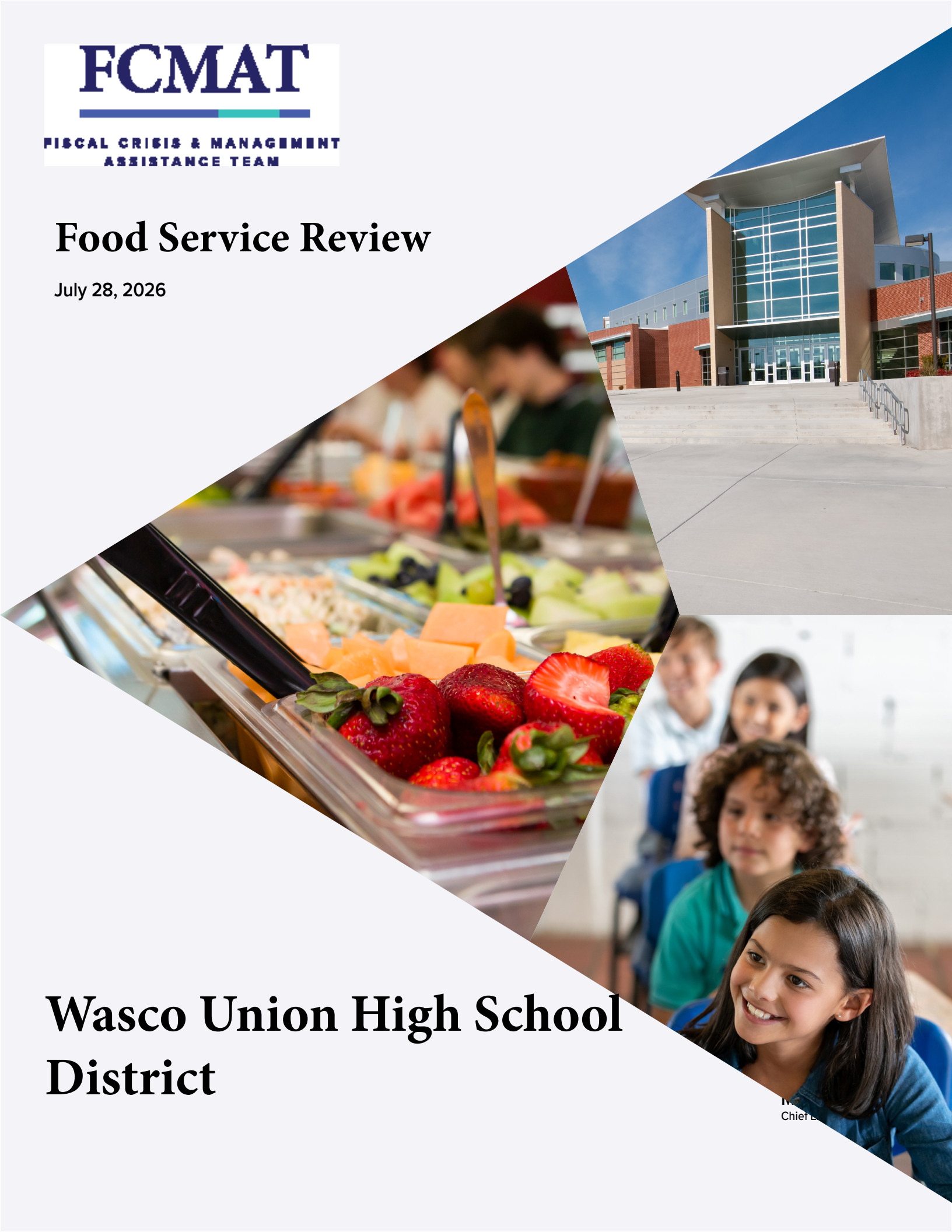


Food Service Review

July 28, 2026



Wasco Union High School District

Mr. [Name]
Chief [Title]

July 28, 2026

Kevin Tallon, Superintendent
Wasco Union High School District
2100 Seventh Street
Wasco, CA 93280

Dear Superintendent Tallon,

In January 2026, the Wasco Union High 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 Food Service Department. The agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the Food Services Department, and make recommendations for staffing improvements or reductions, if any. The team will make every effort to provide comparative staffing data for school districts of similar size and structure, if possible.
2. Examine the department's operations including, but not limited to, food preparation, meal service, student participation, staffing, federal and state compliance, menu planning, purchasing, warehouse and food storage, inventory, and facilities, and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
3. Evaluate the department's workflow and distribution of functions, and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
4. Review training and professional development programs for the department's employees and managers, and make recommendations for improvements, if any.
5. The Team will present the final report to the district's governing board at a public meeting following the completion of the review.

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

FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the Wasco Union High School District and extends thanks to all the staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,



Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

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About FCMAT

Purpose and Services

FCMAT was created by the California Legislature to help California's transitional kindergarten through grade 14 (TK-14) local educational agencies (LEAs) avoid fiscal insolvency. Today, FCMAT helps LEAs identify, prevent and resolve financial, management, program, data, and oversight challenges; provides professional learning; produces and provides software, checklists, manuals and other tools; and offers other related school business and data services.

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

When FCMAT is asked for help with management assistance or a fiscal crisis, FCMAT management and staff work closely with the requesting LEA to meet their needs. Often, this means conducting a formal study using a FCMAT study team that coordinates with the LEA for on-site fieldwork to evaluate specified operational areas and subsequently produces a written report with findings and recommendations for improvement.

For more immediate needs in a specific area, FCMAT offers short-term technical assistance from a FCMAT staff member with the required expertise.

To help meet the need for qualified chief business officials (CBOs) in LEAs, FCMAT offers four different CBO training and mentoring programs that consist of 11 or 12 diverse two-day training sessions over the course of a full year.

For agencies with professional learning needs, FCMAT offers workshops on specific topics. Popular topics include associated student body operations, use of FCMAT's Projection-Pro online financial forecasting software, use of FCMAT's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) Calculator, and data reporting for the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). FCMAT staff and management also frequently make presentations at various professional conferences.

The California School Information Services (CSIS) service of FCMAT helps the California Department of Education (CDE) operate CALPADS; helps LEAs learn about CALPADS, resolve data issues and meet reporting requirements; and provides LEAs with training and leadership in data management. CSIS also developed and continues to host and improve the Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS) web-based financial reporting system for all California LEAs, and provides ed-data.org, which gives educators, policy-makers, the Legislature, parents and the public quick access to timely and comprehensive data about TK-12 education in California.

Since it was formed, FCMAT has provided LEAs with the types of help described above on more than 2,000 occasions.

FCMAT's administrative agent is the Kern County Superintendent of Schools. FCMAT is led by Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer, and is funded by appropriations in the state budget and modest fees to requesting agencies.

Workshop schedules, manuals, presentation slide decks, Projection-Pro software, LCFF calculators, past reports, an online help desk, and many other resources are available for download or use at no charge on FCMAT's website.

