FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

Business Office Organization and Staffing Review

June 2, 2021

Clovis Unified School District

Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

June 2, 2021

Eimear O'Farrell, Ed.D., Superintendent
Clovis Unified School District
1450 Herndon Avenue
Clovis, CA 93611

Dear Superintendent O'Farrell:

In October 2020, the Clovis Unified School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for FCMAT to conduct a review of specific positions in the district's Budget and Finance Department. The agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the district's budget and finance positions listed below and make recommendations for improvement, if any:
   - Director of Budget and Finance
   - Financial Analysts
   - Senior Accountants
2. Review job duties and evaluate the current workflow and distribution of functions within these job classifications and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations.

FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the Clovis Unified School District and extends thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

Michael H. Fine • Chief Executive Officer
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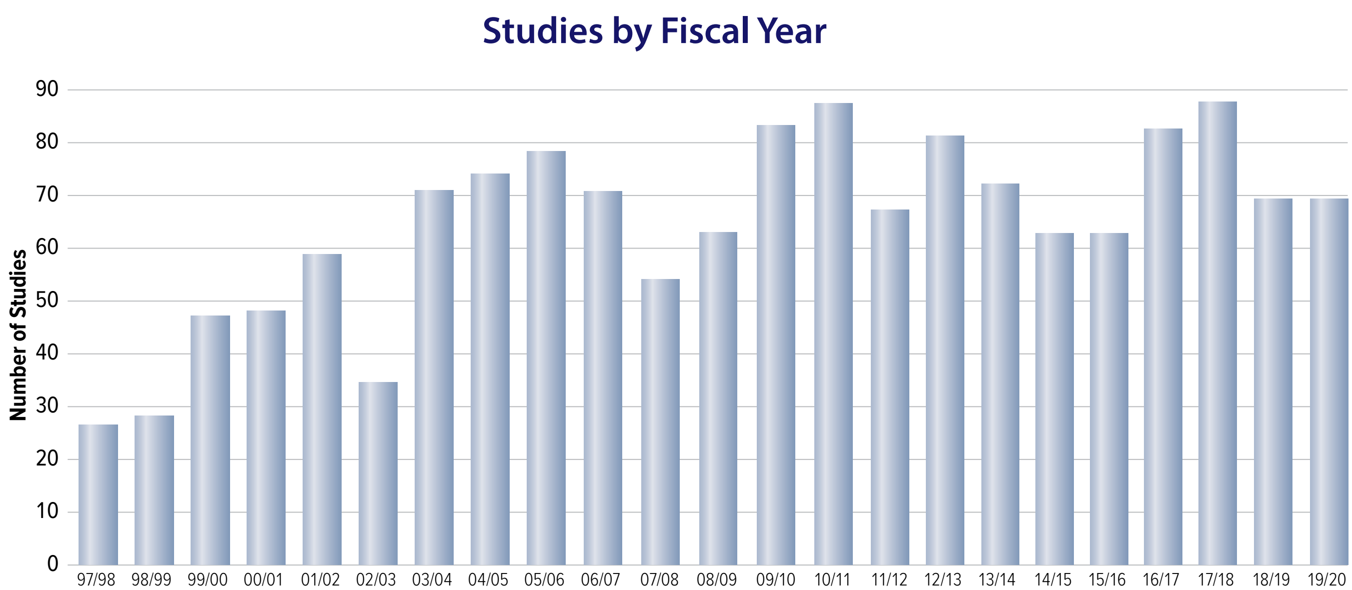
About FCMAT

FCMAT's primary mission is to assist California's local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial, human resources and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related school business and data services. FCMAT's fiscal and management assistance services are used not just to help avert fiscal crisis, but to promote sound financial practices, support the training and development of chief business officials and help to create efficient organizational operations. FCMAT's data management services are used to help local educational agencies (LEAs) meet state reporting responsibilities, improve data quality, and inform instructional program decisions.

FCMAT may be requested to provide fiscal crisis or management assistance by a school district, charter school, community college, county office of education, the state superintendent of public instruction, or the Legislature.

When a request or assignment is received, FCMAT assembles a study team that works closely with the LEA to define the scope of work, conduct on-site fieldwork and provide a written report with findings and recommendations to help resolve issues, overcome challenges and plan for the future.



FCMAT has continued to make adjustments in the types of support provided based on the changing dynamics of K-14 LEAs and the implementation of major educational reforms. FCMAT also develops and provides numerous publications, software tools, workshops and professional learning opportunities to help LEAs operate more effectively and fulfill their fiscal oversight and data management responsibilities. The California School Information Services (CSIS) division of FCMAT assists the California Department of Education with the implementation of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). CSIS also hosts and maintains the Ed-Data website (www.ed-data.org) and provides technical expertise to the Ed-Data partnership: the California Department of Education, EdSource and FCMAT.

FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill (AB) 1200 in 1992 to assist LEAs to meet and sustain their financial obligations. AB 107 in 1997 charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its statewide data management work. AB 1115 in 1999 codified CSIS' mission.

AB 1200 is also a statewide plan for county offices of education and school districts to work together locally to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. AB 2756 (2004) provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans.

In January 2006, Senate Bill 430 (charter schools) and AB 1366 (community colleges) became law and expanded FCMAT's services to those types of LEAs.

On September 17, 2018 AB 1840 was signed into law. This legislation changed how fiscally insolvent districts are administered once an emergency appropriation has been made, shifting the former state-centric system to be more consistent with the principles of local control, and providing new responsibilities to FCMAT associated with the process.

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform more than 1,000 reviews for LEAs, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The team is led by Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer, with funding derived through appropriations in the state budget and a modest fee schedule for charges to requesting agencies.

Introduction

Background

Located in Fresno County, the Clovis Unified School District has a seven-member governing board and serves approximately 42,790 students at 34 elementary schools, five intermediate schools, and five high schools. The district has also authorized one district-operated charter school. One independent charter school also operates within the district's boundaries, authorized by the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools. According to data from the California Department of Education (CDE), the district's student enrollment peaked at 43,654 in 2019-20. An 864-student decrease in 2020-21 is the first time in the last 12 years that the district has experienced declining enrollment.

The district's California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) records indicate that the 2020-21 unduplicated pupil count (the number of students who are English learners, foster youth, or qualify for free or reduced-price meals) is 23,961, or 56% of enrollment.

Study and Report Guidelines

In October 2020, the Clovis Unified School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for FCMAT to conduct a review of specific positions in the district's Budget and Finance Department.

The district collected and provided documents to FCMAT before FCMAT conducted interviews with district personnel. Because of COVID-19, the FCMAT study team conducted interviews by video conference on February 22 to 26, 2021. Following this and other fieldwork, FCMAT continued to review and analyze documents. This report is the result of those activities.

FCMAT's reports focus on systems and processes that may need improvement. Those that may be functioning well are generally not commented on in FCMAT's reports. In writing its reports, FCMAT uses the Associated Press Stylebook, a comprehensive guide to usage and accepted style that emphasizes conciseness and clarity. In addition, this guide emphasizes plain language, discourages the use of jargon and capitalizes relatively few terms.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Julie Auvil, CPA, CGMA, CICA
FCMAT Intervention Specialist

Cathy Shepard
FCMAT Consultant

John Lotze
FCMAT Technical Writer

Each team member reviewed the draft report to confirm accuracy and achieve consensus on the final recommendations.

Executive Summary

A school district should be staffed according to the basic theories of organizational structure used in other school agencies of similar size and type, and its structure should reflect generally accepted theories, which include span of control, chain of command, and line and staff authority. Although most employees in the district's Budget and Finance Department reported that they had one supervisor, one financial analyst has a split funded position and reports to two supervisors, and one senior accountant and two financial analysts are assigned to departments outside of budget and finance, such as the Campus Catering, Facility Services, and Adult Education departments. One of these three employees reported that the director of budget and finance is their indirect supervisor, and another stated that they have commitments to the director that are typical of a subordinate, such as quarterly reports, financial accounting duties and assistance with the budget book. An employee who reports to more than one supervisor can become confused, and power struggles among supervisors may occur.

