoma to reach its literacy goals, educators must work together with families and communities to ensure all students have access to important supports that will ensure their literacy development. Research shows that collaboration with families and communities correlates to increased academic performance and success for students.

	A BRONZE program...
	A. Provides families with the tools to support the literacy achievement of all children.
	B. Collaborates with families to provide opportunities to celebrate literacy achievement of all students.
	A SILVER program has all the elements of a BRONZE program and...
	C. Assesses community needs for literacy services and identifies gaps where needs are not being met.
	D. Identifies and/or leverages resources in support of local literacy activities.
	A GOLD program has all the elements of a BRONZE and SILVER program and...
	E. Maintains a literacy coalition to enhance literacy support in the community.
	F. Supports literacy through public and private partnerships.

Source: <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/POE-ELA.pdf>

²⁸ <https://sde.ok.gov/championexcellence>

FISCAL IMPACT

The superintendent should investigate the resources available to WPS for conducting appropriate program evaluations. Adopt policy and implement processes as soon as it is feasible. Based on the evaluation approach chosen will determine the cost for implementing the recommendation.

FINDING 1-12

The district has no process in place to routinely update and revise all school board policies. It was unclear how policies are regularly reviewed, updated, and approved at board meetings.

The consulting team found that WPS lacks administrative procedures for the adoption and updating of all school board policies. Some policies have been updated in the last two years, but there has not been a comprehensive review of all policies to ensure all are revised and updated appropriately. The district also lacks standard procedures for disseminating the updates and revisions to board members, designated staff, and the public.

Policies adopted by board of education the provide direction, control and/or management of its legal functions. The goals of all policies are to present clear, concise, and specific directives to the staff and to serve as a primary communication tool with the general public, students, and parents. Regulations state that procedures and rules developed by board policy are to guide and direct the administration in the implementation of all board policy. Adoption of new policies or revision of existing policies is solely the responsibility of the board.

The updated policy manuals must be made available to the public and placed for easy access at district locations for use by employees and the public. Many school districts post computerized versions of the policies on the school website. This provides a convenient and effective venue for keeping all stakeholders informed.²⁹ At the time of the onsite review, only the district's Wellness Policy was posted on its website.

The OSSBA provides up-to-date information regarding policies to its members through Policy Service subscriptions. There are a variety of options available in contracting with OSSBA for the policy services available.³⁰

RECOMMENDATION

Develop processes and procedures to ensure all board policies are updated in a timely manner and available to the public.

The school board and superintendent should review options available through the OSSBA for regular policy updates. Once an option has been selected and implemented, the superintendent should direct the inclusion of policies on the district's website.

²⁹ https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/PolicyManual_75079

³⁰ <https://www.ossba.org/services/policy-services/>

FISCAL IMPACT

The OSSBA provides districts with multiple options for keeping all policies updated. The costs vary from \$750 per year to \$6,000 for a customized policy service. The fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend upon the school board's direction regarding which services the superintendent should purchase.

D. 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. In small districts, human resource functions are usually managed by the superintendent with clerical assistance. 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 would include 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.

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

districts must comply with federal laws governing human resource 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.

FINDING 1-13

The district uses the McREL model for principal evaluations. Administrators stated in interviews that they were satisfied with the evaluation tool and felt it aligned to the goals and vision of the district.

The McREL model evaluates principals over three domains: Managing Change, Focus of Leadership, and A Purposeful Community. McREL's principal evaluation components have been aligned to national standards such as the Council of Chief State School Officers Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. **Exhibit 1-23** shows the McREL rubric.

Exhibit 1-23
McREL Rubric Used for Principal Evaluations

Domain	Dimensions
<p>Managing Change involves understanding the implications of change efforts for stakeholders and adjusting leadership behaviors accordingly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change Agent: is willing to and actively challenges the status quo. • Flexibility: adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent. • Ideals and Beliefs: communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about school and schooling. • Intellectual Stimulation: ensures that the faculty and staff members are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school culture. • Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: is knowledgeable about the current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. • Monitor and Evaluate: monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on school learning. • Optimize: inspires and leads new and challenging innovations.
<p>Focus of Leadership involves accurately and proactively targeting appropriate areas for school improvement efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingent Rewards: recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments. • Discipline: protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their time or focus. • Focus: establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention. • Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: is directly involved in helping teachers design curricular activities and address assessment and instructional issues. • Order: establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines. • Outreach: is an advocate and spokesperson of the school to all stakeholders. • Resources: provides teachers with material and professional development necessary for the execution of their jobs.
<p>A Purposeful Community is one with the collective efficacy and capability to develop and use assets to accomplish goals that matter to all community members through agreed upon processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmation: recognizes and celebrates school accomplishment and acknowledges failures. • Communication: establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students. • Culture: fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation. • Input: involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions. • Relationships: demonstrates awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff. • Situational Awareness: is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems. • Visibility: has quality contacts and interactions with teachers and students.

Source: McREL's Principal Evaluation System³¹

Research shows that principals have a major role and value in achieving effective schools. Their role as a school leader matters and principal evaluations matters. The McREL model examined more than 5,000 studies analyzing the effects of principal leadership on student achievement. Based on their research, the correlation between principal leadership and student achievement was statistically substantial. The studies in the meta-analysis suggest that improving the principal's leadership abilities based on the criteria included in the McREL instrument can substantially increase student achievement.

COMMENDATION

The district has implemented the McRel model to provide effective principal and administrator evaluations.

FINDING 1-14

The district uses the Teacher Leader Effectiveness (TLE) system for teacher evaluation. The TLE model for evaluating teachers is a research-based model that includes training and assessment. Utilizing the model helps ensure fair and consistent evaluations that align to the district's goals.

The TLE model is designed to provide teachers and principals with data that can lead to self-improvement. **Exhibit 1-24** shows the evaluation rubric. The TLE model provides a link to improvement through professional development by utilizing an evaluation rubric that clearly profiles areas of needed improvement. The teacher is expected to assist the principal in evaluation activities and to select professional development that will enhance teacher performance and improve outcomes for students. The principal assists the teacher by removing barriers and helping the teacher acquire high quality professional development. The principal also analyzes the results of the TLE for the entire staff, noting trends and areas where larger groups of teachers could use training to increase effectiveness and then reporting that to professional development planners.

³¹ sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/TLE-McRELBooklet.pdf

Exhibit 1-24
Tulsa TLE Observation and Evaluation Rubric for Teachers

Domain	Relative Weight	Dimensions
Classroom Management	30%	1. Preparation 2. Discipline 3. Building-Wide Climate Responsibility 4. Lesson Plans 5. Assessment Practices 6. Student Relations
Instructional Effectiveness	50%	7. Literacy 8. Common Core State Standards 9. Involves All Learners 10. Explains Content 11. Explains Directions 12. Models 13. Monitors 14. Adjusts Based upon Monitoring 15. Establishes Closure 16. Student Achievement
Professional Growth and Continuous Improvement	10%	17. Uses Professional Growth as an Important Strategy 18. Exhibits Professional Behaviors and Efficiencies
Interpersonal Skills	5%	19. Effective Interactions/Communications with Stakeholders
Leadership	5%	20. Leadership Involvements

Source: Tulsa Public Schools,³²October 2012

WPS principals explained their teacher evaluation process in detail and provided up-to-date data for inspection. One principal utilized an iPad to record observations and provide timely feedback to teachers. All teachers receive an evaluation annually, including those with more than three years' experience. **Exhibit 1-25** reflects a survey question regarding staff evaluations. Most staff responded that they received an annual personnel evaluation last year (65 percent). However, several staff responded neutrally (22 percent). The neutral responses more likely reflect the reality of a considerable number of new hires at WPS over the past two years. For those cases, the question may not apply.

³² <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/TLE-TeacherEvalCriteria.pdf>

Exhibit 1-25
Staff Survey Responses to Annual Evaluations

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received an annual personnel evaluation last year.	37%	28%	22%	12%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

COMMENDATION

The district has implemented the TLE model to provide an effective teacher evaluation framework and site administrators had systematic processes in place to complete evaluations.

FINDING 1-15

The teacher shortage is a national dilemma, and WPS is also struggling with this problem. This shortage of qualified teachers compromises teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and economic resources. WPS, a high poverty, small, rural district that has challenges beyond a teacher shortage, is working on growing their own teachers. Most of these teachers are working on teacher certification through an alternative pathway.

At the time of the onsite work, the district had 22 teachers on an emergency certification. A district can apply for emergency certification on behalf of a teacher as the teacher works towards traditional or alternative certification. The district has been supporting these teachers in their efforts to receive certification by providing afterschool workshops and resources. Even with these supports, the teachers have struggled to achieve certification. Three of the district's teachers were on their third year of emergency certification at the time of the onsite work.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) is responsible for overseeing approval and accountability of Oklahoma's teacher preparation programs. The office administers educator certification assessments and maintains an educator preparation program database, study resources, professional development, and certification results. To earn alternative certification in Oklahoma, candidates without licensure in another state must pass three exams:

- the Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET);
- a specific Oklahoma Professional Teaching Examination (OPTE) – it is also possible for a candidate to instead complete the Praxis® Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT) instead; and
- at least one Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) – there are OSATs available in about 60 areas.

The consulting team was able to obtain anonymized data for 19 WPS teachers on emergency certification. Of these:

- 11 had either not taken or not passed any of the three exams;
- four had passed the OGET, but not the other two;
- one had passed the OGET and the OSAT, but not the OPTE/PPAT; and
- three had passed all three and were presumably in the process of being certified, assuming the OSATs they passed were in the area they are emergency certified in.

The alternative pathway to teacher certification has become more prevalent with the ongoing teacher shortages. Studies have found that these teachers can produce student achievement gains comparable to teachers certified in traditional pathways,³³ so they represent a viable route to filling vacant teacher slots. As noted in an opinion piece, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has stated, “A child taught by an effective teacher develops stronger work ethic, has a better chance of going to college, and earns a higher salary as an adult.”³⁴

OEQA can provide expertise and resources to support WPS teachers in gaining their certification and becoming effective teachers. Building an alliance with the OEQA can assist the district to grow and retain qualified teachers.

RECOMMENDATION

Work with OEQA to identify resources to assist emergency certified teachers in gaining standard certification.

The district should first focus its efforts on the five teachers who have already passed the OGET. The superintendent or designee should contact OEQA and request information on resources to assist emergency certified teachers in successfully completing their certification tests. This contact should focus on identifying state resources that teachers can consult about their strengths and area of need based on previous certification test results. In addition, the superintendent should continue to maintain the following supports:

- identify resources and the best pathway for each teacher to achieve certification;
- provide afterschool workshops that are tailored to each teachers’ needs;
- create teams with mentor teachers that can provide daily support in the classroom as they work towards certification; and
- create a timeline that outlines steps the teachers must take towards certification and monitor their progress. As part of this, it will be important for emergency certified teachers to

³³ Blazer, C. (2012, February). What the research says about alternative teacher certification programs. *Information Capsule*, 1104. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536506.pdf>

³⁴ Baines, L. (2017, March 7). When ‘highly qualified’ teachers aren’t (opinion). *Education Week*. Retrieved from: www.edweek.org/policy-politics/opinion-when-highly-qualified-teachers-arent/2017/03

understand that they are in a potentially time-limited process and must do their part to promptly meet all certification requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-16

In response to its teacher shortage, the district has aggressively recruited locally to grow their own teachers. However, the district faces difficulties with these teachers completing their certification. In interviews with district and site administrators, recruiting and hiring teachers continues to be a struggle at their schools.

According to an article by the Economic Policy Institute “the teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought.” High poverty schools like WPS are suffering the most. The number of enrollees in teacher preparation programs between 2008-09 and 2015-16 decreased by 37.8 percent. Schools unable to fill vacancies tripled between 2011-12 to 2015-16. Working conditions were noted as being one of the detractors for current and new teachers to remain in the profession.³⁵

The district has encountered high staff turnover over the past few years. Most of their new hires required an emergency certification. Recruitment practices generally depended on website and OSSBA job search advertisement or word of mouth. The middle school principal did acknowledge that his last hire was recruited based on a recommendation from one of his past college instructors. However, the district has not reached out to universities to place student teachers in their district for the past few years.

From the outside it may be hard to entice teachers to the area. However, once inside the buildings there is evidence of rising stars and a positive school culture. The district also provides a unique demographic that can be challenging yet beneficial for preparing new teachers with the skills necessary to become effective. Building partnerships with university educator preparation programs supports the district in possibly gaining effective teachers and provides experiences for new teachers to gain the skills necessary to be successful.³⁶

Building a school-university partnership can benefit WPS by adding additional teachers and simultaneously supporting their recruitment efforts. In addition, the partnership with a university offers more resources and professional development for prospective teachers as they are still attending the university. The partnership is equally beneficial to the university because it allows their students experience to gain skills necessary to be successful in high poverty schools.²⁴

³⁵ Weiss, E., Garcia, E (2019, April 16). *U.S. schools struggle to hire and retain teachers: The second report in 'the perfect storm in the teacher labor market' series*. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from: epi.org/publication/u-s-schools-struggle-to-hire-and-retain-teachers-the-second-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/

³⁶ Miller, S., Duffy, G., Rohr, J., Gasparello, R., & Mercier, S. (2005). Preparing teachers for high-poverty schools. *Educational Leadership*, 62(8), 62-65. Retrieved from: www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/may05/-vol62/num08/Preparing_Teachers_for_High-Poverty_Schools.aspx

RECOMMENDATION

Improve recruiting by building relationships with surrounding universities and developing an intentional recruiting program.

The superintendent should contact the closest universities to WPS to both recruit teachers and advocate placement of student teachers within the district. She should identify the appropriate personnel who are over the education programs and inform them of the district's eagerness to house student teachers. She can convey the benefits student teachers will experience at WPS with their demographics and highly qualified principals. To support housing for student teachers, the superintendent should reach out to Seminole State College and see if they could provide any incentives for students to live in their housing while doing their student teaching.

The superintendent should then direct the three principals to convene a recruitment and retention study 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; and
- bring skills, knowledge, and energy to the district to implement successful recruitment and retention practices.

The team should include a cross section of district personnel that represents teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, 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. The team should be explicitly diverse, to match the district's student diversity.

The team should consider the "promising strategies" identified by the New Hampshire Department of Education:

- 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.³⁷

The team 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; and
- create a pilot program on different teacher/leader models that include mentors, lead teachers, or instructional coaches.³⁸

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

- recruitment strategy template;³⁹
- steps to building a recruiting strategy;⁴⁰ and
- planning the steps in your recruitment.⁴¹

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.

³⁷ http://www.nheon.org/prof_dev/RetainRecruit/AS3Plan.html

³⁸ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Prelim.%20report%20Dec.%2015%202015.pdf>

³⁹ <https://www.template.net/business/strategy-templates/sample-recruitment-strategy-template/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.eremedia.com/ere/6-easy-steps-to-building-a-recruiting-strategy-and-successfully-measuring-the-outcome/>

⁴¹ <https://www.go2hr.ca/article-category/recruitment/planning>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-17

The district has inconsistent salaries for administrators and support staff based on experience and length of contract. The personnel clerk had a clear process for placing certified teachers but did not have the same for administrators or support staff.

WPS does not have local unions for certified or support staff. Information on processes for salary scale placement and other personnel processes that are normally found in a negotiated agreement are therefore not present.

Although the personnel clerk used consistent processes to identify pay rates for incoming certified teachers, there was a lack of consistent processes to determine pay for support staff or administrators. Although all positions had pay scales, the process of how staff were placed on the pay scales was unclear. For example, a custodian with ten years of relevant experience at Walmart may be placed at year zero or some other year on the pay scale. At the time of the onsite work, the district had four custodians with exactly the same hourly rate of pay, despite differing levels of prior and in-district experience. Also, at the time of the onsite work, the three principals differed in annual salary by only \$8,671, despite two principals having 25+ years of experience while the third had eight. All three had the same level of higher education.

Developing consistent salary and personnel policy for all positions is necessary to provide transparency and ensure fair and consistent compensation practices. It will also help to protect the district from potential EEO or discrimination complaints.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop policies and forms that outline processes in order to fairly and consistently place administrative and support employees on the district approved pay scales.

To complete this recommendation, the superintendent or her designee should complete the following steps:

- Create personnel forms for new hires that includes the salary, start date, OCAS coding, deductions and personal information. **Exhibit 1-26** provides an example of a new hire form.
- Create policy to determine qualifying prior year work experience. The district should develop rules or formulas for determining qualifying work experience in and outside of the district. For example, how will the district determine qualified work experience for a certified retired teacher that is now a bus driver? How will the district determine qualified work experience for the former custodian at Walmart who is now a cafeteria worker?

- Survey nearby districts and determine their rules or regulations regarding qualifying prior year work experience and pay scales. The district should be somewhat aligned or more beneficial than surrounding districts.
- Create pay scales aligned to job descriptions and qualifications.
- Review all policies related to pay and human resources for consistency and best practice.

Exhibit 1-26
Example of a New Employee Form

NEW EMPLOYEE RECOMMENDATION/PAYROLL FORM												
EMPLOYEE INFORMATION												
Employee Name: _____												
Last				First				Position				
Address: _____												
Employee Number: _____				Site: _____				Phone _____				
SSN _____				DOB _____				EXP _____				
Degree _____				Out of State _____				Military _____				
SALARY INFORMATION												
SALARY	C/T	Start	Pds	FB	FB	Prj	Func	Obj	Prg	Subj	Jcl	Site
flex												
Deduction	TYPE	Amount	MSts		Exem		Cal		Support TR RET			
			X-FWH		X-SWH							
SALARY DETAILS												
Effective Date _____				Hourly Rate _____				Daily Rate _____				
Hours _____				Days _____				Contract _____				
Notes: _____												

Source: Chickasha Public Schools, November 2020

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-18

WPS has historically had difficulty in acquiring enough substitutes. During focus groups, support staff reported that they routinely had to cover classes for absent teachers. This practice negatively impacts classrooms instruction and services by removing personnel from their intended responsibilities. Administrators also reported that substitutes were hard or almost impossible to find.

Exhibit 1-27 provides survey results regarding substitutes. As shown, only 36 percent of staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that substitutes were available.

Exhibit 1-27
Staff Survey Results Regarding Substitute Availability

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district has a pool of quality substitutes to fill positions when necessary.	5%	31%	34%	24%	6%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

There are multiple effects of not having enough qualified and available substitutes:

- Classroom aids and other supportive staff members are pulled from their assignments affecting their responsibilities. This may affect multiple classrooms.
- Poor instruction and, often, poor conduct are the results of poorly prepared substitutes.
- Teachers or principals are required to cover absences. This affects instruction.

RECOMMENDATION**Improve the availability and preparedness of substitutes.**

To meet this recommendation the district should take the following steps:

- Develop a substitute handbook that includes essential information about the district and substitute's responsibilities. The document should contain information such as calendar, policy and procedures, substitute code of ethics, job requirements, and pay information. Oklahoma City Public Schools has a professionally prepared document that the district can use as an example.⁴²
- Offer certified substitutes and those in certification programs a performance evaluation. These would be completed by the teacher for whom the substitute was obtained. They would

⁴² <https://www.okecps.org/cms/lib/OK01913268/Centricity/Domain/110/Substitute%20Teacher%20Handbook.pdf>

be printed on WPS letterhead and signed, so that teachers looking for permanent positions could use them in their application packages.

- Provide training on basic classroom management, essential procedures such as bloodborne pathogens, and professional development targeted to the special needs of the substitute. The basic trainings should be provided to new substitutes multiple times per year (semester, quarter, or monthly).
- Ensure that WPS is paying slightly higher for substitutes than neighboring districts.
- Implement a tiered salary schedule, offering an incremental increase in pay for attending trainings and/or completing a specified number of substituting days each year.
- Provide for substitute pay differential between certified and non-certified substitutes.

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 substantially affect citizen perceptions of and engage the community with the school system. Effective programs will rally public support and involvement. They can result in parent and community volunteers, public participation in the decision-making processes that affect the schools (i.e., bond and board elections), and productive business and community alliances.

FINDING 1-19

The consulting team found that the Wewoka community strongly supports the school district. The district benefits from a high level of community involvement as evidenced by its ongoing support from banks, businesses, private donations. School staff cited a number of community organizations and families that regularly support WPS:

- Security State Bank;
- 1st National Bank;
- First United Bank;

- Mekiusukey Oil;
- Lance Ruffel Oil;
- Pete Klentes;
- Dan Dearing;
- SMART Foundation; and
- Patterson Family.

What happens before the school day starts and after it ends can be just as important and impactful in the lives of students as what happens during the school day. For this reason, community engagement and involvement in schools is an important factor in the educational process. Consistent community involvement and engagement have shown to have major short- and long-term benefits.

According to a policy brief from the National Education Association (NEA), “when schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher level programs.”⁴³ Therefore, maintaining and increasing community involvement programs/opportunities should be a consistent goal for schools and school districts.⁴⁴

COMMENDATION

WPS and the Wewoka community are commended for maintaining strong school community relationships.

FINDING 1-20

The district operates a food pantry for its students. This is a much-needed initiative where the district reaches out to support and address the needs of the high poverty students. Through the food pantry, food is provided to students on a regular basis. The consulting team observed students after school, picking up food items to take home, while volunteers managed and organized the items for distribution.

As educators, in order to be responsive to the needs of our students, it is important to consider the constraints that poverty often places on children’s lives, and how such conditions influence learning and academic achievement. Poverty affects intervening factors that, in turn, affect student outcomes. These factors include students’ health and well-being; literacy and language development; access to physical and material resources; and level of mobility.⁴⁵ WPS

⁴³ http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11_ParentInvolvement08.pdf

⁴⁴ Henderson, A. T., Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and the community connections on student achievement*. SEDL. Retrieved from: <https://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-does-poverty-influence-learning-william-parrett-kathleen-budge>

understands the adverse effects poverty has on student learning and is striving to address those needs.

COMMENDATION

WPS is commended for operating a food pantry to support students.

F. COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC RELATIONS

The primary role of communications in a school district is to convey a message and image consistent with the board of education policies and 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.

A 2011 parent and community survey conducted by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) validated that positive relationships between the school and the community are built on the “how and what” the school communicates. The survey concluded that “Consumer needs are changing. The backpack folder is no longer the primary source of information for parents.”⁴⁶ The NSPRA survey asked parents their preferred delivery method for communicating school news. The answers were:

- email from the district/school;
- online parent portal;
- district/school e-newsletters;
- district/school website; and
- telephone/voice messaging system.⁴⁷

The survey also asked parents what news they want communicated. Parents’ communication priorities were:

- updates on their child’s progress or insight on how they improve;
- timely notice when performance is slipping;
- information on what their child is expected to learn during this year;
- homework and grading policies;

⁴⁶ <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/parent-involvement-survey-anne-obrien>

⁴⁷ “Texting” was not included as an option.

- curriculum descriptions and information on instructional programs;
- a calendar of events and meetings;
- information on student safety;
- quality of teaching; and
- educational program changes and updates.

Elementary parents also wanted communication on behavior, including how their child gets along with others, and information comparing their school's performance to others. Secondary parents wanted to know how best to communicate with the teacher and information on graduation and course requirements.

Finally, the NSPRA survey asked when they wanted communication; 47 percent of parents indicated they wanted district updates as often as decisions are made, while another 36 percent wanted monthly updates.

One formal method of communicating with parents is through parent conferencing. **Exhibit 1-28** shows a five-year comparison of parent conference attendance rates for WPS, its peers, and the state. The district had participation rates comparable to that of the state each year. Overall, WPS tends to have average conference attendance rates of 72 percent, which is one percentage point lower than the state average and tied for third highest among its peers.

Exhibit 1-28
Wewoka, Peer Districts, and State Trend in Parent Conference Attendance

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Wewoka	73.0%	72.0%	68.0%	74.0%	74.0%
Atoka	60.0%	64.0%	83.0%	85.0%	74.0%
Haworth	55.0%	56.0%	63.0%	N/A	N/A
Haskell	76.0%	57.0%	61.0%	63.0%	84.0%
Porter	75.0%	82.0%	70.0%	82.0%	84.0%
Vian	76.0%	72.0%	71.0%	67.0%	69.0%
State	74.0%	74.0%	73.0%	72.0%	73.0%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 1-21

With the advent of virtual/remote and blended learning in WPS, teachers have increased their contact with parents. This frequent contact is beneficial and has noticeably improved both communication and student learning.

In many cases, WPS teachers make daily contact with parents using electronic means through phone calls, texts, and emails. Some teachers reported making home visits to virtual/remote students if they cannot be reached by electronic means. There is intentional effort on the part of

both teachers and administrators to have meaningful, constructive, and reciprocal dialog with parents.

Exhibit 1-29 shows the results of staff efforts to communicate with families. A large majority of staff felt that the district effectively communicates with parents and community members. Likewise, a large majority of parents and a majority of secondary students felt that teachers communicate regularly with parents.

Exhibit 1-29
Staff, Parent, and Student Survey Results Regarding Communications

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The district effectively communicates with parents and community members.	25%	65%	6%	3%	0%
Parent	I receive timely communications from my child's teachers regarding his/her progress in school.	39%	51%	7%	0%	2%
Student	My teachers communicate regularly with my parents about my academic progress.	20%	35%	36%	7%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

The WPS teachers and administrators practice many of the communication efforts detailed in NSPRA research and the cited best practices. As noted by NSPRA, “each school district must complete its own research to see what its parents and other constituents prefer when it comes to communication.”⁴⁸

Epstein (2001) at Johns Hopkins University⁴⁹ and others have documented research showing the positive effect that strong parental involvement has on schools and on student achievement. Their findings include:

- 50 to 85 percent of the variance in achievement scores, IQ, or verbal ability can be attributed to parent, family, and home environment variables.
- Parent education programs, especially those that train low income parents to work with their children, improve how well students use language skills, perform on tests, and behave in school.

⁴⁸ <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/parent-involvement-survey-anne-obrien>

⁴⁹ Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Many studies have found that when parents become involved in school activities, not only do their attitudes improve, but so do those of their children. Student achievement rises as well.

COMMENDATION

The district's teachers and administrators are commended for heightened efforts of frequent, meaningful, effective communication with parents and community.

Chapter 2:

Instructional Delivery System

Chapter 2

Instructional Delivery System

This chapter addresses the instructional delivery of Wewoka Public Schools (WPS) 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 how 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 Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) drive educational delivery. With OAS, 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 OAS 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 OAS defines the content, knowledge, and skills students should gain during their K-12 educational careers. It

prepares high school graduates for success in college courses and in workforce environments.

Exhibit 2-1 further explains the OAS standards.

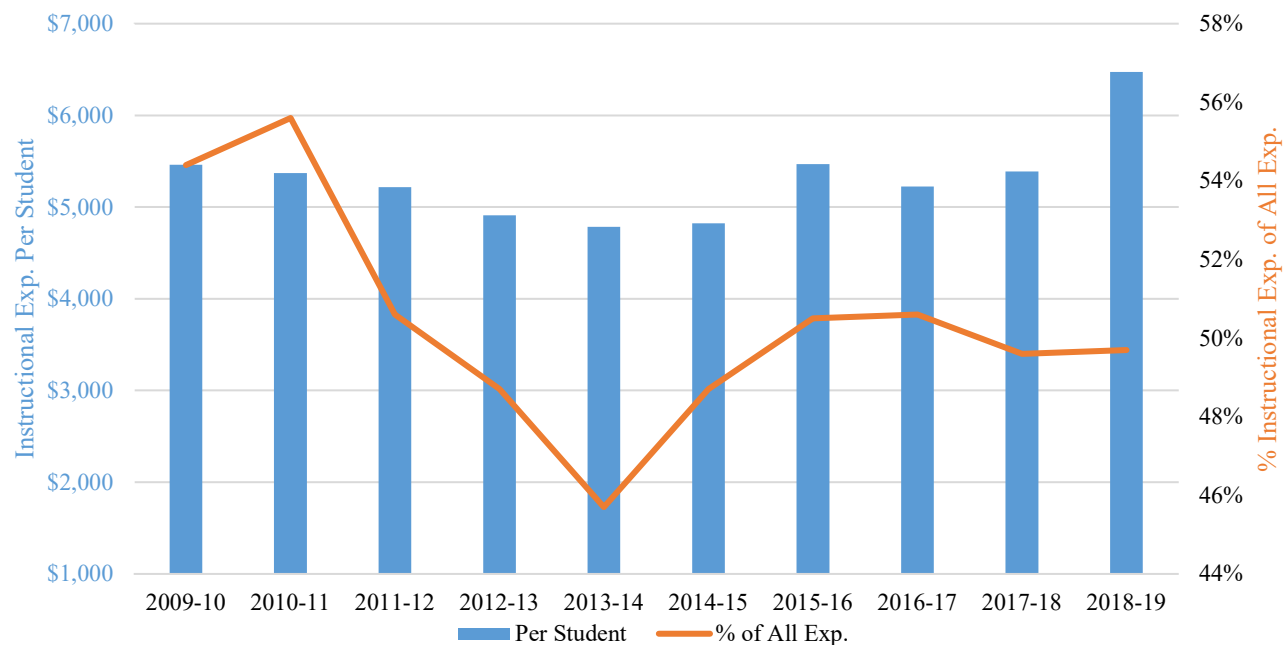
Exhibit 2-1
Oklahoma Academic Standards

What the OAS Does	What the OAS 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: The Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE), 2018

Exhibit 2-2 provides a ten-year comparison of WPS instructional expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures as well as the annual instructional expenditures per student. Over that period, instructional expenses have ranged from 46 percent to 56 percent of all expenditures. Instructional dollars per student have varied from to \$4,786 in 2013-14 to \$6,474 in 2018-19.

Exhibit 2-2
Trend in Instructional Spending



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

The district has prioritized the acquisition of technology over the last two years in order to implement a one-to-one technology initiative with Chromebooks and tablets. **Exhibit 2-3** shows students using Chromebooks in the classroom.

Exhibit 2-3
Student Chromebook Use



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

FINDING 2-1

The district lacks processes and procedures to annually evaluate instructional resources. The district does not comprehensively review curricula and supplemental resources to determine relevancy and alignment with OAS.

No comprehensive review and evaluation process exists to specify foundational and supplemental resources. No process is in place to help teachers determine relevancy, developmental appropriateness, and alignment of materials with OAS. The district lacks processes and procedures to annually evaluate if the instructional resources used by teachers lead to standards mastery or just fill instructional time. The district does not comprehensively review curricula and supplemental resources to determine weighted importance based upon SDE Blueprints and alignment with OAS.

Across the district, there are no defined efforts to routinely collect data to determine the efficiency and cost effectiveness of instructional resources and the impact on student achievement. The consulting team did not find evidence of an evaluation process to determine how digital software, websites, supplemental and remedial interventions, instructional strategies, and enrichment activities are aligned with student data results.

At the middle school and high school, teachers primarily work in isolation and select their own supplemental resources. Some teachers rely more heavily on their textbooks, while others use more supplemental resources in place of textbooks. Interviews and focus groups revealed there is nothing in place to help teachers filter, select, add, or abandon instructional resources and materials. No comprehensive evaluation or screening process is in place to ensure new purchases support student need based upon data and align with standards-based curricula. No evaluation screens resources ensuring they support instructional best practices. Currently, there is no process in place to evaluate the quality of digital learning resources, websites, and the alignment to OAS. Teachers also do not have evaluation measures to help screen resources in designing best practice instruction.

Most federal and state instructional resource/programs require individual instructional resource/program evaluations. However, highly effective schools take the evaluation process to the next level and evaluate all locally implemented instructional resources/programs. This ensures instructional resources/programs work in concert and are effective for remediation or enrichment at each grade level, content area, and student sub-groups. An annual evaluation process ensures all instructional resources, programs, and software are not “busy work” but directly improve standards driven student learning. Likewise, an annual evaluation process determines if instructional resource materials are addressing identified learning gaps or redundant and repetitive overlaps based upon student performance data. All teachers need resources that are relevant, support curricula rigor, and most importantly, seamlessly align with state standards and improved student performance.

Without comprehensive instructional resource/program evaluations, schools risk getting into curricular and instructional traps. They continue doing what they have always done; serving students several instructional resources without focused intent and alignment to state standards and targeted student learning need. Systematically collecting and analyzing quantitative and

qualitative information regarding instructional resources provides district administrators and teachers with valuable assessment information.

Evaluations should measure and answer questions, such as:

- Is there a need to improve, modify, or abandon the supplemental instructional resources?
- Does the resource yield the intended effect on improved student learning, including all subgroups?
- Are the resource goals still relevant to student need and aligned to state standards?
- Do the resources render unintended outcomes?
- Is there a need to change or refine the implementation strategies and procedures?
- Are all the individual resource components valuable and effective in improving student achievement?
- Does the instructional resource/program have a positive impact on students, teachers, school climate, and culture?¹

Districts can then use the evaluation to make data-driven, informed decisions. The evaluation guides the district to keep or abandon instructional resources/programs. Based upon data, modifications, additions, deletions, or revisions to instructional resources/programs can be determined. The evaluation should determine the instructional impact resources have on subgroups such as struggling readers, English Language Learners (ELLs), and special education students and their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requirements.

Such information is crucial for aligning district funds with new purchases. Teachers have easy access to digital and electronic resources. However, instructional resources/programs must support best instructional practices and directly align with the identified paced and aligned curriculum. In the area of technology-based resources, Hill and Hannafin (2001) observed that they often suffer from a lack of regulation of content validity, reliability, and credibility – using evaluation instruments helps teachers identify digital resources of high quality.²

Without implementing a regularly scheduled evaluation system, WPS positions itself to fund instructional resources/programs that are misaligned, not meeting identified student need or the intent behind their implementation. Additionally, the Wewoka community and stakeholders need assurance the district is not spending money and time on ineffective instructional resources/programs.

¹ http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014007.pdf

² https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260392089_How_to_evaluate_the_quality_of_digital_learning_resources

RECOMMENDATION

Review curricula and supplemental resources to determine relevancy and alignment with Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS).

High performing districts annually evaluate all instructional resources/programs, new initiatives, grants, and district processes. The combined data determines if there is need to eliminate components or discontinue the resource or instructional resource/program. The data should also provide evidence that the instructional resource/program positively:

- impacts improved student learning in all subgroups;
- contributes to the relevance and rigor of instruction and OAS curriculum;
- meets the intended curricular and instructional purpose; and
- supports best instructional practices.

In the long-term, instructional resource/program evaluations focus on improving student achievement. Resource evaluation is a guide to use and build upon those products that nurture success and lead to ongoing improvement in instructional practices and outcomes.

The superintendent, principals, and all teachers should develop a list of all major curricular and instructional resources they routinely implement to supplement, remediate, or enrich their instruction, and support the curriculum. The list should include a rank ordering of total dollars spent on each implemented resource. The superintendent should then direct evaluation efforts to those with the highest costs and the strongest correlation to student performance data in the bottom quartiles.

The superintendent and principals should work with teachers to identify and abandon resources and materials that are no longer robust and relevant to the knowledge base students need for the next level of study and college and career-readiness. This evaluation and abandonment process must be simple, easily implemented, and directly focused on student data results and improved student achievement.

All materials should undergo a formative and summative evaluation. A formative instructional resource/program evaluation can be used in purchasing new instructional resources/programs and during the implementation of the resource. Such evaluation promotes close examination of instructional resource/program implementation, as to whether there were changes, adjustments, or improvements, and that it is adapted with fidelity. **Exhibit 2-4** presents examples of formative evaluation questions to explore.

Exhibit 2-4
Formative Instructional Resource/Program Evaluation

While the instructional resource/program is ongoing, these questions should be asked several times:

- Is the instructional resource/program being implemented as it was designed?
- Do the students understand the instructional resource/program's concepts?
- What are the misconceptions about the instructional resource/program?
- Are all WPS instructional resource/program users implementing the instructional resource/program in the same way?
- Is the instructional resource/program being implemented on schedule?
- Is there enough time to implement all aspects of the instructional resource/program?
- What aspects of the instructional resource/program do not seem to be working as well as you intended?
- Do instructional resource/program implementers need additional training on the instructional resource/program?
- Are there any negative outcomes surfacing?

Source: http://www.janetwall.net/attachments/File/9_Step_Evaluation_Model_Paper.pdf

Summative instructional resource/program evaluation takes place after the instructional resource/program has been implemented and is conducted at the end of each school year, or another logical time, such as the end of instructional resource/programmatic intervention.

Exhibit 2-5 presents examples of summative evaluation questions to explore.

Exhibit 2-5

Summative Instructional Resource/Program Evaluation

After an instructional resource/program has been implemented, ask:

- What did the instructional resource/program accomplish?
- Did the instructional resource/program reach its goals and objectives?
- What impact did the instructional resource/program have on students?
- What were the outcomes?
- Who benefited from the instructional resource/program?
- How much was the benefit to improved student achievement?
- Was the benefit greater with this instructional resource/program when compared with another instructional resource/program?
- Did all types of students benefit from the instructional resource/program?
- What were the positive outcomes?
- What were the negative outcomes?
- What should be improved/changed in the instructional resource/program?
- Does the benefit of the instructional resource/program warrant the cost?

Source: http://www.janetwall.net/attachments/File/9_Step_Evaluation_Model_Paper.pdf

In addition to asking these evaluation questions, it is important to make certain the instructional resources/programs align tightly with the current OAS, depth of knowledge (DOK) expectations, and Oklahoma's expected student performance levels. WPS student demographics, such as language, poverty, mobility, ethnicity, and bottom quartile test scores, should also be taken into consideration for abandonment or retention purposes. Teachers cannot afford to implement instructional resources/programs and materials that do not have high impact on closing the achievement gap and improving student performance. There are many free resources available to gather additional information, including:

- resources on designing and planning instructional resource/program evaluation;³
- a basic guide to instructional resource/program evaluation;⁴ and

³ <https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/designing-and-planning-your-program-evaluation>

⁴ <https://managementhelp.org/evaluation/program-evaluation-guide.htm>

- an evaluation matrix and template.⁵

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Initially, WPS staff could objectively and fairly evaluate resources with input from all administrators and teachers. However, federal guidance notes that districts should expect to spend between five and seven percent of the total funding of an instructional resource/program on evaluation. In time, it may be preferable to contract with an outside evaluation firm with credibility and expertise in statistical analysis. Using federal monies, the consulting team recommends that a minimum of \$5,000 per year be allocated to evaluation efforts.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Evaluate all curricula and instructional resources, digital programs, website and initiatives.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)

FINDING 2-2

The district recently purchased a new math series for elementary grades. The primary rationale for adopting a new math series was to provide a consistent and systematic instructional resource in Pre-K through 4th grade. Interviews with elementary teachers indicated an overall appreciation of this initiative.

Exhibit 2-6 shows the implementation of the new program in elementary classrooms. Teachers reported that their previously adopted math program was not at a level their students could understand, and they were unable to obtain high-quality professional development needed to utilize that program effectively. The elementary teachers now report that the new math series is more grade-level appropriate and more closely aligned to the OAS. In addition, the new series includes technology-based options to utilize in conjunction with each lesson, and has manipulatives to accompany the lessons. At the time of the onsite work for this project, teachers in 1st and 2nd grades had not yet received the manipulative kits, but were using the other parts of the new math series.

⁵ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/sst/evaluationmatters.pdf>

Exhibit 2-6 Implementation of Elementary Math Program



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

In assessing the new math series, teachers reported seeing an increased understanding of some of the key topics, such as number sense in multiple grade levels, as evidenced by observing student work and responding to student questions about each topic. One-on-one interviews with teachers revealed their comfort level with the mathematics topics has increased due to the access to a new program that provides multiple strategies and approaches for students to solve problems and provides clear content information for the teachers.

International mathematics teaching and learning expert, Marilyn Burns, explains, “Too often mathematics instruction gives students the erroneous notion that learning math is all about learning procedures rather than making sense of ideas.”⁶ Implementing a new math series, which includes multiple processes for helping student make sense of the mathematics, is a key step in moving away from simple teaching of procedures, to the teaching of mathematical thinking and reasoning using flexibility in strategies and approaches.

COMMENDATION

The district recently adopted a consistent math series for grades K-4 to support growth in student achievement.

FINDING 2-3

The district lacks a comprehensive, common, standards-based curriculum framework to horizontally and vertically align a standards-based core curriculum. Curriculum is in different stages across different core subject areas and grade levels. The teachers have autonomy in

⁶<http://portal.msresources.org/pdf/2015/Uncovering%20the%20Math%20Curriculum.pdf>

choosing curriculum, resources, and making decisions regarding standards selection and curriculum pacing.

Curriculum frameworks emerged as schools moved to a standards-based education rather than textbook-driven education. A curriculum framework organizes standards into learning outcomes. At each grade level or content area, frameworks define and explain the content standards to learn. The framework articulates what the students are to master at each grade level and subject area. Frameworks guide teachers in planning and delivering grade level curricula and instruction. They identify the essential standards, learning experiences, foundational and maintenance skills, and key learning concepts. The framework details what students are expected to learn and teachers are expected to teach. The State of Oklahoma has developed comprehensive curriculum frameworks. Available on the SDE website, there are frameworks in Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Science.⁷

The district is focused on moving from textbook-driven to a standards-based curriculum. Some WPS teachers are further along in that move than others. There are random efforts across the district to define and pace curriculum. Some grades and courses use the textbook-provided framework and pacing guide. For example, fifth grade math uses the pacing guide provided by Big Ideas, the elementary grades follow the My Math program pacing guide, and seventh grade geography uses the HMH-provided pacing guide. While these do provide some structure in pacing overall, there are numerous instances where the textbook or adopted program does not completely cover the OAS. Without pairing the resources provided by the textbook company or vendor with a comprehensive review of standards and content, it is unclear whether there is an instructional plan for all OAS in each grade and subject. In the elementary school, the principal led the staff through the “five ins and outs.” However, no evidence was presented to indicate the “five ins and outs” are guided by the SDE Blueprints and OAS most frequently tested. Moreover, some grades and subjects have not yet completed this process, such as in Pre-K through 4th grade social studies and Pre-K through 2nd grade science.

In the middle school and high school, standards-based curricula are primarily decided by one teacher teaching most grade level sections. No district curriculum framework or curriculum guide anchors and details standards-based instruction. On the staff survey, to which 28 teachers responded, a quarter of teachers did not feel that the curriculum was aligned from grade to grade and from class to class (**Exhibit 2-7**). A further 14 percent of teachers had *no opinion* on the subject, perhaps indicative of a lack of understanding regarding curriculum alignment.

⁷ <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-curriculum-frameworks>

Exhibit 2-7
Teacher Survey Results Regarding Curriculum Alignment

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district's curriculum is aligned from grade to grade and from class to class.	21%	39%	14%	21%	4%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

As part of the curriculum frameworks, the district lacks a common focus for leveraging the key components of digital learning: “active engagement, participation in groups, frequent interaction and feedback, and connection to real-world experts.”⁸ The district's administrators have made intentional effort to raise awareness, provide options, and set expectations to standardize the core curriculum using a Pre-K through grade 12 curriculum framework. However, these efforts do not rise to the level of a common focus in this area.

Content standards that are aligned with and support digital age learning and work are essential in today's schools. Technology is best able to enhance learning when educators use it intentionally within the adopted curriculum. A curriculum framework pairs defined content standards with aligned digital curriculum resources. A curriculum framework guides both how and when technology is used for learning. It ensures that technology is applied:

- in ways that address real-world skills;
- to learn the right skills at the right times for the right reasons; and
- to meet specific learning objectives.

As noted by the International Society for Technology in Education:

Technology is all too often applied as an add-on to existing curriculum. To maximize its potential benefits – such as the development of higher-order thinking skills – educators must weave it into the curriculum in such a way that the tool matches the desired learning outcome. A curriculum framework bridges the gap between overall curriculum goals and the use of technology for learning and teaching.⁹

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement Pre-K through 12th grade core standards-based core curriculum alignment frameworks, along with teacher accountability measures.

District leaders have introduced WPS teachers to various local, state, and national frameworks. With teacher awareness in place, the district needs to standardize the curriculum and adopt a

⁸ <https://www.edutopia.org/video/introduction-technology-integration>

⁹ <http://id.iste.org/connected/standards/essential-conditions/curriculum-framework>

district-wide curriculum framework. Along with adopting the framework, teachers need an accountability system to ensure the framework is taught with fidelity.

The superintendent, principals, and curriculum director, along with teachers, should explore options for adopting a district-wide curriculum framework. Many frameworks are available that sequence standards and pace curriculum while allowing teacher instructional delivery autonomy. The district's instructional team must provide the leadership, support, and release time for teachers to adopt frameworks that provide consistent guidelines for shaping and managing their respective curriculum along with the integration of technology.

There is need for regularly scheduled meetings with focused agendas. Restructuring Friday release time with teachers, refocusing the summer, and refocusing the beginning of the year professional development days are possible venues for framework adoption. In adopting curriculum frameworks, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The district should begin by reviewing the SDE frameworks, along with frameworks from other Oklahoma districts. Once a WPS district-wide framework is agreed upon, the leadership team must continue to provide targeted intentional guidance with accountability measures to ensure all teachers are implementing the frameworks with fidelity.

The SDE curriculum frameworks are sets of curricular resources developed by Oklahoma teachers to help educators translate the OAS into classroom practice. They illustrate what is expected of students at each grade level by examining the intent of each standard and providing instructional options to support student learning. These tools may be helpful to educators as they evaluate, select and implement instruction, curriculum and classroom assessments aligned to standards.¹⁰

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. It can be implemented by restructuring Friday release time and use of existing professional development funds.

FINDING 2-4

The district lacks an ongoing system to horizontally and vertically align and pace the core curriculum. There are no pacing measures to address curriculum gaps and redundancies. A systematic process for detailing content, skills, and pacing is lacking. The district lacks a system to monitor appropriate remediation, review, and maintenance based upon student data.

The district expects teachers to use formative and summative student performance data. However, district-wide student performance data are not maximized by interfacing and weaving the student data results into adjusting and calendar pacing the standards-based curriculum. There is no calendar pacing to mirror the scope and sequence of a standards-based curriculum framework. In elementary and middle grades, some WPS teachers follow the textbook pacing guides provided by the textbook publishers as a way of mapping out when to teach each chapter in the book during the school year. Interviews with principals indicate a desire to move past this

¹⁰ <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-curriculum-frameworks>

stage to one where the teachers collaborate, analyze and unpack the OAS, and map out a visual format of when to cover material at each grade level and subject area with accompanying lessons and resources.

On the staff survey, 75 percent of WPS teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* they “know what is to be taught” (**Exhibit 2-8**). However, no evidence was presented to the consulting team that indicated the existence of a “district-adopted pacing calendar that reflects OAS.” Additionally, only 56 percent of WPS teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* the district implements “scope and sequence documents that determine what is taught and when.”

Exhibit 2-8
Teacher Survey Responses Regarding Curriculum

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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 (OAS).	32%	43%	14%	11%	0%
Teachers have scope and sequence documents that determine what is taught and when.	30%	26%	30%	15%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

On the student survey, only 48 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* they “knew what to expect on state tests” (**Exhibit 2-9**). This is perhaps another indication of the lack of instructional alignment and pacing.

Exhibit 2-9
Student Survey Results Regarding Curriculum and Assessment

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I knew what to expect on the state tests.	12%	36%	31%	15%	5%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Curriculum that is vertically mapped and aligned details what content and skills are required and taught at each grade level and course during a school year. Calendar pacing tells when the content is taught and revisited. The curriculum maps provide a year-long overview, rather than a daily classroom perspective, of what content and skills are required over the course of the school year (Jacobs, 1997). Curriculum mapping creates a document for teachers to follow and gives

guidelines to monitor accountability and ensure the required curriculum is being followed (O'Malley, 1982).¹¹

Curriculum pacing guides or calendars help teachers stay on track and ensure skills are revisited for review, reteach, and/or maintenance. These pacing guides serve a similar purpose to that of traditional scope-and-sequence documents, which lay out expectations of the material to be covered in each subject at each grade level. Pacing guides are different because they detail when the skills and content that are expected to be on the annual state test are presented to students. Teachers schedule these ongoing topics before the spring testing dates. Pacing guides are tied to benchmark assessments that take place quarterly or even more frequently, further delineating what teachers must teach and when they teach it. Some pacing guides specify the number of days, class periods, or even minutes that teachers should devote to each topic.¹²

Research and best practice recommend the identification and specific sequencing and scaffolding of content skills and learning objectives horizontally and vertically. Also recommended is identifying learning gaps based upon student performance. Teachers must know which skills and objectives have not been mastered and require remediation and re-teaching. Curriculum alignment or mapping involves a second-order change state which:

...involves dramatic departures from the expected, both in defining a given problem and in finding a solution. Curriculum Mapping may be considered a second-order change for our district because it challenges the status quo of historical practices and therein may result in resistance. However, it has the potential of resulting in transformative learning.¹³

Jacobs (1997) states:

To make sense of our students' experiences over time, we need two lenses: a zoom lens into this year's curriculum for a particular grade and a wide-angle lens to see the K-12 perspective. The classroom (or micro) level is dependent on the site and district level (a macro view).

Though the micro and macro levels are connected throughout a district, there is a conspicuous lack of macro-level data for decision-making. Yet we need that big picture for each student's journey through his or her years of learning. With data from curriculum mapping, a school and its feeding and receiving sites can review and revise the curriculum within a larger, much-needed context. Data on the curriculum map can be examined both horizontally through the course of any one academic year and vertically over the student's K-12 experience.¹⁴

¹¹ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/curriculum-handbook/421/chapters/Overview.aspx>

¹² <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Pacing-Guides.aspx>

¹³ Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. p. 66.