History

FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill 1200 (Chapter 1213, Statutes of 1991) and Education Code 42127.8. Assembly Bill 107 (Chapter 282, Statutes of 1997) added Education Code 49080, which charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its statewide data management work, and Assembly Bill 1115 (Chapter 78, Statutes of 1999) codified CSIS' mission.

Assembly Bill 1200 created a statewide plan for county offices of education and school districts to work together locally to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. Assembly Bill 2756 (Chapter 52, Statutes of 2004) gave FCMAT specific responsibilities for districts that have received emergency state loans.

In January 2006, Senate Bill 430 (Chapter 357, Statutes of 2005) amended Education Code 42127.8, and Assembly Bill 1366 (Chapter 360, Statutes of 2005) amended Education Codes 42127.8 and 84041. These new laws expanded FCMAT's services to include charter schools and community colleges, respectively.

Assembly Bill 1840 (Chapter 426, Statutes of 2018) changed how fiscally insolvent districts are administered once an emergency appropriation has been made, shifting oversight responsibilities from the state to the local county superintendent to be more consistent with the principles of local control, and giving FCMAT new responsibilities associated with the process.

Introduction

Background

The Wasco Union High School District is located in the city of Wasco in Kern County. The district operates two schools, Wasco High School and Wasco Independence High School, serving students in grades 9 through 12. Enrollment is approximately 1,782 students.

According to Ed-Data, the district's unduplicated pupil count of free/reduced-price meals, English learners, and homeless and foster youth is approximately 89.11%. Data also indicates that English learners represent 19.2% of district enrollment.

The district is governed by a five-member board of trustees, each serving staggered four-year terms. The board provides policy direction and oversight for academic programs, fiscal operations, personnel, and long-term planning.

The district participates in the School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs. The district is also a sponsor of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), an alternative method for claiming student meals in high-poverty schools. It is a four-year provision implemented as a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The USDA made the CEP available nationwide to all school food authorities beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

Study and Report Guidelines

FCMAT visited the district on February 26-27, 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 and its own short internal style guide, which emphasize plain language, capitalize relatively few terms, and strive for conciseness, clarity and simplicity.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Marcus L. Wirowek, CFE
FCMAT Intervention Specialist

Roy Rico
FCMAT Consultant

Leonel Martínez
FCMAT Technical Writer

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

All team members reviewed the draft report to confirm accuracy and achieve consensus on the final recommendations.

Executive Summary

The district's food service program has several strengths. Staffing levels are generally aligned to production needs, and meals per labor hour (MPLH) have remained stable at approximately 28-30 over the past three years, which is consistent with established industry standards. Facilities and equipment at both sites support current meal preparation and service, and observed food safety and serving practices were in line with best practices. The program maintains a substantial cafeteria fund reserve, and overall operations continue to meet the basic nutritional and service needs of students.

At the same time, several factors limit the department's ability to increase efficiency, expand offerings, and ensure full compliance with state and federal requirements. While staffing levels are sufficient, the department does not employ a structured system for cross-training, routine staff meetings, or ongoing professional development, and it lacks a defined plan to ensure continuity of operations during employee absences or leaves. Absenteeism has been significant, and training required under U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) professional standards is not consistently documented.

The cafeteria fund balance exceeds allowable thresholds, requiring the district to implement a spend-down plan with the California Department of Education (CDE). Although this work has begun, the district will need to refine its revenue projections and make program investments to ensure resources are used effectively and in a manner that benefits students while avoiding recurring compliance concerns.

Menu planning and service practices would benefit from increased structure. Menus are repetitive and do not reflect the full range of items prepared and served. Independence High is limited in its ability to offer additional hot items because of equipment constraints and required offer-versus-serve signage was not posted in all locations. Observations showed effective use of share tables and minimal waste.

Additional areas that warrant attention include the relationship between the food service program and the associated student body (ASB). Food services did not review food items sold in the ASB student store for compliance with competitive food regulations. Procurement procedures also require revision based on recent state findings, including updates to the Code of Conduct, clearer documentation of purchasing procedures, and adherence to federal purchasing standards.

Although the district's wellness policy is current, documentation of wellness committee activities, membership, and monitoring is limited. Several food service job descriptions are outdated, and classification levels and salary ranges are inconsistently defined. While equipment generally meets current needs, an additional serving cart at Wasco High could increase efficiency during nutrition break, and Independence High would require additional equipment to expand its hot entree offerings.

Findings and Recommendations

Staffing and Meals per Labor Hour

Staffing

Labor costs are generally a large percentage of the expenses in a food service operation; therefore, it is important for the department to operate efficiently. Staffing ratios should be adequate to meet the needs of the program without being excessive. The best practice is for labor cost to be 40-45% of revenue. The district's 2025-26 adopted budget for the cafeteria fund projects that these costs will be 68% of revenue. However, the district's 2024-25 unaudited actuals showed labor to be 45% of the department's revenue.

According to documents provided by the district, the Food Service Staff Department consists of the following:

• Director of food services	8 hours
• Lead cafeteria assistant	8 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	4 hours
• Cafeteria assistant	6 hours
• Food service technician	8 hours
• Food service worker	8 hours
Total Hours	66 hours

The study team observed both breakfast and lunch service at Wasco High and lunch at Independence High. Wasco High serves a 10-minute nutrition break at 10 a.m. and Independence High offers breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Wasco High has a 50-minute lunch period for all students; and Independence a 20-minute lunch period. The lead cafeteria assistant reports at 6 a.m. and the six-hour cafeteria assistant reports at 7:45 a.m. Two four-hour cafeteria assistants report at 9:15 a.m. and the remaining four-hour cafeteria assistants report at 9:45 a.m.

Meals per Labor Hour

Meals per labor hour (MPLH) is an industry standard formula used to assess labor efficiency and help determine appropriate staffing levels. This calculation is also used for staffing comparisons. Ensuring efficient staffing is essential for the district to operate within its cafeteria fund. Normally, only labor hours for

food preparation, cleanup and meal service are included in this calculation because it is a measure of the amount of labor used to prepare and serve meals at the schools. The MPLH calculation can change when there are changes to a cafeteria's menu or food offerings. The hours for management and the food service worker will not be included in the calculation. Interviews with staff indicated that the food service worker primarily performs custodial work for the department. However, four hours for the food service technician will be included because this position performs various duties for the department, and there is no clear indication of how many hours this position is assigned to meal preparation and meal service.

MPLH can be determined in several ways, and all meals prepared by the department must be included in the analysis. Breakfasts are sometimes counted as a fraction of a meal equivalent because they are simpler to prepare or have fewer items. For this study, they are counted as half a meal, and lunches are counted as a full-meal equivalent. The district does not sell any a la carte items to students.

A best practice is to maintain an MPLH of approximately 30. It would be beneficial for management to periodically conduct an analysis to ensure the district operates within industry standards for the MPLH. The analysis indicated that for three consecutive years, the district has been at or near the standard.

