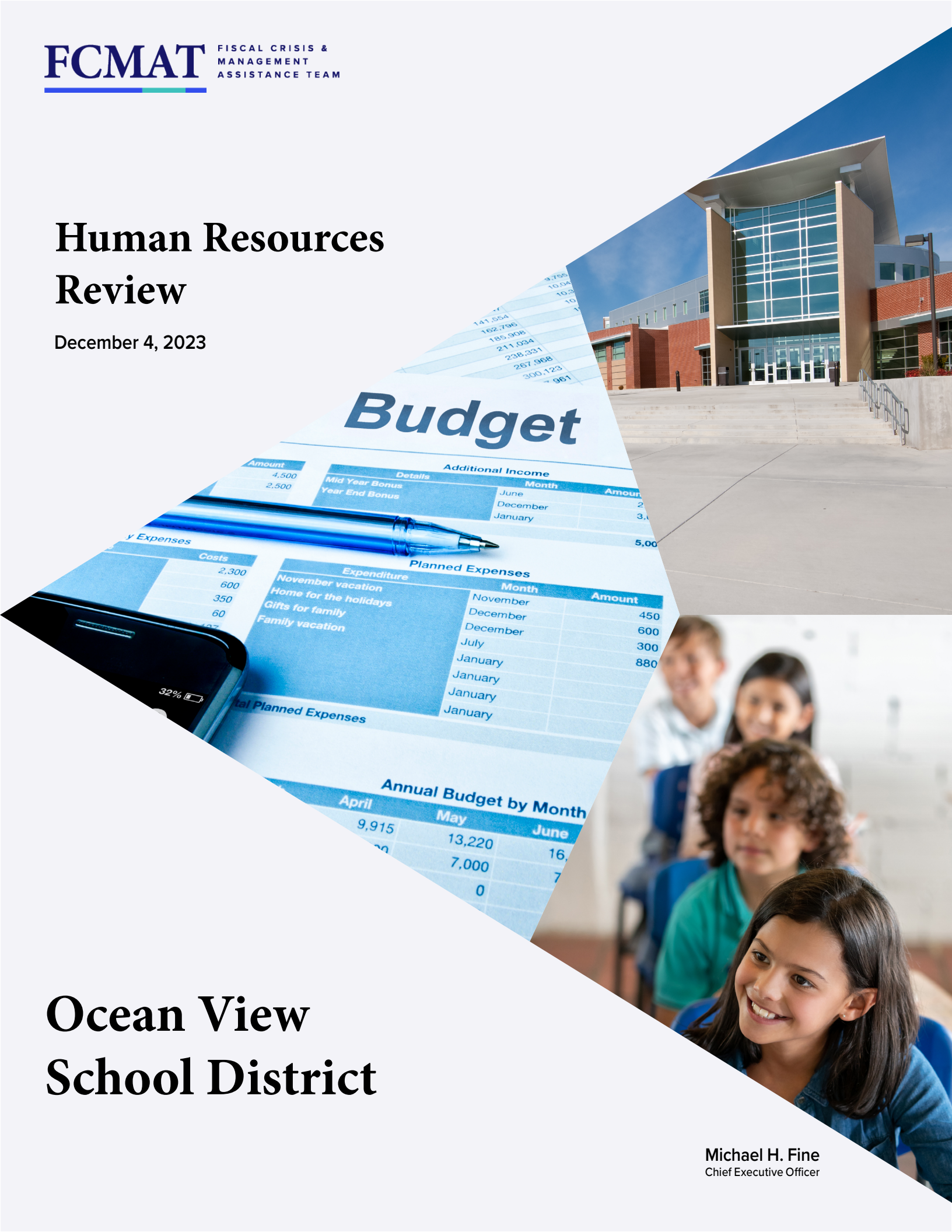


Human Resources Review

December 4, 2023



Budget

Amount		Additional Income	
4,500	Details	Month	Amount
2,500	Mid Year Bonus	June	2
	Year End Bonus	December	3,000
		January	5,000

Planned Expenses	
Expenditure	Month
November vacation	November
Home for the holidays	December
Gifts for family	December
Family vacation	July
	January
	January
	January
	January

Annual Budget by Month		
April	May	June
9,915	13,220	16,000
200	7,000	7,000
	0	

Ocean View School District

Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

December 4, 2023

Michael Conroy, Superintendent, Ed.D.
Ocean View School District
17200 Pinehurst Lane
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

Dear Superintendent Conroy:

In March 2023, the district and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for FCMAT to review the district's Human Resources Department. Specifically, the study agreement states that FCMAT will complete the following:

1. Review operational processes and procedures in the Human Resources Department and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any, in the following areas:
 - Recruitment of certificated personnel
 - Selection and hiring of certificated personnel
 - Onboarding and offboarding of certificated personnel
 - Professional development of certificated personnel
 - Volunteer processing for schools
 - Leaves for certificated personnel
 - Communication with management team
 - Quality of work product and its impact on other departments
2. Review operational processes and procedures of the Personnel Commission and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any, in the following areas:
 - Recruitment of classified personnel
 - Selection and hiring of classified personnel
 - Onboarding and offboarding of classified personnel
 - Classification plan and reclassification of classified personnel
 - Developing job descriptions for classified personnel
 - Professional development and cross-training for classified personnel
 - Leaves for classified personnel
 - Communication with management team
 - Quality of work product and its impact on other departments

3. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the Human Resources Department and the Classified Personnel Commission and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.

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

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael H. Fine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being more prominent than the last name "Fine".

Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

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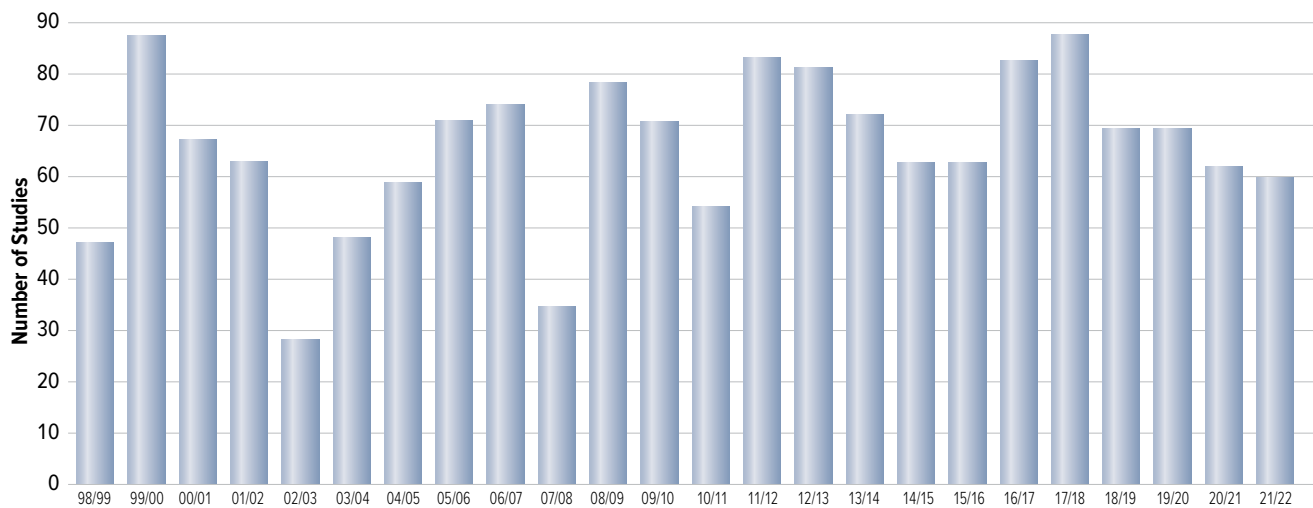
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About FCMAT

FCMAT's primary mission is to assist California's local TK-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.

Studies by Fiscal Year



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 TK-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 1,400 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

The Ocean View School District is in the city of Huntington Beach, CA and serves approximately 6,942 students at 14 schools, including students in transitional kindergarten through grade 8 (TK-8). According to Ed Data, the district's enrollment has declined by an average of approximately 330 students a year since the 2017-18 fiscal year. As of 2021-22, the district's unduplicated count of English learner, socioeconomically disadvantaged and foster youth students was approximately 59% of enrollment.

The Human Resources (HR) Division is one of three divisions in the district; the others are Educational Services and Administrative Services. The district operates two separate departments in the Human Resources Division: the HR Department and the Personnel Commission (PC) Department. The HR Department selects, hires and onboards certificated personnel as well as supporting all personnel in the areas of leaves, performance evaluations, workers' compensation, and professional development. The PC recruits and onboards classified personnel as well as supports classified personnel if there is an appeal of employment action by the district.

The commission at Ocean View is an independent body made up of three community volunteers, each appointed for three-year terms. By law, one member of the commission is appointed by the district's board of trustees, and one member by the classified employees' association (California School Employees Association Chapter #375), with those two appointees jointly agreeing on the selection of the third commissioner.

Study and Report Guidelines

In March 2023, the Ocean View School District and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for FCMAT to conduct a review of the district's Human Resources Department and PC's operational processes and procedures and to provide an organizational and staffing review.

FCMAT visited the district on August 15-17 and scheduled virtual interviews on August 28, 2023, to conduct interviews with district and school staff, collect data and review documents. Following 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:

Marcus Wirowek
FCMAT Intervention Specialist

Robbie Montalbano
FCMAT Intervention Specialist

Leonel Martínez
FCMAT Technical Writer

Norma Gonzales
FCMAT Consultant

Those members of this study team who are otherwise employed by a local educational agency (LEA) were not representing their respective employers but were working solely as independent contractors for FCMAT.

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

Executive Summary

The Ocean View School District's Human Resources (HR) Department manages the recruitment, selection, hiring, onboarding, and professional development of certificated personnel. The district's Personnel Commission (PC) is responsible for recruitment, selection, hiring and onboarding of classified personnel. However, misunderstandings have arisen regarding HR's responsibilities and those of the PC. HR and the PC have a pressing need to collaborate with one another so they can establish consistent and timely hiring practices and best recruitment approaches.

Recruiting for certificated personnel involves posting positions, reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and conducting reference checks. However, candidates have sometimes been brought to the board for approval without the necessary fingerprint clearances. This highlights the importance of streamlining and enhancing the recruitment process to ensure thorough vetting of candidates.

