

# Assessing Fiscal Risk

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# FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT  
ASSISTANCE TEAM

# What is FCMAT?

- The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) was created by Assembly Bill 1200 (AB 1200) in 1991 to help local educational agencies (LEAs) to meet and sustain their financial obligations and maintain fiscal solvency.
- Independent/external agency of the state designed to provide proactive and preventive fiscal, business and management services that help local educational agencies comply with fiscal accountability standards, incorporate best practices and manage their operations.
- Educational professionals serving K-14 and county offices of education.
- California School Information Services (CSIS) is a service of FCMAT.

# What Does FCMAT Do?

- FCMAT staff spend most of their time in county offices of education, school districts, community colleges and charter schools, providing:
  - Management and technical assistance – 70%
  - Professional development – 10%
  - Fiscal crisis intervention – 10%
  - AB 139 extraordinary audits – 10%
  - Data management support – 100% of CSIS
- A variety of services, resources, tools and our reports are available at [www.fcmat.org](http://www.fcmat.org).

# What Does FCMAT Do for Community Colleges?

- As part of FCMAT's management assistance, technical assistance, and fiscal crisis intervention work, we might work directly with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office at their invitation, or we might be invited by a specific community college district to work directly with them.
  - There's really no wrong way to contract with us.
  - We are here to help you.

# Assessing Fiscal Risk

# Whose Responsibility?

- Fiscal stability and solvency of LEAs is the responsibility of governance team.
  - The preparation, approval, monitoring and reporting of budgetary and actual financial data rests with the LEA.

# Oversight

- For K-12, the county superintendent has the responsibility to assess, concur or not concur, and monitor a district's reporting and fiscal condition.
  - For a charter school, the authorizer is responsible for oversight.
  - For a county office, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for oversight.
- For California Community College Districts (CCCD) the chancellor's office has the responsibility to assess and monitor a district's reporting and fiscal condition.

# Who Has Oversight of Community Colleges?

- First Line of Defense: Fiscal stability and solvency of the community college district is the responsibility of governance team.
  - The preparation, approval, monitoring and reporting of budgetary and actual financial data rests with the community college district.
- Second Line of Defense: For CCCD the chancellor's office has the responsibility to assess and monitor a district's reporting and fiscal condition.
- Moral of the Story: Districts need to remain fiscally viable and live within their means.



# Indicators of Risk or Potential Insolvency

- Each indicator reflects a lack of systems, process, commitment or attention to one or more critical elements of an organization's operation.
- The existence of any one of the indicators increases risk of potential insolvency and the need for assistance from outside agencies.
- Lack of corrective action to the indicator will eventually lead to financial distress, insolvency and loss of local control.
- Identifying and responding to issues early is the key to maintaining fiscal health.
- Diligent multiyear planning will help a district remain solvent.

# **Indicators of Risk or Potential Insolvency**

**(Also Known as Fifteen Ways Districts Get in Trouble)**

**These Indicators are the Drivers of the Fiscal Health Risk Analysis Tool**

# Unreliable Budget Development

- Unreasonable and/or unclear budget assumptions
- Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) revenue not calculated correctly
- Reliance on prior-year rollover budget method
- Position control data not used
- Reliance on carryover funds to balance the budget
- One-time sources utilized for ongoing expenditures
- Input not received during the budget development process in accordance with the documented planning model
- Enrollment management and budget development systems are not integrated

# Insufficient Budget Monitoring or Updates

- Failure to regularly update budget assumptions
- Actual revenue and expenditures inconsistent with the most current budget
- Budget revisions not posted in the financial system or communicated to the board regularly
- Lack of control or monitoring of total compensation as a percentage of total expenses
- Noncompliance with the fifty percent law
- Failure to meet the full-time faculty obligation number (FON)
- Balance sheet accounts in the general ledger not regularly reconciled
- Requisitions or purchase orders processed when the budget is insufficient

# Inadequate Cash Management

- Failure to reconcile cash accounts monthly
- 18-month cash flow not forecast
- Lack of short-term plan to address cash-flow needs
- Failure to set aside repayment funds when external borrowing occurs
- Lack of communication to the board about the district's cash position (with a clear distinction that cash and fund balance are not the same thing)

# Mismanaged Collective Bargaining Agreements

- Failure to consider long-term impact of collective bargaining agreements
- Lack of bargaining agreements with all units for several years with no resources identified to cover potential settlements
- Presettlement analysis not conducted thoroughly or timely
- Settlements above the funded cost-of-living adjustment (COLA)

# Increasing and/or Unplanned Transfers, Intra- and Interfund

- Insufficient control and monitoring of intrafund and interfund transfers
- Lack of a board-approved plan to eliminate, reduce, or control intra- and interfund transfers
- Transfers from the unrestricted general fund not made when needed to cover projected negative fund balances in other funds
- Transfers to restricted programs and/or other funds not budgeted

# Continued Deficit Spending

- Deficit spending in the current or two subsequent fiscal years
- Not having or implementing a board-approved plan to reduce and/or eliminate deficit spending
- Not decreasing deficit spending over the past two fiscal years



