



# *Planning Operational Improvements & Efficiency*

*Making critical decisions for the future of  
Pajaro Valley Unified School District*

*February 2005*

*Submitted by  
Superintendent, Dr. Mary Anne Mays*



# **PAJARO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Office of Superintendent Mary Anne Mays

February 8, 2005

To the PVUSD Education Community,

Like all school districts in California, here in Pajaro Valley Unified School District we are facing very difficult and challenging times. The state's lingering fiscal crisis, uncertainty over state funding for public education, and our need to successfully meet increasing demands for accountability and improvements in student achievement are forcing us to re-examine precisely how we spend our scarce resources. It is essential that we allocate our time and funding to achieve the best outcomes for our students.

In that regard, the district recently received a study from a private consultant reviewing our district operations. The findings and recommendations contained in the *Organizational and Efficiency Study* report issued in October 2004 by School Services of California are being thoroughly reviewed by district administration. In the pages that follow are the reactions and responses from the PVUSD leadership team to that study.

We appreciate the focus this study has placed on the effectiveness of district level operations. Management is continually striving to structure and delivery top-quality services and programs that help our schools perform to their potential. We are open to enacting changes if it can be demonstrated that they will indeed help us meet our district goals.

However, the district administration has two major concerns about the report: (a) the study methodology and data-gathering process has led to inaccuracies in some of the reported findings, and (b) the conclusions based on that data offer misleading presumptions about potential savings and operational effectiveness.

School Services based its conclusions on:

- comparisons with other school districts of like enrollment using those systems own self-reported data,
- the firm's data on statewide trends in school finance and resource allocation, and
- interviews with a selected group of 130 individuals within the district.

This methodology has contributed, we believe, to some erroneous conclusions.

From the outset it is important to understand that this study was not a comprehensive financial audit; it was an overview of district expense patterns and how district departments and functions are perceived in the field. Comparisons were made to other school districts to show relative expenditures by function, but those comparisons did not reflect whether other systems were spending at fiscally appropriate levels.

The school district annually has its books audited by the certified accounting firm Vavrinak, Trines, Day and Company. In the past four years our auditors have not raised any issues related to mismanagement of funds or improper or ineffective management practices. While the consultants stated that they reviewed several fiscal audit reports, comprehensive compliance reviews, and state and federal compliance reports, none of the conclusions in those documents is cited as a basis for the consultant findings.

SSC analysts did not audit individual desks or positions to determine workload or performance. They did not objectively compare assignments, staffing levels and objectives against whether those tasks were being successfully accomplished. The consultants did not verify staffing or the roles of staff with the various department heads or within the other districts that responded to the survey. For example, SSC asked to review the job descriptions we had on the books, but then they reported them in their comparison charts as if all of those positions were actually filled. Many were in fact purposely left vacant by the district. The net effect was to imply

that PVUSD has more district office or site staff than we actually employ. In another instance, the report suggests that the district is under-staffed in its curriculum and instruction function, but fails to account for how traditional C&I tasks are now being performed through the Zone leadership. The presumption by SSC is that without centralized control, there is the “possibility” for varying curricula and instructional practices and expectations. No evidence that this had occurred was presented in the study report.

In another case, the study report indicated that PVUSD spends less on classroom support and more on site administration than comparison districts. Clearly, our goal has been to shift resources as close to the classroom and the school site as possible and this was troubling until we began to explore the data more carefully. We believe the report creates a misrepresentation that we are under-funding classrooms by spending too much on site administration. The truth is that we have shifted our after-school coordinators (formerly veteran teachers on special assignment) onto the administrative salary schedule as a cost-saving measure. They still perform the same duties to assist students on academic issues, but they are reflected by SSC as administrators. This is but one example of how we believe the issues and practices behind the raw data often have been overlooked in the consultant’s study methodology.

Perceived inefficiencies and communication gaps were mentioned, but specific evidence or instances of faulty practices were rarely provided except as anecdotes or perceptions from interviewees. Therefore, the first step for some departments in responding to the report was to accurately analyze the information and evidence presented.

Finally, the study did not rely on random sampling of opinions and perceptions among all employees, parents and the diverse communities we serve. It has been several years since the district conducted such an objective district-wide survey. Interviews were conducted with district and site level administrators, selected central office staff, and individuals nominated by stakeholder groups and the Budget Committee. We believe it is time to reach out to all of our stakeholders once again and conduct a broad-based survey of customer satisfaction to give more directed guidance on how to best deliver district level services.

Despite these concerns, the district administration is committed to using the momentum from this report as further impetus to assess each department’s effectiveness and formulate practical, long range improvement strategies.

To advance that objective, I am recommending that the district do three things immediately. First, a sub-committee chaired by the Director of Finance will disaggregate the data in the SSC report and examine the expenditure patterns at school sites to ensure that we are, in fact, devoting appropriate resources to classroom instruction. Second, I am asking the Board of Education begin a process of study sessions as a part of their regularly scheduled school board meetings whereby individual departments and functional areas can be discussed in a dialogue between staff and trustees. The basis of these conversations will be to reconcile the data and recommendations derived from the School Services study with those developed by the department leaders. The goal of this review process is to create department-specific action plans and strategies that can be formulated into an overall Plan for Improved Organizational Effectiveness. Finally, at the conclusion of this series of study sessions if the school board feels it is needed, the superintendent will convene a blue-ribbon panel of community and educational leaders and experts to review and comment on the draft plan prior to its being presented formally to the school board for adoption and implementation.

The administration of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District is committed to ensuring that every education dollar is allocated to its highest and best use. District administration is open to enacting changes that can make our operations as effective and efficient as possible. We view the *Organizational and Effectiveness Study* as a departure point for further examination of how best to meet the unique fiscal and operational needs of our district. We appreciate the community’s support and input as we work to improve the operational and learning environments in our school district.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Mays, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

## BACKGROUND

Every dollar devoted to public education is precious and we must ensure operational efficiency and effectiveness. As we try to create a balanced budget each year we must make sure that we are spending our funds wisely and living within our means. The strictures of AB 1200, fiscal oversight by the state's FCMAT program, and the harsh reality of the state's continuing budget crisis mean that school budget decisions can no longer be made on a year-to-year basis. Strict new state laws require that the County Office of Education and the California Department of Education examine school district budgets to ensure that they demonstrate fiscal solvency for at least three years into the future. Long term effects and projections are now mandates for public school budgeting in California.

### **All California public school districts are grossly under-funded**

In addition, it is critical to understand that state funding for public education has not kept pace with the demands being placed on educators in terms of program responsibilities and expected performance for our students. While funding has grown in California over the last few years it has been insufficient to finance the programs necessary to meet the public's expectations for student achievement. In PVUSD we are demonstrating significant improvements in our classrooms and on our performance indicators. We have done that despite having to make over \$13 million in budget reductions to keep our budget in balance since 2002-03. We have cut positions in the district office including one assistant superintendent and several clerical jobs in an effort to keep cuts as far away from the school site learning environments as possible. Simply put, our state and local revenues are being stretched to their limit and beyond.

### **Declining enrollment in Pajaro Valley USD means fewer resources from the state**

This situation is not unique to Pajaro Valley schools. Districts across California are facing the same problems. Nearly half of the school districts in California are in declining student enrollment resulting in reduced state funding. Even though student enrollment in PVUSD has remained even, we must be cautious to ensure that our anticipated resources do not become over-extended. Almost 50 school districts, many in Northern California, are on the state's "watch list" because they are dangerously close to insolvency. Several districts have actually gone into state receivership. On top of that, we are all grappling with how to most cost-effectively meet the toughest academic standards and performance accountability requirements in the country.