The recruitment of classified personnel differs significantly from the process for certificated personnel. As allowed by Education Codes (EC) 45222 and 45224.5, the district adopted the merit system. This system includes provisions for employee selection, retention, promotion, and PC staff training that are intended to improve workforce efficiency and promote the public good. Many district employees lack an understanding of the merit system, the PC, and the overall recruitment process for classified personnel. Further, statements expressed to FCMAT indicated an unwillingness to understand the system. The development of training workshops for managers and staff could help clarify the intricacies of the merit system and promote understanding of the differences between the two processes. The PC has adopted the merit regulations for the district, and both the commission and its staff interpret the regulations rigidly. This has led to many delays in hiring classified staff, which has severely hindered the staff's ability to effectively serve their students. The commission and its staff should strive to balance flexibility with integrity.

The district lacks a comprehensive certificated and classified recruitment plan, impeding efficient candidate attraction. It is imperative to develop such a plan, including clear timelines, responsible parties, and effective recruitment strategies. Planning and initiating certain recruitment efforts well in advance, even before position approval, can mitigate delays in hiring. Improvements are also needed in personnel requisition; hiring managers would benefit from training and streamlined procedures to minimize delays. A simplified application process for classified positions can also draw more applicants.

Both the onboarding and offboarding processes require attention and comprehensive training for staff. Regular updates to job descriptions and diligent tracking of professional development are necessary for operational efficiency.

Policy updates are essential to align with current laws and best practices, while fostering effective communication and collaboration between HR, PC, and other departments is vital for streamlined operations. Additionally, the customer service provided by the PC could be improved through the development of a recruitment manual and better communication. Interpersonal conflicts and confusion regarding each department's authority and responsibilities have harmed the culture of the organization and point to a crisis in leadership in the district.

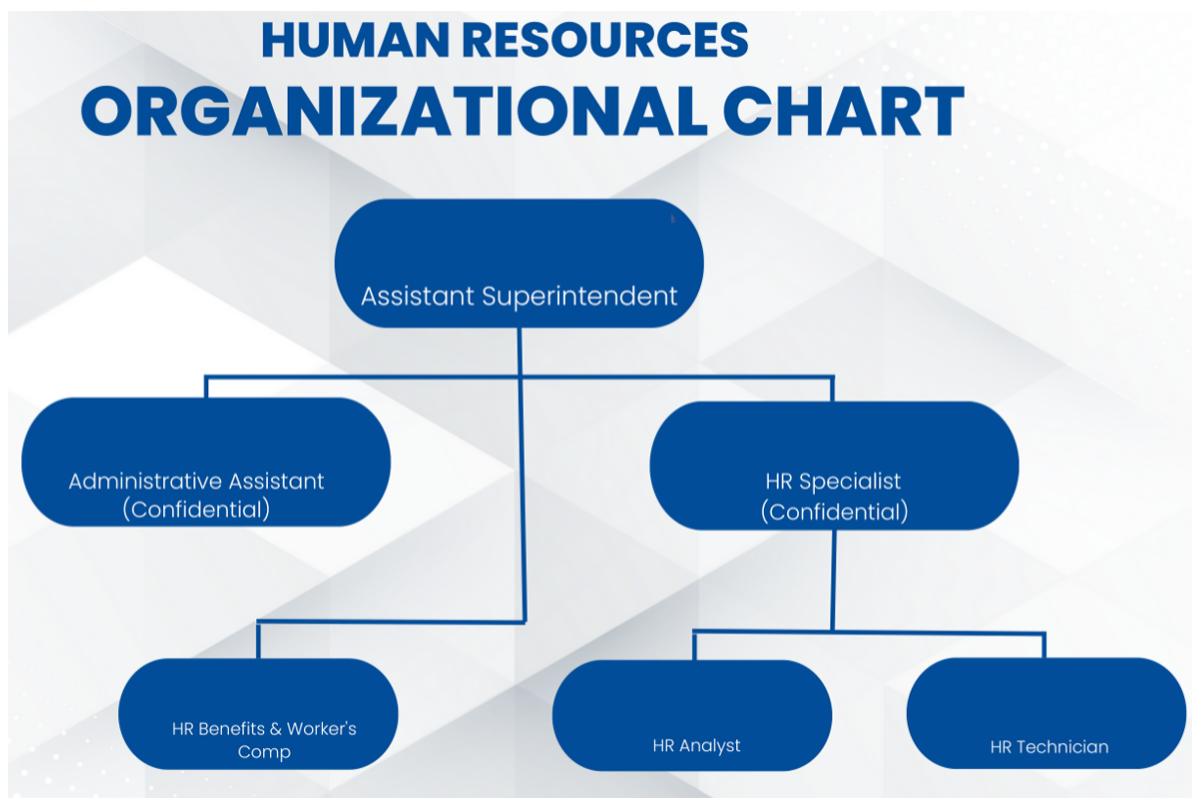
Implementing an organizational chart that shows how the departments support one another and work together would promote unity and support for students and the district.

Findings and Recommendations

Operational Processes and Procedures of the HR Department

Recruitment of Certificated Personnel

The Ocean View School District HR Department consists of the assistant superintendent, administrative assistant, human resources specialist, human resources analyst, human resources technician, and benefits and workers' compensation specialist.



The HR Department is responsible for recruiting all certificated staff. The department also supports the following transactions for all of the district's approximately 900 classified and certificated employees: leave of absences, benefits, complaints and investigations, discipline, workers' compensation, and labor relations/negotiations.

There is a significant misunderstanding in the district about the responsibilities of the HR Department and the PC. Later in this report FCMAT discusses the purpose and responsibilities of the PC. However, a personnel commission is an independent body that provides oversight to an LEA's merit system. PCs are responsible for specific personnel matters affecting classified school employees. The PC is composed of three members that are appointed for staggered three-year terms by the local educational

agency (LEA), the local classified association, and a neutral party who is appointed by the other two board members. Interviews with HR staff indicate that they believe the PC is and should be responsible for all aspects of classified staff, which include leaves of absences, benefits, workers' compensation and other responsibilities.

The HR Department is responsible for maintaining updated certificated job descriptions; however, HR staff indicated, and FCMAT verified, that these documents are not updated regularly or consistently. Instead, job descriptions are reviewed only when there is a vacancy and before they are uploaded to [EDJOIN](#) for a position announcement. Appropriately updated job descriptions help districts achieve their goals and objectives. Accurate job descriptions align employees' performance with the LEAs' goals and desired outcomes. Moreover, job descriptions can identify areas where an employee may need additional training or development. Management can help employees who are not meeting the requirements outlined in their job descriptions by providing them with feedback and coaching to improve their skills. Job descriptions need to be updated periodically to maintain their accuracy and relevance. Typically, these documents should be reviewed annually, but they should be revised whenever job roles change, significant changes are made to job responsibilities, or legal or regulatory requirements change.

During FCMAT's fieldwork, employees described the process of recruiting for certificated vacancies. HR staff stated that they can fill vacant certificated positions in approximately two weeks compared to the recruitment of classified positions, which according to staff takes longer. The key duties in recruitment are to establish criteria to hire properly credentialed teachers and maintain enrollment and staffing projections. The initial hiring process consists of posting the vacant position(s) on [EDJOIN](#), a nationwide online job board used by many districts to recruit candidates. Once a pool of applicants has submitted applications online, the HR staff review/screen them for the appropriate credential.

HR departments should host and attend job fairs for several reasons. Job fairs provide opportunities to connect with a diverse talent pool, enabling face-to-face interactions with potential candidates. They enhance the district's visibility, and facilitate efficient recruitment processes, especially when multiple positions need to be filled quickly. Real-time interactions help assess a candidate's qualifications, suitability and personality. Job fairs can also be a cost-effective recruitment strategy. The Human Resources staff have hosted and attended multiple job fairs. They also use Instagram, a social media platform, to advertise their vacant positions, and they have posted this information in the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), [EdCal](#) publication and the CASBO (California Association of School Business Officials) job board. However, with all of these recruitment resources, the district does not track how and where it gets its candidates. The district needs to track its recruitment resources to determine which source draws the most applicants. In addition, working with local university credential programs could improve its recruitment efforts.

In a recruitment report given to the governing board on November 15, 2022, HR staff identified the areas of concern in certificated recruitments as shortages of substitute teachers, speech-language pathologists, special education teachers, and classified substitutes. However, this shortage is not specific to Ocean View; it is a concern for all LEAs throughout the state of California.

Interviews indicated the district does not have a recruitment plan. A recruitment plan serves as a strategic guide, helping to identify, evaluate, and select candidates who align with the district's objectives and needs. These plans are crucial in a district's efforts to attract the right talent. Without a recruitment plan, issues and problems could arise. Timelines are a vital plan component, providing structure and efficiency in the hiring process. The importance of a recruitment plan is its ability to align hiring efforts with the district's goals, making the process more efficient. It ensures consistency and fairness by documenting criteria for candidate evaluation, which is essential for avoiding biases and discrimination. An effective plan would include potential vacancies, possible program changes, contractions and expansions of programs, timelines, staff responsible for each task and the recruitment resources to be used. The plan's timelines estab-

lish clear deadlines for each recruitment stage, helping HR and hiring managers manage their time effectively. They also ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. While a plan provides structure, it is important that it remain adaptable to changing circumstances.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Clarify the roles of the PC and HR departments.
2. Annually review and update certificated job descriptions separately from the recruitment process.
3. Once a position is hired, analyze the recruitment sources the applicants used to learn about the position.
4. Work with local university credential programs to potentially increase certificated candidate pools.
5. Develop an annual recruitment plan that identifies the following:
 - a. Potential vacancies.
 - b. Program changes, contractions and expansions.
 - c. Timelines and important dates for the hiring process.
 - d. Recruitment sources that will be used, by job classification.
 - e. Position(s) responsible for each task.

Selection and Hiring of Certificated Personnel

Once staff have identified qualified candidates, they schedule interviews and coordinate interview panels. Annual and ongoing training is imperative for panelists to know and understand how to rank/score the candidates they interview. Staff indicated that these panels are given instructions but not regularly reviewed or monitored to ensure they follow instructions. The district needs to develop frequently asked questions (FAQs) to describe what is and is not appropriate during interviews. Appropriately trained HR staff could occasionally attend interview panels to monitor the process. The certificated selection process is required to adhere to high standards and ensure all steps are taken appropriately, and best practices are followed.

The next step in the process is for the candidate's potential supervisor to conduct reference checks. Once an employment offer is made, the candidate is invited to a new-hire orientation, and a criminal background check is performed. This process is described in more detail in the section of this report titled Reference Checks. The final step is for the governing board to approve the hiring of the candidate. FCMAT found that candidates are sometimes brought to the board for approval before all the required clearances are in place. The district needs to bring forward only candidates who have cleared a criminal background check and whose hiring process is in accordance with board policy. Failing to confirm criminal backgrounds prior to board approval can increase the district's liability and risk. These responsibilities are standard operations within LEAs' HR departments.