¹⁴ Jacobs, H. H. (1997). Chapter 1: The need for calendar-based curriculum mapping. *Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum & assessment K-12*. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Research is clear that the quality of pacing guides and how teachers respond to them vary greatly. For example, new teachers need curricular guidance. Studies find that new teachers can benefit from resources such as pacing guides designed to help them figure out what to teach and how to teach it. It is also important for instructional leaders to understand that pacing guides, if poorly developed, intensify pressure on teachers to cover all the material specified and that teachers attempt to meet this demand in several ways. One is to devote more time to subjects that are tested, giving less attention to science, music, art, and social studies.¹⁵ As noted in one resource:

The best pacing guides emphasize curriculum guidance instead of prescriptive pacing; these guides focus on central ideas and provide links to exemplary curriculum materials, lessons, and instructional strategies. Guides like these embody what many experienced teachers do when they plan their curriculum for the year: They chunk it, put topics in a sensible order, determine what resources to draw on, and develop a good sense of how long different elements will take. They also allow for some unpredictability depending on their particular mix of students. Constructive pacing guides assume differences in teachers, students, and school contexts. They adjust expectations through frequent revisions based upon input from teachers. Most important, they encourage instruction that challenges students beyond the content of the test.¹⁶

Pacing is about the student, not the teacher. Pacing guides need built-in flexibility to address what to do if a student falls behind the pace or does poorly on an assessment. Pacing guides should allow for teacher autonomy to find instructional approaches and effective ways to reinforce and adjust the curriculum, as needed, based upon student data, that leads to standards mastery. **Exhibit 2-10** provides an example of a pacing guide that is mindful of outcomes on formative assessments and year-end goals. While it does not give teachers advice on how to monitor and adjust the pacing of the curriculum, this example does identify the priority lessons and the suggested alternatives for non-mastery.

¹⁵ Kauffman, D., Johnson, S. M., Kardos, S. M., Liu, E., & Peske, H. G. (2002). "Lost at sea": New teachers' experiences with curriculum and assessment. *Teachers College Record*, 104(2), 273–300. doi: 10.1111/1467-9620.00163.

¹⁶ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Pacing-Guides.aspx>

Exhibit 2-10 Denver Public Schools Pacing Guide

Region	Pacing	Unit	Standards	Big Ideas	Essential Questions	Materials
	1 week	Population Density in Japan: Life in a Crowded Country	4.4, 5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place Interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does population density affect the way people live? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography Alive! Chapter 31, "Population Density in Japan: Life in a Crowded Country"
	2 weeks	The Global Sneaker: From Asia to Everywhere	4.3, 4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is globalization, and how does it affect people and places? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Geography Alive! Chapter 32, "The Global Sneaker: From Asia to Everywhere"
Oceania and Antarctica	3 days	Mapping Lab: Oceania and Antarctica	1.3, 2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic Tools Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I use maps and other geographic tools to learn about the world around me? How does defining the world by regions help me understand the world around me? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Geography Alive! "Oceania and Antarctica Mapping Lab," Challenges 1-5 OR The Hystrom World Atlas, "Antarctica and the Arctic" lesson and "Australia and its Neighbors," Lessons 1-2
	2 weeks	The Pacific Islands: Adapting to Life Surrounded by Ocean	3.1, 5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do people adapt to life in an island region? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography Alive! Chapter 34, "The Pacific Islands: Adapting to Life Surrounded by Ocean"
	2 weeks	Antarctica: Researching Global Warming at the Coldest Place on Earth	3.1, 5.1, 6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction Planning for the Future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might global warming affect the environment in the world's coldest places? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Geography Alive! Chapter 35, "Antarctica: Researching Global Warming at the Coldest Place on Earth"

* Indicates priority lesson. If you fall behind, go to next priority lesson.

Source: <https://grantwiggins.wordpress.com/2012/01/04/on-pacing-guides>

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement district-wide processes and procedures to horizontally and vertically align and pace the core curriculum from Pre-K through 12th grade.

Pacing guidelines should be incorporated into the curriculum framework. As WPS instructional leadership seeks to adopt and implement standards-based curriculum frameworks that horizontally and vertically align curriculum, pacing guides also need consideration. Implementing pacing guides requires caution so they do not become overly prescriptive and tight timelines for coverage of content only.

Ultimately, the curriculum framework and pacing guide become one working document. There is a plethora of formats and options to peruse for designing and implementing standards-based frameworks and pacing guides. WPS framework and pacing conversations must consider teacher friendly formats, processes, and procedures for implementation and maintenance that integrate one-to-one digital technology. Phasing out or balanced use of textbooks should accompany the transition to adopting a framework for alignment and pacing the curriculum. Supporting the learning needs of the districts' at-risk, Special Education, and ELL students is also of primary importance.¹⁷

¹⁷ Suggested resources that provide planning and background knowledge, formatting ideas, and information to include in pragmatic student-centered frameworks and pacing guides include: <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-curriculum-frameworks>; <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-family-guides>; <https://www.baschools.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/Curriculum%20and%20Instruction>; <https://www.currituck.k12.nc.us/domain/22>; and <https://www.cantonschools.net/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=7777&dataid=1661&FileName=11th%20Grade%20ELA%20Pacing%20Guide%202017-18.pdf>

The Curriculum Decisions Website examines mapping research and provides pragmatic rationale. The site addresses the importance of the horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment and serves as a valuable foundational resource. It also provides descriptions of the mapping process and how the process is completed.¹⁸

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, using existing professional development funding.

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 strong instructional leadership to implement the curriculum. The principal and teachers, working collaboratively, are responsible for consistent implementation, quality instruction in the classroom, and student performance. The principal's instructional leadership is the catalyst for effective instructional delivery and high 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 of the work of instructional leaders, rather it is a description of the most important aspects of instructional leadership. **Exhibit 2-11** describes the five core beliefs that drive the work in school leadership at the Center and **Exhibit 2-12** describes the four dimensions of instructional leadership.

Exhibit 2-11
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>

¹⁸ <http://www.curriculummapping101.com/curriculum-mapping-general>

Exhibit 2-12
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>

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 substantially associated with student achievement. These characteristics and responsibilities are now integrated into a Balanced Leadership Framework.¹⁹ Much of the TLE evaluation process adopted for Oklahoma administrators uses this research.²⁰

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. The school leader is no longer simply 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.²¹

¹⁹ www.mcrel.org/~media/Files/McREL/Homepage/Products/01_99/prod54_BL_Framework.ashx page 15

²⁰ <http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/TLE-McRELBooklet.pdf> page 3

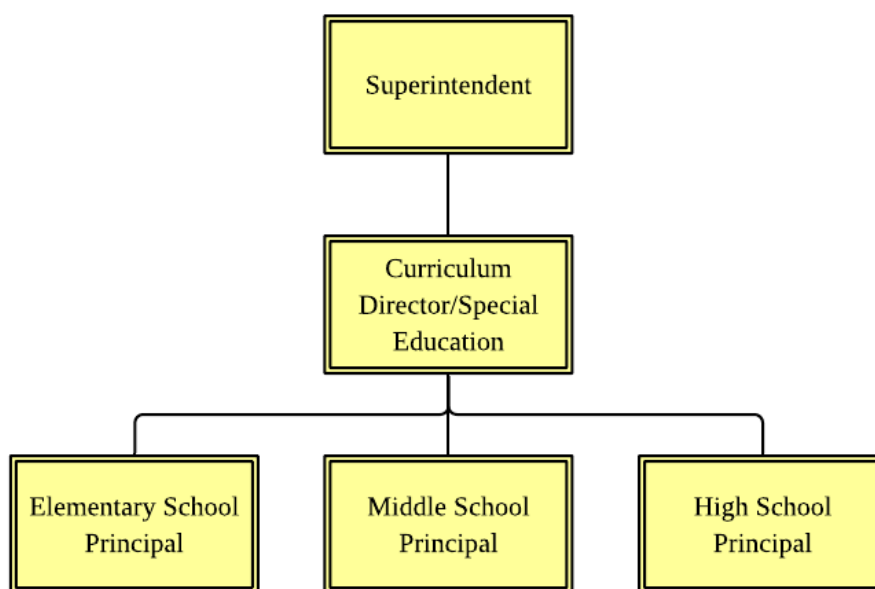
²¹ <http://www.youblisher.com/p/110815-New-thinking-about-educational-leadership/>

Effective learning environments begin with strong educational and instructional leadership and include:

- Instructional Vision – instructional practices that are guided by a common, research-based instructional vision that articulates what students do to learn the subject effectively.
- Continuous Improvement of Instruction – resources (i.e., professional development, allocation of teacher time, budget decisions), policies, and procedures (i.e., school improvement plans, teacher evaluation) aligned toward continuous improvement of instructional practice guided by the instructional vision.
- High Expectations – for all students, academically, behaviorally, and in all aspects of student well-being.
- School Culture – a safe, collaborative, and supportive space that places high priority on ensuring that students are successful in school and life.

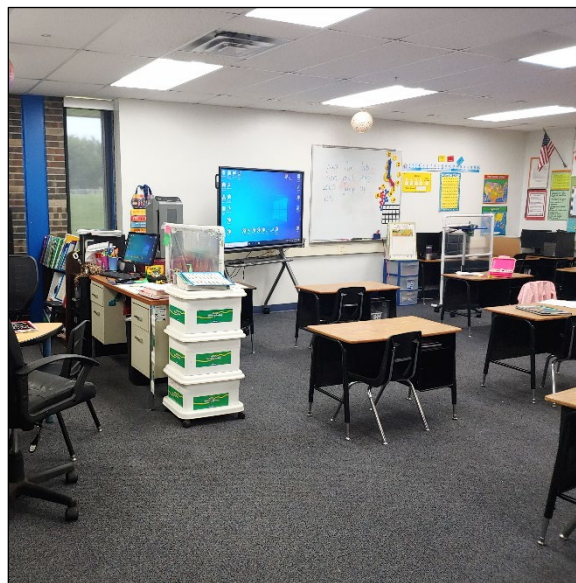
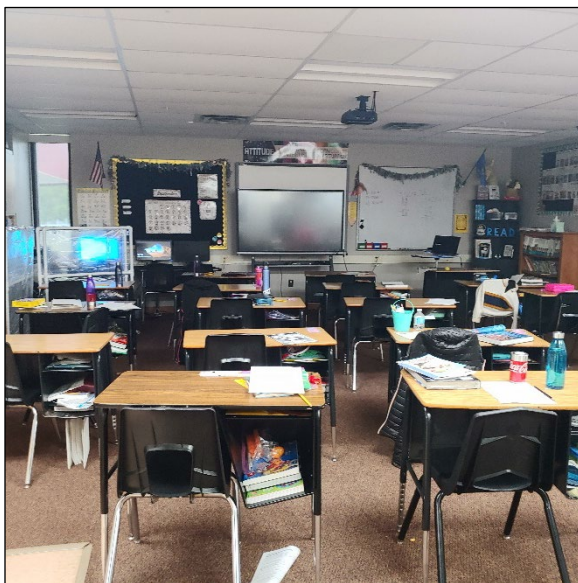
Exhibit 2-13 provides the current organizational structure for leadership of instructional delivery at WPS.

Exhibit 2-13
Organizational Structure



Source: Created by Prismatic, November 2020

Exhibit 2-14 provides illustrations of WPS classrooms.

**Exhibit 2-14
WPS Classrooms**

Source: Prismatic, September 2020

Oklahoma School Testing Program

Student assessment is an integral part of measuring student performance. The Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) for students in grades 3rd through 8th and the College and Career Ready Assessment (CCRA) for students in 11th grade continue implementation of the current standards-based tests that students must take during the school year. The OSTP consists of Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs) designed to measure student attainment of skills established for core subjects and helps monitor student and school performance relative to the OAS. Currently, state assessments are administered for selected grades and courses in this manner:

- third grade: English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- fourth grade: English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- fifth grade: English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science;
- sixth grade: English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- seventh grade English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- eighth grade: English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science; and
- eleventh grade: CCRA consists of two parts. For part one, each district administers either the ACT or SAT, including the writing section. Part two consists of Science Content Assessment which is aligned to the OAS for Science, and U.S. History Assessment which is aligned to the OAS for U.S. History.

All students in the tested grades and subjects participate in the OSTP. The test results are for all students who attend a Full Academic Year (FAY). Current administrative rules define FAY as any student who has enrolled within the first 20 instructional days of the school year and who does not have a gap of ten or more consecutive instructional days prior to dates that vary by indicator type.

The SDE uses performance level descriptors (PLDs) advanced, proficient, basic and below basic in reporting student test scores:

- Advanced – Student demonstrates superior performance on challenging subject matter;
- Proficient (called Satisfactory prior to 2009) – Student demonstrates mastery of appropriate grade level subject matter and is ready for the next grade, course, or level of education, as applicable;
- Basic – Student demonstrates partial mastery of the essential knowledge and skills appropriate to his or her grade level, course, or level of education, as applicable; and
- Below Basic – Student does not perform at least at the limited knowledge level.

To assist teachers and districts in teaching the OAS and preparing students for the OSTP, the SDE provides a variety of resources on its website. These resources include the following:

- the OAS 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;
- curriculum frameworks in ELA, Mathematics, and Science; and
- DOK levels and percentage weights for all OSTP test questions in test specifications.

The OAS along with the blueprints, PLDs, item specifications, DOK, writing samples, and released items define the testing requirements for 2014 through 2017.²²

Exhibit 2-15 provides the results of the math CRTs in 2018-19. WPS students in 3rd, 4th, and 6th grades scored the lowest among all the comparison groups. In 5th and 7th grades, WPS students scored the second lowest among the peers as well as below the community group and state. WPS students scored the second highest in eighth grade among peer districts but were lower than the community group and the state.

Exhibit 2-15
Percentage of WPS and Peer District
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Math
2018-19

Entity	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
Wewoka	12%	13%	19%	8%	20%	17%
Atoka	77%	53%	33%	57%	41%	13%
Haskell	18%	42%	32%	12%	32%	39%
Haworth	55%	36%	33%	27%	26%	14%
Porter	36%	44%	17%	13%	13%	DNS
Vian	68%	68%	59%	35%	33%	11%
Community Group	52%	43%	36%	31%	32%	24%
State	53%	47%	39%	37%	40%	28%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-16 provides the results of the reading CRTs in 2018-19. At every grade, WPS students scored below the state in all grades except eighth grade, WPS students also scored below the community group. In comparison to the peer districts, WPS students were among the lowest in each grade level.

²² <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/assessment-administrator-resources-administrators>

Exhibit 2-16
Percentage of WPS and Peer District
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Reading
2018-19

Entity	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
Wewoka	21%	17%	26%	26%	20%	33%
Atoka	54%	31%	36%	39%	44%	50%
Haskell	20%	23%	23%	32%	45%	29%
Haworth	55%	21%	22%	44%	29%	28%
Porter	39%	41%	33%	47%	13%	19%
Vian	58%	42%	57%	52%	42%	47%
Community Group	46%	35%	39%	39%	30%	33%
State	49%	39%	45%	45%	36%	37%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-17 shows the 2018-19 science scores. In 5th and 8th grades, WPS students scored third and second lowest among the peer districts, respectively, and lower than the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-17
Percentage of WPS and Peer District
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Science
2018-19

Entity	5 th Grade	8 th Grade
Wewoka	37%	27%
Atoka	53%	57%
Haskell	45%	46%
Haworth	22%	48%
Porter	30%	16%
Vian	63%	67%
Community Group	43%	44%
State	47%	48%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-18 shows math scores over a five-year period. From 2014-15 to 2018-19, WPS map scores generally declined. The 2016-17 and 2017-18 percentages reflect Oklahoma's higher performance standards adopted in 2017.

Exhibit 2-18
Five-year Data Trend in Math

Grade	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State
3 rd	70%	71%	62%	75%	19%	54%	14%	51%	12%	53%
4 th	55%	79%	71%	77%	14%	49%	10%	45%	13%	47%
5 th	41%	77%	58%	79%	4%	42%	4%	37%	19%	39%
6 th	76%	76%	61%	76%	31%	42%	19%	34%	8%	37%
7 th	57%	76%	65%	76%	29%	42%	29%	41%	20%	40%
8 th	71%	64%	50%	64%	21%	29%	23%	25%	17%	28%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-19 shows reading scores over a five-year period. From 2014-15 to 2018-19, WPS reading scores generally declined. The 2016-17 and 2017-18 percentages reflect Oklahoma's higher performance standards adopted in 2017.

Exhibit 2-19
Five-year Data Trend in Reading

Grade	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State	Wewoka	State
3 rd	61%	81%	73%	82%	15%	49%	10%	43%	21%	49%
4 th	55%	80%	63%	78%	30%	46%	21%	46%	17%	39%
5 th	47%	74%	65%	82%	29%	49%	26%	46%	26%	45%
6 th	53%	74%	48%	74%	28%	48%	31%	46%	26%	45%
7 th	70%	82%	65%	82%	29%	42%	15%	33%	20%	36%
8 th	81%	86%	79%	86%	42%	43%	23%	41%	33%	37%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-20 displays results for the 2018-19 11th grade test scores. In English, WPS had the lowest score among peer districts. In math, WPS had the third-lowest score among peer districts. In science, WPS had the second-lowest score among peers. In all three subjects, WPS fell below the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-20
Percentage WPS and Peer District Grade 11 Regular Education,
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above, 2018-19

Entity	English	Math	Science
Wewoka	20%	14%	11%
Atoka	40%	10%	10%
Haskell	38%	35%	48%
Haworth	31%	4%	23%
Porter	23%	16%	13%
Vian	33%	16%	16%
Community Group	32%	21%	22%
State	40%	30%	29%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-21 shows that in four out of the past five years WPS' number of high school graduates completing Regents' College-Bound Curriculum was 76 to 100 percent. This performance was higher than the community group and state each year. In 2017-18, WPS outperformed all of the peer districts. WPS' rate dropped to nine percent in 2018-19, which was a sharp decline from the previous year as well as lower than the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-21
Percentage of WPS and Peer District Graduates Completing
Regents' College-Bound Curriculum, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Wewoka	76%	97%	85%	100%	9%
Atoka	55%	69%	73%	86%	100%
Haskell	100%	80%	0%	75%	100%
Haworth	94%	90%	95%	DNS	DNS
Porter	100%	100%	95%	75%	0%
Vian	86%	96%	93%	98%	90%
Community Group	73%	82%	76%	79%	82%
State	81%	81%	80%	80%	83%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-22 compares the trends in the district's ACT composite scores over time. WPS' composite score averaged 17.7 in 2014-15 and decreased to 16.7 in 2018-19. However, in the same period, scores for all the peer districts also decreased.

Exhibit 2-22
Trend in ACT Composite Scores, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percentage Change
Wewoka	17.7	17.8	16.6	15.9	16.7	(5.6%)▼
Atoka	19.6	18.3	18.8	18.9	18.4	(6.1%)▼
Haskell	19.1	18.3	16.9	16.5	17.6	(7.9%)▼
Haworth	18.9	18.4	18.3	19.1	17.1	(9.5%)▼
Porter	18.1	18.7	18.0	18.0	17.2	(5.0%)▼
Vian	19.2	19.0	19.5	18.7	18.0	(6.3%)▼
Community Group	19.3	19.3	18.4	18.2	17.8	(7.8%)▼
State	20.7	20.6	19.5	19.4	18.9	(8.7%)▼

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

In 2018-19, WPS had the second-highest four-year dropout rate but also a 100 percent graduation rate. WPS' four-year dropout rate was higher than both the community group and state. Conversely, WPS' senior graduation rate was higher than both the community group and state (**Exhibit 2-23**).

Exhibit 2-23
WPS and Peer District Four-Year Dropout and Senior Graduation Rates, 2018-19

Entity	Four-Year Dropout Rate	Senior Graduation Rate
Wewoka	15.4%	100.0%
Atoka	15.7%	98.7%
Haskell	9.1%	96.2%
Haworth	6.7%	100.0%
Porter	5.1%	100.0%
Vian	1.7%	100.0%
Community Group	6.8%	98.4%
State	9.6%	97.2%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-5

Within the district, leaders have made intentional efforts to use data to inform instruction. In Wewoka Elementary School, the teachers review data from the DIBELS assessments in reading and track student progress each year. A dedicated wall in the elementary school library displays data (**Exhibit 2-24**). The data charts are color-coded and labeled for teachers to review as they work with students to make progress in reading skills.

Exhibit 2-24
WPS Data Wall in Elementary Library



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

The principal, who is in her first year in that role, previously worked as the elementary librarian and facilitated the process of compiling and analyzing student results on the DIBELS reading assessment. Teachers could review student progress on specific skills and provide targeted support for students in small groups based upon their areas of need.

COMMENDATION

Wewoka Elementary School reviews systematically data from the DIBELS assessments and tracks student progress.

FINDING 2-6

The district has no uniform process for analyzing OSTP student performance data. There is no process to assist teachers in breaking down the data, applying it to instructional pacing, and adjusting curriculum and instruction. There is no process to use student performance data to vertically align and pace curriculum and make adjustments in re-teaching specific topics. There was isolated reporting of teachers using item analysis to find trends and patterns in student learning. Teachers may independently review the data but have limited knowledge and expectations for using those reviews to plan instruction and remediation.

There are no district-wide procedures to assist teachers in using OSTP data to inform targeted instruction and form flex groups for targeted remedial instruction. There are no standardized methodologies for disaggregation of data and looking for vertical learning gaps. Random evidence was presented to indicate how student performance data collected at the end of each grading period were used to plan re-teach, remediation, or maintaining mastery. There is no district-wide use of student performance data to close skill gaps or reoccurring curricula

redundancies. Across the district, student performance data are not commonly used to plan, adjust, pace, and design instruction or to close skill gaps throughout the school year.

One of the longest-standing bodies of research is the “effective schools” research. One of the original correlates of effective schools’ research is the “frequent monitoring of student progress.” As stated by the University of Oklahoma’s research in effective schools: “The effective school frequently measures academic student progress through a variety of assessment procedures. Assessment results are used to improve individual student performance and improve instructional delivery. Assessment results will show that alignment must exist between the intended, taught, and tested curriculum.”²³

More recently, effective schools research was conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). NAESP published best practices for schools and reported how the use of student achievement data must be included in instructional decision-making. In a white paper, NAESP provided five recommendations to help principals put student achievement data to the best possible use:

- make data part of the ongoing cycle of instructional improvement;
- teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals;
- establish a clear vision for school-wide data use;
- provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school; and
- develop and maintain a district-wide data system.²⁴

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a district-wide process for analyzing student performance data throughout the school year using the analysis results to monitor and adjust curricula and instruction.

The purpose of teachers analyzing classroom data is to determine what the students have learned, what they need help to learn, and how teachers plan instruction to ensure that they all do learn. The use of student performance data is essential to identify skill gaps in student learning. The learning and skill gaps must be addressed through re-teaching or remediation. The use of data also guides improvements in the rigor, pacing, and vertical articulation of curriculum and instruction. As teachers monitor performance data, patterns of teaching and individual student learning successes and challenges become evident. It is essential for teachers to have ongoing formative data to measure learning at the end of each instructional segment. This allows teachers to make informed, collaborative decisions to address potential problems.

Working with the teachers, the superintendent and principals should develop a timeline that details which student assessment data are required throughout the school year. Using this timeline, the superintendent and principals should hold Professional Learning Community (PLC)

²³ http://ces.ou.edu/7_correlates_effectiveness.html

²⁴ http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Student%20Achievement_blue.pdf

meetings for analyzing data. Meetings should focus on determining the strengths and weaknesses of the students and how the results impact the district in pacing instruction. Reviewing formative benchmark test data throughout the school year allows timely feedback on student performance, the effectiveness of teaching strategies, and any needed adjustments and alignment to the curricula.

A helpful resource for administrators and teachers to use is found in an article published in *Educational Leadership*, “*Developing Data Mentors*.” The authors say that “gathering student-assessment data is not enough. Administrators and teachers must learn to analyze the data and apply this information in the classroom.”

The district process should examine classroom data and ask key questions:

- Which content standards is the teacher assessing?
- What percent of students demonstrated proficiency?
- What implications does that have for instruction?
- Which students have not demonstrated that they can master content standards?
- What diagnostic information did an examination of student work provide?
- Based upon individual student performance, what do teachers need to do next to move the student to proficiency?
- Based upon the class performance, what re-teaching needs to be done?
- After re-assessing, did students demonstrate proficiency?
- Is re-teaching or other interventions resulting in improved student performance?
- When comparing performance by subgroups, are any groups not performing as well as the whole group? If so, what is being done about that?
- Are there students who are not attaining proficiency across standards?
- What diagnostic information do we have about them to inform instruction?
- What interventions have we tried? What interventions do we plan to try next?²⁵

The superintendent, principals, and teachers should consider regularly graphing data. A visual depiction of the information often yields additional insights, and has proven helpful to teachers at the elementary grades where they graph students’ data on the DIBELS assessments.

²⁵ Nichols, B. W. & Singer K. P. (2000). Developing data mentors. *Educational Leadership*, 57(5).

Another way for teachers to get a quick visual picture of who needs additional support is to color code the data recorded in the grading process. For example, if three categories are used to define student performance in the grade book (i.e., basic – B, proficient – P, and advanced – A), each could be assigned a different color. This would allow teachers to quickly determine who was progressing and who needed additional support.²⁶

Parents, as well as students, need consistent and clear communication regarding ongoing student performance data. Through use of one-on-one conversation or electronic communication, they can monitor daily assignments, homework, and student test data.

Additionally, the SDE has developed the Oklahoma Family Guides for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for Pre-K through 6th Grade.²⁷ The OSDE Family Guides are resources aligned with the Oklahoma Academic Standards and developed specifically for Oklahoma families to complement classroom learning. They illustrate what is expected of students at each grade level in different content areas along with activities families can do at home to further support children's learning experiences. This is a valuable resource to share with parents.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. However, if an external consultant is needed, there are consultants available to guide teachers through the data analysis process. A short-term consulting engagement would cost approximately \$3,000.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Hire a consultant to help design a process for analyzing student performance data, if needed.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 2-7

The district's move to one-to-one technology modifies teacher instructional delivery practices. Textbooks and whole group lecture are no longer the foundational source for curriculum and delivery of instruction. However, not all WPS teachers are yet comfortable with the paradigm shift.

Exhibit 2-25 provides examples of available devices and students using technology. During focus group meetings and interviews, the consulting team learned that teachers have a wide-range of comfort levels with the existing technology, online tools, and software programs available in the district. Teachers reported that with so many different programs, instructional time is spent trying to familiarize students with each one. Teachers listed a number of programs

²⁶ <http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/progress/using.html>

²⁷ <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-family-guides>

used, including USA Test Prep, Big Ideas, Edgenuity, Acellus, Lexia, Canvas, Google Classroom, DIBELS, Delta Math, My Math, and National Geographic.

Exhibit 2-25 WPS Classroom Technology



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

The district has been working to set up Clever to simplify the process for teachers to access instructional programs online, but this transition has been slow. Clever is a single sign-on platform that districts and teachers can use to provide the selected suite of resources and tools for

students in one place.²⁸ The person working on Clever also has teaching responsibilities and has not had the time to implement the set up or training for staff. Teachers report being overwhelmed with learning how to use each device and tool, and that there is inconsistent training provided across all sites on instructional programs and online platforms.

With the introduction of one-to-one devices, standards-based curriculum, data-driven instructional design, and technology integration, the role of WPS teachers is expanded to include facilitation skills and techniques. Student engagement is increasingly important in the classroom and is the vehicle for helping learning take place. Clear and concise objectives are still delineated, standards are still taught and mastered, yet the pathway to learning may not be the same for all students. A teacher facilitator helps individual students build on their skills/interests and learn new ones. They offer support, advice, and provide necessary scaffolding knowledge and skills. “Extending the recognition and use of authentic purposes, materials, and content into any subject area helps ensure that learning experiences are meaningful and satisfying. Thus maps, directions, brochures, and directories find a comfortable home in English classes, and community surveys in math classes.”²⁹ The teacher as facilitator gives direction in finding necessary resources, information, and support in order for the learner to complete a task and master learning.

They assist students in learning for themselves, picking apart ideas, forming their own thoughts about them and owning learning through self-exploration and dialog. As needed, a teacher facilitator corrects misinformation, provides clarification, and ensures students understand subject matter.³⁰

Research is clear that more and more schools and colleges are advising teachers to shift their roles from that of sole classroom leader/lecturer to one who aids students in leading themselves in the learning process. They are recognizing that the most powerful kind of learning does not come from being told what to think but in learning how to think about it for oneself. Now the role of teacher is as a facilitator in learning. There is also clear evidence that teachers should become mentors of learning. Teaching means the teacher is doing the act of teaching. Facilitation means students are doing the act of learning.³¹

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to improve teacher instructional delivery skills and practices as both a teacher and a facilitator.

As the district evolves with one-to-one technology integration and standards-based curricula, the district’s instructional leadership team should articulate expectations and provide teachers with learning opportunities to grow and develop facilitation skills. Professional development

²⁸ www.Clever.com

²⁹ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107003/chapters/Educating-Everybody's-Children@-We-Know-What-Works%E2%80%94And-What-Doesn't.aspx>

³⁰ <https://study.com/academy/lesson/facilitator-of-learning-definition-lesson-quiz.html>

³¹ <http://oaji.net/articles/2016/1201-1476521024.pdf>

opportunities, staff meeting discussion and dialog, and observing facilitatory teachers are possible options for supporting and increasing facilitation skills and expertise.³²

The most impactful statement for teachers as facilitators comes from those who daily practice it. As noted by one professor on the subject: “The difference in the enthusiasm and learning that takes place isn’t even quantifiable. Not only do I adhere to the idea of being a facilitator and guide, I’m nearly an evangelist on the subject!”³³

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates a one-time cost of \$2,000, based upon fees charged by firms that provide training in this and similar areas for a district the size of WPS. This fee includes a full day of training for all district staff.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Provide training in teachers as learning facilitators.	(\$2,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 2-8

While the district has scheduled release time on Fridays, there has not been an emphasis on creating and facilitating ongoing professional dialog that is focused specifically on curriculum, data analysis, instructional implications, and assessment strategies. Teacher release time is important. However, the consulting team found that the district does not routinely examine if the Friday release time is being used as efficiently and effectively as possible with teachers. District leaders do not consistently screen for maximized use. The teachers are not routinely canvased for specific or current issues that need addressing.

Foundations of PLCs are apparent in the district and can be expanded upon to increase collaboration as it applies to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The superintendent has established a PLC with the principals in which each Friday, they meet to explore elements of leadership, including articles and podcasts. Building on this structure, the model can be utilized with teams of teachers and departments to further the dialog on subjects such as instructional strategies, technology implementation, curriculum alignment, use of data to adjust instruction to meet students’ needs, analysis of student work, and formative assessment strategies.

The curricular/instructional delivery changes emerging from the initiation of one-to-one technology and standards-based curriculum/instruction are monumental for teachers. Using Friday release to monitor and adjust the progression to standards-based curriculum and

³² The following links provide background knowledge, pragmatic “how to” information, and examples for teacher facilitation skills:

<https://educationaldividends.com/teachers-as-facilitators/>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002248717502600319?journalCode=jtea>

<https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/teacher-facilitator>

<https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/the-teacher-as-a-facilitator-and-resource-person>

³³ <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/jde7/ese425/eco/optional/facilitator.html>

technology integration is not usually reviewed and evaluated. The student assessment tools implemented, the time and effort for administering the assessments, and the usefulness of the student data results, need continuous teacher examination and dialog. No evidence was presented to indicate the time on Friday is used to comprehensively address these district-wide issues. Interviews and focus group discussions reported minimal dialogue centering on the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on student-centered learning. Teachers recognize there is a great deal of expertise, as well as innovative strategies, and valuable resources among the staff, but no consistent structured time or process to share their work, knowledge, and experiences.

Through interview and focus group dialog, the consulting team found limited accountability to ensure efficient, relevant, and appropriate use of the time. For teachers, the curricular and instructional delivery changes emerging require extensive collaborative effort. Building curriculum frameworks and curriculum maps will also need sufficient collaboration time for teachers within and across grade levels.

The district has not evaluated whether the Friday early release time is being used as effectively as possible. For teachers, the curricular and instructional delivery changes emerging from the launch of one-to-one technology and standards-based curriculum and instruction are epic. District leaders currently do not regularly ask teachers for specifics as to what they really need to work on and how to improve the use of release time. No comprehensive approach is in place where principals and teachers address curricular and instructional issues.

Research clearly supports the importance of teachers meeting regularly as a group to share expertise, to work collaboratively to improve teaching skills, and to support the academic performance of students. A paradigm shift is needed, however, both in the public and in teachers themselves about what the role of teacher entails. Many in the public and in the profession believe that the only legitimate use of a teacher's time is standing in front of the class, working directly with students. In studies comparing how teachers around the globe spend their time, it is clear that in countries such as Japan, teachers teach fewer classes, using a greater portion of their time in planning, conferring with colleagues, working with students individually, visiting other classrooms, and engaging in other professional development activities (Darling-Hammond, 1994, 1996).

A district seeking to improve, as WPS is, must be mindful that capacity building is as important as accountability because the former is the route to the latter. Clearly, one needs both. Finding the right combination and integration of the two is the trick.³⁴ Being the change agent in successful schools means that growing and learning are ongoing phenomena.³⁵ **Exhibit 2-26** summarizes Fullan's insights regarding change.

³⁴ Fullan, M. (2008). *The six secrets of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

³⁵ <http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>

Exhibit 2-26
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. • Engaging 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://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2008SixSecretsofChangeKeynoteA4.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION

Implement district-wide Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for teachers and administrators, with regularly scheduled release time, standardized norms, support structures, and a focus on continuous school improvement.

The superintendent and principals should examine the existing practices, agendas, and levels of teacher expertise and engagement being utilized during Friday release time. The instructional leadership team should clearly communicate expectations and solicit accountability. The release time should be consistently used for sharing or learning of classroom innovative and engaging best practices. As the district navigates to one-to-one technology and standards-based curriculum all teachers must be focused on learning which “best practices” interface, support, and impact student achievement. Staff should reflect on trends and patterns emerging from technology and standards driven curriculum. Utilizing exemplary staff to model effective student engagement practices creates common practice among all staff members.

WPS release time is not formalized as a PLC, yet the pragmatic focus and expectations mirror PLC function. PLC agendas focus participants to address specific problems and strategies: How do I teach *this* particular student better? How do I teach *this* specific standard more effectively? Teachers discuss and reflect on their instructional techniques, lesson designs, and assessment

practices. District administrators may use the time to address leadership questions, strategies, and issues.³⁶

Exhibit 2-27 cites examples of common activities of a district's leadership that may take place in release time meetings.

Exhibit 2-27 **Professional Learning Activities**

Discussing teacher work: Participants collectively review lesson plans or assessments that have been used in a class, and then offer critical feedback and recommendations for improvement.

Discussing student work: Participants look at examples of student work in a class, and then offer recommendations on how lessons or teaching approaches may be modified to improve the quality of student work.

Discussing student data: Participants analyze student-performance data from a class to identify trends such as which students are consistently failing or underperforming and collaboratively develop proactive teaching and support strategies to help students who may be struggling academically.

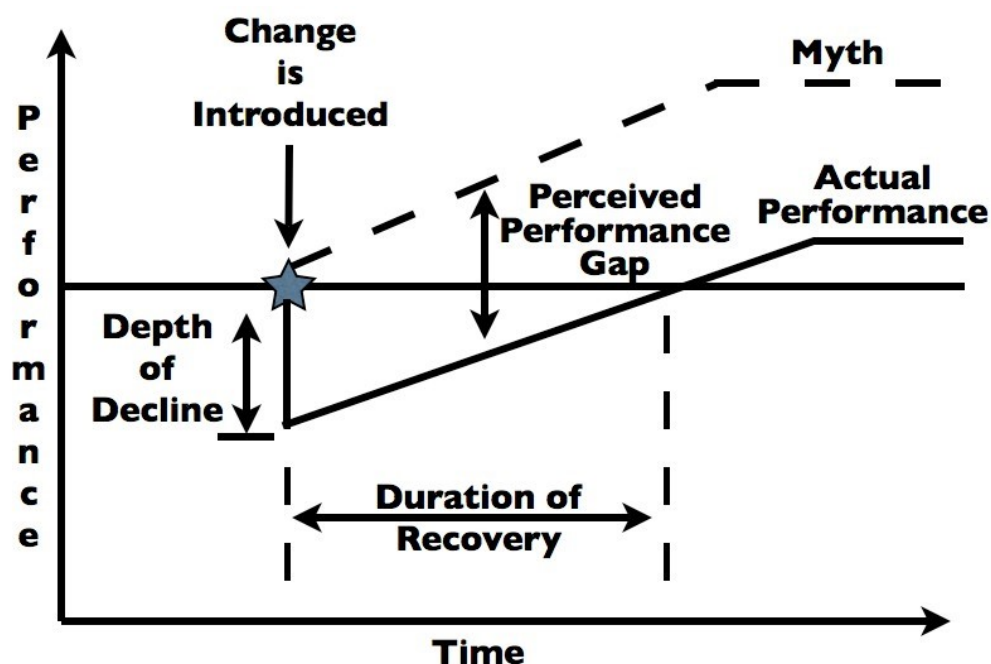
Discussing professional literature: Participants select a text to read, such as a research study or an article about a specialized instructional technique, and then engage in a structured conversation about the text and how it can help inform or improve their teaching.

Sources: <https://www.edglossary.org/professional-learning-community/>
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED410659.pdf>

WPS is going through numerous district-wide changes. **Exhibit 2-28** describes the change process and gives 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.

³⁶ <https://www.edglossary.org/professional-learning-community/>

Exhibit 2-28
Change Implementation



Source: <http://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2008SixSecretsofChangeKeynoteA4.pdf>

Maximizing Friday release time requires dedicated and intentional effort on the part of the WPS instructional leaders and the professional staff. Moving to collaborative planning and learning creates organizational change. It takes teachers from teaching in isolation and moves them to corporate thinking and shared expertise. It takes seasoned teachers out of their comfort zone and into facilitation and shared learning.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 2-9

Elective course offerings for students are limited. The superintendent, principals, counselor, and teachers all expressed interest in offering additional courses for students to select depending on areas of interests.

A comparison of core units in the high school curriculum reveals a number of WPS strengths (**Exhibit 2-29**). In 2018-19, the district:

- offered more core subjects units than three of the peer districts and exceeded the community group and state number of units;
- offered the highest number of social studies units of any of the comparison groups;

- was tied in first place with a peer district and was higher than the community group and state in science units offered;
- was tied in second place with three other peer districts but was lower than the community group and state in math units offered;
- offered the second-highest number of fine arts units, tying with a peer district and higher than community group and state;
- was the lowest in language arts and languages, along with one peer district; and
- offered the second-lowest units in computer education, tying with one peer district and lower than the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-29
Comparison of Core Curriculum Units by Subject, 2018-19

Subjects	Wewoka	Atoka	Haskell	Haworth	Porter	Vian	Community Group	State
Language Arts	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.0	4.0	4.8	5.2
Science	8.0	3.0	8.0	6.0	5.0	6.0	5.6	6.2
Math	5.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	5.0	6.0	5.2	5.4
Social Studies	9.0	4.0	8.0	5.0	6.0	5.0	6.0	6.9
Fine Arts	9.0	6.0	9.0	6.0	2.0	12.0	6.9	8.2
Languages	1.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.8	2.5
Computer Education	1.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	4.0	3.0	1.8	2.1
Total	37.0	30.0	39.0	31.0	32.0	38.0	32.1	36.5

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Currently, WPS offers electives in the following areas:

- Art;
- Vocational Agriculture;
- Robotics;
- Computers;
- Family and Consumer Science;
- Band;
- Choir;

- Yearbook; and
- Athletics.

Additional electives are possible through the Edgenuity, the program the district uses for the students enrolled as virtual learners. Interviews with principals, staff, and students indicated a desire for more electives offered in person at the high school, including computer-based courses, integration of STEM content, music, drama, Advanced Placement options, and Spanish.

The role of elective courses in a student's education can be a pivotal one. When students across the nation are asked to identify what it is about a course that engages them most, student choice is the top response. Allowing students some choice in their learning is clearly proving successful. In 2008, a meta-analysis was conducted by Patall, Cooper, and Robinson (n.d.) that examined 41 studies on the topic. "Results indicated that providing choice enhanced intrinsic motivation, effort, task performance, and perceived competence, among other outcomes," according to its authors.³⁷ According to education researcher Robert Marzano, choice "has also been linked to increases in student effort, task performance, and subsequent learning."³⁸ Marzano further explains that giving students elements of choice directly aligns with student engagement.

Electives, many times, reflect the interests of the teachers that teach them as well as the students that choose them. This permits an automatic, self-selected connection and rapport between the teacher and students. The *Journal of Educational Psychology* recently reported that in a study of almost 400 students and their 25 teachers, researchers found that when teachers and students were given information about five similarities they shared, the knowledge helped improve student-teacher relationships and academic achievement.³⁹

Not only are electives powerful in engaging students through choice, interest, and building relationships, but they can provide tremendous support for the core content courses. They can be helpful in teaching literacy skills, as well as problem-solving, reasoning, and critical thinking. Elective teachers can provide evidence of the learning happening by doing three key things:

1. Encourage annotation when students read texts related to the elective topic.
2. Utilize pre- and post-assessments to show growth in related informational reading comprehension.
3. Fold in writing and oral presentations to help students communicate the elective's content.

Researchers further assert, "Yearbook, robotics, film society, photography, world languages, theater, speech and debate, music appreciation, and current events – all of these classes can tap

³⁷ <https://lifelearners.ng/why-choice-matters-to-student-learning/>

³⁸ https://www.marzanoresources.com/resources/tips/hec_tips_archive/#:~:text=Research%20has%20shown%20that%20providing,task%20performance%2C%20and%20subsequent%20learning

³⁹ <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/creating-birds-similar-feathers-leveraging-similarity-improve-teacher-student>

into reading, writing, listening, and speaking. And all of them attract a variety of students while adding a self-selected layer of engagement to those students' learning of core standards.”⁴⁰

RECOMMENDATION

Explore additional offerings to support student interests and college- and career-ready needs.

Administrators must consider several points when determining if additional course offerings are possible. First, leaders should evaluate the certifications of all existing staff members to determine if there are specific electives that could be added within their areas of expertise. Next, leaders should assess student interest in potential new electives. Where students identify interests beyond the expertise of the current faculty, the district should seek it externally. The district should seek to offer some courses only every other year, in order to have a sufficiently large class. Taking a close look at the master schedule once all of these data are compiled can inform decision-making about possible course additions and offerings.

FISCAL IMPACT

Depending on the certification held by current teachers, it may be possible to implement this recommendation with existing funds. However, if the district must hire a part-time teacher to add new elective courses, the consulting team estimates a cost of \$20,000 per year. In addition, depending upon the area(s) of student interest and the availability of certified teachers, the district may need to hire an adjunct instructor (who would not need to hold teaching certification).

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Hire a part-time electives teacher/adjunct, as needed.	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)

FINDING 2-10

The district has made staffing changes in order to prioritize instructional leadership. The district employs a Curriculum Director/Special Education Director to facilitate direction in instructional leadership and working with all students to meet their learning needs. Two new principals were hired this year.

Interviews with teachers and principals indicated that the culture has shifted to promote innovative practices in the classrooms with a focus on student engagement and differentiation in teaching the curriculum. While still early in the process, principals are looking forward to facilitating the development of curriculum maps and instructional strategies designed to engage all learners and meet the learning needs of students using a standards-based approach.

⁴⁰ <https://www.edutopia.org/article/case-electives-schools>

Additionally, educators are working to mentor emergency-certified teachers. Technology coaches in each building have been identified to increase teachers' abilities to use instructional technology in their classrooms by troubleshooting technical issues and providing leadership in effective instructional technology tools. Establishing channels of peer support can help expedite response time in answering questions and can facilitate collaboration and professional growth. It will be important for district leaders to provide guidance and coaching to all staff placed in mentor roles. **Exhibit 2-30** describes the continuum of competencies in coaching and mentoring, along with examples of evidence of growth at each stage.⁴¹

⁴¹ <https://www.teacherleadershipinstitute.org/competencies/instructional-leadership-competencies/>

Exhibit 2-30
Coaching and Mentoring

Emerging	Developing	Performing	Transforming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value the importance of their professional growth and development for the benefit of the students. Invite colleagues to observe their teaching practices. Engage in peer assistance for personal growth and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a collegial environment of trust and respect. Foster the development of colleagues and value their skills and abilities. Guide colleagues to make their own professional decisions by asking appropriate questions and encouraging reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in formal roles of coaching and mentoring. Utilize multiple measures to identify effective teaching and successful student learning. Identify and promote colleagues who would be good mentors and/or leaders. Connect colleagues based upon strengths, needs, and personal and academic qualities, and determine methods to meet those needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the creation of new systems and/or innovate existing systems to foster the development of other teacher leaders by envisioning what they need and developing systems to meet those needs on a large scale. Create opportunities for fellow teacher leaders to design coaching and mentoring opportunities in their own contexts.
<p>Evidence Indicators of growth at the emerging stage include, but are not limited to, the following evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strive to develop professionally beyond their current practice in a manner to positively impact their students including collegial interaction, course participation, workshop attendance, etc. Allow colleagues to observe their practice and gather evidence for their improvement. 	<p>Evidence Indicators of growth at the developing stage include, but are not limited to, the following evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a trustworthy work environment with colleagues in which there is an open exchange of ideas. Work with other teachers to provide information about their own practice to promote growth and development. Seek opportunities to give and receive feedback on instructional practice. Provide targeted professional development based upon data analysis and instructional needs. 	<p>Evidence Indicators of growth at the performing stage include, but are not limited to, the following evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide formal coaching or mentoring to colleagues. Collect evidence and provide colleagues with meaningful feedback about their practice. Build collegial communities based on needs and foster an environment of learning and teaching among colleagues to inform and improve their practice. Seek additional teacher leaders to serve as coaches or mentors to colleagues and match them based upon strengths and needs. 	<p>Evidence Indicators of growth at the transforming stage include, but are not limited to, the following evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work within or beyond their school and/or district to establish systems that encourage and support teacher leader development. Determine the vision of teacher leaders and enable teachers to fulfill that role. Prepare and support teacher leaders for future mentoring and/or coaching roles. Bring mentorship and/or coaching systems to a broader scope. Design appropriate coaching and mentoring programs for schools, districts, and/or states. Build and sustain outside partnerships and programs to support the needs of mentors and/or coaches in schools, districts, and/or states.

Source: <https://www.teacherleadershipinstitute.org/competencies/instructional-leadership-competencies/>

School administrators of today must understand they have multiple roles. Principals of 21st Century schools are no longer effective if they view their primary role as managing schedules, making sure buses run on schedule, the lunchroom is orderly, and classrooms are quiet. These tasks still exist and must be addressed. However, in all schools, including WPS, students are changing; expectations for effective principals are different. Classrooms are no longer just about lecture and fill in the blank chapter tests. This leads to apathy, lack of motivation, poor attitudes, and low morale. In order to motivate and improve student learning, classrooms must be about involvement, interactive learning, applied learning, projects, and creativity. For classrooms to evolve, principals must be skilled as instructional leaders.

The national and state requirements to hold schools accountable for all students learning and mastering curriculum standards and objectives has launched principals into the teaching and learning process. Today, all schools need principals to be instructional leaders who ensure there is quality instruction taking place in every classroom. Thus, there is a need for principals to spend time in classrooms, recognize which teachers implement high impact instruction, and closely monitor the process of teaching and learning. This is done while also balancing other needs such as student safety and parent relationships. Fulfilling these multiple responsibilities well requires an effective principal to possess an inner compass that consistently points them toward the learning needs of students while never losing sight of their school's vision, mission, and goals.

There is no evidence of schools turning around, improving, or meeting the needs of today's diverse learners without the influence of strong leadership. Operative instructional leadership sets the direction and influences teachers to work together toward meeting district goals and diverse learning needs of students. Principals accomplish this responsibility by providing individual support, challenging teachers to examine their own practices, implementing models of best practice, and supporting teachers in the intentional school improvement processes. Additionally, effective principals develop and depend on leadership contributions from a variety of stakeholders, including teachers and parents. Key to instructional leadership is principals sharing their leadership with teachers to promote reflection and collaborative investigation to improve teaching and learning. Subsequently, principals and teacher leaders lead change from the classroom by asking questions related to school improvement, and they feel empowered to help find the answer.

COMMENDATION

WPS is commended for implementing staffing changes in order to prioritize instructional leadership.

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 special education and Gifted and Talented education programs. It also includes educational supports, such as library programming.

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 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 RtI. This approach was adopted in 2010 by 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 or tiered 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 2-31 shows comparison data on the percentage of special education students and the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in special education for 2018-19. Wewoka’s identification rate, at 22.8 percent, was the highest of the peers, and higher than the community group and state. WPS had a special education student-to-teacher ratio that was the lowest of all the comparison groups except the state.

Exhibit 2-31
Students and Teachers in Special Education Programs, 2018-19

Entity	ADM	Special Education Percentage of All Students	Special Education Teachers FTEs	# of Special Education Students per FTE
Wewoka	638	22.8%	5.0	29.1
Atoka	884	25.4%	5.0	44.9
Haskell	740	24.4%	5.4	33.4
Haworth	543	20.3%	2.0	55.1
Porter	533	22.0%	2.9	40.4
Vian	881	24.0%	5.5	38.4
Community Group	703	19.2%	3.9	34.6
State	1,289	16.1%	8.3	25.0

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-32 compares district special education revenues and expenditures for 2018-19. At 171.7 percent, WPS had the highest revenue-expenditure ratio among its peers, the community group, and the state. This indicates that WPS has received more in special education revenues than it spent that year.