### **PVUSD has very low revenue limit funding (only \$4,900 per student) compared to other districts**

This dilemma was underscored by a recent study released by the prestigious Rand Corporation. In their national review, Rand researchers found that California had dropped to the bottom quartile in the nation among the states in resources devoted to public education. California is the lowest among the most populous states in the U.S. These figures were confirmed recently in a presentation by Dr. Allen Odden, a nationally renowned financial analyst. Dr. Odden asserted that California would need to spend an additional \$8,300 per student to adequately meet all of the mandates placed on them including No Child Left Behind and state accountability laws. Revenue limit funding for our district is only \$4900 per student. As you can see, Pajaro Valley USD is under-funded and this places us at a distinct disadvantage

### **Comparing PVUSD to other districts must account for our ability to meet objectives**

Therefore, it is not only a question of how we compare with other school districts, but whether we are spending our limited resources as effectively as we can and whether we are operating our schools as efficiently as possible. Comparing PVUSD with other school districts that are under-funded and under-staffed does not alone answer this question. We must match what we expect from our district office with what it costs to meet those expectations.

### **Budget Committee and School Board sought an outside analysis of management expenditures**

At the request of the District Budget Committee as part of the budgeting process last year, the Board of Education directed the superintendent to engage the services of an outside firm to examine our spending patterns to see if we could or should reduce or reorganize the way we do business in the district office. The parent members of the Budget Committee were particularly interested in such a study in order to have an objective analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of the district office functions. Finding additional savings in district office functions was a clear objective in light of multi-million dollar budget cuts we have faced. An *Organizational and Effectiveness Study* was completed in October 2004 by School Services of California, a respected expert in school financing issues in California. This planning document responds to many of the observations and recommendations offered in that report.

## ***Review and response to Executive Summary and Strategic Issues Portion of the Organizational and Efficiency Study performed by School Services of California***

### **► DISTRICT MISSION, GOALS AND POLICIES**

**The consultants recommended that the district periodically review its mission statement and goals to ensure that practices and operations are advancing those directives.**

**We concur.** The district leadership team began a review of the district's purpose, beliefs and goals at the Leadership Retreat in August. The School Board is holding a study session as part of an upcoming Retreat to be scheduled in February to review the mission, values and goals. The district will look at incorporating a measurability component into the goals statement.

**The report identified that district board policies had not been updated for several years.**

**We concur.** Maintaining the board policy manual is a time-consuming and meticulous process. Given scarce resources, this effort has not been undertaken in recent years. It is a priority project of the trustees and the superintendent during the coming year. A board policies working group, comprised some district staff and two board members, has undertaken this task. It may take up to two years for the manual to be completely updated. After that, a process will be implemented to maintain an up-to-date policy manual.

### **► MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT**

**The report makes a flat statement that the superintendent or her designees have failed to exercise focused oversight of central office functions. Specifically, they cite jurisdictional confusion among departments, unclear lines of authority, unresolved personnel issues, and lack of understanding among staff and departments as to their responsibilities.**

**We disagree in part.** The report suggested that the Associate Superintendent be given direct authority over central operations. In effect, by practice, that is already the case. Much of the day-to-day workings of the district office's support units are supervised by the Associate Superintendent. In addition to weekly cabinet meetings and bi-weekly extended cabinet meetings, the superintendent engages in weekly meetings with the Associate Superintendent to discuss operational issues. To promote better inter-departmental coordination, directors meet as a group quarterly as well.

However, given limited resources and growing workloads, we have been exploring alternative ways to improve district management operations. As a result of discussions about the report with County Superintendent of Schools Diane Siri, PVUSD has been invited to participate with the American Productivity Quality Center (APQC), the originators of Baldrige in Education program to work with the Open Standards Benchmarking Collaborative (OSBC). Delegates from PVUSD cabinet are participating in the human resources, instruction and technology benchmarking groups. This activity should give PVUSD access to some of the best thinking in public education about management structure and performance criteria for these critical components of district operations. Nearly ninety hours of staff time has been devoted to this activity in just three months.

### **► DISTRICT OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING LEVELS**

**The report concluded that PVUSD is not top-heavy with central office administrators and managers.**

**We concur.** Among the comparison districts, PVUSD ranked the lowest in the percent of budget spent on central office administration (6.8%). Our own figures validate that conclusion. This includes classified support staff, clerks, technicians, maintenance supervisors and food service and other operational managers. Administrators only account for six percent of the district's entire workforce.

For over 25 years, California has had in place the strictest law in the country regulating the number of administrators a school district can employ under the General Fund. For unified districts like ours, that ratio is eight administrators for every 100 teachers. Most administrators counted against this ratio work at school sites as principals, vice principals, and deans. We only have 60.95 FTE (full time equivalent) administrators supported from the General Fund working in our district. Annually we must report our actual staffing levels to the Office of

the State Controller. If we exceed that state ratio, we can be financially penalized. Pajaro Valley has never exceeded the state mandated ratio. In fact, under this tough state law, PVUSD would be “entitled” to hire 12 more administrators. Obviously, we have not done that.

One significant finding in the report was that PVUSD spends a large amount of money on Migrant Education and Special Education. This creates the impression of higher levels of district office staffing than other districts. When these two functions are removed from the calculation, district staffing levels are much more in line with, if not lower than, other comparable school districts.

## ► **RELOCATING THE DISTRICT OFFICE FROM THE TOWER**

**After a thorough review of the economic and logistical factors, the consultants recommended against relocating the district office and instead suggested that PVUSD acquire the property.**

**We concur.** An analysis of the pros and cons of a moving the district headquarters makes it clear that it is in the long term interests of the district to remain where we are. Staff will explore the feasibility a lease/purchase agreement where a portion of the current lease can be converted toward acquisition and some segment of the facility could house non-district tenants producing a revenue stream for the district.

## ► **CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATION IN THE CENTRAL OFFICE**

**The report recommended that the district engage in a process to improve customer service in the central office departments.**

**We concur in part.** How we provide responsive and competent service to our stakeholders must be a high priority for every district and site level function. In any organization that has downsized its staff, workload overload and reduced responsiveness can become growing problems. PVUSD is no exception. The report flatly states that the central office does not have a customer service attitude. We take exception to that blanket condemnation of all of the dedicated and hard working professionals who are doing their best, with dwindling resources and growing demands, to provide outstanding service to school site personnel. The report recognizes that the level of non-administrative support staff at the district level is low compared to other school districts (when Migrant Education and Special Education are removed from the comparison). Is it any surprise that responsiveness may have suffered as a result? The district will continue to stress customer service through professional development and communication skill building for central office staff.

Human Resources and other departments have sponsored numerous customer service professional development activities. As part of its Continuous Improvement Process, HR has conducted specific trainings on customer service involving the staff in a variety of offices. This process will continue.

**The report criticizes the central office for lack of communication within the district but makes no specific suggestions as to how to overcome perceived communication gaps.**

**We concur that communication should be improved.** Time is one of the most important resources in any school district. Everyone in public education, whether they are in a classroom or a departmental office, has more to do and less time to do it in. That means that frequently lead time is a luxury and response time to inquiries must be balanced against staggering workloads. One of the keys to effective communication is for the district to cultivate a communicating culture where everyone understands their obligations and benefits of emphasizing timely and complete two-way communication. The district will develop a communications plan that defines responsibilities, sets criteria for communication and discusses ways to improve mass and interpersonal communications techniques.

The central administration has launched a program of using I-Memos to elicit responses and feedback from employees about pending issues and district procedures. This electronic polling process enables individual staff members to reply quickly with their comments and ideas. Because of concerns about the lack of specificity in the School Services report about which procedures, personnel and functions were experiencing customer relations issues, one recent I-Memo asked employees to help us identify where customer service could be improved. Using their feedback we have noted several areas where due to workload responsiveness has become an issue. Coaching and corrective actions can now be put into place as a result of this feedback.

