Chapter 5

Support Services

A school district is greater than the sum of its parts. Many of its parts, or components, exist to support teaching and learning. Three important components of a school system are computers and technology, food service, and transportation. Without quality and efficiency, these components can drain a school district of resources. With their proper organization and maintenance, these components can add invaluable support to any-sized school district. This chapter assesses all aspects of computers and technology, food services, and transportation.

TECHNOLOGY

I. Computers and Technology: Organization, Staffing, and Budgeting

Use of automation has enabled school districts to enhance operational, instructional, and business programs. Technological advances in hardware and software combined with affordable pricing allow districts of all sizes to utilize information systems to perform vital functions.

An information technology system provides a number of benefits including:

- More efficient operations through speed of processing and increased information

- Integration of programs

- Communication networks

This section examines information technology including information system planning, operational and organizational controls, system applications, system acquisition, user input, and program evaluation. The section focuses on operations management, not on technical analysis or review. To achieve its technology-related goals, a school district must have an organizational structure that creates an environment for using and supporting new technologies.

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures

- Organizational structure of the information technology operation. For example, who handles instructional technology, who handles administrative technology?

- District salary schedule and technology budget

- Department mission and goals

- Information technology training plans for support staff, teachers and administrators

- List training manuals

Staff to Interview

Superintendent
Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
All other assistant superintendents/ Directors
Principals and Assistant Principals
Director of Human Resources
Director of Technology Department
Technical Support Staff
E-rate Coordinator
Library Media Specialist

I.A. Organization and Personnel Management

Activities to Perform

I.A.1   Examine the organization and staffing charts and job descriptions for technology and interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, determine whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department, and document if it has been changed recently or repeatedly in the recent past or is anticipated to change in the near future and explain the reasons for changes. Note any contracted services or employees as well as any user committees and show to whom they report in the overall management structure.

I.A.2   Examine the staffing and budgets of technology and technology related functions including hardware and software budgets for the last three years and determine the ratio of total staff to staffing within the technology function. Compare the budget and staffing levels to levels in peer districts and to industry standards.

I.A.3   Examine the salaries of technology staff and compare the salaries to salaries in area peer districts or industry standards. Note variances by position.

Questions to Ask

Are instructional and administrative technology support handled in one department or are the technical support functions separated in the overall district's organizational structure? Is the structure working well or are there opportunities for improving the management of the functions? Does the current arrangement of technology promote communication? Does the current arrangement provide support to users?

Is the technology organization too autonomous essentially holding the organization hostage to technology services and data because upper management does not understand the technology function and/or has low expectations of the technology department as a result of their lack of

expertise? Is the board of education too involved or unduly influenced by salespersons in making contractual decisions for major contracts for technology?

Does the district have an established system for determining information technology staffing requirements that is based upon enrollment, program needs, number of users to support, and comparative district data? Who heads the technology division? Are functions that relate to technology efficiently aligned within the overall district organization? What is the staffing pattern of the technology division? What are the functions supported by the technology division? How are related functions coordinated within the district? Does the district have active user committees to assist in determining needs and establishing system priorities? Explain.

How does communication flow to upper management? Stakeholders? Lower-level employees? How does the board interact with the technology department? Formally? Informally? How does the administration interact with the technology? Formally? Informally? What is the relationship between purchasing and technology? Are there formal lines of communication that support the purchasing of technology? How does the technology department meet the curriculum and instructional needs of the district?

What is the relationship between the technology department and campus staff? How are the needs of individual campuses met? Are there teams of campus-based staff that support technology? What is their reporting relationship within the technology function? What is the communication link with technology?

Where does the user technology committee fit into the overall district organization? What advisory or decision-making authority does the committee have? Does the district technology committee have adequate representation from various user groups? Explain. Does the committee meet on a regularly scheduled basis with a well-planned agenda and activities?

Has the district developed a segregation of functions between the Information technology department and user departments and internally within the information technology department as possible? Does the district's central information technology staff function separately from technology staff in accounting, payroll and other departments? Why? Are the duties and responsibilities of the district's information technology staff clearly separated to ensure checks and balances on input and output data? Why?

What is the turnover rate among technology staff? How is turnover of employees tracked? Do employees complete an exit survey when they leave the district? How is survey information used to improve employee satisfaction? Is district compensation for technology employees competitive? Does the district or department have performance pay plan? How are employees recognized? Retention bonuses of people who agree to stay past certain critical years or in certain critical functions? How are employee grievances handled?

How is absenteeism managed? Who covers for absent employees? Who evaluates employees and on what schedule? What are evaluation criteria? How are poor-performing employees dealt with? Remediation? Appraisal? Grievances? Board involvement? Administrative involvement?

I.B.   **Technology Training**

Activities to Perform

I.B.1   Prepare a list of technology-related training opportunities and show the target audience; the provider, whether internal or external; the frequency of the training; the number of attendees; and the summary results any evaluations received concerning the training.

I.B.2   Examine the staff development budget for technology training for technology staff and for user departments or campuses. Determine what percent training is of the total technology budget for the district and compare that percentage to industry standards.

Questions to Ask

What, if any, training is mandatory for staff, including teachers? Which training is routinely given to new staff regarding the information technology program and system? What is the basic structure of the district training plan? Which training are routinely given to non-management staff? How often? Which training are routinely given to management staff? How often? Which training are routinely given to technical support staff? How often? Is the district WebPage used as a source of training?

Are users consulted about the needs of new training? How often? What are the training requirements for teachers? For technical support staff? How often are the training sessions evaluated?

What training does staff in the technology division receive to better understand current and emerging developments in technology? How does technology staff serve as resources to other district administrators in technology matters? Are employees in the division cross-trained? To what extent does technology staff participate in workshops, conferences, seminars, read professional literature and interact with technology administrators in both public and private sectors to improve job performance?

II.   *Policies, Procedures and Planning*

Oklahoma school districts should prepare improvement plans that include provisions for the integration of technology into instructional and administrative programs. The most effective technology plans contain clear goals, objectives and action plans for technology projects. They assign individual responsibility for implementation steps and set deadlines.

Policies, procedures and standards are the bedrock of effective technological change. Districts need clear policies and procedures for the purchase of technology, its acceptable use, the application of copyright laws, and the control of software and hardware inventories.

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures

- District and Campus Technology Improvement Plans

- Disaster recovery plan

- Long-range technology plan

- District business plan

- New school plans (what is being installed as the schools are built)

- Strategic Plan

- District review, analysis or evaluation report of current equipment and future hardware needs

- Grants and external technology funding; list amounts of E-rate and/or other grant funds received/awarded within the last 3 years.

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
Director of information technology
User departments
Board members
Principals

II.A. Technology Planning

Activities to Perform

II.A.1   Compile copies of all plans that relate to technology including but not limited to the district's long-range technology plan, strategic plan, disaster recovery plan, campus and district improvement plans as they relate to technology and the district's budget. Prepare a list of the plans, briefly describe the scope of the plan,

the individuals or groups involved in creating the plan, the dates covered by the plan, the frequency of the plan's update, who is responsible for monitoring progress, and state whether the goals and objectives of the plan are linked to other plans and the budget. Note any inconsistencies between the plans.