Unlike the Accounting and Payroll departments within the Budget and Finance Department, the budget and finance section lacks a senior management position that reports to the director of budget and finance. References in this report to positions as senior management are not intended to indicate that they have been designated under, or are subject to, the provisions of Education Code Sections 45100.5 and 45108.5. Over the past eight years, the district has configured the top management positions in the Budget and Finance Department in various ways, including having two directors, eliminating one director and adding a coordinator of budget and finance, then switching to a manager, budget and finance. The department's coordinator position is currently vacant awaiting the results of this study. Based on the level of duties that the district needs in a position that helps the director manage the department, FCMAT believes that filling the position of the coordinator of budget and finance would best serve the district.

The distribution and assignment of work to the senior accounts and financial analysts is not based on an equitable number of account strings, account resources, departments and/or programs, or budget complexity. It is also sometimes based on a staff members' capabilities, production performance, and technical skills. This causes an unbalanced workload.

Adding to the difficulties in assigning work, staff interviewed mentioned that technical skills vary greatly among the senior accountants; those less skilled struggle with typical automated workflow processes and require repeated assistance each time a process is performed. Some staff were comfortable with automated processes only if given step-by-step instructions. In interviews, staff indicated that some financial analysts' technical skills are better than those of some senior accountants.

FCMAT's review of each employee's self-prepared lists of duties they perform showed that some senior accountants are working at a level below their position description and some financial analysts are working at a level above their position description.

Based on the manner in which the district is already using its personnel, FCMAT's comparison of their current duties to their position descriptions, and the district's desire to increase department efficiency and effectiveness with minimal turmoil and disruption, FCMAT believes the district should consider creating a new, retitled senior accountant position, increasing the work force to include eight retitled senior accountants (including those in the Campus Catering and Adult Education departments) and decrease the number of financial analyst positions to three.

The district holds customer service in high regard; however, it disrupts workflow and may be a factor in not completing tasks on time. One possible solution may be to require that incoming intradistrict questions be sent via email, and establishing a standard response time such as within 24 hours. Each employee would then set aside a specific time of day to respond, such as the first hour of the day. This would allow staff to manage workflow without disruptions while still being responsive to stakeholders.

FCMAT was provided with a *Budget & Finance Department Handbook/Guide* dated January 25, 2021. FCMAT was also provided with two draft manuals: an undated *Senior Accountant, Budget & Finance Duties, Projects & Reference Guide*, and an undated *Department FA Instructions*. The Budget and Finance Department also maintains a team folder on the district's WikiPage in Microsoft Teams. Some staff reported documenting procedures for their specific duties or using notes from predecessors; however, most staff were unaware of formal standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Findings and Recommendations

Organizational Structure

A school district's organizational structure establishes the framework for leadership and the delegation of specific duties and responsibilities for all staff members. As a district's enrollment increases or declines, the organizational structure should adapt as needed to the changes. School districts should be staffed according to the basic theories of organizational structure and the standards used in other school agencies of similar size and type. The most common theories of organizational structure are span of control, chain of command, and line and staff authority.

Span of Control

Span of control refers to the number of subordinates who report directly to a supervisor. Although there is no agreed upon ideal number of subordinates for span of control, the span can be larger at lower levels of an organization than at higher levels because subordinates at lower levels typically perform more routine duties and therefore can be more efficiently supervised (*Principles of School Business Management* by R. Craig Wood, David C. Thompson, Lawrence O. Picus and Don I. Tharpe).

Chain of Command

Chain of command refers to the flow of authority in an organization. Chain of command is characterized by two guiding principles: unity of command, meaning that a subordinate is accountable to only one supervisor, thus eliminating the potential for an employee to receive conflicting direction and instruction from a variety of supervisors; and the scalar principle, meaning that subordinates at every level in the organization follow the chain of command and only communicate through their immediate supervisor. The result is a hierarchical division of labor in the organization.

Line and Staff Authority

Line authority is the relationship between supervisors and subordinates and refers to the direct line in the chain of command. For example, in the Clovis Unified School District, the superintendent has direct line authority over the deputy superintendent, and the deputy superintendent has direct line authority over the associate superintendent of business services. Conversely, staff authority is advisory. Staff personnel do not have the authority to make and implement decisions; rather, they act in support roles to line personnel. The organizational structure of local educational agencies has both line and staff authority.

The purpose of any organizational structure is to help district management make key decisions to facilitate student learning while balancing financial resources. The organizational design should outline the management process and its specific links to the formal system of communication, authority and responsibility needed to achieve the district's goals and objectives. Authority in a public school district originates with the elected governing board, which hires a superintendent to oversee the district. Through the superintendent, authority and responsibility are delegated to the district's administration and staff.

Management positions are typically responsible for supervising employees and overseeing the work of their respective divisions. They must ensure that staff members understand all district policies and procedures and perform their duties in a timely and accurate manner. A manager must also serve as a liaison between their division and others to identify and resolve problems and design and modify processes and procedures as needed. Management positions should typically not be responsible for a division's routine daily functions; these should be assigned to division support staff.

District Organization and Structure

The district provided FCMAT with organizational charts last revised October 17, 2019 that clearly show the chain of command and functional areas of responsibility as well as the structure and relationships between positions.

The Budget and Finance Department is one of five departments in the Business Services Department, which is overseen by the assistant superintendent of business services. The head of the Budget and Finance Department is the director of budget and finance. She supervises four senior accountants and four financial analysts in the Budget and Finance Department, which are the subject of this study, as well as a business analyst senior and a coordinator of budget and finance, which are not a part of this study. One of the senior accountant positions and the coordinator of budget and finance position are currently vacant, as is one of the financial analyst positions. The district was filling the financial analyst position at the time of FCMAT's fieldwork and is awaiting the results of this study to determine its course for the other two open positions.

Not included in the department but nonetheless a part of this study are the senior accountant assigned to the Facility Services Department, the financial analyst assigned to the Campus Catering Department, and the financial analyst assigned to the Adult Education Department. None of these three positions are supervised by the director of budget and finance but, because of the nature of their duties, must coordinate their duties with the Budget and Finance Department. These three employees consider their respective department heads to be their supervisors. However, one reported the director of budget and finance as being an indirect supervisor and one stated that they have commitments to the director that are typical of those a subordinate would have to a supervisor, such as quarterly reports, financial accounting duties and assistance with the budget book. Also, one of the financial analysts in the Budget and Finance Department is in a split funded position and reported having two supervisors; this directly contradicts the position description. An employee who reports to more than one supervisor can become confused, and power struggles among supervisors may occur.

The position description for the business analyst senior states that the position's supervisor is the coordinator of budget and finance, a position that is not included on the district's October 2019 organizational charts.

In addition to the Budget and Finance Department, the director of budget and finance also oversees the Accounting and Payroll departments. The Accounting Department consists of an accounting manager and six accounting technicians. The Payroll Department is composed of nine employees including the payroll manager, three payroll analysts, two payroll specialists, two payroll technicians and one payroll assistant. Under this structure, the director is the immediate supervisor to the senior management positions of accounting manager and payroll manager in the Payroll Department as well as the nine members of the Budget and Finance Department. The section of the Budget and Finance Department's organizational chart that includes the business analyst senior, senior accountants and financial analysts is the only section in the department without a senior management position that reports to the director.