## ► USING THE ZONE CONFIGURATION FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The report raised concerns about the Zone structure in that it is a departure from the traditional organizational structure used in most school districts. The district was urged to review this approach and determine if a change to a more traditional centralized management system would work better.

**We disagree.** The superintendent has reviewed the information in the report and also reviewed the current structure with cabinet and the County Office of Education. We believe that the Zone structure reflects a positive trend in public education of placing management closer to school site operations and facilitates closer community connections to their neighborhood schools. We believe the Zone structure should remain intact, but that we should continuously monitor its effectiveness in achieving common district wide objectives and providing equity and comparability in educational offerings and allocated resources.

Diane Siri, Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools, shared the following:

*“I was co-facilitator of the twelve-person committee that was established after the school district reorganization petition was heard by the State Department of Education in 1999. The committee of twelve unanimously agreed that the zone concept addressed the various issues of the communities of interest within the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. The hope was that the zone concept would increase communications, allow for more parental involvement and promote locally defined ideas that addressed the unique issues within each of the three zones rather than a one-size-fits-all solution. Following the formulation of the recommendations by the District to move to the zone concept, we held numerous public hearings at locations from Aptos to Hall District Elementary and received community support for the concept. When the final report was taken to the Pajaro Valley Unified School District governing board as a recommendation from the community, the recommendation was unanimously accepted.”*

The superintendent recommends retaining the Zone Structure for the following reasons:

- 1) In many school districts, centralized administration is often criticized for being “out of touch” with the day-to-day workings of school sites. Central offices are criticized for being overly bureaucratic and for imposing “one size fits all” regulations and procedures that stifle innovation and responsiveness in the field. Commonality is not a good rationale for an organizational structure. Achieving improvements in student performance, communication and organizational effectiveness is a solid reason for breaking with tradition.
- 2) The key to any management structure is whether it contributes significantly to measurable gains in student achievement. During the last five years under the zone configuration, student achievement and test scores have risen steadily. In spite of under-funding this district has continued to make gains in student achievement. The zone organizational structure supports student achievement.
- 3) In part because PVUSD’s administrative salary schedule is lower than neighboring districts we tend to have many principals and assistant principals new to administration. Of this district’s 26 schools, not including schools chartered through the district, 12 principals are in their first or second year as principals or are new to their position or the school. The span of control in the zone configuration allows the necessary mentoring and support of beginning and “new to PVUSD” administrators. Leadership matters in public education and it flourishes when site administrators do not feel isolated or under-supported by district level leaders.
- 4) Geographically this district is one of the largest in the state. The current zone configuration allows for quick access to all schools by the supervisor of the schools.
- 5) Research indicates that any innovation requires five to seven years for implementation. This district has been in a zone configuration for five years. The system is just now adjusting to the changes this innovative structure has created. One comment in the report had to do with communications. The zone assistant superintendents meet on a regular basis and this past year we began across-the-district level meetings about once a quarter. Changing the structure again would disrupt the system and negatively impact growth in student achievement.

- 6) Prior to the 2004-05 school year there were three zone assistant superintendents and a charter/ alternative schools assistant superintendent. In response to the financial concerns in the district, this latter assistant superintendent position was eliminated and those responsibilities were distributed across the remaining zone assistant superintendents and the leadership team.
- 7) The potential savings mentioned in the report is not supported by the recommended organizational structure included in the report. The report contradicts itself. In place of the three zone assistant superintendent positions the proposed chart includes an assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction and two director II positions; one for elementary schools and one for secondary schools. That configuration still includes three positions with the only savings being the difference between the salary of an assistant superintendent and a director II (the district does not have a director II designation, by inference that salary would be higher than a director's salary reducing even further the potential savings). The salary difference between assistant superintendent and director at the highest step would be \$12,013 for each of the two positions or a total possible savings of \$24,000: not the potential \$250,000 savings indicated in the audit.

## ► INCREASING ATTENDANCE TO GENERATE ADDITIONAL REVENUE

**The report speculates that PVUSD could generate almost one million dollars if it improved its attendance rate to that of the county-wide average.**

**We concur in part.** However, the report also indicated that on any given school day, 93% of our students are in class. The report states that this is the norm for districts of our socio-economic demographics. Pajaro Valley USD has a higher percentage of students on free and reduced meals than other districts in the county. We also have a high number of students whose families are living below the poverty line. They often lack access to health care or child care services. We will continue to stress to parents the importance of having students attend school, but we cannot expect to match attendance rates for districts with significantly different demographics.

**The consultants recommended that the district implement closer attendance monitoring, explore using more public information and incentive programs to reduce missed days due to illnesses, and changing the school calendar to ensure that typically high days when students are absent (pre- and post-holidays) are not overly calculated at key funding points in the year.**

**We concur.** These are all potential ways to bolster attendance and improve state reimbursement for student enrollment. However, the cost-benefit of these programs must be weighed against added administrative time commitments, outright expenditures for informational and tracking programs, and practicality in altering school calendars. The district administration will conduct such an analysis.

Specifically, the district has reinstated the attendance incentive program. In addition, the district calendar is scheduled to be revisited for 2005-06 and 2006-07 on the Expanded Cabinet agenda. Child Welfare and Attendance is working with Migrant Education to present statistics to the schools on "actual attendance." CWA staff has given a presentation to the new shift of the WPD for the spring semester for the TACS pick up of truant students. The annual March Attendance Awareness Month is scheduled and the City Council will be making a Proclamation.

**Review and response to Departmental findings and recommendations of the Organizational and Efficiency Study performed by School Services of California**

**BACKGROUND**

For the past three months, the Organizational and Efficiency Study has been a featured topic at all meetings of the cabinet and administrative team. The findings, data, and recommendations have been reviewed and discussed within each department and functional area of the district office. Outlined below are the initial reactions and responses for each department.

**► SPECIAL EDUCATION/SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Numerous inaccuracies have been identified in relation to the SELPA/Special Services Department.

**District Administrative Staff**

In the Supervisor category, two positions (Assistant Directors) are reported in the chart on page 64 while the accompanying narrative reports three. Neither figure is correct: there are actually 2.6 Assistant Directors. Additionally, Appendix B indicates that Assistant Directors fall within the Management category, not the Supervisor category.

The report indicates that the Department has one Healthy Start Coordinator. In fact, the Department only has a 50% Healthy Start Coordinator. The person employed in this position also works 50% for another department. It should be noted that this position is paid for out of MEDI-Cal LEA reimbursement and that none of the comparison districts operate Healthy Start programs out of the Special Education Department.

In the Technician category, four Technicians are reported as employed by the Department. It appears that these four positions are actually Registration Specialists who are categorical employees and are not administrators. These four positions should not be included under the clerical section either since they are not assigned to the District Office. They are funded through grants and MEDI-Cal LEA reimbursements and are assigned to the Healthy Start Children’s and Teen Centers. Ten clerical positions are reported when, in reality, there are eleven positions.

The total number of administrators working in the SELPA/Special Services Department is 4.1 (not 8), the total number of clerical staff is 11 (not 10), and the total administrative staff is 15.1 (not 18).

<b>Position</b>	<b>Data from Report</b>	<b>Corrected Data</b>
Superintendent	0	0
Management	1	3.6
Supervisor	2	0
Coordinator	1	0.5
Analyst	0	0
Technician	4	0
<b>Subtotal Administrators</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4.1</b>
Clerical	10	11
<b>Total Administrative Staff</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15.1</b>

**Incidence of Special Education**

The report indicates that the District’s incidence of special education (based upon CBEDS) was 11.58% for 2003-04 and above the state average by 1.5%. It is not clear whether the formula used to calculate the incidence percentage included an adjustment for our birth to five and post-secondary students. If it did not, this statistic may

be inaccurate. We were not found out of compliance on this item in the Program Review that was conducted during this same time period.