The processing of personnel requisitions for vacant positions could be improved. It is a best practice to ensure all personnel requisitions are complete prior to filling any position. HR staff stated they are exploring streamlining this process with an updated Orange County Department of Education online requisition

system. Interviews indicated HR staff may skip steps to expedite the processing of requisitions due to the pressing need to fill positions. Staff reported that positions have been filled without an approved personnel requisition. While expediting a process is efficient in many ways, the district's process requires final approvals before an employee is hired. Failure to complete the process correctly could result in the overhiring of personnel.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop and provide training for staff who are a part of the district's interview panels.
2. Work with the county office of education to streamline the online requisition system for processing positions.
3. Ensure candidates receive the appropriate clearances prior to board approval.
4. Ensure the personnel requisition process is complete prior to initiating recruitment for a position.

Onboarding/Offboarding of Certificated Personnel

The onboarding of all personnel is an important component of the final phase of the recruitment process. Federal- and state-mandated hiring paperwork as well as local forms must be completed before employees start working in the district. The onboarding process is a multidepartment effort that involves HR, benefits, payroll, information technology and others. With any changes made to the onboarding/offboarding process, HR should work with the respective department to ensure efficiency.

Comprehensive training and proper processing are essential to ensure that the information produced is reliable and accurate. The HR staff must ensure that all required documents are obtained, and that new-hire forms are completed in their entirety and processed efficiently.

The school district website has a limited amount of information pertaining to new hire orientation. Although the district provided FCMAT with a sample new hire packet, it lacked a checklist to ensure all the documents were completed accurately and appropriately. In addition, the packet lacked signature lines for the staff member who completed and verified the information was provided and reviewed with the employee. There were also no employee signature lines to ensure new employees received all appropriate documents, information and training.

HR staff sends an offer letter to new employees and schedules an orientation (including management). Mandatory trainings for the new employee are included in the onboarding process. However, the HR staff do not provide training to new supervisors. Effectively training new supervisors in areas such as collective bargaining, discipline, and other relevant skills is essential to prepare them for their roles. This training equips them with the necessary knowledge and tools as well as reducing the district's potential liabilities. As an example, "Facts, Rule, Impact. Suggestions, Knowledge" (FRISK) training (or similar training) helps supervisors gain the tools needed to draft a letter of concern and/or reprimand as well as learn general supervisory process and procedures.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Work with other relevant departments to ensure new staff are provided with all the necessary equipment, access and training for the district's systems.
2. Develop a comprehensive onboarding/offboarding checklist.
3. Add staff signature lines for those who process the onboarding checklist.
4. Add employee signature lines to verify that staff have completed all required tasks.
5. Ensure newly hired/promoted management staff receive appropriate supervisor training such as FRISK.

Professional Development of Certificated Staff

Professional development is a cornerstone of certificated staff's growth and efficacy in the classroom. It is a structured, ongoing process that hones educators' skills, knowledge, and capacities, leading to improved learning outcomes for students. Collaboration between educational services and human resources is essential in offering comprehensive and effective professional development for certificated staff.

Educational Services includes a range of administrative and supportive functions such as curriculum design, classroom management and assessment. These services work with schools and educators to identify professional development needs.

Central to this coordination is the management of district-mandated trainings, which is critical for legal compliance, regulations, and updates to recent changes in law. Human resources plays an important role in pinpointing these required training modules, communicating them to schools, management and teachers and coordinating and tracking training sessions. It is imperative that all mandated training be tracked to ensure compliance with applicable law.

Staff indicated that educational services collaborates closely with human resources for mandated training. However, professional development is not tracked or coordinated with the HR Department. Tracking professional development for teachers holds significant importance for several reasons. It serves as tangible evidence of teachers' growth and dedication to enhancing their skills and knowledge. The administration can also align training to the issues faced by the students. Depending on test scores from the previous year, the administration can customize training to meet the needs of certificated staff and to ultimately make improvements in the classroom. Without tracking, a historical record is not created to demonstrate how professional development was tied to student needs.

The district's contract with the Ocean View Teacher's Association allows two dates throughout the year for column movement. It is imperative for HR to track training for potential of column movement in the certificated salary schedule. Ideally, HR would have some of the information for column movement and could work with the employee and respective departments to update the employee's compensation.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure educational services and human resources work together for mandated training.
2. Track and place in the employee's respective employee file any professional development and/or training completed.
3. Track professional development yearly to develop a historical record and align training to student needs.

Volunteer processing for schools

The HR staff processes all facets of volunteers within the district. The district's website provides considerable information about volunteers. To strengthen campus safety at all schools, the district uses the Raptor Visitor/Volunteer Management System. This system allows HR staff to screen all visitors and provides badges to volunteers via their government-issued ID card to determine if their names appear on sex offender registries in all 50 states. This allows them to continue to adhere to the volunteer policy. The district's website provides instructions on how to become a volunteer as well as the requirements.

The district has published a Volunteer Handbook that outlines the requirements and types of volunteers. There are two types of volunteering as follows:

Tier 1 - Volunteering more than five hours a week, attending field trips and/or overnight school-sponsored trips. Only Tier 1 is required to complete the fingerprint clearance.

Tier 2 - Volunteering less than five hours a week; no fingerprint clearance required.

The Volunteer Handbook is comprehensive and contains detailed information for a new volunteer. New and current volunteers would benefit from a condensed version of an onboarding orientation, similar to a new-hire orientation. This would ensure that volunteers understand their role at the school site or location where they are assigned, and that they maintain appropriate conduct while accompanying students on field trips. The handbook does not state how hours are tracked or what happens when a volunteer exceeds the five-hour-per-week limit. This exposes the district to some risk since there is no process to determine when a Tier 2 volunteer exceeds five hours a week. This could allow those with criminal backgrounds to exceed the time limit without having their fingerprints processed.

The district does not have a clear offboarding process for volunteers. If a volunteer quits or is removed, the district should outline how to secure that person's district identification and other district property that may have been issued.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop a condensed onboarding/offboarding process for volunteers.
2. Update the volunteer handbook as needed to ensure the contents remain relevant.
3. Consider having all volunteers classified as Tier 1, and requiring all volunteers to be fingerprinted so the district can obtain their background.

4. Consider issuing annual identification badges to recognize volunteers as having been cleared through the HR Department. This safety precaution can be tracked in the Raptor system and monitored regularly.

Leaves for Certificated Personnel

Leaves of absence at LEAs are typically outlined in the employees' collective bargaining agreement, California Education Code and board policy. To address the complexities surrounding leaves of absence, HR Department staff need to be trained and knowledgeable of the intricacies of leaves. In addition, board policy should serve as a resource to those who request leave and those who process it.

Interviews with staff indicated that the HR Department is adequately trained in leaves. Those interviewed stated they have no problem obtaining approval to attend any new training that becomes available. However, the board policies on leaves have not been revised or updated for some time (see below).

A board policy (BP) is adopted by the board and provides general guidance for operating the school district. It could also be a statement reflecting the principles that guide staff. An administrative regulation (AR) directly supports the board policies and provides specific steps for carrying out a policy or designates the person who carries it out. The following are BP and AR policies specifically related to leaves.

BP 4161	- Leaves	Last Review Date: 02/05/08
AR 4161.1	- Personal Illness/Injury Leave	Last Review Date: 08/12/03
AR 4161.2	- Personal Leaves	Last Review Date: 08/09/05
AR 4161.5	- Military Leave	Last Review Date: 08/09/05

It is imperative for LEAs to revisit and update their existing policies and procedures. Certificated leaves are intricate and demand a comprehensive approach that aligns with legal requirements while ensuring fair treatment of staff. The district would benefit from instituting policy revisits or reviews that are regular (at least annual), to ensure that the district's board policies remain current and aligned with any changes in the Education Code or other relevant legislation. When board policies or administrative regulations are updated or revised, management needs to ensure all staff are informed of these recent changes. This proactive approach would prevent the policies from becoming outdated and out of compliance.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue to support the staff's professional development in certificated leaves.
2. Ensure BPs and ARs are updated in accordance with any recent change in law.
3. Revisit board policy and administrative regulations on an ongoing basis to ensure best practices are always applied.
4. Once board policies and administrative regulations are updated, ensure staff are informed of relevant updates.

Quality of Work Product and Impacts on Other Departments and Communication with Management

During interviews with district staff, FCMAT received negative and unprofessional comments regarding the PC. When interviewing HR staff for the report, most of those interviewed also focused on unprofessional and unproductive comments regarding PC staff instead of providing constructive information about HR processes. These comments reflect a serious concern within the organization in which management has both participated in this type of unprofessional behavior and has failed to correct the situation in general.

In interviews, some hiring managers indicated they were unsure about the certificated processes in the HR department, but did not elaborate. Instead they would immediately shift to unprofessional and unproductive comments about the PC.

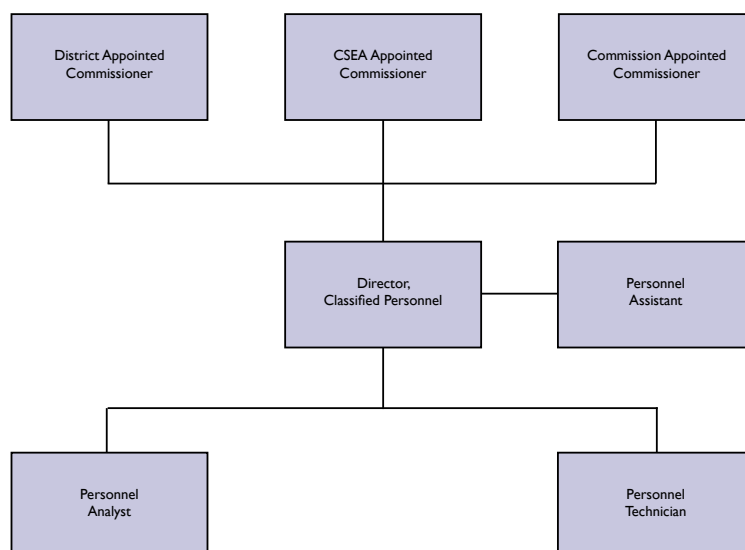
Interviews indicated management was encouraged to detail the PC's shortcomings at a staff meeting. Almost everyone interviewed outside the PC clearly expected FCMAT's report to focus on the PC department's flaws and on disdain for the merit system in general.