II.A.2   Prepare a list of all grants and other external funding obtained by the district for technology. Determine whether the funding is or is not directly related to implementing the technology plans of the district.

II.A.3   Examine opinion survey results (as available) to determine the perceived effectiveness of technology in the district and where users believe that additional work is needed.

Questions to Ask

Does the technology department have a mission statement or have an understanding about how their department fits into the overall district mission and goal? How does the department monitor and measure success? How does the department know they are meeting their customers' needs? Who are their customers? How is quality of services ensured?

How often do user groups attend regular review and planning sessions? How often the management personnel attend regular review and planning sessions? How are technology staff involved in user division planning that relates to technology?

Does the district conduct scheduled reviews, analysis and evaluation of information technology software hardware? Do these scheduled reviews consider changing user requirements? Are any user committees involved in conducting reviews, analysis and evaluation of information technology software? Explain. Does the district regularly review current equipment and future hardware needs on an annual basis? Explain.

Has the board adopted an annual spending plan for information technology with use of operating funds and bond funds as appropriate? Are spending plans tied into technology plans? Do technology plans have detailed implementation schedules and timelines? Is information on progress reported to the board?

Has the board approved multi-year spending plan to provide hardware, software, and all peripheral requirements? Funding for use of outside consultants to assist regular staff with system planning, requirement definition, or system implementation if the need exists?

How aggressively has the district sought grant funding to support the technology plans of the district? Who is responsible for grant writing? What goals, objectives or strategies are being met through grant funding or other external funding sources? How is this funding strategy reflected in the district's plans?

Does the district provide a system for determining accounting, instructional, student records, curriculum, budgeting and other departmental information needs? Does the district provide a formal prioritization process for analyzing district-wide needs?

Does the district's long range technology planning process include input from representatives of the district administration, campus-based personnel and support personnel? Are the district's current and future technology requirements considered when planning for system upgrades or replacements?

How is district security of hardware evaluated? Of software? How is district security of information access evaluated? How is disaster and recovery planned? Evaluated? Tested?

Is data regularly stored offsite in light of the recent increase in disasters involving flood, tornado and fire? Is there a plan for cost efficiency in data storage? Is there a exiting plan for changing vendors of offsite data storage as it relates to security and privacy?

II.B. Technology Policies and Procedures

Activities to Perform

II.B.1 Compile and examine all policies and administrative procedures relating to technology including, but not limited to any board approved technology standards, internet or other technology use policies for students and/or staff, and security policies to protect the privacy of student data.

Questions to Ask

Are information technology policies published and disseminated to appropriate staff and committee members and updated on a scheduled basis? Are technology procedures that implement board-approved policies published and disseminated to appropriate staff and committees?

Does the district provide procedures for establishing user committees for system planning and feedback? Are accounting and other user department personnel actively involved in the design of new systems and selection of administrative software packages?

Does the district provide standards for technology that promote acquisition of some technology while discouraging or preventing the purchase of other technology? Are these standards distributed to campuses? How does the district ensure compliance with standards? Does the technology department support unauthorized hardware or software? Have standards improved the district's ability to support the software or hardware purchased?

Does the district have published guidelines (procedures) for application system development and acquisition and maintenance controls? Are there policies or procedures in place to ensure that information technology and user department personnel adequately test new application systems before they are acquired?

What procedures ensure that maintenance (updating and changing) of application programs is adequately controlled? What kind of standards are in place for system documentation? Who is responsible for ensuring that standards for documentation are followed? Which programs are fully documented? Does the district fully use control features that are built into the hardware and operating system?

Does the district have policies, procedures or processes in place to restrict access to data files, programs, and documentation to authorized personnel? How is access restricted? Does the district restrict access to hardware to authorized personnel? How?

Has the district developed appropriate physical safeguards and backup provisions? What off-site storage is used? Has the district developed a disaster recovery plan?

What input controls, ensure that only properly authorized and approved input data is accepted for processing? What significant codes are used to record data to be verified (e.g., employee numbers or vendor numbers)?

III.   *Infrastructure, Software, Hardware and Operations*

While infrastructure provides the connections that permit communications, the hardware provides the capability to retrieve, process and disseminate information, software makes these tools truly powerful resources.

Data Needs

- List of technical services currently supported by the private sector

- Description of the system architecture of the district (platforms, documentation on WANs, LANs, operating systems, wireless access etc)

- Inventory of students computers (other hardware) by campus and location

- Inventory of staff computers (other hardware) by campus and location

- Inventory of specialized administrative software being used in the district and highlights of instructional programs are used by the district. (For example, the district might use Edulog in transportation or Bon Appetit in food services, etc. For instructional programs,

there are probably some major efforts that are going on. Just hit the high points. We certainly don't want a list saying, Excel, Word, etc.)

- Staffing chart showing all of the levels of technical support provided within the district

- Work orders and completion statistics reports

- Diagram of the troubleshooting process

- Diagram of the data collection and compilation process

- List of operational manual and reports

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
Director of Information Technology
Information Technology Management
Purchasing staff
User departments
Help desk supervisor and staff
Webmaster

III.A. Inventory Control

Activities to Perform

III.A.1   Obtain a list of computers/devices for all campuses and programs by facility, type and capacity of computer/device and location (whether classroom, lab, office). Establish a pupil to computer ratio by campus and program based upon computers that can support grade-appropriate programs and Internet access (exclude unusable equipment). Establish a staff to computer ratio for administrative computers. Explore equity in wireless access.

CROSSOVER WITH INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

III.A.2   Obtain documentation regarding the inventory control systems for hardware and software and compare the documented procedures with practices to determine the effectiveness of the controls.

Questions to Ask

How does the district control hardware inventories? Is each piece of hardware tagged with an inventory number? Are computers and other items of technology included in the fixed asset

inventory or are they kept on a control ledger for inventory purposes? Is an annual inventory conducted? How does the district deal with discrepancies in the inventory? Are individuals held accountable for lost or stolen items? Are individuals assigned responsibility for every item of inventory? Are the police or proper authorities notified when equipment is missing? Are insurance claims filed for stolen equipment? Are insurance coverages adjusted to reflect the current inventory?

How does the district remove an item from inventory when it becomes obsolete or damaged? How does the district dispose of obsolete equipment?

How does the district ensure that all software on all computers is properly licensed? That copyrights are honored? How does the district view "shareware"? When unauthorized software is found on a computer, how does the district deal with the problem? Does the district use site-licenses for software that is used on multiple machines? Who is responsible for maintaining the software inventories?

III.B. Systems Infrastructure and Integration

Activities to Perform

III.B.1 Compile a list of specialized administrative software and major instructional programs being used by the district. (For example, a district might use the SNAP systems for finance and personnel; Edulog in transportation; Bon Appetit in food services; NovaNet for the Alternative Education programs, etc. Don't list Excel, Word, etc. — only major specialized programs.) Determine when these systems were installed and/or upgraded, whether they are standalone or integrated with other systems, whether the districts or departments are experiencing any major problems with the system, and if any are scheduled for replacement or upgrade in the near future?