Exhibit 2-32
Comparison of Special Education Revenues and Expenditures, 2018-19

Entity	Total Revenues for Special Education	Total Expenditures for Special Education	Revenues as Percent of Expenditures
Wewoka	\$578,940	\$337,155	171.7%
Atoka	\$896,933	\$663,210	135.2%
Haskell	\$896,933	\$663,210	135.2%
Haworth	\$521,165	\$321,161	162.3%
Porter	\$408,174	\$316,755	128.9%
Vian	\$744,046	\$569,022	130.8%
Peer Average	\$693,450	\$506,671	136.9%

Source: OCAS Impact Aid Letters and Prismatic calculations, 2020

Exhibit 2-33 shows the trend in special education revenues and expenditures over time. As shown, WPS' special education revenues exceeded expenditures every year.

Exhibit 2-33
Trend in WPS Special Education Revenues and Expenditures

Year	Total Revenues for Special Education	Total Expenditures for Special Education	Revenues as Percent of Expenditures
2014-15	\$498,740	\$289,890	172.0%
2015-16	\$465,962	\$266,483	174.9%
2016-17	\$461,510	\$225,481	204.7%
2017-18	\$510,775	\$319,320	160.0%
2018-19	\$578,940	\$337,155	171.7%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-11

The district lacks processes and procedures regarding the use of its resource room by special education students. The consulting team found no evidence of daily monitoring to determine if students legitimately need the resource room learning environment or if their learning needs can be met in the inclusionary classroom.

WPS special education students utilize the resource room for testing accommodations. The consulting team found the resource room accommodates the students' need for review, reinforcement, and re-teaching of content area concepts. In some IEP cases, the resource room offers students a sheltered environment for learning. Going to the resource room also provides additional time for students to process content and a slower pace as they strive to become independent and self-directed learners. However, these instructional supports are not being strategically and intentionally coordinated.

The consulting team found that general education teachers, special education teachers, and instructional aides collaborate randomly and informally as their schedules allow. Teachers reported that they see great need for coordinated classroom routines and schedules between the inclusionary classroom and the resource room. Yet, there is little dedicated time across the district to address IEP updates, specific student performance struggles, remediation efforts, or overall instruction and learning issues. The district has set up a mentoring process to provide support to the emergency certified special education teachers but has not established specific collaboration times and procedures as part of that process.

Assessing the need for students to legitimately transition to the resource room and how instruction is to be delivered is not consistently planned. There is not routine dialog among teachers and para-professionals to ensure instruction is seamless and cohesive with the inclusionary classroom.

There is no dedicated time for teachers to review the adaptations and modifications students require. Without increased collaboration, the district is at risk of the falling prey to the mindset of pull out and resource room services taking precedence over mainstreaming and inclusionary practices. Some general education teachers and paraprofessionals were apprehensive about how to provide students with least restrictive environment (LRE) in the inclusionary classrooms and

wanted more input and direction from special education teachers. Interviews and focus groups revealed the need to continuously communicate, monitor, and coordinate services between the regular classroom and the resource room.

RECOMMENDATION

Review resource room practices and procedures making sure the transition from the inclusionary classroom to the resource room best supports each student's learning needs.

The administration should establish guidelines and expectations for improvements, so they are viewed as a priority for all teachers and paraprofessionals. The principals, special education teachers, para-professionals, and general education teachers should review resource room and inclusionary classroom practices and procedures. WPS should implement ongoing, regularly scheduled time for all teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional aides to coordinate services and cooperatively plan curriculum and instruction based upon student IEPs. The improvement dialog should examine if co-teaching, modeling, or transitioning between classrooms are best practices. The time should be spent developing lessons, reviewing resource materials and digital programs, and planning one-to-one remediation and instruction.

Continuity among the rules and expectations in both classrooms should be clearly understood and enforced by all. Meaningful ways the content in the two classrooms is taught and presented needs examination. It is important to establish clear criteria as to when students need to transition back and forth between classrooms. There should be strategic coordination in assisting IEP students in knowing their strengths, equipping them with strategies to address their learning weaknesses, and directing them to be independent, not dependent, learners. There should be a coordinated effort to seamlessly teach students and maximize the learning needs in the inclusionary classroom with nominal resource room support.

Planning for middle and secondary students is more difficult, as required courses may dictate which class students must attend. Ideally, weekly planning times work best. The purpose of the teacher collaborative planning is to combine expertise and meet student needs based upon IEP requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 2-12

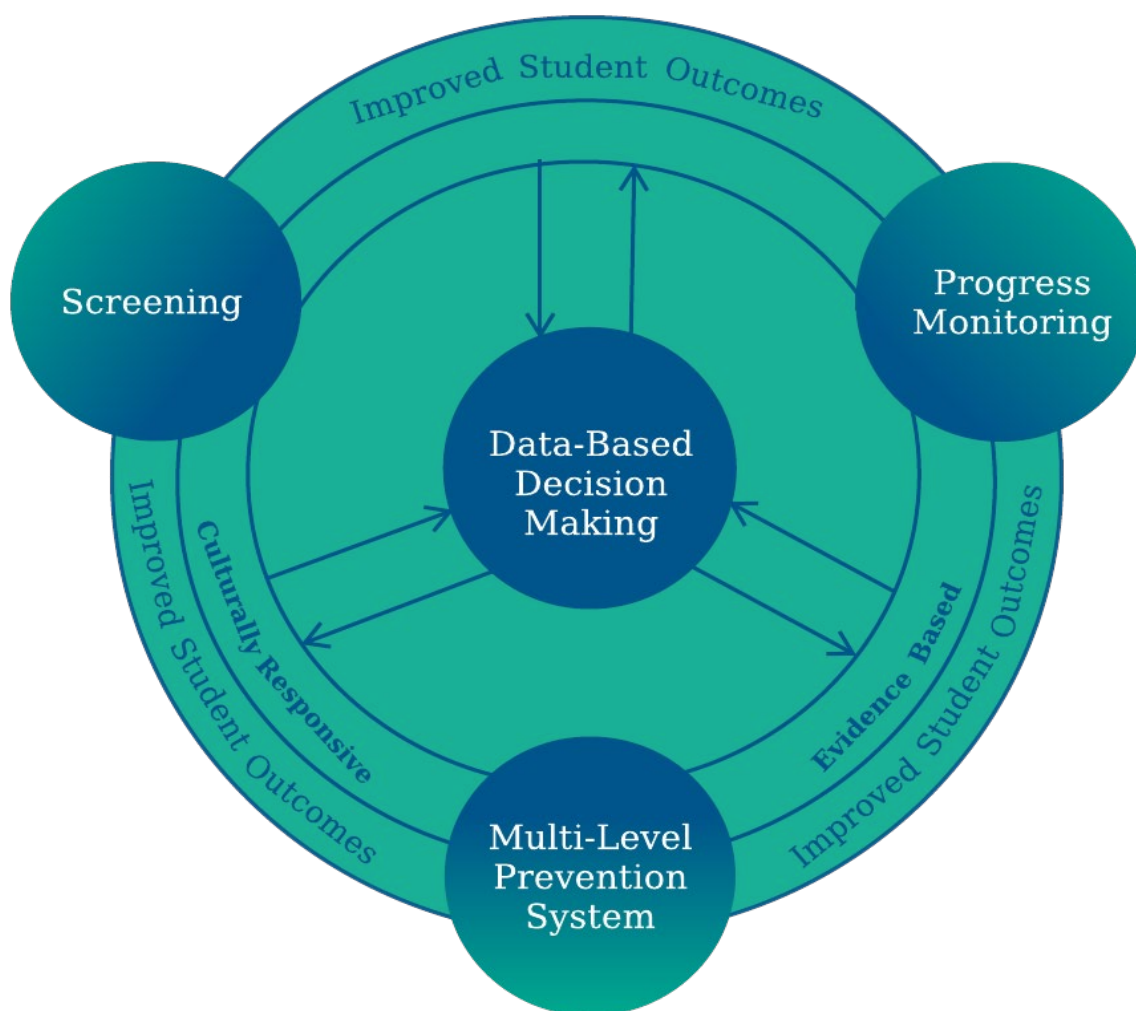
The district has no established tiered intervention measures for ELL, at risk, or struggling learners. There are no structures in place to assist teachers in effectively monitoring the frequency and intensity of remedial interventions for students. Leveled or tiered interventions are lacking to guide teachers in selecting appropriate interventions to sustain student progress or help them determine if the interventions are closing learning gaps. Protected time is not embedded in the daily schedule to provide targeted remediation for skill-based flex groups or one-on-one remediation. No clearly defined early intervention system is implemented for all at-risk students.

Teachers provide interventions, but there is no strategic plan for appropriate remediation strategies, how to differentiate instruction, and determining the level, frequency, and intensity of interventions.

The consulting team noted in focus groups and interviews no uniform understanding of structured tiered interventions. District administrators and teachers expressed awareness of the need to address targeted interventions and define procedures to more effectively meet the needs of struggling learners. The district is committed to meeting the needs of all students; however, no comprehensive continuum of prevention/intervention services is in place. At the elementary level, the consulting team found only reference to tiered intervention and flex grouping. Interviews and focus groups indicated that some teachers were attempting to provide data-driven interventions. Other teachers were vague and inconsistent in articulating how struggling learners are identified, how intervention strategies and support structures are selected, and how the interventions are evaluated as appropriate and helpful for meeting student need and closing learning gaps. Teachers report the use of multiple computerized programs to provide support for struggling students but expressed a need for one consistent program and process that they would all receive training in to implement.

The district is not consistently implementing the tiered interventions, such as the Response to Intervention (RtI) model, with ELLs and struggling learners. This model has both an academic and behavioral component. Oklahoma's RtI model is Oklahoma Tiered Intervention Support System (OTISS) model. **Exhibit 2-34** illustrates the RtI process.

Exhibit 2-34
Essential RtI Components



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

The research behind RtI implemented 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; and
- instructional practices are evidence-based and follow set parameters.⁴²

⁴² http://www.rti4success.org/sites/default/files/FidelityImplementation_10-20-09_FINAL.pdf

RtI provides structure for lesson planning and instructional delivery. **Exhibit 2-35** summarizes the essential questions teacher teams address in lesson planning and planning for delivering instruction using RtI.

Exhibit 2-35
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? • How well do you differentiate one intervention from another? • How well do you avoid inserting pieces from other interventions?
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

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

- detail 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.⁴³

Research indicates that teachers as facilitators are more effective with ELLs: “Teachers should develop a learning environment that is relevant to and reflective of their students’ social, cultural, and linguistic experiences. They act as guides, mediators, consultants, instructors, and advocates for the students, helping to effectively connect their culturally-and community-based knowledge to the classroom learning experiences.”⁴⁴

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a tiered intervention model for remediation.

The superintendent, principals, and select teachers should review tiered intervention models such as the RtI programs. They should then determine to adopt the standard RtI program or a hybrid district approach to tiered intervention for struggling learners. The review process should focus on how to increase the effectiveness of tiered interventions. If needed, external consultants are available to assist in the process.

The district needs to ensure:

- staff follow clear data-based decision-making rules;
- predetermined fidelity checks are applied routinely;
- integration and sustainability practices are followed; and
- staff regularly communicate using the same vocabulary.⁴⁵

The guide *Considering Tier 3 Within a Response-to-Intervention Model* can serve as a resource to understand the RtI process.⁴⁶ The *RtI Essential Components Integrity Rubric* and the *RtI Essential Components Integrity Worksheet* are useful appraisal tools.⁴⁷

The district may also consider guidelines for planning remediation for ELL students. All students, and particularly ELLs, learn best if the following components are included in lesson planning.

- Content objectives – what exactly is to be taught;
- Language objectives – ELL students are not likely to be as familiar with the vocabulary associated with content specific vocabulary, this must be explicitly taught, clearly defined,

⁴³ Johnson, E., Mellard, D. F., Fuchs, D., & McKnight, M. A. (2006). *Responsiveness to intervention (RTI): How to do it*. Lawrence, KS: National Research Center on Learning Disabilities.

⁴⁴ <https://work.chron.com/difference-between-facilitators-teachers-11510.html>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tier3/consideringtier3>

⁴⁷ <https://www.rti4success.org/resource/essential-components-rti-integrity-rubric-and-worksheet>

using some sort of visual, revisited and reviewed multiple times, taught and used contextually;

- Utilizing Visuals – photographs, pictures, authentic video materials, graphs, maps, and graphic organizers;
- Activating Prior Knowledge – each student has a different set of experiences that influences how a student interprets and organizes new information. Once the topic becomes personal, it is more interesting and applicable to the student;
- Expanding Upon Prior Knowledge – using their experiences to help make connections to new information;
- Scaffolding – introduce skills and tasks in a slow, manageable manner, in the beginning stages of learning, students need more support, as the skill is strengthened the supports are methodically eliminated; and
- Working Together – working with peers creates a low-pressure, confidence-building environment optimal for progress, small groups provide safe settings for practicing language, students learn language nuances, native speakers, or more fluent peers are excellent mentors.⁴⁸

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing Title I or Special Education resources.

Gifted and Talented Education

Chapter 8 *Article VII, Section 904* of the School Law Book defines Gifted and Talented children as “those children identified at the preschool, elementary, or secondary level as having demonstrated potential abilities of high-performance capabilities and needing differentiated or accelerated educational services.” The definition includes students who scored in the top three percent on any national standardized test of intellectual ability or who excel in the areas of creative thinking ability, leadership ability, visual performing arts ability, and specific academic ability.

School Law Book *Section 910* requires each school district to provide Gifted and Talented educational programs and to serve those identified students who reside within the school district boundaries. The local board of education is required to submit a plan for Gifted and Talented to the State Board of Education and to provide annual program reports to the SDE.

The required components for Gifted and Talented education programs includes:

- a written policy statement which specifies a consistent process for assessment and selection of children for placement in Gifted and Talented programs in grades one through 12;

⁴⁸ <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/instruction-strategies-for-ell-students/>

- a description of curriculum for the Gifted and Talented educational program, demonstrating that the curriculum is differentiated from the normal curriculum in pace and/or depth, and that it has scope and sequence;
- criteria for evaluation of the gifted child educational program;
- evidence of participation by the local advisory committee on education for Gifted and Talented children in planning, child identification, and program evaluation;
- required competencies and duties of Gifted and Talented educational program staff; and
- a budget for the district's Gifted and Talented educational programs.

Exhibit 2-36 shows the trend in the gifted and talented identification rate over time. From 2014-15 to 2018-19, WPS' identification rate increased and was higher than the community group and state all five years. However, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, WPS had the third-lowest rate among the peer districts. In 2018-19, WPS had the second-highest identification rate among the peer districts.

Exhibit 2-36
Trend in Percentage of Gifted and Talented Education Students

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Wewoka	15.9%	14.8%	17.5%	18.4%	20.9%
Atoka	30.3%	30.4%	29.2%	25.9%	22.4%
Haskell	8.0%	8.6%	9.4%	8.3%	10.8%
Haworth	17.3%	20.8%	20.8%	19.3%	19.4%
Porter	25.9%	25.4%	27.2%	24.7%	19.5%
Vian	11.9%	13.7%	14.8%	14.2%	15.1%
Community Group	12.6%	12.9%	13.4%	13.0%	13.4%
State	14.2%	14.2%	14.5%	13.9%	13.6%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-13

The Gifted and Talented program in the elementary, middle school, and high school is in the beginning stages. One-to-one technology offers enrichment opportunities for all students, yet these are not strategically planned and organized for gifted students.

Discussions with teachers indicate that there is some confusion in how students are identified for placement in the Gifted and Talented. The district uses the NNAT3 to identify students scoring in the top three percent. This test measures nonverbal reasoning and general problem-solving abilities. In addition, recommendations are accepted from teachers in order to place more students in the Gifted and Talented program. According to teachers, the recommendation process lacks clarity and often results in students being placed in Gifted and Talented who may not be qualified.

The WPS Gifted and Talented program is currently a pull-out program at all levels. At the high school the students meet after school. The consulting team found that more training and curriculum ideas are needed to support the teacher in implementing the program at all levels. **Exhibit 2-37** shows that only 55 percent of staff members *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the needs of the gifted and talented are being met. Among just teachers, the figure was 57 percent.

Exhibit 2-37
Staff Survey Results Regarding Gifted Program

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The needs of the gifted and talented are being met.	10%	45%	31%	14%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Research indicates that acceleration and enrichment are confused. Gifted students may be asked to read more, answer more questions, and complete longer assignments; these are not enrichment. **Exhibit 2-38** illustrates the differences.

Exhibit 2-38
Differentiating Between Acceleration and Enrichment

Acceleration	Enrichment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceleration is about the destination and moving through curriculum. • Pacing of content and instruction is sped up to match learner needs. • The goal is to accelerate content mastery. • When acceleration is the goal, students are moving faster through content or skill development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrichment is about the journey and extending the experience with depth and complexity. • Effort is made to allow students to explore topics of interest. • The goal is to enhance and investigate. • When enrichment is the goal, connections are made to units of study with integration of real-world applications.

Source: <https://hwlearninglinks.wordpress.com/2015/08/03/enrichment-for-gifted-learners-in-a-general-education-classroom/>

School districts must provide additional support for students who are already high achieving and those with the potential for high achievement. In planning for educational opportunities, school leaders must communicate a clear purpose and common goal that is endorsed by classroom teachers, gifted coordinators, counselors, and other district staff. Gifted education strategies, when employed, not only increase the achievement of identified gifted students, but have been shown to increase achievement levels of all students, making their use well worth the investment.

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to strengthen the Gifted and Talented Program and establish clear procedures for identifying students who qualify.

The SDE provides options for classroom curricular modifications. The modifications must be challenging and enriching to the student. The district should consider how it might incorporate one or more of these options (**Exhibit 2-39**).

Exhibit 2-39 Enrichment Options

- **Enrichment in the Regular Classroom:** Experiences provided in regular classrooms that are supplemental to the established curriculum and which are purposefully planned with the needs, interests, and capabilities of students in mind. Appropriate enrichment experiences are NOT a repetition of material.
- **Seminars/Convocations:** Special short-term sessions where students focus on one area of study.
- **Mentorships:** A program which pairs individual students with someone who has advanced skills and experiences in a discipline and can serve as a guide, advisor, counselor, and role model.
- **Summer Enrichment Programs:** Enrichment classes or courses offered during the summer months.
- **Saturday Enrichment Programs:** Enrichment classes or courses offered on Saturday.
- **Creative/Academic Competitions:** Organized opportunities for students to enter local, regional, state, or national contests in a variety of areas.
- **Differentiated Curriculum:** Curriculum designed to meet the needs of high ability students and differentiated according to content, process, and product.
- **Learning Centers:** A designated area or portable center designed to enrich and/or accelerate students' interests in a given content area.
- **"Great Books" and "Junior Great Books":** Discussions of great literature led by an adult discussion leader using a prepared question guide.

Source: <http://ok.gov/sde/gifted-and-talented-education-programming-options>

The superintendent, principals, and gifted coordinator should periodically share websites and resources with the regular classroom teachers.⁴⁹ The SDE also has resources to assist both regular classroom teachers and the Gifted and Talented teacher in teaching gifted students.

⁴⁹ https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1IKiJPSr9d8FAjSN2sVC8dZbTwMXXhs9bDz_b6vib1Ps/edit#slide=id.p

Release time meetings can also be used to focus on effectively serving and modifying instruction for gifted students.

There are multiple resources with insights for teachers to use to support learning to identify gifted students.⁵⁰ The superintendent, principals, and gifted coordinator should periodically share websites and resources with the regular classroom teachers.⁵¹ Friday early release meetings can also be used to focus on effectively serving and modifying instruction for gifted students, as well as providing opportunities for collaboration between the general education teachers and gifted and talented teacher to discuss possible connections and enrichment opportunities to the curriculum and core content.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Library Services

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.⁵²

WPS offers students libraries in each school (**Exhibit 2-40**). All are bright and functional.

⁵⁰ <https://rossieronline.usc.edu/blog/teaching-gifted-students-in-full-inclusion-classrooms/>;
<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>

⁵¹ https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1IKiJPSr9d8FAjSN2sVC8dZbTwMXXhs9bDz_b6vib1Ps/edit#slide=id.p

⁵² <http://ok.gov/sde/library-media>

**Exhibit 2-40
WPS Libraries**

Elementary School



Middle School



Source: Prismatic, September 2020

Exhibit 2-40 (continued)
WPS Libraries**High School**

Source: Prismatic, September 2020

FINDING 2-14

The library media center is traditional in function and service. The schools do not have structured library time built into schedules.

All three libraries are functional and inviting to students. Currently, the libraries are not staffed with a full-time librarian. WPS requested and received a waiver to provide services through an assistant library aide this school year rather than a certified librarian. At the elementary, the library aide reads with students who are sent to the library for assistance and interventions. In the middle school and high school, books and resources are available for students.

The district lacks structured time for students to visit the library and participate in lessons and activities that support the content taught in the classroom. Interviews with staff indicated a desire for more comprehensive library services and support for students to conduct research using informational text. Students also expressed interest in learning more about the library resources and how they can be used to support their learning in the classroom.

As shown in **Exhibit 2-41**, staff expressed satisfaction with the library services. Students were less positive. Less than a majority of 7th and 8th and high school students felt that the library met their needs for books and other resources.

Exhibit 2-41
Student and Staff Survey Results Regarding the School Library

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The school library meets the needs of the teachers and students.	22%	41%	29%	7%	0%
7 th and 8 th Grade Students	The school library meets my needs for books and other resources.	8%	38%	41%	11%	1%
High School Students	The school library meets my needs for books and other resources.	10%	24%	44%	19%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

According to the American Library Association, research suggests that school library programs staffed with qualified faculty members have a positive impact on students' academic success. This research shows education officials that librarians can, in fact, help students do better academically. English as a Second Language students can perhaps benefit the most, since books and other resources can be used for them to get familiar with the American English language. Qualified school librarians can impact their schools in a number of ways that normally include the following:

- They are essential partners for teachers and can help students discover topics that interest them.
- They can help faculty members find current trends and resources to bring to their classrooms.
- Librarians can provide students with the information needed to improve their reading, writing, and academic growth as well.⁵³

RECOMMENDATION

Explore options for offering supportive instructional resources, digital learning opportunities, and collaborative learning activities between the library and the regular classroom.

The principals and library staff should seek ways to intentionally connect the library with classroom curricula. The library staff should be included in staff meetings and make teachers aware of digital and hard copy library resources that can be linked to classroom content and OAS. The library staff can use the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Framework as an initial resource to look for innovative learning opportunities to share with

⁵³ <http://teacherhabits.com/why-schools-still-need-libraries/>

classroom teachers.⁵⁴ A number of websites describe how school libraries interface digital literacy services with classroom content.⁵⁵

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. 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:

- The counseling staff, parents, administrators, and others shall provide guidance and counseling program direction through involvement in assessment and identification of student needs.
- 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.
- 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

⁵⁴ <https://standards.aasl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/180206-AASL-framework-for-learners-2.pdf>

⁵⁵ <http://geiendorsed.com/blog/beyond-the-classroom/school-libraries-of-the-future-5-trends-to-watch/>;
<https://www.ebsco.com/blog/article/promoting-school-library-resources-and-services-with-todays-digital-tools>;
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/21st-century-libraries-learning-commons-beth-holland>

activities that enhance students' development; appropriate referrals to other specialized persons, clinics, or agencies in the community; and coordinated services.

- 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 published *The School Counselor's Guide: Developing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program Using Accreditation Standard VI*.⁵⁶ This 2004 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."⁵⁷

ASCA recommends that school counselors divide time between four components:

- Guidance Curriculum – The guidance curriculum is structured with 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.

Time allocated for each program component should depend on the developmental and special needs of the students served. While each district determines time allotments, ASCA recommends that school counselors spend 80 percent of their time in direct contact with students. Oklahoma high schools and middle schools are required to have one full-time counselor for every 450 students. At the elementary level a counseling and guidance program is required but does not have to be delivered by a certified counselor.

Exhibit 2-42 provides the trend in counselor staffing over time. WPS has doubled its counselor staffing over the last five years, while other districts have remained the same or declined.

⁵⁶ <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/CounselGuide.pdf>

⁵⁷ <http://www.ascanationalmodel.org/>

Exhibit 2-42
Trend in Counselor Staffing Over Time

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Wewoka	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3	2.0	100.0%▲
Atoka	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0%●
Haskell	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	(50.0%)▼
Haworth	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.1	1.1	(26.7%)▼
Porter	1.1	1.0	0.3	0.6	0.9	(18.2%)▼
Vian	2.0	2.0	1.2	2.0	2.0	0.0%●
Community Group	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6	0.0%●
State	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.9	3.0	(3.2%)▼

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-15

The district employs a full-time counselor at the high school and at the middle school. The counselors provide individual counseling services to students, as well as group counseling services as needed. The counselors keep middle school, freshman, and sophomore students informed of the Oklahoma Promise program and assist students with the needed paperwork to apply for the program. The high school counselor has extensive knowledge of iCAP and has led the full implementation of this state-sponsored initiative. The high school counselor also provides information to students about internships and the criteria needed to qualify for these classes and promotes the Job for Americas Graduates (JAG) program for students.

Exhibit 2-43 shows that over 80 percent of staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* “the district provides students with adequate counseling services.” A majority of high school students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they have received sufficient college or career counseling.

Exhibit 2-43
Student and Staff Survey Results Regarding Counseling Services

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The district provides students with adequate counseling services.	26%	55%	14%	5%	0%
High School Student	I have received sufficient college and/or career counseling.	13%	41%	33%	11%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Effective school counseling programs are a collaborative effort between the school counselor, teaching staff, families, and community stakeholders. Counselors work with other educators to create an environment resulting in a positive impact on student achievement. School counselors value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in their student population and

community. They are culturally sensitive and responsive to student needs. Comprehensive school counseling programs become an integral part of the school setting. Counselors ensure equitable access to opportunities and rigorous curriculum for all students to participate fully in the educational process.⁵⁸

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for employing two full-time counselors.

⁵⁸ https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_ComprehensivePrograms.pdf

Chapter 3:
Business Operations

*Chapter 3****Business Operations***

This chapter addresses the business operations of Wewoka Public Schools (WPS) and is divided into the following sections:

- A. Organization, Management, and Staffing
- B. Planning and Budgeting
- C. Accounting/Internal Control and Payroll
- D. Cash Management
- E. Bond Issuance and Indebtedness
- F. Purchasing Policies, Procedures, Planning, and Operation

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.

Financial Statements

Financial statements for WPS are prepared based upon Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) that require funds to be combined by fund type, and for the financial statements to be prepared based on these combined funds. The accounts of the district are organized based on funds, each of which is 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. WPS prepares financial statements that include the fund types illustrated in **Exhibit 3-1**.

Exhibit 3-1
Funds Contained in the 2019 WPS 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 the financial activity of the building, co-op, and child nutrition funds.
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.
Bond or Capital Projects Fund	To account for monies received from the sale of bonds for specific capital projects that span several years.
Agency Fund	To account for the activities of various student groups.

Source: WPS Annual Financial Report, June 2019

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 School Law Book. 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.

A mill is the equivalent of \$1 per \$1,000 or (1/10 of a penny) of net asset valuation.

Assessment ratios for real and personal property are determined locally by each individual county assessor within guidelines established by the State Board of Equalization and the Oklahoma Tax Commission. Property within WPS district boundary had a net valuation of \$16,355,501 in Fiscal Year 2019-20 and \$16,273,706 in 2018-19. Through Fiscal Year 2025-26, the Net Assessed Valuations are expected to grow at an annual rate of just 1.55 percent.¹ The millage rate levied for WPS was 83.19 in 2020, which was a slight increase from the 2019 rate of 83.16.

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.

Between 2014-15 and 2018-19, the average assessed property value per student in WPS increased by 31.0 percent (**Exhibit 3-2**). This was the second-largest increase among all the comparison groups, and nearly double that of the state.

¹ Superintendent-provided History of Net Assessed Valuations, Schedule 1.

Exhibit 3-2
Trend in Assessed Property Value per Student

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Wewoka	\$19,468	\$22,633	\$22,322	\$23,034	\$25,496	31.0% ▲
Atoka	\$30,627	\$31,490	\$32,165	\$35,046	\$36,779	20.1% ▲
Haskell	\$27,988	\$30,018	\$29,189	\$32,298	\$38,152	36.3% ▲
Haworth	\$11,705	\$13,331	\$13,952	\$14,535	\$15,177	29.7% ▲
Porter	\$32,353	\$33,024	\$34,214	\$37,144	\$36,110	11.6% ▲
Vian	\$19,484	\$21,714	\$22,542	\$23,147	\$25,324	30.0% ▲
State	\$47,329	\$49,623	\$49,471	\$52,219	\$55,097	16.4% ▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-3 shows the percentages of district, county, state, and federal revenues for WPS and its peers. The WPS revenue percentage from district and state-dedicated sources was at the bottom of its peers. The WPS revenue percentage from federal sources was the highest of its peers.

Exhibit 3-3
Breakdown of Revenues by Source, All Funds, 2018-19

Entity	District	County	State Dedicated	State Appropriated	Federal Revenue
Wewoka	16.3%	1.5%	5.9%	47.5%	28.9%
Atoka	38.0%	1.2%	9.5%	37.0%	14.3%
Haskell	29.2%	1.9%	6.4%	50.6%	11.9%
Haworth	16.7%	1.7%	6.3%	63.5%	11.8%
Porter	32.2%	2.0%	6.4%	43.4%	15.9%
Vian	22.7%	1.2%	6.6%	51.4%	18.1%
Community Group	29.0%	2.1%	9.0%	45.3%	14.6%
State	39.4%	2.5%	7.1%	40.4%	10.6%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-4 shows the trend in revenue sources for WPS, the community group, and state. The district's district and county revenue percentage were consistently lower than both the community group and the state each year. The percentage of revenue from state sources was lower than the community group and a little higher than the state each year. The percentage of federal funding was higher than the community group and the state each year.

Exhibit 3-4
Sources of Revenue as a Percentage of Total Revenue, All Funds

Source of Revenue	Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
District & County	Wewoka	16.7%	17.7%	17.2%	18.3%	17.8%
	Community Group	30.0%	31.4%	33.2%	32.2%	31.1%
	State	40.8%	42.1%	43.2%	44.2%	41.9%
State Dedicated & Appropriated	Wewoka	52.9%	52.1%	51.0%	49.7%	53.4%
	Community Group	54.5%	52.9%	51.7%	52.6%	54.3%
	State	47.7%	46.3%	45.5%	45.1%	47.5%
Federal	Wewoka	30.4%	30.2%	31.9%	32.1%	28.9%
	Community Group	15.5%	15.7%	15.1%	15.2%	14.6%
	State	11.6%	11.6%	11.3%	10.7%	10.6%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-5 compares 2018-19 expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures. As shown:

- WPS was the second lowest of its peers, community group, and state for instructional expenditures, surpassing only Atoka.
- The percentage that WPS spent for instructional support, student support, and district administration was the highest among all comparison groups.
- WPS was among the lowest of the peer districts for school administration expenditures and was below the community group and state.
- The percentage that WPS spent for district support was the second highest compared to its peers, and higher than both the community group and state.

Exhibit 3-5
Percentage Breakdown of 2018-19 Expenditures by Type, All Funds

Entity	Instruction ²	Instruction Support ³	Student Support ⁴	School Admin. ⁵	District Admin. ⁶	District Support ⁷	Other
Wewoka	49.7%	4.5%	9.0%	4.9%	5.0%	18.9%	7.9%
Haskell	56.3%	2.9%	7.2%	5.6%	3.4%	16.2%	8.4%
Haworth	51.6%	3.0%	6.3%	4.9%	3.6%	21.9%	8.6%
Porter	53.5%	4.1%	4.7%	5.2%	4.2%	18.1%	10.2%
Vian	53.4%	1.5%	5.7%	6.4%	4.0%	17.2%	11.8%
Atoka	38.2%	3.0%	4.0%	3.6%	3.2%	15.5%	32.5%
Community Group	55.2%	2.7%	6.3%	5.6%	3.9%	16.8%	9.5%
State	54.6%	3.8%	7.2%	5.8%	2.8%	17.2%	8.6%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-6 shows the trend in WPS expenditures per student and overall, for the past ten years. While the total expenditures have fluctuated between \$7.2M and \$9.0M, the per student expenditures reached a maximum of \$13,622 in 2018-19.

² Instruction – Activities dealing directly with the interaction between teachers and students.

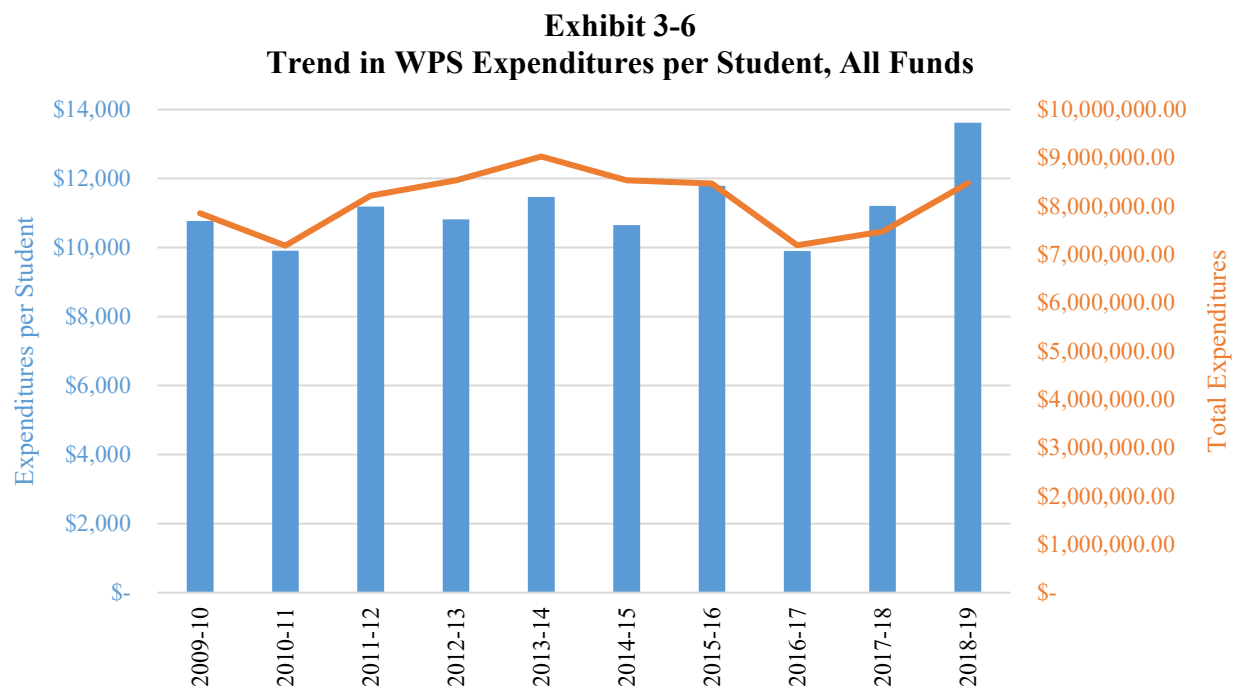
³ Instruction Support – Activities associated with assisting the instructional staff with the content and process of providing learning experiences of students.

⁴ Student Support – Activities designed to assess and improve the well-being of students and to supplement the teaching process.

⁵ School Administration – Activities concerned with overall administrative responsibility for a single school or group of schools.

⁶ District Administration – Activities involving the establishment and administration policy in connection with operating the entire school district.

⁷ 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).



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

Exhibit 3-7 shows WPS expenditures for the past three years, disaggregated by function code. 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 37.3 percent. Spending in each classification also increased.

Exhibit 3-7
Trend in WPS Expenditures per Student, All Funds

Classification	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Instruction	\$5,035	\$5,483	\$6,644	32.0% ▲
Student Support	\$512	\$687	\$980	91.6% ▲
Instruction Support	\$332	\$317	\$488	46.8% ▲
General Administration	\$334	\$468	\$538	60.8% ▲
School Administration	\$518	\$553	\$657	26.8% ▲
Central Services	\$149	\$201	\$239	59.8% ▲
Plant Operations and Maintenance	\$1,727	\$2,097	\$2,352	36.2% ▲
Transportation Services	\$175	\$177	\$335	90.9% ▲
Child Nutrition Program Operations	\$856	\$894	\$1,007	17.6% ▲
Enterprise Operations	\$37	\$34	\$42	15.3% ▲
Total	\$9,676	\$10,910	\$13,280	37.3% ▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, 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 mid-year adjustments that may occur. Fund balance is the amount of cash that is not obligated by purchase orders, contracts, outstanding warrants, or other commitments. 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 can maintain as a fund balance. **Exhibit 3-8** shows the table of maximum allowable balances expressed as a percentage of their general fund collections.

Exhibit 3-8
Maximum Allowable Balances at Year End

General Fund Collections	Maximum Allowable Balances
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 Assistance Document, July 2009

Based upon general fund collections of \$5,234,884 for 2018-19, WPS would be able to reserve up to 20 percent as a fund balance.⁸ *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 3-9** provides the WPS fund balances for the last three years. The fund grew from 2016-17 to 2017-18 but dropped 20.0 percent from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Overall, the general fund fell 11.5 percent over the past three years.

⁸ Wewoka 2019 audit, page 15

Exhibit 3-9
Trend in WPS General Fund Balances

	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Actual	2018-19 Actual
General Fund Collections	\$4,813,867	\$4,754,756	\$5,234,884
Fund Balance	\$1,445,527	\$1,598,298	\$1,279,427
Percentage of General Fund Collections	30.0%	33.6%	24.4%
Fund Balance Year-Over-Year Change		10.6% ▲	(20.0%) ▼
Fund Balance Three-Year Change			(11.5%) ▼

Source: WPS Annual Audit Reports, 2016-17 through 2018-19, and Prismatic calculations

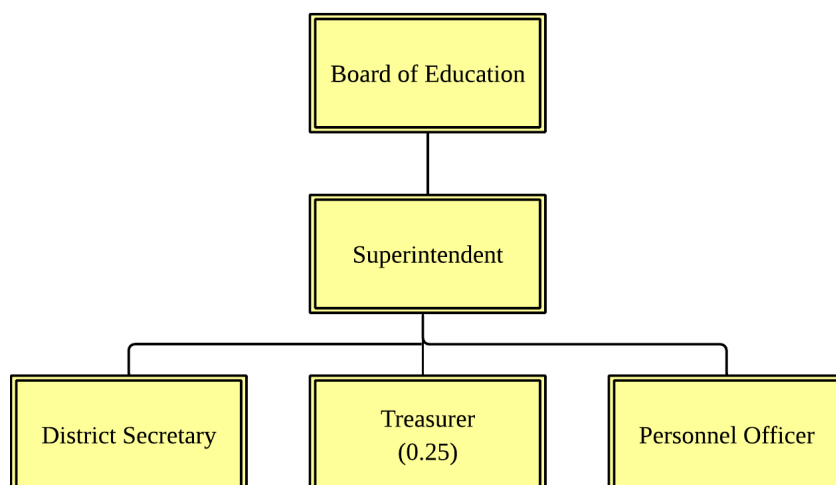
A. ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFFING

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. WPS has chosen the latter option for many years.

The WPS superintendent oversees business services and is assisted by several employees who perform various business operations and treasurer duties. Business operation duties include processing payrolls and encumbrances, as well as child nutrition funds. Treasurer duties involve preparing monthly financial reports, reconciling the district's bank accounts, and completing financial transactions pertaining to the district's activity funds.

Exhibit 3-10 shows the organization of WPS's business operations. The district secretary also serves as the minutes clerk, purchasing agent, and encumbrance clerk, while the personnel officer also serves as the payroll clerk and activity funds encumbrance clerk. The district secretary and personnel officer are full-time positions. The treasurer is a part-time (0.25 FTE) position whose primary employment is at a local bank.

Exhibit 3-10
WPS Business Operations Organization



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2021

FINDING 3-1

The organization and management of the financial functions of the district are not optimal. The treasurer is a part-time employee who does not office in school district facilities, but in a local bank where he is also an employee. In addition, the superintendent and school board do not receive a great deal of financial analysis information.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-11**, while most staff members felt that the district manages its revenues and expenditures wisely, 26 percent had *no opinion*, which could indicate a lack of knowledge on the subject. Only 38 percent of parents felt that the district spends its money wisely and a majority also had *no opinion*.

Exhibit 3-11
Staff and Parent Survey Responses Regarding Financial Management

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The district wisely manages its revenues and expenditures.	26%	48%	26%	0%	0%
Parent	The district spends its money wisely.	10%	28%	58%	5%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Under Oklahoma law, a school district may contract with the County Treasurer to perform Treasurer duties or may appoint someone else. In the case of WPS, an outside appointment has been used for many years. Besides WPS, the current treasurer also serves as the treasurer for three other area school districts. The district treasurer has been in his position since 1985. He prepares reports and attends board meetings to discuss the reports but is not well-versed in bond-related matters.

At the same time, the district employs a full-time district secretary who handles a number of financial areas, primarily purchasing and encumbrances. However, despite what is essentially more than 1.0 FTE dedicated to financial matters, the superintendent and board do not receive all the financial information that it would be useful for them to have. For example, the December 2020 board packet includes 48 pages of financial data, but no year-over-year comparisons or projections regarding the district's likely financial position at the end of the school year. Ideally, monthly reports provide more than dollar amounts without context.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the organization of district financial functions to provide more in-house expertise and reporting.

The district should consolidate the existing positions of district secretary and treasurer into one full-time position within the central office. The position should be renamed "business manager." The business manager should be charged with these primary responsibilities:

- serving as the district treasurer;
- being conversant with bonds and bonds planning, so as to be able to provide the board of education and the Superintendent with better information concerning the district's debt issues;
- handling encumbrances; and
- serving as the board minutes clerk.

In order to maintain a proper separation of duties, the district should seek out another secretary within the school district to handle purchasing functions. That secretary should be paid a stipend for this work. The district should first review its existing purchasing processes to streamline operations, as it appears possible to reduce the number of purchasing items that are presented for board approval. At the time of the onsite work, the superintendent had the authority to approve purchases up to \$10,000, but the district process has been to bring items above \$5,000 to the board. Adjusting the current process to the actual district emergency policy would reduce some of the workload associated with reporting on purchases.

Exhibit 3-12 provides an example of the kinds of financial analysis and reporting that would be useful for the superintendent, school board, and general public. 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 child nutrition fund.

Exhibit 3-12
Example of Budget Document

Wewoka Public Schools General Fund Budget Status Report Month Ended xx,xx,xxxx						
Description	Current Year				Previous Year	
	Estimated/ Budgeted	Current Month Received/ Expended	Year to Date Received/ Expended	Remaining Balance	Current Month Received/ Expended	Year to Date Received/ Expended
REVENUES:						
Local Sources	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Intermediate Sources	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
State Sources	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Federal Sources	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Total Revenue	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
EXPENDITURES:						
Salaries	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Benefits	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Purchased Property Services	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Other Purchased Services	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Supplies & Materials	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Property	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Other	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx	x,xxx
Total Expenditures	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx

Source: Created by Prismatic, March 2012

Exhibit 3-13 provides a sample of another report that could be prepared monthly. A report of this nature, 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 current financial position on an ongoing basis. Such an understanding of the district's financial position will help establish and maintain confidence in the WPS system of accountability.

Exhibit 3-13
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 Balance	\$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						
Instructional Programs						
Salaries & 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 Instructional	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%	\$x,xxx,xxx	\$x,xxx,xxx	xx%
Student Support Services						
Salaries & 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 Support Services	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%	\$xxx,xxx	\$xxx,xxx	xx%
Staff Support Services						
Salaries & 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 Staff 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, May 2013

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The district pays \$61,433 plus benefits for the current 1.25 FTE positions. It should seek to hire a business manager for \$51,433 annually and pay an annual stipend of \$10,000 to another staff member for purchasing duties.

B. PLANNING AND BUDGETING

An organization's budget development and management establish 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 3-2

The superintendent actively seeks grants for which the district might be eligible and completes the grant applications herself. Awarded grants supplement the budget dollars provided to the district by the state in its annual Estimate of Needs.

The superintendent advised that she is constantly on the lookout for grant opportunities that might be of benefit to her district's students. For example, she reported she had received some funding to be able to bring to WPS a new program to teach children about growing produce. When she finds something, she thinks might be good for WPS, she completes the required grant paperwork herself.

As shown in **Exhibit 3-14**, staff indicated that the district actively applies for competitive grants. Fully 88 percent *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the district actively pursues grants; none *disagreed*.

Exhibit 3-14
Staff Survey Results Regarding Grants

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district actively applies for competitive state and federal grants.	50%	33%	17%	0%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

WPS has seen declining enrollment in recent years. As school enrollments decline, school funding is negatively impacted since enrollment is a key factor in funding. Any additional funding that can be obtained can help support the WPS education program.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent's initiative and the efforts she puts in to find grant opportunities – and then complete the paperwork usually required for grants – is commendable.

FINDING 3-3

The district lacks an inclusive process to budget development. According to the superintendent, the WPS school board shares its goals with her, and she in turn puts together the district budget.

Campus principals are not involved in the budget process for their campuses. Additionally, principals are not aware of the status of their respective budgets during the school year.

The superintendent has the sole responsibility of planning the school district's budget. While she appears to be sensitive to the needs of the campuses (according to the principals), they have little exposure to the budgeting process.

While the principals were all laudatory of the superintendent's abilities in the budgeting area, they are not currently adding to their budgeting skill sets – which possibly could hinder their professional development. Moreover, the current budget development process does not provide other stakeholders with an opportunity to provide their input into budget priorities. As shown in **Exhibit 3-15**, less than a majority of staff and parents believe that the district solicits stakeholder or community input into annual budgeting. Less than a majority of staff indicated understanding of the district's budgeting process.

Exhibit 3-15
Stakeholder Survey Responses Regarding District Budgeting

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	District stakeholders provide input into the budgetary process.	9%	22%	66%	3%	0%
Staff	I understand the district's budgetary process.	7%	38%	50%	4%	2%
Parent	The districts asks the community for input when developing its budget.	3%	13%	73%	10%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Numerous articles in the school district world discuss the importance of finance and instructional people working together to provide the best funding solutions for their schools. For example, in the article entitled "Best Practices in School District Funding," the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), lists as Step 1.A. "establish a partnership between the finance and instructional leaders."

The GFOA recommends that a school district 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.

At the time it was reviewed under the Oklahoma School Performance Review process, Clinton Public Schools had a transparent budget development process with a commendable level of public input. The process for budget development in Clinton involved these steps:

1. Preliminary Budget: Prior to the end of the current fiscal year, the superintendent and other key administrators prioritized items for the following fiscal year. Many contributions for this process came from school employees and the public.
2. Preparation of Proposed Budget: After the school board approved the estimate of needs, proposed budgets were devised within the approved revenues and expenditures for the budget year.
3. Receipt of Public Comments: The school board conducted a public hearing to take all comments on financial matters, both past and future, in the district.
4. Adoption of a Final Budget: This included any revisions due to public comments and potential program allocations received prior to this date.
5. Amending of Final Budget: Changes were made throughout the year to ensure that all expenditures had an appropriate amount of budgeted funds available and to adapt the current budget to reflect midterm allocation changes.

RECOMMENDATION

Involve campus principals and stakeholders formally in the budget development process.

The superintendent should bring her campus principals into the overall budget process. This can be done as she finalizes the preparation of the WPS 2021-22 budget.

As a best practice, districts should include a variety of stakeholders in the budgetary process. These stakeholders should include the principals, facilities/transportation director, and cafeteria manager. A teacher and parent representative could also be included in the process. The goal should have more transparency, communication, and input regarding the 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.

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 3-16**. 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 3-16 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 3-4

Information concerning the district's overall budget as well as its month-to-month expenditures is not readily available to district citizens. The district website has no budget information on it.

While the district's website has much information of general interest on it, there is no information about the district's budget – either month-to-month or for the school year as a whole. Nor is there any information available about the board of education, except for the names and photographs of the members.

There is a page on the website which purports to provide board of education agendas and minutes of the meetings, but there are only four boxes on the "Board Agendas" page: January 2020 and February 2020 – two columns each of Agendas and Minutes. However, clicking on these boxes sends the user to the main district Webpage in three cases, and displays a "404 – Page Not Found" error on the fourth option.

A school district's taxpayers fund much of a school district's budget, and periodically vote on whether or not to raise their personal property taxes to support bond referendums. The more informed the citizenry, usually the easier it is to pass bond programs.

But the education of the public should be ongoing, not just when the voters are faced with a bond referendum. One way to accomplish this is to have websites that contain up-to-date information on the financial situation of the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop summary overall budget and year-to-date summary reports that can be posted to the district's website.

The members of the board of education should confirm that WPS has a working website with useful information by personally signing on to the site periodically and surveying the information on it. The board of education should direct the superintendent to develop financial summary reports that can be updated no less than monthly, so that the public will always have up-to-date information at hand.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. ACCOUNTING/INTERNAL CONTROL AND PAYROLL

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.

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 regulations 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 3-5

The personnel officer who records the ins-and-outs of Activity Fund accounts provides status reports every month to the campus principals for dissemination to their various Activity Fund sponsors. The principals were unanimous in their opinion that the personnel officer kept them well-apprised of all their numerous Activity Fund accounts.

The district has dozens of Activity Fund accounts, and well-established procedures for how to obtain goods and services. A purchase request goes through the campus principal, then to the superintendent. Once the superintendent approves the request, the personnel officer confirms that the designated activity fund has available dollars, and, if so, then orders the merchandise and ultimately processes payment for it. After each month-end, she sends reports to the campuses.