FCMAT discusses this concern further in the Organizational Review section.

Operational Processes and Procedures of the Classified Personnel Commission

Education Codes 45222 and 45224.5 allow for the adoption of a merit system for classified personnel, and EC 45240-45320 outline the specific merit rules. The merit system is a method of personnel management designed to promote the efficiency and economy of the workforce and the public good by providing for the selection and retention of employees, promotional opportunities, in-service training, and other related matters based on merit, fitness, and the principle of like pay for like work.

The district adopted the merit system and established a personnel commission in 1966. The PC is a part of the HR Division and has a director of classified personnel, who directly supervises three classified support staff. Both the HR and PC divisions serve the district's classified staff.



The district's human resources functions have been divided between the PC and the HR Department. A director of classified personnel manages the PC's functions, and an assistant superintendent for human resources manages the personnel functions for certificated staff and for some classified staff services once they are hired.

The PC operates independently of the HR Division rather than as an integral part of it. The PC director was selected by the commission and reports to it as does her staff. While the two departments share space in the district office, staff reported that there is little interaction between them, and when the HR and PC departments meet, the meetings are unproductive.

As mentioned previously, many staff members clearly do not fully understand the role of the PC and the operations of the merit system. Both administration and HR Department employees have limited understanding of the PC. Interviews indicated that the PC staff should be responsible for all activities that affect classified personnel.

A pervasive belief in the district is that the director of classified personnel and the PC staff are not district employees. While the commission oversees the PC staff, the positions are not exempt from district policies and procedures. The existence of separate departments both symbolizes and perpetuates the divide. All staff need to work together in a single department with a common goal of recruiting, retaining and serving employees.

During interviews, many hiring managers expressed frustration at the length of time necessary for recruitment and hiring. They believe that the PC is not proactive in recruiting and does not actively seek new ways to reach potential applicants unless prompted.

This belief causes friction and animosity among employees, both within the HR and PC departments as well as across the district.

Recruitment Process

The classified recruitment process is different from certificated recruitment. Certificated staff are awarded a credential(s) that qualifies them to teach in a classroom and sometimes a specific subject area. Similarly, psychologists, nurses, counselors and principals all have credentials that qualify them to serve in their positions.

An LEA's classified employees fall within many different job classifications, most of which do not require a specific certification or license. This requires the LEA to determine whether an applicant is qualified to perform the duties of a particular job. The process is more involved and often takes longer than standard certificated recruitment since it requires more steps. This is true of both merit and nonmerit LEAs.

A lack of understanding of the classified recruitment process is common in the district. Providing managers and staff with training workshops about the merit system's function would clarify the process.

The length of time taken to hire a classified employee can and should be mitigated by detailed and organized planning. Planning is crucial whether operating within a merit system or not. Because turnover is high among bus drivers and before- and after-school aides, recruitments should be continual for these positions. If an LEA knows of specific vacancies or of the upcoming vacancies in positions that work directly with children, the process should be continuous, but also begin in early spring for the fall. For summer positions, recruitment should be immediate upon approval of positions. If they have not yet been approved, the district could advertise that it is developing an eligibility list for certain positions and start the process even before.

FCMAT interviewed staff in the PC and requested numerous documents, including recruitment packets for five positions. None of the packets included complete documentation of the process.

Recruitment Plan

Based on interviews with staff and documents provided to FCMAT, the district lacks a true recruitment plan for classified personnel. This plan serves a crucial purpose as it outlines a strategic approach for attracting, selecting, and hiring the best candidates to meet a district's present and future workforce needs. Having a well-structured recruitment plan helps the district find and hire the most suitable individuals for specific roles, reducing the time to fill vacancies, and optimizing recruitment costs.

A recruitment plan needs to have clearly identified timelines and processes as well as state the staff responsible for these tasks. Important dates and processes should be clearly outlined. The plan should include the recruitment sources for each type of recruitment. As with certificated recruitment, program changes including contraction, redesign and expansion, need to be reviewed and added to the plan with target dates for hiring as well as any known or potential position vacancies. The responsible administrator needs to confirm staffing for summer sessions as well as regular school year programs so that PC staff can recruit and hire employees well in advance of summer school/programs as well as at the beginning of each school year. The Personnel Commission Q&A for Leadership manual provided to FCMAT states the following:

We often recruit in advance for positions we know will have multiple vacancies. For example, starting in May and throughout the summer we recruit for many Instructional classifications in anticipation of fall openings.

May is late to start a recruitment process when hiring managers, and possible interview panel participants are gone most of the summer. Having a recruitment plan that is developed with hiring departments and leadership would prevent unnecessary delays due to poor timing and planning.

To increase the chances of drawing a large pool of qualified applicants, it is important to determine the best recruitment sources based on the position. These sources can be internal, such as job boards, emails to staff, and the district website. They can also be external sources, typically including local newspapers or other publications, social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn, EDJOIN, job fairs, recruitment publications, and dedicated recruitment websites such as Indeed. In today's post-pandemic hiring environment, districts need to be creative when advertising for hard-to-fill positions. The director should meet with parent-teacher organizations, school site councils, local trade organizations and other district partners to inform them of employment opportunities for these positions. Understanding the effectiveness of each source is vital because it enables the department to focus its efforts on the sources that attract the most qualified candidates.

To evaluate the success of the chosen recruitment sources, the district should analyze the collected data. Each recruitment source should be evaluated for its efficacy. Data should be collected from each recruitment source such as the number of hires from the sources, candidate quality, and feedback from candidates regarding their recruitment experience. By analyzing the collected data, the PC and the district can make informed, data-driven decisions, optimize their recruitment strategies, and attract the best candidates to meet their specific needs and objectives. While some of this data is tracked in EDJOIN, it is not analyzed or compared with any other recruitment systems or outcomes.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop an annual recruitment plan that identifies the following:
 - a. Potential vacancies.
 - b. Program changes, contractions and expansions.
 - c. Timelines and important dates for the hiring process.
 - d. Recruitment sources that will be used, by job classification.
 - e. Position(s) responsible for each task.
2. Develop criteria for using additional recruitment sources based on classification and difficulty of recruiting for positions.
3. Analyze the recruitment sources newly hired employees used to find their job.
4. Develop and provide management with training regarding the merit system's functions.

Recruitment Request Process

The district provided FCMAT with a flowchart illustrating the recruitment and hiring process for classified personnel. In interviews, staff described processes that aligned with the flowchart. The hiring manager who has the vacancy sends a personnel requisition to the personnel analyst. The analyst reviews the requisition to ensure it is complete. If the requisition is not complete, it is returned to the hiring manager. To minimize delays, hiring managers would benefit from annual training on the process and on the forms required for the classified recruitment process. Once completed, the personnel analyst routes the request through the electronic workflow system, which includes accounting, position control, the director of fiscal services, the assistant superintendent of HR, and then back to the analyst. Staff indicated that the director was included in the previous routing system but is no longer included. The workflow routing should include the director of classified personnel.

Staff indicated that they do not post a job notice without a fully approved requisition. In the past, the hiring of an applicant was delayed due to the lack of a valid position to offer because a requisition had not been properly approved. A best practice is for a requisition be fully approved through the district process before posting a job notice. The routing process should not be prolonged because each stage should have an alternate assigned in the event of an employee's absence or position vacancy. While the requisition proceeds through the approval process, preparations can continue such as making arrangements to post the job notice and establishing dates for deadlines, testing and interviews. The jobs notice can then be immediately posted upon final approval. Waiting until the requisition is fully approved before preparing for the recruitment is an unnecessary delay. Any delay in the receipt of the requisition should be immediately reported to the director of classified personnel and the assistant superintendent of HR. FCMAT heard varying accounts of how long the process takes from request to posting. Some estimated a week while others stated it was much longer. FCMAT cannot verify any of the accounts since no documents were provided to support them.

According to the flowchart, staff next checks against 39-month rehire list. If an employee is qualified for the job, an offer is made. If the position is not filled from the 39-month rehire list, it may be offered to a current approved eligibility list. If none exists, recruitment is necessary. This part of the process needs be done concurrently with the routing of the requisition. If someone is qualified from the 39-month rehire list or a

current approved eligibility list, the personnel analyst can prepare for the steps to offer the position once the requisition approval is received. This step can be performed when the initial requisition is received and needs to be completed so that progress can be made toward full recruitment as described above.

The flowchart shows that the next step is to update the job description, if necessary. This should not be part of a recruitment process. Job descriptions should be updated regularly outside of the process. Stopping the recruitment process to conduct a job or classification study is a guaranteed and unnecessary delay that could last weeks or months, depending on the job classification. Job classification review is discussed in more detail in the Classification Plan and Reclassification of Classified Personnel section of this report.

The next step on the flowchart is to develop a recruitment plan. The staff did not provide any documentation to show that a recruitment plan was developed, the information it included or whether it was executed.

The department uses a form titled Recruitment Manual, which is actually not a manual but a checklist of tasks and fill-in items. This information includes details such as the receipt of the requisition, routing, and the document's approval status, as well stating whether the 39-month rehire list or the current eligibility list has been reviewed and when this review took place. The document includes a space to indicate the date the position was posted and closed as well as spaces for exam dates and to state whether they were added to the recruitment calendar. Almost none of this information was completed in the five packets provided by the district. It is unclear who completed the form and whether more than one position is responsible for completing it. If the information is necessary for the recruitment, the recruitment forms should be completed and signed by the person responsible. If the information is not necessary, it should be removed from the form. Most of the forms had a date of March 2023, while one form was dated November 2022. The forms appear identical apart from the date, so the reason for having multiple dates is unclear.

The form also includes a checklist of tasks with space for dates for posting, screening, and activities for written and oral exams. Again, most dates were missing, and some items were marked as complete but not others. The sections are not signed by the individual who completed them. Having signatures on checklists is important because it promotes accountability, providing a clear and documented way to assign responsibility and accountability for each task. Having individuals sign when they complete specific actions or steps makes it easier to track the person responsible for completing them and ensures that important tasks are not overlooked or neglected. Without fully completed forms with signatures and dates, it is impossible to verify the length of time for the full process.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Provide training for hiring managers on the personnel requisition process.
2. After forwarding the personnel requisitions for approval, immediately check the requisitions against current 39-month rehire lists and current eligibility lists while the requisition makes its way through the process.
3. Start the appropriate process to offer a position to an eligible candidate, or post the job depending on the outcome of the previous recommendation.
4. Verify checklists are used and completed in a timely manner.
5. Add a signature line to each checklist.