Meals per Labor Hour	Oct. 2023	Oct. 2024	Oct. 2025
Days Served	22	23	23
Breakfasts per Month	19,840	19,317	19,156
Breakfasts per Day	902	840	833
Lunches per Month	20,581	20,152	20,574
Lunches per Day	936	876	895
Total Meals for Month	40,421	39,469	39,730
Total Meals per Day	1,837	1,716	1,728
Total Meal Equivalents	1,386	1,296	1,312
Labor Hours	46	46	46
Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH)	30	28	29
Source: October 2023, 2024, and 2025 reimbursement claims. Rounding used in calculations.			

At the time of FCMAT's fieldwork, four four-hour cafeteria assistants were working two extra hours in the extended absence of the lead cafeteria assistant. Based on the current and consistent MPLH average, the district is staffed appropriately for the number and type of meals being produced and served.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure that the director of food service routinely completes and monitors the MPLH analysis to assess staffing needs.
2. When changes to the cafeteria menu are made, ensure that the director of food service reanalyzes the MPLH.

Training and Professional Development

Food service staff members need to receive regular training to be able to understand and perform their jobs, and the USDA has established minimum training requirements for food service personnel. These requirements became effective July 1, 2015, and mandate professional standards and annual training requirements for child nutrition directors, managers and staff. The director of food service must keep meeting and training agendas/sign-in sheets, and needs to organize these records to show the annual hours of each individual staff member to demonstrate compliance with the standards. Training needs to be documented and will be evaluated during state administrative reviews. Information about this mandate and training resources can be found at: [Professional Standards in the SNP - School Nutrition \(CA Dept. of Education\)](#).

Interviews with staff and documents provided by the district indicated that regularly scheduled food service training is not provided. The only meeting site staff reported is a welcome-back meeting at the beginning of the school year, where some annual training was provided in addition to the mandated training. The documents outline staff members who participated, training topics, and the agenda, but do not break down the learning objectives with training hours for each section. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the district credited staff with hours for the mandatory annual training required for all district staff. Additional meetings with the food service lead and assistants throughout the school year are needed to discuss new regulations, procedural changes, and menu planning.

It is essential for a food service director to thoroughly understand and implement program regulations and consistently stay current with and train all staff on requirements. The district needs to develop an annual food service staff training plan and schedule to ensure that specific food service topics are explained and understood. The food service director needs to monitor compliance, observe serving lines, and remind staff of requirements as needed. This type of hands-on interaction and training is effective.

The food service director also does not hold regularly scheduled meetings with the food service technician. The food service technician assists with preparing and serving meals but is also responsible for receiving incoming food and supplies orders from vendors. This position also performs inventory control. Meetings with the food service technician are needed to discuss inventory levels to support the ordering of food and supplies weekly.

The CDE has developed a new Learning Management System (LMS) website for delivering training options for all food service staff. The LMS will become the primary venue for virtual training content and resources to satisfy annual mandatory training requirements and support the Food Service Department's operations. Webinars are available to all district food service staff to set up an account and an overview of the training topics available. Information about this new training website can be found at: [LMS Account Setup & Site Overview Webinars - Nutrition \(CA Dept. of Education\)](#).

The food service director and all food service staff would also benefit from visiting other school districts' food service departments and observing their meal service. Networking like this can help provide new ideas as well as information about efficiencies and cost-saving measures. When staff work in only one environment, they often cannot visualize other ways to perform their duties. Observing other food service operations can help stimulate new ideas for menu planning, food production methods and other services.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Organize training records to show that each individual staff member's annual hourly requirement is met, listing learning objective by hours.

2. Ensure that all USDA training requirements are met.
3. Identify areas in which food service staff need more training during the school year and ensure that is provided.
4. Assign the food service director to develop and implement an annual training plan to schedule regular training sessions for all food service staff throughout the year.
5. Ensure that the director of food service provides staff members with information on registering for the new learning management system to access virtual training topics.
6. Ensure that the director of food services regularly monitors the program and provides immediate staff training on any practices that need improvement.
7. Send the director of food services and food service staff to other school districts to observe food service operations.

Cross-Training

A best practice in any operational department is the intentional cross-training of staff. Cross-training prepares employees to perform tasks beyond their primary assignments, especially when the additional tasks fall within the same job family or classification. For example, some duties performed by a cafeteria assistant I may overlap with those of a cafeteria assistant II. Documents provided by the district do not indicate if the cafeteria assistants are I or II.

Cross-training supports continuity of operations by ensuring that employees are prepared to assume critical duties when another staff member is absent. It is also beneficial during staff transitions because cross-trained employees can more easily assume additional responsibilities as needed. This increases operational efficiency and reduces the impact of turnover by helping staff adapt to changing demands.

Interviews with staff indicated that the department began implementing cross-training within the last 2.5 years. Prior to this effort, employees were typically assigned a single task or station within the kitchen, and responsibilities were not rotated. Although staff indicated that this practice has changed, the department did not provide documentation, schedules, or written procedures demonstrating the implementation of a structured cross-training plan.

To ensure successful implementation, management needs to develop written training standards for each major task within each position. Once these standards are established, the department can determine the appropriate sequence, timeline, and method for cross-training employees.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue cross-training staff as indicated in interviews.
2. Develop and implement a formal cross-training plan for all food service staff.
3. Document all cross-training activities, including schedules, completion dates, and skills attained.

Schedule When Absences or Leaves Occur

Once the department has fully implemented a cross-training plan and staff are appropriately trained, it also needs to develop a schedule that identifies which duties must be completed when employees are absent. This type of schedule would outline the essential daily tasks needed to maintain efficient food service operations and indicate which positions are responsible for each task. Having a designated backup schedule ensures staff understand expectations and can assume critical duties when coworkers are unavailable. Failing to develop a backup schedule could result in decreased department efficiency because when unexpected absences occur, staff may be unsure how to ensure efficient operations of the Food Services Department.

Documents provided by the district indicate that employee absences have been significant. During the two most recent full fiscal years, 2023-24 and 2024-25, staff were absent an average of 1,734 hours per year. At the time of fieldwork for the current fiscal year, staff had already accumulated approximately 1,128 hours of absences. Given the volume of absences, a clear and well-communicated backup schedule is vital to ensure that both staff and management understand the priority functions that must continue each day for the department to operate efficiently.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Develop a backup schedule that identifies essential daily functions and the staff responsible for completing them during employee absences.
2. Communicate the schedule to all food service staff and ensure it is easily accessible and reviewed regularly.

Fund 13 – Cafeteria Fund

The cafeteria fund is maintained as a special fund to separately account for cafeteria revenues, expenditures, and balances, as authorized by Board Policy (BP) 3551. These funds are defined in the California School Accounting Manual and follow generally accepted accounting principles. Ideally, Fund 13 should operate as a self-balancing set of accounts segregated from the general fund and used exclusively for activities subject to specific laws, restrictions, and program requirements.