### **Comparison to Other Districts**

A review of the websites for two of the comparison school districts, Coachella Valley Unified School District and Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District, indicates that the number of administrative staff reported for their districts is inaccurate as was the case for PVUSD. For example, the report states that Coachella has one administrator and no clerical staff while their website indicates that they have two administrators and four clerical staff. Fairfield-Suisun is reported to have four administrators, but their website indicates that in addition to the four administrators, they have four intern supervisors which would yield a total of eight administrators.

The appropriateness of comparing our SELPA/Special Services department to the selected comparison school districts is of concern from several perspectives. First of all, not one of the comparison districts is a single-district SELPA as is PVUSD. The additional responsibilities entailed in operating a SELPA require additional staff. Secondly, at least a few of the comparison districts do not serve students with moderate to severe disabilities or the birth to five and post-secondary populations. In those districts these students are sent to another LEA, typically the COE. Lastly, it does not appear that any of the comparison districts operates a Healthy Start program out of the Special Education Department as does PVUSD.

### **Recommendations**

**The report recommends that the District consider eliminating one Assistant Director, one Program Specialist, four Technicians, and three clerical positions (page 76).**

**We disagree.** With the corrected data, it appears that the department is not over-staffed with administrators and, in fact, may be understaffed in comparison to the other districts. Due to the fact that we are a single-district SELPA it is necessary to maintain the number of Program Specialists already employed. All of the Assistant Directors and Program Specialists are already stretched very thin. The four Technicians are not administrators, are assigned to Healthy Start centers and funded through categorical funds. Therefore, they should not have been included in the audit at all. It may be possible to eliminate one clerical position. Each of the program recommendations that are made on pages 66 and 73-75 are already in place and have been for some time. In summary, making administrative changes to the SELPA/Special Services Department based upon this report would be a mistake. The data is flawed and the comparison districts are significantly different in several critical ways.

## **► BUSINESS OFFICE**

In order to facilitate the analysis of the Business Office, we evaluated the administrative and supervisory functions of each department separately, including Payroll, Accounts Payable, Budget and Finance.

## **FINANCE**

### **Scope of operations**

The Director of Finance oversees 22 employees, including the Payroll and Accounting Supervisors, who are responsible for payroll, accounts payable, workers' compensation, attendance accounting, and employee benefits. The Director of Finance directly supervises the Finance Department which includes the Budget Analyst, Senior Accountant, four Staff Accountants and the District Attendance Specialist.

The Finance Division is responsible for the development and monitoring of all Budget and Financial Data. The district has a \$146 million general fund budget that includes \$60 million in categorical programs. In addition, the department monitors over \$100 million in miscellaneous funds including five charter schools, Adult Education, Child Development with a large Migrant Head Start program, Food Service, Deferred Maintenance, General Obligation Bond, Construction, Developer Fee, Self Insurance for Medical, Dental, Vision and Workers

## Compensation and Scholarships.

The district has centralized accounting services in the district office. Sites report changes necessary to their budgets or expenditure transfers to the assigned staff accountant. The Staff Accountant and Budget Analyst process the changes to be reflected in the financial reports.

The Finance Department also collects all attendance data from the school sites and consolidates the data for reporting to the County Office of Education and the State.

The Business Department, in conjunction with the Technology Department, is currently implementing elements of a new financial system offered through the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (CECC). The system has not been fully implemented at this time. The district elected to use the capabilities of the system for Human Resources, Payroll, Purchasing and Accounting. The district uses a separate budget development and monitoring system that has proven to be an excellent tool in the past. It is currently being updated. Without the Human Resource portion of CECC being fully implemented it would be impossible to rely on CECC for budgeting purposes. In addition, the budgeting portion of CECC is still being developed and does not offer the flexibility and reporting features of the Analytic system the district chose to utilize.

One unique organizational feature in PVUSD is that the workers' compensation and employee benefit functions are part of Business Services, instead of the Human Resources Department. The traditional argument for housing these functions in Human Resources is that employees have a single point of contact for personnel and employment related issues. However, having employee benefits and workers' compensation in the Business Department gives employees a complete continuum of payroll-related services after the employee has been hired.

### Recommendations

**The School Services report recommended against shifting the workers' compensation and employee benefits functions to Human Resources at this time.**

**We concur.** Until the HR Department has been reorganized and responsibilities have been clearly delineated, it would be premature to undertake restructuring at this time.

## ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

### Scope of operations

The accounts payable function is managed by the accounting section under the Finance Division. The accounting section is also responsible for accounts payable, accounts receivable, 1099 processing, GASB 34 implementation and ongoing reporting, student body funds, general ledger entries, and cash flow monitoring. There are six staff members in the accounting section, including an accounting supervisor, staff accountant, and four account specialists. The supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day management of these accounting functions and reports to the Director of Finance.

The largest part of the workload relates to the processing of accounts payable. The staff processes more than \$1 million in payments on a weekly basis, and in some weeks, payments may be as high as \$3 million. The large dollar amount of accounts payables processed is driven by the District's large volume of categorical programs and ongoing facilities, construction, and modernization projects. Overall, staffing appears reasonable and there was no indication of a significant problem in processing payments.

### Recommendations

**The report stated that at this time, there is nothing to indicate that a change in staffing — either an increase or decrease — is warranted.**

**We concur.** The District should maintain current staffing levels. However, changes in workload that could result from items such as the completion of construction and modernization projects, the conversion to the CECC system, and enrollment fluctuations and funding should be closely monitored to identify potential adjustments that may be required in the future.

## PAYROLL

### Scope of operations

The Payroll Department is staffed with a payroll supervisor who oversees six Payroll Technicians, a Workers Compensation Coordinator and Benefits Specialist. Three Payroll Technicians cover certificated employees and three are responsible for classified employees. The unit processes all payroll for the District and is responsible for benefit calculations as well as benefit enrollment for all district employees and their families, workers' compensation, and all absence tracking. It is also important to note the district is Self Insured in both Medical, Dental and Vision as well as Worker Compensation.

### Recommendations

**The report referenced instances where communication between Human Resources and Payroll had not functioned well. This contributed to problems in processing payroll, errors in benefit calculations, and delays in paying newly hired staff. Many, but not all of the shortcomings and processing deficiencies have been attributed to the payroll system, which is not integrated with the Human Resources system.**

**We concur.** The payroll system is being replaced by the system utilized by the Santa Cruz County Office of Education. The new system — California Educational Computer Consortium (CECC) — is expected to reduce many of the transaction errors prevalent in the current system because it will link payroll with position control. The District will run parallel systems through the end of January 2005, with the expectation that the new system will be fully operational in the spring of 2005. Despite skepticism that the newer version of CECC may be plagued by some of the earlier problems, we believe the new system will vastly improve responsiveness, accuracy and efficiency.

We share the report's optimism for the success of the new payroll system, believing that it will reduce workload, improve accuracy, and eliminate needless paper transactions. Tracking and retrieval of payroll records is also expected to be facilitated by the new system.