III.B.2 Prepare a list, or diagram, the district's telecommunications infrastructure including routers, servers, the mainframe, WANs, LANs as well as the wiring (such as t1 lines) that connect the sites showing the type and capacity of each, and the location (where applicable). Note any areas where the infrastructure is lacking and determine if the district's plans are addressing these issues. What is the district's wireless capabilities?

III.B.3 Determine if the district's student information system is meeting the requirements set forth by the OSDE and if district is prepared to input all necessary data elements as required.

Questions to Ask

Are all schools in the district connected to the internet? Are the connections in every classroom, or are connections only to certain computers or certain locations within the campus? Are the campus offices connected to the business office? Does the current level of technology allow from electronic communication between campuses and among campuses and the central administration?

Are administrative systems integrated to allow for exchange of information? Is the exchange of information immediate, or does information update periodically, such as over night? What processes are not integrated? How does this lack of integration contribute to redundant data entry? To errors or omissions?

How is student information such as attendance data collected and transmitted to the central office? Can teachers enter the data directly into the system from the classroom? Are attendance clerks used to enter data that teachers pass to them manually? Is manual data collected at the campus level and entered at the central office? How is the accuracy of manually compiled data ensured? What improvements would be possible if these systems were better integrated or connected?

Is the district's student information system compatible with the OSDE's requirements?

What form of communication exists between the classrooms and the campus offices? Between campuses and the central office? How can a teacher or campus administrator call for help? Are there phones in every classroom? Are there opportunities for using existing lines to improve communication with the classrooms?

Are there external entities such as businesses or colleges or universities that could, through a partnership arrangement, help the district to expand its current capabilities?

III.C. Technical Support and Help Desk Operations

Activities to Perform

III.C.1   Prepare a staffing chart showing all of the levels of technical support provided within the districts including support provided by campuses-based personnel, central office personnel, external entities including service contracts, maintenance agreements, warranty services and the like. Define the number of employees within each group, the role of each group, the type of technology that is supported such as MACs, PCs, software, etc., and attempt to the extent possible to determine the ratio of technician to users or the ratio of technicians to computers. Compare to industry or peer district standards.

III.C.2   Review work orders and completion statistics for a period of time and determine whether responses meet customer expectations and needs. Compare the statistics

to industry standards and note areas where improvements might be needed.

III.C.3   Diagram the troubleshooting process, including the help desk operations, and determine if the levels of technical support are appropriate and effective.

Questions to Ask

Do customers feel that they are getting the level of technical support they need to get their jobs done? Are there times when the productivity of staff is impaired due to major breakdowns? What activities has the district performed to reduce productivity losses?

Are the information technology operations performed in a controlled, orderly manner that provides good customer service? Who is responsible for prioritizing requests and scheduling of work assigned to designated staff?

Are campus and administrative user staff that have an interest in technology used effectively to train and troubleshoot for fellow employees?

IV.   *Technology Acquisition Practices*

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures concerning technology acquisitions

- Long-range technology plan concerning technology acquisitions

- New school plans (what is being acquired as the schools are built)

- Technology related purchasing records

- E-rate eligibility documents

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
Director of Information Technology
Director of Purchasing
Information Technology Project Leaders
Grant writers

Activities to Perform

IV.A.1   Examine a sample of purchasing documents data or files and determine the amount of the purchase, the funding source for the purchase, purchasing process used, compliance with state purchasing laws, and, to the extent possible, whether prices were competitive.

IV.A.2   Examine whether district is eligible for any E-rate funds and determine if district is applying and using those funds.

Questions to Ask

When making a decision to buy technology does the district first assess its current programs and systems? Are user divisions asked what they need and what they hope to achieve with the new technology? Does the district or department develop a vision for the future that anticipates how the new technology will improve the way the district does business? Does the district quantify the improvements it expects to achieve with the purchase? Does the district write specifications for meeting needs or have vendor products been allowed to dictate the district's processes? How does the board monitor the benefits achieved through the purchase of technology to determine if the decisions to purchase where appropriate?

How does the district acquire new technology? Does the district obtain hardware or software through state or local purchasing cooperatives or catalog purchasing arrangements? Are formal bids used to acquire technology? How is the purchasing department involved in the purchasing of technology?

How are expenditures controlled? How does the district ensure that all technology purchases are made following state purchasing guidelines? Does the district competitively bid technology purchases? What purchasing cooperatives or catalog purchasing arrangements does the district use when purchasing technology? For each technology project, does the district perform a feasibility study and cost benefit analysis that evaluates costs, risks, and benefit of each project? What are the major challenges to overcome in performing feasibility studies in this district?

Does the district attempt to locate alternative funding sources such as grants, donations, and the like to pay for or defray the costs of anticipated purchases? Does the district use lease purchase arrangements to acquire technology? When making decisions to lease or purchase technology outright does the district factor in the cost of implied interest? Do the terms and conditions of the lease purchase agreement allow the district to upgrade technology at appropriate intervals?

Does the district negotiate on purchases and software licenses? Does the district have teams used to negotiate software licenses? Is software tested prior to purchase?

Is the district eligible for E-rate monies? Have they applied? Are they being used for equipment or materials? If so, are they following all current legislation connected to E-rate specifications?

FOOD SERVICE

V.   Food Services: Management, Planning, Policies, and Procedures

The food service review category examines the efficiency and effectiveness of school district food programs. Effectiveness in this area is measured by the level of service provided to school children and compliance with federal, state and local policies. Efficiency is measured by the district's cost per meal and staff productivity performance measures. Food programs are funded by revenues from the sale of meals and by federal government funds for free and reduced-price meals. If these revenues fail to cover the service's cost, districts must subsidize the operation through their operating budgets.

This section includes the review and evaluation of the food service policy and procedures, its planning and evaluation efforts; employee training,

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures (local, state and federal)

- Financial reports

- Department budget

- Organization and staffing charts

- Staff development plans

- Employee recognition and incentive plans

- Staffing standards

- Compliance/audit reports (OSDE)

- Health department inspection reports

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant superintendent/Director with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Cafeteria managers
Principals/campus-based personnel

V.A. Policies and Procedures

Activities to Perform

V.A.1   Review board and departmental policies and procedures to determine when they were last updated.

V.A.2   Determine if there are policies in place that could be changed to improve the management, operation and communication processes in the food service area.

V.A.3   Review federal guidelines for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and Oklahoma's Child Nutrition Programs Administrator's Reference Manual to determine if the school district is in compliance with regulations. Ensure the school district has developed a process for compliance with the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (See http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/nutritionstandards.htm).*

Questions to Ask

Does the district have board approved policies for the operations of the food service program that:

- Sets its student and adult meal prices?

- Establishes procedures regarding a la carte menus and prices?

- Establish procedures about food preparation centralization or decentralization?

- Establish policies regarding open or closed campuses?

- Define roles of food service personnel and building principals?

What local policies or procedures exist that directly impact food services and child nutrition? What state and federal laws must be complied with in food services and child nutrition? Rules? Guidelines? What will happen to the district if the laws, rules and/or guidelines are not followed?

Are policies and procedures with regards to pay, benefits and leave fair and competitive with the market?

V.B. Planning

Activities to Perform

V.B.1   Create an organizational chart of the food service operations to determine if kitchens are staffed appropriately and whether the span of control is appropriate.