FCMAT reviewed the district's Fund 13 financial information for the past three years. Specifically, the team analyzed unaudited actuals from 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the district's 2025-26 first interim projected budget. During budget development and to ensure the Cafeteria Fund remains self-sustaining, the district uses a conservative approach to projecting its revenues. The table below demonstrates that the district is operating well within its budget and is maintaining an average reserve of approximately 184% of annual expenditures. Interviews indicate the district is implementing a spend-down plan under the direction of the CDE. The table below shows the district's cafeteria fund status:

	2023-24 Unaudited Actuals	2024-25 Unaudited Actuals	2025-26 1st Interim (Projected)
Revenues			
Federal	\$1,033,432.89	\$1,049,544.67	\$1,000,000.00
State	\$388,593.07	\$381,397.44	\$300,000.00
Local	\$62,564.93	\$65,806.56	\$18,982.63
Total	\$1,484,590.89	\$1,496,748.67	\$1,318,982.63
Expenditures			
Salaries and Benefits	\$573,339.26	\$676,479.47	\$688,803.44
Supplies	\$477,987.80	\$526,261.70	\$435,000.00
Services and Operating	\$30,366.87	\$44,638.89	\$52,295.48
Capital Outlay	\$25,552.00	\$ -	\$142,883.71
Other Outgo			
Total	\$1,107,245.93	\$1,247,380.06	\$1,318,982.63
Excess (Deficiency)	\$377,344.96	\$249,368.61	\$ -
Transfers In	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fund Balance			
Beginning	\$1,688,541.32	\$2,067,993.01	\$2,344,133.11
Increase (Decrease)	\$377,344.96	\$249,368.61	\$ -
Ending	\$2,065,886.28	\$2,317,361.62	\$2,344,133.11
Reserve (Percentage of expenditures)	187%	186%	178%
Source: Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS) forms for 2024-25, unaudited actuals for 2024-25, and 2025-26 1st Interim projected budget.			

According to Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Sections 210.2, 210.14(b), and 210.19(a)(1), a spend-down plan is required when a cafeteria fund's net cash resources exceed six months of average operating expenditures. When this occurs, LEAs must develop a plan to do the following:

- Improve food quality and variety, which may include culturally inclusive meals and plant-based options.

- Plan for future cafeteria fund purchases that support, expand, or improve school nutrition services.
- Avoid payment holds for failure to spend excess fund balances (2 CFR Section 200.339(a)).
- Avoid reimbursement rate reductions due to failure to spend excessive account balances (7 CFR Section 210.19(a)(1)).

The district provided its spend-down plan, and it is being implemented. The CDE has already approved the district's three-year plan to spend down the excess funds. In its spending plan, it has identified several projects and items such as replacing kitchen floors, replacing dining tables, changing menu items, and replacing outdated equipment. FCMAT encourages the district to ensure that this plan is followed, and the cafeteria's funds are expended appropriately. As the district moves forward, it may benefit the district to reevaluate how it projects its revenue to ensure it does not run into a situation where it would have to develop yet another spend-down plan. FCMAT understands the need to budget conservatively; however, the district ultimately is not spending funds on the students who earn them.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Continue implementing the district's spend-down plan as required by the CDE.
2. Continue monitoring the cafeteria fund to ensure it remains self-sustaining and compliant with federal resource limits.
3. Explore opportunities to responsibly increase expenditures — such as enhancing meal quality, expanding menu options, adding staffing, or purchasing equipment — to better meet student needs.

ASB Conflicting Sales

Food service programs must comply with strict local, state, and federal laws governing the sale of foods and beverages on school campuses. These requirements ensure that all foods available to students during the school day meet established nutritional standards.

During FCMAT's fieldwork, the team visited the ASB student store. ASBs are student organizations authorized under California law to raise and spend money on behalf of students. The district's documents show that the ASB store operates during the same time that Food Services provides meals during nutrition break and lunch. The documents also identify the items sold and associated prices; however, FCMAT did not review the nutritional content of those items to determine compliance with competitive food regulations.

The district and food services director need to review guidance from the CDE regarding the definition of "sold" under competitive food and beverage rules. The CDE's guidance states:

Only those foods and beverages that comply with state and federal competitive food and beverage requirements are allowed to be sold to a student on a school campus during the school day outside of the federal meal programs.

The district should also refer to the CDE's Competitive Foods and Beverages Reference Guide, which outlines all requirements, restrictions, and definitions for food and beverage sales on school campuses:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/compfoodsrefpub.asp>

At time of fieldwork, FCMAT was unable to review the district's current board policies related to food services and their application to ASB operations. Interviews indicated that the district is transitioning its board policies to GAMUT, and updated policies are forthcoming.

Interviews also indicated that the food services director was unaware of the items being sold at the ASB student store during the school day. To ensure compliance, the district should engage the food services director in reviewing ASB food sales and ensuring all competitive food standards are met.

According to FCMAT's Associated Student Body Accounting Manual, Fraud Prevention Guide and Desk Reference, the relationship between ASB and the food service program should not be adversarial. Instead, the two programs should collaborate, as both aim to support students. The manual notes that food service programs operate under extensive federal and state regulations, making food service staff essential partners in ensuring that all food and beverages sold or provided to students meet nutritional requirements and comply with applicable laws.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Assign the food services director to collaborate with ASB personnel to ensure full compliance with all local, state, and federal food and beverage requirements.
2. Assign the food services director to provide training to ASB staff and students on what foods and beverages may be sold during the school day and at what times.

Purchasing

Purchasing is an important function in a food service program. Goals for purchasing should be to acquire the best price for needed items and use vendors that provide quality service. The best method to accomplish these goals is by implementing best practices and procedures for bids and quotes. Some districts have found it advantageous to form a food services purchasing cooperative with other districts to increase purchasing power and to decrease the administrative burden of duplicated paperwork.

California Education Code (EC) 38083 allows districts to purchase perishable foodstuffs and seasonal commodities needed to operate cafeterias in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the governing board, notwithstanding any provisions of the Education Code that conflict with such rules and regulations.

The district is a member of the Kern Purchasing Cooperative (KPC), a purchasing group consisting of several school districts in Kern County. Under the bylaws of the KPC, a district may submit in writing a request to join the cooperative by December 15 to take effect the following fiscal year. Under the agreement, a member district has the option to leave the cooperative each year by choosing not to renew the agreement. Every district represents the purchasing group as a lead district on a rotating basis. For the 2025-26 school year, the Wasco Union High School District was the lead district. For one year, the lead district has the authority to contract with vendors and other related services on behalf of member districts.

According to documents provided to FCMAT, the KPC accepted the rollover pricing for 2025-26 for commercial food and chemical products. The current year is the final year of a three-year contract with Gold Star Foods. The district did enter into a contract with Gold Star Foods for the purchase of whole and precut produce for the 2025-26 school year.

Another purchasing option for the district is to piggyback on the bids of other districts. Piggybacking is authorized in Public Contract Code Section 20118 and allows school districts to make purchases using the bid awarded by another public agency or corporation if it is in the district's best interest. For dairy products, the department uses the piggyback option contained in the Kern High School District contract with Producers Dairy.