Our review has found, however, that the deficiencies in the processing of the District's payroll cannot be traced solely to shortcoming of the computerized payroll system. Some of the problems stem from management deficiencies in the Human Resources Department that are discussed in detail elsewhere in this report

**The report recommended that the district take steps to ensure that current and new district level employees be provided mandatory and periodic refresher training on the new software system. It also cautioned that adequate documentation and user manuals should be made available to affected staff. The report also urged the two departments to schedule regular meetings to bridge communication gaps and identify potential needs, and that input be sought from departmental employees on appropriate changes to procedures and practices.**

**We concur.** At the time of this report the Payroll Department had received training on the Magic (H/R portion) of the new system. This was necessary because Payroll would be giving up some functions and HR would be picking up these duties. In most cases, the work had been duplicated in each department due to not having an integrated system. One aspect of the change is to clearly delineate the distinct duties and tasks involved in adding an employee versus paying that employee. All data entered and downloaded to the Magic system first needed to be analyzed for accuracy and any changes since the initial implementation needed to be made. Payroll training is to begin in the near future. Once training is completed, regular meetings will commence and staff will be engaged in training and troubleshooting to clearly understand the separation of assignments and responsibilities.

## ► FOOD SERVICES

### Scope of operations

With a classified staff of 96 and two managers, Food Services is responsible for serving approximately 8,050 reimbursable lunches and 2,180 reimbursable breakfasts per day. The meals are provided to students at 27 sites, including 10 Head Start and Migrant Education programs. Food Services also operates the café in the lower level

of the District's central office. The program is fully self-funded.

The School Services report does not include information regarding how and where the school meals are prepared. Such an understanding is critical when deciding the adequacy of food services staffing. A central kitchen located at the District Office serves 14 school sites. Approximately 5,400 meals are prepared, packaged, and distributed to 14 schools. Meals are shipped cold and heated on site. Six other schools have on-site kitchens and prepare meals for themselves and the remaining schools. Meals and warehouse supplies are delivered by the warehouse staff which includes a Lead Warehouseman and two Food Service Delivery Drivers. Food Services also prepares meals for sixteen Child Care Centers that include twelve Migrant Head Start Centers. Two Child Care Centers operate year round, and one operates just during the school year. One migrant center plus the twelve Migrant Head Start Centers operate May through October.

### **Recommendations**

**The report commented that Food Services was generally well run and operated with effective leadership, but that occasional lapses in communication between sites/programs and Food Services led to operational problems. The report recommended that the Food Services Department develop a systematic means of collecting information that would allow better planning for the number of and time that meals must be delivered.**

**We disagree in part.** Ensuring that students receive the meals they require is a shared responsibility between Food Services and the affected school sites and programs. It has been an ongoing practice to give all schools instructions as to what information must be provided to Food Services regarding meal applications. Written instructions as to what information must be included on student applications are sent through the district pony mail to all school sites. In the past, Food Services conducted two trainings for site office personnel. These trainings were held in July and August to review how to screen meal applications. The trainings were discontinued in August 2004 due to low participation in the prior years. They will be reinstated.

Beginning last September, Food Services started sending weekly status updates to the schools to keep them informed of the progress in approving applications. Each school site receives a list of all the students who have had applications processed and a chart that shows the percentage of free and reduced approvals. Sites are reminded to encourage families to submit their applications to ensure a high accurate percentage for Title I funds. The list of approved applications indicates which students still need to submit applications. Schools are given written timelines and dates as to when the grace period will end and students will be taken off the program if no application has been processed. They are also given a deadline for Title I processing. The weekly update is sent to principals, office managers, and zone assistant superintendents via email and the pony mail.

One factor that slows down the application processing is the procedure and length of time it takes to assign new students permanent ID numbers. Food Services cannot process an application in the system without a permanent student ID number. Over 1,000 applications were held for at least 3-4 weeks while Food Services waited for permanent IDs. In addition, every time a student transferred from one school to another, his or her ID was deactivated and Food Services had to wait for it to be activated again. If a temporary ID was used, the student was lost with each new SASI download. We will develop procedures and staff allocations to improve timelier processing of student IDs.

The scheduling of meal times is done differently for summer school and the traditional school year. Extended learning notifies Food Services of the selected summer school sites and their start and end times. The Director of Food Services then develops a list of recommended meal times for each site and submits it for approval to the Director of Migrant Education and the Extended Learning administrators. This past spring, the list was sent at least four weeks prior to summer school opening, but changes were not requested until just several days before opening. The district will take steps to improve response time to this request from Food Services.

During the traditional school year, principals schedule the meal times and Food Services tries to meet those schedules if possible. Food Services calls each school site for its bell schedule as soon as the site staff returns in August. This year, three or four school sites could not give Food Services the meal times until the day school opened. Then several days into the first week, one school wanted to change the start of lunch time and was not pleased when we could not meet the request. Food Services has limited trucks and drivers so the delivery schedules are very tight, especially with the opening of three new schools.

**The report recommended that Food Services and Migrant Education schedule meetings before the annual influx of migrant families is expected to arrive in the District. These meetings should be used to plan for the arrival of these students, their number, and the school sites that will be affected. These planning meetings would allow Food Services to meet the surge in demand for meals.**

**We concur because we are already doing that.** Obviously, maintaining communication with our customers is a priority for Food Services. However, the report reflects a misunderstanding of how Migrant Education and Food Services already work together.

First, it needs to be clarified that Migrant Head Start and Migrant Education are two separate programs and treated as such. Food Services treats migrant students just like any other students. Food service employees do not know who the migrant students are as they proceed through the breakfast and lunch lines. Meal counts can fluctuate by 100-400 meals on a daily basis throughout the year regardless of the migrant population. Popularity of menu, field trips, restructured programs, and high incidence of illness affect the meal counts much more than the arrival and departure of the migrant families. One hundred additional students spread out over 26 schools really should not be a problem. We already know when the migrant camps open in May and what schools will be affected by the attendance boundaries. Menu records from previous years should indicate when the number of meals needs to be increased or decreased.

Second, Food Services already communicates with Migrant Education regarding how and when students are qualified as migrant. Effective July 1, 2004, all K-12 migrant students qualified for free meals and did not need to submit an application. However, Food Services must have written authorization from Migrant Education verifying the students are qualified as migrant. Staff from Migrant Ed and Food Services have already met and discussed procedures to qualify their students for the meal programs. Migrant Ed is forwarding Food Services lists of new migrant students as they are qualified. Food Services will continue to communicate with Migrant Ed as new guidelines are received from the Department of Education. With this new law, Food Services will now have access to information regarding the number of migrant students at each site which will help in forecasting meal counts.

## ► MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

**Based on interviews, the report concluded that there was a communication disconnect between Facilities, Maintenance, and Technology. Despite the fact that these three departments report to the same Associate Superintendent, the report observed that communication, information sharing and coordination between the three divisions was not very effective because of the lack of appropriate systems and personality conflicts between the department managers. The consultants recommended that the district thoroughly review and institute a better work order processing system and that they communicate the elements and requirements of the new system to all employees.**

**We concur in part.** It has been a widely recognized problem that scheduling and tracking work orders and requests for planned activities in all three of these service-oriented divisions are widely recognized problems. In addition, the demands placed on these three units usually require the staff in these units to make decisions about which service requests should receive a higher priority response. Admittedly, this has led to delays in the past that have contributed to a sense of frustration and criticism of these units.

We are very disappointed, however, that School Services did not mention in its report that the Maintenance and Operations Department was well aware of the problem and had been taking positive steps to improve the system in recent months. M&O has been working on the installation of an Internet accessible computerized Work Request/Work Order Program. The M&O director explained this effort to the consultants during the interview process. This new program will allow site authorized staff to input, track and correspond with the M&O department regarding work they want completed. The site can prioritize their requests and thereby provide service to the highest student needs established by each site. The new systems should be fully operational at the beginning of the 2005-06 school year.