V.B.2   Review the food service's planning (long-range and otherwise) documents and communication tools to determine if all levels of staff are regularly involved in the planning process.

V.B.3   Request copies of department newsletters, status reports, calendars etc., to determine if staff are regularly kept in the communication loop and are notified of policy or procedure changes that may affect production in the kitchens.

Questions to Ask

Does the department have a mission statement or have an understanding about how their department fits into the overall district mission and goal? How does the department monitor and measure success, such as quality of service? How does the department know they are meeting their customers' needs? Who are their customers?

Are food service staff assigned specific duties and responsibilities which:

- Are supported by current and accurate job descriptions?

- Provide essential specialization in areas such as nutrition, sanitation, menu preparation, automation, etc.?

Are monthly management planning sessions held to:

- Review evaluation reports?

- Review menus?

- Review cost control procedures?

- Plan training sessions?

- Review staff assignments (hours and costs)?

Does the district engage in an annual planning process to improve food service procedures which includes:

- Evaluation of food service goals?

- Evaluation of procedures and operations to establish equipment needs?

- Evaluation of expenditures and revenues to plan budget requirements?

- Evaluation of procedures to determine training needs?

- Evaluation of costs to determine the future cost per food item to students and staff?

- Evaluation of costs to determine potential saving opportunities?

- Evaluation of purchasing practices?

- Evaluation of meal prices?

Are regularly scheduled visitations by management staff conducted to evaluate:

- Menu compliance?

- Food serving and temperature?

- Student and staff acceptance?

- Time schedules?

- Delivery schedules?

- Proper sanitation of kitchen facilities?

Are monthly review and evaluation sessions conducted with:

- Food service supervisors?

- Site managers?

- Cafeteria managers?

- Principals?

V.C. Employee Development and Recognition

Activities to Perform

V.C.1   Determine if the employee incentive, staff development and appraisal processes promote employee development and high performance.

V.C.2   Examine the district's policy regarding leave and absences to determine if a process is in place to encourage good attendance.

V.C.3   Examine the in-service training programs to determine whether employees are regularly trained on new and updated policies and procedures, cooking techniques, sanitation, customer service.

V.C.4   If the district has its own food service association or belongs to a state or national association, determine if opportunities to join are made affordable and available to all kitchen staff.

V.C.5   Determine if the district encourages kitchen staff to gain statewide and national certifications and funds are available to supplement any costs for gaining certification for employees.

Questions to Ask

Is there an established in-service training program for food service personnel which:

- Has an orientation session for entry level employees to describe district personnel policies, food service operational policies, operation of food service equipment, and to distribute a handbook for food service employees detailing job descriptions, procedures of service, etc.?

- Provides regularly scheduled training sessions on hygienic food preparation and food handling procedures?

- Provides regularly scheduled training sessions on control of serving portions and cost control procedures?

- Provides regularly scheduled training on baking and cooking methods for preparing new food offerings?

- Provides regularly scheduled training sessions on care and cleaning of food preparation and serving equipment?

- Provides regularly scheduled training sessions on serving the customers with proper service methods–courtesy, exchanging problem foods, etc.?

Does the district provide for food service staff to attend regional and state food service seminars including:

- State conferences of a state professional organization or OSDE? (identify)

- Regional meetings of food service personnel? (identify)

- Certification by local, state or national food service organizations? (identify)

Does the district offer employee recognition and incentive programs to encourage attendance and reward employee performance? Describe the programs.

What procedures are in place to address and re-mediate poor performance and excess absences?

V.D. Customer Service

Activities to Perform

V.D.1   Review all food service reports from OSDE and discuss each identified weakness to determine if corrected.

V.D.2   If the food service department surveys their customer, determine whether results of those surveys are being used to improve service delivery and the types of meal items offered.

V.D.3   Ask students, faculty and administrators their opinion of the food service operations to determine whether the department solicits input from its customers.

Questions to Ask

Is an annual evaluation or survey of food services conducted to gather information on:

- Quality of product?

- Product acceptance by student?

- Product acceptance by staff?

- Product acceptance by parents?

- Service acceptance by student?

- Service acceptance by staff?

- Service acceptance by parents?

- Adherence to dietary guidelines?

VI. *Performance Reporting*

This section includes review and evaluation of productivity standards, such as meals per labor hours; staffing patterns; food and labor costs; cash management policies and procedures; inventorying and warehousing of food products (cold and dry); and revenue and expenditures controls including the management and use of the fund balance.

CROSSOVER WITH BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Data Needs

- Staffing patterns by campus and/or kitchen showing titles, hours worked, days worked, full or part-time status and other available staffing information.

- Standards, calculations and/or sources used to determine optimal MPLH standards per campus.

- Reports reflecting labor and food costs.

- Financial records or any published reports showing the operations costs and revenues of food service for last three years, including the condition of the fund balance and the current federal reimbursement rates per meal.

- Student and staff meal costs.

- Monthly food service reports for last two years.

- Budget variance reports and other financial reports used regularly for financial management.

- Profit and loss statements.

- Pre-costing and post-costing data.

Possible People to Interview

Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business or finance director or manager
Purchasing department
Technology director
Cafeteria managers

Activities to Perform

VI.A.1   Chart the MPLH hours by campus and compare them to peer districts and industry standards. Note discrepancies and determine cause for the deviation.

VI.A.2   Analyze the district's food, labor and operating costs, and the fund balance. If the district has been operating at a deficit, determine the cost drivers that are impacting the operation adversely.

VI.A.3   Compare the district's food service budgets, goals, strategies and performance measures against actual performance and financial data.

VI.A.4   Tour the kitchen and cafeteria facilities during meal preparation and service and make note of any areas where processes or equipment are not in compliance with state or federal guidelines or health codes. Also note areas where efficiencies could be achieved through automation, improved equipment, or streamlined operations.

VI.A.5   Prepare a staffing chart for each campus and central support facility showing the number of staff by position at each location. If it is appropriate, show the number of hours worked and compare it to staffing standards by location.

Questions to Ask

Staffing

Does the district have an established food service staffing method that:

- Is based on meals served per labor hour?

- Includes benchmarks and/or gauges that are based on comparable school districts and other food industry standards?

- Allows for reporting and monitoring of staffing levels?

- Considers use of convenience foods, alternative types of dishware, kitchen equipment and facilities to control staffing costs?

Food and labor costs

Are food service costs maintained and analyzed on a daily, monthly and annual basis including:

- The cost per meal served?

- The cost of food per meal as a percentage of the cost of the meal?

- The cost of labor per meal as a percentage of the cost of the meal?

- The indirect cost per meal as a percentage of the cost of the meal?

- Overhead costs charged to the program for benefits, utilities, custodial support, maintenance, etc.?

- Profitability of the overall operation?

- Size of campus and participation?

- Menu pre-costing and post-costing?

- Portion control?

Cash management

Does the accounting and deposit of cash receipts provide for:

- Written policies and procedures on counting and depositing money?

- Accounting by individual food service site?

- Auditing on a periodic basis by assigned personnel?

- Provision of security measures for cash and personnel (i.e., courier service, deposits)?

- Consistent record-keeping for each site?