Job Notices

PC staff repeated multiple times that the Education Code requires a position to be posted for 15 working days. EC 45278 states in part the following:

(a) Written notices concerning tests, vacancies, transfer opportunities, and other selections of shifts, positions, assignments, classifications, or locations shall be posted at all work locations of employees who may be affected, not later than 15 working days prior to the closing date of filing appropriate applications, together with the normal use of newspapers and bulletins for public notice for open or promotional vacancies.

Meetings of the board and commission discussed reducing this time limit to 10 working days in “some circumstances.”

Education Code 45278 goes on to give flexibility in this process as follows:

(b) (1) Subdivision (a) does not apply to a school district that publishes and distributes to all work locations examination bulletins at least once each month, provided that records of employee requests for transfer and change of location are maintained and that the names of all candidates for transfer and change of location to a vacancy are certified to the appointing authority along with names of appropriate applicants from employment lists.

(2) A school district may publish and distribute pursuant to paragraph (1) by electronic means.

If the PC posts a list of vacancies on its website and sends emails to all employees notifying them at least monthly of open positions, it is not bound to the 15-day requirement or even a 10-day requirement. As an example, an email to all staff could be modeled after the following:

Ocean View School District
August 25, 2023

TO: All Staff

FROM: Personnel

SUBJECT: Current Job Announcements

The following positions are currently posted for recruitment. Please visit [webpage] to view the job openings.

[Positions] must ensure that the job announcement information is posted at all work sites where employees may not have access to office email.

Classified:

Custodian – Part Time (Open)

Universal Instructional Aide – after school (Open)

Lead Cook – (Open & Promotional)

Classified Substitute Opportunities:

Instructional Aide – Special Education

Paraprofessional School Bus Driver

Not all positions benefit from the same posting timelines. A recruitment plan would outline what the process and timelines should be for various job classifications, depending on the time of year and the job market.

All district jobs are posted on EDJOIN. Staff stated that they also post jobs on Government Jobs (www.governmentjobs.com) and Indeed (www.indeed.com). A search of both platforms yielded two job notices: school office clerk and sprinkler mechanic.

Effective job notices would include the written and oral exam dates and locations as well as the selection interview date and location. Planning these in advance allows for space to be made available, materials to be ready and participants to set the time aside.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider notifying district employees at least monthly of current classified openings so that job postings can be less than 15 working days, if necessary.
2. For hard-to-staff positions, post jobs continuously.
3. Include the written and oral exam dates and locations as well as the selection interview date and location in the posting.

Application Process

Once a job notice is posted, applicants are required to apply for positions at EDJOIN. Job notices posted on sites such as [Government Jobs](http://www.governmentjobs.com) or [Indeed](http://www.indeed.com) redirect the candidates to EDJOIN.

Staff indicated a paper application is not provided as an option unless it is for an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Applicants can use a computer/laptop at the district office if they do not have access to one at home.

Completing an application for classified positions is unnecessarily lengthy and cumbersome. EDJOIN has standard application questions in its system. Many LEAs add supplemental questions to the application to assist with screening, particularly when a candidate pool is likely to be large or a unique need exists. Most of the additional questions posed on the district's classified application are unnecessary for screening and may deter individuals from completing the document.

The application requests the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number. This information is not needed and may be considered discriminatory unless the person is hired by the district. When asked why this was necessary, PC staff stated that this was previously used on paper applications to identify applicants with the same name and indicated it will be removed.

The application asks whether the applicant has "continuously resided in California for 12 months," and staff explained this information is used for fingerprinting purposes. If candidates have not lived in the state for that length of time, fingerprints are submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in addition to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to obtain a copy of the criminal record. This process is described in more

detail in the section titled Reference Checks. The best practice is to submit all fingerprints to both the DOJ and the FBI to ensure that the district receives any criminal record the applicant may have.

The application for universal instructional assistant appears to be particularly cumbersome and may discourage potential candidates from completing it. The following supplemental questions appear on this job notice:

The following are representative duties of the Universal Instructional Assistant. Check YES, if you are willing to perform these duties, and NO, if you are not willing. Marking yes, indicates that if hired, you are willing and able, with or without reasonable accommodation, to perform the job duties.

- Assist with the preparation and presentation of educational and recreational materials and activities
- Tutor students individually and in small groups
- Monitor and assist students in activities such as drill, practice, study habits and research in a variety of subject areas utilizing a variety of instructional materials according to instruction/guidance of certificated/permitted staff
- Provide for supervision and safety of students during classroom and outdoor activities, learning center, library, recess and field trip activities, and during fire and earthquake emergencies and preparedness drills
- As directed, research and prepare instructional, motivational and decorative materials as well as letters, notices and other communications
- Assist in maintain a positive, disciplined, clean, safe, sanitary, orderly and attractive learning environment
- Assist children in personal hygiene needs, including washing face and hands and use of toilet facilities
- Administer basic first aid or CPR as needed
- Prepare and maintain a variety of records, notes, files and reports related to assigned students, activities and programs
- Perform routine office and clerical duties
- Attend staff meetings and participate in meetings and in-service training programs as assigned

A review of multiple other classified job postings for the district found that none had additional questions of this nature, including the posting for the early learning instructional assistant, which has a substantially similar job description. This is an unnecessary step in the process and may deter potential candidates from completing an application. According to staff, applicants who answer “no” to any of these questions are automatically screened out. If staff find it necessary to have this information, it would be better included as a single yes/no question such as, “I have reviewed and understand the job description and am willing and able to perform the duties, with or without reasonable accommodation.”

Other issues with the applications are that some include an area where the applicant “may use this space to provide any other information you wish to include with your application. This may include your reasons for wishing to apply for this position or why you feel you would be a good candidate, etc.” It is unclear why this appears on some classified applications and not others.

The classified application also includes a duplicate question: Candidates must list the name of the high school they attended and then state whether they received a diploma or a GED. In the supplemental questions section, a question asks whether the applicant has attained a high school diploma or a GED or neither.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Remove from the application the request for the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number.
2. Consider removing the supplemental question about residing continuously in California for 12 months.
3. Submit fingerprints for all new hires to both the DOJ and the FBI.
4. Review and remove nonessential questions from the application.
5. Review and ensure that no questions are duplicated.

Selection and Hiring of Classified Personnel

Screening

Screening is the first review of an applicants' qualifications. PC staff screen applications electronically in EDJOIN. Job descriptions provided to FCMAT indicate that both the personnel analyst and the personnel technician can perform this task. According to staff interviewed, classified applications are screened over two to four days, depending on the number of applicants. If the recruitment has been appropriately planned, at least one of the positions is available to screen the applications to avoid delays in notifications of testing. The director is sufficiently experienced to assist in ensuring staff availability based on historical information on recruitments and numbers of applicants. Of the five packets provided to FCMAT, all had less than 10 applicants.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure that adequate staff are available to screen applicants at the closing of a job notice to avoid delays in the recruitment process.

Written Examinations

The personnel analyst is responsible for creating written exams. The district is a member of the Cooperative Organization for the Development of Employee Selection Procedures (CODESP). This is a consortium of public educational agencies, including school and college districts, charter schools and Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs), that provide human resource services, training, and employee selection materials. A copy of the job description is sent to CODESP, and the organization returns a series of questions and answers that can be used for a written test as well as interview questions. According to PC staff, those questions are provided to the hiring department (subject matter experts) to choose both written test and interview questions. This is best accomplished while the job is posted so the written test and interview questions are ready when needed.

Staff also indicated that they send exam notices to qualified applicants within seven days of closing the position, and that the oral exam (interview) usually follows one week after the written exam. To be proactive and efficient, the testing and interview date(s) could be listed in the job posting. The tests are taken using Scantron forms. Using these, staff should be able to score tests and notify applicants quickly about whether to appear for an interview. The personnel analyst and personnel technician can both score tests.

Staff stated that tests are scheduled depending on available space. Given the desire to fill district positions, it would be best to make every effort to accommodate space for testing and interviews. Depending on the positions testing and the time of year, this could be offered more often to capture as many candidates as possible. Both the personnel analyst and the personnel technician can administer tests, so there should be few delays.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue to use CODESP to assist in creating written examinations.

2. Make every effort to accommodate space for written examination.
3. Set dates for examinations and selection interviews ahead of time.

Qualification Appraisal Interviews (Oral Exams)

District staff stated that they routinely use panel interviews to select the top candidates for vacant positions. Panel interviews are those in which more than one interviewer is present, and the primary purpose is to create a broader picture of the candidate than a one-on-one interview. Since each panel member brings a different set of experiences, thoughts, beliefs, and biases to the process, panel interviews are used to gain perspective from a variety of people in and sometimes outside the district. The use of panel interviews is based on the philosophy that the involvement of multiple interviewers increases the accuracy of assessing a candidate's match for the position. Typically, panel interviews are coordinated by a facilitator, who may or may not be a participant.

FCMAT reviewed the recruitment files for the last five classified positions recruited. In those five recruitment files, panels were composed of two interviewers. When possible, panels should include a hiring manager as well as other employees who may interact with the position. As an example, bus drivers interact with the transportation supervisor but also with dispatch, fellow bus drivers, parents and school personnel. While there is no required number of panelists, these interviews are most effective when they use a variety of individuals. Merit regulations state the following:

5.3.1 Qualifications Appraisal Interview (QAI) - Oral Exams

- A. Competitors eligible for the QAI will be examined at the earliest practicable date after conclusion and rating of any earlier test(s).
- B. The QAI Board will consist of two or more persons who are familiar with the work of the class for which the examination is being held. If the oral examination board is directed to evaluate the candidates' technical knowledge or skills, at least two members of the board shall be technically qualified in the specific occupational area.
- C. No member of the Commission or Board may sit on the panel. District employees are permitted to sit on the panel if they are not first or second level of supervision over a vacant position in the class being examined.

A review of the recruitment packets provided by the district found that one had a first-level supervisor as part of the oral examination panel.

The PC maintains a recruitment calendar in which it notes the dates of QAI and sends invitations to staff to participate. Staff members described it as difficult to schedule oral exams with various departments because they would often double-book over the time arranged, causing delays in the process. Summer is a particularly difficult time to schedule QAIs since many site staff are on vacation.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue to use CODESP to assist in creating oral examinations.
2. Make every effort to accommodate space for oral examinations.

3. Set dates for examinations and selection interviews ahead of time.
4. Ensure that first and second line supervisors are not on QAI panels.
5. Make efforts to have more than two individuals on QAI panels.