During the past eight years, the Budget and Finance Department has had various management configurations to relieve the administrative burden of the department. Before 2013, the department had two directors; 2013 was the first time the department did not have two directors, but it added three senior accountant positions to help with the workload. In 2015, discussions were held regarding adding back the second director. Instead, the district added a coordinator of budget and finance, and that position remained filled by an internal candidate through 2019. From 2016-2019, the district added the business analyst senior position and another financial analyst position. When the coordinator of budget and finance resigned from that position in 2019 and returned to a senior accountant role, the district changed direction and reduced the coordinator of budget and finance position to a manager, budget and finance position, promoted a financial analyst to a senior accountant position, and moved the financial analyst responsible for the child development fund into the department. When the manager, budget and finance was released from employment in the 2019-20 fiscal year, a restructure of the department was discussed and the decision to fill the manager, budget and finance position was tabled pending the results of this study.

This history, staff members' comments regarding lack of access to the director of budget and finance, and the record of extra time worked by the director discussed below, shows the district's need for a second department senior manager position to help the director in her duties and provide mentoring and training to other positions in the department. FCMAT reviewed the position descriptions of both the coordinator of budget and finance and manager, budget and finance. Based on the level of duties the district needs in a position that helps the director manage the department, FCMAT believes filling the position of coordinator of budget and finance would best serve the district's needs.

The description for the coordinator of budget and finance position was approved by the board on August 12, 2015, and there is no indication that it has been updated since that date. The description lacks a section describing the physical requirements of the position. In addition, duties related to the following need to be added to allow the coordinator to take on some essential duties that are now performed by the director:

- Supervise, train and evaluate budget and finance personnel (a full text of this duty can be found in the manager, budget and finance position description). This would place the section of the Budget and Finance Department's organizational chart containing the business analyst senior, senior accountants and financial analysts on the same level as that of the Accounting and Payroll departments.
- Answer questions and provide support to staff regarding issues of concern.
- Prepare audit schedules and accounting reports for the annual audit (a full text of this duty can be found in the director of budget and finance position description).
- Initiate and develop routine procedures that help the Budget and Finance Department identify and implement more effective and efficient processes.

District employees reported that the last coordinator of budget and finance resigned to achieve a better balance of work and home life and because of difficulties in managing some staff in lower job classifications. Interviewees also reported that the person who last occupied the manager, budget and finance position was unsuccessful because they lacked both governmental accounting knowledge and school accounting experience. Many employees interviewed believed that only an internal candidate can be successful in either position. Although an internal candidate has advantages in understanding the district's culture, the former coordinator was an internal hire and was not successful in the position. FCMAT believes the main factors in determining success will be a candidate's knowledge of governmental accounting and experience in school accounting as well as support from district administrators in supervising, managing and disciplining employees.

The majority of Budget and Finance Department staff members reported that it is difficult to schedule time to meet with the department director because her calendar is often filled with meetings. This makes it extremely difficult for her to fulfill her role as a mentor and trainer to staff who report directly to her. The director reported that she also spends many of her evenings and weekends dealing with district business.

To verify this assertion, FCMAT requested user activity log reports from the Munis financial management system for May 2020 and February 2021, which show individual users' starting and ending times in that system. FCMAT found that the system does not always record the end time for a person's usage, such as when an employee does not log out; this prevented FCMAT from recording the number of hours and minutes worked beyond normal office hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, the reports did allow FCMAT to tally the number of weekends and holidays worked as well as the number of workdays on which the system was accessed after normal office hours. That analysis shows the following for the director of budget and finance:

Munis Activity Log Analysis — Director of Budget and Finance

	Weekdays Worked Beyond 5 p.m.			Weekends Worked			Holidays Worked		
	Available	Worked	Percentage	Available	Worked	Percentage	Available	Worked	Percentage
May 2020	20	12	60.00%	5	3	60.00%	1	1	100.00%
February 2021	18	9	50.00%	4	1	25.00%	2	0	0.00%

The Munis user activity log report is one of a variety of ways to collect evidence of employees working beyond normal office hours.

The Budget and Finance Department uses various internally and externally designed software systems, including the following:

- External Systems
  - Munis Financial Management — an enterprise resource planning suite encompassing financials, human resources, asset management, and revenues
  - Microsoft Office
  - Informed K12 — a workflow automation and digital forms program that helps school district administrators manage all forms and paperwork electronically, automate essential school business processes, and track approval workflows across departments
  - Permission Click — an electronic system to create, send and submit parent permission forms
  - Docushare — a cloud-based platform that allows department members to share documents with others
- Internally Designed Systems
  - Scenario — used by sites and departments to create and modify their budgets
  - Employee Requisition Management System (ERMS) — an electronic management system for the district's personnel requisitions

The district has one collective bargaining unit: the California School Employees Association, which represents cafeteria, maintenance, warehouse, custodial, grounds and transportation workers. The employees subject to this study are classified management employees and are not members of this bargaining unit.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review and revise its organizational chart as changes occur.
2. Ensure each employee reports to only one clearly identified supervisor.
3. Consider filling the coordinator of budget and finance position and revising its position description as outlined above.
4. Focus its recruitment efforts for the coordinator of budget and finance position on candidates who, whether internal or external, possess governmental accounting knowledge and school accounting experience.
5. Provide the new coordinator of budget and finance with additional support as needed in supervising, evaluating and disciplining Budget and Finance Department personnel.
6. Update position descriptions, organizational charts, lists of duties and other such documents as changes occur.

Director of Budget and Finance

The director of budget and finance was hired by the district in 2009 as a systems and applications analyst in the Information Technology (IT) Services Department. She moved to the Business Services Department as the coordinator of budget and finance in 2015 and was promoted to her current position in 2017.

The position description for the director of budget and finance states that the position is tasked with directing and performing all of the accounting and budgeting functions of the district, providing accurate and timely budget information on financial data that can be used for current and future budget and finance decisions, serving as principal advisor to the district's top administrators concerning all budget and finance issues, and being responsible for all budgeting and accounting of district facility projects.

The director of budget and finance position description was approved by the board on January 11, 2012 and does not include any indication that it has been updated since that time. The description also lacks a section on physical abilities. Although this section is not required for a position description, including it is a best practice as it helps all parties if the need arises to interact with and provide accommodations for an employee, such as when an injured employee returns to work with physical restrictions noted in their doctor's return to work authorization. The physical abilities section is needed to determine what accommodations can be made if an employee requires such measures.

Some of the major essential duties listed in the position description are as follows:

- Manages and supervises the budget and financial aspects for the district. Facilitates the preparation, administration and execution of the district's budget and financial reports. Assists district and site administrators with preparation and interpretation of budget and financial items.
- Prepares, administers and monitors all quarterly financial statements for board and administrators.
- Provides technical expertise to senior staff for all related financial areas. Provides financial analysis as needed by senior staff.

- Files federal, state and local financial reports as required for actual revenues and expenditures reporting.
- Maintains a complete set of records of financial transactions by overseeing, reviewing, and entering transaction details into an established financial accounting system. Classified [sic], codes, and consolidates charges, rates, and related financial information to either municipal or double-entry accounting system.

The director confirmed to FCMAT that she performs the above duties along with the other 15 essential duties listed in the position description. In addition, she reported that she performs other duties not listed in her position description, including the following:

- Serves as the functional lead for the Munis system. Responsible for coordinating upgrades to the team and managing permissions and workflow, including the approval of permissions and analysis of workflow.
- Works closely with the business analyst senior; responsible for process improvement.
- Coordinates the district's annual audits and collection of documents to support those audits.
- Prepares the annual budget book, which includes, but is not limited to, a table of contents, graphics and photos, executive summary, maps, awards, California Dashboard, conversion of the district's standardized account code structure (SACS) forms into easy-to-read tables and charts, analysis of district financial information, and glossary of school finance terms. The annual budget book has ranged in length from 335 to 347 pages over the past three years.
- Writes report queries using structured query language to help respond to special report requests.