Are individuals that handle and prepare cash for deposit bonded for theft?

Does the district compare its costs to comparable districts and what is the methodology?

Inventory

Are inventories of food and serving products:

- Maintained for pantry stock, warehouse stock and freezer items?

- Secured for control purposes to avoid pilferage?

- Centrally received for control and accounting purposes or properly reported if delivered to individual sites?

- Monitored through production sheets detailing food prepared and food served?

- Physically counted on a periodic basis?

- Followed on how to deal with food waste, leftovers and expired food products?

  Does the district's participation in the USDA surplus commodity program:

- Meet federal procedures for ordering, receiving and storing of commodity products?

- Provide for inventory controls consistent with other food service inventory?

- Provide for efficient and cost-effective use of a majority of items received?

Budgeting process

Do food service budgets provide necessary information for effective program management including:

- Compiling campus information for comparative analysis?

- Keeping records on equipment purchases and repairs to assist in future purchasing of equipment?

- Current data on budget status?

- Involvement of selected food service personnel in all phases of budget administration?

- Itemizing indirect costs in budget reports?

Revenues and expenditures

What revenues are generated by food services of the district? What is the basis for revenue flows?

Do food services affect the flow of revenues for another area of district operations (i.e., compensatory education dollars that flow due to participation in school meal programs)

How are expenditures controlled?

Does the district compare its costs to comparable districts and what is the methodology.

What data flows into food service and from where? What data flows out of the food service to where?

Does the food service fund balance account for up to three months of revenues? If more than three months, why? Is the food service department reinvesting its profits into the food service operation?

Is the food service fund balance used to purchasing capital equipment? Travel? Staff development? Certifications for food service workers? Nutrition promotion materials? Technology? Delivery trucks? Is the food service department using its budget, not the general fund, to pay for overhead expenses such as janitorial service, utilities, garbage removal, printing and reproduction?

VII. Qualifying Families for the Federal Free and Reduced-Price Meal Programs

This section involves the examination of the process for qualifying all eligible students in the free and reduced-price meal program including the use of point of sale system to protect student information and procedures to ensure that no student goes hungry.

Data Needs

- Procedures for qualifying families (district and campus)

- Software programs used to qualify

- Point of Sale (POS) reports

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business or finance director or manager
Technology director
Cafeteria managers

Activities to Perform

VII.A.1   Diagram the process for qualifying students and siblings for the free and reduced-price meal program.

Questions to Ask

What is the district's process for identifying families (student and their siblings) who are eligible to participate in free and reduced-price meal programs? Does the district use direct certification through Oklahoma Department of Human Services? What safeguards are in place so that no child falls through the cracks?

What follow-up is done for non-responsive students or families? How are principals involved in the identification process? What incentives exist for principals to help identify qualified students? What efforts are ensured that the identity of students participating in free and reduced-price meals is kept confidential? What mid-year activities occur to ensure continual eligibility?

What incentives does the district employ to encourage families to submit applications for free and reduced-price meal programs? What advertising campaigns does the district use to encourage participation? What is the district's approach to getting non-English speaking or illiterate parents to apply for the free and reduced-price meal programs?

VIII. *Student Participation*

This section involves the evaluation of student meal participation versus average daily attendance in the district's lunch and breakfast programs; a description of the district's meal programs including its successes and its obstacles; and policies that affect meal participation.

Data Needs

- Student meal participation rates by campus (free, reduced, paid and overall)

- Information about special meal programs (breakfast carts, grab-and-go bags, etc.), Catering programs, or other revenue generating endeavors.

- Breakfast and lunch schedules for each campus.

- Menus and recipes

- List of food items

- Vending contracts

- Student campaign materials

- Survey results

Possible People to Interview

Food service director
Cafeteria managers
Teachers
Principals

Activities to Perform

VIII.A.1   Chart meal participation over the last 3 school years by campus to determine

participation trends vs. ADA trends.

VIII.A.2   Identify factors contributing to low participation districtwide and by campus.

VIII.A.3   Identify best practices for getting students to eat. Benchmark these against the districts' current efforts.

VIII.A.4   Tour the kitchen and cafeteria facilities during meal preparation and service and examine the adequacy of equipment and the conditions of the kitchen and serving lines.

VIII.A.5   Do your own taste test: eat in various cafeterias.

VIII.A.6   Track locations of vending machines to determine compliance with federal/state guidelines, who is responsible for when they are operated (turned on) and the nutritional content of the items sold.

Questions to Ask

General

What type of meal programs does the district offer to students? If 80 percent of the students are eligible for the free and reduced-price meals, does the district participate in the federal Provision 1, 2 or 3 (universal feeding) programs?

How do meal participation rates compare to state, regional or comparable districts' averages? Does the food service department track daily participation for each menu to determine if:

- Certain menus are more appealing to students than others?

- Have food courts been implemented in secondary schools?

Have the lunch participation percentages remained stable or increased over a five-year period? Have the breakfast participation percentages remained stable or increased over a five-year period? What special occurrences have affected (positively and negatively) participation? What obstacles have the cafeteria staff encountered that negatively affected meal service? What special occurrences have affected (positively and negatively) participation? What obstacles have the cafeteria staff encountered that negatively affected meal service?

Customer satisfaction

What kinds of student taste testings have been successful? Are surveys administered to students, faculty and/or parents to gauge customer satisfaction and tastes? What meal programs or campaigns to increase participation have been successful?

What types of breakfast programs have proven successful in elementary schools? Secondary schools? What type of cafeteria surroundings have been implemented that encourage students to eat in school? Are plants, posters, artwork and any elements of school spirit used? What special events have been implemented to encourage nutrition and meal participation?

Policies

Does the district have an open or closed campus policy? Are campus administrators adhering to federal guidelines regarding placement of vending machines, vending machine items and other competitive food sales? What mechanisms are in place to communicate school events, such as fund raisers and field trips, to kitchen staff?

IX.   *Nutrition Education Programs*

This section involves the review of the district's student nutritional education program.

Data Needs

- Nutrition education plans used by the district

- Nutrition curricula

- USDA Nutrition Education and Training programs

- Materials used to promote nutrition and special events

Possible People to Interview

Food service director
Cafeteria managers
Teachers
Principals
Students

Activities to Perform

IX.A.1   Review the nutrition curricula and materials to determine the effectiveness of the district's nutrition education efforts.

Questions to Ask

Does the food service operation provide support of the educational program by providing:
- Nutritional education to teachers and students?
- Student involvement in special meal planning and taste-testing?

- How does the district gauge the quality and nutritional content of its food to its menus? Is a full-time nutritionist or registered dietician employed? Are these services contracted for?

X. *Food Service Technology*

This section involves the review of technology used to support the food service operation to assist in the reporting and tracking of student and financial information, planning its menus, measuring nutritional analysis, and streamlining operations.

CROSSOVER WITH COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

Data Needs

- Nutritional analysis program

- POS software program

- Wiring and communication structure

- Computer-generated reports (financial, participation, etc.)

- Payroll and leave accounting systems and reports

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business or finance director or manager
Purchasing department
Technology director
Cafeteria managers and food service workers

Activities to Perform

X.A.1   Review all the systems and software programs used by the food service department to determine if staff are properly trained on the use of them.