While Activity Funds are not tax-appropriated dollars, the school district is nonetheless responsible for the funds. Providing accurate information in a timely manner is a way of ensuring that funds are expended appropriately.

COMMENDATION

WPS does a good job of keeping its principals and activity fund sponsors informed as to the status of their respective accounts, thereby enabling the various activities to use the dollars in their accounts to enhance their activities.

FINDING 3-6

Although the number of district employees receiving a hard copy warrant instead of a direct deposit is currently down to four, having two different pay warrant methods cause additional work in processing payroll. Additionally, there is at present not an absolute prohibition against current or future employees also choosing a hard copy warrant at some point. Incoming employees are verbally directed to provide direct deposit information, although it is not official board of education policy.

The district provides a direct deposit process for employees to receive pay warrants, and employees are encouraged to participate – but not required to do so. Direct deposit expedites the availability of funds to the employees' bank accounts, reduces the possibility of warrants being lost or stolen, and is more 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 directly deposited warrants eliminate the need to print and distribute paper payroll warrants. Direct deposit would save employees currently receiving paper checks time spent in making trips to the banks; moreover, electronically transferred funds generally are available immediately.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a board of education policy that requires direct deposit of employee pay.

The superintendent should present to the board of education a draft policy requiring direct deposit for all monthly payroll checks. Once the board of education approves the policy, the few employees not currently on direct deposit should be instructed to change their pay preferences to indicate the financial institution of their choice.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

D. CASH MANAGEMENT

Effective management of cash and investments requires seeking investments with maximum interest-earning potential while simultaneously safeguarding the district's cash and ensuring sufficient liquidity to meet fluctuating cash flow demands. Developing an effective cash

management program can provide a district with additional revenues to fund programs and operations.

FINDING 3-7

The school principals described strict procedures. This was for the handling of cash on the campus level.

The principals are well-versed in how cash should be handled on their respective campuses, and all described in detail procedures that are followed – from the collection of the cash to its deposit into the bank. These procedures include more than one person counting cash from gate receipts and no cash allowed to be retained on campus overnight.

If not properly tracked, cash can diminish or disappear. Clearly established procedures which are consistently adhered to reduce the possibility of cash being stolen.

COMMENDATION

WPS has developed outstanding procedures for the handling of cash.

FINDING 3-8

While payroll is run twice per month, accounts payable warrants are generally sent out only once per month, after the WPS school board approves the list of pending warrants in its monthly meeting. Paying for goods and service after the Board approves the disbursements in a monthly meeting sometimes leads to late fees that the district must pay due to not meeting the vendor pay-by dates. Additionally, any vendors who complete delivery of purchase orders must wait until after the board meets to get paid, even if an order might have been completed several weeks before the meeting.

The district has traditionally paid its accounts payable bills just once per month. At present, part of its monthly meeting is a review of and approval for prepared warrants to be sent to vendors. Although the superintendent has been granted by the board of education emergency (due to COVID-19) approval authority of purchases up to \$10,000, the POs are brought to the board of education for approval. Additionally, the warrants themselves are reviewed by the board of education – even though the board of education approved the purchases earlier.

Although once-a-month was a typical method for districts to pay vendors years ago, many districts now pay their bills on a more frequent basis. This reduces a district's exposure to late charges and serves to increase goodwill between district and supplier if the supplier knows there will not be an overly long wait from when the order is filled to when the payment is received.

As an example, Tulsa Public Schools has an explicit set of purchasing thresholds that do not require prior school board approval:

Small Purchases-Request for Quotation (RFQ): Where the total cost of goods or services is less than \$50,000, the purchasing department is authorized by the Board of Education

to issue a purchase order based on verbal (under \$3,000) or written (\$3,000-\$50,000) quotations obtained through an informal process.

Sealed Competitive Bidding- Invitation for Bid (IFB): Where the estimated total cost of goods and services is more than \$50,000, sealed competitive bids will be solicited from vendors who have requested in writing that their names be placed on the purchasing department's vendor bid lists. The purchasing department may add names of prospective vendors who are known to the purchasing department. Generally, bid and RFP notices will be posted on the purchasing department webpage. All purchases in excess of \$50,000 must be approved by the district's board of education before a purchase order will be issued. Bids which do not conform to the bid terms will not be considered.⁹

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a permanent board policy that the superintendent has the authority to approve purchases up to a fixed dollar amount, such as \$10,000, per purchase order.

Warrants should be prepared and sent out no less than weekly. Filing time is reduced with weekly versus monthly warrants, as the shorter the time span between warrant runs, the less handling, re-handling, and shuffling of bills will be required.

The district should include in the policy a directive that warrants to satisfy these purchase orders may be sent out without waiting for the monthly board of education review. If the superintendent has approval authority, the board of education does not need to additionally approve the warrants. The consulting team recommends that the school board continue to be provided with a list of warrants paid.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The district should realize a small regular savings from avoiding late fees.

FINDING 3-9

The district pays all bills with paper warrants, even though some routine bills offer online automatic payments. This is inefficient and sometimes results in the district incurring late charges.

Numerous companies – especially utility companies – offer their customers the option to have their bills automatically paid on their due date by drafting the customers' bank accounts. This will normally preclude the possibility of the customers being charged late fees.

Utility bills in particular are often prime candidates for direct payment via autopay. Entries would still need to be made in the books, but the entry would be by journal entry as opposed to sending out warrants.

⁹ <https://www.tulsaschools.org/about/teams/finance/purchasing>

RECOMMENDATION

Put some types of bills, such as utility bills, on Automatic Pay so that the utility company can draft the district's bank account on the due date.

The district should prepare a list of possible candidates for autopay, concentrating on utilities, which often have multiple meters on a site. The district secretary should then contact these candidates to learn if they in fact offer this service, as well as what kind of advance notice is provided to customers whose accounts are being drafted, so that they are sure to have sufficient cash on hand to meet the bills. The district secretary should also check with the accounting software provider to see if they perhaps have a template available for their customers that already utilize this option to pay some of their bills, to help with the data entry of the account debits.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The district should realize a small regular savings from avoiding late fees.

FINDING 3-10

The district's idle funds are primarily invested by the treasurer in Certificates of Deposit (CDs). These CDs offer low interest rates.

Part of the treasurer's duties are to invest idle district funds. However, the treasurer indicated a lack of awareness regarding the availability of investment pools for Oklahoma school districts.

The Oklahoma Public School Investment Interlocal was organized some years ago. It formed the Oklahoma Liquid Asset Pool (OLAP) to provide a vehicle in which districts could invest their operating and reserve funds. There is a possibility that a pooled investments fund such as OLAP might provide slightly better interest rates than a local bank.

The three most important criteria for school district investments are in the acronym SLY, which stands for Security, Liquidity, and Yield. Sometimes, depending on the market and current interest rates, a district might be able to increase its interest earnings by becoming part of a larger organization for at least part of its investments.

RECOMMENDATION

Invest a portion of the district's idle cash into a larger investment pool such as the Oklahoma Liquid Asset Pool, if the yields in the pool exceed the yield from the CDs.

The district should investigate available investment pools in Oklahoma, especially any that may have been set up with school districts in mind. Once suitable options are identified, the superintendent and school board should determine what portion of its idle funds should be invested in investment pools with the goal of achieving better returns.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

E. BOND ISSUANCE AND INDEBTEDNESS

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 acquiring or improving school sites, constructing, repairing, remodeling, equipping buildings, or acquiring school furniture, fixtures, or equipment. **Exhibit 3-17** compares the district’s average daily membership (ADM), assessed property value, and bonding capacity for the last five years. As shown, ADM has decreased since 2014-15 but property values and bonding capacity have increased.

Exhibit 3-17
WPS Trends in ADM, Assessed Values, and Bonding Capacity

School Year	ADM	Assessed Property Valuation	Bonding Capacity
2014-15	789	\$15,360,252	\$1,536,025
2015-16	705	\$15,956,265	\$1,595,627
2016-17	700	\$15,625,400	\$1,562,540
2017-18	679	\$15,640,086	\$1,564,009
2018-19	638	\$16,266,448	\$1,626,645
Percent Change	(19.1%) ▼	5.9% ▲	

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

Debt service expenditures per student are based upon the amount of outstanding debt and number of students a district has during a given school year. Districts must balance facility and equipment needs with the amount of tax money requested of district taxpayers. In 2018-19, WPS had the third-highest debt service expenditure per student of its peer districts but was lower than the community group and state. (**Exhibit 3-18**).

Exhibit 3-18
Debt Service Expenditures per Student, 2018-19

Entity	Debt Service per Student
Wewoka	\$507
Atoka	\$881
Haskell	\$0
Haworth	\$14
Porter	\$804
Vian	\$486
Community Group	\$590
State	\$1,084

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 3-11

There is no information on the district's website regarding the district's bond status. As a result, it is not easy for a WPS stakeholder to become educated about the district's bonding situation.

Currently, stakeholders have no resource where they can readily get information on the district's bond indebtedness. A person with some knowledge of state funding might know to look at a district's Estimate of Needs on a state website, but the information is not easily available from the district itself.

Ongoing community support for bond issuances and debt financing require substantial community information, involvement, and support. Readily providing bond information on the district website consistently, and not just when a bond vote is upcoming, would promote trust in the district. The better informed a citizenry is, typically, the more receptive it is to school district bonding plans.

RECOMMENDATION

Summarize and post bond information to the district's website so that stakeholders have ready access to it.

The district should develop an easy-to-read table showing the district's financial position with respect to its bonds, both for the current year and the future. The superintendent should direct her staff to develop such a table with accompanying explanatory graphics.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

F. PURCHASING POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PLANNING, AND OPERATION

An effective purchasing system allows a school district to receive quality materials, supplies, and equipment in the right quantity in a timely, cost-effective manner. Purchasing includes those activities involved in the identification and purchase of supplies, equipment and services needed by the district, as well as the storage and distribution of goods. Goods and services must be obtained according to the specifications, at the lowest responsible cost, and within state laws and regulations including the state's purchasing and bid requirements and the School Laws of Oklahoma.

A sound purchasing system begins with researched policies implemented through well considered procedures. Careful planning, strong internal controls, and cost-efficient practices such as bulk purchasing and price/bid solicitation provide the framework for the efficient procurement of goods and services.

Purchasing policies and operating procedures help ensure a district complies with state and board purchasing requirements while performing purchasing functions in an efficient and timely manner. Policies should clearly establish purchasing authority, methods required for each type of purchase, provisions for conflicts of interest, and penalties for violating purchasing laws and policies. Purchasing procedures implement policies by documenting the steps that should be taken when goods or services are procured.

FINDING 3-12

A formal purchasing process is in place whereby anyone wanting to obtain goods or services must submit a request in writing which includes vendor information as well as the purchase price(s) of the item(s) - to include shipping and handling - and submit that to the central office for approval. Only when the approval is received is the individual authorized to order the item(s).

The district is strict on requiring a purchase order on every purchase. If an individual orders something without receiving the required advance permission to order it, the individual must pay for the goods or service themselves. Strict adherence to the "how-to's" of purchasing helps minimize unauthorized purchases.

COMMENDATION

WPS has good processes and procedures in place to prevent violations of its purchasing rules.

Having individuals personally responsible for such purchases goes far to prevent it recurring, as any person who has to pay will invariably spread the word that this policy is strictly enforced.

FINDING 3-13

The district does not belong to any cooperative purchasing programs, or co-ops. In joining available co-ops, the district might be able to save money on some of its purchases.

With co-op membership, many different types of items are formally bid. Buying off a co-op bid relieves a district of doing its own formal bidding for the items within the co-op bid – but does not restrict a district from doing its own bidding on specific projects.

As a small district, WPS does not have the purchasing power that a much larger district might have. One way for smaller districts to perhaps get better pricing on at least some of their purchases is to join a purchasing co-op. A co-op allows municipalities, state, and national government agencies to purchase products and services from suppliers and service providers without having to go out to bid with the vendors.

WPS does sometimes go in with other districts for certain bulk purchases, such as copy paper, as the larger volume of the orders often translates to lower prices. Co-ops work in the same way - often with negotiated prices available for all co-op members. Volume bidding as part of a co-op could possibly save the district money on some purchases – as it now saves when joining other districts in a paper bid.

RECOMMENDATION

Seek to join one or more purchasing co-ops.

District purchasing staff should explore what purchasing co-ops might be readily available to join. They should also contact some members of those co-ops to discover how their experiences have been using the co-op method of purchasing. Two examples of purchasing cooperatives WPS might explore are Buyboard – Oklahoma State School Boards Association, and JPS Purchasing Association - Jenks Public Schools.

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 Wewoka Public Schools (WPS) in the following sections:

- A. Facilities Planning and Construction
- B. Maintenance and Custodial Operations
- C. Safety and Security
- D. Energy Management

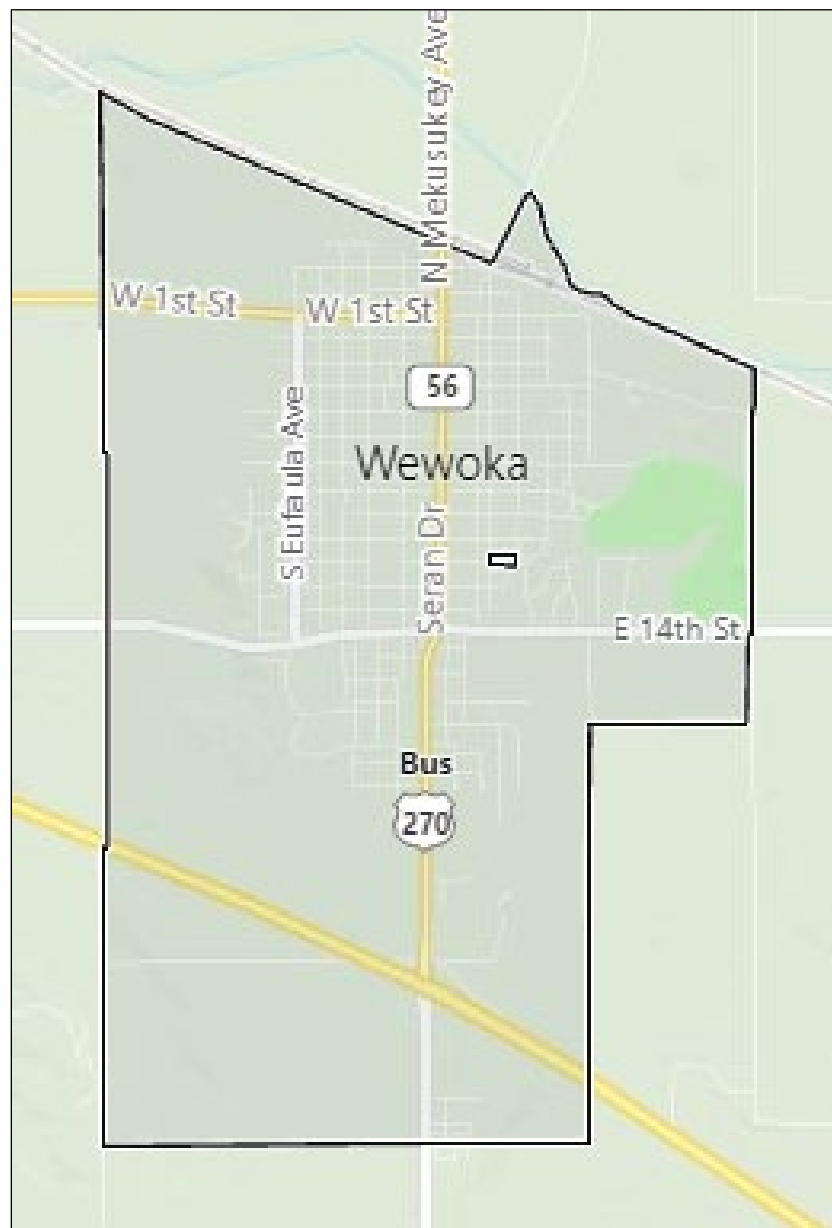
Facilities use and management includes the planning, construction, and maintenance of buildings, the safety of students and staff using those buildings, and the security of facilities before, during, and after school hours. More specifically, this area includes the following:

- 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;
- providing regulated access to individuals and organizations for use of the facilities after hours and on weekends;
- operating facilities in a manner that is energy efficient;
- ensuring that the facilities are safe when students and teachers are present;
- creating proper safeguards to ensure the security of the facilities during and outside school hours; and
- having safety plans in the event of a crisis or natural disaster so that students and staff members are protected.

Background

Wewoka is in Seminole County near the convergence of State Highways 56 (Seran Drive) and 59 (14th Street, **Exhibit 4-1**). It is among the oldest communities in Oklahoma, and the official capital of the Seminole Indian Nation. The population has generally been in decline since the 1930s; it is expected to be about 3,189 once the 2020 Census is completed.

Exhibit 4-1
Wewoka's Location in Seminole County



Source: [Wewoka road map - Bing](#), January 2021

Exhibit 4-2 provides an aerial view of the WPS campus. It shows the following district areas: high school, middle school, elementary school, head start, cafeteria and kitchen, vocational agriculture building, superintendent's office, and football stadium.

Exhibit 4-2
Wewoka Public Schools and Facilities



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2021

Exhibit 4-3 provides an inventory of current WPS facilities, including the address, the current replacement value (CRV), the contents' value, and the square footage. In total, the district has approximately 171,437 square feet of facilities in the inventory.¹ The building replacement cost is \$32.4 million; contents are valued at \$3.9 million.

¹ These floor area figures are taken from the most recent insurance policy documents provided by the school district.

Exhibit 4-3
WPS Facilities Inventory²

Facility Name	Address	Building Value	Contents Value	Sq. Ft.
Elementary School	1000 S. Okfuskee	\$6,842,050	\$673,448	32,670
Middle School	800 S. Ocheese	\$3,343,917	\$656,051	31,424
Portable Classrooms	800 S. Ocheese	\$89,610	\$21,887	1,584
High School and Gym	1121 S. Okfuskee	\$16,802,029	\$1,690,356	71,724
Head Start Facilities	200 S. Seminole	\$1,425,581	\$210,640	13,427
Vo-Ag Building	1120 S. Seminole	\$490,618	\$98,211	6,000
Vo-Ag Open Sheds E & W	206 E. 14 th	\$9,746	\$0	2,884
Bus Barn	202 S. Seminole	\$87,853	\$56,121	2,016
Cafeteria and Gym	300 W. 10th	\$1,446,656	\$280,043	13,120
Administration (portable)	302 W. 10th	\$112,910	\$16,837	2,016
LED School Sign	10 th Street	\$27,115	\$0	0
Athletic Facilities/Fields	14 th @ Wewoka	\$1,760,868	\$153,496	9,708
Vacant Land	Lots 8, 9, and 10	\$0	\$0	0
Total		\$32,438,953	\$3,857,090	171,437

Source: WPS, June 2020

The facades of each school are shown in **Exhibit 4-4**.

Exhibit 4-4
Exteriors of School Buildings in Wewoka

Elementary School Entrance



Elementary School Side View



Source: Prismatic, September 2020

² This table was created by the consulting team from the WPS property schedule within the current insurance policy. Some information has been consolidated but the total figures have not been modified from the original. In addition, the term "Upper Elementary" used in the original has been changed to "Middle School" for clarification.

Exhibit 4-4 (continued)
Exteriors of School Buildings in Wewoka

High School Main Entrance



High School Accessible Entrance



High School Auditorium Entrance



Middle School Entrance



Source: Prismatic, September 2020

Between 2014-15 and 2018-19 the average assessed property value per student for WPS increased by 31.0 percent (**Exhibit 4-5**). This was the second-largest increase among all the comparison groups.

Exhibit 4-5
Trend in Assessed Property Value per Student
2014-15 through 2018-19

District	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Wewoka	\$19,468	\$22,633	\$22,322	\$23,034	\$25,496	31.0% ▲
Atoka	\$30,627	\$31,490	\$32,165	\$35,046	\$36,779	20.1% ▲
Haskell	\$27,988	\$30,018	\$29,189	\$32,298	\$38,152	36.3% ▲
Haworth	\$11,705	\$13,331	\$13,952	\$14,535	\$15,177	29.7% ▲
Porter	\$32,353	\$33,024	\$34,214	\$37,144	\$36,110	11.6% ▲
Vian	\$19,484	\$21,714	\$22,542	\$23,147	\$25,324	30.0% ▲
Community Group	-	-	\$37,679	\$36,165	\$40,027	6.2% ▲
State	\$47,329	\$49,623	\$49,471	\$52,219	\$55,097	16.4% ▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA), Profiles Database

The debt service expenditures per student are based upon the amount of outstanding debt and number of students a district has during a given school year. Districts must balance facility and equipment needs with the amount of tax money requested of district taxpayers. In 2018-19, WPS had the third-highest debt service expenditure per student of its peer districts but was lower than the community group and state. (**Exhibit 4-6**).

Exhibit 4-6
Debt Service Expenditures per Student
2018-19

Entity	Debt Service per Student
Wewoka	\$507
Atoka	\$881
Haskell	\$0
Haworth	\$14
Porter	\$804
Vian	\$486
Community Group	\$590
State	\$1,084

Source: OEQA, Profiles Database

A. FACILITIES PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION

Well-planned facilities are based upon the educational program and 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 by applying 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 following 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 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).³ Effective long-range school facilities master planning incorporates 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.

In 2008, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) published the second edition of *Planning for Education: Space Guidelines for Planning Educational Facilities*.⁴ 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.⁵

- **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.⁶
- **Enrollment Projections:** Effective planning requires accurate enrollment projections at least five years into the future.⁷ Accurate projections require planners to examine district

³ Council of Educational Facility Planners International. (2004). *Creating connections: The CEFPI guide for educational facility planning*. Can be purchased at <http://creatingconnections.a4le.org/>

⁴ <http://digitalprairie.ok.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/stgovpub/id/9456/rec/4>

⁵ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/CI-AdministratorsGuide.pdf>

⁶ A detailed, space-by-space inventory is not available from WPS.

⁷ No official enrollment projections are available from any sources for WPS.

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 can chart 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.⁸

Exhibit 4-7 provides student and parent responses regarding WPS facilities generally. Most survey respondents feel the facilities are attractive and welcoming.

Exhibit 4-7
WPS Survey Results Regarding Maintenance

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Student	My school is attractive and welcoming.	16%	43%	27%	10%	4%
Parent	My child's school is attractive and welcoming.	33%	55%	10%	0%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

FINDING 4-1

Major improvements to buildings and grounds have been completed or are being completed since the current superintendent started her appointment. This includes:

- a general improvement of the site landscaping for “curb appeal;”
- remediation of a persistent and pervasive storm water flooding problem; and
- removal of a source of excess humidity and mold from the mechanical attic of the elementary school.

While no actual data from a building condition assessment are available, all administrators interviewed could not identify any glaring backlog or other maintenance or repair neglect in any of the WPS facilities.

⁸ No official facilities maintenance plan is available from WPS.

In **Exhibit 4-8** a comparison of maintenance and operating expenses for WPS and its peer districts shows a steady overall 26.3 percent increase between 2014-15 and 2018-19. This attests to the efforts described above, including what appears to be the virtual elimination of a maintenance and repair backlog.

In addition to the higher funding commitment for maintenance and operations, another factor has played an important role in this improvement. The Oklahoma School Insurance Group, insurance underwriter for WPS' building stock, has for many years sent a representative to examine the condition of the district's facilities, leaving behind in a "Safety Report," a list of action items requiring maintenance, repair, or other upkeep. The consulting team was told that in prior years such lists were filed away and largely ignored, but in recent years they have been reviewed and addressed in the maintenance and repair program.

Exhibit 4-8
Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Wewoka	\$1,158,356	\$1,386,859	\$1,253,801	\$1,398,544	\$1,462,844	26.3% ▲
Atoka	\$1,082,536	\$1,036,762	\$755,507	\$977,893	\$1,056,973	(2.4%) ▼
Haskell	\$602,876	\$613,504	\$819,351	\$777,701	\$508,795	(15.6%) ▼
Haworth	\$834,299	\$934,708	\$1,159,239	\$792,674	\$725,432	(13.0%) ▼
Porter	\$433,409	\$403,533	\$457,511	\$482,238	\$559,315	29.1% ▲
Vian	\$742,704	\$752,045	\$670,123	\$775,667	\$857,955	15.5% ▲
Peer Average	\$809,030	\$854,569	\$852,589	\$867,453	\$861,886	6.5% ▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2014-2019, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 4-9 shows example photographs of some of the commendable maintenance.

Exhibit 4-9
Examples of Commendable Maintenance and Repair

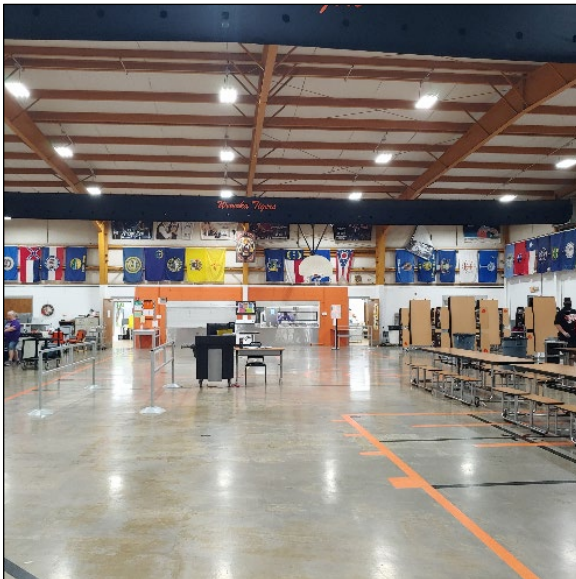
New Protective Cages for Propane Bottles



Thermal Replacement Windows at HS



Cafetorium



Elementary School



Source: Prismatic, September 2020

Keeping up with maintenance and repair needs is a best practice. No one suggests that maintenance neglect saves money or costs nothing. Everyone instead agrees that maintenance neglect leads to added costs, but the magnitude of such costs is subject to debate. One source notes that the collateral damages of deferred maintenance may be subject to an “inverse square rule.”⁹ This means, for example, that damages in the billions of dollars from an oil refinery

⁹ <http://www.geaslin.com>

explosion can eventually be reduced to the cost of the original part that was not replaced before it failed. It is a reminder of the folk poem attributed to Benjamin Franklin:

For the want of a nail the shoe was lost, For the want of a shoe the horse was lost, For the want of a horse the rider was lost, For the want of a rider the kingdom was lost, And all for the want of a horseshoe-nail.¹⁰

Waiting until roofs leak, boilers explode, or other building components break typically incurs much greater costs than preventive maintenance. Just the appearance of maintenance neglect – an unrepaired broken window, a leaky toilet valve, unkempt grounds, stained ceiling tiles, graffiti – can lead building users to lose their respect for the institution contained within the building.

COMMENDATION

WPS has achieved a commendable level of maintenance and repair throughout its building stock and grounds over the past five years.

This is commendable due to the obvious efforts put forth to move the district away from an earlier period of blasé maintenance neglect and under-funding. In the future, the current state of attention to, and funding of, maintenance and repair needs should be the expected standard practice.

FINDING 4-2

The WPS superintendent prepared an outline of a facilities master plan several months into her current tenure. This is an important initial step. However, WPS does not currently maintain or use a written facilities master plan document. Without a master plan, the district runs the risk of overbuilding, underbuilding, or otherwise spending on facilities that do not necessarily meet the district's needs.

WPS lacks processes and data for developing and maintaining a long-range, continuous facility plan that addresses building maintenance and students' educational needs. Neither the school board nor the leadership team of WPS are engaged in active facilities master planning. The superintendent has a facilities plan in mind, but it is unclear how much of this information is shared with school board members or others on the leadership team. This leaves unclear whether school board members are encouraged or expected to bring forward their own facilities planning proposals, or if their role is viewed more passively as one of approving or disapproving the proposals of others.

The superintendent's facilities master plan outline is displayed in **Exhibit 4-10**. This document represents an excellent beginning, but it lacks sufficient detail for informed deliberation and decision-making.

¹⁰ [all for the want of a horseshoe nail poem - Bing](#)

Exhibit 4-10
Building Plans Document Prepared by WPS Superintendent

<p>The following building plan is designed to maintain the current level of building fund reserves. Approximately \$100,000 will be spent annually to complete the projects below.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2019-2020</p> <p>1. Baseball Field</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Demolishing</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i. Remove old dugouts, fencing, media building.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ii. Gravel the new parking</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">iii. Trench repair</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">1. Seal collars, cover pipe, and close</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. Rebuilding</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i. Build new dugouts</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ii. Build new fencing around field</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">iii. Build new bathrooms/storage/announcer</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">iv. Remodel middle school dressing room into bathrooms and concession stand</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. Prepare area behind the softball field for football practice area</p> <p>2. New hitting facility, weight room, coaches' office</p> <p>3. Remodel the old dressing room into guest dressing room and storage</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2020-2021</p> <p>1. New middle school: Funding Possibilities: Tax credits or bond issue</p> <p>2. New gym: Dome: Funding Possibilities: FEMA with bond issue</p> <p>3. Begin updating electricity at the high school</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2021-2022</p> <p>1. Complete the updating of electricity at the high school</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2022-2023</p> <p>1. Update all bathrooms at the High School</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2023-2024</p> <p>1. Update four classrooms and office area of the high school (downstairs)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2024-2025</p> <p>1. Update four classrooms of the high school (downstairs)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2025-2026</p> <p>1. Update four classrooms of the high school (upstairs)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2026-2027</p> <p>1. Update four classrooms of the high school (upstairs)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2027-2028</p> <p>1. Update remaining classrooms and halls of the high school</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">2028-2029</p> <p>1. Update auditorium and stage area.</p>	

Source: WPS Superintendent, November 2020

At the time of the onsite work, WPS lacked a systematic facilities planning process or protocol. This lack exposes the district potentially to an insufficient consideration of facilities planning alternatives, constrained public debate, glossed-over financial and logistical details, and other factors leading possibly to information-poor decision-making.

Facilities planning is not just about new construction or big projects. Rather, it includes a broad spectrum of actions, including:

- properly and realistically funded facility maintenance and operations activities, including preventive and reactive maintenance tasks, operational energy efficiency improvements, custodial services, and many other tasks aimed at keeping buildings safe, clean, healthy and conducive to teaching and learning;
- major and minor capital improvement projects, such as additions, renovations, replacements, facility adaptive reuse projects, or upgrading of building systems or elements;
- outsourcing of maintenance and custodial functioning;
- land and facilities sales or acquisitions; and
- new construction.

Districts that engage in facilities master planning systematically identify and collect the data needed to inform decision-making in the facilities master planning process. Major data collection activities include:

- periodic building condition assessments;
- demographic, economic and geographic development trends;
- building capacity and space use; and
- other research and data collection efforts needed for decision-making.

But there are additional best practices to consider as the plan's components. A school district's long-range facilities master plan is a compilation of district policies and statistical data that provide a basis for educational facilities to meet the changing needs of a community. As noted in resources developed by the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE),¹¹ effective long-range school facilities master planning incorporates the elements previously described as lacking at WPS.

RECOMMENDATION

Use the facilities master plan outline prepared by the superintendent as the start for an ongoing facilities master planning process.

WPS should design and implement a protocol for a continuous, ongoing facilities master planning activity. As noted in one best practice resource for facilities master planning:

[Facility Master Plans] should be developed with a wide range of community stakeholders to ensure that multiple perspectives are included. Many districts find

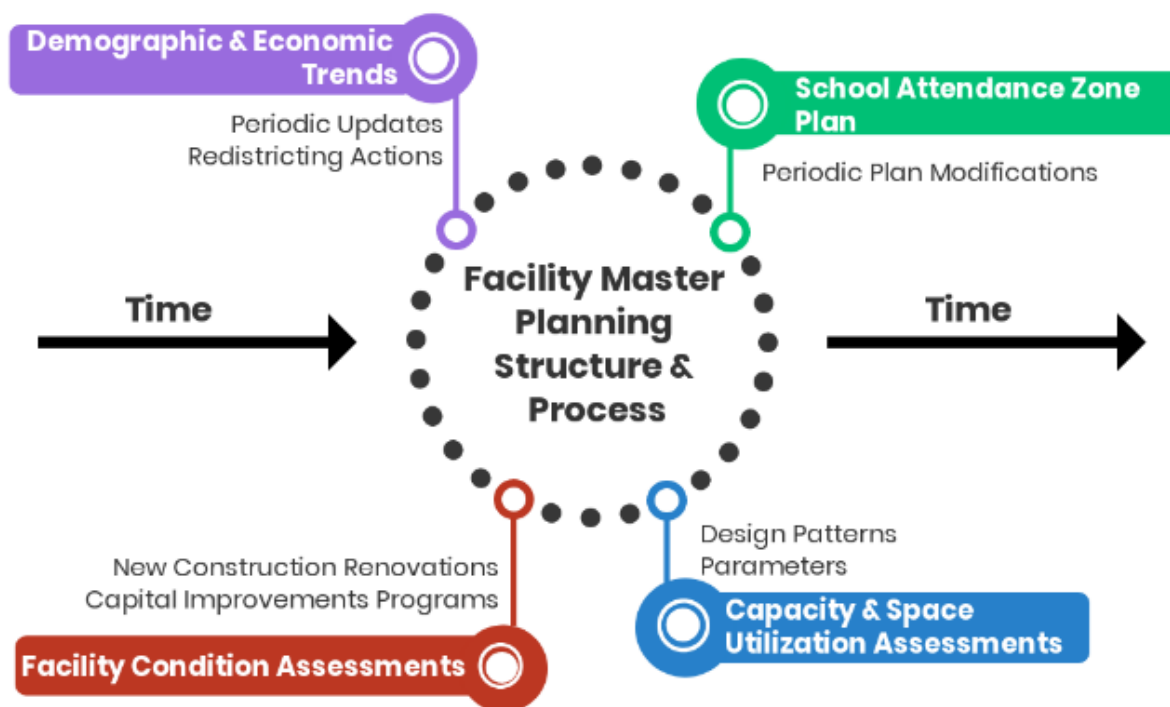
¹¹ Council of Educational Facility Planners International. (2004). *Creating connections: The CEFPI Guide for Educational Facility Planning*. Can be purchased at <http://creatingconnections.a4le.org/>

community workshops to be beneficial in both understanding the facility needs of each school and in building support for the plan and any future financing efforts. Finally, approval by the BOE demonstrates the significance of the FMP and that the plan has a high level of support.¹²

In this process, the district may find it necessary to keep specific details of the plan confidential until such time that they can be openly shared with the public, but it should use public workshops to discuss alternatives before deciding on the best course of action.

Exhibits 4-11 and **4-12** show in diagrammatic form how a continuous facility master planning process should function.

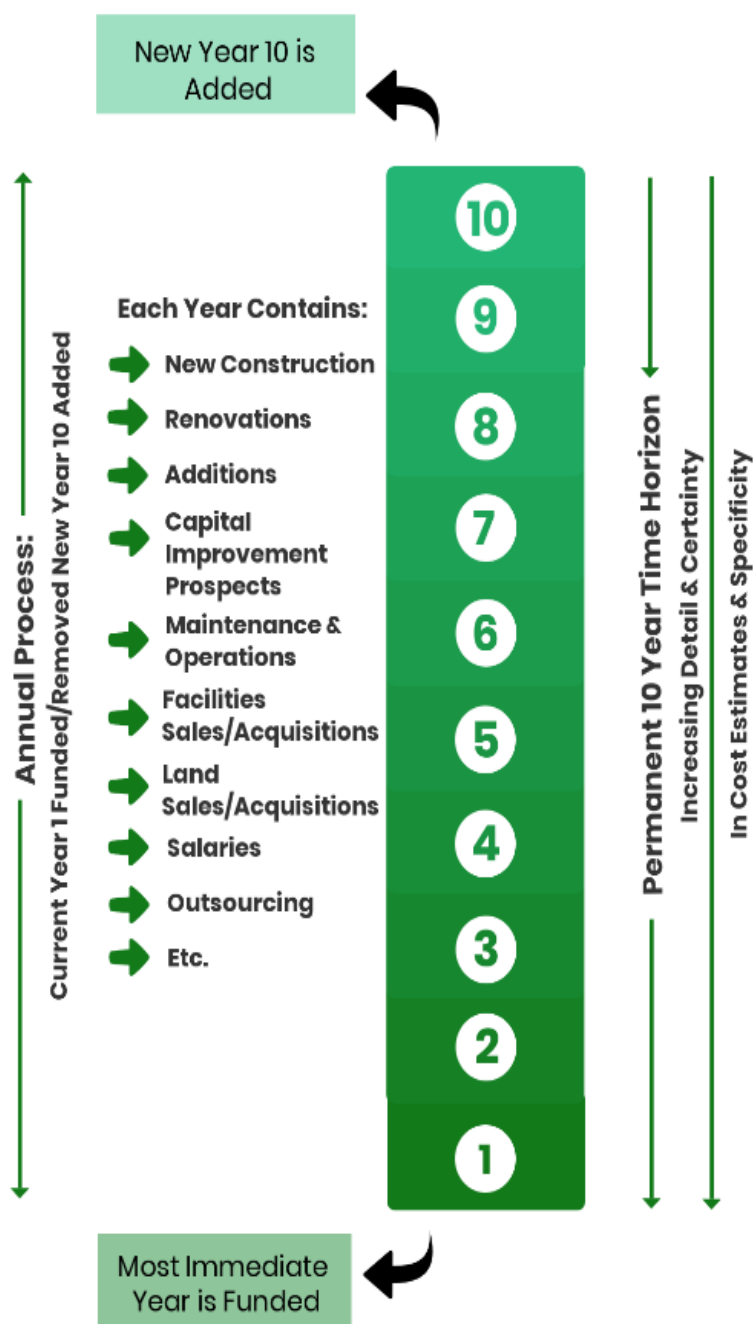
Exhibit 4-11
Facility Master Planning Structure and Process



Source: Created by Prismatic, March 2020

¹² Council of Educational Facility Planners International. (2004). *Creating connections: The CEFPI Guide for Educational Facility Planning*. Can be purchased at <http://creatingconnections.a4le.org/>

Exhibit 4-12
Procedure for Maintaining a Continuous 10 Year Time Horizon



Source: Created by Prismatic, March 2020

Additional implementation steps should include:

1. WPS should hire a facilities master plan consulting team on a retainer basis. This will have a fiscal impact but may be desirable for the first few years while district staff learn how to engage in continuous facility master planning. The facilities master plan consulting team

would serve as designated committee staff, and would be tasked with preparing all minutes, reports, or other committee records and correspondence.

2. The district should form a permanent WPS Master Plan Committee, with committee membership determined by the school board and district administrators. Broad community-wide stakeholder representation is desirable. The major purpose of the committee would be to recommend the addition of new plan action items for approval by the board. The committee should meet quarterly on a standing basis, or more frequently should the need arise.
3. A Facility Master Plan update should be scheduled at the same time each year. This activity would require one full day, consisting of the following:
 - a. Full detailing of the Master Plan's current year, Year Zero, for full funding of all included projects and other activities, and recommendation by the WPS Master Plan Committee for approval of this year by the board.
 - b. Refinement of Years 1 to 9 and addition of Year 10 to complete the Master Plan's time horizon. Each year should be discussed individually, and the overall 10-year timespan also viewed as a continuum of increasingly likely plan actions. The completed time horizon should be recommended to the board of education for approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

If the district elects to not hire an outside firm to facilitate and support facilities master planning, this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The consulting team estimates that hiring an outside firm on retainer would require an annual cost of approximately \$30,000 for three years.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Engage a consulting firm to assist with facilities master planning, if needed.	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	\$0	\$0

FINDING 4-3

Some facilities issues and concerns remain on WPS campuses. Improvements still requiring attention that were identified by district administrators include:

- additional student bathrooms for the elementary school – The need for additional lavatory facilities at the elementary school became apparent after the renovated facility was opened more than ten years ago. It appears that the low number of toilets provided is a building code violation not flagged before the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
- an additional elementary gymnasium – An elementary level gymnasium was not included in the school renovation, perhaps for cost reasons. But the continued use of the high school

gymnasium by the elementary grades places limitations on the high school and elementary school physical education curricula that need to be addressed.

- additional specialty middle school classrooms (art and music) – Specialty classrooms for middle school are a long-standing need.
- renovations of the plumbing and electrical systems in the high school – Renovations of the plumbing system at the high school were a contemplated action item mentioned in *2006 Performance Review* for WPS. Some parts of the high school plumbing are still the original system components of 1923.
- periodic assessments of building condition are only a self-protective insurance underwriter initiative and not a routine management action – A building condition assessment walk-through is conducted annually by a representative of the insurance carrier for the district's facilities. This is not a forensic engineering examination. It is aimed at reducing the insurance carrier's risk. Although the insurance input is useful and worthy of the district's attention, the district would benefit from an additional building condition assessment conducted every five years by a qualified architect/engineer to provide further detailed input to the capital project planning of the district.

These are chiefly long-standing facilities deficiencies the district has decided to defer to some uncertain date in the future. The district's lack of a capital improvement projects list, as part of a facilities master planning process, has allowed these needs to remain unmet for years.

RECOMMENDATION

Include, schedule, and budget various needed major capital improvements projects into the facilities master planning process, and into specific programs and plans for bond referenda.

As recommended previously, the district should hire a facilities master plan consulting team to assist with the identification, description, costing, and scheduling of capital improvements projects to be presented for approval to the school board. Thereafter, these projects should be entered into the district's facilities master plan. The facilities master plan consulting team should include architects and engineers with the qualifications for conducting a facilities condition assessment every five years.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost to implement this recommendation has been included as part of the cost for developing a facilities master plan.

FINDING 4-4

At the time of the onsite work, the Wewoka School Board and district administrators were in the early stages of discussion to place a bond referendum on a future ballot, chiefly for the design and construction of a new Wewoka Middle School. The chief reason cited for a new Middle

School is that the “outlier” location of the current building was inadvisably chosen many years ago. This effort to obtain voter approval of a bond referendum would currently be conducted in the absence of a systematic facilities planning process or protocol.

Without resort to a formal facilities planning process, the district cannot assure itself of giving all options and alternatives the fullest recognition, consideration, and evaluation before reaching a selected course of action. Decisions about what types of facilities are needed, whether they should be new and/or remodeled, where such facilities should be located, and what provisions should be made for future additions, are among many of the considerations requiring thorough study and discussion in the form of a prescribed and systematic protocol.

Although WPS is a small district, and informal planning has often been the basis for past decision-making, it is a fact that changes to a school district’s facilities are a major, long-term financial commitment. Once the construction funds have been spent, any decisions that in hindsight are now seen as not having been considered deeply and deliberately enough, cannot easily be changed without further cost. One such example is the major impetus for a new Wewoka Middle School – a change to a more safe and functional location, reflecting a poor location decision made many years ago. Another example is the corrective improvement that had to be made more than ten years ago to the Wewoka Elementary School. The original, trendy open school design created both security and space management problems, with many exterior doors and few permanent interior walls. These examples support the best practice that the rationales used for new construction or renovations should be given more than casual and informal consideration.

Beyond facilities planning best practices, an additional best practice is connected directly to successful bond referendum campaigns: engage in careful, thorough, and defensible planning. As noted in a recent article:

There is no exact science for passing a bond issue. However, there are strategies that when implemented can help improve the chances that the bond issue will pass.

1. Build a Foundation with local organizations, such as the chamber of commerce and influential community leaders.
2. Organize and Plan. Make sure you have done all your homework to justify the bond in a logical and defensible way.
3. Establish a realistic need.
4. Be honest. Misrepresentations will come out in the open, either before or after the vote. When they do, this bond issue – or the next – will likely fail.
5. Campaign! Campaign! Campaign!
6. Focus on uncertainty. Many voters are predisposed to vote either yes or no. You should make every effort to encourage the yes voters to come to the polls. But the people who are truly

undecided are the ones that need to be convinced to vote in favor and actually show up to vote. They are the ones who may ultimately decide passage of the referendum.¹³

RECOMMENDATION

Prepare and conduct bond referenda with a facilities master plan foundation.

Prior to requesting voter support for a bond referendum, the district should craft a well-researched, defensible, realistic, and financially feasible plan for the use of the funds through effective facilities master planning. In the current situation of the proposed middle school relocation, the district should first hire an architectural firm with a record of innovative design and examples of work using successful upgrades of existing construction. This firm should conduct several preliminary studies leading to design concepts and alternatives:

- A capacity assessment to identify available spaces for grades 5th through 8th in the high school and elementary school buildings. The high school need not be viewed rigidly as a “Grades 9th through 12th only” environment. How many learning spaces for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades can be accommodated in the high school? How many learning spaces for 5th and 6th grades can be accommodated as extensions of the elementary school? How can existing gymnasium spaces be used and upgraded? Is a new gymnasium needed? How many portable classrooms can be eliminated? Based on the current enrollment and limited data on likely enrollment trends in the near future, the question of whether an entirely new middle school is even needed should be addressed.
- A programmatic study to determine state-of-the-art thinking about the size, configuration, and fixtures, furniture, and equipment for learning spaces in 5th through 8th grades. The focus should include special facilities for such disciplines as robotics and STEM, music, art, theater, etc.
- A footprint study to determine the optimal placement of new facilities, as may be needed, based on the initial findings of the capacity assessment and the programmatic study.
- Preliminary design concept alternatives for presentation in electronic form and, if desired, in 3D model format. These presentations should be used for discussion among formal committees and informal community groups to raise issues and concerns, justify ideas, answer questions, and go back to concept development or revision. A construction manager at-risk (CMAR) and a bond company should evaluate and rate the concepts.
- Schematic Design concepts and preliminary estimates. CMAR and bond company should create and adjust the estimates. The bond committee should decide which one concept to adopt.

¹³ Meador, Derrick. “Tips to Successfully Pass a School Bond Issue.” *ThoughtCo*, August 28, 2020. www.thoughtco.com/successfully-pass-a-school-bond-issue-3194411

- Final recommendations to the school board. The school board should vote to place the bond referendum on the ballot three to four months before election day.
- Final concept should be prepared for presentation to the community and media three months before the referendum vote.
- The bond campaign should start two months before the referendum vote.

An additional reference document from the Oregon Association of School Boards provides further suggestions for planning and launching a successful bond referendum.¹⁴

FISCAL IMPACT

The services of an architectural firm, a CMAR, and a bonding company are estimated to cost up to \$50,000, to prepare for, and conduct, the bond campaign. This includes all presentation materials, meetings, and ancillary services. District staff and school board members may not, as a rule, receive additional compensation for their participation in a bond campaign.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Prepare and conduct bond campaign.	(\$50,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 4-5

WPS operates a community use of facilities program that employs a manual system of forms to keep a record of school and community organizations who have been approved for scheduled uses of school facilities after hours and on weekends, either for user fees or gratis, per district policy. The manual record-keeping is sufficient for the scope of the district's program requirements and has been managed continuously for several decades.

The best practice aspects are evident in the strong bond between the Wewoka community and its public school district. WPS is viewed as a strong community asset and resource.

COMMENDATION

WPS has maintained an important community resource and outreach program in its well-established community use of facilities program.

FINDING 4-6

WPS' community use of facilities program is not regularly reviewed. The district is therefore missing an opportunity to further improve this program.

¹⁴ http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Bonds/ElectionsRoles_and_Responsibilities_in_a_Bond_Election_-_Campaign.aspx

The district has never performed a formal review of its community use of facilities activities. Questions have not been asked about:

- the perceived fairness of the policies for facilities use;
- the fees;
- use restrictions and priorities; or
- who is or is not exempt from having to pay user fees.

Are the fees too high or too low? Are any user groups given undue privilege or short-changed? A review would address these questions and provide the district with valuable information for improving the program.

A role model best practice can be found in the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). “Total quality management helps bring your entire organization together with one main goal: continually improving processes and products to ensure customer satisfaction.”¹⁵ A key component of TQM is regular program review.

RECOMMENDATION

Review the community use of facilities program every five years.

The board of education should add to its policies a required performance review of the community use of facilities program to be conducted in five-year intervals. The superintendent should appoint a review committee, consisting of both school and community representatives, including actual and potential stakeholders. The review should include a community survey of organizations and other groups who are actual or potential program beneficiaries, as well as, community leaders, parents, students, teachers, district officials, and others. Community forums and other discussions should be used to present and discuss survey results, as well as, raise other issues the survey may not have brought forth. The committee should prepare a report of its findings for use by the superintendent and school district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-7

WPS operates a special access and support program aimed directly at the community’s high and pervasive poverty rate. This support program is highlighted by access to a food pantry, showers, and laundry facilities in school buildings (**Exhibit 4-13**).

¹⁵ <https://www.cio.com/article/3444217>

Exhibit 4-13
Poster Advertising Help from the District



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

In addition to the use of facilities to support WPS families and students, shoes, clothing, and bicycles have been obtained for distribution to students (**Exhibit 4-14**). These items were obtained through grants and donations.

Exhibit 4-14
Family Support Efforts by WPS – Holiday Gifts for Students



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

COMMENDATION

WPS has initiated and implemented an exemplary community outreach program to families in poverty by opening a food pantry, laundry and shower facilities, as well as, access to shoes, clothing, and holiday gifts for student.

This outreach to families by the district affirms a tradition and concept of “shared community” between the town and the school.

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 can 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 to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

As noted previously, the district’s overall operations and maintenance expenditures over the past five years have increased steadily by 26.3 percent. On a per-student basis, WPS’ expenditures for maintenance and operations increased by 60.3 percent over the past five years, eclipsing all of the peer districts (**Exhibit 4-15**). WPS’ expenditures per student have increased steadily since 2016-17.