The district earns entitlement funds to purchase USDA commodity products. A district's donated food entitlement amount is the number of reimbursable lunches served during the previous fiscal year multiplied by the current per-meal value. For the 2025-26 school year, the per-meal value was 45 cents. Therefore, it is advantageous for districts to serve as many reimbursable lunches to students as possible.

Districts can also send USDA commodities to processors who have been approved by the state or the USDA. Processors must meet specific requirements, are reviewed regularly by the state or the USDA, and are required to have an approved agreement on file to participate in the program. The agreement includes end product data schedules, a list of end products available, and nutrition and labeling information. Processing allows districts to better use USDA commodities by converting them into more convenient and usable items. Processing often makes the most efficient use of USDA foods by reducing waste, stabilizing food costs through portion control, providing a variety of food choices, and increasing food safety. During the current school year, the district did divert commodities to several vendors for processing. Sysco Foods is the primary distribution vendor for commodity processed items. Entitlement funds were also used to purchase fresh produce.

The CDE is required to perform an off-site procurement review a minimum of once every eight years for all public school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education. The CDE conducted a procurement review of the food service program's purchasing practices for the fiscal year ending in 2024-25. The district provided FCMAT with a copy of the Procurement Review Report dated January 13, 2026. At the time of fieldwork, the report indicated that the district's written Code of Conduct was not compliant because it did not include clear language that explicitly prohibits both real and apparent conflict of interest for employees, officers, agents, and board members involved in the selection, award, or administration of contracts supported by federal funds. Technical assistance was also provided in the results of the review referencing the CDE's code of conduct sample available in the Child Nutrition Information and Payment System download forms section. During FCMAT's fieldwork, district staff indicated that a response to the finding was in the process of being developed.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review the advantages and disadvantages of other purchasing groups in the Kern County area to maximize the district's purchasing options.
2. Continue piggybacking with other larger districts to ensure the district secures the best pricing available for the food service program.
3. Routinely analyze the use of commodity entitlement funds to ensure funds are maximized in procuring processed and fresh produce products.
4. Ensure that the Food Service Department uses its entire annual USDA commodities entitlement.

Wellness

Wellness policies have been required by school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program since 2006. This regulation was part of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2004 and was expanded in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The district has a policy that covers the requirements established in legislation, including goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus. The wellness provisions also require the wellness committee to include parents/guardians, students, food service employees, physical education teachers, school health professionals, board members, school administrators and members of the public.

The district's policy states that the director of programs is the district's designee assigned to ensure site compliance with the wellness policy. The policy was last reviewed on January 15, 2026. The district provided a copy of the policy for FCMAT but did not provide any other information on wellness committee members, meeting agendas, or minutes of meetings.

More information about requirements of a district Wellness Policy and suggestions for implementing one are available on the following CDE website: [Local School Wellness Policy - Healthy Eating & Nutrition Education \(CA Dept of Education\)](#).

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Ensure a wellness committee is formed consisting of educational partners.
2. Ensure the wellness committee meets regularly to update the wellness policy.
3. Develop a wellness committee with regular meetings and assessments in accordance with the district's policy.

Job Descriptions

Accurate and up-to-date job descriptions are essential to an organization's success. Job descriptions serve several critical functions because they:

- Provide clarity to employees and candidates regarding roles and responsibilities.
- Support effective recruitment and screening of qualified applicants.
- Guide training, onboarding, and ongoing professional development.
- Facilitate workforce planning and ensure legal and regulatory compliance.
- Support career progression and promote organizational consistency.

Local educational agencies (LEAs) need to periodically review and update all job descriptions. Ideally, the Human Resources Department would maintain a schedule to ensure each job description is evaluated regularly and revised when duties, qualifications, or operational needs change. When updates occur or when new tasks are added or removed, this information would be communicated to all affected employees.

The table below includes the titles and dates of the most recent updates to food service job descriptions.

	Board Approved	Salary Range(s)
Food Service Technician I-II.pdf	10/10/2019	10 and 12
Food Service Worker Job Description.pdf	5/9/2024	10 and 12
Food Services Director.pdf	12/9/2021	
Cafeteria Assistant.pdf	1/15/2004	7.5
Cafeteria Lead Assistant I-II - BA 10.10.19.pdf	10/10/2019	12.5 and 14

Source: District-provided documents

Although some job descriptions have been updated recently, the cafeteria assistant job description has not been revised in 22 years. Most of the department's job descriptions have not been updated in over six years, with one position updated in 2021 and another in 2024. The district would benefit from revisiting and updating each job description on a regular cycle to ensure accuracy and alignment with current duties.

In addition, the salary schedule needs to accurately reflect each classification and align with the job description. Documents provided by the district and salary schedules posted online indicate that several positions show two different salary ranges and/or two classification levels, including:

- Food service technician I and II.
- Food service worker.
- Cafeteria lead assistant I and II.

FCMAT was unable to determine from the job descriptions what distinguishes a level "I" from a level "II" for these classifications, nor was it clear why the food service worker position is associated with two separate salary ranges. This lack of clarity may confuse applicants who may be unsure which salary range they qualify for since the job descriptions do not include minimum qualifications or criteria tied to the salary designation.

Once the district determines the appropriate ranges and classification levels, revised job descriptions and salary schedules should be clearly communicated to affected employees. This ensures staff understand their responsibilities, performance expectations, and the standards that will be used to evaluate them.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Review and update as necessary the cafeteria job descriptions.
2. Develop a schedule to regularly review and update all food service job descriptions.
3. Determine and document the appropriate salary range and classification structure for:
 - Food service technician I–II.
 - Food service worker.
 - Cafeteria lead assistant I–II.
4. Communicate all job description and salary range updates to affected staff.

Facilities and Equipment

FCMAT visited the district's food preparation, serving, storage and multipurpose/eating areas. The Wasco High School food preparation areas were well organized, clean and maintained. It is equipped with convection ovens, a combi-oven (a type of oven that uses three methods of cooking in one appliance: convection, steam, and a combination of steam and convection), a pizza oven used to cook some entrees, and other pieces of equipment normally seen in a bulk production kitchen. Facilities and equipment were in working order and adequate for the district's current production.

For storage, the district has plenty of storage for dry goods, freezer and refrigerated items. Serving equipment located in the serving areas is appropriate for the amount of production. Holding hot and cold food units are equipped with see-through doors, making it easy for staff to determine immediately how many items or trays of goods are still available during meal service.

Wasco High serves breakfast during one nutrition break and one lunch meal service. The 50-minute lunch service includes sufficient time to feed a school the size of Wasco High; however, the 10-minute nutrition break does not appear to be long enough for students to participate in the nutrition break and consume a breakfast. During the nutrition break, the study team observed many students near the trash cans consuming what remained of their breakfasts before disposing of what they did not have time to finish before the bell rang. The district has two mobile carts located on opposite ends of the campus. However, the placement of another cart may allow more students to participate in the nutrition break or allow more time for students to consume their entire breakfast by easing congestion at other serving lines. It would certainly increase serving efficiency.