X.A.2   Determine whether the district is taking advantage of all components or modules contained in their POS system.

X.A.3   Working with the technology (consultant counterpart) team member, evaluate the infrastructure to determine if all cafeterias are networked properly.

X.A.4   Look at the manual processes being performed and identify automated solutions to

streamline and improve operations.

X.A.5   Review the process for employee timekeeping, leave accounting and payroll to determine if the Food Service department is using a separate reporting system from the rest of the district and whether the controls are in place that reflect actual hours worked and taken.

Questions to Ask

Does the food service department have the infrastructure in place to support all cafeterias? Are some cafeterias wired and networked for POS, while others are not? How does this affect the quality and timeliness of reporting and protecting student confidentiality?

Does the district use an information system (POS, child nutrition software, other software program) to:

- Track meal eligibility?

- Track meal receipts?

- Track student information?

- Create a menu history used to forecast future food purchases?

- Determine the amount of food served versus the amount prepared?

- Purchase food and supplies?

- Track inventory?

- Process free and reduced-price application?

- Plan menus?

- Perform nutritional analysis of menus?

Does the district use a free and reduced-price application processing software? Are food service staff properly trained on new programs and the use of technology?

XI.   *Purchasing*

This section involves the evaluation of the food service purchasing process including the use of inter-local agreements and purchasing cooperatives; processing and storage of commodities; and product specification, price and quality.

CROSSOVER WITH BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Data Needs

- Copies of all service contracts

- Status reports on services performed

- Feasibility studies

- Cost benefit analyses

- Performance data

- Procedures and specifications (cooperative purchasing)

Staff to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business or finance director or manager
Purchasing department
Legal counsel

Activities to Perform

XI.A.1   Compare the food service purchasing process with the district's central purchasing process and determine how compliance with purchasing laws and district procedures is maintained and followed.

XI.A.2   Review all contracts and inter-local agreements for food purchases.

XI.A.3   Contact neighboring districts, and others to determine opportunities for cooperative purchasing, and compare to district's purchasing methods to determine whether the district is taking advantage of these opportunities.

XI.A.4   Conduct site visit of warehouses to determine if adequate storage is provided to support the schools, and whether a shortage of space has a direct impact on cost and delivery of food items.

Questions to Ask

Are effective purchasing practices used by food service personnel that include:

- Bidding items to ensure the lowest price?

- Provision of adequate dry and freezer storage space to facilitate purchasing practices?

- Adherence to all district central purchasing practices and procedures?

If the food service department has entered into cooperative purchasing agreements with other school districts:

- What does it buy cooperatively?

- How does it track its savings?

- How has it increased its buying power?

- What procedures and specifications have been standardized that have led to increased quality and customer services?

Do the number of deliveries and delivery locations satisfy participating districts?

Does the vendor provide for emergency and/or special orders?

Have participating districts collectively tested products for taste, quality, nutritional analysis, cost, volume, etc. before the contracting process?

Are products routinely evaluated for quality and cost? Does the district have adequate cold and dry storage space? Do food vendors make just-in-time deliveries to individual campuses? Or, does the district make its own deliveries? If so, does the district have adequate delivery trucks and enough drivers to make timely deliveries? Where does the district store its commodities if it has no central warehouse? Is the district involved in purchasing cooperatives with the other districts? Local food vendors? Private companies for processing and preprocessing of commodities?

XII. Evaluation of Equipment, Equipment Replacement Plans, and Facilities.

This section includes the examination of the district's kitchens, cafeterias and freezer/cold and dry storage facilities; the age and efficiency of kitchen equipment; and the work order process for equipment repairs.

CROSSOVER WITH FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Data Needs

- Policy for use of cafeteria/kitchen by other groups

- Budget

- Replacement plans

- Work orders for equipment repairs

- Accident reports

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent(s) with assigned responsibility
Food service director
Business or finance director or manager
Facilities, plant and construction managers

Activities to Perform

XII.A.1   Conduct investigations (site visits) of kitchen, warehouses, central baking centers and other related facilities.

XII.A.2   Review health department inspection reports to determine safety hazards and violations.

XII.A.3   Discuss future kitchen construction and renovation projects with construction and food service management.

XII.A.4   Review work order process for maintenance and equipment repairs with maintenance and food service management.

XII.A.5   Conduct yellow pages test on equipment repair process.

Questions to Ask

What type of kitchen facilities (i.e., centralized/decentralized; central warehouses, freezers, baking centers; dishwashers) exist in the district?

Are records kept on equipment purchases and repairs that assist in future equipment purchases? Are equipment repairs and replacements made part of the annual budget? Are kitchen facilities in compliance with OSHA and health department standards?

Are there defined procedures for the use of cafeteria facilities including:

- A defined policy for use of cafeteria facilities by student and parent organizations?

- A defined policy for the use of cafeteria facilities by community groups?

- Centralized accounting for funds received from special activities relating to the food service operations?

Are freezer units or outside storage facilities secured against vandalism and spoilage? Does a policy exist for the assignment of keys to cafeteria/kitchen personnel?

TRANSPORTATION

XIII. Transportation: Policies, Procedures, Operations and Staffing

Transportation is a vital support service that demands sound management due to the large capital investment in bus fleets and annual expenditures required for maintenance and operation. The goal of any school transportation operation is to timely transport students safely to and from school and other school related activities. Although numerous state regulations govern transportation services, districts have the flexibility of establishing procedures that can enhance operations such as setting bell schedules, designing efficient routes and establishing sound maintenance procedures.

This chapter examines the transportation program focusing on monitoring factors affecting transportation, bus replacement and vehicle maintenance programs, driver recruitment and training, driver and passenger safety, service evaluation and purchasing procedures.

The aim of an effective transportation service delivery system must be to deliver safe, timely and efficient transport to all district students. The absolute paramount importance of safety and timeliness requires no explanation. The concern over efficiency, while of a second order of importance, must be vigorously pursued in order to free additional resources for use in classroom instruction.

Data Needs

- Policies and procedures

- Bus routings

- Maintenance records

- Bus fleet records

- Annual transportation report

- Transportation information systems

- Transportation outsourcing feasibility studies and request for proposals

- Copies of contracts, if services are privatized

- Job descriptions, salaries and wages of transportation employees

- Staffing by category and location

- Training/certification records of transportation employees

- Vehicle accident or vandalism reports

- Results of student and parent surveys

Possible People to Interview

Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent with assigned responsibility
Transportation director
Principals/campus-based personnel
Bus drivers
Mechanics
Training coordinators
Transportation vendors, if applicable

XIII.A. Organization and Staffing

Activities to Perform

XIII.A.1   Examine the organization and staffing charts and job descriptions for all transportation related functions including vehicle maintenance and parts ordering and warehousing. Interview staff to determine reporting arrangements, whether the organizational structure depicted on the chart reflects the actual organization of the department, and document if it has been changed recently or repeatedly in the recent past or is anticipated to change in the near future. Explain the reasons for any changes.

XIII.A.2   Examine the staffing including substitute drivers, and budgets of transportation and transportation related functions and determine appropriate staffing ratios within the function such as mechanics to total buses in the fleet, etc. Evaluate whether the budget and staffing level compares favorably to industry standards.