Exhibit 4-15
Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures per Student

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Wewoka	\$1,468	\$1,967	\$1,727	\$2,097	\$2,352	60.3% ▲
Atoka	\$1,168	\$1,092	\$1,092	\$1,113	\$1,188	1.6% ▲
Haskell	\$742	\$745	\$957	\$954	\$677	(8.7%) ▼
Haworth	\$1,348	\$1,674	\$2,096	\$1,484	\$1,326	(1.6%) ▼
Porter	\$798	\$736	\$852	\$936	\$1,051	31.7% ▲
Vian	\$732	\$785	\$726	\$820	\$965	31.8% ▲
Peer Average	\$958	\$1,006	\$1,145	\$1,061	\$1,042	8.8% ▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2014-2019, and Prismatic calculations

WPS' maintenance and operations expenditures by category are shown in **Exhibit 4-16**. The two largest categories have been purchased services and supplies – both spending areas grew substantially over the past five years.

Exhibit 4-16
Trend in WPS Maintenance and Operations Expenditures, All Funds

Expenditure by Category	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Salaries	\$146,836	\$153,498	\$149,391	\$148,622	\$159,325	8.5% ▲
Benefits	\$80,509	\$80,304	\$75,333	\$66,287	\$61,068	(24.1%) ▼
Purchased Services	\$348,867	\$865,749	\$542,885	\$603,347	\$610,619	75.0% ▲
Supplies	\$402,301	\$273,150	\$484,639	\$579,960	\$632,252	57.2% ▲
Property	\$178,849	\$14,058	\$65,658	\$47,810	\$29,500	(83.5%) ▼
Other	\$995	\$100	\$1,553	\$336	\$13	(98.7%) ▼
Total	\$1,158,356	\$1,386,859	\$1,319,459	\$1,446,362	\$1,492,777	28.8% ▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2014-2019, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 4-17 shows WPS' maintenance and operations expenditures by fund over time. As shown, only the building fund increased over the last five years.

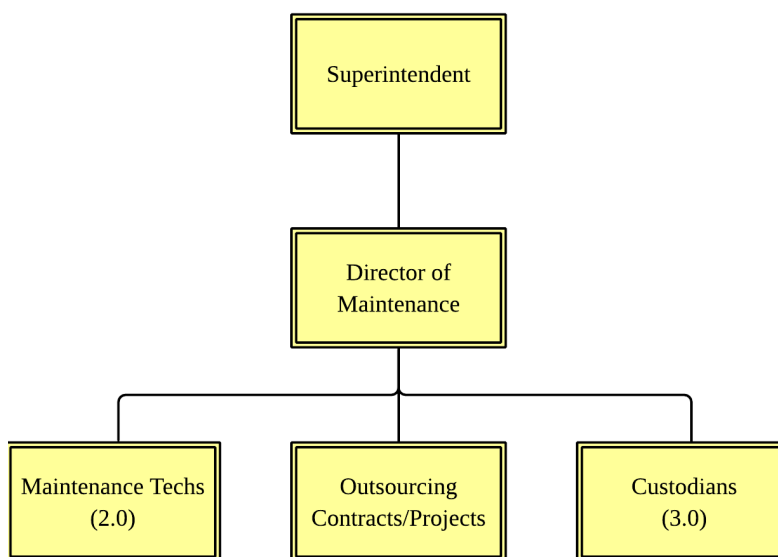
Exhibit 4-17
WPS Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures by Fund

Fund	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
General Fund	\$905,976	\$831,276	\$771,860	\$800,620	\$886,409	(2.2%) ▼
Co-op Fund	\$206,657	\$192,767	\$172,609	\$183,882	\$155,500	(24.8%) ▼
Building Fund	\$45,723	\$17,817	\$55,468	\$101,082	\$110,918	142.6% ▲
LEA Assigned Bond Fund	\$0	\$345,000	\$319,522	\$360,769	\$339,950	(1.5%) ▼
All Funds	\$1,158,356	\$1,386,859	\$1,319,459	\$1,446,353	\$1,492,777	28.8% ▲

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2014-19, and Prismatic calculations¹⁶

The WPS maintenance organization is shown in **Exhibit 4-18**. The maintenance director currently has five reports: two FTE maintenance technicians and three FTE custodians. Of the three custodians, one each is assigned to the high, middle, and elementary schools. As their time allows, each maintenance technician also serves to aid the custodians as substitutes or to provide back-up whenever the need might arise. The maintenance director also oversees and manages the work of contractors in a substantial amount of outsourcing for maintenance.

Exhibit 4-18
WPS Maintenance Organizational Structure



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2021

Two additional custodians are on the maintenance payroll. One works full-time for the child nutrition program and reports to the child nutrition director. The other works half-time as a custodian and half-time as a bus driver but reports to the transportation director for both assignments. The district's

¹⁶ Column sums may not match the total shown due to rounding.

federal Head Start Program has its own custodial and maintenance staff, which is paid for via the federal program funds and report to Head Start staff.

FINDING 4-8

The district's maintenance director and two full-time maintenance technicians collectively possess a skill-set sufficient for many of the day-to-day maintenance and repair tasks. When there are problems beyond their expertise, the district has had difficulties contracting with external experts.

Reliance on outsourcing expertise has not always been sufficient to solve all major problems without money and time spent on initially unsuccessful attempts. Wewoka is in an area of Oklahoma where some needed expertise, knowledge, and training are not readily available. At times, outsourcing attempts in a limited geography have been costly because they have prolonged and worsened the situation and caused further collateral damage. Examples of where this problem has occurred include:

- design and construction of an addition and renovation of the elementary school with insufficient lavatories for the student population; and
- remediation of an excess moisture and mold condition from a utility attic design for the elementary school.

Needed expertise is not easily found in the Wewoka geography. This underscores the need for the district to plan ahead in identifying sources for expertise in each of the trades – electrical, plumbing, mechanical, etc.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop proactively a list of vetted expertise in all the trades areas.

The district should conduct a systematic and thorough search for technical expertise via all sources, from word-of-mouth to Internet networking, and especially from other school districts in the geographic area. The district should exert its best efforts to find the needed expertise for outsourcing to solve problems beyond its in-house know-how. The goal should be to find the best outsourcing available on first effort in order to save churning, time and money. Such best efforts should include networking with superintendents in other Oklahoma districts, as well as persistent and thorough Internet searches among professional associations for facility managers and maintenance directors.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-9

WPS has available work order forms to be used by faculty, staff, and administrators in making requests for maintenance, repair, and minor installations. However, these forms are used rarely.

Work order forms serve several important purposes:

- They help to define and document the nature of the problem or request. Is it a request by a faculty member to install a whiteboard in his classroom? A request to lower the temperature in the office of an administrator? A report of a roof leak causing collateral damage in the library? A complaint of distracting noise from the next room and a request to soundproof the shared wall? Written work orders are needed so that the originator can state clearly what is requested.
- Work orders help prioritize requests. Most work order forms contain a section that allows the processor of the work order determine the request's priority level in a systematic manner. **Exhibit 4-19** shows an example.

Exhibit 4-19
Sample List of Work Order Priorities

SAFETY PRIORITY: Includes requests where immediate danger to health, welfare, and safety of persons using the facility is serious, all breaches of building security, and all fire or safety violations and repairs to fire safety systems or security systems. (0 to 2 days completion goal).

HIGH PRIORITY: Work left uncorrected will cause serious degradation to existing educational and other school programs. (0 to 7 days completion goal).

MEDIUM PRIORITY: Maintenance work for existing program, instructional, or building mechanical needs that can be held for short durations. (0 to 45 days completion goal).

LOW PRIORITY: Maintenance or other work identified as non-hazardous and/or non-disruptive to existing educational programs. (0 to 365 days completion goal).

Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2021

- Work orders help track costs. Most work order forms allow cost estimates as well as final costs to be documented. If estimates are often 50 percent or more below actual costs, it may be time to find the reasons and take corrective action.
- Work orders allow dates of initiation and completion to be documented, along with milestones in between, as a measure of effectiveness and efficiency.
- Work orders form a record that can inform facilities management decisions. For example, if work orders contain a large “safety priority” percentage, the maintenance program may require a greater emphasis on preventive and predictive modes. If many electrical malfunctions in one building are documented via work order, an overhaul of that building's electrical system may be warranted.

The district's current use of largely informal and undocumented, word-of-mouth procedures to initiate maintenance and repair work has created a lack of certainty, fairness, and efficiency in decision-making. Instead of “the squeaky wheel getting the grease” a more orderly, logical and fair prioritization of work orders can create greater equity, efficiency, economy along with an ability to study patterns in maintenance and repair requests.

Large school districts avail themselves typically of computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS) to achieve these goals. In the case of WPS, a manual system where the available work order forms along with back-up records are used and kept as a record may be sufficient initially.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and adopt a work order management system for WPS.

The maintenance director should identify any improvements or other changes to the current work order form. A procedure should be approved by the superintendent that has these components:

- the requirement that, with few exceptions, all maintenance and repair work must be requested via work order;
- exceptions to the required use of the work order document are minor corrections taking only a few minutes of work in passing, such as tightening easily accessible loose items, or the quick lubrication of door hardware, or similar situations;
- a procedure for the processing and filing of the forms and related documentation;
- a specification of who is authorized to initiate, approve, and process work orders; and
- an emergency procedure for the expedited processing of “safety priority” work orders.

The system can be operated manually but should allow for the eventual development of a digital database, once all participants have achieved the requisite computer literacy. For WPS, work order records could be efficiently maintained in an Excel spreadsheet.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-10

The consulting team generally found facilities maintenance to be operating at a commendable level. However, there are a number of smaller maintenance items that need staff attention.

The services provided by maintenance staff members are rated highly by staff, parents, and students (**Exhibit 4-20**). A large majority of survey respondents in each group felt that facilities are well-maintained. These results are among the best the consulting team has received for Oklahoma school districts.

Exhibit 4-20
Student, Parent, and Staff Survey Results Regarding Facilities Maintenance

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Student	My school building is well-maintained.	18%	49%	25%	5%	3%
Staff	The district's facilities are well-maintained.	29%	60%	7%	3%	0%
Parent	My child's school is well-maintained.	28%	63%	5%	5%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

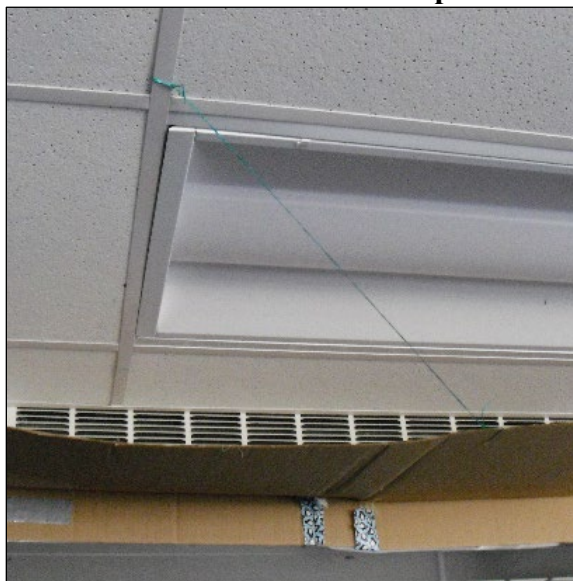
In its onsite review, the consulting team largely concurred with the opinions of stakeholders. Nevertheless, a number of smaller maintenance concerns were found. A sampling of these items is shown in **Exhibit 4-21**.

Exhibit 4-21
Examples of Items Requiring Maintenance Attention

ADA Sink Drain Lacking Insulation



Handmade Deflector Needs Replacement



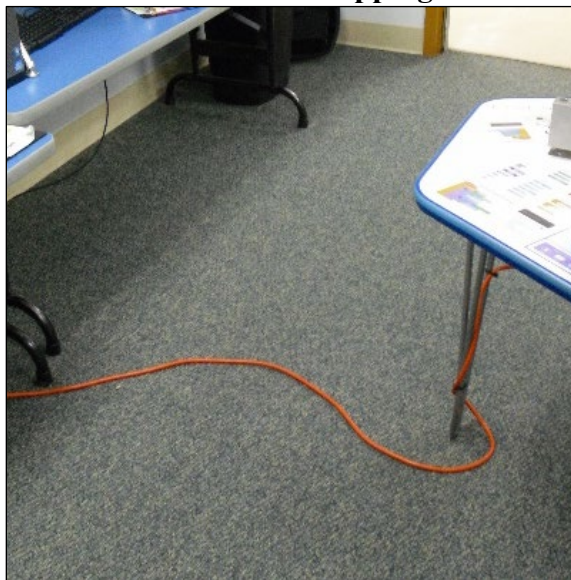
Source: Prismatic, December 2020

Exhibit 4-21 (continued)
Examples of Items Requiring Maintenance Attention

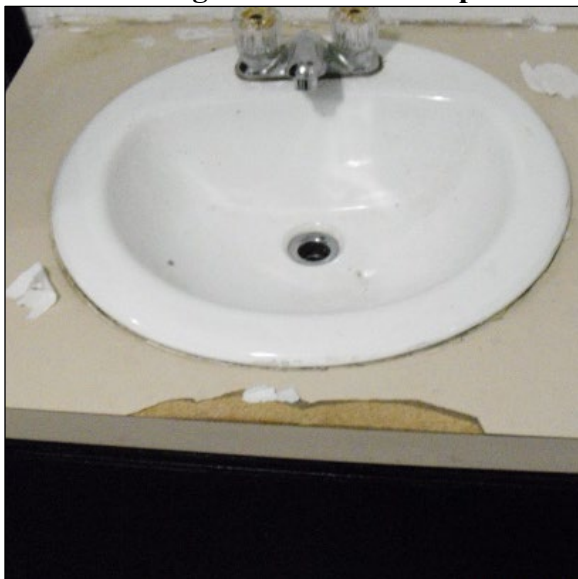
Stained Ceiling Tiles



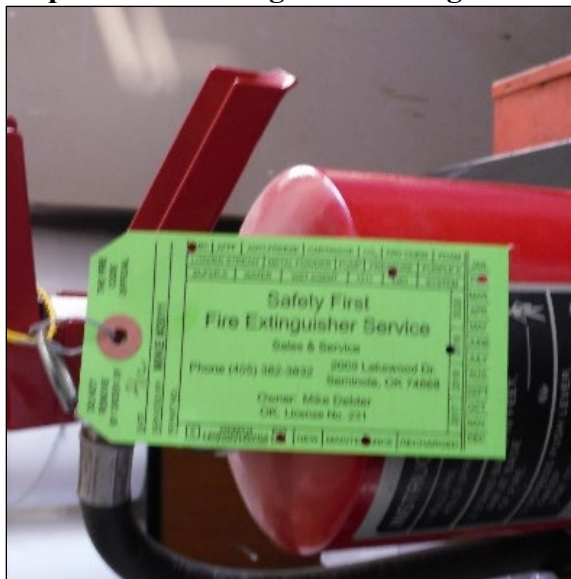
Extension Cords -- Tripping Hazard



Damaged Sink Countertop



Expired Fire Extinguisher at High School



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

Exhibit 4-21 (continued)
Examples of Items Requiring Maintenance Attention

Damaged Ceiling Tiles



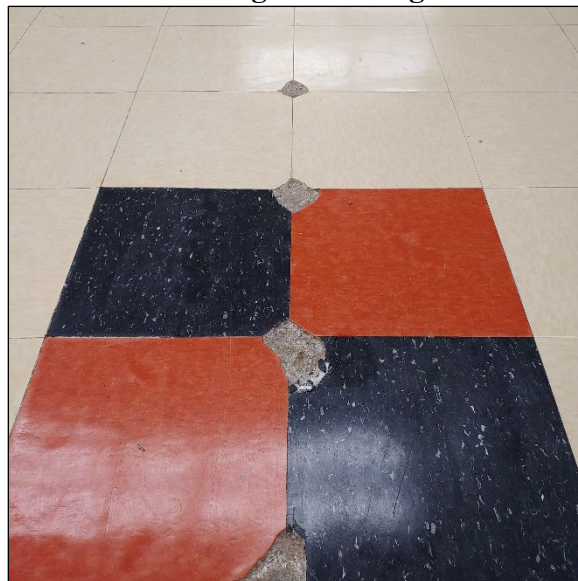
Freezer Leak



Damaged Flooring



Damaged Flooring



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Address minor maintenance issues regularly.

The maintenance director should tour each facility once a month and flag areas where minor maintenance is needed. He should then task the technicians with addressing them.

FISCAL IMPACT

Depending on the solutions to the maintenance issues, this recommendation may incur costs.

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 in-house, may reside partially or wholly with the central office, the individual school, or maintenance department. Determining the desired structure usually involves several 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.

Studies conducted by APPA demonstrate that one custodian should be capable of cleaning between 20,000 and 30,000 square feet of school facilities to achieve a level two or level three standard of cleanliness, respectively. The levels of cleanliness in the APPA standard are shown in **Exhibit 4-22**.

Exhibit 4-22

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.

WPS has 3.0 FTE custodians assigned to the high school, middle school and elementary school, a total of 135,818 square feet. This floor area amounts to 45,272 per custodian – substantially

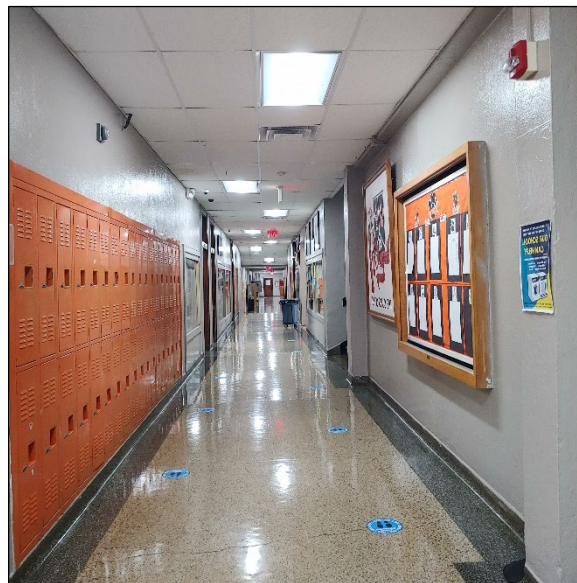
exceeding the 20,000-30,000 square feet to achieve level two or three cleanliness. Another full-time custodian is assigned to the child nutrition department is responsible for cleaning 13,000 square feet. Another half-time custodian is assigned to the transportation department is responsible for cleaning 10,000-15,000 square feet.

FINDING 4-11

The consulting team found most areas of the WPS facilities to be within cleanliness standards. District stakeholders also generally agree that facilities are kept clean.

Based on the observations of the consulting team, cleaning levels throughout the school buildings were generally at a level two in the restrooms, and level three in all other areas. No classrooms, hallways, or common areas showed evidence of custodial inattention or neglect. The hallways of the high school were particularly clean (**Exhibit 4-23**).

Exhibit 4-23
Clean Hallways in Wewoka High School



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

The services provided by custodians are rated highly by staff, parents, and students (**Exhibit 4-24**). A majority of staff, parents, and student agreed that facilities are kept clean.

Exhibit 4-24
WPS Survey Responses Regarding Custodial Services

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The district's facilities are kept clean.	40%	52%	3%	5%	0%
Parent	My child's school is clean.	33%	53%	15%	0%	0%
Student	My school is clean.	17%	39%	25%	13%	6%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, December 2020

COMMENDATION

The district's custodians do a commendable job keeping the facilities clean.

The work of custodians was also noted as commendable in the *2006 Performance Review*.

FINDING 4-12

The district is not allocating its custodial duties equitably across available positions. The child nutrition has more custodial FTE assigned to it than is needed while other areas are staffed more thinly.

When one of the three full-time custodians assigned to the schools are absent due to illness or other reasons, the two maintenance techs are asked to help with custodial duties. Bus drivers are more often hired on overtime as substitute custodians than as bus drivers.

At the same time, a full-time custodian paid by the maintenance budget works in the child nutrition department. At the moment, maintenance has assigned him for eight hours to the kitchen and cafetorium. Because of this assignment, the district has decided to charge the child nutrition fund for his full salary. However, it does not appear that there is enough work in the cafetorium to warrant an eight-hour position. Consequently, the child nutrition director has asked for this custodian to work four hours per day for child nutrition and only that portion of his salary to be deducted from the child nutrition fund.

RECOMMENDATION

Reassign the current child nutrition custodian to work only half-time for the child nutrition department, freeing him to work half-time in other areas of custodial need.

This extra half-time custodial assignment outside of the child nutrition department would serve to augment custodial work not assigned directly to the three schools but needed in other WPS facilities. For example, periodic restroom cleaning during the day should be considered to reduce unclean conditions in these areas. In addition, this position should be used during the absence of one of the full-time custodians for regular cleaning work in the schools, with overtime approved for this purpose as needed. Making this shift would enable the district's maintenance techs to remain focused on their primary job responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

The payment of one-half of the custodian's salary from the general fund rather than the child nutrition will result in a cost of approximately \$11,600. However, the reassignment should also reduce a portion of the overtime currently being paid to three custodians assigned to the school buildings. The consulting team estimates that the overall impact on the general fund will be a cost of \$6,000 per year.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Convert full-time child nutrition custodian to half-time child nutrition and half-time maintenance.	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)	(\$6,000)

C. SAFETY AND SECURITY

School districts are expected to provide a safe and secure environment for their students and staff. While districts are largely insulated from violent crime, incidents of violence at schools 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 and the need for an all-hazard approach. As such, the mission of school districts in an emergency/disaster is to:

- Prevent a threatened or actual incident from occurring.
- Protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, networks, and property from a threat or hazard.
- Mitigate to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency.

- Respond to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way; establish a safe and secure environment; save lives and property; and facilitate the transition to recovery.
- Recover to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment (**Exhibit 4-25**).

Exhibit 4-25
Continuous Process of Emergency Management



Source: <https://blog.ed.gov/2014/04/join-americas-prepareathon/>

The Oklahoma Commission on School Safety, which was created in response to the Newtown tragedy, submitted several 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 are covered. The state also created a new Oklahoma School Security Institute to help schools keep their policies up to date.

The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) reports that the state has had an increased number of earthquakes in recent years. In 2017, there were 304 earthquakes across the state with a magnitude of three or higher. Actions that the district can take regarding earthquakes, and teach to students, staff, and visitors are provided on the ODEM website.¹⁷

Since 1950, there have been 61 tornadoes of varying strengths that touched down in or tracked across Seminole County. **Exhibit 4-26** displays frequency by decade and Fujita Scale category.

¹⁷ https://www.ok.gov/OEM/Programs_&_Services/Preparedness/Preparedness_-_Earthquakes.html

Exhibit 4-26
Tornado Frequency and Strength in Seminole County, 1950-2019

Year Range	F0	F1	F2	F3	F4	Total
1950-1959	2	2	9	1	1	15
1960-1969	1	0	3	4	1	9
1970-1979	1	3	3	1	0	8
1980-1989	3	4	1	1	1	10
1990-1999	3	1	2	1	0	7
2000-2009	4	1	0	0	0	5
2010-2019	0	5	0	1	0	6

Source: <https://www.weather.gov/oun/tornadodata-county-ok-seminole>, January 2021

FINDING 4-13

The safety of WPS facility users has been given proper care and attention by maintenance staff. The consulting team's walk-through of buildings and grounds uncovered only a few minor and incidental exceptions.

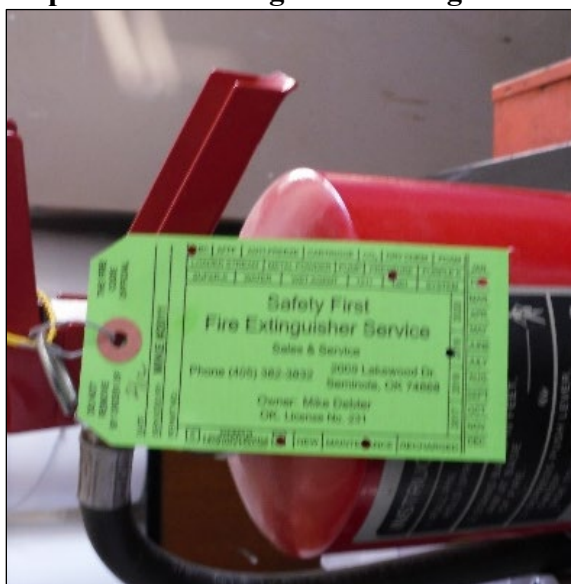
Care has been taken to maintain safe shop machinery and equipment, maintain safe playground equipment, and, with only a few exceptions, keep current the inspections of fire extinguishers and the functioning of emergency lights, exit signs, eye wash equipment, emergency showers, AED devices, etc. **Exhibit 4-27** shows the few exceptions the consulting team found.

Exhibit 4-27
Emergency Systems Faults

Egress Light with Dead Battery



Expired Fire Extinguisher at High School



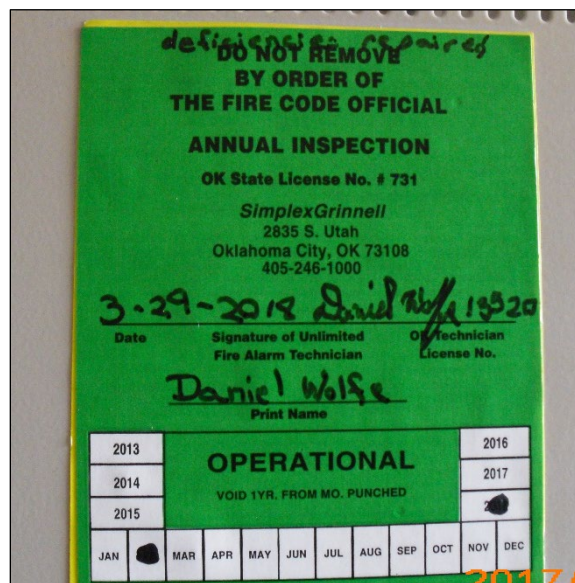
Source: Prismatic, December 2020

Emergency Systems Faults - Exhibit 4-27 (continued)

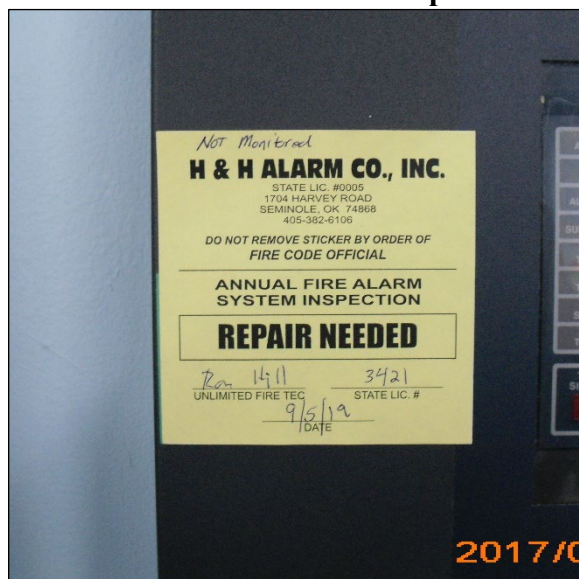
Broken Egress Lighting



Fire Panel Sticker Out of Date



Fire Panel Sticker Indicated Repair Needed



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

WPS' property and liability insurance company has recently sent a representative to conduct an annual safety inspection. This person has left behind a list of items in need of attention. The current superintendent has made sure that any noted deficiencies are promptly addressed.

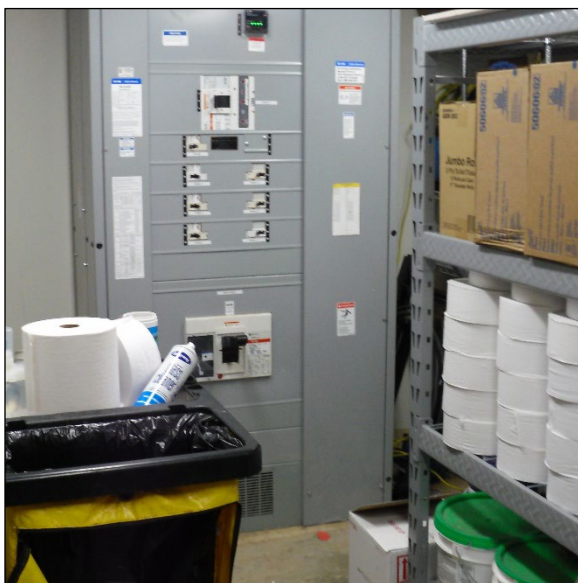
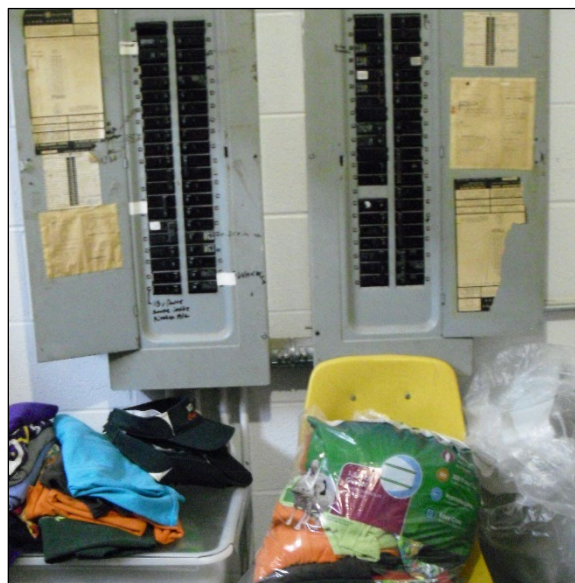
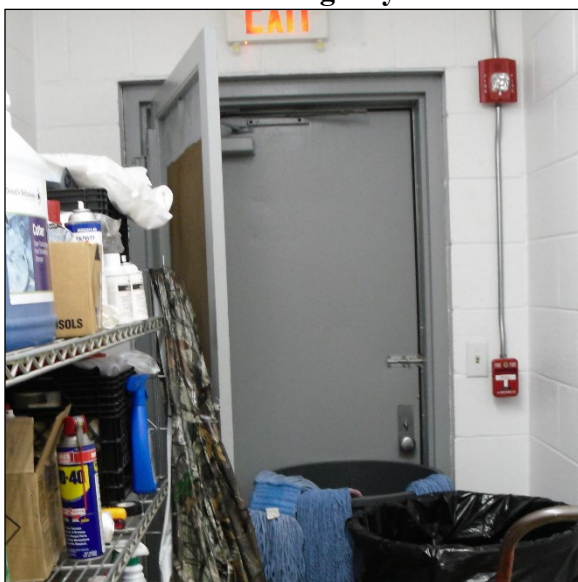
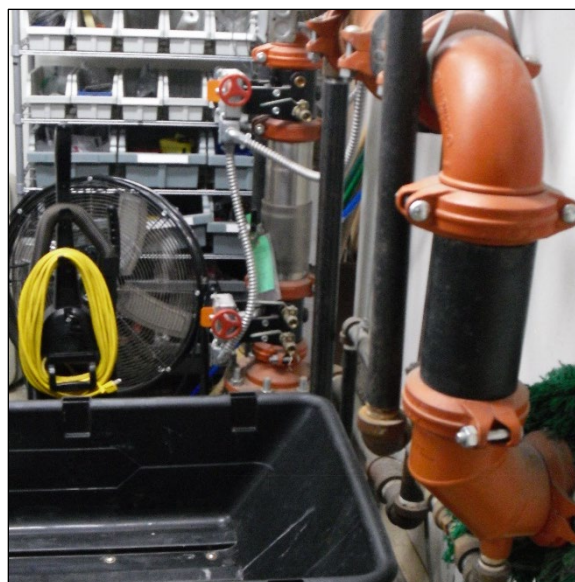
COMMENDATION

WPS has demonstrated a commendable attention to the safety of students, faculty, staff, and other building users.

FINDING 4-14

The consulting team found a number of life safety concerns in WPS facilities that share a common source: building users. Multiple electrical panels had items stored within three feet, which is a violation of fire code. In one case, a marked emergency egress point was completely blocked by various items. **Exhibit 4-28** provides examples.

Exhibit 4-28
Safety Concerns Created by Building Users

Blocked Electrical Panel**Blocked Electrical Panel****Blocked Emergency Exit****Blocked Fire Riser**

Source: Prismatic, December 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Address life safety issues regularly.

The maintenance director should tour each facility once a month and flag areas where building users' practices are reducing safety. Building principals should provide support in reminding building users of the need to keep electrical panels, risers, and egress points clear.

FISCAL IMPACT

Depending on the solutions to the life safety issues, this recommendation may incur costs.

FINDING 4-15

WPS does not routinely engage in safety/security assessments. As a smaller community, where strangers or newcomers are easily identified, district leadership has not felt a need for the kinds of security measures typically found in more urban areas.

The district does have an abundance of security cameras that are strategically placed on campus grounds. Additional camera installations are planned. The cameras are not monitored in real time, but video records are available for review to search for any incidents or unusual behaviors.

Exhibit 4-29 provides stakeholders' opinions regarding school safety. Nearly all staff feel that the facilities are secure from unwanted visitors. A large majority of parents said that their children feel safe and secure at school. Finally, a majority of student respondents also indicated that they feel safe at school.

Exhibit 4-29
WPS Survey Results Regarding School Safety

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The district's facilities are secure from unwanted visitors.	31%	60%	4%	5%	0%
Parent	My child feels safe and secure at school.	28%	59%	13%	0%	0%
Student	I feel safe and secure at school.	19%	48%	24%	7%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, December 2020

Nevertheless, ensuring school safety is an ongoing activity in every district. A best security practice is available to all Oklahoma public schools. The Oklahoma School Security Institute offers a Threat and Vulnerability analysis to any district that requests it.¹⁸ The analysis includes:

¹⁸ https://www.ok.gov/schoolsecurity/PROGRAMS_&_RESOURCES/Risk_&_Vulnerability_Assessments/index.-html

- a site visit from an OSSI staff member on a traditional school day to observe the normal activities around the school;
- a list of school security best practices in each area assessed by the OSSI staff;
- a campus overview including a tour of the school with notation on the security practices in place that are working well for the site as well as notation on threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities observed at the site;
- a review of the school's policies and procedures with recommendations to strengthen language or processes if needed; and
- recommendations that are either no cost or low cost for the school site to reduce risk and increase the overall security of the site.

RECOMMENDATION

Request a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment to be conducted by staff of the Oklahoma School Security Institute (OSSI).

OSSI experts will identify any security concerns they feel the district should address. They will then recommend specific actions and responses.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. OSSI assessments are free.

D. 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, oil, 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 Association of School Business Officials (ASBO), in their publication *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities*, 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., using guaranteed energy savings as equity to finance energy efficient equipment installations) 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.¹⁹

Additional considerations may include alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal energy.

More information about energy management can be found through the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities' Energy Page 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.²⁰

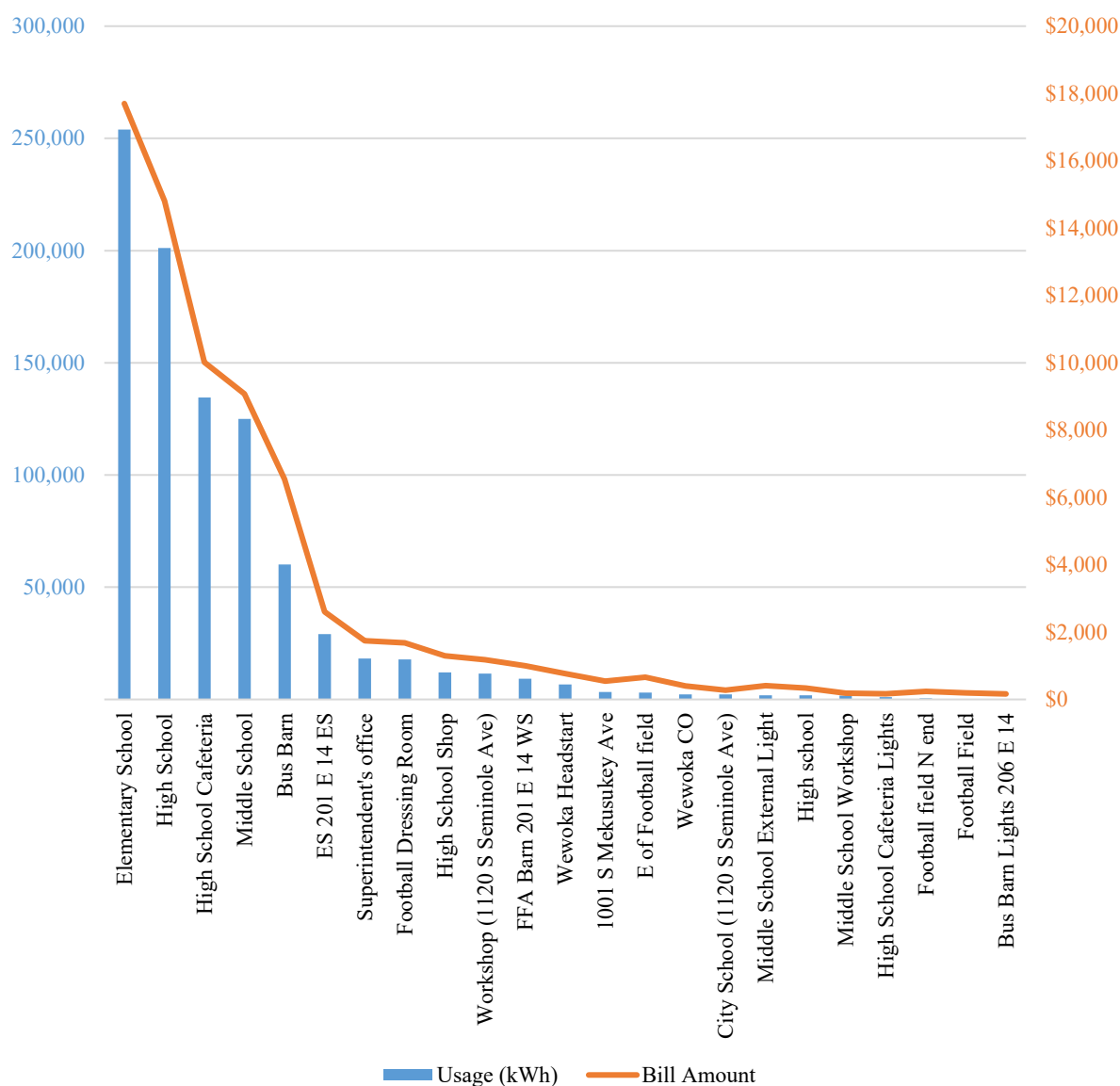
FINDING 4-16

The district has low energy consumption. WPS receives electricity from Oklahoma Gas and Electric, and natural gas from Oklahoma Natural Gas. The district's consumption of electricity is shown in **Exhibit 4-30**.

¹⁹<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003347.pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.ncef.org/search/node/energy%20management>

Exhibit 4-30
WPS Electricity Consumption in Kilowatt Hours



Source: Oklahoma Gas and Electric and Prismatic calculations

Summing up the meters from the previous exhibit, from the elementary school up to and including the FFA barn (the district's 11 main facilities), the following computation results:

Total floor area represented:	158,000 sq ft
Total kwh used:	872,590 kwh
Total billing:	\$68,406
Total cost/sq.ft.	\$0.43/sq.ft.

The Council of the Great City Schools annually collects a variety of data from its member districts that are suitable for use in benchmarking. The Council compiles these into its

publication, *Managing for Results*.²¹ **Exhibit 4-31** provides the upper, median and lower quartiles for utilities spending among Council districts. These cost figures include electricity, natural gas, fuel oil, water and sewer.

Exhibit 4-31
Council of the Great City Schools
Cost per Square Foot of Utilities

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2019-20
Upper Quartile	\$1.47	\$1.57	\$1.59	\$1.64
Median	\$1.25	\$1.23	\$1.34	\$1.45
Lower Quartile	\$1.10	\$1.10	\$1.13	\$1.17

Source: [Managing for Results in Americas Great City Schools 2020.pdf \(cgcs.org\)](#)

At 43 cents per square foot for electricity, WPS' costs are substantially below the lower quartile. The data for WPS' natural gas, water and sewer usage were not available for analysis, but it is unlikely that adding in these items would bring the district's overall utilities cost beyond the lower quartile range.

COMMENDATION

WPS operates with low utilities costs.

FINDING 4-17

The district is proactively seeking to further reduce its utilities costs. It is engaged in replacing older lighting and in installing an energy management system.

WPS has replaced virtually all its electric lamps with the brighter, longer-life and lower-energy consuming LED technology lamps. Over the next ten years, this action has the potential to deliver an 80 percent savings over conventional incandescent lighting and may reduce overall electrical consumption at WPS by more than ten percent.²²

At the time of the onsite work, WPS was completing the installation of an energy management system (EMS) that permits the remote identification of trouble in specific HVAC systems and components. The EMS also allows adjustments to heating and cooling schedules and modes in major buildings remotely on specific laptop computers. The EMS will potentially save between five to 25 percent of the energy bill.²³

Implementing these two energy conservation measures is a positive step. In addition, the district has also replaced windows in the high school with thermal windows, and many thermostats with the more versatile programmable and night-time setback models.

²¹ [Managing for Results in Americas Great City Schools 2020.pdf \(cgcs.org\)](#)

²² [How Much Do Energy Efficient Bulbs Save? \(sfgate.com\)](#)

²³ [Energy Management Systems: Maximizing Energy Savings \(Text Version\) | Department of Energy](#)

COMMENDATION

WPS is implementing two of the most cost-effective energy conservation measures currently available: LED lighting and an HVAC energy management system.

FINDING 4-18

The large portion of the original WPS High School was built in the early 1920s, a time when energy management was not a big consideration. Although the building has been updated and well-maintained, opportunities to reduce energy consumption still exist.

The superintendent's current building plans include a number of updates for the high school. These include updates to:

- high school electrical system;
- high school bathrooms;
- high school classrooms, offices and hallways; and
- high school auditorium and stage area.

It is an important best practice to address in any renovations the energy aspects of such actions. Without that consideration, renovations could result in greater energy inefficiency.

RECOMMENDATION

Invite Energy Systems Companies (ESCOs) to propose performance contracting arrangements and potentially uncover additional energy cost savings.

Working with an ESCO was also recommended in the *2006 Performance Review* but was not implemented. In performance contracting, the projected energy savings can be used as collateral to finance the cost of installing the energy saving features. An Energy Systems Company (ESCO) should be hired to work with WPS' retained architect to identify energy conservation opportunities and designs, and to estimate the energy cost savings.

The ESCO can then assemble a performance contract package to finance much, perhaps all, of the high school renovations. The loan proceeds from the performance contract can be combined with bond proceeds or used alone to proceed with construction.

The ESCO guarantees to make up any shortfalls in projected energy savings to assure the district of not having to default on loan terms.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

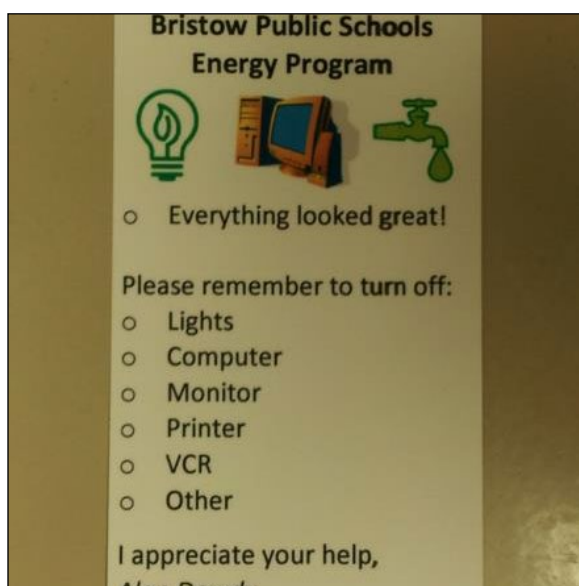
FINDING 4-19

Energy conservation is never a “one and done” effort. Instead, the quest for improvement is continual. Although WPS has made strides in energy management and conservation, more energy saving opportunities likely exist.

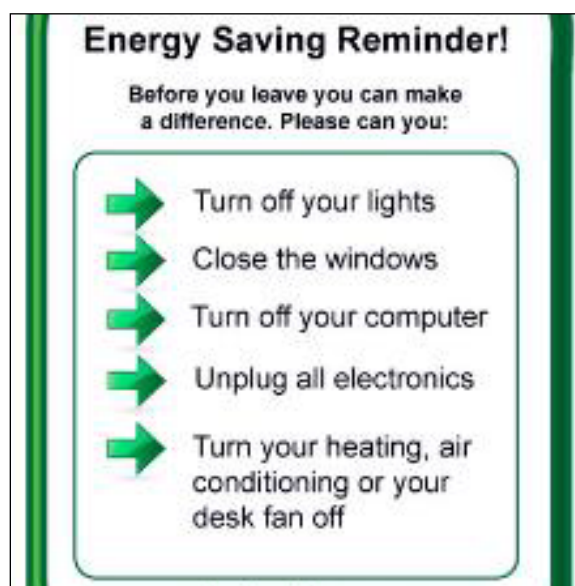
An active energy awareness program is a best practice for school districts. A number of school districts around the country use several techniques to keep energy costs down. The following are some examples of these conservation efforts:

- entering monthly energy bill data into a spreadsheet to maintain a history of expenditures and to use in detecting problems (example: high-energy cost outliers that are contrary to experienced patterns at WPS);
- performing building checks to see if lights are turned off, doors are closed, water faucets are not dripping, etc.;
- leaving notes reminding teachers or staff of the proper procedure, such as those shown in **Exhibit 4-32**, if problems are found during building checks;

Exhibit 4-32
Examples of Energy Saving Reminder Stickers



Source: Prismatic Archives, April 2012



Source: BusinessHelpZone.com, December 2015

- establishing set points for thermostats at 76 degrees in the summer and 69 degrees in the winter; and
- setting water heaters or boilers at a maximum temperature of 140 degrees, except in areas requiring higher temperatures for sanitation purposes, such as kitchens.

The U.S. Department of Energy determined that at least 25 percent of all energy consumed in a school facility is due to energy inefficiency. This inefficiency can be caused by:

- dry transformers;
- poor location of light switches;
- continuously burning hallway lights;
- excessive plug loads and use of personal appliances; and
- phantom loads.²⁴

The search for more energy saving opportunities – and for more sources of energy – is never abandoned in high performing districts. One of the best sources of this attitude is Dr. Daniel Yergin’s book *The Quest – Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World*.

RECOMMENDATION

Involve staff, faculty, and students actively in conserving energy by their personal behavior and actions.

This should be viewed as a potential “team sport,” where everyone is on the Tiger Team to help save the school district money. Competitions between the three schools could be staged, with a portion of saved dollars being given to student organizations, or to staff and faculty for their proven contribution to energy savings.

FISCAL IMPACT

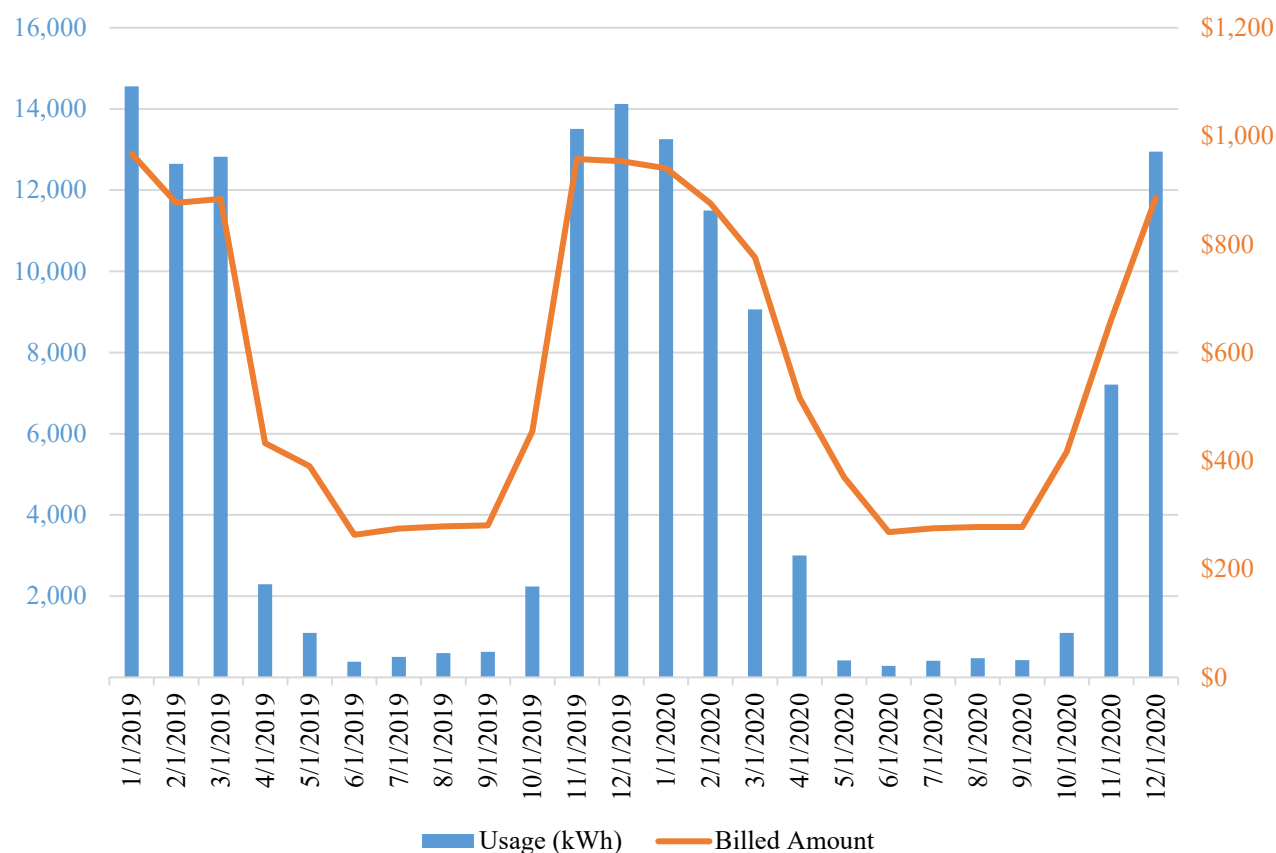
This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-20

The energy consumption profile for the bus barn appears to be an outlier, and too high. Despite having a meager floor area of 2,016 square feet, the electrical consumption appears to be that of a buildings three to five times its actual size. **Exhibit 4-33** provides the pattern of electricity consumption in the bus barn.