It is important to mention again that no credit was given to the M&O Department for its current training efforts. Some training for key users is already underway. Once the system is up and running, a thorough training and information sharing process for key employees will take place. This year's annual M&O training program will be expanded to include site Office Managers along with the Principal and Head Custodians to augment the one on one training we are already giving each site on the Work Order Program. On-going developments and improvements to the District-wide Work Order system will be updated to all authorized users by our M&O training program and newsletters.

**The consultants also observed that customer service and technical training needed to improve in the M&O Department. The department was criticized for improper handling of phone calls, e-mails, and work orders and that responsiveness by staff was lacking. They recommended that all Maintenance and Operations staff be trained in customer service and be evaluated on the implementation of this training.**

**We concur in part.** The relationship between site and district level customers and these service departments is critical to effectively meeting the school district's needs and goals. The district will conduct customer service training for key point-of-contact staff. In addition, site staff and employees in other district level departments need to be apprised of the limitations facing the department in terms of resources and workload demands so that they can develop realistic expectations for service delivery. The training regimen on the new work order system is also designed to streamline contacts between departments and improve customer service. The department is fully committed to providing top-notch responsive service within the fiscal and operational constraints it faces.

## ► PERSONNEL

The School Services report refers to the Human Resources Department as "Personnel," a designation we feel does not give enough credence to the range of activities and services this operation attempts to provide for district employees and leaders. Human Resources is a service-driven department whose primary purpose is to provide the highest level of quality support to the sites and individual employees. Using the continuous improvement model, we are modifying and improving our system to better serve our stakeholders, which in turn impacts student achievement.

**The report recommends eliminating the Director of Certificated Personnel position and transferring those responsibilities to the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel. The rationale for that recommendation was a perceived imbalance in assigned responsibilities among the three administrators in the Department.**

**We disagree.** The report does not correctly account for workload demands in the department. In 2003, the Human Resources office restructured its hiring procedures for certificated personnel. The process went from support and assistance — leaving the major responsibility for hiring to site principals — to a centralized hiring process. This shift ensures compliance with State and Federal mandates (i.e. NCLB, CCTC, and now *Williams v. California*). The workload for this undertaking is substantial. For example:

- In 2003-2004 and under the direction of the Certificated Director, the HR department recruited and hired 169 teachers, 242 substitute teachers, and 34 administrators. There has been a significant focus on hiring only fully qualified teachers meeting NCLB standards. As a result, the number of emergency credentialed teachers was reduced from over 14% to less than 4% in three years.
- Centralized hiring ensures equitable placement of experienced teachers across all zones. This is a major improvement over past site-hiring practices. Research validates that having high-quality teachers in every classroom enables schools and student to achieve to higher levels. This support function directly contributes to the academic goals of the entire school district by ensuring equity, comparability and quality control over the hiring process.
- The Director of Certificated has primary responsibility to (a) facilitate the District's Peer Assistance and Review program and routinely oversees teacher discipline processes, (b) monitor and facilitate use of the comprehensive certificated evaluation system and coordinate with the Beginning Teacher Support program through UC Santa Cruz, and (c) support and orient new principals and vice-principals. With the hiring of so many new administrators, this latter function is particularly critical.

- Grant writing and grant management is also a function of this position. H.R. has brought over one million dollars to the district for teacher incentives, recruitment, selection and development of pipelines with local university teacher training institutions.

We believe that assigning these designated tasks to the Assistant Superintendent on top of that positions overall management and labor relations responsibilities will dilute the effectiveness of the department.

**The School Services report recommends that the district create a Personnel Manual outlining the procedures, policies and practices that staff should follow.**

**We concur in part.** The problem is not that PVUSD has too few documented personnel policies and procedures in place. Rather, problems the staff and public may encounter when interacting with the Human Resources Department tend to stem from of having too many policies and procedures. For example, the Department must operate and explain to prospective and current employees and members of the public:

- Board policies related to personnel hiring and discipline
- Merit System rules and regulations
- Specific regulations and procedures for hiring, transfers, and promotions of all classified staff; the rights of employees during a lay-off/bumping process; and employee discipline appeals and procedures.
- Title V and Education Code regulations related to teacher credentialing and authorizations
- ADA requirements, regulations, and compliance
- State Workers Compensation regulations
- Federal and State legislation (e.g.: NCLB, *Williams v. California*, etc)
- General Education Code provisions
- State and Federal employment regulations including leave (FMLA), unemployment, etc.
- Bargaining unit contracts for certificated, classified and certificated substitutes
- Time consuming layoff and bumping procedures and timelines that protect the employees contractual rights
- Other Title II, CCR, and miscellaneous regulations that affect the activities of Human Resources.
- Requisition and hiring processes
- Procedures are in place for handling all formal complaints, which is the responsibility of H.R. (i.e. Uniform Complaint, Williams Complaints, Complaints against employees, etc.)

By following these established processes and procedures there have been no grievances from any bargaining unit. Lawsuits relating to employment practices have been greatly reduced. Compliance with federal, state and district regulations and requirements can be complicated and frustrating for everyone involved. The department will explore ways to streamline these reporting and compliance procedures and work to develop simplified guidance and information for employees and parents.

**The School Services report criticized the department for not maintaining an up-to-date copy of the district's collective bargaining agreements.**

**We concur in part.** The past practice has been to enter in tentative agreements with our labor organizations as needed during the life of the contract as unforeseen issues arise. In the case of the PVTA agreement, we are currently working with the union's leaders to incorporate all of the TAs into a single document for printing and circulation. With respect to the contract with CSEA for classified employees, the last contract was indeed negotiated in 2003, but the parties took a three-year extension forward to the school board so that the current agreement is in effect until 2006. Salaries and benefits were negotiated for a two-year period when that agreement was initially signed. The cover of the CSEA agreement will reflect the extension and be circulated.

**The School Services report complained that Human Resources maintained as many as seven separate databases that did not connect and correlate to each other. Further, the report suggested that HR staff undergo extensive training in the new CECC computer software system to facilitate a transition away from these databases.**

**We disagree because we are already in process of undergoing training.** Creation of an effective centralized, integrated computer system is a problem that all departments in the district have been working to achieve. Over the past year, the Human Resources staff has actively participated in over five hundred (500) hours of CECC training and data input. The conversion has greatly impacted the HR Department. However, the entire department

is working in partnership with finance and payroll to develop a single database to ensure the accuracy and efficiency of all personnel information and communication with Business Services. The HR piece of the CECC conversion was first and primary so that all other applications (i.e. payroll) were dependent on the input and information. HR continues to work with both finance and payroll to audit and finalize the conversion of all employee data. The initial investigation and discussions around converting to a single database system was a collaborative effort between HR, payroll and finance. Informational meetings were held and a plan for implementation was established. The focus of both departments has been to get this system up and running and eliminate or at least reduce duplication of work. The report only gave scant mention or credit for these extensive efforts to bring CECC on-line successfully.

**The School Services report criticized the department for poor customer service, coordination and communication with other departments and recommended training and accountability in the evaluation process.**

**We disagree in part.** Customer service and coordination are very high priorities in HR and we make efforts within time and resource limitations to make sure that our staff recognize and demonstrate good customer relations practices.

HR continues to partner with payroll, purchasing and finance to review and develop procedures around paper/information flow regarding employment, payroll, purchasing and budget. There are frequent interactions to discuss what's working and what's not. At least once a year, HR, payroll, and finance partner to provide an in-depth training for all site support staff engaged in the processing of employment, purchasing, or ordering information. A part of the preparation and follow-up to the training is to request from sites "what's working and what's not" from their perspective. Those suggestions are incorporated into the process. Additionally, we have developed specific check-list procedures that are used as tools in all certificated and classified employee recruiting situations.