With the exception of the duties related to the annual budget book, the additional duties listed above can be performed by other members of the Budget and Finance Department. For example, the duties associated with the functional lead for Munis, process improvement, and coordination of audits can be assigned to the coordinator position discussed above. The coordinator position can also help the director compile the annual budget book. The writing of queries can be assigned to the business analyst senior.

Although the specific tasks of being the functional lead for Munis and helping with the annual budget book are not mentioned in the position description for the coordinator of budget and finance, in FCMAT's opinion they are part of the duties of maintaining internal controls and developing financial statements, which are in the position description.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Update the position description for the director of budget and finance position to include any of the additional duties listed above that are not currently in the document and that the director now performs, except for any that will be assigned to other employees.
2. Add a physical abilities section to the position description for the director of budget and finance position.

3. Update the position description of the coordinator of budget and finance to include duties associated with process improvement and coordination of audits.

4. Update the business analyst senior position description to include the additional duties to be assigned as noted above.

Senior Accountant

The senior accountant position is a highly skilled professional in the classified management group. The senior accountant position description states that employees in this position are required to work with complex accounting processes and financial systems; possess the ability to develop, analyze and balance budgets; prepare cash flow projections and multiyear financial projections; open and close accounting periods within various financial systems; prepare financial reports; work closely with internal and external auditors to balance resources and prepare audit adjustments; and accurately communicate financial information to all stakeholders.

The senior accountant position description was last updated in 2013 and does not include any indication that it has been updated since that date. The position description's summary of duties includes the following:

- Develops, prepares, and maintains a complete set of financial records.
- Oversees and participates in processing complex accounting transactions to sub-ledgers and ledgers, and performs reconciliation, reporting, and auditing of general ledger financial information.
- Prepares accurate and timely financial and statistical reporting from district and program-based accounting systems.

The district has five senior accountant positions: four are assigned to the Budget and Finance Department and one is assigned to the Facility Services Department. The senior accountants assigned to the Budget and Finance Department are evaluated by the director of budget and finance. The senior accountant assigned to the Facility Services Department is evaluated by the assistant superintendent of facility services and liaises with the director of budget and finance as well as the assistant superintendent of business services when necessary.

The senior accountants have been employed by the district from three to 15 years, and have been in the senior accountant position itself from two years to 13 years. Staff members indicated that the district supports and encourages job-specific training, and that most external training is through the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), FCMAT, or School Services of California, Inc. (SSC). Some training is available through the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, and the district offers in-house training in technical areas and processes.

Senior accountants are assigned management responsibilities related to specific funds, account resources, departments and programs. The district publishes a *Budget & Finance Responsibilities* document (also referred to as the who to call list), the latest version of which is dated February 4, 2021, that lists staff assignments; however, the distribution of assignments is not based on an equitable number of account strings, account resources, departments or programs, or budget complexity. FCMAT's review of this list, interviews with staff, and employees' individual written descriptions of duties, indicate assignments are distributed based on staff capabilities, production performance, and technical skills. This causes an unbalanced workload.

Distributing workload based on both an equitable number of account resources or account strings and complexity would result in a more fairly distributed workload. For example, managing the special education program is more complex and regulated than managing a department budget, regardless of the number of account strings. At the same time, overdistributing less complex programs and account resources may create an unmanageable workload. FCMAT was provided an analysis of the distribution of account resources that shows the senior accountant assigned as its fiscal contact. That report includes the following direct distribution among the senior accountants.

Budget and Finance General Ledger Responsibilities

Position	Account Resources	Account Strings
Senior Accountant 1	23	29,638
Senior Accountant 2	41	16,749
Senior Accountant 3	16	1,400
Senior Accountant 4	10	3,221
Senior Accountant 5	17	4,464

There are also other resources and account strings assigned to multiple fiscal contacts that have not been included in this analysis.

At the time of fieldwork, one Budget and Finance Department senior accountant had recently transferred to a new position but participated in FCMAT's interviews. Although all of the senior accountants have the same position description, their individual assignments and duties can vary greatly depending on their area of budget oversight. For example, one senior accountant may be responsible for an entire program from budget projection through year-end closing, reconciling accounts, balancing resources, and final unaudited actuals SACS financial report creation; another may have more general duties such as department budget oversight and posting journals. Information received during interviews, and supporting data, indicate that the workload among the senior accountants is unbalanced, as shown in the following table.

Senior Accountants' Main Duties

Main Duty	Senior Accountant 1	Senior Accountant 2	Senior Accountant 3	Senior Accountant 4	Senior Accountant 5
Analyze Budgets	x		x	x	x
Balance Resources and Accounts	x	x	x	x	x
Bank Account and Invoice Reconciliation			x	x	x
Budget Development	x			x	x
Financial Report Narrative	x			x	x
Journals, Transfers, Adjustments – Enter	x	x	x	x	x
Journals, Transfers, Adjustments – Approve			x	x	x
Manage Budget	x	x	x	x	x
Multiyear Budget Projections	x			x	x
Position Control and Personnel Requisition	x	x	x		x
Prepare SACs Financial Reports	x		x	x	x
Process Payments			x	x	x
Pull Data from Munis – Upload into SACs	x			x	x
Site and Department Customer Service Support	x	x	x		
Support Development of Scenarios — Upload into Munis		x			x

District administrators stated that they set up the current structure so each senior accountant could supervise and mentor a financial analyst. However, during interviews staff stated that technical skills vary greatly among the senior accountants; those less skilled struggle with typical automated workflow processes and require repeated assistance each time a process is performed. Some staff were comfortable with automated processes only if provided step-by-step instructions. A high level of technical skill is needed to be an efficient and effective senior accountant; low level technical skills will hinder the performance of the position and impose a burden on other staff and the district's operations. Assigning a senior accountant with a low skill level will impede the progress of the financial analyst they supervise.

Staff who were hired within the last two to three years indicated they were required to complete a simple Excel spreadsheet exercise when they tested for their position but had not been tested subsequently. Veteran staff have not been required to complete skills testing either at hire or subsequently. An evaluation of each senior accountant's technical skills is needed to determine whether each individual has sufficient skills for their position, including keeping up with the technical and computer system changes that have occurred since they started in their positions. The district may need to provide additional training.

All senior accountants reported that they work extra hours during the week and/or on weekends to stay current with their workload. Some said extra hours were necessary to complete some projects or to meet deadlines. Other staff stated extra hours were necessary to handle their regular workload demand. Because this is a management position, overtime is not tracked or paid. To review documents that would provide measurable evidence of work beyond the position's normal 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. working hours, FCMAT requested Munis user activity log reports for May 2020 and February 2021. This is not the only evidence of work outside of regular business hours, but it is one of the more measurable.

In May 2020, three senior accountants accessed the Munis financial system before or after regular weekday hours for a total of approximately 7.5 hours, and two senior accountants accessed the system on the weekend for a total of approximately one hour. The system does not always record the end time for a person's use (e.g., when an employee does not log out when done using the system). FCMAT's analysis of all Munis activity by senior accountants found that 48% of entries that showed a start time lacked an end time. In these cases, it was not possible to accurately determine the number of hours and minutes worked beyond the normal office hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Because of this, FCMAT included in its analysis and compilation only those instances when both the starting and ending times were recorded. Employees were not working from district offices during this time because of COVID-19, and staff were accessing the system from home. Although they had been instructed to continue their normal working hours, there may have been instances when they deviated from that schedule. FCMAT did not consider those instances in this analysis.

In February 2021, three senior accountants accessed the system for a total of approximately two hours before or after regular weekday hours, and four senior accountants accessed the system for a total of approximately four hours on weekends. FCMAT's analysis of all Munis activity by senior accountants found that 61% of entries that showed a start time lacked an end time. At the time of this report, the employees subject to this study had returned to their normal district-provided workplace.

FCMAT's analysis and the evidence of extra time worked is limited because it includes only one method of viewing that time and because employees did not always log off of the system when done using it.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review and/or revise the senior accountant position description periodically to ensure it continues to accurately list the duties assigned.