²⁴ See http://www.stratenergy.ca/phantom_loads.htm for a detailed explanation.

Exhibit 4-33
WPS Bus Barn Electricity Consumption



Source: Oklahoma Gas and Electric and Prismatic calculations

Conversations with building users revealed that two challenges that place extraordinary electrical loads on the bus barn during the winter months.

1. The bus barn is the only building heated by electric resistance devices; and
2. The buses are equipped with crank case/engine block heaters that are plugged in around the clock on cold days.

These challenges explain the pattern seen in the data, where consumption skyrockets each November through March period.

RECOMMENDATION

Explore alternatives to heat the bus barn and reduce usage of engine block heaters.

The district should find an alternative to electric resistance space heating devices in the barn. It would likely realize substantial savings by switching to propane heaters or high-efficiency heat pumps.

In addition, the district should review and reduce its use of engine block heaters. During cold months, the buses could be plugged into the heaters, but the heaters themselves should be on a timer. There is no automotive reason to keep the buses engines warm 24/7 in the winter. Depending on the type of engine block heater, they can be complete the task of preheating the bus engine in as little as one hour.

FISCAL IMPACT

Focusing on the potential savings from adjusting the use of engine block heaters, the consulting team estimates that a 50 percent reduction can be achieved in electricity consumption during the November-March period. This would translate to an approximate annual savings of \$2,000.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Implement electrical use reductions	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000

FINDING 4-21

The district has some electrical meters that show little to no activity. Regardless of the amount of consumption, WPS still pays a monthly fee to have a meter.

Based on the consumption data provided by the district, there are 12 meters that show little to no consumption. Some of these meters show some usage for two or three months in a given year, with zero during the remainder. The electric company (ONG) still charges the district a monthly fee of \$16 to \$18, perhaps as a “maintenance fee.”

RECOMMENDATION

Close unnecessary electrical meters.

The district should examine the possibility of either closing completely inactive meters to avoid the monthly service charges or transferring the occasional loads of other meters to another nearby meter and then canceling the “orphan” meter.

FISCAL IMPACT

Closing all 12 of the meters would result in an annual savings of \$2,448 (12 meters x \$17 x 12 months). The consulting team estimates that at least six meters can be closed.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Close at least six “orphan” meters.	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$1,224	\$1,224

Chapter 5:
Support Services

Chapter 5

Support Services

This chapter reviews several areas of support services in Wewoka Public Schools (WPS). 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.

Prior to COVID-19, WPS participated in the NSLP, the SBP, the After School Snack Program (ASSP), and the USDA Foods in Schools Program. With the onset of the pandemic, WPS switched from the ASSP to a supper meal under a program developed in response to COVID-19. 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. WPS has been approved to serve all meals free under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

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 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 federal reimbursement rates for meals served under the CEP program.

Exhibit 5-1
Trend in Federal per Meal CEP Reimbursement Rates

Meal Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Breakfast	\$2.14	\$2.20	\$2.26
Lunch ¹	\$3.39	\$3.50	\$3.60
Snacks	\$0.91	\$0.94	\$0.96
Dinner	NA	\$3.43	\$3.53

Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/rates-reimbursement>

The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA)* provided sweeping modifications to the school nutrition programs and made substantial 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 nutritional requirements as specified in the *HHFKA*. Both the breakfast and lunch menus now must offer more fruits and vegetables than before. Milk must be low-fat or fat-free. Sodium levels must be reduced. Whole grains must be increased and trans fats must be eliminated. In the last two years, 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 is reached, all the provisions of *HHFKA* are in effect.

¹ Includes Performance Incentive of \$0.06 in 2018-19 and \$0.07 in 2019-20 and 2020-21

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, December 2018

*Target 1 was set to be implemented by 2014-15

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, meal programs in schools have been temporarily, but substantially, modified. USDA has issued multiple waivers to accommodate the special challenges around serving meals to children both in school and in remote learning environments. These waivers began in March 2020 and have been extended for the entire 2020-21 school year. The waivers received by Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) cover several topics:

- Location – meals can be served in schools, as take-home meals, as pick-up meals by parents or students, or delivered to pick-up sites;
- Multiple Meals – schools can provide more than one days' worth of meals to eligible children via a single meal pick-up;
- Mealtimes – meals can be served outside the standard meal times;
- Meal Pattern – flexibilities in the requirements of the meal pattern; and

- Cost – allows free meals to be served to all students.

Exhibit 5-3 provides photos of a sampling of WPS lunch trays selected by students during the onsite period. Examples of the warm and cold boxes provided to students in remote learning are shown in the second row. The contents of the weekend boxes are shown in the third section. Breakfast meals were served in brown bags at the time of the onsite work.

Exhibit 5-3 WPS Sample Trays

Lunch Trays for In-Person Learning



Lunch Boxes for Remote Learning



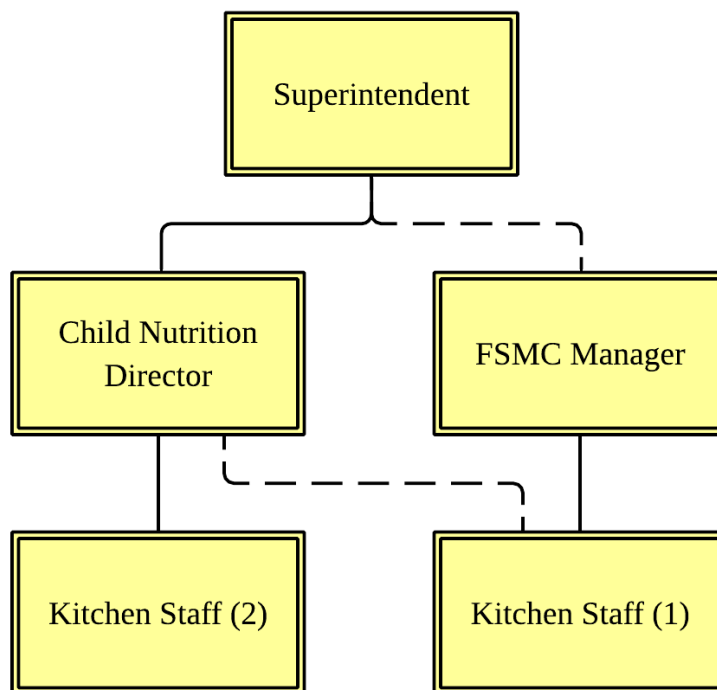
Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Exhibit 5-3 (continued)
WPS Sample Trays**Weekend Boxes**

Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Exhibit 5-4 shows the organization of staff within the WPS child nutrition department. As shown, the district employs a child nutrition director who works with a contracted food services management company (FSMC). The kitchen staff is employed by both the district and the FSMC. As kitchen staff retire or resign, they will be replaced by employees of the FSMC.

Exhibit 5-4
WPS Child Nutrition Organization



Source: Created by Prismatic, December 2020

FINDING 5-1

The cashier and point of service (POS) are located at the beginning of the serving line. This practice was also observed in the 2006 Review but was not noted as a finding. The consulting team was not able to observe typical meal service and the process of meal counting at the POS due to COVID-19 serving restrictions. The child nutrition director described the usual process step by step from when the students entered the cafeteria to when they completed their meal purchase and sat down to eat their meal.

When students enter the cafeteria, they start at the POS station. For elementary students, the cashier uses a class roster received from each teacher that contains student names, ID number, and an X beside those that ate breakfast and those who intend to eat lunch. The cashier verifies the students who are in the line and after meal service these names are put into the POS computer system. Names of secondary students are found in the POS system as they pass by the cashier and again are recorded as eating. Then all students progress to the serving line where they are given a meal. The servers are responsible for verifying the meal contains all the required components and is considered eligible to be classified as a reimbursable meal. After exiting the serving line, students progress to the condiment table where they get condiments, napkins, and plastic eating utensils. There is a fruit and vegetable bar that is positioned after the condiment table for secondary students (due to COVID-19, this bar was not in use during the onsite review period). After making selections from this portable bar, students make their way to tables to eat their meal. Due to COVID-19, a number of WPS classes currently take their meals either outside or back to the classroom to eat.

Guidance from SDE Child Nutrition Unit (CN) states the POS is the point where a determination can accurately be made that a reimbursable meal has been served to an eligible student. WPS is verifying reimbursable meals after the POS and therefore is not following SDE guidance. The child nutrition director stated that staff from SDE have noted on numerous occasions during observations, the POS should be at the end of the line. Because there is minimal offer versus serve, and servers fill the plates, there have not been issues with students taking plates with insufficient components. However, the practice of positioning the POS at the beginning of the line is a poor procedure, puts undue burden on the servers, and hinders future modifications to meal service such as implementation of increased offer versus serve options.

RECOMMENDATION

Reposition the POS to the end of the serving line so the cashier can determine if the selected meal contains all the required components and is eligible for reimbursement.

When students enter the cafeteria, they should immediately proceed to the serving line. Upon exiting with their plates, elementary students should pick up condiments and then advance to the cashier and POS station. Secondary students should follow the same process except they will select items from the fruit and vegetable bar prior to arriving at the POS station.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-2

The district is closed campus for all grade levels. The *2006 Performance Review* noted the high school had an open campus policy and recommended the district adopt a Board policy to close the high school campus. As a result of this review, the district took action and closed the high school campus.

According to district staff, the high school principal closed the high school campus several years ago to address issues of off campus drug use, complaints from businesses about students stealing, and students discarding trash in neighboring resident's yards during their off-campus lunch hour. The 2020-21 Student Handbook clearly addresses the topic of closed campus for high school students (**Exhibit 5-5**). It is WPS Board policy to review and approve the Student Handbook for each building every year. The following information found on page 49 in the 2020-21 Student Handbook clearly addresses the topic of closed campus for high school students.

Exhibit 5-5 WPS High School Handbook Excerpt

HIGH SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE

The length of the school day is subject to change in the event of an excessive number of missed school days resulting in the additional make up of school **days or hours**.

Monday –Friday

Breakfast- 7:20-7:55

1st period- 8:00-8:55

2nd period- 9:00-9:55

3rd period- 10:00-10:55

4th period- 11:00-11:55

Lunch- 12:00-12:25 (CLOSED CAMPUS)

5th period- 12:30-1:25

6th period- 1:25- 2:15

7th period- 2:20- 3:30

CLOSED CAMPUS

Students will not be allowed to check out for lunch unless they are ill and will not be returning for the day or have a Dr. appointment (must provide note). Any student who leaves campus unexcused will be subject to disciplinary action.

Source: WPS High School Student Handbook, 2020

Off the Map: Extracurricular School Food Open Campus Lunch, published by the Public Health Advocacy Institute,² addresses open campus policies in schools. They state that open and closed campus policies have the potential to affect students' health, safety, and security, as well as to influence the school environment itself. They note that the 2006 School Health Policies and Programs Study showed that, nationwide, 71.1 percent of high school districts have a closed campus policy. The nationwide trend is moving toward more closed campuses as in 2000 there were 65.9 percent nationwide. They describe the school environment as an important sphere in the development of dietary behavior and recommend policymakers to craft school food laws that encourage healthier options while restricting unhealthier options. They state student input and support are critical to the success of a closed school policy.

COMMENDATION

WPS is commended for closing all school campuses at lunch times.

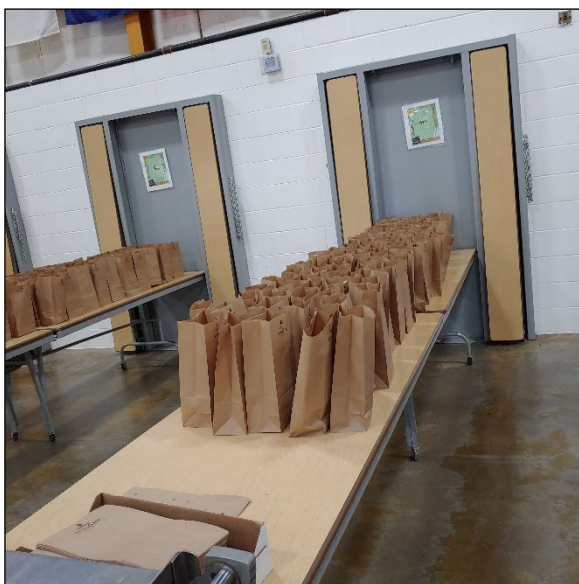
FINDING 5-3

Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) was begun in WPS at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year when meal service changed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The day before, staff fill sacks with shelf stable breakfast food items (**Exhibit 5-6**). The morning of serving, hot items are wrapped and put in a heated cart. Five minutes before pick-up, these items are then put into the sacks which are then put into bins, one for each classroom. Milk is put into a cooler with ice. Schools

² <https://www.phaionline.org/2009/04/06/off-the-map-extracurricular-school-food/>

send over someone with a wagon to transport the bins and coolers back to the schools for distribution.

Exhibit 5-6 WPS BIC Preparations



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Principals in the elementary and high school stated they would like to see BIC continue after COVID-19 serving restrictions are lifted and regular meal service resumes. The high school principal said more students in his school are eating breakfast now that it is readily available to them at the beginning of the school day, and they do not have to walk over to the cafetorium before school starts.

Offering BIC, where meals are delivered to the classroom and students eat at their desks during the first ten to 15 minutes of the school day, has proven to be one of the most effective strategies for increasing participation in the school breakfast program. The Food Research and Action Center lists numerous benefits of this type of meal service:

- improved classroom performance and learning;
- improved concentration and alertness;
- increased meal participation;
- improved student nutrition; and
- a heightened sense of community.

Reductions in tardiness, behavioral issues, absenteeism, and stigma are additional benefits.

COMMENDATION

WPS started serving Breakfast in the Classroom to all students at the beginning of the school day when COVID-19 serving restrictions were put in place. This practice should continue as a standard meal service for all grades after the restrictions are lifted.

FINDING 5-4

The WPS child nutrition department is doing a good job managing its staffing. Meals per labor hour (MPLH) are within the range of standards as recommended by the Oklahoma SDE CN Unit.

SDE guidelines provide productivity goals based upon the number of meal equivalents (ME) 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 SDE 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
- a la carte sales of \$3.78 (2020-21 rate) equate to one meal equivalent.

The most common means of measuring employee productivity in child nutrition is the 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 SDE guidelines for MPLH staffing are shown in **Exhibit 5-7**. The SDE provides MPLH guidelines for both conventional and convenience systems of food preparation. The consulting team found WPS 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: OK SDE Child Nutrition Manual Compliance Section, July 2018

Exhibit 5-8 shows the MPLH by month for school year 2018-19 which was the last full year of normal meal service. As shown, the average MPLH was slightly higher than recommended standards. Using the formula, $ME \div MPLH = \text{Labor Hours}$ which calculates appropriate labor hours, in the case of this school year the program was short three labor hours per day ($611 \div 18 = 33.9$). The program was self-operated during this time frame and served breakfast and lunch meals to students, adults, and Head Start students.

³ A system where meals are generally prepared from scratch onsite.

⁴ A system where meals are generally only re-heated from frozen prepared items onsite.

Exhibit 5-8
Wewoka Cafeteria Meals per Labor Hour, 2018-19

Month	Lunches Served	Breakfasts Served	Meal Equivalents	School Days	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Labor Hours	MPLH
August	6,611	3,719	8,471	18	471	31	15.2
September	9,376	5,168	11,960	18	664	31	21.4
October	9,676	5,136	12,244	19	644	31	20.8
November	8,255	4,241	10,376	16	648	31	20.9
December	7,465	3,756	9,343	15	623	31	20.0
January	8,513	4,479	10,753	17	632	31	20.4
February	7,788	3,911	9,744	16	609	31	19.6
March	6,767	3,337	8,436	14	602	31	19.4
April	9,720	6,084	12,762	20	638	31	20.6
May	2,984	2,081	4,025	7	575	31	18.5
Total	77,155	41,912	98,114	160	6,106	310	196.8
Average	7,715	4,191	9,811	10	611	31	19.7

Source: WPS and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-9 shows the MPLH by month for school year 2019-20. The program served regular meals through March and then switched to a special meal service due to COVID-19 serving restrictions. Because these meals and the service style were so dissimilar from the rest of the school year, they were not included in the exhibit. As shown, the average MPLH was higher than recommended standards. Applying the formula, the program was short six labor hours ($671 \div 18 = 37.2$). The program changed management from self-operated to a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) during this time frame and served breakfast and lunch meals to students, adults, and Head Start students. An additional meal, the ASSP, was added. This new program increased meal equivalents resulting in a MPLH higher than guidelines.

Exhibit 5-9
Wewoka Cafeteria Meals per Labor Hour, 2019-20

Month	Lunches Served	Breakfasts Served	Snacks Served	Meal Equiv.	School Days	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Labor Hours	MPLH
August	9,024	4,498	713	11,508	17	677	31	21.8
September	9,670	5,182	1,155	12,642	18	702	31	22.6
October	9,857	5,208	1,347	12,906	19	679	31	21.9
November	7,406	4,683	1,061	10,098	15	673	31	21.7
December	7,335	5,217	659	10,161	15	677	31	21.8
January	8,977	6,167	1,295	12,488	18	694	31	22.4
February	7,575	5,415	0	10,283	16	643	31	20.7
March	4,614	3,311	0	6,270	10	627	31	20.2
Total	64,458	39,681	6,230	86,356	128	5,372	248	173.1
Average	8,057	4,960	1,038	10,794	16	671	31	21.6

Source: WPS and Prismatic calculations

Costs for labor and benefits are a major expenditure for child nutrition programs. To maintain a sound financial position, goals for staffing must be established based upon industry standards. SDE 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 the kitchen has adequate labor hours but is not overstaffed. The *2006 Performance Review* noted the kitchen was overstaffed and recommended labor hours be adjusted to meet the SDE recommended staffing guidelines. WPS did reduce labor hours from 53 to 31.

COMMENDATION

The child nutrition program is to be commended for maintaining staffing levels that follow SDE recommended guidelines.

Moving forward, since the MPLH in the program has increased from 19.7 to 21.6 after the addition of the snack/supper program and remains higher than guidelines, the consulting team recommends an additional six labor hours. An analysis of labor hours should be performed after the first two months of operation during school year 2021-22, provided regular meal service has resumed and there are no COVID-19 serving restrictions, to ensure labor hours are within recommended guidelines.

FINDING 5-5

The Child Nutrition Fund is paying one-half of utility costs for the cafetorium. The *2006 Performance Review* recommended the food service fund should pay for all its indirect costs, in particular its fair share of utility costs.

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. A district may charge child nutrition

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 kitchen and related areas.

The entire WPS food service program operates in the cafetorium. This building has its own meters to record utility use. The district decided to charge the Child Nutrition Fund for 50 percent of all utility costs as the building is also used for other functions. The encumbrance clerk stated that actual utility bills are used to determine the charges. The Child Nutrition Fund is charged on a monthly basis. In 2019-20, the Child Nutrition Fund was charged a total of \$10,823 for utility services, electrical services, electricity, and gas. The child nutrition program has maintained a sound financial position, so it can cover these costs.

COMMENDATION

The WPS child nutrition program is paying its fair share of utility costs for the cafetorium.

FINDING 5-6

The district implemented the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in 2016-17. They also participate in the After School Meals Program. The district had been offering after school snacks, but recently switched from that meal to serving a supper meal under a program developed in response to COVID-19.

The CEP was established in 2010 as a part of the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA)*. This initiative streamlines school meal operations by allowing schools in high-poverty areas to offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge. One of the key simplifications of the initiative is that schools no longer collect meal applications. This reduces paperwork for parents and schools that do not have the administrative burden of processing applications. Another benefit is programs no longer have to collect payment for meals and the POS process is streamlined. Issues with nonpayment of charges are also eliminated. Increases in meal participation is another benefit of the CEP. The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) reported that in the initial pilot states, schools that implemented the provision for two years saw breakfast participation increase by 25 percent and lunch participation by 13 percent. The program became available nationwide to all schools in 2018-19.

The Afterschool Meal Program is offered through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). It provides federal funding to afterschool programs operating in a low-income area where 50 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price meals. The district must provide educational or enrichment activities after the school day. The Afterschool Meal Program is an excellent way to continue to meet the nutritional needs of children as well as provide a safe setting after the school day ends. In addition, it provides added revenue to the program.

COMMENDATION

WPS is commended for participating in USDA programs designed to meet the additional nutritional needs of low-income communities.

FINDING 5-7

Breakfast participation rates for both the middle school and high school have been lower than industry best practices over the past three years. Best practices exist to compare a district's breakfast participation rates to those established as a benchmark. **Exhibit 5-10** shows industry best practice rates for breakfast. These benchmarks are the recommended percentage of participation of membership.

Exhibit 5-10
Best Practice Breakfast Participation Rates

School Level	Best Practice
Elementary School	35%
Middle School	35%
High School	25%

Source: HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria, 2014

Exhibit 5-11 shows breakfast participation rates for the middle school over three years. All are below the recommended best practices. In 2017-18 the average for the year was just 20 percent. The overall participation rate increased to 29 percent in 2019-20, but this was still below the best practice rate of 35 percent. The program was self-operated the first two school years and in 2019-20 the district changed operation of the program to a FSMC.

Exhibit 5-11
Trend in WPS Middle School Breakfast Participation Rates

Month	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Best Practice
August	NA	27%	35%	35%
September	28%	32%	33%	35%
October	NA	26%	30%	35%
November	23%	27%	29%	35%
December	23%	24%	30%	35%
January	19%	24%	26%	35%
February	19%	21%	24%	35%
March	18%	23%	23%	35%
April	18%	23%	NA	35%
May	16%	182%	NA	35%
Average	20%	24%	29%	35%

Source: WPS and Prismatic calculations, December 2020

Exhibit 5-12 shows the high school breakfast participation rates over the same three years. The average for 2017-18 was 11 percent. It increased to 17 percent the next year due to a change in meal service – the final two months of 2018-19, the district offered a Grab and Go delivered meal. This new service resumed in November 2019 and continued through March 2020. One can see the strong improvement in breakfast participation due to the change in meal service type.

Exhibit 5-12
Trend in WPS High School Breakfast Participation Rates

Month	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Best Practice
August	NA	9%	13%	25%
September	13%	12%	10%	25%
October	NA	13%	9%	25%
November	13%	12%	35%	25%
December	15%	8%	56%	25%
January	9%	8%	55%	25%
February	9%	9%	52%	25%
March	9%	9%	47%	25%
April	11%	51%	NA	25%
May	8%	42%	NA	25%
Average	11%	17%	35%	25%

Source: WPS and Prismatic calculations, December 2020

Prior to COVID-19 serving restrictions, breakfast for all grade levels was served in the cafeteria. Students picked up their meal and ate it in the cafeteria. In November 2019 breakfast service for the high school was changed to a Grab and Go system that was delivered to the high school. This was at the request of the high school principal who noticed low breakfast participation. Rates of participation dramatically increased with this change in service.

For 2020-21, breakfast service for all grade levels is Breakfast in the Classroom due to COVID-19 serving restrictions. Breakfast components are put in individual sacks and milk is put in coolers. These items are put in bins and transported to the three buildings. Students eat breakfast in their classrooms. During interviews, all three principals indicated they would like this alternative breakfast service to continue when COVID-19 serving restrictions are lifted.

There are several strategies to increase participation in the school breakfast program. One is to offer breakfast to all students at no cost. WPS is currently doing this by participating in the CEP program, as discussed previously, which provides meals at no cost to all students. Another proven strategy is to implement alternative service models such as breakfast in the classroom, breakfast after the first bell, and Grab and Go Breakfasts. The School Nutrition Association (SNA) *2018 Trends Report* notes since 2016 there has been an increase in the use of Grab and Go kiosks located outside of the cafeteria at all grade levels, but especially at middle and high schools. In 2018, nationwide, 62 percent of all schools were serving breakfast using a Grab and Go service.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop strategies for increasing breakfast participation rates at the middle and high school.

WPS started serving Breakfast in the Classroom in August 2020 at all grade levels due to COVID-19 serving restrictions. They should continue this alternative meal service at all grade levels after the restrictions are lifted.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-8

High school lunch participation has been lower than industry best practices for the past several years. Best practices exist for lunch to compare a district's participation rates to those established as a benchmark. Industry standards for all grade levels are shown in **Exhibit 5-13**.

Exhibit 5-13
Industry Standard Lunch Participation Rates

School Level	Industry Standard
Elementary School	70%
Middle School	60%
High School	50%

Source: Pannell-Martin, School Food Service Management, 4th Edition, 2000

Exhibit 5-14 shows recent lunch participation rates in the high school. In only a few months did high school participation exceed the best practice standard. In 2017-18, average participation was 45 percent. In 2018-19 the rate increased to 56 percent but was still below industry standards. During both of these years the program was self-operated. In 2019-20, the district changed operation to a FSMC and average high school lunch participation dropped to 50 percent (COVID-19 also likely impacted participation that year).

Exhibit 5-14
Trend in WPS High School Lunch Participation Rates

Month	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Best Practice
August	NA	48%	66%	50%
September	47%	68%	62%	50%
October	NA	61%	57%	50%
November	48%	64%	49%	50%
December	50%	59%	46%	50%
January	44%	56%	44%	50%
February	45%	57%	39%	50%
March	44%	51%	37%	50%
April	43%	51%	NA	50%
May	36%	42%	NA	50%
Average	45%	56%	50%	50%

Source: WPS and Prismatic calculations, December 2020

The consulting team found several practices contributing to rates lower than industry best practices:

- no entrée choices;
- same menu for all grade levels;
- no self-serve options on the serving line;
- self-serve options for upper level grades are only available at the salad bar;
- students at all grade levels are asked which of each item they would like, which slows down the serving process;
- no à la carte items for sale; and
- student input is not solicited on a regular basis.

There are no entrée choices available in WPS. When students are allowed to select from several choices, participation increases, plate waste decreases, and there is a greater opportunity to meet students' nutritional requirements. Traditionally, menus in secondary schools offer several entrée choices during the week, such as hot and cold sandwiches and wraps, prepackaged chef salads, pizza, and burritos, all in addition to the hot entrée of the day. Choices in secondary schools have become common in districts nationwide.

The same menu is served to all grade levels in WPS. Different age groups have different food preferences and menus need to accommodate the more developed palates of the older students. Wewoka secondary students are able to make some fruit and vegetable selections from the salad bar however it is not being utilized to its full potential due to servers putting the fruit and vegetable of the day on the trays prior to students going to the self-serve salad bar.

There is no ability for students to select what items they want through a self-serve process. Servers ask every student, for each item offered, whether they would like it put on their trays. This is an extremely slow process. Long wait times are a deterrent for students especially at the secondary level and will serve to discourage them from participating. When a student makes a selection themselves from several options they feel a sense of control and are more inclined to consume what they have selected. **Exhibit 5-15** shows examples of trays of pre-portioned fruits and vegetables available on the serving line at another school district of similar size to WPS.

Exhibit 5-15
Example of Pre-Portioned Vegetable and Fruit Servings at Another School



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) has developed *Keys to Excellence: Standards of Practice for Nutrition Integrity*.⁵ This tool defines national standards for quality programs and provides a framework for continuous program review, evaluation, and improvement. Indicators of best practices in the area of meal service include the following:

Best Practice A5.2:

Service options and line architecture are designed to encourage healthy choices and minimize the time students wait to be served.

Indicators:

- **A5.2.1** – Menu options are clearly posted before the point of service in prominent locations.
- **A5.2.2** – Concepts such as self-service, food courts, kiosks, food bars, vending machines, and scramble system serving stations are used where appropriate.
- **A5.2.3** – Individual portions, POS marketing, self-serve, and student education activities are planned to reduce the time it takes to serve students.

There are no à la carte items available for sale to Wewoka high school students. An à la carte program has the potential of increased revenue and higher student satisfaction and participation.

⁵ School Nutrition Association. (2015). *Keys to excellence: Standards of practice for nutrition integrity*. National Harbor, Maryland. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/CareerEducation.aspx>

Students are not being fully utilized to provide input on WPS menus and the overall meals program. One of the objectives listed in the FSMC contract is to seek input from students and parents. This is not being met. When asked about student involvement during interviews, the high school principal stated there is no opportunity for student involvement and he would like to see a student advisory panel be organized and used on an ongoing basis. The middle school principal also stated this would be a good idea.

Results from student surveys indicated an extremely low number (25 percent) like the food served in the cafeteria. Only one-third (34 percent) think the cafeteria serves a good variety of food. **Exhibit 5-16** shows the responses about the cafeteria from the 250 secondary students who responded. These survey data substantiate the need for major improvements to the meal program at the secondary level which should result in improved participation levels.

Exhibit 5-16
Secondary Student Survey Results Regarding School Meals

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have enough time to eat my lunch each day.	14%	38%	21%	17%	10%
I like the food served in the cafeteria.	8%	17%	29%	21%	24%
The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	9%	25%	28%	18%	19%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Develop strategies for increasing lunch participation rates at the high school.

The FSMC should:

- Organize a secondary student advisory group which meets regularly to provide input on the menus currently being used as well as taste new food items and recipes. Feedback from these meetings should be used to develop a secondary menu.
- Include multiple entrée choices in menu planning at the secondary level.
- Start an à la carte program for secondary students. Nutritional requirements of the HHFKA “Smart Snacks” must be followed when selecting items for sale.
- Include on the salad bar for secondary students all the cold fruit and vegetable offerings, instead of offering some on the line.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should increase high school participation. Given that the district has a closed campus, it would be expected for it to exceed the best practice level of 50 percent participation. Achieving 65 percent participation

would result in an annual revenue increase of \$15,949 ($\$3.60 \text{ per meal} \times 15\% \times 179 \text{ students} \times 165 \text{ serving days}$, in non-COVID-19 operations).

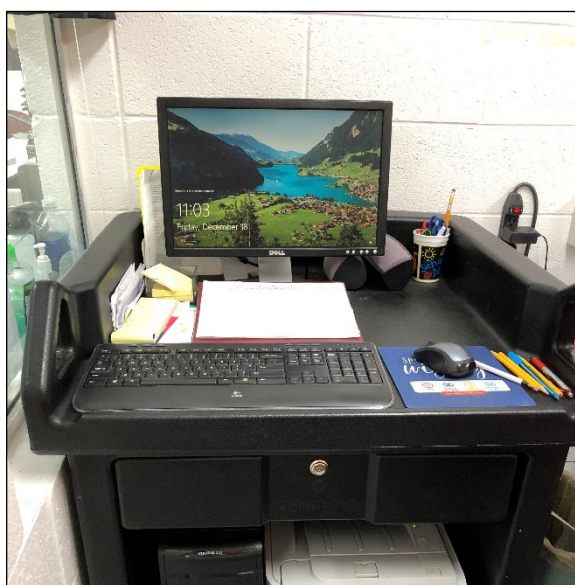
Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Improve high school lunch participation.	\$15,949	\$15,949	\$15,949	\$15,949	\$15,949

FINDING 5-9

The cafeteria lacks sufficient meal purchasing and POS equipment. This slows meal service and claims processing.

A bulky cart with the office computer equipment is being used as the POS (**Exhibit 5-17**). This cart is wheeled into the cafeteria at serving time.

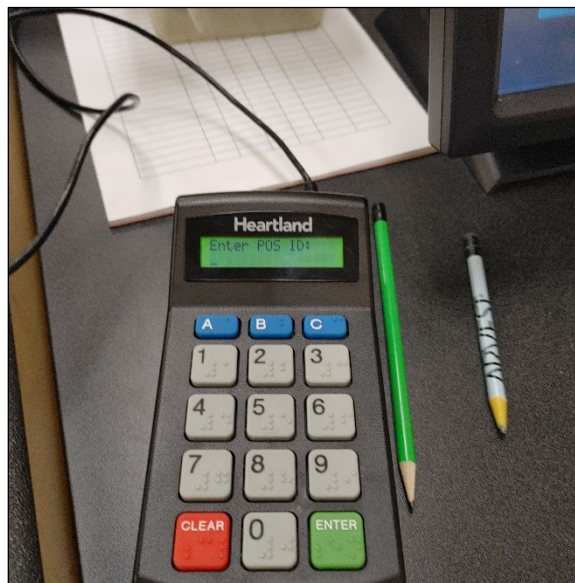
Exhibit 5-17
WPS POS Cart



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

The addition of a smaller profile cart, laptop, and pin pad would provide a more efficient and updated recording system. Some pin pads can also read barcodes for contactless transactions. An example used in another school district is shown in **Exhibit 5-18**.

Exhibit 5-18
Example of POS Cart and Pin Pad



Source: Prismatic, December 2020

WPS uses a manual counting system for elementary students at mealtime. Paper rosters are used; one for each class. The cashier checks names off these rosters for students and then enters them into the POS software program after meal service. This is an inefficient and time-consuming process as the cashier records meals served to students twice – once on the roster and a second time from the roster to the POS. The process could be simplified by having the cashier record the student into the POS at the moment they come through the line.

There is a different process used for middle and high school students. The student ID numbers for these students are entered into the POS by the cashier when the student comes to the POS. This electronic system does eliminate the manual process but does not allow the student to be a part of the process. When the POS is located at the end of the serving line, the cashier is responsible for verifying a student has selected the correct number of components to qualify as a reimbursable meal. Performing this verification duty as well as inputting ID numbers puts an undue burden on the cashier and is not an efficient process.

The utilization of a pin pad provides a solution for this inefficiency. Students input their ID numbers into the pin pad and their meal is automatically recorded into the POS software. This frees up the cashier to perform an accurate verification of a reimbursable meal. Students become an active participant in the process which is appealing to secondary level students. It also speeds up the process, as the cashier does not have to look up the student ID. Many schools use two pin pads connected to one POS, supervised by one cashier. This speeds up the POS process substantially, especially if students are able to go down both sides of the fruit and vegetable bar.

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. Most WPS students (80 percent) indicated on the student survey that they regularly use technology. (**Exhibit 5-19**). Most school meal

programs use an electronic meal counting system with direct student involvement at the secondary level as well as at the upper elementary level.

Exhibit 5-19
Student Survey Results on Technology Use

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I regularly use computers or other technology at school.	28%	52%	15%	4%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Purchase additional meal-purchasing and POS equipment:

- a laptop and small cart for the POS; and
- a pin pad for student use at the POS.

WPS should contact their software provider Wen-GAGE for assistance in purchasing and setting up a new laptop and pin pad system for their cafeteria POS. These items should be purchased for use at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year.

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates the cost of a laptop, one pin pad, and a small cart at \$3,000. This would be a one-time cost.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Purchase a laptop, pin pad, and small cart.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

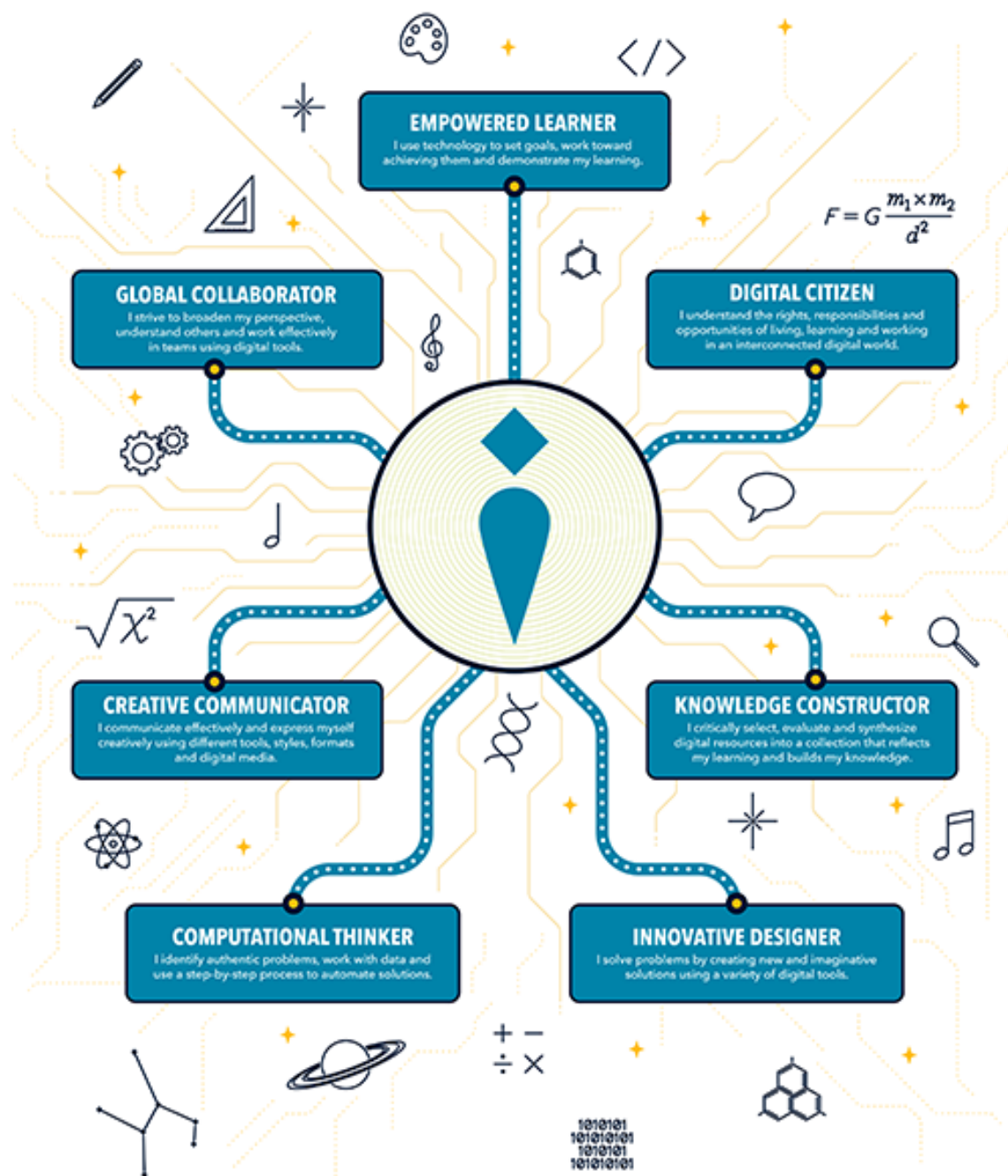
B. TECHNOLOGY

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has created standards for the use of technology to enhance education. Part of preparing students for the digital age includes helping them become responsible consumers and curators of online content. For this reason, digital citizenship is a benchmark integrated into the ISTE Standards for Students, ISTE Standards for Education Leaders and ISTE Standards for Coaches. Oklahoma has adopted the International Society for Technology in Education's Student Standards for the Oklahoma Academic Standards.⁶ These standards are designed to empower student voice and promote learning as a student-driven process and have evolved from just using technology to learn to

⁶ <https://www.iste.org/standards/for-students>

transformative learning with technology. **Exhibit 5-20** outlines the seven key ISTE standards for students.

Exhibit 5-20
ISTE Standards for Students



Source: <https://www.iste.org/standards/for-students>

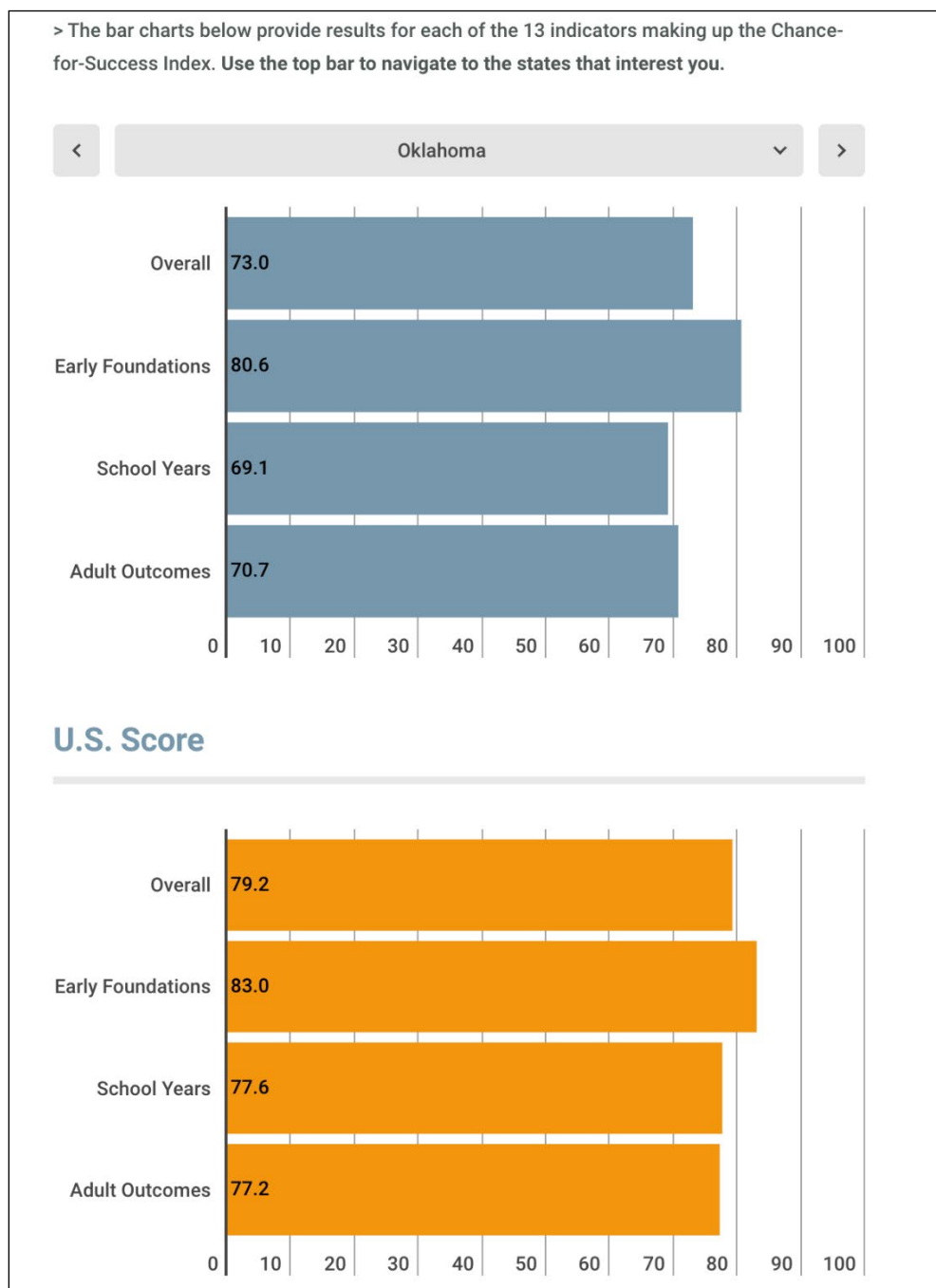
The implementation of technology in schools follows a broader societal trend – teens’ technology use is creeping up. In 2015, 29 percent of teens said they used a computer for homework, but by 2019, 59 percent of teens said the same, according to a media census from Common Sense Media.⁷ Since the 2010 report card on which Oklahoma earned a C+, Oklahoma has worked to develop various aspects of education to improve these areas of concern and to emphasize the role of technology in digital citizenship. In 2019, there were 163 Oklahoma schools districts with a one-to-one program in which at least one grade at one school had Internet-connected device for each student.⁸ Oklahoma continues to make advances in online assessment practices and in the use of instructional technology in the PK-12 classroom. Despite the heavy focus the state has placed on transformational learning with technology, Oklahoma’s overall score earned on the Chance-for-Success Index in Quality Counts 2020 was a C (**Exhibit 5-21**). The purpose of this report card is to rank states on educational opportunities and performance.⁹

⁷ https://www.common Sense Media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/research/census_researchreport.pdf

⁸ <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Fast%20Facts%20July%202019.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/quality-counts-2020/state-grades-on-chance-for-success-2020.html>

Exhibit 5-21 Chance-for-Success Results by State



Source: <https://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/quality-counts-2020/state-grades-on-chance-for-success-2020.html>

Oklahoma was previously one of 22 states and one territory to create K-12 assessments aligned to Common Core State Standards through the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).¹⁰ A major impact of PARCC's Common Core assessments, and

¹⁰ <http://www.parcconline.org/>

a concern of many Oklahoma school districts, involved technology. Oklahoma transitioned to a new vendor, Measured Progress, now called Cognia, for the Online Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) to assess student mastery of the Oklahoma Academic Standards rather than the Common Core Standards; however, technology remains a major component of the assessment process. The State Department of Education (SDE) has released technology guidelines for the Cognia assessments for schools so they will be properly equipped and ready to administer the tests.¹¹

Exhibit 5-22 illustrates the most current assessment technology specifications that districts in Oklahoma must consider as they administer assessments in 2019-20 and beyond. Unlike specifications provided in previous years, the technology guidelines are required. In the past, there were minimum and recommended specifications. These specifications provide the levels of computer and network capacity that are required to provide a smooth testing experience for students. Android devices will not be supported.

The stated technology requirements further illustrate the importance of an adequate technology infrastructure and effective long-range planning. To meet the requirements districts will need to accommodate an increasing number of students participating in online testing in the coming years.

¹¹ <https://oklahoma.onlinehelp.cognia.org/>

Exhibit 5-22
Oklahoma Spring 2020 Assessment Technology Specifications¹²

System Requirements – All Hardware	
Connectivity	Student devices must be able to connect to the Internet via wired or wireless networks
Screen Size	9.7” screen size or larger 10-inch class” tablets or larger
Screen Resolution	1024 x 768
Browsers ^{13,14} (used for practice test only)	Chrome™ 79 or newer Firefox® 70 or newer Microsoft Edge™ 44.18 or newer Safari® 13 or newer
Headphone/Earphone/ Ear Buds	Required for students who have a text-to-speech accommodation
Desktop and Laptop Specific Requirements	
CPU	1.3 Ghz
Memory	2 GB 4 GB is strongly recommended for best performance
Input Device	Keyboard – wired or wireless Bluetooth® enabled mouse or touchpad
Windows®	Windows® 8.1, and 10 (32-bit and 64-bit)
macOS®	10.13 – 10.15 (64-bit only)
Linux®	Ubuntu® 16.04.3 LTS (64-bit only) Fedora™ 27 (64-bit only)
Tablet/Netbook/2-in-1 Specific Requirements	
iOS®	12.4, 13.1 - 13.3
Chromebook™ notebook computer	Chrome OS™ 74 - 79
Windows®-based tablets/netbooks/2-in-1	Windows® 10 (32-bit and 64-bit) ¹⁵

Source: <https://oklahoma.onlinehelp.cognia.org/guides/>

In Wewoka, the rate of home broadband access is relatively low, compared to other communities in the area (**Exhibit 5-23**). The US Census estimated that only 57 percent of Wewoka households had broadband access in 2018.

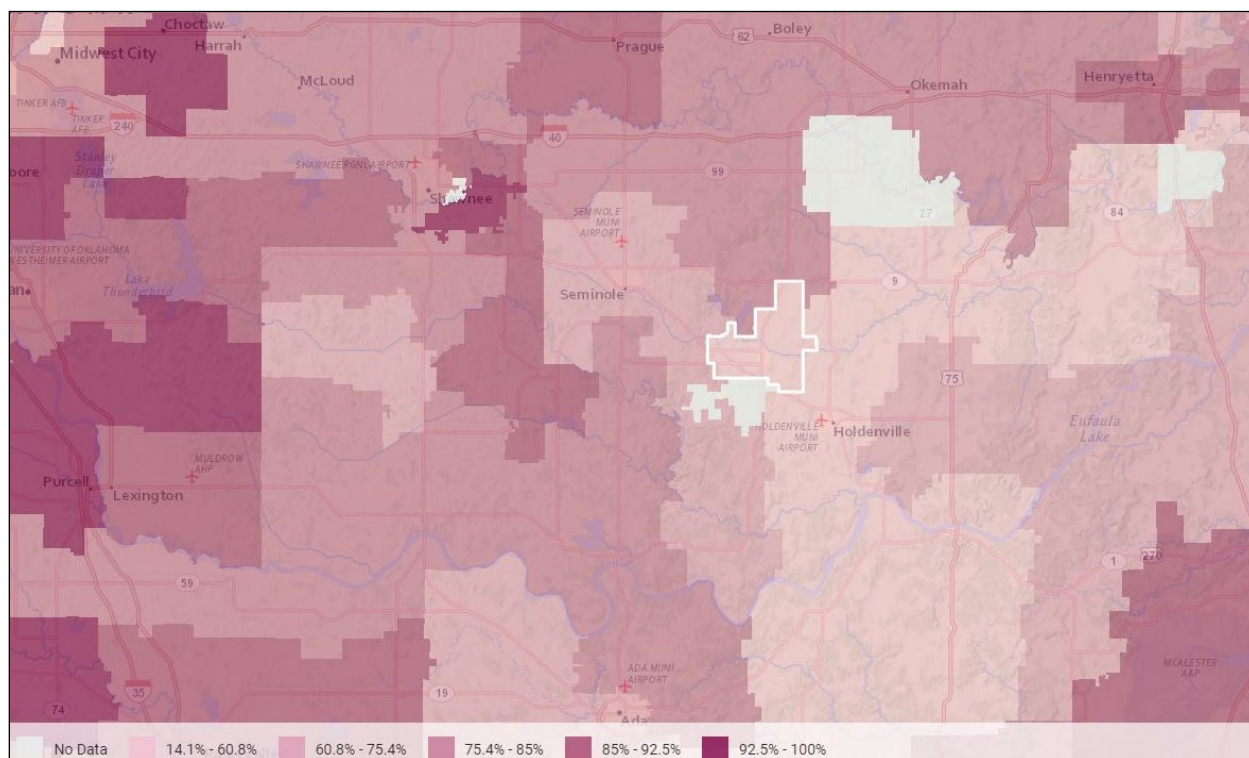
¹² Windows is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. Firefox is a registered trademark of the Mozilla Foundation. Safari, Mac, and iPad are registered trademarks of Apple Inc. Chrome and Chromebook are registered trademarks of Google Inc. Fedora is a trademark of Red Hat, Inc. Linux is the registered trademark of Linus Torvalds in the U.S. and other countries. The Bluetooth is a registered trademark owned by Bluetooth SIG, Inc.