XIII.A.3   Prepare a chart showing the salary rates and ranges for each position within the transportation function, and the budgeted or actual overtime worked by each position type stated in hours and/or dollars, as appropriate. Compare salary rates to industry standards and note any areas where consistent, excessive overtime is being used.

XIII.A.4   Prepare a list, by position, of all staff development or certifications provided

and/or required at time of hire, at orientation, annually and at other intervals. Show whether that training is provided in-house or by contract and the approximate contract cost.

Questions to Ask

Does the district have an adequate number of drivers to run regular routes? Is the number of backup drivers sufficient to cover the average number of absent drivers? What other staff are licensed to drive buses and how often are they called upon to run routes? How does that impact their ability to do their normal work? How does this practice impact overtime rates?

How are drivers hours calculated? Actual driving time, a set time per route, etc.?

How are drivers and mechanics recruited? Are these recruitment activities tracked to determine which are most successful? How is the human resources office involved in the recruitment process? In the hiring process? Are processes in place to ensure that criminal history checks are done before drivers come in contact with students? Are criminal history checks done periodically to determine that new events would not make a driver ineligible for student contact?

Who drives for field trips? Who schedules field trips? Who drives for extracurricular trips? Who schedules extracurricular trips? Is scheduling done so as to minimize overtime costs? Who pays for field trips, activities, extracurricular, etc.

Is the district's staffing levels comparable to districts of similar size and linear density? What staffing formulas does the district use to ensure the efficiency of staff?

Do drivers and mechanics receive adequate supervision? What is the span of control? Who is responsible for evaluating drivers? Do the evaluators ride with the drivers to assess performance? Are surveillance cameras used in buses to observe driver performance? Does the supervisor follow drivers periodically to observe driving skills and adherence to district policies and procedures?

Who handles preventive maintenance on vehicles? Who responds to emergency calls like flat tires, break downs, etc.?

When drivers are having problems, who do they turn to for help? When a mechanic is uncertain of how to proceed with a repair, to whom can they turn for assistance?

How do employee turnover rates compare to peer districts, regional and state averages? Are employee compensation rates competitive with peer districts, regional, and state averages? Does the district provide a benefits program that is comparable with other districts, particularly surrounding/area districts? Is there a relationship between compensation package

and turnover rates? How does the district track the reasons employees leave the district? What other factors are affecting turnover rates?

Is training provided for all transportation staff on an annual basis? Are transportation staff provided in-service training on changing laws, requirements and procedures? Who provides the training? Does appropriate staff attend regional seminars?

What in-service activities are provided for drivers? What driver training has required attendance? Are drivers of special education students receiving training in the needs of the special students? What types of training do drivers receive in student communication and discipline? Are trained substitute drivers available? What specific training is given to substitutes?

How many hours of initial training do newly hired bus drivers receive? How many hours of ongoing training do established bus drivers receive per year? What types of training are provided, and how does it compare to that suggested in Oklahoma School Laws?

XIII.B.   Policies and Procedures

Activities to Perform

XIII.B.1   Compile all board-approved policies and administrative procedures that relate to transportation, transportation routes and schedules as well as any policies or procedures that are unique to transportation personnel. Examine the content to determine if they are consistent and comprehensive; note any discrepancies. Further, to the extent possible, determine how these policies or procedures impact the effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation operation.

Question to Ask

By policy, what children are transported to and from school in the district? What routes are run that are not reimbursed by the state?

Do any policies or procedures establish a maximum amount of time that regular education students should be on a bus? Special education students? Does policy or procedure prescribe when an aide is provided on a bus?

With regards to special education transportation services how does the Transportation Department communicate with Special Ed Director, Principals, etc. elating to transportation needs? Does the district apply least restrictive environment rules to transportation? If such aides are employed, which department compensates them? What procedures exist in order to ensure the safety of special education children? What policies or procedures discuss transportation of special education students to and from locations where they receive special services, such as transportation to and from physical therapy?

Are district policies relating to transportation of students to and from Career and Technology education classes either at another school or to a college or university where the course is offered?

Are any students in the district charged for transportation costs? If so, who? Under what circumstances? What is the charge? Does the charge match the cost of transportation? Is this process documented in district policy?

Does the district allow external groups such as non-profit organizations to use or charter school buses? If so, who? Under what circumstances? What is the charge? Does the charge match the cost of transportation? Is this process documented in district policy?

Does board policy clearly define hazardous routes that would not otherwise be eligible for reimbursement from the state? What procedure is in place to ensure that routes are reviewed regularly to identify hazardous routes?

Do procedures outline the student count process? Do the count procedures comply with OSDE requirements? Does the count procedure ensure that the district accurately captures information on ridership?

What policies or procedures address appropriate student behavior on a bus? Student misbehavior or vandalism? Grounds for removal from a bus? Grounds for termination of transportation privileges? Are students and parents required to sign a transportation agreement acknowledging acceptable behavior guidelines? What due process is provided if parents protest the district's disciplinary actions?

Does the district have locally developed and approved policies for handling student or parent complaints?

How does the administration ensure that board policies are followed and incorporated into day-to-day operating procedures?

Do any policies address busload capacity? Are all students required to wear seatbelts? To sit two or three to a seat? Can students stand on the bus when seats are not available?

How does policy or procedure stipulate how charges are to be assessed to departmental or program budgets for special trips? Are campuses allowed to charter special buses from external entities if the cost is lower than the district's cost from providing those services? When there are no district buses available to handle the trip?

Does district policy establish a replacement policy for school buses? How often, or at what intervals are buses to be replaced in the district?

Do any procedures or policies require an analysis of long term transportation costs when choosing sites for new schools? When redrawing attendance zone boundaries? When setting bell times for schools? When opening magnet school programs? When considering open enrollment or school choice policies? When setting or changing field trip budgets?

Has the district established requirements and guidelines governing the use of private vehicles for transporting students on district business including: Proof of insurance? Guidelines for use which are outlined and provided to drivers? Verification of qualifications to drive?

Does the district have policies designed to reduce absenteeism? How does the district evaluate the effectiveness of those policies?

What are the procedures for reporting an accident? An accident with injuries? How does the administration monitor compliance with these procedures? Do mechanics note unreported damage to buses when they are conducting preventive maintenance?

XIII.C. Operations

Activities to Perform

XIII.C.1   Using reports from the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) for the last three to five years, compare the number of riders, regular education transportation cost per mile, the special education transportation cost per mile, the regular education transportation cost per rider, and the special education transportation cost per rider of the district to peer districts and state and regional averages.

XIII.C.2   Compile annual operations and performance data for regular and special education routes, including the number of daily student riders, the number of miles driven, the operations cost and the daily cost per student rider. Track trends in Transportation costs (operations costs for both regular and special education transportation, annual miles for both regular and special education, and cost per mile for both regular and special education) over five years. Track trends in transportation costs (salaries and benefits, purchased/contracted services, supplies and materials, other expenses). Track the amount of route mileage, extracurricular mileage, other mileage, and gross annual mileage over 3 years.

XIII.C.3   Compile data concerning arrival and departure times and determine the on-time performance of the district's bus service.