2. Balance workload among senior accountants based on a combination of the number of account resources and account strings, and the complexity of assignments.
3. Evaluate each staff member's technical and computer skills and provide training as needed.
4. Redistribute workload to reduce the need to work extra hours.

Financial Analyst

The position description for the financial analyst describes the position as a journey level professional accountant in the classified management group. The financial analyst position description states that an employee in this position is expected to work independently on complex accounting functions such as budget management, financial analysis, reconciling accounts, and processing budget and journal transfers; allocate and distribute categorical funds and collaborate with district and agency staff to manage categorical budgets; participate in year-end closing in all financial systems; and have the skills needed to analyze budget data, create financial reports and make budget recommendations.

The financial analyst position description was last updated in 2013 and does not include any indication that it has been updated since that date. The position description's summary of the position's duties includes the following:

- Perform a variety of highly analytical duties of a financial, inferential, statistical, or general business nature to support business and program decisions in a variety of departments.
- Accomplish assigned functions according to established schedules, calendars, projects, and programs.
- Participate in organizationwide projects such as annual budget development, capital expenditure proposal, etc.
- Prepare accurate and timely financial and statistical reporting from district and program-based accounting systems.

The district has six financial analyst positions: four assigned to the Budget and Finance Department, one assigned to the Adult Education Department, and one assigned to the Campus Catering Department. The financial analysts assigned to the Budget and Finance Department are evaluated by the director of budget and finance; the financial analyst assigned to the Adult Education Department is evaluated by the principal of adult education; and the financial analyst assigned to the Campus Catering Department is evaluated by the director of campus catering.

Both the adult education and the campus catering financial analyst liaise with the director of budget and finance as well as the assistant superintendent of business services when necessary. In addition, each financial analyst in the Budget and Finance Department is assigned to a senior accountant, from whom they are supposed to receive training, supervision, evaluation and development. During interviews, some staff indicated that assistance from their assigned senior accountant was insufficient and that often financial analyst staff train their assigned senior accountant.

The financial analysts have been employed by the district from two to 24 years and have served in the financial analyst position itself from two to 10 years. Staff members indicated that the district supports and encourages job-specific training, and that most external training is through CASBO, FCMAT, or SSC. Some training is available through the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, and the district offers in-house training in technical areas and processes.

The district publishes a *Budget & Finance Responsibilities* document (also referred to as the who to call list), the latest version of which is dated February 4, 2021, that lists staff assignments. As with the senior accountants discussed above, the distribution of assignments among the financial analysts is not based on an equitable number of account strings, account resources, departments or programs, or budget complexity. FCMAT's review of this list, interviews with staff, and employees' individual written description of duties, indicate assignments are distributed based on staff members' capabilities, production performance, and technical skills. This causes an unbalanced workload.

Distributing workload based on both an equitable number of account resources or account strings and program complexity would result in a more fairly distributed workload. For example, managing the special education program is more complex and regulated than managing a department budget, regardless of the number of account strings. At the same time, overdistributing less complex programs and account resources may create an unmanageable workload. FCMAT was provided an analysis of the distribution of account resources that shows which financial analyst is assigned as its fiscal contact. That report includes the following direct distribution among the financial analysts.

Budget and Finance General Ledger Responsibilities Breakdown

Position	Account Resources	Account Strings
Financial Analyst 1	7	3,319
Financial Analyst 2	1	2,388
Financial Analyst 3	21	32,865
Financial Analyst 4	2	1,435
Financial Analyst 5	9	19,826

The district has one financial analyst position that is vacant, and the account resources and strings attached to that position were redistributed among the remaining financial analysts and are therefore included in this chart. There are other resources and account strings assigned to multiple fiscal contacts that are not included in this analysis.

Although all the financial analysts have the same position description, the assignments and duties of each vary greatly depending on their area of budget oversight. For example, one financial analyst may be responsible for an entire fund from budget projection through year-end closing, reconciling accounts, balancing resources, and unaudited actuals SACS financial report creation; another financial analyst may have more general duties such as department budget oversight and posting journals. Information received during interviews, and supporting data, indicate that the workload among the financial analysts is unbalanced, and that some staff may be performing duties outside of their position description, with short-term assignments of out-of-class duties receiving appropriate compensation. A sample of the distribution of work based on primary job duties is shown in the following table.

Financial Analysts' Main Duties

Main Duty	Financial Analyst 1	Financial Analyst 2	Finacncial Analyst 3	Financial Analyst 4	Financial Analyst 5
Analyze Budgets	X		X	X	X
Balance Resources and Accounts	X		X	X	X
Bank Account and Invoice Reconciliation	X	X			
Budget Development	X		X	X	
Financial Report Narrative	X	X			
Journals, Transfers, Adjustments – Enter	X	X	X	X	X
Journals, Transfers, Adjustments – Approve	X	X	X	X	

Main Duty	Financial Analyst 1	Financial Analyst 2	Finacncial Analyst 3	Financial Analyst 4	Financial Analyst 5
Manage Budget	X		X	X	X
Multiyear Budget Projections	X		X	X	
Position Control and Personnel Requisition	X	X	X	X	X
Prepare SACs Financial Reports	X			X	
Process Payments	X	X		X	
Pull Data from Munis – Upload into SACs	X				
Site and Department Customer Service Support	X	X	X	X	X
Support Development of Scenarios — Upload into Munis	X		X	X	X
Write and Update SOPs		X	X		X

In interviews, staff indicated that the financial analysts' skills vary; some are better than those of some senior accountants, and some do not have all the skills needed for their positions. The financial analysts need technical training and support, but a senior accountant with low skills will not be able to provide this and can even impede the progress of the financial analyst they supervise. In such cases, training from someone other than a financial analyst's assigned senior accountant will be needed until skill levels increase.

An evaluation of each financial analyst's technical skills is needed to determine whether each individual has sufficient skills for their position, including keeping up with changes to technical and computer skills since they started in their positions. A high level of technical skill is needed to be an efficient and effective financial analyst; low technical skills will hinder the performance of the position and impose a burden on other staff and the district's operations. The district may need to provide additional training.

All financial analysts stated they work extra hours to stay current with their workload. Some said extra hours were needed occasionally to complete projects or meet deadlines. Others stated working extra hours was necessary to handle their regular workload demand. Because this is a management position, overtime was not tracked or paid. To review documents that would provide measurable evidence of work beyond the normal 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. working hours, FCMAT requested Munis user activity log reports for May 2020 and February 2021. Tracking staff access in Munis is not the only way to obtain evidence of an employee's work outside regular business hours, but it is one of the more measurable methods.

The Munis system does not always record the end time for a person's use (e.g., when an employee does not log out when done using the system). In these cases, it was not possible to accurately determine the number of hours and minutes worked beyond normal office hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Because of this, FCMAT included in its analysis and compilation only those instances when both the starting and ending times were recorded.

The May 2020 Munis report showed that two financial analysts accessed the Munis financial system before or after regular hours. However, they did not log off the system, so FCMAT was unable to determine the amount of after-hours activity on behalf of the district. One financial analyst accessed the system on the weekend for approximately 1.5 hours. FCMAT's analysis of all Munis activity by financial analysts found that 57% of entries that showed a start time lacked an end time. Employees were not working from district offices during this time because of COVID-19, and staff were accessing the system from home. Although they were instructed to continue their normal working hours, there may have been instances when they deviated from that schedule. FCMAT did not consider those instances in this analysis.

In February 2021, two financial analysts accessed the system before or after regular weekday hours for a total of approximately two hours, and two financial analysts accessed the system on weekends for a total of approximately 4.5 hours. FCMAT's analysis of all Munis activity by financial analysts found that 25% of entries that showed a start time lacked an end time. At the time of this report, the employees subject to this study had returned to their normal district-provided workplace.