Reference Checks

Prior to hiring an applicant, the district needs to conduct reference checks. These checks can provide useful information about job applicants; however, some employers may be concerned that former employees could file defamation lawsuits if they provide negative information in response to a reference request. To deal with this issue, California and other states have enacted laws protecting employers from claims by former employees for defamation of character.

Under California law, truthful communications about the job performance or employment qualifications of a current or former employee are privileged if they are based on credible evidence and made without malice (CA Civil Code 47(c)). Privileged communication includes answering the question, "Would you rehire the employee?" With the enactment of Assembly Bill (AB) 2770, effective January 1, 2019, current or former employers can disclose whether a decision not to rehire is based on the employer's determination that the former employee engaged in sexual harassment. However, a wide range of criminal records cannot be accessed by California employers, including arrests that did not lead to a conviction. Because of the complexity of laws governing reference checks, it is essential for all LEAs to have a consistent, legally defensible practice for performing this task. Therefore, it is best not to consider information received informally from nonemployment sources when making employment decisions.

Instructions for hiring supervisors at the bottom of the district's interview information sheet state the following:

1. It is highly recommended that you conduct reference checks prior to making an employment recommendation to the Personnel Commission Office. Please use the form provided with your interview email and contact our office should you need assistance or additional materials/information.
2. After you have completed all interviewing/evaluating of candidates, contact Diana Flores in the Personnel Commission Office (847-2551 Ext. 1403) and give her the name(s) of the candidate you would like to select.
3. **Diana will contact the candidate you have selected and make an offer of employment.** You will be informed if your candidate has accepted.
4. Once the candidate has accepted the position, Diana will contact the candidates not selected to inform them that you have selected another candidate.
5. Diana will be in contact with you to advise when the candidate has completed all of the requirements for employment (fingerprinting, TB, physical, payroll papers, etc.) and when they will be able to begin work.

While the form states that reference checks are highly recommended, it implies they are not required.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Once the reference check form has been updated, consistently conduct reference checks prior to offering employment to an applicant.
2. Ensure the form tracks the individual who performed the reference check, who they spoke with, the date and time, and the important points of the conversation. Make certain it is signed by the individual performing the reference check.

Onboarding

New employee onboarding includes integrating a new employee into a district and its culture, ensuring that the employee has the tools and information needed to become a productive member of the team, and entering the employee's information into the personnel and financial systems.

In most public sector organizations, several tasks must be completed before any new employee begins work. Highly efficient districts reduce delays starting on an employee's first day of work. Onboarding is a multidepartment effort involving human resources, payroll, information technology, and others.

FCMAT was provided with the following four different checklists the district uses for onboarding new hires:

1. New Hire Packet Title Page 5.10.22.
2. Preemployment checklist.
3. Classified employee status checklist.
4. Onboarding process/checklists.

All the forms appear to be different versions of the same information, and it is unclear which, if any, are used regularly by staff. None of the forms provided to FCMAT included signature lines. Having signatures on onboarding checklists and new employee setup lists is important because it promotes accountability and ensures new employees are given legally required documents and the equipment to perform their jobs. Signatures provide a clear and documented way to assign responsibility and accountability for each task on a checklist. Having individuals sign when they complete specific actions or steps makes it easier to track who is responsible for completing them. This ensures that important tasks are not overlooked or neglected during onboarding.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review the various onboarding checklists and consolidate them into a single document.
2. Add a date to all forms to ensure the most up-to-date version is being used.
3. Add a signature line to each checklist.
4. Work with IT staff and operations staff to develop a list of equipment and other items a new employee may need, based on their classification.

Classification Plan and Reclassification of Classified Personnel

During FCMAT's visit, employees who work in both the HR Department and the PC indicated that the classification plan and reclassification process are outdated. This is the responsibility of the director of classified personnel. Classified job descriptions have not been updated in several years, and when they are reviewed, it is done reactively. A request survey is submitted to the PC. The department's process is to analyze the survey, then make a conclusion/recommendation based on the job group, job families and the district hierarchy. PC staff indicated that they have been trained on the merit system but have not received formal training on the reclassification process. They also stated that although they recognize they are required to review one-third of the job classifications per year, this has not occurred. The staff claim they need more staff to perform this ongoing task.

The Merit System Rules and Regulations for the Classified Service, Section 3.2.10 Review of Positions, states the following:

The Director, Classified Personnel shall review the duties and responsibilities of positions as necessary to determine their proper classification and shall cause all positions to be reviewed at least once every three years.

If the Director, Classified Personnel finds that a position or positions should be reclassified, the administration shall be advised of this finding. If the administration does not revise the duties to fit within the current classification, the Director, Classified Personnel shall report his/her findings and recommendations to the Commission.

Interviews with staff, documents provided to FCMAT, and a review of the commission's board agendas indicate that the director and staff of classified personnel have not complied with this requirement. The departments have become frustrated with the lack of follow-through from the director of classified personnel and her staff regarding this issue.

The PC recommended that the commission retain a consultant last year (2022) to perform a compensation study of classified job descriptions. However, the board did not approve this recommendation. This has lowered morale in the district and hindered the overall operations of the PC. Some departments became frustrated and created/updated their own job descriptions. This involved pulling salary comparisons from other school districts and working with the classified personnel staff to implement their proposed changes.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure the staff in classified personnel receive formal training on the classification/reclassification process and procedures.
2. Develop a clear and consistent classification and reclassification plan along with a timeline of ongoing completions.
3. Maintain a classification plan, grouping positions into job classes based on duties and responsibilities and ensuring that all classified positions have been reviewed and/or revised every three years.

Developing Job Descriptions for Classified Personnel

Accurate and updated job descriptions are crucial for any LEA because they do the following:

- Provide clarity to employees and potential candidates about roles and responsibilities.
- Help in recruitment and candidate screening.
- Guide training and development initiatives
- Facilitate workforce planning and legal compliance.
- Support career progression.
- Foster clear communication across the school district.

At the district, the PC is responsible for classified job descriptions. In fact, one of the commission's goals is to "Conduct job description reviews on a three-year cycle to ensure meeting changing requirements of the jobs." Interviews and documents provided to FCMAT indicate that the PC staff is significantly behind in ensuring that job descriptions are updated and accurate.

According to the commission's board agenda, not a single job description was presented under the review or revision section of the commission's consent calendar in the last year. However, three job descriptions were brought before the commission for review, reclassification or reactivation. This is not aligned with Merit System Rules and Regulations, Section 3.2.10, titled "Review of Positions," which is meant to ensure the documents reflect the changing requirements of the jobs.

The concern is that, over time, job duties and responsibilities can evolve due to changes in technology, district needs, or industry standards. If job descriptions are not updated, they may no longer accurately reflect the current requirements of the positions. This could lead to confusion among both applicants and current employees about the expectations and responsibilities associated with a particular job.

In addition, outdated job descriptions could make it difficult to recruit qualified applicants. Potential candidates might be discouraged from applying if these documents do not accurately reflect the skills and qualifications needed for the position. This could limit the applicant pool, cause further delays in hiring and make it harder to find suitable candidates.

As mentioned previously, staff stated the PC's desire to contract with a consultant to conduct a job classification review for all positions maintained by the PC. Interviews indicated there was no plan in place to keep job descriptions current. Without such a plan, even updated job descriptions could eventually become outdated.

The commission needs to develop a three-year calendar that includes which classification will be reviewed each month. Ideally, the PC could reasonably expect all classifications to be reviewed in three years. Once the calendar is developed, the PC can prioritize, regularly conducting thorough job description reviews. This involves working closely with department managers and employees to understand any changes in job duties, responsibilities, and qualifications required for each position. Setting a calendar and a timeline prevents failure to update the job descriptions and violations of the rules of the PC.

The commission and the school district must work together to accomplish this rule and goal. Staff in the PC need to work collaboratively with different departments to gather input and feedback regarding any changes in job roles and responsibilities. This can help ensure that the updated job descriptions accurately reflect the needs of each department.

PC staff stated they were trained in the merit system, but FCMAT is uncertain what training the staff received outside the organization to conduct job classification studies. Job classification studies are highly involved and require assistance from various departments and staff in the district. The commission needs to provide training and resources to its staff and to managers and employees about the importance of accurate job descriptions and how to effectively communicate changes in job roles. Insufficient training for district employees often manifests as reduced efficiency, an increased number of errors, the need for rework, diminished customer service quality and other related issues.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop a three-year calendar plan identifying which job classifications are to be updated during which month.
2. Ensure the PC staff adhere to the calendar of job classification updates.
3. Train PC staff to conduct job classification studies.
4. Require the PC staff develop training for Ocean View administration to assist in the job classification process.

Professional Development and Cross-Training for Classified Personnel

Although the PC is not responsible for the professional development of classified staff, it plays a vital role in helping employees in career development. Over the course of several years, staff can become qualified for higher-level roles by gaining experience, education and professional development. Interviews indicated that the PC does not track education or professional development for classified staff.

Staff stated that the PC requests training information from departments, but this information is only used as part of an annual report. The PC needs to seek ways for this information to be attached to employees' professional development or training record in their respective employee files. This information would be vital in determining whether employees meet minimum qualifications for other positions when there are promotional opportunities, layoffs, professional growth and other changes.

During FCMAT's fieldwork, PC staff indicated that they perform duties in a lower classification. When employees consistently handle tasks that are beneath their skill levels, their knowledge and expertise are underutilized. This can result in decreased motivation, job satisfaction, efficiency and overall engagement.

Resource allocation becomes skewed when staff spend significant time on tasks that could be adequately managed by lower-level employees. This prevents the department from optimizing its resources and hampers its ability to focus on its goals and objectives.

Interviews indicated that staff are also not cross-trained. Given the uniqueness of the merit system, it is imperative that staff be cross-trained appropriately. Without this type of training, the employees' skill sets remain limited to their original roles, and their potential contributions to other areas are overlooked, causing a lack of versatility within the team.

Another concern with a lack of cross-training is that a planned or unplanned absence can lead to delays in critical functions, affecting both internal processes and the delivery of services to employees and the district. Interviews indicated that when a PC staff member is absent, certain processes stop. This can cause a significant delay in the hiring process. In school districts, students attend school whether or not staff are in place. It is imperative that the staff in the PC are adequately cross-trained to ensure operations continue to support the district's students.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Start tracking experience, education and professional development for classified staff.
2. Ensure PC staff are performing the duties for which they were hired.
3. Ensure that employees are adequately cross-trained to understand and perform all duties when there is an unexpected vacancy or absence.