The district is in a spend-down plan required by the CDE due to an excess in fund balance. It is appropriate and beneficial to use cafeteria funds to create efficiencies and maintain equipment in the food service area. Excess funds could be used to purchase a third serving cart for the nutrition break to support serving efficiency. The USDA has a list of approved capital expenditure equipment items that will support the district's immediate purchase of an additional cart. Items listed require preapproval from the CDE before purchasing. The list of approved items can be found on the following website: [Capital Expenditure Approved List - School Nutrition \(CA Dept of Education\)](#).

FCMAT also visited Wasco Independence School to observe lunch meal service. Since the team visited on a Friday, all items offered were convenience items. Interviews with staff indicated that mostly five to seven rotating cold items are offered regularly because the site lacks the equipment to cook and hold hot items. The site does have an area that could be explored to install the equipment necessary to offer more hot entrees.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Consider purchasing an additional food cart for Wasco High to place at the middle of campus during the nutrition break.
2. Evaluate the equipment needs for Independence High to be able to offer more hot food entrees.
3. Consider revising the spending plan approved by the CDE to purchase the additional cart for nutrition break and other equipment needs at Independence High.

Meal Program, Menus, and Meal Service

Nutritional Requirements

The district participates in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs, which are regulated by the USDA and the CDE. During federal reauthorization in 2010, regulations were updated to become the most comprehensive changes to the program in 15 years. Initial revisions became effective in the 2012-13 school year and have continued to become stricter. The regulations seek to increase the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat fluid milk on school menus; reduce the level of sodium, saturated fat and eliminate trans fats in school meals; and meet the nutritional needs of school children within specified calorie requirements. The intent is to provide meals that are high in nutrients and low in calories.

In December 2025, the USDA released the most recent updates to school nutrition program standards to meal patterns to align with the 2024-25 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Final Rule released on April 25, 2024. The Final Rule allowed flexibilities for child nutrition programs to phase in over the next few school years to meet the needs of vegetarian diets and other dietary preferences, with significant updates to nutrition standards, most notably for added sugar and sodium. The following website contains additional information on the Final Rule updates: [Updates to School Nutrition Program Standards - School Nutrition \(CA Dept of Education\)](#).

Menu Planning

Districts must offer a wide variety of vegetables, including specified weekly amounts of vegetable subgroups. These subgroups include dark green, red/orange, starchy, and legumes. While this is nutritionally sound, it has complicated menu planning and to some extent, student acceptance. A full cup of fruit must be offered at breakfast for all grade levels. One-half cup of fruit and a minimum of three-fourths cup of vegetables must be offered to K-8 students at lunch, and one cup of both fruit and vegetables must be offered to high school students (grades 9-12) at lunch. Students must take at least one-half cup of fruit or vegetable with both breakfast and lunch for districts to claim as a reimbursable meal served. Some districts have experienced an increase in waste because of these requirements, but precise nutritional standards must be met.

To reduce waste, the district has placed several shared tables in the main dining room at Wasco High for students to place unwanted food items and allow other students to consume them. During FCMAT's lunch observation, the shared tables were empty after the meal service. The team also observed very little waste in the trash cans. Interviews with staff also indicated that the department reuses some items such as salads and packaged items the following day to reduce waste. The USDA does have a longstanding food donation policy for all child nutrition programs for districts that wish to donate their leftover food items to entities outside of the school program. The policy was amended in February 2025. The policy also recommends that child nutrition program sponsors consult with their local health departments for local guidance on donating leftover food and establishing share tables.

The following website has additional information on donating food prepared by a program that is not consumed on campus: [Guidance on Donation of Leftover Food in CNPs - School Nutrition \(CA Dept of Education\)](#).

The department's breakfast and lunch menus are posted on the district's website. However, the menus posted are repetitive, with the items recurring quite frequently, often several times a month. The lunch

menu indicates that additional options are offered daily in addition to the items posted on the menu. Documents provided by the district do indicate all the different menu options offered for two weeks, but these options are not on the menus. As mentioned previously, and as part of the district's spend-down plan, the district is exploring options to purchase better quality food items and offer more fruits and vegetables to increase participation. Interviews with staff indicated that nine to 15 items are offered daily for lunch. For breakfast, cereal options are offered daily. Most school districts use a cycle menu system, in which menus are repeated within a specific time frame, such as every four weeks. In a cycle menu, the same items often appear on the same day of the week or the same week in the month, so students can anticipate favorite menu days. Because some days are more popular with students than others, a cycle menu helps school food staff and the director establish a product usage history, which in turn makes it easier to order the correct quantities in advance. This also helps the warehouse and purchasing staff because the flow of products is more predictable. The cycle can be changed quarterly or for holidays to add variety and take advantage of seasonal favorites, new items and commodity products.

Serving Lines

At Wasco High, during lunch meal service, three serving lines in the cafeteria were open and two windows to the quad were open to serve students. However, a speed line serving area was not opened due to shortage of staff. The school has a 50-minute lunch period. Overall, meal lines moved smoothly even though they were long. Apart from the various main entree options, the department also prepares approximately 120 different types of salads, which are popular with students. Leftover salads are held for the next day. The lunch meal services are different on Fridays because the campus is open. The department prepares a grab-and-go lunch for all students, and participation drops significantly. Staff indicated that a decrease of approximately 30-35% in lunch participation on Fridays is not unusual. The school does not offer breakfast before school but instead offers a 10-minute nutrition break during midmorning. During the nutrition break, seven serving areas were open, including one adult meal service line, and the speed line was open. Two food serving carts are also stationed at opposite ends of the campus that offer convenience breakfast items such as muffins, cereal, juice, and milk.

The district's serving lines have a personal identification number (PIN) pad for student identification. After making their food selections, students enter their student PIN at the point of sale.

FCMAT also visited Wasco Independence School to observe lunch meal service. Students were offered a grab-and-go lunch, the same items that Wasco High serves on Fridays. From interviews with site staff, mostly cold food items are offered at Wasco Independence because the school site does not have any cooking or hot-food holding equipment. The site serves approximately 70 students daily for lunch during a 20-minute lunch period. Students at this site are offered breakfast before school for approximately 30 minutes.

Federal regulations require signs at the breakfast and lunch serving lines to inform students of what food items they must take. Signs must be placed in a visible location or near the beginning of the serving line and must indicate what foods are part of the reimbursable meal so students can easily choose all the required food items in the appropriate quantities. The signs should include the number of choices of fruits or grains the student may select and the minimum requirements for offer versus serve. This meal planning option allows students to decline some of the food items offered in a reimbursable meal. The goal is to reduce food waste and extra expense while allowing students to choose the foods they want to eat. At least five items must be offered at lunch, and at least four items at breakfast, and students may take all items offered; however, they are required to take only three items at each meal. Other than the requirement that one of the items be a fruit or vegetable, students may choose or refuse whatever they want provided

they fulfill the meal requirement. Regulations require offer versus serve at the high school level, and it is strongly encouraged at other grade levels. At Wasco High, the required signage was only visible on the speed line that was closed for lunch but opened for the nutrition break.