FCMAT's analysis and the evidence of extra time worked is limited because it includes only one method of viewing that time and because employees did not always log off of the system when done using it.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review and revise the financial analyst position description periodically to ensure it continues to accurately list the duties assigned.
2. Balance the workload among the financial analysts based on a combination of the number of account resources and account strings and the complexity of assignments.
3. Evaluate employees' technical skills and provide training as needed.
4. Redistribute workload to reduce the need to work extra hours.

Customer Service

The district places a high value on customer service, and this ethic was evident during staff interviews. All staff interviewed, including senior accountants and financial analysts, described providing customer support to stakeholders regardless of whether the area in question was their primary responsibility, and all considered it their duty to be responsive at the time needs are expressed. While this is an admirable quality, it is disruptive to workflow and may hinder the timely completion of tasks.

A potential solution may be to require that incoming intradistrict questions be sent via email, and establish a standard response time, such as within 24 hours. Each employee would then set aside a specific time of day to respond, such as the first hour of the day. This would allow staff to manage workflow without disruptions while still being responsive to stakeholders.

The department has created a *Budget & Finance Department Handbook/Guide* (last updated January 25, 2021), which is an excellent resource to help staff outside of the Budget and Finance Department independently access the Munis financial system. This guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to create budget scenarios, create budget or expenditure transfers, perform position inquiries, and process budget reports. Conducting an annual review and training for site and department staff and encouraging staff to attend the training and use the handbook before submitting questions could help reduce the need for telephone support from the senior accountants and financial analysts.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Establish a process that requires intradistrict customers to submit questions to senior accountants and financial analysts through email only, and set a specific time of day for staff to review questions and respond.
2. Conduct an annual review of and training on the *Budget & Finance Department Handbook/Guide* for all site and department staff involved with the Munis financial system. Encourage site and department staff to use this training and the handbook before requesting assistance from senior accountants and financial analysts.
3. Review and update the *Budget & Finance Department Handbook/Guide* at least once a year.

Department Restructure

FCMAT used the senior accountant and the financial analyst position descriptions to evaluate differences between the two. That comparison shows a higher level of complex accounting and analytical skills is required for the senior accountant position and supports the salary difference between the two positions. FCMAT identified the major duties of each position for comparison, and these are listed in the table below.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities of Senior Accountant and Financial Analyst Positions

Essential Duties and Responsibilities	Senior Accountant	Financial Analyst
Implement Budget and Integrate into Financial System	X	
Maintain Chart of Accounts	X	
Multiyear Projection for All SACs Financial Reports Preparation	X	
Prepare Account Balance Audit Adjustments	X	
Prepare and Process Monthly and Annual Financial System Closing	X	
Process Adjustments	X	
Process Budget Transfers	X	X
Process Journal Transfers	X	X
Reconcile Accounts to General Ledger	X	
Year-end Closing Process	X	X
ASB Oversight and Training	X	
Attendance Report Preparation	X	
Audit Process Participation	X	X
Budget Development	X	
Budget Development Participation		X
Forecast Short-term and Long-term Budget Projections	X	X
Monitor Cash Flow	X	
Prepare Cash Flow Projection	X	
Capital Projects Financial Analysis and Report Preparation	X	
Develop and Maintain Comprehensive Statistical Data	X	
Financial Analysis	X	X
Review Budget and Make Recommendations		X
Reconcile Financial Information and Convert to Format used by External Agencies	X	
Analyze and Interpret Governmental Directives	X	X
Ensure Internal Controls and Compliance	X	X
Account Reconciliation		X
Allocate and Distribute Categorical Funds to Sites		X
Analyze Original Budget to Actual	X	X
Complex Accounting		X
Maintain Financial Records		X
Process Requisitions — Ensure Proper Coding		X
Monitor Mandate Related Tasks		X
Monitor Position Control Process	X	
Position Control — Ensure Proper Coding		X
Position Control Site Support	X	
Prepare and Present Comparative Analysis Reports	X	X
Prepare Financial Reports	X	X

Essential Duties and Responsibilities	Senior Accountant	Financial Analyst
Create Standard Operating Procedures		X
Collaborate with Other Departments	X	X
Site and User Support	X	X
Train, Supervise, Evaluate, Develop Assigned Employees	X	

FCMAT's comparison of the position descriptions and the distribution of duties described in the *Budget & Finance Responsibilities* document, the district's budget and finance general ledger responsibilities breakdown spreadsheet, and actual duties performed based on staff interviews and the lists FCMAT requested from staff of the duties they perform, indicate that some senior accountants are working at a level below their position description and some financial analysts are working at a level above their position description.

In addition, as noted above, the distribution of workload among the senior accountants and among the financial analysts is unbalanced. This can be caused when a district has employed staff whose skill sets do not meet the rigorous requirements of their position. Under those circumstances, work is assigned to those who are best suited to perform the duties, not necessarily based on position description. Staff with deficient skill sets need to be required to improve both their knowledge and their technical skills, and must possess the ability to retain this knowledge and increase skills.

Based on changes to business practices, funding models, financial systems, reporting requirements and other factors, the Budget and Finance Department's current structure is no longer the most efficient. Various options exist for restructuring, including the following:

- **Maintaining the Department's Current Structure**

  Under this option, the district would return duties to both the senior accountant and the financial analyst positions based on their position descriptions. More complex accounting processes, such as creating budgets in Munis and financial reports in SACS, would return to the senior accountants, while less complex accounting processes, such as account reconciliation and transfers, would return to financial analysts.

  The district will need to ensure that low-performing staff are provided with improvement plans that include sufficient training in both accounting and technical skills. Staff who are unable to perform at the rigorous level described in their position descriptions and improvement plans could undergo a process to: a) bring them to the level of performance described in their position description, or b) be moved to another position based on prior position classification(s) they held, or c) apply to a more appropriate open position in the district, or d) be terminated.

- **Create a Single Pool of Senior Accountants**

  FCMAT observed that most financial analysts are performing duties beyond their position description. Under this option, the district would blend the position of financial analyst and the position of senior accountant into one position description. Financial analysts would be reclassified as senior accountants, and the workload would be redistributed equitably based on a combination of the number of account resources and account strings, and the complexity of assignments.

- **Create Tiered Senior Accountant Positions**

  Like the tiered structure within the Payroll Department, the Budget and Finance Department could create a second senior accountant position placed between the current senior accountant and the financial analyst on the salary schedule (such as senior accountant 1 and senior accountant 2). Or the district could follow the structure already established by the Payroll Department, with the hierarchy being analyst, followed by specialist, then technician.

  No matter what structure the district decides to follow, all senior accountants and financial analysts would apply for placement in the positions through an application and testing process. Those who do not qualify would be moved to another position based on prior position classification(s) they held, or apply to a more appropriate open position in the district, or be laid off.

- **Create a New, Retitled Senior Accountant Position**

  Under this option, the district would eliminate the current senior accountant position, create a new position title (such as budget accountant, senior) and position description, and determine how many positions would be available. As noted above, some financial analysts are already performing the duties of senior accountants. Based on that observation, the district's needs seem to support having more senior accountants, and the district should consider a structure that mirrors those needs. As with the previous option, staff would be required to qualify for the new position through an application and testing process.

  The district would also determine the number of financial analyst positions required and close positions above that number when staff have vacated a position by qualifying for a new senior accountant position title, moving to another position in the district, or being laid off. Assuming the district wishes to continue with the 11 combined positions that are in its current structure (both in the Budget and Finance Department and in other departments included in this review), the new structure would indicate that eight of the new positions would be retitled senior accountants and three would be financial analysts.

  Any former senior accountants who were unsuccessful would be given the opportunity to transfer to a lower level position for which they qualify, be moved to another position based on prior position classification(s) they held, apply to a more appropriate open position in the district, or be laid off.

  For those financial analysts who maintain their position, the district would need to ensure that their duties match their position description.