# Mismanaged Employee Benefits

- Actuarial valuation not completed in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements to determine the unfunded liability for other post-employment benefits (OPEB)
- Lack of a board-adopted plan to fund retiree health and welfare benefit liabilities
- Nonexistence or noncompliance of a policy or collectively-bargained agreement to limit faculty banked hours and other vacation balances
- No verification and determination of eligibility for benefits for all active and retired employees and dependents in the last three years
- Compensated leave balances not tracked, reconciled and reported on the balance sheet

# Inattention to Enrollment and Attendance Reporting

- Enrollment decreasing and/or unstable
- Enrollment, weekly student contact hours (WSCH) and full-time equivalent students (FTES) data not monitored and analyzed at least monthly through P2
- Enrollment projections and assumptions not based on historical data, demographic trend analysis, high school enrollments, community participation rates and other industry-standard methods
- Disagreement between institutional research and business/fiscal staffs on enrollment and FTES projections
- College enrollment plans not addressing the funding elements of the SCFF
- Data not reviewed and verified by applicable sites and departments and corrected as needed before the report submission deadlines to the state
- Board policy on enrollment is nonexistent, or policy is not followed

# Decreasing Fund Balance and Reserve for Economic Uncertainty

- Failure to accurately estimate the ending fund balance
- Failure to maintain the 5% minimum reserve for economic uncertainty in the current or two subsequent years
- If unable to maintain the minimum reserve for economic uncertainty, a board-approved plan to restore the minimum reserve for economic uncertainty does not exist
- Projected unrestricted fund balance not stable or not increasing
- Unrestricted fund balance does not include assigned or committed reserves above the 5% reserve level when unfunded or contingent liabilities, or one-time costs, exist

# Ineffective Internal Controls and Fraud Prevention

- Lack of controls that limit access to the financial system
- Access and authorization controls to the financial system not reviewed and updated upon employment actions (e.g., resignations, terminations, promotions or demotions) and at least annually
- Lack of segregation and/or supervision or monitoring of duties in accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, contracts, payroll, human resources, associated student body, and warehouse/receiving
- Beginning balances for the new fiscal year not posted and reconciled with the ending balances from the prior fiscal year
- Prior year accruals not reviewed and cleared by October 31
- Suspense accounts not reconciled regularly
- General ledger not reconciled or closed timely
- Inadequate processes and procedures in place to discourage and detect fraud

# Breakdown in Leadership and Communication

- Uninformed decisions made because the system(s) cannot provide key financial and personnel data needed
- Frequent turnover in the chief business official or chancellor/chief executive officer positions (the incumbents have been with the district less than two years)
- Lack of regular communication between the chancellor/chief executive officer and all members of the administrative cabinet
- District, college and department administrators who are responsible for budget management and decision-making do not receive timely training on financial management, budget and governance.
- Board policies and administrative regulations routinely ignored, not adopted, updated, implemented or communicated to staff
- Micromanagement by board members
- Systems fully or partially controlled by highly influential special interest groups

# Lack of Multiyear Planning

- Unreasonable and/or unclear multiyear projections that are not aligned with industry standards
- Failure to explain trend analysis
- SCFF calculation not prepared with multiyear considerations
- Financial decisions made without most current multiyear projection in mind

# Inattention to Non-Voter-Approved Debt and Risk Management

- Sources of non-voter-approved debt repayment unstable, unpredictable and from the unrestricted general fund
- Downgrade of credit rating
- Out-of-date actuarial study (more than two years old) without a plan to pay for any unfunded liabilities when self insured
- High levels of non-voter-approved debt with total annual debt service payments greater than 2% of the district's unrestricted general fund revenue

# Lack of Position Control

- Financial and human resources systems not integrated
- Accounting for positions and costs is incomplete
- Staffing not analyzed or adjusted based on enrollment
- Budget, payroll and position control not reconciled regularly
- Budget source not identified for each new position before the position is authorized by the governing board
- New positions and extra assignments posted before governing board approval
- Lack of regular meetings between human resources, payroll and budget to discuss issues and improve processes



# Related Issues of Concern

- Failure to produce timely and accurate financial information
- Annual independent audit report contains material apportionment or internal control findings
- Out-of-date long-range facilities master plan
- Poor data quality
- Failure to file annual audit, financial or enrollment reports accurately and on time

# Response to Distress

Characteristics of Districts That:

| Make A Successful Turnaround                            | Require Severe Measures               |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Recognize they have a problem                           | Deny they have a problem              |
| Don't mask the problem                                  | Resist scrutiny from outsiders        |
| Take advantage of financial expertise that is available | Don't seek external assistance        |
| Work collaboratively with oversight agencies            | Are combative with oversight agencies |
| Are part of the solution                                |                                       |

# Links to Tools

- Indicators of Risk or Potential Insolvency for Community Colleges  
<https://www.fcmat.org/PublicationsReports/CC-fiscal-indicators-2019.pdf>
- Fiscal Health Risk Analysis for Community Colleges (instructions, worksheet and documents list)  
<https://www.fcmat.org/fiscal-health>

**Thank you!**