¹³ Text-to-speech on browsers is partially supported.

¹⁴ As new operating system and browser versions are released, eMetric will update technology guidelines following successful compatibility testing.

¹⁵ Windows 10 S is not supported.

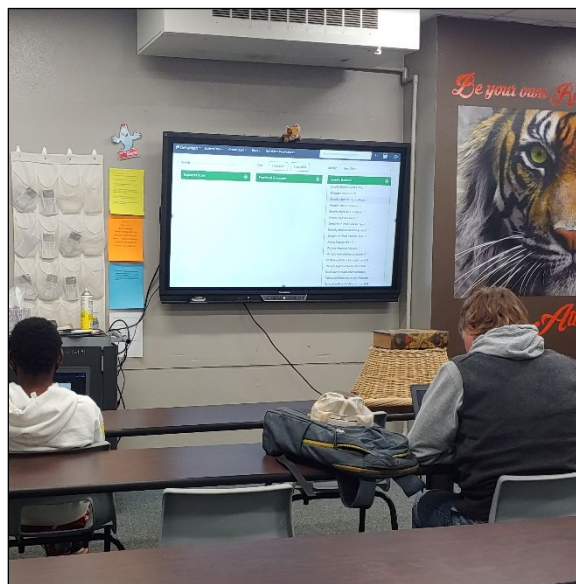
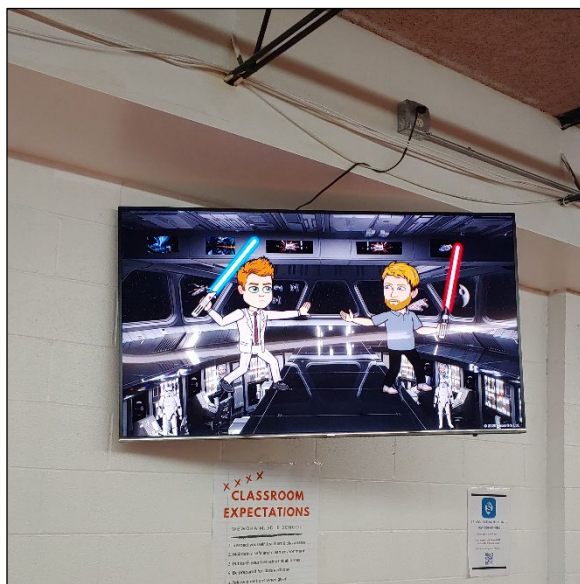
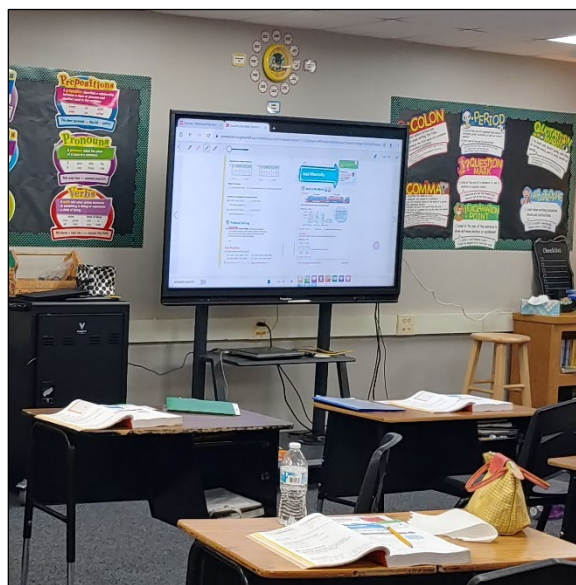
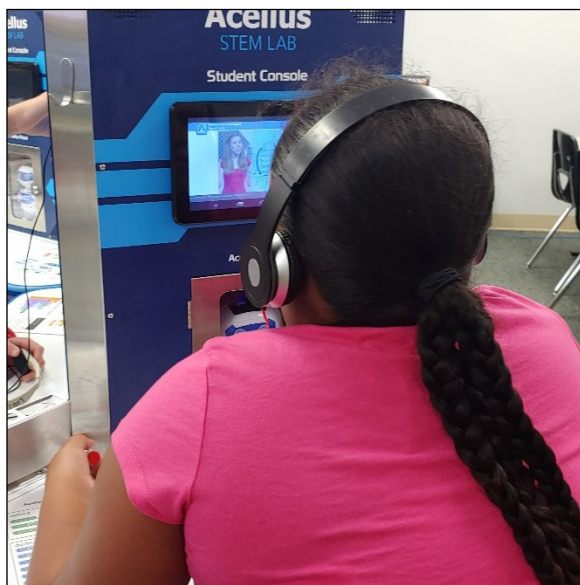
Exhibit 5-23
Rate of Home Broadband in the Wewoka Area



Source: www.nces.ed.gov

WPS has an Internet Use Policy in place, as well as backup system servers. The district has acquired funds through E-Rate to improve Internet connectivity and grants to supply classroom equipment. WPS implemented a One-to-One Initiative during the 2019-20 school year. The district has interactive touchscreen panels in classrooms and staff has received training on them. **Exhibit 5-24** provides some examples of technology in use in the district.

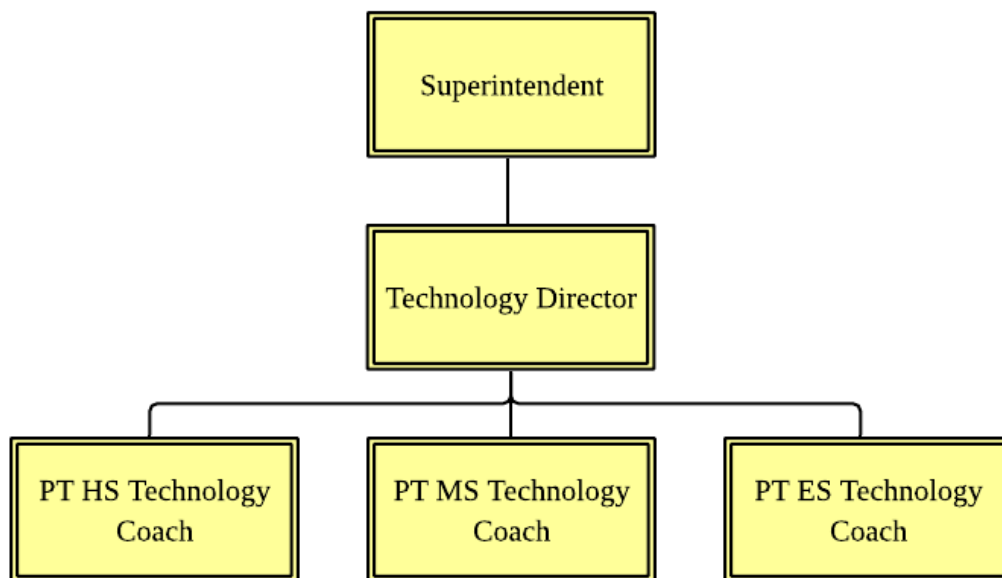
Exhibit 5-24
Examples of Technology in WPS



Source: Prismatic Services, December 2020

The current technology organization for WPS is shown in **Exhibit 5-25**. In the last couple of years, the district has hired a technology coach for each site. These positions were created to provide technology support, to provide instructional coaching with technology, and to facilitate the purposeful use of technology in the current one-to-one initiative.

Exhibit 5-25
WPS Technology Organizational Chart



Source: Created by Prismatic, November 2020

FINDING 5-10

WPS secured funding through grants and E-Rate to fund technology equipment, networking, and connectivity. This has allowed the district to make large purchases of technology and improve connectivity.

In the past several years, the district has cultivated a grant-seeking environment, successfully identifying and securing additional funding for technology purchases and upgrades, as well as technology infrastructure. The district received approximately \$150,000 from the Oklahoma State Department of Education for a school improvement grant. The funds helped with the one-to-one initiative. Additionally, WPS was awarded \$56,231 for Category 1 and \$75,920 for Category 2 E-Rate funding.

Technology can no longer be an afterthought or add-on in today's classrooms. It must be purposely integrated into instructional strategies and practices and available to teachers and students. In order for that to happen, funding must be available to ensure that classroom technology is up-to-date and usable.

COMMENDATION

WPS is commended for securing funding through grants and E-Rate to fund technology equipment, networking, and connectivity.

Moving forward and given the current needs in technology and professional development and the impact of decreasing school funding, WPS should continue to identify and pursue additional

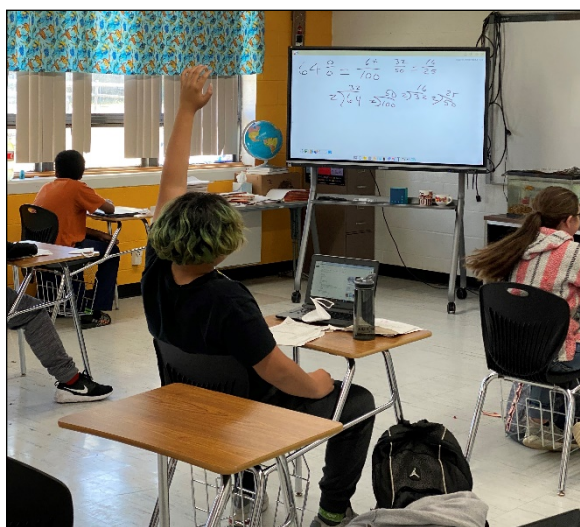
grants. Grants are available through a number of sources, including the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.¹⁶

FINDING 5-11

WPS implemented a one-to-one initiative district-wide, prior to and independent of actions taken in response to COVID-19. The district fully implemented the initiative one week prior to COVID-19 restrictions being put into effect.

WPS is currently in the second year of implementing a one-to-one technology initiative that began in 2019. Students in 1st through 12th grades have Google Chromebooks to utilize at school and home (**Exhibit 5-26**). In addition, each classroom is equipped with an interactive touchscreen panel (ViewSonic) that allows teachers to incorporate engaging learning experiences for students.

Exhibit 5-26
One-to-One Chromebooks



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Teachers have the opportunity to utilize technology to access the curriculum and enhance learning experiences for students. Research indicates that to ensure student success, education must move from a teacher-centric to a learner-centric approach. One-to-one technology programs create the opportunity for authentic personalization of teaching and learning for each student and extend learning environments for students. With access to personal portable technologies in a wireless environment, students can learn at their own pace, ability levels, and take advantage of the worldwide experiences and resources available online and just in time. Teachers become facilitators of learning experiences – meaningfully linking technology to curriculum and instruction.

¹⁶ <https://OklahomaGrantsforNonprofits-GrantWatch>

Kimberly White (2020), at the Christa McAuliffe Academy School of Arts and Sciences website, lists the benefits one-on-one instruction provides to students:

1. Class will never go on without the student.
2. High quality interaction where students feel heard.
3. Low stress environment frees the student from fear of failure.
4. Instructors can gauge the student's progress and mastery.
5. Give students the opportunity to step up and not rely on others.
6. Avoids overstimulation and eliminates many distractions.
7. Ability to personalize conversations and assignments.
8. Instructors adapt to the student's communication style.¹⁷

A 2017 survey from the Consortium for School Networking reported 40 percent of districts in the U.S. were one-to-one, which is nearly twice as many as in 2014.¹⁸ According to Medlin, 2019, "Although some schools use iPads or other laptops, Chromebooks outpace every other device. Chrome OS made up a reported 60 percent of K-12 school institutional purchases in 2018. That's up from 16 percent in 2013."¹⁹ Chromebooks are easier for technology directors to manage and are also much cheaper than other devices. They do not require regular updates or antivirus protection. They provide students with access to many different tools through the Google Suite, as well as online resources.

COMMENDATION

WPS is commended for implementing a one-to-one initiative district-wide.

FINDING 5-12

WPS implemented a student technical assistant internship model to provide additional onsite support and student training. Two students were active in the program for the 2020-21 school year.

Students in the student technical assistant internship at WPS receive training and certification through a local vendor, Vivacity Tech. The company offers curriculum for students involved and a \$15 credit to the district if school devices under warranty are fixed internally. In addition to servicing school equipment, students monitor a District Help Desk. One of the students is now employed part-time in the technical industry because of this experience.

¹⁷ White, K. (2020, May 9). *8 reasons why one-on-one instruction benefits students*. <https://www.cmasas.org/8-reasons-why-one-one-instruction-benefits-students>

¹⁸ <https://www.northernpublicradio.org/post/rapid-growth-11-technology-and-how-its-changing-classroom>

¹⁹ Ibid.

Originally, plans were to include eight students in the program. COVID-19 restrictions beginning in early 2020 resulted in a lower number of participants. Plans are to continue the program and offer A++ Certification to students free of charge through a local bank donation.

Not only has this initiative provided students with an opportunity to learn about technology and gain skills for future careers, but it has also helped the district manage numerous types of technology support issues. With many districts facing budget cuts and personnel shortages, utilizing student talent to provide technology support is a practical solution.

COMMENDATION

WPS has implemented a student technical assistant internship model to provide additional onsite support and valuable student training.

FINDING 5-13

No job description exists for the technology director. As a result, the technology director's responsibilities and priorities are unclear.

WPS has purchased a large amount of technology equipment and software over the past two years. While having a full-time technology director responsible for the district's technology is commendable, a lack of clear expectations impedes the success of the director. The director is posed with a number of needs and requests without any guidelines on what takes precedence.

Without a proper job description, the technology director at WPS is forced to rely upon verbal instructions. His efforts can be torn between any number of administrative and instructional staff that place demands upon his time. Also, without a job description the superintendent has nothing in writing upon which to base an employee evaluation.

According to an online article posted on LinkedIn,²⁰ job descriptions clarify work situations for both leadership and employees. Specific to WPS' technology director position, the article lists two things which will help current and future administration and technology directors. A job description clarifies exactly what is expected of the employee and provides the employee with information on exactly what is expected and demanded of them. Not only would a job description aid the current technology director but will provide a framework for filling technology positions in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a technology director job description.

The superintendent and technology director should work together to develop a job description that lists required skills and characteristics, major duties and responsibilities, education requirements as well as priorities for the technology director position. Discussion should include developing new technologies, choosing hardware and software, or developing technology

²⁰ Castillo, M.K. (2014, July 16). *Five reasons why you need job descriptions*.
<http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140716135928-202466285-5-reasons-why-you-need-job-descriptions>

strategies. Technology directors may also develop departmental budgets and schedules, provide network support, and work with vendors to choose or implement new systems. The lines of responsibility should be clearly identified in the job description.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-14

WPS has a technology coach at each site to provide additional onsite support and training. The technology coaches serve as first-line support for technical issues, as well as assisting teachers with technology integration and professional development activities and training.

The district has purchased large numbers of devices over the past two years. As the amount of technology increases so does the need for technology support and training. A full-time technology director, along with three technology coaches, increases the efficiency in addressing technology-related issues.

The technology director works collaboratively with the technology coaches to conduct training sessions for staff. Additionally, he leads a student internship program where two high school students work alongside him to support teachers with their technology devices. This support team troubleshoots Chromebook problems, fixes broken screens, and supports other maintenance requests as needed. The technology coaches are primarily tasked with addressing teacher needs in technology and software.

COMMENDATION

WPS has staffed a technology coach position at each site to provide additional onsite support and training.

FINDING 5-15

Planning has been conducted by the superintendent and technology director. However, no formal technology plan exists.

WPS has not formalized a process for including multiple stakeholders on a technology committee or the development of a current technology plan. Multiple stakeholders include parents, students, community members, and businesses. Community and business partnerships could provide additional perspective in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

From the district's document, Wewoka Distance Instructional Plan, there is no evidence of committee participation by parents or community members and currently no such committee exists. Including stakeholders such as parents, students, community members, and businesses could provide additional perspective in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The National Center for Technology Planning²¹ recommends five phases for an effective planning model:

- **Phase 1: Recruit and organize the planning team.** It is important that the planning team consists of all stakeholder groups, and members should excel in planning and communication skills. Stakeholders may include technology specialists, district leaders, parents, students, community members, and business leaders.
- **Phase 2: Research.** This phase consists of a needs assessment and an effort to identify the technologies that can be applied to those needs and ascertain how they can be applied.
- **Phase 3: Construct the technology plan.** This phase focuses on applying the research to establish the district's vision/mission and to define the goals and objectives that will lead to fulfilling that vision and mission.
- **Phase 4: Formalize the planning.** This phase culminates into a comprehensive document that analyzes the present state of the district with respect to technology, articulates specific goals and objectives, incorporates clearly defined strategies and budgetary plans to realize the desired state of technology in the district, and includes a process for evaluation.
- **Phase 5: Continually implement, evaluate, and revise.** This phase deals with the ongoing implementation, evaluation, and revision of the plan to ensure progress is made.

The consulting team found no evidence that WPS has a technology plan, although many goals have been achieved. Key to the planning process is conducting periodic needs assessments and structuring the plan around the results. Additionally, there are no parents, students, community members, or business leaders on a planning team. During the review, the consulting team found no evidence of a technology planning document or committee in place.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the technology planning process and create a long-term strategic plan for technology with input from a variety of stakeholders.

Establishing a committee that includes staff and outside stakeholders should provide additional perspectives in planning, implementation, and evaluation of technology. Such stakeholders could include parents, students, community members, and businesses as partners. Including teacher leaders on the technology committee could also enhance opportunities for strategic planning and could increase buy-in among staff members, as well as increase understanding of what is possible.

The WPS technology plan should be a current, comprehensive document that drives technology expenditures, implementation, and decision-making. The plan should be tied to the district strategic plan and professional development plan. The district should formalize and utilize a process for including a technology committee in technology strategic planning and the

²¹ <http://www.nctp.com/downloads/guidebook.pdf>

development of a long-term planning document. The superintendent should direct the technology committee to develop and periodically update a comprehensive technology plan. The plan should be achievable and based upon the current state of the district. By incorporating clearly articulated vision and mission statements, followed by specific goals, measurable objectives, adequate funding, and a detailed evaluation process, the district ensures that technology purchases and services are in line with the goals set forth in the plan and result in student achievement gains. The plan and progress should then be communicated to all stakeholders to ensure a common understanding and purpose.

To facilitate effective use of technology funds, the technology committee should:

- periodically review the technology plan for accuracy and make necessary additions and deletions;
- develop hardware and software standards, and review them with all personnel;
- centralize the software purchasing process to avoid purchases that cannot be supported or will not function properly on the district's equipment;
- recommend the types of computer equipment that should be purchased and the most effective distribution of that equipment;
- develop a training program for all staff; and
- establish a policy on the purchase of extended warranties for hardware and the standardization of operating systems, antivirus, applications, and office software.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-16

Little or no staff development or plan exists around technology. No technology integration sessions are planned or scheduled for staff.

During focus groups and interviews, staff reported a wide range of technology skills among the teaching staff. Initial training was provided when interactive whiteboards or touchscreen panels were purchased but limited follow-up training has been made available. Currently, staff development sessions are held at the start of the school year and focus on state requirements such as school security and classroom management. Additionally, some software specific training has been offered. Administrators and technology coaches noted a need for input from teachers related to technology staff development offerings. A need for practical sessions on existing equipment and software were highlighted in focus groups and interviews. Staff noted that Fridays are available for professional development sessions as students are not in attendance.

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. Substantial professional development emphasizing both technology applications and its integration into curriculum and classroom instruction is necessary in WPS.

Exhibit 5-27 shows staff comfort levels with the use of technology in the classroom and for communication. While staff members indicate an understanding of technology and its utilization, the consulting team found in onsite observations and interviews that this knowledge is at a basic level. Implementing technology effectively into classroom instruction requires a teacher have a higher level of understanding, redirected teaching methodology, much practice, and continuous training. This is compounded by the continued purchase of new and varied equipment and software.

Exhibit 5-27
Staff Survey Results Regarding Comfort with Technology

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I understand how to use technology as it relates to my job functions.	32%	61%	5%	2%	0%
District staff and administrators often use email to communicate with one another.	39%	56%	4%	2%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

During the onsite interviews and focus groups, all WPS instructors and administrators indicated a need for additional professional development or training focused on the use of existing technology and software packages. Specifically, a need for small-group practical training was noted, as well as, limiting additional purchases.

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 SDE has adopted the NETS standards from which state standards for instructional technology were derived.

Building on the NETS for Students, the ISTE has also developed NETS for teachers (NETS-T) and NETS for administrators, which define standards for classroom 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.

NETS-T (2008) defines the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings. The five standards areas and performance indicators are designed to be general enough to be customized to fit state or district guidelines and include specific outcomes to be measured when developing technology assessment tools. NETS for teachers include:

-
- using their knowledge of subject matter, teaching and learning, and technology to facilitate experiences that advance student learning, creativity, and innovation in both face-to-face and virtual environments;
 - designing, developing, and evaluating authentic learning experiences and assessment incorporating contemporary tools and resources to maximize content learning in context and to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes identified in NETS-S;
 - exhibiting knowledge, skills, and work processes representative of an innovative professional in a global and digital society;
 - understanding local and global societal issues and responsibilities in an evolving digital culture and exhibiting legal and ethical behavior in their professional practices; and
 - continuously improving their professional practice, modeling lifelong learning, and exhibiting leadership in their school and professional community by promoting and demonstrating the effective use of digital tools and resources.

NETS (2011) for technology coaches include:

- inspiring and participating in the development and implementation of a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology;
- assisting teachers in using technology effectively for assessing student learning, differentiating instruction, and providing rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning experiences for all students;
- creating and supporting effective digital-age learning environments to maximize the learning of all students;
- conducting needs assessments, developing technology-related professional learning programs, and evaluating the impact on instructional practice and student learning;
- modeling and promoting digital citizenship; and
- demonstrating professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions in content, pedagogical, and technological areas as well as adult learning and leadership and are continuously deepening their knowledge and expertise.

NETS (2009) for administrators include:

- inspiring and leading development and implementation of a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology to promote excellence and support transformation throughout the organization;
- creating, promoting, and sustaining a dynamic, digital-age learning culture that provides a rigorous, relevant, and engaging education for all students;

- promoting an environment of professional learning and innovation that empowers educators to enhance student learning through the infusion of contemporary technologies and digital resources;
- providing digital age leadership and management to continuously improve the organization through the effective use of information and technology resources; and
- modeling and facilitating understanding of social, ethical and legal issues and responsibilities related to an evolving digital culture.

Data from the National Science Foundation (NSF)²² indicates that the actual impact technology has on classroom instruction is causally 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 extended across time were needed to develop, enhance, and change the practices of teachers. Ongoing opportunities for professional development must be available to teachers, administrators, and support personnel at all levels. Successful professional development focuses on the specific needs of individual staff and is sustained through coaching and periodic updates. A technology-training plan outlines the opportunities afforded to district staff for learning job specific technology skills. This information is essential in developing the technology professional development plan that meets the needs of WPS and is aligned with data-driven goals supported by long-term professional development activities.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide teachers and staff with technology-related professional development opportunities and hold them accountable for implementing technology for both instructional and administrative uses.

The district should move beyond mere technology acquisition and ensure that the hardware and software tools are being used in ways that result in continuous improvement of classroom instruction/practices and higher student achievement. Ongoing opportunities for professional development should be made available to teachers and administrators at all skill and development levels.

The technology 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 developing an assessment to gather, analyze, and report information about how technology is used for teaching and learning in their schools. Additionally, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) provides the NETS for Teachers.²³

A second step should be to discuss and define technology integration for WPS classrooms. Based upon this definition and interview results, the program should seek to increase teacher

²² <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind06/c1/c1s3.htm - c1s3l2>

²³ <http://www.iste.org/standards/nets-for-teachers.aspx>

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 board of education for approval.

A number of online professional development resources should be considered including:

- TED: Ideas Worth Spreading;²⁴
- Classroom 2.0 Live;²⁵
- the K12 Online Conference;²⁶
- the Global Education Conference;²⁷ and
- Simple K12 Webinars.²⁸

The district should also consider tapping into additional resources offered through the University of Oklahoma K20 Center, the Oklahoma State Department of Education, the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education or partnering with Gordon Cooper Technology Center. Additionally, area colleges and universities and vendors provide customized training, continuing education, professional development and other resources for K-12 teachers and administrators.²⁹ WPS should also continue forming partnerships with neighboring school districts and formalize the implementation of a shared professional development initiative.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-17

District policies and procedures specific to Chromebooks do not exist. The district has implemented a one-to-one initiative without policies and procedures in place prior to student checkout.

During focus groups and interviews, staff and administration noted a lack of procedures or checkout policy with Chromebooks. Staff further indicated problems retrieving Chromebooks when families moved or replacement costs when the device was damaged.

While the use of Chromebooks for a one-to-one initiative is commendable, funds for technology are always a challenge. Forming policies and procedures for any technology equipment,

²⁴ <http://www.ted.com/>

²⁵ <http://live.classroom20.com/index.html>

²⁶ <http://k12onlineconference.org/>

²⁷ <http://globaleducation.ning.com/>

²⁸ <http://simplek12.com/tlc/webinars/>

²⁹ <http://www.okhighered.org/econ-dev/business-services/>

including Chromebooks, helps ensure good stewardship of district money and helps make parents and students responsible for the care and proper use of the device.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop policies and procedures for the use of Chromebooks and other technologies.

The superintendent, technology director, and technology committee should develop a formal process for checkout and return of district equipment, specifically Chromebooks. The same process can be used for other computer-related equipment, such as printers.

Many Chromebook checkout forms are available online. Some to investigate include:

- Chromebook Checkout Policies and Procedures from Mount Zion, Georgia;³⁰
- Mana Academy Charter School Chromebook Checkout Form in West Valley City, Utah;³¹ and
- Idaho Falls, Idaho School District 91 Chromebook Checkout Form.³²

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-18

The district lacks an adopted replacement cycle for its technology assets. This can lead to the continuing use of outdated, inefficient, and insufficient technology.

A large amount of equipment has been purchased over the last couple of years with E-Rate funding and successful grants. While this currently provides a positive technology environment, no plan exists for replacing the equipment once its usefulness cycle has been reached. Old equipment was observed in libraries and classrooms, not being used or prepared for surplus. In staff surveys, when asked about the lifespan of district technology equipment, 23 percent *agreed* and 14 percent *strongly agreed* that equipment was operated past its usefulness. (**Exhibit 5-28**)

³⁰[http://images.pcmac.org/SiSFiles/Schools/GA/CarrollCounty/MtZionMiddle/Uploads/Forms/chromebook_form_2019 - 2020.pdf](http://images.pcmac.org/SiSFiles/Schools/GA/CarrollCounty/MtZionMiddle/Uploads/Forms/chromebook_form_2019_-_2020.pdf)

³¹ <https://form.jotform.com/200854942895063>

³² https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Wjl2yEOt7-RTlilZ_46Hv5TKmse6TZLkfSFy6f7Auw/edit#!

Exhibit 5-28
Staff Survey Results on the Technology Equipment Lifespan

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district's technology equipment is often used past its useful lifespan.	14%	23%	35%	26%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

According to The Gartner Group, an independent technology research and consulting firm, the useful life of computers in public education is four to five years. Similarly, to achieve satisfactory efficiency status on the ISTE Index, equipment should be placed on a four to five-year life cycle. Some categories, such as student lab computers, may require more frequent replacement than those computers used in administrative capacities. The ISTE Index indicates that lacking a computer replacement schedule of any kind falls into the low efficiency category. Failing to surplus equipment until it is no longer usable and continuing to service obsolete equipment also falls in the low efficiency category.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a replacement cycle for equipment.

The technology director should establish a priority list of which types of computers are to be replaced first (i.e. student use, and then, in what order others will be replaced) and with what type of device. The technology director should also establish the expected longevity and scheduled replacement for each computer category.

Once these replacement schedules have been established, the superintendent should annually link district funds designated for computer replacement to the number of computers to be replaced. The same process can be used for other computer-related equipment, such as printers.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend upon the replacement schedule adopted. The implementation of a four- to five-year replacement cycle is recommended. Currently, the district has approximately 850 Chromebooks and 200 desktops for 611 students. Given that the Chromebooks were purchased in 2019-20, a small number will need replacement in the 2021-22 and subsequent school years as students graduate or move from the district. The replacement cycle should focus on student devices, particularly Chromebooks.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Develop technology replacement cycle.	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)	(\$17,500)	(\$20,000)	(\$30,000)

FINDING 5-19

Equipment and other resources are in place but no evaluation of whether these resources are being used fully. The district is not ensuring that it is spending dollars wisely by regularly assessing the use of technology available to students and staff. As a result, the district is not maximizing its technology use or expenditures.

The district has no structured procedures in place to assess staff, student, or parent use of, and satisfaction with, technology available in the district. There is no formal process in place for evaluating technology implementation and use. WPS has made a substantial number of technology investments in infrastructure, hardware, and software, and continues to invest in technology. However, by not following up after the initial purchase and set up to determine the use of technology or the problems preventing its use, the district lacks the kind of information that leads to sound decision-making and improvement.

With the onset of online instruction and assessments, web-based textbooks, and college and workplace requirements, students must be comfortable and adept at using computers, the Internet, and other technology resources. For students to develop and build the necessary skills and comfort level, students must have reliable, consistent access and integrated use of technology. In addition to providing access to students, it is critical that the district identify what technologies are being used, provide teachers with the tools and training to integrate those technologies into instruction, and evaluate whether these strategies result in student achievement gains.

RECOMMENDATION**Develop procedures to assess existing resources for communication and instruction.**

The district should frequently gauge user satisfaction and adjust, in order to ensure optimal technology service. The district should track and analyze technology use in classrooms, in order to ensure it has used its technology resources most effectively. This will also identify whether additional supports, such as training or improved infrastructure, are needed. The district could also implement a method to assess staff, student, and community satisfaction with technology-integrated classes and instruction. This knowledge could help inform future planning in technology acquisition and implementation.

Several survey instruments and checklists are available free of charge. Survey examples may be found at the Wufoo Form Gallery,³³ including technology support surveys, website content surveys, and student satisfaction surveys. Additionally, in 2019, ISTE presented a research-based classroom observation tool, Technology Integration Panel³⁴ that provides districts with a framework to record and analyze technology use in classrooms. The framework looks at dimensions including pedagogy, learning context and access to technology and use of technology tools. This tool allows district personnel to determine what best practices look like for their

³³ <http://www.wufoo.com/gallery/>

³⁴ <https://ISTE19 - EdTech Conference | Philadelphia, June 23-26>

specific needs. Once the information is gathered, district personnel should discuss the findings with staff and make needed adjustments.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-20

WPS has a robust equipment inventory system. The technology director has implemented an inventory system through Hayes Software Systems.

Items are recorded in a digital file by serial number, tagged, and have their location and person of primary responsibility noted, as well as date of purchase. Plans are to continually update the inventory as new purchases are received and obsolete equipment is retired. An annual inventory of all equipment is conducted. Tags are scanned and placed in the inventory system. The technology director has made technology inventory a priority and noted that the inventory was 80 percent complete at the time of the onsite work.

Defined processes for inventory systems ensure when equipment from future purchases are delivered, it is received by the technology director or designee and then processed into the inventory system. Physical inventories are taken, and status reports generated according to the adopted school board policy. Having the receiving, tagging, assignment and inventory processes standardized prevents confusion about the count, value, age, and location of district technology assets.

COMMENDATION

WPS has implemented a robust technology equipment inventory system.

FINDING 5-21

The WPS website information is out of date or missing. Many documents are from past years, some as old as 2018.

Website updates are assigned to an administrator and the site is hosted through a vendor. Board agendas and minutes are from the previous year. The website has calendar info from the 2019-20 school year. School meal menus are from March 2020. Photos of staff members are missing. The district has a Facebook page where staff share photos and highlight events, but content is limited. As a result, communication with staff, parents, and students is lacking.

While most staff and parent survey results indicate satisfaction with the WPS website (**Exhibit 5-29**), 42 percent of staff and 43 percent of parents are neutral or do not feel that the current website is useful.

Exhibit 5-29
Survey Results on the Website

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The district website is useful for staff, parents, and students.	18%	40%	30%	5%	7%
Parents	The district website is a useful tool for me and/or my child.	10%	48%	30%	10%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, November 2020

Moveable Online regularly outlines best practices for websites by industry. They note that desktops and laptops are no longer the most common access point for users browsing the web. Many people use smartphones to navigate the Internet.³⁵ Simple navigation is also an important factor in any website design, but especially for schools as stakeholders and prospective students depend on easily accessible information.³⁶ Simple does not necessarily mean minimal. A website with simple navigation in mind should not have outdated information or empty tabs that lead the user to a dead end.

For students, an effective district website includes schedules, policies, and faculty contact information that are up to date. Teacher pages on the website include assignments, files that can be shared with students and parents, classroom rules and procedures, links to useful educational content, and links to instructional support programs that students may access from home.

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to update and expand the district website.

The technology director should develop a list of priorities where content should be kept up-to-date and comprehensive. From there, a timeline should be established for providing updates and establishing information on the website. Teachers and administrators should be encouraged to update and use the website as a communication device with parents and students.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

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.

³⁵ <http://moveableonline.com/blog/2014/08/20/8-key-features-websites-education-sector/>

³⁶ <https://www.eschoolview.com/What-Makes-a-Good-School-Website.aspx>

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 (SDE) 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 typical 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 (ODPS) requires bus drivers to obtain a specialized bus driver's license. The SDE requires bus drivers to obtain bus driver certification and training and to pass a license history review. WPS conducts criminal background checks on all new employees and annually evaluates the motor vehicle records of the personnel who drive school board owned vehicles. New bus drivers also must pass an alcohol and drug test for pre-employment and submit to random drug tests that are administered throughout the year, as defined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's regulation § 382.305.

The WPS transportation department provides route and extracurricular transportation for district students. With approximately 35 square miles to cover, the district has eight regular buses, and two special needs buses for the transport of exceptional education students. Currently, the district has three daily regular education routes and one special needs route. **Exhibit 5-30** provides a breakdown of the fleet, support vehicles, and equipment. Bus 14 has been placed "Out of Service" and is not in use, due to the expense of the flooring repairs and a non-functioning wheel-chair lift.

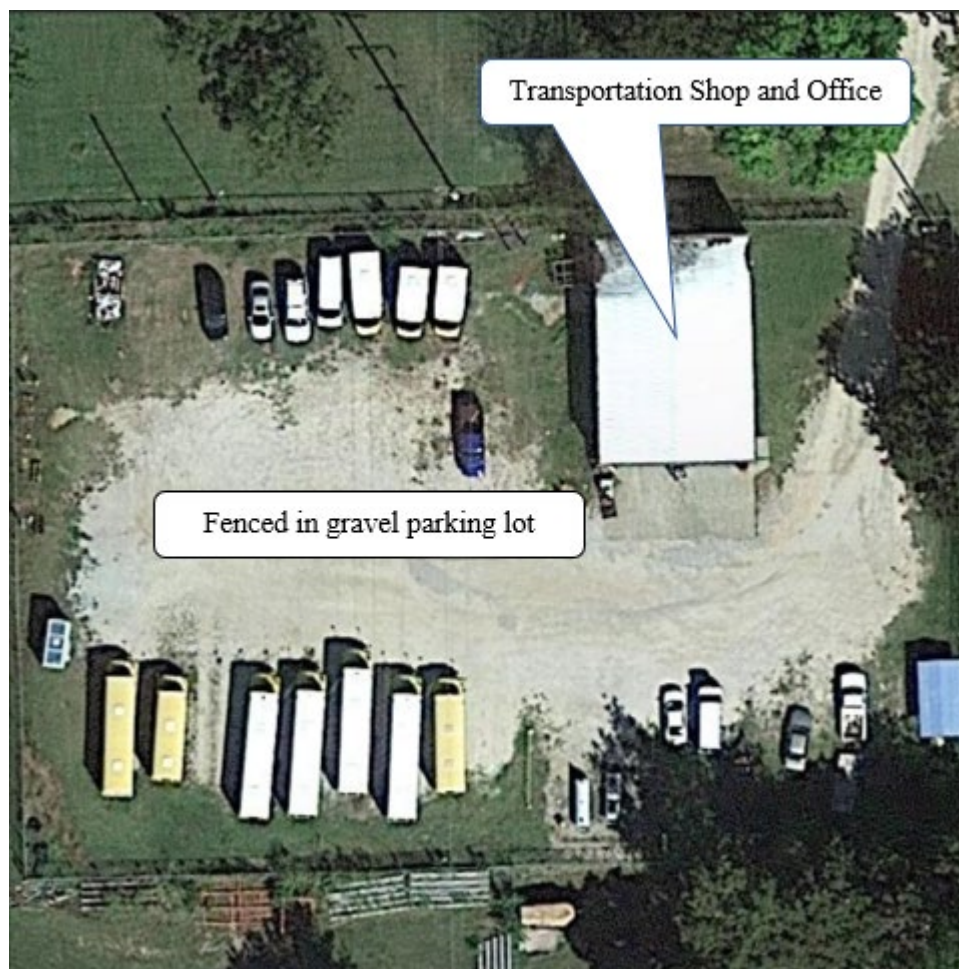
Exhibit 5-30
WPS Bus Fleet, Support Vehicles, and Equipment

Inventory	Year	Make	Model
Bus 1	2009	Bluebird	Bus
Bus 2	2009	Bluebird	Bus
Bus 3	2010	Bluebird	Lift Bus
Bus 7	2014	Bluebird	Bus
Bus 12	2009	Bluebird	Bus
Bus 14	1996	Chevrolet	Lift Bus
Bus 18	2005	Thomas	Bus
Mini Bus 5	1999	Chevrolet	Bus
Mini Bus 15	1999	Chevrolet	Bus
Mini Bus 20	2005	Blue Bird	Bus
Agg Truck	2008	Dodge	Ram
WK Truck	2001	Chevrolet	PU/V6
WK Truck	2004	Ford	PU/V8
Suburban	2001	Chevrolet	Sub/V8
Band Van	1999	Ford	Econ Van
Head Start Van	2004	Chevrolet	Van
Suburban	2018	Chevrolet	Sub/V8
Flex	2015	Ford	Flex PU
Fusion	2009	Ford	Fusion
Tractor	N/A	John Deer	Tractor

Source: WPS, November 2020

Currently, the district owns all vehicles in its fleet and does not lease any. All WPS buses and support vehicles are parked within a fenced lot that surrounds the parking area (**Exhibit 5-31**). The parking area is unpaved yet amply sized to accommodate the fleet.

Exhibit 5-31
Wewoka Public Schools Transportation/Maintenance Building



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

The current transportation building is shared with the maintenance department and can accommodate one regular size school bus or one support vehicle in a dedicated service bay (**Exhibit 5-32**) for minor vehicle maintenance/repairs. The shop area is open for ease of work and the center isle supports and area for tools and storage. Additional storage space is located on a mezzanine, above the director's office. The maintenance shop is currently furnished with an area designed for machining and welding repairs and equipment storage.

Exhibit 5-32
WPS Service Bay Area

Service Bay #1



Mezzanine



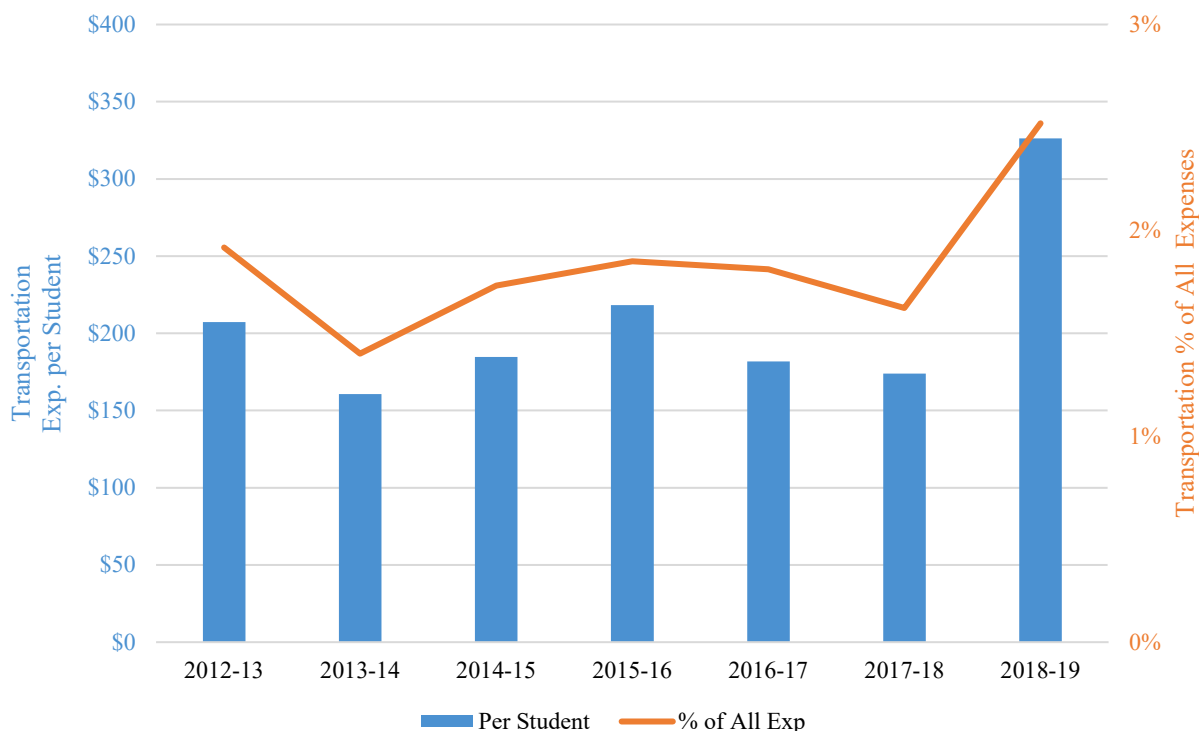
Machine/ Welding Area



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Exhibit 5-33 provides a seven-year comparison of WPS transportation expenditures as a percent of total expenditures as well as the annual transportation expenditures per student. Over that time, transportation expenses have never accounted for more than 2.5 percent of all expenditures. Transportation dollars per student have varied from \$160 per student to \$326.

Exhibit 5-33
Trend in WPS Transportation Expenses



Source: SDE, OCAS and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-34 compares WPS' transportation costs by category over time. In the past five years, transportation salaries and benefits have had the largest increases, but supplies costs have increased as well. Property costs had a single-year spike in 2016-17, but otherwise remained at zero. The district reduced its spending on purchased services. Overall, transportation operating costs increased by 42.9 percent.

Exhibit 5-34
Trend in WPS Transportation Operating Costs

Expenditure Category	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Salaries	\$51,160	\$52,027	\$38,460	\$39,589	\$89,437	74.8%▲
Benefits	\$18,129	\$22,913	\$20,030	\$20,274	\$41,609	129.5%▲
Purchased Services	\$24,926	\$22,504	\$4,858	\$13,931	\$13,241	(46.9%)▼
Supplies	\$51,392	\$56,409	\$63,895	\$44,285	\$63,831	24.2%▲
Property	\$0	\$0	\$62,000	\$0	\$0	0%●
Other	\$50	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$45	(10.0%)▼
Total	\$145,657	\$153,853	\$189,244	\$118,080	\$208,163	42.9%▲
Annual Percent Change		5.6%▲	23.0%▲	(37.6%)▼	76.3%▲	

Source: SDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures and Prismatic calculations

Exhibits 5-35 and 5-36 compare the change in WPS and the peer districts' transportation costs over time, with and without property expenses, respectively. The second exhibit provides a better ongoing expenditure comparison due to the removal of large, single year expenses (typically school buses). In either exhibit, in most years, WPS spent the least overall on transportation. Including property expenses, the district's increase in transportation spending was below the peer average.

Exhibit 5-35
Comparison of Transportation Costs over Time (Including Property Expenses)

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Wewoka	\$145,657	\$153,853	\$189,244	\$118,080	\$208,163	42.9%▲
Atoka	\$275,798	\$288,898	\$273,601	\$239,381	\$642,674	133.0%▲
Haskell	\$286,346	\$167,506	\$545,933	\$362,295	\$475,118	65.9%▲
Haworth	\$359,348	\$407,171	\$329,219	\$376,965	\$401,606	11.8%▲
Porter	\$161,420	\$184,916	\$137,477	\$153,271	\$471,572	192.1%▲
Vian	\$477,366	\$455,922	\$369,744	\$397,449	\$391,711	(17.9%)▼
Peer Average	\$312,055	\$300,882	\$331,195	\$305,872	\$476,536	52.7%▲

Source: SDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures, All Funds, 2014 through 2019, and Prismatic calculations

Excluding property expenses, WPS transportation expenses were still generally the lowest of the peers. However, WPS expenses have increased at a higher rate than all but one of the peers.

Exhibit 5-36
Comparison of Transportation over Time (Excluding Property Expenses)

Entity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Percent Change
Wewoka	\$145,657	\$153,853	\$127,244	\$118,080	\$208,163	42.9%▲
Atoka	\$273,780	\$288,898	\$266,596	\$239,381	\$336,152	22.8%▲
Haskell	\$286,346	\$167,316	\$272,617	\$268,449	\$261,568	(8.7%)▼
Haworth	\$351,151	\$255,973	\$225,542	\$268,801	\$291,420	(17.0%)▼
Porter	\$161,420	\$142,916	\$137,477	\$153,271	\$471,572	192.1%▲
Vian	\$477,366	\$455,922	\$369,744	\$342,447	\$330,779	(30.7%)▼
Peer Average	\$310,012	\$262,205	\$254,395	\$254,470	\$338,298	9.1%▲

Source: SDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures, All Funds, 2014 through 2019, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-37 provides a comparison of cost per rider per day in WPS and the peers for 2018-19. As shown, WPS had the second-highest cost per student, despite spending the least overall on transportation.

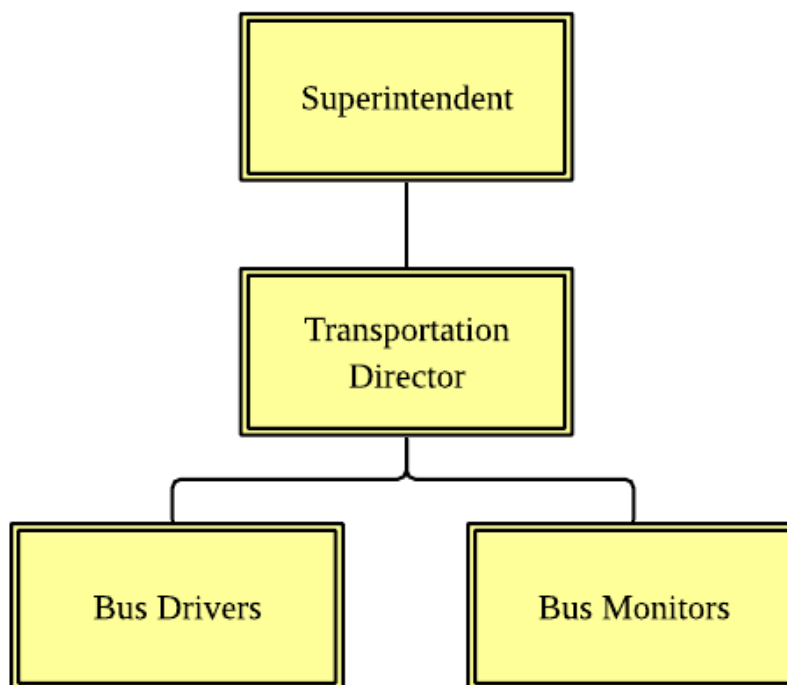
Exhibit 5-37
Comparison of Cost per Rider per Day, 2018-19

Entity	Total Annual Operating Cost	ADH	Attendance Days	Overall Cost per Rider per Day
Wewoka	\$208,163	202	160	\$6.44
Atoka	\$336,152	799	164	\$2.57
Haskell	\$261,568	500	168	\$3.11
Haworth	\$291,420	501	146	\$3.98
Porter	\$471,572	445	160	\$6.62
Vian	\$330,779	820	176	\$2.29
Peer Average	\$338,298	613	163	\$3.39

Source: SDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures, All Funds, 2018-19 and Prismatic calculations

The transportation department organizational structure is shown **Exhibit 5-38**. The district has 14 Oklahoma Commercial Driver's License (CDL) certified drivers to operate school buses. Of the 14, three are regular route drivers while the other 11 are utilized on an as-needed basis.

Exhibit 5-38
WPS Transportation Organization



Source: Created by Prismatic, November 2020

Before the start of each school year and before drivers are permitted to drive a school bus, they must submit to a full SDE review of in-service training. WPS then reviews the licenses for proper endorsement and infraction history. WPS policy mandates that any traffic infraction must be reported to the transportation director immediately.