The decision about which of the above options to implement, or any other restructuring choice, lies solely with the district, and the district should work closely with its Human Resources Department and its legal counsel to help ensure that any restructuring works as seamlessly as possible. However, no matter what choice the district makes, there will be turmoil; any restructuring is a process that takes time, causes upheaval among those directly affected, and often creates temporary negative impacts for all department staff.

Although the first two options listed above (maintain the current structure, or create one pool of senior accountants by reclassifying both the senior accountant and the financial analyst positions and redistributing workload) may be the least disruptive, those options do not eliminate the inferior work production the district is experiencing. The district would continue to employ staff who are not working at the rigorous level of their position description, and distribution of workloads would remain imbalanced.

Maintaining the current structure would require that duties currently performed by financial analysts be returned to senior accountants. This would resolve the issue of work being performed out of class but would return work to staff who are unable to perform at the expected level of rigor. It would also require development of performance improvement plans for underperforming employees, followed by progressive discipline for those who cannot improve sufficiently. Because some financial analysts are already successfully completing these duties, it would also be a step backwards in efficient, effective production for the Budget and Finance Department. FCMAT does not believe this would be the best option for the district based on the amount of managerial effort it would take to implement, the shortage of managerial personnel in the department, and the upheaval that would ensue.

The second, third and fourth restructuring options above (creating a new single pool of senior accountants; creating a new tiered department structure; and creating a new and retitled senior accountant position) would eliminate the issue of employees not performing to the expected level of rigor. However, they could prove to be more (although still temporarily) disruptive to the department because of the length of time such processes can take as well as a reduced level of work while a process plays out and after a process has concluded with employees having to assimilate unfamiliar duties.

Nevertheless, FCMAT believes that the optimal solution for the district would be to create a new, retitled senior accountant position (the fourth option above), increase the work force to include eight retitled senior accountants (including those in the Campus Catering Department and Adult Education Department), and decrease the number of financial analysts to three. This conclusion is based on the manner in which the district is already using its personnel, FCMAT's comparison of their current duties to their position descriptions, and the district's desire to increase department efficiency and effectiveness with the least amount of turmoil and disruption.

This recommendation is based purely on the duties and responsibilities of the positions under study. FCMAT did not perform a cost analysis for any of the restructure options above and does not make any guarantee that any of the options will either decrease or increase the district's costs.

Regardless of which structure is chosen, it is imperative that the district require all staff to perform at the rigorous level described in their respective position descriptions. This may require additional training, including both knowledge based and technical skills, followed by an improvement plan and, in the absence of sufficient improvement, a progressive disciplinary process appropriate for a member of the classified management group if issues arise. For these actions to be effective, timelines for improvement must be strictly enforced.

In addition, the testing for these positions would need to be revised to align with the expected performance in terms of knowledge, aptitude and technical skills. The testing needs to adequately measure an applicant's abilities. If the testing for either position does not yield qualified candidates, the district might consider alternative ways to advertise job openings, such as through internet job seeker services and/or school business accounting organizations (such as CASBO).

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Require staff to work at the rigorous level described in their respective position descriptions.

2. If a restructuring plan is not implemented, consider reclassifying the positions of financial analysts who perform senior accountant duties.

3. Consider a restructure of the senior accountant and financial analyst positions as recommended above. Work closely with its Human Resources Department and its legal counsel to help ensure that any restructuring works as seamlessly as possible.
4. Revise the testing process for the senior accountant and financial analyst positions.
5. Identify and consider using alternative methods to advertise job openings if needed.

Automation of Manual Tasks

Automating business processes whenever possible increases efficiency, improves accuracy, and streamlines processes. The automation of routine, manual processes, no matter how small or how few staff are affected, increases productivity, freeing time for staff to perform other duties. Automated processes also make transitions easier when duties are redistributed among staff.

During FCMAT's interviews, various staff described routinely performing manual tasks that could be automated, including the following:

- Receiving salary and benefits data from one system and then manually entering the data into the Munis financial system.
- Receiving data in electronic form, then manually entering the data into a spreadsheet.
- Manually processing budget reports from the Munis financial system and then distributing the paper reports to site and department users.

Staff also reported that a request to automate a routine manual task was rejected because it benefited only one employee.

The director of budget and finance has a technology background and is currently considered the go-to person for improving processes in the department. However, a business analyst senior whose function is to manage technical systems is assigned to the Budget and Finance Department. A summary of this position description includes the following:

- Analyze, evaluate, design and maintain business processes and workflow
- Extract, analyze and present data in a form appropriate to the requesting business unit
- Establish requirements for developing reports and datasets to optimize processes or provide essential data

This position needs to set criteria to prioritize the development of individual automated processes that will allow the department to meet the needs of all its staff while supporting the most critical tasks first. The director of budget and finance needs to be involved in reviewing the list of tasks, making changes to the order of tasks based on the department's needs, and serving as a liaison to the IT Department if additional assistance is needed in automating tasks.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Collaborate with all department staff to identify tasks appropriate for automation.
2. Automate routine manual processes whenever possible.
3. Assign the duty of prioritizing the automation of routine manual processes to the business analyst senior, and ensure that the director of budget and finance reviews and approves the priority list of processes to be automated and serves as liaison to the IT Department if further assistance is needed.

Standard Operating Procedures — Desk Manuals

Standard operating procedures (SOPs), sometimes referred to as desk manuals, document how to perform duties. These documents help staff with infrequently performed duties, and are a resource when duties are redistributed or when new employees are hired. Standard operating procedures ensure a task is completed with the same effectiveness regardless of who is performing the task, and eliminate confusion that can lead to differing processes for the same task. Some staff reported documenting procedures for their duties or using notes from predecessors; however, most staff were unaware of formal SOPs.

Each financial analyst is assigned to a senior accountant who is responsible for their training; however, without consistent, written SOPs, staff will receive varying and possibly contradictory training. Some financial analysts stated they train their senior accountants instead of being trained by them, while others stated they receive no training at all.

FCMAT was provided with a *Budget & Finance Department Handbook/Guide* dated January 25, 2021. This is an excellent resource for staff who work in the Munis financial system; it provides step-by-step instructions along with pictorial examples.

FCMAT was also provided with drafts of two manuals. The first is an undated *Senior Accountant, Budget & Finance Duties, Projects & Reference Guide*, which provides a calendar for duties as well as tips, links and screenshots to help perform duties. Based on the dates provided in the screenshots, this manual appears to have been started in 2018. The second is titled *Department FA Instructions* and contains calendars as well as tips, checklists, workflows, and other related information regarding various duties assigned to financial analysts. It too is undated but appears to have been created in 2018.

The Budget and Finance Department maintains a team folder on the district's WikiPage in Microsoft Teams. Although relatively unused, this folder is intended to store SOPs, step-by-step instructions, and training videos specific to the Budget and Finance Department. This folder is managed by the department's administrative secretary, and all staff have access.

It would benefit the district to create SOPs in the form of desk manuals for each position and ensure that these documents include step-by-step procedures for job duties and workflow diagrams to ensure a better understanding of duties and their timelines. This type of document also ensures consistent application of internal controls and designates the responsibilities that each position holds; can also help bridge the training gaps that sometimes remain after employee turnover; and it is especially helpful to new staff. These documents can provide training and cross training, help preserve institutional knowledge, eliminate dependency on one person, ensure staff members follow the latest and most efficient procedures, and effectively document and monitor segregation of duties. Once established, SOPs should be made available to district staff as applicable to help with transactions and best practices. With the turnover the district has experienced, documenting how tasks are performed is especially important.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop SOPs in the form of desk manuals that describe employees' duties, and ensure that each employee includes step-by-step procedures for all assigned duties in their SOPs. Consider using a third party to prepare the documents to ensure they are consistent in format and do not detract from the time staff members need to perform assigned duties.