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Regularly monitor for new nutrition standards compliance, especially for added sugars and sodium.
2. Ensure that the director of food service develops a method that shows all items being offered each day for both breakfast and lunch.
3. Consider writing four-week cycle menus to offer more options and make ordering and inventory control more efficient.
4. Continue to explore options to purchase better quality food items that are appealing to students and to offer more fruits and vegetables.
5. Explore all food donating options for leftover foods.
6. Ensure that the federal signage requirements are met for both breakfast and lunch at all serving lines.

Appendix

Appendix A – Study Agreement

FCMATFISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE TEAM

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM STUDY AGREEMENT FOR MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

This study agreement, hereinafter referred to as Agreement, is made and entered into by and between the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team, hereinafter referred to as the Team or FCMAT, and the Wasco Union High School District, hereinafter referred to as the Client; collectively, FCMAT and Client are hereinafter referred to as the Parties. This Agreement shall become effective from the date of execution hereof by FCMAT.

1. BASIS OF AGREEMENT

FCMAT provides a variety of services to local education agencies (LEAs) as authorized by Education Code (EC) 42127.8(d). The Client has requested that the FCMAT assign professionals to study specific aspects of the Client's operations. The professionals will include FCMAT staff and may include professionals from county offices of education, school districts, charter schools, community colleges, other public agencies or private contractors. All professionals assigned shall work under the direction of FCMAT. All work shall be performed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

FCMAT will notify the Client's county superintendent of schools of this Agreement.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

A. Scope and Objectives of the Study

1. Conduct an organizational and staffing review of the Food Service Department, and make recommendations for staffing improvements or reductions, if any. The team will make every effort to provide comparative staffing data for school districts of similar size and structure, if possible.
2. Examine the department's operations including, but not limited to, food preparation, meal service, student participation, staffing, federal and state compliance, menu planning, purchasing, warehousing and food storage, inventory, and facilities, and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
3. Evaluate the department's workflow and distribution of functions, and make recommendations for improved efficiency, if any.
4. Review training and professional development programs for the department's employees and managers, and make recommendations for improvements, if any.
5. The Team will present the final report to the district's governing board at a public meeting following the completion of the review.

B. Services and Products to be Provided

1. Orientation Meeting

The Team will conduct an orientation session at the Client's location to brief the Client's management and supervisory personnel on the Team's procedures and the purpose and schedule of the study. This orientation meeting is normally held at the beginning of fieldwork for the study.

2. Fieldwork

The Team will conduct fieldwork at the Client's office and/or school site(s), or other locations as needed. Limited fieldwork may also be conducted remotely via telephone or videoconferencing services, in addition to the Public Safety Considerations outlined in Section 13 below.

3. Exit Meeting

The Team will hold an exit meeting at the conclusion of the fieldwork to inform the Client of the status of the study. The exit meeting will include a review of the scope of work; outstanding items, including documents, data and interviews not yet received or held; and the estimated timeline for a draft report. The meeting will not memorialize details regarding findings because the Team's conclusions may change after a complete analysis is finished. Exceptions to this will be findings of immediate health and safety concerns for students or staff, and other time-sensitive items that include the potential for risk or exposure to loss.

4. Exit Letter

Approximately 10 business days after the exit meeting, the Team will issue an exit letter briefly memorializing the topics discussed in the exit meeting.

5. Draft Report

An electronic copy of a preliminary draft report will be delivered to the Client's point of contact identified below for review and comment.

6. Final Report

An electronic copy of the final report will be delivered to the Client's point of contact and to the Client's county superintendent of schools following completion of the study. FCMAT's work products are public, and all final reports are published on the FCMAT website.

7. Board Presentation

Presentations to the Client's board are optional and are made at the request of the Client. If a board presentation is requested, it will be noted in the scope and objectives of the study or can be added as a change in scope at a later date.

8. Follow-Up Review

If requested by the Client within six to 12 months after completion of the study, FCMAT, at no additional cost, will assess the Client's progress in implementing the recommendations included in the report. This follow-up support is primarily a document review-based study. Progress in implementing the recommendations will

be documented to the Client in a FCMAT management letter. FCMAT will work with the Client 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 the date of the final report.

3. PROJECT PERSONNEL

The personnel assigned to the study will be led by a FCMAT staff person (job lead) and will include at least one other professional. FCMAT will notify the Client of the assigned personnel when the fully executed copy of this Agreement is returned to the Client.

FCMAT will communicate to the Client any changes in assigned project personnel.

4. PROJECT COSTS

The cost for studies requested pursuant to EC 42127.8(d)(1) and 84041 shall be as follows:

- A. \$1,200 per day for each FCMAT staff member while on site conducting fieldwork. The cost of independent FCMAT consultants will be billed at their daily rate for all work performed. On-site is defined as either 1) physically at the Client's office or school site(s), or 2) in a scheduled virtual meeting with the Client's personnel, representatives or others associated with the scope of work pursuant to Section 13 below.
- B. All out-of-pocket expenses, including travel and its associated costs, and miscellaneous items necessary to complete the scope and objectives of the study.
- C. The applicable indirect rate at the time work is performed on the study will be added to all costs billed.
- D. The Client will be invoiced for 50% of the not-to-exceed cost shown below following completion of fieldwork (progress payment) and the remaining amount shall be due upon the issuance of the final report or presentation to the Client's board, whichever is later (final payment). The Parties agree that changes documented in a revised study agreement may change the original not-to-exceed amount shown below. If changes are made before or during fieldwork, the new not-to-exceed amount documented in such a revised study agreement will constitute the basis for the progress payment. If changes are made after fieldwork, 100% of the total changed value documented in a revised study agreement, less progress payments made, will constitute the final payment due. All payments shall be due immediately based on the terms of the invoice.

Based on the scope and objectives of the study, the total not-to-exceed cost of the study will be \$18,000.

- E. Any change to the scope of work will affect the total cost. Changes may include, but are not limited to, delays, revisions to the scope of services, and substitution or addition of personnel. The need for changes shall be communicated by FCMAT to the Client in advance in the form of a revised study agreement.

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

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLIENT

- A. Return current organizational chart(s) that show the Client's management and staffing structure with the signed copy of this Agreement. Organizational charts should be relevant to the scope of this Agreement.
- B. Provide private office or conference room space for the Team's use during fieldwork.
- C. Provide for a Client employee to upload all requested documents and data to FCMAT's online SharePoint repository per FCMAT's instructions. Provide FCMAT with the name and email of the person who will be responsible for collecting and uploading documents requested by FCMAT with the signed copy of this Agreement.
- D. Provide documents and data requested on the Team's initial and supplementary document request list(s) by the date requested.

All documents and data provided shall be responsive to FCMAT's request, in quality condition, readable and in a usable form. With few exceptions, documents and data requested are public records and records maintained by LEAs in the routine course of doing business. Some data requested may require exporting LEA financial system reports to Microsoft Excel or another usable format agreed to by FCMAT.