The department has engaged in other coordination and training activities including:

- Working in partnership with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education and APQC, an organization nationally renowned for their use of surveys focusing on area of customer service. Jointly, districts in the county will use the surveys to create and measure local and national benchmarks for service and best practices against which PVUSD can be compared.
- Focusing on-going professional development for HR staff on customer relations and team-building as part of the Continuous Improvement Model. HR just completed Phase I of such training with the Transportation Department with plans for a follow-up training in the Spring. An outside expert was engaged to facilitate and lead the training in partnership with HR admin. HR is currently developing a timeline for specific training opportunities focusing on customer service for the HR department which can then offered to other district departments throughout the year.
- Conducting joint team building and problem solving activities with Finance and Payroll mid-way into the CECC conversion process. A part this activity focused on customer service for both departments.

## ► MIGRANT EDUCATION

Though Migrant Education was not specifically cited in the departmental review section of the School Services report, the consultant's various references and conclusions can be clustered into three general areas: staffing, technology, and food services. Interviews of Migrant Education staff or parents conducted by School Services did not address the conclusions reached in the report regarding Migrant Education. Thus, the conclusions in the report were gathered without any meaningful input from the Migrant Education Program. The report was shared and discussed with the Executive Council of the Migrant Parent Advisory Committee and their comments are reflected in this response.

**The most prominent conclusion regarding Migrant Education is the report's assertion that Migrant Education staff is over-represented in PVUSD in comparison to surveyed districts. Migrant Education staffing at the district office level was seen as significantly higher than in the compared districts.**

**We disagree.** The report does not mention some important information about the comparison districts or the unique operation of migrant education in Pajaro Valley USD.

**Distinctions in Structure**

Manteca, Folsom, Coachella Valley, Madera, and Fairfield-Suisun Unified School Districts each function within a Migrant Region located at the County Office. Many of the administrative services required of a region are not located at these school districts and thus would not be documented in the survey. The Migrant Education Program of PVUSD is a direct-funded region, which means that it is a region in itself and not assigned to a county regional program. The report briefly acknowledges these structural distinctions between PVUSD and the comparison districts without defining the fiscal and personnel demands that this creates for PVUSD. In other words, the report identified PVUSD as having a higher than usual amount of staff without explaining the unique conditions that contribute to that factor.

**Distinctions in Population**

Pajaro Valley USD serves nearly five times the number of migrant students than any one of the comparison school districts. With an enrollment of 14,500 students, PVUSD has more migrant students than all of the other surveyed districts combined by over 150%. It is for this reason that comparisons of the number of Migrant Education staff within these districts to the staff of the Migrant Education Program within PVUSD are unreliable and misleading.

A more valid comparison is to contrast the program within PVUSD to other regional programs. This comparison reveals that of the regions that oversee the districts in this survey, the regional program within PVUSD (Region 11) has the lowest number of staff assigned to the regional office. This highlights the program’s focus to maximize the number of migrant staff working at school sites.

	Migrant Students	Project Coordinators	Administrators	Clerical Staff	Recruiters	Total Staff	Ratio: Region staff to students	Comparison to PVUSD
Region 23	20,000	4	6	4	11	25	0.00055	159.50%
Region 7	5,729	2	1	5	3	11	0.000524	151.86%
Region 2	31,000	41	16	13	14	84	0.000452	130.97%
Region 3	19,722	7	7	4	18	36	0.000913	264.68%
Region 11 (PVUSD)	14,500	7	1	6	5	19	0.000345	100.00%

**The School Services report also concludes that the Migrant Education Program is duplicating technology services and that at least one employee position working on the Migrant Education database could be transferred to Technology.**

**We disagree.** This conclusion of the consultants is unsubstantiated. The Archive/CSD system developed by the Migrant Education program is not duplicative of the SASI XP system. In fact, the system was developed to compensate for the shortcomings of the SASI XP system. There is no other system in PVUSD that does what the CSD/Archive system does – it is therefore not duplicative of any other effort.

Since Migrant Education staff is paid from categorical funds, the recommendation of transferring a staff member from the Migrant Education department to the Technology department seems to be inconsistent with the goal of reducing General Fund expenditures. We recognize the need and the benefits of articulating and collaborating with the Technology department. The Migrant Education Program continues to work with the Matrix committee which has been tasked by the Superintendent to guide the development of technology solutions for our schools. The Migrant Education Program will continue to provide leadership in the use of data and technology for the support of students throughout the district.

**The report concludes that articulation with Food Services would be of benefit to the department and that regular communication and meetings should occur between the departments.**

**We disagree because we are already doing this.** As a result of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265), the Migrant Education Program has been working closely with the Food Services department. The Migrant Education Program provides weekly updates of qualifying Migrant students to ensure their qualification for Free and Reduced Lunch without the need of application completion by qualifying families. This has facilitated student enrollment and reduced time and financial expenditures.

The Migrant Education Program will continue to work with the Food Services department and furnish them with any information they require to make their services more efficient. We hope to have ongoing meetings to discuss the nutrition needs and attendance patterns of migrant students and their effect on food services

## ► CONSTRUCTION/FACILITIES

**The report concluded that the Construction Department is understaffed.**

**We concur.** The lack of a Director has obviously placed a significant additional workload on the Associate Superintendent and the Planning Supervisor. This is especially due to having as much as \$150 million worth of construction or modernization projects underway at the same time. The workload is decreasing slightly with the completion of some of the projects, but there will be a steady level of work for the next several years until the current construction and bond projects are completed. The report suggests an addition of a technical level staff, but that is not where the biggest need is located. A director or high level administrator will be needed if the Associate Superintendent is to be relieved of that duty.

## ► TECHNOLOGY

**The School Services report outlined deep concerns about the status of technology implementation and use within the Pajaro Valley USD central office and school sites. Specifically, issues relating to staffing, infrastructure, leadership, training and communication were highlighted as needing improvement.**

**We concur.** The technology operations of the school district are undergoing a thorough review by the administration. The Technology Director retired on December 31, 2004. This creates an opportunity in the recruiting and hiring of a new Technology Director to identify someone with the expertise, vision and communication skills to address many of the concerns mentioned in the School Services report. There are, however, many roadblocks that stand in the way of adequately funding and managing the accelerating needs of our district relating to technology and computer infrastructure.

Working with the Superintendent, the Human Resources Department prepared a survey of the cabinet to gather information about the district's needs related to technology, and try to identify the priorities of the Zones and district leadership. The suggestions are being incorporated into the job description and will become part of the recruitment expectations. One of the first expectations of a new Technology Director will be to review and modify, if needed, the district's Technology Plan.

Since the interviews and analysis by School Services several corrective and planned steps have already been taken by the administration. For example, coordination between Construction, Maintenance and Technology is being addressed with regular meetings. Additionally, Duncan Holbert School, which was not connected to the internet and e-mail, has now been fully wired.

We were disappointed that the report's recommendations on infrastructure and work station replacement did not address any of the technical aspects of our system or reflect the extensive state-of-the-art infrastructure which has already been implemented with heavy dependence on E-rate funding.

The implementation of the CECC system for financial, purchasing, payroll and HR operations was discussed with the consultants at a point when we were in the initial stages of implementation. We have addressed most of their concerns and comments through the normal implementation of the system. Their recommendation that we eliminate the use of our current budget system for the sake of compatibility would, in our opinion, produce less accurate and reliable financial data using the CECC budget system.

The consultants do not appear to be familiar with SASI. They indicated that SASI was only used by some districts when in fact it has the largest market share of any system in California for student information processing. Their understanding of system integration does not match ours nor does it reflect our efforts to integrate our systems district-wide. Again they accurately reflect that we need additional personnel in this department and need better coordination with the data bases maintained by other departments.