2. Review and revise these SOPs in the form of desk manuals at least once a year.

3. Store all SOPs in one location, such as the Budget and Finance Department Wikipage team folder in Microsoft Teams, and allow staff access as appropriate.

Appendix

Study Agreement

FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM
STUDY AGREEMENT
October 20, 2020

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the team, and the Clovis Unified School District, hereinafter referred to as the district, mutually agree as follows:

1. **BASIS OF AGREEMENT**

The team provides a variety of services to local education agencies (LEAs). The district has requested that the team assign professionals to study specific aspects of the district's operations. These professionals may include staff of the team, county offices of education, the California Department of Education, school districts, or private contractors. All work shall be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this agreement.

In keeping with the provisions of Assembly Bill 1200, the county superintendent will be notified of this agreement between the district and FCMAT and will receive a copy of the final report. The final report will also be published on the FCMAT website.

2. **SCOPE OF THE WORK**

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the Budget and Finance positions listed below and make recommendations for improvement, if any.

   - Director of Budget and Finance
   - Financial Analysts
   - Senior Accountants

2. Review job duties and evaluate the current workflow and distribution of functions within these job classifications and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

1. Orientation Meeting – The team will conduct an orientation session at the district to brief district management and supervisory personnel on the team's procedures and the purpose and schedule of the study.
2. On-site Review – The team will conduct an on-site review at the district office and at school sites if necessary.

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3. Exit Meeting – The team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the on-site review to inform the district of significant findings and recommendations to that point.
4. Exit Letter – Approximately 10 days after the exit meeting, the team will issue an exit letter briefly memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.
5. Draft Report – Electronic copies of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the district's administration for review and comment.
6. Final Report – Electronic copies of the final report will be delivered to the district's administration and to the county superintendent following completion of the review. Printed copies are available from FCMAT upon request.
7. Follow-Up Support – If requested by the district within six to 12 months after completion of the study, FCMAT will return to the district at no cost to assess the district's progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report. Progress in implementing the recommendations will be documented to the district in a FCMAT management letter. FCMAT will work with the district on a mutually convenient time to return for follow-up support that is no sooner than eight months and no later than 18 months after completion of the study.

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The FCMAT study team may include:

A.	***To be determined***	***FCMAT Staff***
B.	***To be determined***	***FCMAT Consultant***

4. PROJECT COSTS

The cost for studies requested pursuant to Education Code (EC) 42127.8(d)(1) shall be as follows:

A. $800 per day for each staff member while on site, conducting fieldwork at other locations, preparing or presenting reports and participating in meetings. The cost of independent FCMAT consultants will be billed at their actual daily rate for all work performed.

B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel, meals and lodging.

C. The district will be invoiced at actual costs, with 50% of the estimated cost due following the completion of the on-site review and the remaining amount due upon the district's acceptance of the final report.

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Final Report Submitted:	to be determined
Board Presentation:	to be determined, if requested
Follow-Up Support:	if requested

7. **COMMENCEMENT, TERMINATION AND COMPLETION OF WORK**

FCMAT will begin work as soon as it has assembled an available and appropriate study team consisting of FCMAT staff and independent consultants, taking into consideration other jobs FCMAT has previously undertaken and assignments from the state. The team will work expeditiously to complete its work and deliver its report, subject to the cooperation of the district and any other parties from which, in the team's judgment, it must obtain information. Once the team has completed its fieldwork, it will proceed to prepare a draft report and a final report. Prior to completion of fieldwork, the district may terminate its request for service and will be responsible for all costs incurred by FCMAT to the date of termination under Section 4 (Project Costs). If the district does not provide written notice of termination prior to completion of fieldwork, the team will complete its work and deliver its report and the district will be responsible for the full costs. The district understands and agrees that FCMAT is a state agency and all FCMAT reports are published on the FCMAT website and made available to interested parties in state government. In the absence of extraordinary circumstances, FCMAT will not withhold preparation, publication and distribution of a report once fieldwork has been completed, and the district shall not request that it do so.

8. **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR**

FCMAT is an independent contractor and is not an employee or engaged in any manner with the district. The manner in which FCMAT's services are rendered shall be within its sole control and discretion. FCMAT representatives are not authorized to speak for, represent, or obligate the district in any manner without prior express written authorization from an officer of the district.

9. **INSURANCE**

During the term of this agreement, FCMAT shall maintain liability insurance of not less than $1 million unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by the district, automobile liability insurance in the amount required under California state law, and workers' compensation as required under California state law. FCMAT shall provide certificates of insurance, with Clovis Unified School District named as additional insured, indicating applicable insurance coverages upon request prior to the commencement of on-site work.

10. **HOLD HARMLESS**

FCMAT shall hold the district, its board, officers, agents and employees harmless from all suits, claims and liabilities resulting from negligent acts or omissions of its board, officers, agents and employees undertaken under this agreement. Conversely, the district

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Based on the elements noted in section 2A, the total not-to-exceed cost of the study will be $8,200.

D. Any change to the scope will affect the estimate of total cost.

Payments for FCMAT's services are payable to Kern County Superintendent of Schools - Administrative Agent located on 1300 17th Street, City Centre, Bakersfield, CA 93301.

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT**

A. The district will provide office and conference room space during on-site reviews.

B. The district will provide the following if requested:

1. Policies, regulations and prior reports that address the study scope.
2. Current or proposed organizational charts.
3. Current and two prior years' audit reports.
4. Any documents requested on a supplemental list. Documents requested on the supplemental list should be provided to FCMAT only in electronic format; if only hard copies are available, they should be scanned by the district and sent to FCMAT in electronic format.
5. Documents should be provided in advance of fieldwork; any delay in the receipt of the requested documents may affect the start date and/or completion date of the project. Upon approval of the signed study agreement, access will be provided to FCMAT's online SharePoint document repository, where the district will upload all requested documents.

C. The district's administration will review a draft copy of the report resulting from the study. Any comments regarding the accuracy of the data presented in the report or the practicability of the recommendations will be reviewed with the team prior to completion of the final report.

Pursuant to EC 45125.1(c), representatives of FCMAT will have limited contact with pupils. The district shall take appropriate steps to comply with EC 45125.1(c).

6. **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

The following schedule outlines the planned completion dates for different phases of the study and will be established upon the receipt of a signed study agreement:

Orientation:	to be determined
Staff Interviews:	to be determined
Exit Meeting:	to be determined
Draft Report Submitted:	to be determined

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shall hold FCMAT, its board, officers, agents and employees harmless from all suits, claims and liabilities resulting from negligent acts or omissions of its board, officers, agents and employees undertaken under this agreement.

11. **COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Because of the existence of COVID-19 and the resulting shelter-in-place recommendations, local educational agency closures and other related considerations, at FCMAT's sole discretion, the Scope of Work, Project Costs, Responsibilities of District (Sections 1, 4 and 5 herein) and other provisions herein may be revised. Examples of such revisions may include, but not be limited by, the following:

A. Orientation and exit meetings, interviews and other information-gathering activities may be conducted remotely via telephone, video conferencing, etc. References to site work and fieldwork shall be interpreted appropriately given the circumstances.

B. Activities performed remotely that are normally performed in the field shall be billed hourly as if performed in the field (excluding out-of-pocket costs).

C. The district may be relieved of its duty to provide conference and other work area facilities for the team.

12. **FORCE MAJEURE**

Neither party will be liable for any failure of or delay in the performance of this study agreement due to causes beyond the reasonable control of the party, except for payment obligations by the district.

13. **CONTACT PERSON**

Name: Susan Rutledge
Telephone: (559) 327-9127
E-mail: susanrutledge@usd.com

O'Farrell 10/20/2020
Eimear O'Farrell, Ed.D., Superintendent Date
Clovis Unified School District

Michael H. Fine October 20, 2020
Michael H. Fine, Date
Chief Executive Officer
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

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