Leaves for Classified Personnel

The study agreement for this report lists this function under the PC; however, according to interviews, this task resides with the HR Department.

As previously discussed, it is imperative for LEAs to revisit and update their policies and procedures. Classified leaves are intricate and demand a comprehensive approach that aligns with legal requirements while ensuring fair treatment of staff. The district would benefit from instituting regular (at least annual) policy revisits or reviews to ensure that the district's board policies remain current and aligned with any changes in the Education Code or other relevant legislation. When board policies or administrative regulations are updated or revised, management needs to ensure all staff are informed of these recent changes. This proactive approach would prevent the policies from becoming outdated and out of compliance.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure board policies and administrative regulations are updated in accordance with any recent change in law.
2. Revisit board policies and administrative regulations on an ongoing basis to ensure best practices are always applied.
3. Once board policies and administrative regulations are updated, ensure staff are made aware of relevant updates.

Communication with Management Team

During interviews, hiring managers indicated they sometimes had to contact the PC multiple times to get updates on current job postings, but the department provided minimal information. It is not uncommon for hiring managers to check on the number of applicants for positions during the recruitment process. At the same time, staff stated to FCMAT that hiring managers had to call the PC to learn a job closed with no applicants. If a job posting closes with no applicants, this needs to be immediately communicated to the hiring

manager, and discussions need to take place about the next steps in the process. When the PC does not notify the hiring manager that there were no applicants, the whole recruitment process comes to an immediate standstill. Effective communication between the PC and the hiring manager is crucial to address the problem, identify other recruitment sources, and develop a strategy to attract suitable candidates for the position. Failure to notify the hiring manager can lead to frustration and delays in filling the role, which can affect the district's and department's operations and productivity.

During interviews, hiring managers and administrators stated that communication from the department is lacking. As described in the next section of this report, there is no productive and respectful communication between administration and the PC.

Communication

The district has adopted the OVSD Blueprint, which communicates its core values, overarching goals and operational practices as follows:

Core Values

Innovation, Integrity, and Equity

Learners will achieve and develop the skills to live productively in a changing society with confidence, compassion, and enthusiasm for life-long learning.

Learners are offered innovative, unique programs to enrich and magnify their learning experience.

Learners are provided an engaging environment that encompasses the whole child, including safe learning experiences and secure campuses.

Positive and respectful interactions are fostered with all students, staff, and families. [emphasis added]

Two-way communication is practiced and valued, allowing for honest feedback, direction, and guidance. [emphasis added]

District resources are unified in order to maximize funds, support equity, and ultimately support student success.

Staff are valued for their expertise and are provided current and purposeful growth opportunities.

(Adopted by the OVSD Board of Trustees on January 22, 2019)

The root cause of many issues in an organization is poor communication. Poor communication leads to misunderstandings, disagreements, mistakes, arguments, poor interpersonal relationships, low productivity, poor work quality, low job satisfaction and poor employee retention.

An organization's leaders should bring employees together to achieve its common goal. When they speak negatively about employees or departments, they divide employees and the organization to the detriment of the goal.

Effective communication involves both communicating and listening. The district has already developed its core values, specifically regarding communication. The district would benefit from reminding and setting clear expectations to staff regarding these core values. The HR and PC departments need to have a relationship that benefits each department and the district as a whole. In a high-performance district, all departments must function at high levels. While the district governing board is

elected, the personnel commission is appointed; they both serve the district's students. While both are independent, they must work together to ensure high-quality employees are in the appropriate positions. These relationships need to be mutually beneficial without an element of control.

In most interviews conducted by FCMAT, employees made negative comments about the PC and its staff. A number of statements were so hostile that even if improvements are made, some administrators clearly have solidified their views and are unwilling to change them. This creates an environment that will impede change and improvement.

It is the responsibility of the governing board, the superintendent and the commission to collectively set the tone for a respectful and positive organizational culture. Interpersonal conflicts and confusion regarding each department's authority and responsibilities have harmed the culture of the organization and point to a crisis in leadership at the district.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Establish ongoing communication between the PC and hiring managers regarding their specific vacancies.
2. Ensure that leadership does not speak negatively about employees, services or departments in the district and actively discourages the behavior when it is observed.
3. Remind all staff about the district's core values, and set expectations for all staff to follow them.

Quality of Work Product and Impacts on Other Departments

All departments affect other departments and the organization as a whole. If processes and procedures are lacking in any area, the impacts are felt beyond the department where the problem began.

Customer Service

An overarching theme from interviews is that the PC needs to improve its interactions with other departments as well its processes. The district has a customer-service manual that is included in the department onboarding process. Although this is a districtwide manual, it was included in the PC onboarding process. No date is noted on the manual, but it apparently has not been updated in some time since it indicates a district enrollment of 8,000 students instead of the current 7,000. Some excerpts from the manual are as follows:

- Positive and respectful interactions are fostered with all students, staff, and families.
- Two-way communication is practiced and valued, allowing for honest feedback, direction, and guidance

A customer is:

- The most important person we do business with
- Not an interruption of our work, but the purpose for it
- A person who should be treated with respect and cared for to the best of your ability, no matter who they are

- An opportunity, not an imposition

Who are our customers?

- Families
- Students
- Colleagues

What are the qualities of great customer service?

- Build and maintain relationships
- Be a good listener to understand the customer's problem correctly
- Be flexible
- Have a positive and friendly attitude
- Be a problem solver and take initiative. If possible, do not hand over the problem to someone else
- Responding to Phone Messages It is expected that all phone messages or inquiries should be responded to within 24 hours. Even if you do not have an answer to the inquiry or have all the necessary information, an initial acknowledgment to the customer should be made within 24 hours with an indication of the approximate date you will be responding back.

The manual was provided to FCMAT with onboarding items, so it is assumed to be distributed to new hires. PC customers include schools and departments as well as new and existing employees. Yet during interviews, many individuals described their interactions with the department as unfriendly and frequently rude, and indicated calls and emails were often not returned in a timely manner. This information was expressed by most interviewees and should be taken seriously by the department. Based on all interviews with staff, the district would benefit from reviewing customer service expectations with all employees.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review and update the customer service manual.
2. Review the manual with employees and set expectations, providing for consequences when customer service expectations are not followed.

Organizational and Staffing Review of the HR Department and Personnel Commission

Leadership

As discussed previously in the report, communication and leadership are vital for establishing a unified vision, aligning objectives, and fostering a positive work environment. Collaboration between the district administration, the HR Department, and the PC promotes efficiency, transparency and the pursuit of common goals. This collaboration ensures better decision-making as varied perspectives contribute to holistic solutions.

During interviews, it became clear that district leadership does not publicly support the PC. In addition, PC staff specifically stated they do not feel supported by the district. This is a concerning issue that needs to be addressed. The district's management needs to lead and partner with the PC to achieve shared goals. Public support for the PC is crucial because it reinforces trust and credibility in the organization. School leadership must recognize the commission's pivotal role in ensuring fair employment practices and compliance. Members of management often indicated they could not lead the PC, since they do not supervise the PC. However, there is a distinct difference between leading and managing a department or group. To manage is to control a group or individual to achieve specific objectives. Conversely, leadership is the ability to influence a group or individual, motivate and enable them to contribute to the organization's shared goals. An open and honest discussion without condescension can help school leadership understand the PC's value and encourage active endorsement.

It is important to have productive meetings between the PC and HR and adopt a solutions-oriented approach. Although the PC and HR meet regularly, there is a divide between the departments. School leadership needs to immediately facilitate the alignment of its strategies and objectives. In most, if not all, nonmerit LEAs, recruitment is performed by the HR.

In well-functioning merit systems, recruitment is collaboratively accomplished by both the PC and HR. Yet, at the district, the PC and HR operate completely independently of each other. The PC has merit rules it must follow; however, this should not prevent the departments from working as a cohesive unit. Adopting an approach that emphasizes solutions during these meetings can improve problem-solving, focusing on addressing issues instead of just identifying them. Fostering a culture that encourages staff to move from complaints to solutions can transform the work atmosphere. When problems or issues arise, staff need to provide at least three potential solutions. This mindset encourages innovation and empowerment, as individuals actively contribute to solving problems.

Interviews also indicated that district management and staff do not have a general understanding of the purpose of a commission. As stated on the district's website and in EC 45220-45320, the functions of the PC are as follows:

- Establishes eligibility lists for appointment or promotion. (EC 45272 through EC 45284).
- Prescribes and amends rules and regulations as necessary to ensure the efficiency of the classified service and retention of employees based on merit and fitness. (EC 45260).
- Maintains a classification plan that groups positions into job categories based on assigned duties and responsibilities. (EC 45256, EC 45285, EC 45285.5)
- Recommends salaries to the governing board. (EC 45268).

- Investigates and conducts hearings on appeals of disciplinary actions and other matters within the commission's authority. The commission provides an impartial, neutral forum within which many classified employee concerns may be resolved in an orderly, expeditious and cost-effective manner. (EC 45305).
- Establishes and maintains permanent confidential personnel records for all the district's classified employees.
- Serves as a resource to the district and CSEA Chapter 375, in their collective bargaining to establish negotiable terms and conditions of employment for employees in the CSEA-represented bargaining unit.
- Coordinates the administration of professional growth and service recognition programs and activities for classified employees.
- Provides for training of its own staff. (EC 45255).

Developing informative materials like FAQs that define the PC's requirements under its merit rules would be highly beneficial. For management employees or those who are responsible for hiring, it would also be beneficial for the PC to develop and provide training as part of onboarding. This training could provide a general understanding of the PC process. Furthermore, the PC can help management and hire managers by reverse-engineering timelines in the hiring process. Reverse-engineering timelines for filling vacant positions ensures clarity and accountability, helping candidates and hiring managers better understand the hiring process. Within these timelines, the PC can identify areas of flexibility and rigidity. In general, excessively rigid PCs are a common problem that was identified in the 2017 California School Personnel Commissioners Association (CSPCA) [report](#) on merit systems. The report states, in part, the following:

By definition, there are rules and regulations, laws and past practices that establish tight boundaries which the director should follow to be consistent. Not all issues are as cut and dried as some would like to believe. **The intent of rules and regulations sometimes needs to be brought into the process to look at additional ways to resolve an issue that otherwise may not be apparent if no flexibility is used in seeking a solution.** In a perfect world, it would be easy to follow the rules to the letter, however we don't have that luxury in real world applications. Looking at all sides of an issue and understanding various viewpoints is a key to arriving at a satisfactory and acceptable outcome. [Emphasis added]

Reviewing timelines can also contribute to better communication and management of vacant positions. Support from leadership and collaboration between different departments will contribute to the district's overall success. It promotes better customer service by streamlining processes, reducing redundancy, and improving response times. A unified front provides a more cohesive experience for the district's customers. Effective communication and leadership are imperative for the success of any organization. Addressing the lack of support for the PC, promoting regular meetings, and cultivating a culture focused on solutions are key steps to fostering collaboration. The development of informative resources and cross-departmental cooperation further contributes to streamlined processes and improved customer service.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Publicly support the PC's role in fair employment practices and compliance.