XIII.C.4   Examine all school bus or other district vehicle accident reports for the last year and determine whether trends exist. If trends are discovered, interview staff to determine what action the district has taken to reverse those trends.

Questions to Ask

How does the district monitor factors affecting transportation costs such as increases in enrollment? Decreases in enrollment? Closure of schools? Opening of school(s) in new attendance area(s)? Number of new students in a geographic area without a school? Boundary changes? Organizational changes (i.e., addition of middle schools)? School-to-school transportation due to over enrollment in a building? The cost per pupil for transportation? Periodic criminal record and driver record checks for both regular and substitute drivers?

Do the district's operating procedures for transportation reflect the use of scheduling; routing and automated tools for the purpose of improved efficiency and cost effectiveness? Does the district use a computerized routing and scheduling system? Is each bus and driver dual or triple routed? Are bell schedules staggered sufficiently to provide for multiple use of buses and drivers? What activities has the district used to improve its linear density group for regular routes and thereby increase the state's reimbursement rates? How does the district group special education routes to achieve efficiency?

How are transportation services evaluated to determine overall effectiveness and efficiency? Does the district review routing, loading and scheduling annually looking for ways of increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness?

With regards to safety, how many accidents have district buses been involved with during the previous school year? What percentage of these accidents did the district classify as preventable and/or non-preventable? How does the district track and monitor accidents? What procedures exist for dealing with drivers involved in preventable accidents? Are drivers with multiple accidents terminated or retrained?

XIV. Vehicle Maintenance and Replacement

The maintenance and replacement of school buses impacts the safety of students and for the department budget. Analysts must therefore carefully examine upkeep and vehicle turnover issues.

Data Needs

- Federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations

- Policies and procedures

- Preventive maintenance records/schedules and repair history files

- Deferred maintenance/repairs log

- Work orders or repair orders

- Bus and vehicle fleet records, including fleet inventory and miles reports and vehicle usage reports

- Daily bus check logs (if applicable)

- Fuel purchase and usage reports

- Equipment/parts inventory lists and replacement plans

- Automated vehicle maintenance information systems records (if applicable)

- Location of maintenance and parts storage facilities (if applicable)

- Job descriptions of maintenance employees

- Maintenance employees' training/certification records

- Environmental compliance records

Possible People to Interview:

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
Transportation director (if appropriate reporting line)
Maintenance director or supervisor
Mechanics
Bus drivers
Training coordinators
Maintenance Vendors, if applicable

XIV.A. Vehicle Maintenance

Activities to Perform

XIV.A.1   Inspect repair and parts storage facilities and prepare a written assessment of the adequacy of space, tools and equipment, physical layout, security, safety and environmental compliance.

XIV.A.2   Prepare a table showing the current fleet inventory by year, make and model; fuel use type; capacity; date of purchase; purchase price (if available; and current mileage. This should include all vehicles owned by the district including buses, police vehicles, maintenance vehicles, and the like.

XIV.A.3   By examining vehicle maintenance work orders and interviewing staff, prepare a list of all preventive and major maintenance task categories for vehicles

stipulating the type of maintenance performed, the frequency of the maintenance, who performs the maintenance whether in-house or by some external entity and the timeliness of each category of repairs including driver requested bus repairs.

XIV.A.4   Physically inspect school buses and, if applicable, other vehicles maintained by the department to determine the overall condition and identify trends to improve performance and repair processes.

XIV.A.5   Examine the fleet maintenance and/or work order tracking system and prepare a list of the systems capabilities, which modules are in use and which, if any, are not. Determine if the systems capability meets the district's needs and whether the system is integrated with other appropriate systems to eliminate redundant data entry and possible errors.

Questions to Ask

How many district vehicles other than buses does the district own? How many miles does each vehicle log each year?

How are maintenance costs recorded, monitored and evaluated each year? Are maintenance costs used to determine when to retire buses? When to refurbish buses?

What procedures are in place for drivers to check the vehicle (including fluid levels) daily and report status to maintenance personnel? What is reviewed during pre-trip inspections? Post-trip inspections? How are needed repairs communicated to the mechanics?

Are contracted services considered to reduce costs if service quality and effectiveness can be maintained?

How does the district hold down the cost of parts, including tires? Does the district participate in cooperative purchasing arrangement available through the General Services Commission? Does the district following purchasing laws and guidelines in competitively bidding parts? What alternatives exist for purchasing parts and supplies at a reduced cost? Is maintaining a parts inventory the best way to ensure the availability of regularly needed parts? How is the parts inventory maintained? Is there any obsolete inventory that should be disposed of?

How has the district sought to reduce fuel costs? Has the district evaluated the use of alternative fuels such as propane? Does the district purchase fuel cooperatively with other school districts or governmental entities in the area? Does the district maintain its own fuel tanks and purchase fuel in bulk? Or, does the district purchase fuel at local service stations? If credit cards are used to purchase fuel, how are charges controlled? Does the district buy new

buses that use less fuel or less expensive fuel? How much fuel does the district purchase monthly, annually, or by another schedule?

With regards to equipment and parts:

- how does the district cooperatively order and purchase equipment and parts? Buses?

- how are parts stored and inventoried?

What measures does the district use to determine whether it has enough mechanics?

Are mechanics required to drive buses? Why? How often (on average)? How has this practice impacted the district's ability to adequately maintain the buses? Who supervises the mechanics? Are mechanics adequately trained? ASE certified?

What method is used to record, monitor and evaluate maintenance costs for each vehicle, each year?

What alternative purchasing methods does the district use for purchasing parts and supplies to reduce costs? Does the district annually review the types of vehicles needed and purchase the most efficient and effective type for the district? Smaller sizes? Larger sizes? Specific fuel types? Are supplies efficiently acquired and appropriately distributed?

Is there a planned program of equipment and tool replacement within the transportation maintenance function? Do mechanics own their own tools, or are they the property of the district? What equipment does the district own and maintain? What system of controls prevents the theft of district-owned tools and equipment?

XIV.B. Fleet and Equipment Replacement Schedules

Activity to Perform

XIV.B.1   Based on information gathered in II.A.2, and other budgetary documentation, determine the average number of buses purchased each year and the average amount budgeted for bus replacement. Compute the bus replacement schedule in practice, and compare it to any stated policies for bus replacement in the district and/or state recommended guidelines for replacement.

Questions to Ask

How does the district decide on the types of vehicles needed and purchased annually to determine the most efficient and effective type for the district? What purchasing process is used when purchasing buses that ensure that the district is getting the best price? How does the district purchase buses and school vehicles?

Does the district maintain a bus replacement schedule with:

- future needs for transportation identified in relationship to available equipment?

- bus replacements meeting existing federal and state codes?

- a set schedule and methodology for bus replacement?

XV. Review and Evaluation of Contracting Process

Support Services could be purchased or contracted for through private companies or interlocal agreements with neighboring districts or other governmental entities. It is important to regularly evaluate whether there are goods or services that can be obtained from the private sector at a lower cost, higher quality or both. It is equally important to continually evaluate existing contracts to determine if the district is getting the best value possible through the contracting arrangement. In other words, do the district's Support Services meet industry standards?