All documents shall be provided to FCMAT in electronic format, labeled as instructed by FCMAT. Upon approval of this Agreement, access will be provided to FCMAT's online SharePoint repository, to which the Client will upload all requested documents and data.

- E. Ensure appropriate senior-level staff are available for the orientation and exit meetings.
- F. Facilitate access to requested board members, officers and staff for interviews.
- G. Facilitate access to requested information and facilities to include, but not be limited to, files, sites, classrooms and operational areas for observation.
- H. Review a draft of the report and return it to FCMAT by the date FCMAT requests with any comments regarding the accuracy of the report's data or the practicability of its recommendations. The Team will review this feedback in a timely manner and make any adjustments it deems necessary before issuing the final report.
- I. Return the requested evaluation survey to FCMAT as described below.

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE

Time is of the essence. The Parties acknowledge that the goal of the scope and objectives of the study under this Agreement is to produce a timely and thorough report that adds value for the Client. To accomplish this goal, the Parties agree to communicate and mutually agree to honor established time commitments. These commitments include the Client providing requested documents, setting and keeping interview appointments and returning comments on the draft report consistent with the established project schedule.

The following project schedule milestones will be established by FCMAT upon receipt of a signed Agreement from the Client:

ACTION	TIMELINE
FCMAT provides the Client with a draft Agreement.	Draft Agreements are usually provided within 20 business days of the Client's initial request for services.
Client returns partially executed Agreement to FCMAT along with the applicable organizational chart and the name and email of the of person who will be responsible for collecting and uploading documents requested by FCMAT.	Draft Agreements are valid for 30 business days.
FCMAT returns a fully executed Agreement to the Client and identifies the project schedule and the lead and other personnel assigned to the job.	Within five business days of the Client's return of the signed Agreement.
Client uploads initial requested documents and data to FCMAT's online SharePoint repository.	Within 10 business days of the Client's receipt of the FCMAT document and data request list.
Fieldwork	Mutually agreed upon; usually, to commence within 10 business days of FCMAT's receipt of requested documents and data.
Orientation meeting	First day of fieldwork.
Exit meeting	Last day of fieldwork.
Follow up fieldwork, if needed (e.g., rescheduled interview, additional interviews).	Mutually agreed upon; usually, within five business days of FCMAT's request.
Client uploads supplemental documents and data to FCMAT's online SharePoint repository.	Within two business days of the Client's receipt of FCMAT's supplemental document and data request(s).
Draft report submitted to the Client.	To be determined, usually, within eight weeks of the conclusion of fieldwork and receipt of all documents and data requested.
Client comments on draft report	Within 10 business days of FCMAT providing a draft report to the Client.

The Client acknowledges that project schedule deadlines build upon and are contingent on each previous deadline. Missed deadline dates will affect future deadline dates and ultimately the timing of the final report. For example, if the Client does not provide requested documents and data by the specified date, the fieldwork may not be able to proceed as originally planned.

FCMAT acknowledges that the Client has an educational program to administer, is balancing many priorities, and in some cases may have records management difficulties, staffing capacity issues, staff on various types of leave, or other circumstances, all of which will affect the project schedule.

The Parties commit to regular communication and updates about the study schedule and work progress. FCMAT may modify the usual timelines as needed.

7. COMMENCEMENT, TERMINATION AND COMPLETION OF WORK

FCMAT will commence work as soon as it has assembled an available and appropriate study team, taking into consideration other jobs FCMAT has previously undertaken, assignments from the state, and higher priority assignments due to fiscal distress. The Team will work expeditiously to complete its work and deliver its report, subject to the cooperation of the Client and any other related 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 report. In the absence of extraordinary circumstances, FCMAT will not withhold preparation, publication and distribution of a final report once fieldwork has been completed.

Prior to completion of fieldwork and upon written notice to FCMAT, the Client 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 Client does not provide written notice of termination prior to completion of fieldwork, the Team will complete its work and deliver its final report and the Client will be responsible for the full costs.

FCMAT may terminate this Agreement at any time if the Client fails to cooperate with the requested project schedule, provide requested documents and data and/or make staff available for interviews as requested by FCMAT.

8. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

FCMAT is an independent contractor and is not an employee or engaged in any manner with the Client. 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 Client in any manner without prior express written authorization from an officer of the Client.

9. RECORDS

The Client understands and agrees that FCMAT is a state agency and all FCMAT reports are public records and are published on the [FCMAT website](#). Supporting documents and data in FCMAT's possession may also be public records and will be made available in accordance with the provisions of the California Public Records Act.

FCMAT has a records retention policy and practice, and every effort will be made to maintain records related to this Agreement in accordance with this policy.

10. CONTACT WITH PUPILS

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

11. 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 Client, automobile liability insurance in the amount required by California state law, and workers' compensation as required by California state law. Upon the request of the Client and receipt of the signed Agreement, FCMAT shall provide certificates of insurance, with the Client named as additional insured, indicating applicable insurance coverages.

12. HOLD HARMLESS

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

13. PUBLIC SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Whether due to public health considerations, extreme weather conditions, road closures, other travel restrictions or interruptions, shelter-at-home orders, LEA closures or other related considerations, at FCMAT's sole discretion, the Scope of Work, Project Costs, Responsibilities of the Client, and Project Schedule (Sections 2, 4, 5 and 6 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, or other means. References to fieldwork shall be interpreted appropriately given the circumstances.
- B. Activities performed remotely that are normally performed in the field shall be billed hourly as if performed in the field (excluding out-of-pocket costs that can otherwise be avoided).
- C. The Client may be relieved of its duty to provide conference and other work area facilities for the Team.

14. FORCE MAJEURE

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

15. EVALUATION

In the interest of continuous improvement, FCMAT will provide the Client with an evaluation survey at the conclusion of the services. FCMAT appreciates the Client's honest assessment of the Team's services and process. The Client shall return the evaluation survey within 10 business days of receipt.

16. CLIENT CONTACT PERSON

The Client's contact person designated below shall be the primary contact person for FCMAT to use in communicating with the Client on matters related to this Agreement. At any time when this Agreement or FCMAT's process requires that FCMAT send information, document request lists, draft report or final report, or when FCMAT makes other requests for the Client to act upon, this is the person whom FCMAT will contact. The Client may change the contact person upon written notice to FCMAT's job lead assigned to the study.

Name: Nelly Sanchez, Chief Business Official

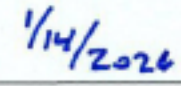
Telephone: (661) 758-7458

Email: nesanchez@wascohsd.org

17. SIGNATURES

Each individual executing this Agreement on behalf of a party hereto represents and warrants that he or she is duly authorized by all necessary and appropriate action to execute this Agreement on behalf of such party and does so with full legal authority.

For Client:

 
 Kevin Tallon, Superintendent Date
 Wasco Union High School District

For FCMAT:

Michael H. Fine  Digitally signed by Michael H. Fine
 Date: 2026.01.23 09:46:47 -08'00'
 Michael H. Fine, Date
 Chief Executive Officer
 Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team