The section on staff training centered on the use and operation of the financial and student management systems. We conducted extensive training on the new CECC system in the course of implementation. We have also continued and expanded our training of school site office staff on the use and operation of the various fiscal and data functions and procedures for accomplishing most common tasks. Our communication with school sites has continued to improve as we concentrate on providing accurate and timely information to sites.

## ► CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

**The consultants recognized that the district was making significant strides in the area of student achievement and credited the superintendent with maintaining a strong focus of the district administration on student achievement and learning. However, the School Services study report favored retaining the Director of Curriculum position or even upgrading it an Assistant Superintendent level. In addition, they cited some examples of textbook usage that differed between Zones and left the implication that district-wide consistency was a problem.**

**We disagree.** The consultants reflected a bias toward a traditional approach toward C&I by having centralized control over the instructional program that is common in most school districts. After careful thought, PVUSD opted instead for a decentralized approach relying instead on the Zone Superintendents to bring educational program operations and decision-making closer to the school sites. We believe the consultants did not adequately appreciate the important role that these three administrators play in guiding the district's learning program.

In reference to curriculum and instruction, the PVUSD Zone Assistant Superintendents:

- Focus on student achievement and yearly academic progress
  - Review performance data (API, AYP, CELDT, High School Exit exam, etc.) to monitor student progress
  - Work with site's and stakeholders to develop recommendations to increase student achievement
  - Supervise and coordinate district and site instructional programs to ensure effectiveness
- Ensure implementation of California Grade Level Standards
  - Observe and monitor instructional program by regular site and classroom visits
  - Work with District level directors and coordinators to facilitate and coordinate appropriate services
  - Facilitate curriculum development, evaluation implementation including textbook adoptions, staff development, grant writing, etc.
- Assist schools in the evaluation process of certificated and classified staff to monitor their effectiveness in implementing the instructional program
  - Involved in district, site, and grade level meetings to promote the use of effective strategies that support the instructional program
  - Review with parents the progress of the site which communicates the progress of students in meeting the CA Standards.
  - Coordinate Zone Council meetings that focus on curriculum and instruction

This year, in order to better coordinate district-wide instructional services, the Curriculum and Instruction and Federal and State Programs Departments merged. The roles and responsibilities of Federal and State Programs include the implementation and evaluation of Title 1 Programs, Programs for English Learners, all IIUSP, HPSG, CSR, and Reading First Grants, as well as the administration of other grants to the district. The Federal and State Programs Director works closely with the Assistant Superintendents to coordinate instructional services district-wide. So that all previous functions, roles and responsibilities of the Curriculum and Instruction Department continue to be addressed, an Assistant Director of Federal and State Programs was hired to support the delivery of

instructional services. The Assistant Director serves as liaison with the Zones and coordinates the administration of district-wide programs. A coordinator of Professional and Community Development was hired to coordinate staff development and parent involvement services at Comprehensive School Reform Grant schools and the district. Additionally, a coordinating group comprised of the superintendent, Zone Assistant Superintendents, Migrant Education Director, Extended Learning Director, and the State & federal Programs Director meet regularly to bridge communication gaps and ensure that there is uniform implementation of the district's learning programs and objectives.

Specific curriculum projects addressed through Federal and State Programs this year are:

- ▶ Full implementation of district adopted H/M Language Arts through the Reading First Grant, which includes the hiring and training of a coordinator and a coach at each of the nine RF schools, and training all K-3 teachers in the AB 466 H/M Language Arts Program.
  - Providing a range of professional development, including but not limited to:
  - ELD Training through the Site Leader Network monthly meetings
  - District-wide SBC Day training on lesson development based on ADEPT testing information
  - Other AB 466 Trainings on the state/district adopted High Point, McDougell/Littell and Mathematics Curriculum
  - Our goal is to develop an annual district-wide professional development calendar each Spring
- ▶ Co-chair curriculum committees with Assistant Superintendents on:
  - Reading Assessment Committee
  - Writing Assessment Committee
  - Kindergarten Job Alike
- ▶ Support for schools in Program Improvement, and an array of other support services including but not limited to:
  - Textbook adoptions and reordering. Currently the department is working with a committee to review ELD Supplemental Materials for purchase through the SB 1113 funds.
  - Coordinate the Music Programs
  - Instructional technology support

To facilitate better coordination and information sharing, we are reinstating the Curriculum Council, beginning in March. Currently the district has a Curriculum Cabinet in place that is comprised on district administrators and support teachers. It is important to include site input, and most importantly the teacher leader voice, in all matters of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Additionally, the district administration has implemented the School Scans program whereby top cabinet members, union representatives, community leaders and trustees conduct site visits as a team to observe classroom instruction firsthand. The teams provide written feedback to the schools reflecting on whether best practices are in place, classroom instruction is achieving the district goals and curriculum expectations, and standards are being met. This activity is viewed not so much as a compliance review, but as a capacity building program that advances the administration's objective of Building Professional Learning Communities.

The reorganization of Curriculum and Instruction and the State & Federal Programs units is still taking shape and we feel it is premature to recommend scrapping it for a more traditional and more remote organizational structure.

## ▶ **ADULT EDUCATION**

**The general tone of the report relating to adult education is positive and there were no recommendations listed for adult education.**

However, the references in the report relating to adult education indicate a lack of understanding about the role and structure of adult education programs. Adult education is funded differently and is not truly a district level program; it is treated like a school site by the state Department of Education.

There are several factors and trends that affect the organization and delivery of adult education programs in PVUSD. They include:

**Growth:** The program has experienced dramatic growth in recent years. In three years the program has grown over 40%. The program has run with a balanced budget. The program has been recognized by the CDE as one of the best in the state.

**New visibility, new respect, new opportunities:** As a result of growth, successful new programs and new collaborations, Adult Education has increased the positive reputation of PVUSD and the opportunities for expanded services especially in English Language Development, Workforce Development and Parent Education and Family Literacy.

**Facilities:** The recently approved plans for an educational center at the Langendorf Building downtown (with the board-approved Certificate of Participation to partially fund the project) has satisfied our program's most pressing facilities needs. We will continue to explore additional space at the Towers site and expanded partnerships with sites such as Cabrillo College.

**Administrative time to connect with sites and programs, evaluate instruction:** Since the study last fall, two we have restored a half-time Assistant Director and half-time Deputy Director to assist the Director with evaluation and monitoring of programs and to meet the required supervisory ratios mandated by the CDE Compliance Review. Administrative staff is in classrooms on a regular basis with negotiated evaluation processes fully implemented (dealing with over 40 sites and 30 full-time, 110 part-time instructors).

**Support staff:** The challenge of supporting a growing program without a commensurate growth of staff remains. Funding for ADA programs was actually deficiated and federal funds were less than the expected totals. This precludes the adding of support staff. The school has pursued both staff development and a re-organized structure of roles and responsibilities to increase the efficiency of the support staff.

**Funding:** The program continues to seek additional funding through grants either through state and federal programs or additional sources. The school doubled the "pay point" benchmarks for the current fiscal year. Continued articulation with Cabrillo College, the Workforce Investment Board and regional workforce initiatives have opened opportunities for funding beyond current sources and levels. Contract education grows as a promising new avenue for funding.

**Size of fee-based program:** Growing community education remains a goal for the program. New ideas for offerings to attract "customers" are welcomed and new classes have been received well: guitar, using real estate equity for investments, and financial planning for seniors are examples of recent successful offerings. Even more promising is a "contract-ed" program which enables us to customize training on a fee-for-service basis. This school year we have designed and delivered multiple trainings for the City of Watsonville, Driscoll's Berries, the Career Center, Home Depot, Pajaro Community Development Corporation and Martinelli's.