2. Facilitate regular meetings between the HR and the PC departments to align strategies and address issues.
3. Embrace a mindset that emphasizes solutions during meetings and any other actions to foster problem-solving.
4. Develop FAQs explaining the PC's processes and reverse-engineer hiring timelines for clarity.
5. Foster collaboration between different departments to enhance customer service and efficiency.

Human Resources & Personnel Commission Staffing

The district's HR and PC departments' staffing levels at the time of fieldwork is shown below:

Job Title- Human Resources	FTE
Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources	1.0
Administrative Assistant	1.0
HR Specialist	1.0
HR Benefits & Worker's Compensation	1.0
HR Analyst	1.0
HR Technician	1.0
Job Title- Personnel Commission	FTE
Director of Personnel Commission	1.0
Personnel Assistant	1.0
Personnel Analyst	1.0
Personnel Technician	1.0
Total	10.0

FCMAT conducted a comparison of districts with similar enrollment in Orange County. Some of the comparable districts were merit and others were nonmerit. In addition, FCMAT added two merit districts outside of Orange County that were comparable in enrollment. The district's HR and PC total FTE was included in this comparison because various functions related to the recruitment of classified positions must be carried out regardless of the presence or absence of the merit system. Data was from Ed-Data.org and the districts' websites or obtained directly from the district staff. When using data from the websites, FCMAT assumed that the positions were full-time (1.0 FTE). In some cases, a portion of an FTE was split among or between various departments or considered to be a shared position.

Comparable District	Enrollment* (2021-22)	HR Staff	PC Staff	Total Staff
Brea-Olinda Unified	5,866	7.0		7.0
Buena Park Elementary	4,015	5.0		5.0
Centralia Elementary	4,077	4.0		4.0
Fountain Valley Elementary**	5,998	4.50	2.25	6.75
Huntington Beach City Elementary	5,224	5.0		5.0
La Habra City Elementary**	4,499	3.0	4.0	7.0
Los Alamitos Unified**	9,133	3.6	1.4	5.0
Magnolia Elementary	5,121	5.0		5.0
Ocean View Elementary**	6,942	6.0	4.0	10.0
Westminster Elementary**	8,203	5.0	4.0	9.0
Manhattan Beach Unified**	5,852	3.0	1.0	4.0
San Lorenzo Unified**	9,842	10.0	4.0	14.0
Averages	6,231	5.1	3.0	8.0

*Enrollment is based on data obtained from Ed-Data

**Merit Local Educational Agencies

Sources: Ed-Data.org, district's websites and staff.

Student enrollment varied from 4,015 to a 9,842, with an average of 6,231. The districts' Human Resources Departments' FTE ranged from 3.0 FTE to 10.00 FTE. Districts with a merit system had from 1.0 FTE to 4 FTE. Again, the functions related to the recruitment of classified positions must be carried out regardless of the presence of a merit system. The comparison average of total staff assigned to HR and PC departments is 8.0 FTE.

While comparative information can provide valuable insights, it should not solely determine suitable staffing levels because each district is unique in the students it serves and the services it provides. However, given Ocean View's projection of declining enrollment, it is imperative that the PC work with the district to develop staffing ratios for classified staff.

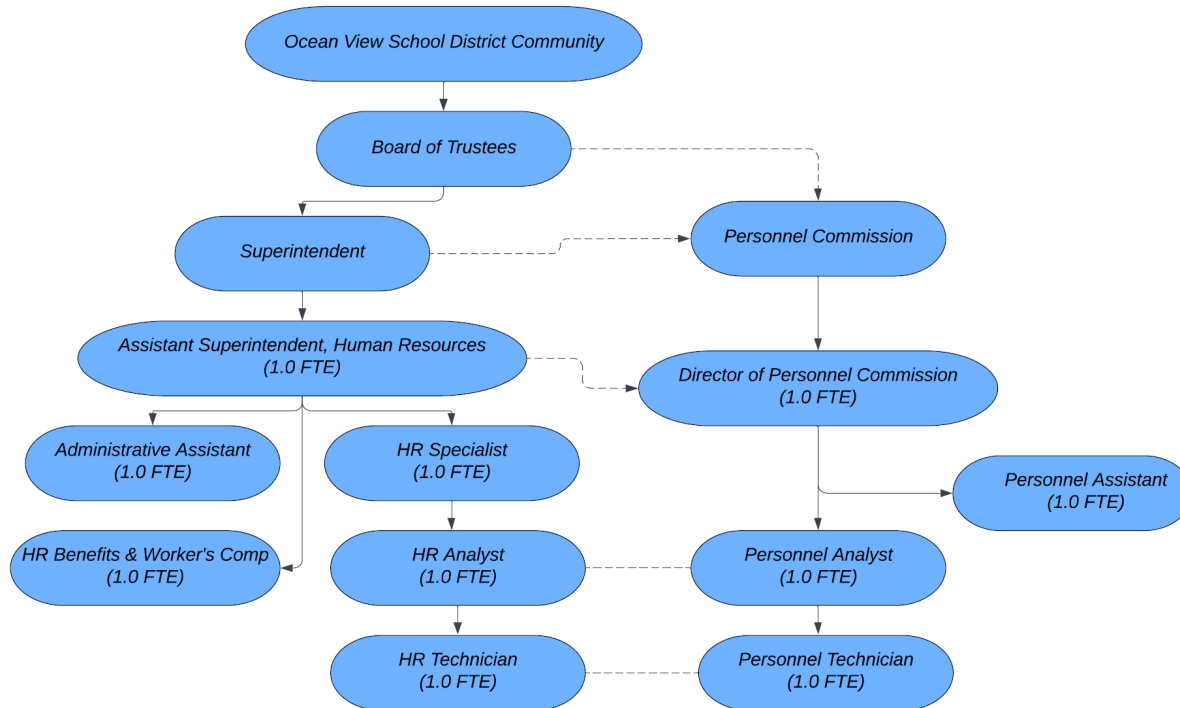
FCMAT's Indicators of Risk or Potential Insolvency is a tool that was developed to identify key issues for maintaining the district's fiscal health. One of the indicators is position control; listed here, more specifically, is an excerpt on staffing ratios.

- Failure to analyze and/or adjust staffing based on staffing ratios and enrollment.
- Failure to adopt/or follow staffing ratios for certificated, classified and administrative positions.
- Failure to align special education staffing ratios, class sizes and caseloads with statutory requirements and industry standards.

Each of these bullets represents a risk to a district without set staffing ratios. The district's lack of staffing ratios increases the risk of fiscal insolvency and needs to be addressed.

The district's staffing levels appear to be sufficient based on the data presented. However, if the district continues to decline in enrollment, it may want to consider reducing staff accordingly. The district could consider sharing some positions between the HR and the PC departments. However, as stated previously

and throughout the report, there are concerns regarding the overall efficiency of the two departments. While the numbers may meet immediate demands, there's a sense that the HR and PC departments are not run as efficiently and effectively as they should be. The district and PC provided FCMAT with separate organizational charts, which further demonstrates that the departments work separately. To create a sense of a unified department, below is a draft organizational chart for the district to implement for the PC and HR.



The organizational chart was designed to facilitate both departments working together to support the organizational goals. In addition, this would help set the expectation that both departments work together to support the students and Ocean View community.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Request that the PC work with the district's respective departments to develop classified staffing ratios.
2. Explore areas in which certain positions in HR and PC can become shared positions.
3. Implement the proposed organizational chart to set the expectation and ensure both the PC and HR departments cohesively and efficiently work together.

Appendix

A: Study Agreement



FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM STUDY AGREEMENT March 7, 2023

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), hereinafter referred to as the team, and the Ocean View 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. Review operational processes and procedures in the Human Resources Department and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any, in the following areas:
 - Recruitment of certificated personnel
 - Selection and hiring of certificated personnel
 - Onboarding and offboarding of certificated personnel
 - Professional development for certificated personnel
 - Volunteer processing for schools
 - Leaves for certificated personnel
 - Communication with management team
 - Quality of work product and its impact on other departments
2. Review operational processes and procedures of the Classified personnel commission and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any, in the following areas:
 - Recruitment of classified personnel
 - Selection and hiring of classified personnel
 - Onboarding and offboarding of classified personnel
 - Classification plan and reclassifications of classified personnel
 - Developing job descriptions for classified personnel

- Professional development and cross-training for classified personnel
 - Leaves for classified personnel
 - Communication with management team
 - Quality of work product and its impact on other departments
3. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the Human Resources Department and the Classified Personnel Commission 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.
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:

To be determined

To be determined

To be determined

FCMAT Staff

FCMAT Consultant

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, or 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.

Based on the elements noted in section 2A, the total not-to-exceed cost of the study will be \$24,000.

- 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 at 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
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. Upon the request of the district and the receipt of the signed study agreement, FCMAT shall provide certificates of insurance, with Ocean View School District named as additional insured, indicating applicable insurance coverages.

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

11. COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Because of the existence of COVID-19 and the resulting shelter-at-home orders, local educational agency closures and other related considerations, at FCMAT's sole discretion, the Scope of Work, Project Costs, Responsibilities of the District (Sections I, IV and V herein) and other provisions herein may be revised. Examples of such revisions may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Orientation and exit meetings, interviews and other information-gathering activities may be conducted remotely via telephone, videoconferencing, etc. References to on-site work or fieldwork shall be interpreted appropriately given the circumstances.
- B. Activities performed remotely that are normally performed in the field shall be billed hourly as provided 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: Michael Conroy, Superintendent
Telephone: (714) 847-2551
E-mail: mconroy@ovsd.org

Michael Conroy 3-8-23
Michael Conroy, Superintendent Date
Ocean View School District

Michael H. Fine 3/15/23
Michael H. Fine, Date
Chief Executive Officer
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

Bob Ewing 3/8/23
Chair, Personnel Commission