As mandated by the SDE policy and Oklahoma law, the WPS transportation department holds two information/safety meetings each school year. The first is held before the start of the school year; the second is held midway through the year. During the first in-service, employees receive a copy of the original bus routes, update all pertinent employee information, receive bus assignments, and attend classes on transportation policy and procedure. The second in-service is held to review policies and to address any concerns that have arisen. Per state requirements, there must be at least four hours of in-service training annually; at least two hours must cover these subjects:

- Adjusting Bus Mirrors/Danger Zones
- Picking Up and Discharging Passengers
- Turnabout Maneuvers and Backing the Bus
- Activity Trip Procedures/Night Driving Safety
- Railroad Crossing Procedures
- Sound Driving Practices
- Bus Evacuation Procedures
- Bus Evacuation Procedures on Activity Trips
- Student Discipline on the Bus
- Transportation of Special Needs Students
- Evacuation Procedures for a Special Needs School Bus
- Hazardous Weather Procedures for Bus Drivers
- Bullying: Recognition, Reporting, and Prevention
- Evaluation of Bus Routes and Pick Up/Discharge Areas

FINDING 5-22

WPS is organized with separate director-level positions for maintenance and transportation. Given the size of WPS, this is more human resources than needed. In particular, the WPS transportation operation is fairly small.

Historically, WPS has functioned successfully with one person serving as the director of maintenance and transportation. The move to create a separate director of transportation position at WPS was implemented about seven years ago. Among WPS' peer districts, some follow the single director of maintenance and transportation model, while others do not:

-
- Vian – full-time positions for both maintenance and transportation director;
 - Atoka – full-time maintenance director, while transportation director is also a history teacher;
 - Haworth – full-time positions for both maintenance and transportation director;
 - Porter – one full-time director of maintenance and transportation with a maintenance assistant; and
 - Haskell – full-time positions for both maintenance and transportation director.

It is a best practice to staff an organization as leanly as possible. This is particularly true in school districts where public funds are often limited. The management approach of Six Sigma embraces lean staffing as a method to achieve optimal performance.”³⁷

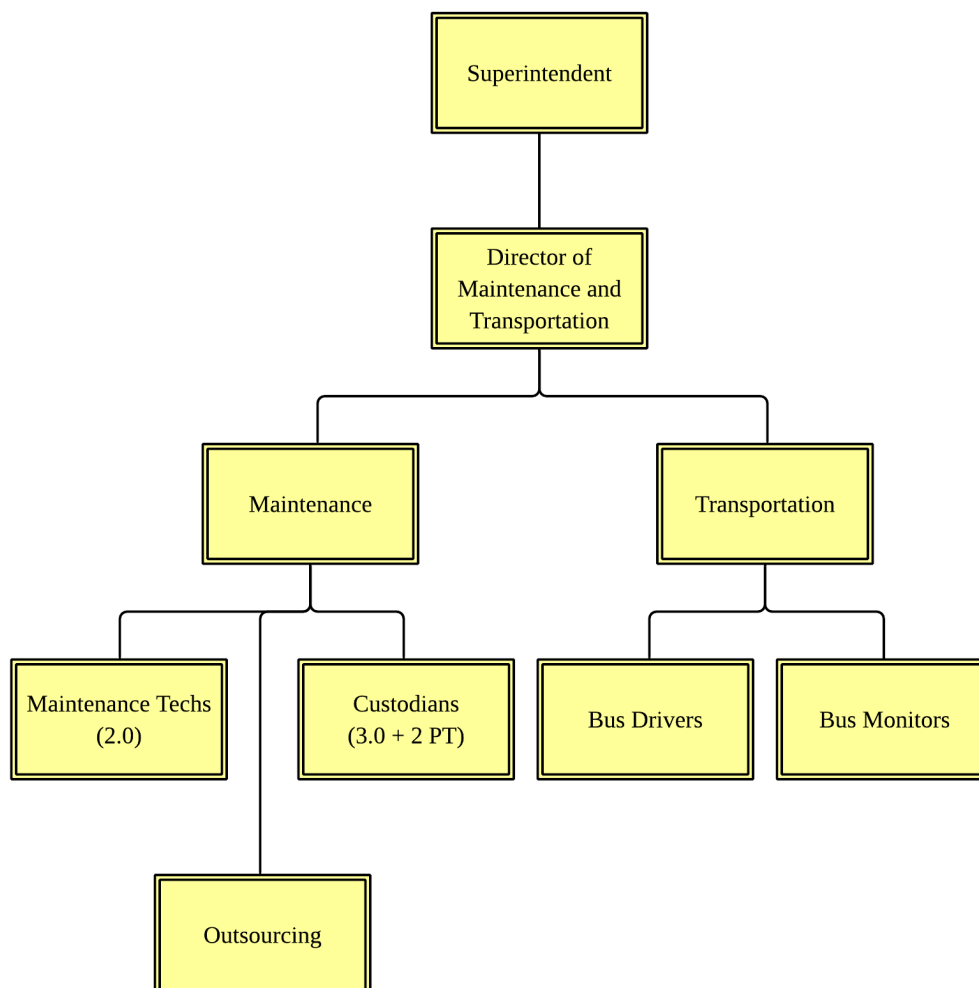
RECOMMENDATION

Consolidate the reports for maintenance, custodial services, transportation, and outsourcing under one director of maintenance and transportation.

The elimination of one director position and consolidation under one director position would streamline several support services areas. **Exhibit 5-39** shows the proposed organization.

³⁷ [A Lean Approach to Staffing Brings Optimal Performance \(isixsigma.com\)](http://isixsigma.com)

Exhibit 5-39
Proposed WPS Support Operations Organization



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2021

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates the savings to be that of one director position, plus fringe benefits, for a total of \$47,361.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Consolidate maintenance and transportation under one director.	\$47,361	\$47,361	\$47,361	\$47,361	\$47,361

FINDING 5-23

In just his second year in the position, the transportation director has improved the efficiency of transportation operations in several areas. This includes complying with SDE standards, bus routing, and scheduling emergency substitute drivers.

The transportation director has reorganized the file system and organized the working area of the maintenance shop. Previously, records management was generally left undone, or confined to Post-It throughout the shop area. The transportation director has also integrated several Oklahoma State Department of Education manuals and publications into a learning library of resources for the pupil transportation operation.

During the onsite visit to the transportation facility, the consulting team observed the manner in which the shop area was re-organized. It is currently laid out for ease of work and to have the supplies at the ready (**Exhibits 5-40**).

Exhibit 5-40
Organized WPS Transportation Shop

Front Center Storage Area



Rear Bay Maintenance Storage



Air Compressor Station



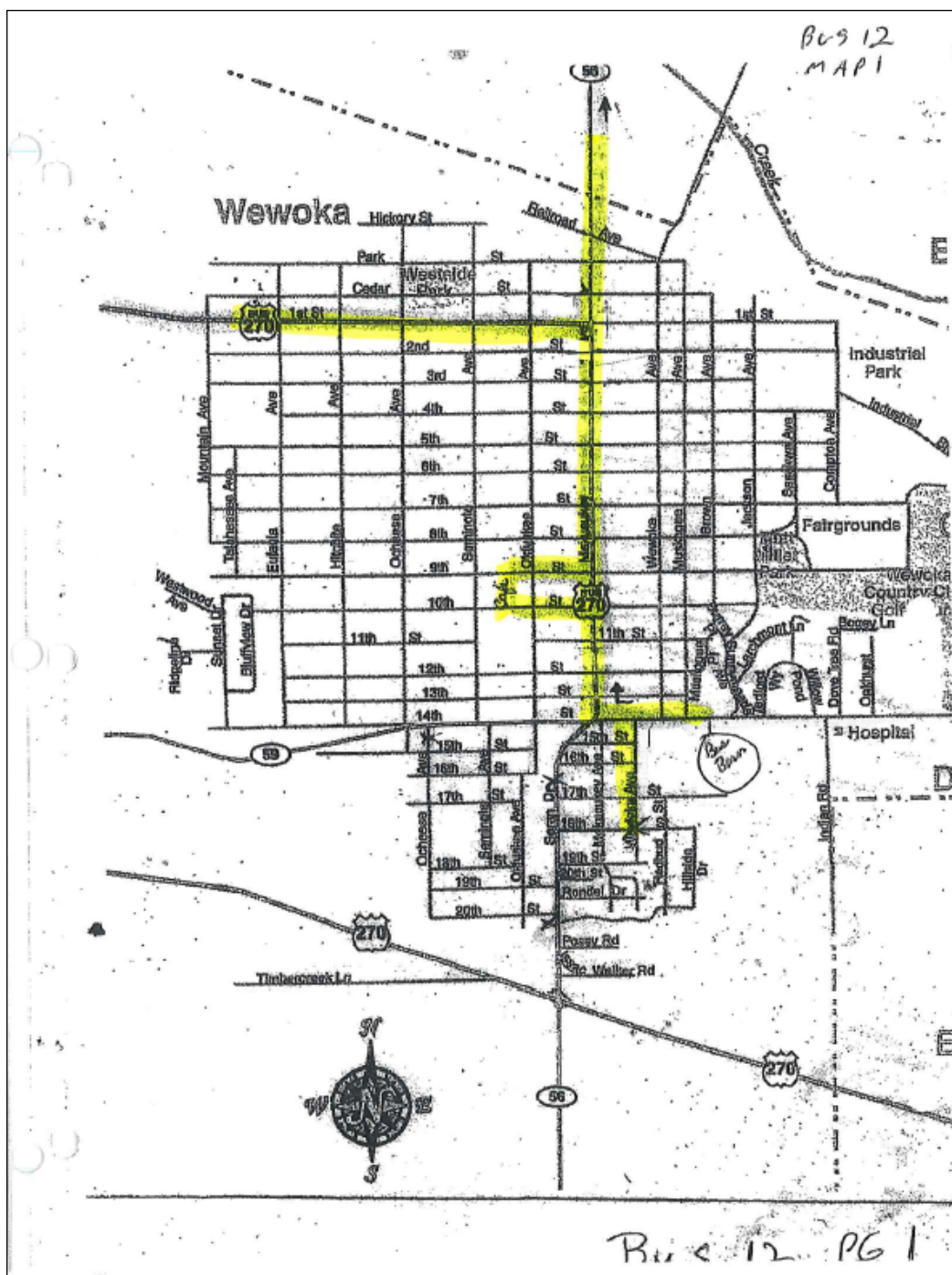
Repair Order Board



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

The transportation director also made improvements to bus routes. Over the last two years the director has streamlined the routes to be more efficient and charted each route with a base map and turn-by-turn direction sheet (**Exhibits 5-41** and **5-42**). This was an improvement over previous route documentation.

Exhibit 5-41
WPS Bus 12 Base Map



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Exhibit 5-42 WPS Bus 12 Turn-by-Turn Directions

Bus 12 Rdut intown	
Stop	Direction From The Bus Barn
	Left on 14th to Wewoka Street past the light to Ocheese
	Turn Left on Ocheese to address 1401 Ocheese
1	1404 Ocheese
	Turn Left on 16th, then Left on Seminole to 14th
	Turn Right on 14th to the light (Suran)
	Turn Right on Suran to 1st house on the right with wood fence
2	House with wood fence on the Right side just past the stop light
	Forward past 20th to next Address 1727 Suran
3	1727 Suran dr (White house on the Right)
	Forward just past Hair Solon to A turn around spot
	Turn around back down Suran to 18th
	Turn Right on 18th to Mekusukey
4	Corner of 18th and Mekusukey
	Turn Left on Mekusukey to to 14th
	Turn Right on 14th, past bus barn to Willow pond
5	Corner of 14th and Willow Pond
6	Corner of 14th and Oakhurst
7	Address 700 E 14th on the Right
	Turn Right at the -Y- on to Dixy leese to Address 13037 Dixy leese
8	13037 Dixy leese
	Take the curve Left, past stop sign (367.2) to NS 368
	Turn Left on NS 368 to Address
9	12969 NS 368
	Forward to 14th street Turn Left, Past bus barn to The Light (mekusukey)
	Turn Right on Mekusukey out of town past R/R Tracks to 1270.
	Turn Right on 1270 to NS 366
	Turn Left on NS 366 to Address 1269 ns 366
10	1269 NS 366 on the Left
	Forward to EW 126 (make a sharp Right turn on to a gravel road)
	Stop at house Across from Address 12620.
11	House across from Address 12620 on the right side.
	Drop off Elementary / Drop Off Middle School

Source: WPS Transportation Office, November 2020

COMMENDATION

The WPS transportation director has improved the efficiency of the transportation operation by maintaining necessary records, re-organizing the shop area, incorporating SDE forms, and improving bus routes.

FINDING 5-24

The transportation department has an acceptable understanding of the special needs students it transports. The department works often with special education staff to best meet students' needs.

WPS at present staffs one special-needs bus to serve nine students. Both the bus driver and bus aide have received training on the interaction or intervention strategies that may occur while transporting students with an individualized education plan (IEP). The transportation director and subsequent drivers receive educational training and information on each student's individual situation, and each driver receives supplementary training to understand, monitor, report, and interact with any student assigned to his or her vehicle.

The transportation program has direct dialogue with the special education program about the students being transported and it receives and fulfills indirect transportation requests on the regular buses. The transportation department participates in the individualized education plan (IEP) meetings, and the transportation program does have direct input in the transportation-related outcomes of the meeting.

COMMENDATION

The WPS transportation department effectively supports the district's special needs students.

FINDING 5-25

School bus drivers do not have a WPS specific procedure/policies manual on the operational functions of the transportation department. Instead, information is generally received by word of mouth or by means of historical practice.

The transportation department does utilize SDE manuals and forms. In addition, several WPS handbooks reference some aspect of bus transportation, but the department lacks a manual focused on WPS transportation.

Organizations only operate effectively when the expectations and procedures are documented. The national Pupil Transportation Safety Institute recommends a transportation department handbook listing the employee roles, responsibilities, and safety procedures for the department. The SOP is critical for the training of new employees in the districts policies and procedures.

As an example, Edmond Public Schools provides its transportation employees with a 52-page handbook that covers all aspects of employment as well as directions on how to pick up and drop off students, road courtesy, and what to do in case of an accident. **Exhibit 5-43** provides the table of contents for the Edmond Handbook.

Exhibit 5-43

EPS Transportation SOP Table of Contents

Table of Contents	
Welcome to Edmond Public Schools Transportation	0
Table of Contents	4
Sexual Harassment	6
Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying	6
Employee Leave	6
Criminal Record Questionnaire	7
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act	8
Evaluation	8
Ethical Conduct Code	8
Dress/Appearance	9
F.M. Radio	9
Inclement Weather	9
Injuries At Work	10
Omnibus Act of 1991(Drug Testing)	10
Performance Expectations	11
Drivers' and Monitors' Section	12
Requirements	14
Responsibilities	14
Assignment of Routes and Activity Trips*	14
Clocking In and Out	14
Time Centre and Payroll	15
Care of Bus	15
Flag Out Procedure	18
Loading and Unloading Students	19
Routes	20
Accidents	20
Student Management	21
Key Procedure	22
Bus Street Use and Parking Procedure at Office	22
Information You Really Need to Know!!! A Practical Guide for the Edmond Public Schools Transportation	
Department	24
Thriving at the Transportation Department	26
Employee Lounge	28
Bus Compound	29
Pick Up/Drop Off	29
Bus Loops	32
High Schools	32
Middle Schools	33
Late Elementary Schools	37
Choice Schools	40
On the Road	41
Road Courtesy	41
Accident Processing	42
Administration	43
POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING FOR DRIVERS	45
Notes	55

Source: EPS Transportation, October 2013

RECOMMENDATION

Create a WPS bus driver's notebook that includes pertinent transportation departmental and operational information.

The transportation director should develop and distribute a drivers' notebook. General topics covered in the manual should include:

- Mission Statement / Vision / Goals
- Organizational Chart
- School Bus Operator Qualifications
- Driving Record Standards
- Driver Duties and Responsibilities
- Disciplinary Guidelines
- Student Conduct Form
- Student Management Techniques
- Cellular Telephone Use
- School Bus Idling
- Annual Payroll Schedule
- Dress Code
- School Bus Crash/Accidents
- Incident Reporting Procedure
- Student Injuries and Illnesses
- Bus Stops and Walk-to-Stop Distances
- Field Trips
- Loading and Unloading Students
- Certificate of Absence
- Leave Request
- Employee Agreement Form

Distribution of the manual should be given during the mandated in-services held each school year and to any new employees throughout the year. The transportation director should also set aside time during the in-service to brief and instruct employees on the notebook, then give staff time to ask questions and seek clarification.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-26

Bus routes are pre-driven for efficiency within the prescribed attendance zone. Currently, due to COVID-19, routes have been adjusted to reduce ridership and to be more efficient.

According to staff, the WPS bus routes were basically untouched for many years. A pattern of driving the roads and picking up students along a set corridor was the normal process. In the past two years, bus routes have been mapped with a set of specific directions to each stop.

Due to COVID-19, WPS has adjusted its routes to be safer for students. During a typical morning in transportation, bus routes are tiered, beginning with the elementary students (*K-6 @ 7:15 to 8:00*). Once those students are released from the buses, each bus is then taken to a secure location and prepped, cleaned, and disinfected for the second route tier with middle and high school students (*7-12 @ 8:15 to 8:55*).

COMMENDATION**WPS has developed safe and efficient bus routes.**

The WPS transportation director and administrative team are further commended for successfully managing safe bus routing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FINDING 5-27

Drivers are required to check their bus for sleeping students and lost items at the end of each route assignment. This safety measure ensures that no child is left on the bus.

The WPS transportation department has instituted a policy, via the SDE (**Exhibit 5-44**), of physically walking the bus at the end of each assigned route session to ensure that no child is left on the bus. Several buses currently are equipped with a buzzer alarm system that requires a driver to walk to the rear of the bus for de-activation.

Exhibit 5-44
Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual

Students Left on the Bus – Being left alone on a bus is a dangerous and traumatic experience for a child. When your bus is in a safe location check your bus after your last drop off, make sure students are not sleeping or hiding before returning to the bus barn. Doing a complete child check after every route is very important. Always make the check.

Source: SDE, Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual, Chapter 5, Loading and Unloading, Page 37, November 2020

COMMENDATION**WPS has developed good policies and procedures for ensuring that a student is not left on an unattended bus.****FINDING 5-28**

The district frequently lacks sufficient drivers for its routes and trips, despite having 14 staff members with CDL credentials. The lack of available drivers is so acute, the transportation director also routinely drives route buses. This is an inefficient use of staffing resources.

Currently, the transportation department has only two staff members working as bus drivers who are only bus drivers. The other 12 district staff with CDL credentials also have other assignments, including crossing guard, custodian, and transportation director. On an average day, the district needs three drivers for its regular education routes and one driver for its special education route, then some additional drivers for activity trips. At the time of the onsite work, the transportation director was driving a regular education route daily.

RECOMMENDATION**Develop a larger pool of school bus drivers.**

Driver recruitment should be ongoing, with the goal of having at least one substitute driver available each day to cover runs as needed. Driver recruitment tactics that have been successful in other districts include:

- referrals from current drivers (best way);
- sign on bus facility fence;
- contacts with local fire department and law enforcement;
- PTA contacts;
- flyers on cars in parking lots;
- newspaper ads;
- recruitment table at student enrollment (at schools);
- parked bus with recruitment banner/drivers with flyers;
- a finder's bonus for staff that recruit a new driver;
- place posters around town;
- letters sent home with student riders;
- ads in local gazettes/weekly free papers;
- billboards;
- positive news articles regarding school busing;
- church newsletters; and
- recruitment table at local shopping center.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-29

WPS has used bond funding to replace aging buses. The superintendent currently plans to replace one school bus a year, until all buses older than 15 years are removed from the fleet. This standard will ensure buses are compliant with evolving regulations and vehicle specifications.

Excluding Bus 14, which is permanently out of service, the average age of the fleet at the time of the onsite work was 14.4 years (**Exhibit 5-45**). Four buses were older than 15 years. During the

last budget cycle the superintendent obtained funding to purchase two new buses. In June 2021, the new buses will replace Buses 18 and 20, which will be returned to the Head Start Program.

Exhibit 5-45
WPS Transportation Fleet Age

Inventory	Year of Manufacture	Age (Years)
Bus 1	2009	12
Bus 2	2009	12
Bus 3	2010	11
Bus 7	2014	7
Bus 12	2009	12
Bus 14*	1996	16
Bus 18	2005	22
Mini Bus 5	1999	22
Mini Bus 15	1999	16
Mini Bus 20	2005	12
	Average	14.4

Source: WPS Transportation Office, November 2020

**permanently out of service*

Rotating and replacing an aging fleet with newer buses:

- reduces operational costs, as newer buses need fewer repairs;
- improves fleet reliability, as there are typically fewer breakdowns
- improves the average fuel mileage of the fleet, as newer buses are more fuel-efficient; and
- helps ensure the district is meeting the latest bus specifications.

COMMENDATION

WPS has replaced aging buses, likely reducing operational costs and improving fleet reliability.

FINDING 5-30

The district lacks modern equipment to access the undercarriage of a small bus and support vehicles in order to perform routine maintenance. This negatively impacts the efficiency and safety of WPS staff.

General bus or support vehicle maintenance is done in the transportation/maintenance building. The district lacks a means to lift vehicles for minor repairs or general maintenance on the underside of the small buses and support vehicles.

Typically, all major repairs to the WPS fleet vehicles are sent out to a third-party repair shop or a local vendor. But district staff does handle some preventive maintenance or minor maintenance, such as oil changes. Because the district lacks a lift, district staff currently uses a “Creeper” to access the undercarriage (**Exhibit 5-46**). This is an antiquated standard in automotive repair.

Exhibit 5-46
Sample Automotive Creeper



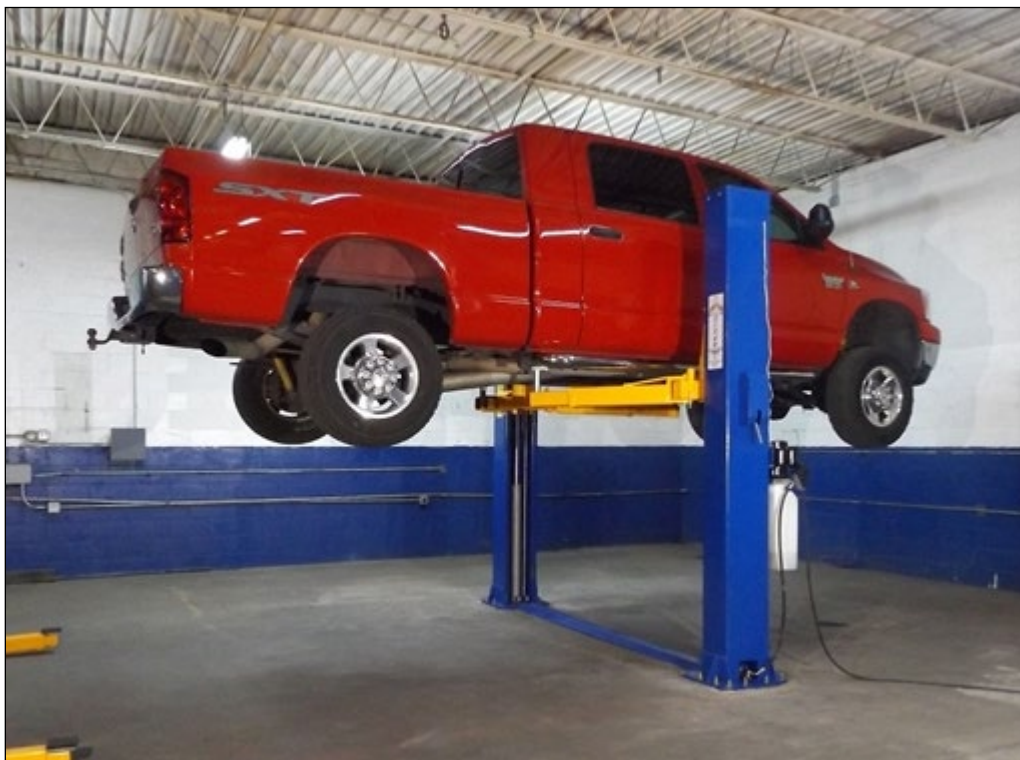
Source: Prismatic file photo, November 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Purchase a lift system for support vehicle maintenance.

The district should upgrade its facility to include a working vehicle lift, to better perform maintenance and repairs on the fleet support vehicles and the small buses. An example of a vehicle lift is shown in **Exhibit 5-47**.

Exhibit 5-47
Example of a Vehicle Lift



Source: Prismatic file photo, November 2020

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates the cost of a suitable vehicle lift to range between \$4,000 and \$7,500.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Purchase a vehicle lift.	(\$7,500)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 5-31

The consulting team's bus inspections found only a few mechanical problems, as well as some problems with bus cleanliness. Bus drivers are required to clean and inspect their buses on a daily basis. WPS staff noted that buses used for field and athletic trips often had a dirty exterior appearance.

The consulting team inspected most WPS buses and found only a few areas in need of attention (**Exhibit 5-48**). Bus 15 was out of district for repairs during the onsite visit. Bus 14 has been placed "Out of Service" due to extreme floor rot and should not be used under any circumstances.

Exhibit 5-48
Bus Inspections Completed by the Consulting Team

	Type C					Type B			Type A	
Bus	1	2	7	12	18	5	15	20	3	14
Mirrors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>O</i>	✓	✓	✓
Glass	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>u</i>	✓	✓	✓
Tires	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>t</i>	✓	✓	✓
Body Damage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	<i>N/R</i>
Seats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>f</i>	✓	✓	✓
Flooring	✓	<i>N/R</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>o</i>	✓	✓	<i>N/R</i>
Emergency Door	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>r</i>	✓	✓	✓
Clean Inside	✓	<i>N/R</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Clean Outside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>R</i>	✓	✓	✓
Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>e</i>	✓	✓	✓
First Aid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>p</i>	✓	✓	✓
Body Fluid Kit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>a</i>	✓	✓	✓
Triangles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>i</i>	✓	✓	✓
Placard (Sleeping Kids)	<i>N/R</i>	✓	✓	<i>N/R</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/R</i>	<i>r</i>	✓	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/R</i>

Index: ✓ = OK, N/R = Needs Review, N/A = Not Applicable

Source: Prismatic, November 2020

WPS bus drivers assigned to drive a school buses are required to perform a pre-trip inspection each day of use. The current daily preventive maintenance inspection form (**Exhibit 5-49**) is accepted by the SDE Student Transportation Division but does not reference the cleanliness of the bus exterior. Due to the conditions in the gravel parking lot and unpaved roads within the WPS school district absolute cleanliness is nearly impossible (**Exhibit 5-50**).

[illegible]

RIGHT SIDE	INSIDE THE BUS	DRIVERS AREA	NOTE:	(POINTS)
(state you would check all the same, except for a few exceptions)	service floor steps hand rail light put key in ignition	driver seat seat belt student mirror outside mirrors fans visor	(LIGHTS ARE) CLEAN CLEAR NO CRACKS SECURLEY MOUNTED	PLUS 1 EACH ITEM MINUS 1 MISSED OPEN BACK DOOR IS 5 POINTS
fuel cap (look under) no leaks fuel tank fuel tank cage exhaust pipe pipe hangers drive shaft u-bolts shocks frame differential (no leaks) safety hangers	alles seats windows emergency windows emergency labled bumper guards back door (open) top hatch emergency first aid-blood kits spare fuses fire exstinguisher triangles seat belt cutters	windshield wiper/wash door with handle (start engine) instrument gauges (abs/wait to start and break pressure oil pressure trans tempature voltage fuel, rpm, mph left side instruments (noise/inner lights pump/heater/ defrost student master switch head lights hazards blinker indicator horn steering wheel (2 in. play) (check all lights outside of bus) pump breaks 3X (hold 5 sec.) shifter emergency break (flashers/ put in reverse buzzer/ don't move) (simulate) (bus in drive drive 5 mph, apply breaks)	(GLASS IS) CLEAN CLEAR NO CRACKS NO ILLEGAL STICKERS (MIRRORS) CLEAN CLEAR NO CRACKS SECURLEY MOUNTED PROPERLY AJUSTED (HOSES ARE) NO LEAKS NO CRACKS WRAPPED CONDUIT SECURLEY MOUNTED (BOLTED ITEMS ARE) SECURLEY MOUNTED NO MISSING BOLTS	BREAK CHECK IS 5 POINTS EMERGENCY BREAK CHECK IS 5 POINTS LIGHTS CHECK OUT SIDE OF BUS IS 5 POINTS



PRISMATIC
SERVICES, INC.

Exhibit 5-50
WPS Gravel Parking Lot



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Exhibit 5-51 provides the results of the consulting team's inspection. Bus 2 was found to have debris in the floor. Buses 1, 2, and 12 were each found to have the exit door blocked by a trash can. Trash cans should be secured at the front of the bus at all times and emptied on a daily basis. There was some minor damage to some buses and several that were overly dirty.

**Exhibit 5-51
Results of Bus Inspections**

Bus 1

Front



Wear on Hood



Damaged Headlight



Emergency Door Blocked



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

**Exhibit 5-51 (continued)
Results of Bus Inspections**

Bus 2: Wear on Hood



Bus 2: Debris in Center Aisle



Bus 2: Emergency Door Blocked



Bus 12: Damaged Front Bumper



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

Exhibit 5-51 (continued)
Results of Bus Inspections

Bus 12: Dirty Rear



Bus 12: Trash Bag in Aisle



Source: Prismatic, November 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Regularly clean buses.

The district should wash buses used for activity trips more frequently. Only three of the five Type C buses are routed daily. The district should set up a rotation among the five to be able to regularly wash them. The WPS transportation department should spot check, at a minimum, two times a week for bus cleanliness. This spot check should include cleaning aisles, clearing exits, and noting damage in need of repair.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-32

During the site visit, there was no communication with any school bus while on an assigned route. This reduces the ability of the district to accurately know what is going on while buses are in operation and to assist drivers when needed.

During the site visit, the consulting team noted of a lack of outward communication to and from route buses in operation. Drivers are not allowed to use the cell phone for communication without securing the bus and contacting the proper authority. WPS school buses are not equipped with any form of secondary communication. Once the bus leaves the transportation facility, there is no communication to a central command, nor do the drivers have a way to communicate to

each other about road conditions, emergencies, or their locations, what calls may have been received, or any business matter that may pertain to the routing operation.

Today's radio technology is relatively user friendly and only requires a charging station at a central location, and a mounting system with a handset for the buses. **Exhibit 5-52** shows an example radio system and its effective associated working time.

Exhibit 5-52
Example Two-Way Radio



Source: <https://www.techsounded.com/best-long-range-two-way-radios/>

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a two-way radio network for emergency situations.

The district should invest in a two-way radio system and incorporate them into the daily operation. Once purchased, the transportation department should establish a set of radio codes to be circulated to the entire district and provide each administrator the ability to communicate with the driver(s) during morning and afternoon routing operations. Transportation department staff and bus drivers should then be trained in their use.

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates the cost of the radios to be approximately \$175 each.

Recommendation	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Install eight two-way radios.	(\$1,400)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Appendix A:
Staff Survey Results

Staff Survey

*Surveys Completed: 66
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	56%
6 – 10 years	18%
11 – 15 years	4%
16 – 20 years	9%
21 years or more	13%
What is your role in the school district?	
School Administrator	13%
Classroom Teacher	51%
Other Certified (Librarian, Guidance Counselor)	4%
School Aide/Nurse	0%
Instructional Aide	4%
Other Support Staff (Cafeteria, Office, Custodial)	29%

Survey Questions

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The district has a long-range strategic plan that guides the decision-making process.	20%	56%	23%	2%	0%
2	I understand the district's policies and procedures.	24%	62%	12%	2%	0%
3	I have an accurate, written job description to guide me in my work.	24%	47%	17%	12%	0%
4	I understand the district's organizational structure.	24%	58%	12%	6%	0%
5	I know to whom I report for all my job functions.	42%	53%	5%	0%	0%
6	I understand the district's salary schedule and justification for paying extra-duty stipends.	29%	47%	20%	3%	2%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7	I receive adequate training overall to perform my job functions.	35%	53%	8%	5%	0%
8	I received an annual personnel evaluation last year.	37%	28%	22%	12%	2%
9	District staff works well together.	30%	60%	6%	3%	0%
10	The district has an adequate number of staff to carry out its operations.	16%	51%	14%	14%	5%
11	The district actively recruits high quality staff to fill vacant positions.	22%	46%	21%	10%	2%
12	The district has a pool of quality substitutes to fill positions when necessary.	5%	31%	34%	24%	6%
13	The district effectively communicates with parents and community members.	25%	65%	6%	3%	0%
14	The central office effectively communicates with district staff.	21%	68%	3%	8%	0%
15	The superintendent effectively communicates with district staff.	48%	48%	3%	2%	0%
16	The principals effectively communicate with their staff.	37%	51%	5%	8%	0%
17	The teachers effectively communicate with students and parents.	27%	51%	14%	6%	2%
18	The district effectively uses volunteers to assist with meeting district goals.	11%	37%	48%	3%	2%
19	The district gives student needs a high priority when making major decisions.	35%	53%	10%	2%	0%
20	School board members listen to the opinions of parents and the community members.	16%	35%	47%	2%	0%
21	The school board understands the needs of the district.	13%	47%	34%	6%	0%
22	The superintendent is accessible to district staff.	56%	40%	2%	0%	2%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	The principals are accessible to staff.	52%	45%	2%	2%	0%
24	The teachers are accessible to students and parents.	45%	50%	0%	3%	2%
25	Teachers often collaborate on projects related to the curriculum.	32%	42%	18%	6%	2%
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).	23%	40%	29%	6%	2%
27	The district's curriculum is aligned from grade to grade and from class to class.	15%	45%	26%	11%	3%
28	Teachers have scope and sequence documents that determine what is taught and when.	18%	36%	36%	8%	2%
29	Test data from district-adopted benchmarks and mandated end-of-year tests are used to improve the district's curriculum.	20%	37%	37%	7%	0%
30	Teachers effectively use student data to improve instructional practices.	22%	37%	37%	3%	2%
31	The principals are effective instructional leaders.	27%	58%	10%	5%	0%
32	There is adequate high-quality professional development for the principals and teachers.	25%	62%	12%	2%	0%
33	Non-teaching staff has opportunities for professional development relevant to their responsibilities.	25%	52%	20%	3%	0%
34	At least some of the required annual professional development is offered online.	38%	57%	5%	0%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35	The needs of the special education students are being met.	17%	58%	18%	3%	3%
36	The needs of the gifted and talented are being met.	10%	45%	31%	14%	0%
37	Teachers adequately prepare students for state mandated tests.	14%	52%	22%	12%	0%
38	Students are adequately prepared for college, if they choose that path.	10%	41%	29%	19%	0%
39	Students receive timely information on college entrance requirements and scholarship offers.	17%	50%	33%	0%	0%
40	Students receive adequate vocational training to prepare them for the workforce, if they choose that path.	19%	59%	22%	0%	0%
41	The district provides students with adequate counseling services.	26%	55%	14%	5%	0%
42	The school library meets the needs of the teachers and students.	22%	41%	29%	7%	0%
43	District stakeholders provide input into the budgetary process.	9%	22%	66%	3%	0%
44	I understand the district's budgetary process.	7%	38%	50%	4%	2%
45	The district actively applies for competitive state and federal grants.	50%	33%	17%	0%	0%
46	The district wisely manages its revenues and expenditures.	26%	48%	26%	0%	0%
47	The district has a long-range plan to address facility needs.	28%	40%	33%	0%	0%
48	The district's facilities are well-maintained.	29%	60%	7%	3%	0%
49	The district's facilities are kept clean.	40%	52%	3%	5%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
50	The district has an energy management program in place to minimize energy consumption.	9%	29%	59%	4%	0%
51	There are facility and/or equipment concerns throughout the campus.	12%	42%	30%	14%	2%
52	The district's facilities are secure from unwanted visitors.	31%	60%	4%	5%	0%
53	I know what to do during a crisis or an emergency.	33%	61%	4%	2%	0%
54	Student discipline is well-maintained.	18%	54%	11%	14%	4%
55	Drugs are a problem in this district.	4%	19%	44%	28%	5%
56	Student bullying is a problem in this district.	0%	19%	32%	47%	2%
57	Adult bullying is a problem in this district.	0%	7%	23%	54%	16%
58	I often purchase a meal from the cafeteria.	5%	21%	5%	25%	43%
59	Students seem to like the cafeteria meals.	4%	32%	19%	35%	11%
60	I find the cafeteria meals appealing and appetizing.	0%	33%	35%	18%	14%
61	I understand how to use technology as it relates to my job functions.	32%	61%	5%	2%	0%
62	District staff and administrators often use email to communicate with one another.	39%	56%	4%	2%	0%
63	The district has adequate technology to support its operations.	32%	49%	12%	5%	2%
64	When necessary, the district's technology equipment is quickly repaired or serviced.	29%	50%	9%	9%	4%
65	Technology is readily accessible and easy to use in the performance of my job duties.	29%	58%	5%	5%	2%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
66	The district's technology equipment is often used past its useful lifespan.	14%	23%	35%	26%	2%
67	The district website is a useful tool for staff, parents, and students.	18%	40%	30%	5%	7%
68	Buses arrive and depart on time each day.	23%	53%	23%	2%	0%
69	There are enough working buses to meet the needs of the district.	16%	44%	35%	2%	4%

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?

- Always having a problem with internet, I love how everyone acts as if they're family!
- I feel that the district is doing good with what they have, emphasizing the high school building. This building has been kept up very well for being such an old facility. It would be nice if all of the very old carpets could be replaced with laminate flooring due to the students eating and spilling their drinks in the classroom. The carpet has a lot of allergens and the odor from the carpet leaves the classroom with a terrible smell. My real main concern is how to get the students, in-class, and virtual to be accountable for themselves in regrade to their grades.
- Communication between administration and faculty has improved over the past couple of years. The facilities look good and are kept clean. Internet is sporadic in some rooms in my building.
- Need better internet accessibility.
- Need better internet connectivity!
- Need proper training on programs used by this district relay information sooner as to give adequate time to adjust accordingly.
- This district has improved every year since I have been employed here. I am very pleased with the improvements the superintendent has implemented.
- The staff and administration is great! I love working here. My only issue is that I have rarely had working internet for my students in my classroom, and all of our assignments need to be virtual. When asked about it, [redacted] always acts too busy to help.

- This district does exceedingly well in meeting the physiological needs of the students (providing food, clothes, and facilities for showering and washing clothes.) This district could improve on aligning curriculum to state standards, quality of instruction in the classrooms, adopting more consistent student discipline policies, communication with parents, providing an updated website that is more user-friendly for parents and stakeholders, public relations in general, and hiring and retaining individuals who are certified in their area of instruction.
- I think we are doing about the best we could considering the circumstances.
- The school is doing very well by modernizing the classroom. The teachers need more training on classroom management, it is leading to rampant behavior problems.
- I feel like our district is the strongest it's ever been since I began my employment.
- Hire more special education teachers.

Appendix B:
Parent Survey Results

Parent Survey

*Surveys Completed: 41
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.	8%	28%	55%	10%	0%
2	School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the district.	10%	41%	36%	10%	3%
3	The Superintendent is a respected and effective leader.	28%	48%	20%	5%	0%
4	District and school staffs are accessible to parents.	38%	50%	13%	0%	0%
5	I feel welcome at my child's school.	48%	35%	13%	5%	0%
6	My child feels welcome and accepted at school.	43%	48%	8%	3%	0%
7	I receive timely communications from my child's teachers regarding his/her progress in school.	40%	50%	8%	0%	3%
8	My child's school encourages parents to volunteer, if they are able.	18%	35%	35%	13%	0%
9	Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	10%	45%	28%	13%	5%
10	Education is the main priority in our school district.	33%	50%	10%	5%	3%
11	Students learn the necessary material to be prepared for the next grade.	23%	55%	18%	3%	3%
12	I am satisfied with the education my child receives.	28%	55%	10%	8%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13	Teachers are held accountable for ensuring that students learn.	13%	63%	23%	3%	0%
14	I receive enough information from the district regarding academic expectations for my child (i.e. student testing, retention, etc.).	15%	58%	18%	10%	0%
15	Our school can be described as a "good place to learn."	30%	53%	15%	0%	3%
16	The district spends its money wisely.	10%	28%	58%	5%	0%
17	The districts asks the community for input when developing its budget.	3%	13%	73%	10%	3%
18	My child's school is clean.	33%	53%	15%	0%	0%
19	My child's school is attractive and welcoming.	33%	55%	10%	0%	3%
20	My child's school is well maintained.	28%	63%	10%	0%	0%
21	District facilities are open for community use.	8%	18%	65%	5%	5%
22	My child feels safe and secure at school.	28%	59%	13%	0%	0%
23	Student bullying is a problem in this district.	0%	21%	53%	24%	3%
24	Drugs are a problem in this district.	3%	18%	63%	13%	5%
25	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	13%	73%	13%	3%	0%
26	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered in my child's school.	5%	53%	38%	5%	0%
27	The district website is a useful tool for me and/or my child.	10%	48%	30%	10%	3%
28	I regularly use technology to keep up-to-date on my child's education (emailing teachers, online gradebook, etc.).	15%	65%	10%	10%	0%
29	My child regularly uses technology at school.	18%	58%	23%	3%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30	Teachers know how to use technology in the classroom.	23%	50%	28%	0%	0%
31	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	5%	48%	45%	3%	0%
32	The school lunch period is long enough for my child to eat.	8%	45%	40%	5%	3%
33	My child likes the food served in the cafeteria.	3%	38%	20%	30%	10%
34	The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	5%	43%	45%	3%	5%
35	My child's school bus runs on time nearly every day.	3%	28%	60%	10%	0%
36	My child feels safe riding the bus.	3%	43%	55%	0%	0%
37	Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the bus.	3%	28%	65%	5%	0%
38	The length of my child's bus ride is reasonable.	8%	38%	53%	3%	0%

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?

- Communication has always lacked here.
- The reason for the disagree on parent volunteers is because of the virus. My children do not ride the bus either. Wewoka is a good school.
- An area you could improve is to meet the states minimum requirements on education.
- I feel parents should have been better informed of how the Virtual system worked. The only instruction I received was the passwords, believing my child was up on what he was to be doing on virtual and how it worked. Several phone calls and with the help of his teacher, we are slowly getting there. By observation, this may be a issue with other parents and children falling behind. Some parents are not up to date on technology as others. Also, I believe the investment of clear plastic shields attached around the individual student desk could be a long term benefit to reduce not only COVID-19 but other potential illnesses and diseases and will promote a healthier school environment and increase school attendance by a reduction in close contact exposure. Teacher and students would be able to see and communicate easier,

less distraction for students who have trouble focusing, limit exposure. They can be easily cleaned at end of class by the students as a educational practice in health and prevention. With this practice, it would limit exposure, and the risk of whole classes or school shutdowns. I believe this could be completed through a research grant and might help our school systems and families get back to some normalcy. Please consider.

- The students dislike the food. They complain every day about the food.
- I would to be contacted when my middle school child is falling behind. Students that age need to be responsible but are still quite young and irresponsible.
- I think that Wewoka Public Schools has been doing an excellent job since the beginning of this school year. They made a plan and informed families on what to expect and they keep us updated with everything. I think our school district was one of the few who had and plan and were prepared to get things going early on. I am very pleased with our schools.
- The teachers and administration are great. I feel like all of them are always watching out for my children.
- I don't know a lot about the inside of the school due to COVID. I was only given a tour of the high school before my daughter started. I've not seen the inside of the other schools my children attend. Everyone seems very nice although I cannot say on a lot of the questions since this year of school is very different. I do like online communication, but I don't always see school updates from Facebook and think it would be better to send notes home or mail notices. [redacted] is very communicative and usually calls once a week or so to let me know how my son is doing in 5th grade. That is very nice. He seems like a great teacher. My son loves him. The COVID situation has made my other son's first year at kindergarten strange compared to the other two. It's hard to explain things or communicate with the teacher. Although she is doing a very good job and is responsive to messages. In-person conversations would just be a little easier sometimes and I know right now that's not a great idea.
- I don't know anything about the school because they are not allowed to bring anything but themselves to school. I don't get any notifications until the day of something that is happening
- I'm very proud of the way that our school district was proactive in planning for this school year. The parents were included in every step of the way. I felt that we had a plan to follow well before any other school in our area. I would just like to say that I am pleased with the way that Wewoka Public Schools responded to these unprecedented times due to COVID-19.
- I am pleased with virtual school. Thank you for offering it.

Appendix C:
Student Survey Results

Student Survey

Surveys Completed: 250
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.	20%	52%	21%	6%	2%
2	Students learn the necessary material to be prepared for the next grade.	17%	59%	17%	5%	2%
3	I am being academically prepared for life after high school.	17%	48%	24%	9%	2%
4	Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	18%	45%	25%	8%	4%
5	I knew what to expect on the state tests.	12%	36%	31%	15%	5%
6	There is at least one adult at school to whom I can go when I have a problem.	30%	42%	17%	8%	3%
7	I feel welcome and accepted by other students.	14%	44%	26%	9%	7%
8	I feel welcome and accepted by the adults in this school.	22%	49%	21%	5%	3%
9	The school library meets my needs for books and other resources.	9%	32%	43%	13%	3%
10	I have received sufficient college and/or career counseling.	13%	32%	38%	14%	4%
11	My teachers communicate regularly with my parents about my academic progress.	20%	35%	36%	7%	2%
12	My school is clean.	17%	39%	25%	13%	6%
13	My school is attractive and welcoming.	16%	43%	27%	10%	4%
14	My school building is well maintained.	18%	49%	25%	5%	3%
15	I feel safe and secure at school.	19%	48%	24%	7%	3%
16	Student bullying is a problem in this district.	14%	17%	33%	24%	12%

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	15%	48%	27%	6%	4%
18	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered in this school.	12%	39%	35%	9%	6%
19	Teachers and staff respect students in this school.	20%	42%	23%	11%	3%
20	Drugs are a problem in this school.	9%	8%	36%	27%	21%
21	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	14%	38%	35%	9%	3%
22	I have enough time to eat my lunch each day.	14%	38%	21%	17%	10%
23	I like the food served in the cafeteria.	8%	17%	29%	21%	24%
24	The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	9%	25%	28%	18%	19%
25	The district has made online classes available to students.	34%	52%	13%	0%	0%
26	I regularly use technology to keep up-to-date on schoolwork (emailing teachers, using online gradebook, etc.).	24%	47%	20%	6%	2%
27	I regularly use computers or other technology at school.	28%	52%	15%	4%	0%
28	The district's technology is new enough to be useful to me.	26%	51%	19%	3%	1%
29	Teachers know how to use technology in the classroom.	21%	43%	27%	7%	3%
30	Teachers effectively integrate technology-based resources into instruction, such as online videos.	19%	49%	27%	3%	2%
31	I have regular Internet access at home.	29%	43%	11%	12%	5%
32	My bus runs on time nearly every day.	8%	17%	71%	2%	2%
33	Students feel safe riding the bus.	7%	20%	68%	3%	2%
34	Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the bus.	6%	22%	68%	3%	2%
35	The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	7%	18%	70%	3%	2%

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?

- This school sucks.
- Yes, strongly agree.
- I love this school.
- lfkfvnfjjfjvghjsbr; onfgjw rjngwrinrw Love [redacted]
- We need playground equipment.
- I think we could have more P.E. time for the athlete's future.
- Trash and things like that could be picked up.
- Cafeteria has a great variety it just needs more flavor.
- The best school.
- School.
- Yes it is doing well.
- The 5th grade bathroom is not that clean.
- The benches.
- I don't ride the bus.
- The bullying is bad, too bad.
- In the bathroom.
- Lunch food.
- The school is very clean and I love the school. It teaches me stuff, and stuff I have known at my other school. I love the teachers there, they are really nice and when I need help they will

come and help me, and yeah. The school is doing real good and also I'm online but I know if I do go to school it will be so fun.

- I think that the 5th grade bathrooms could use more color.
- I don't ride a bus I walk or ride in a car.
- Could improve on the food but it's pretty good for now. Also would be nice to do not as much online work and a little more paper work.
- The rest room.
- Our self-paced education system is very helpful for me, I'm graduating a year early.
- No comment.
- There is a Satan worshiper in my class literally and she also is a [deleted] and I think love is love but she is telling me she likes me and she is my friend and nothing more we are only in [deleted] grade.
- I don't ride the bus so I don't know but I hope so on all of them.
- I don't know.
- The boys restroom.
- I do not have anything to say.
- The area is doing good but the food is gross.
- School cool.
- I said no on "do I have time to eat lunch," I said no because we only get 20 min to eat.
- The girl bathroom.
- It can be improved by giving us an open campus for lunch.
- Let the kids that are done with their work get on YouTube.
- No curse words.
- School is hard.
- [deleted]
- BETTER FOOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- Off campus lunch, longer lunch period.
- Can the teachers be more laid back?
- Discipline that's it.
- Should be cleaned better its really gross in the girls restroom.
- If you're going to be "fair" about quarantine, then be fair about it. [deleted] Also, the cafeteria food is trash low key, you all need to go back to what we used to have with steak fingers and gravy, not no freaking carrots with no ranch.
- Improve food variety and quality.
- Off campus is what we need to do good in school.
- The basketball court, and the school needs to be improved.
- Don't know.
- Better computers and teachers need to get more educated about the online classes they don't explain or teach they just assign stuff.
- You're doing well but...going for online for long time a whole lot of people will fail and everyone knows that so why do it? I think is dumb but smart cause of COVID-19 but I would still want in-person.
- Lunch.
- School needs to improve the park is doing well.

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