

2.0 DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

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In this chapter the findings and recommendations for the overall organization of Bath County Public Schools (BCPS) are presented. The five major sections of the chapter include:

- 2.1 Introduction and Legal Foundation
- 2.2 School Board Governance
- 2.3 Policies and Procedures
- 2.4 Legal Services
- 2.5 Organization and Management
 - 2.5.1 Division Organization
 - 2.5.2 Decision Making, Communications, Planning, and Accountability
 - 2.5.3 Public Information
 - 2.5.4 School Organization and Management

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Bath County Public Schools is led and managed by a superintendent who assumed the position in July 1999. Recommendations contained in this chapter are essentially focused on issues relating to the relationships with the County Board of Supervisors, shared services, and district communications. Notable findings include:

- Bath County School Board meets all minimum Commonwealth school administrative staffing criteria as set forth in the revised Standards of Quality.
- BCPS School Board, superintendent, administration, and staff develop a comprehensive meeting agenda information packet that is provided members of the school board.
- BCPS has a user-friendly policy manual and related forms and procedures are placed on the division's intranet site.
- BCPS School Board and administration have done a good job of keeping the cost of legal services expenses low.

Among the recommendations are the following key suggestions that should assist the superintendent and school board as they continue to consider all aspects of improving the school division:

- Implement a full school board member development program.
- Establish two additional regular school board committees including board evaluation and superintendent evaluation and evaluate the number of meetings held each year.
- Appoint a community-based task force charged with establishing with the Bath County Board of Supervisors and BCPS School Board

a collaboratively developed Memorandum of Agreement for shared services and coordinate its implementation.

- Establish a written school board approved contract for legal services and assess those services annually.
- Clarify the organizational chart to more clearly reflect the structure of the organization.
- Include community involvement in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Implement recommended strategies to improve communications within BCPS and monitor organizational health.

2.1 Introduction and Legal Foundation

Conditions in Bath County Public Schools of importance to this review include:

- Significant tension between the school board and board of supervisors;
- Issues related to board of supervisors' budget oversight; and
- Long-term cost of education.

Interviews with division administrative staff raised a number of challenges facing the division. Among these challenges were the fiscal dependencies of the division on external funding, the significant per-student cost increases, and the ever-changing demands of technology. Meanwhile, the board of supervisors and their representatives voiced concerns over increasing costs of education, financing facilities and utilities in the county, and lack of certainty as to whether government services are organized in the most cost-effective manner.

BCPS is fiscally dependent upon the Bath County Board of Supervisors since Commonwealth of Virginia, Code of Virginia, Title 22.1, and other controlling regulations assign final budget approval and appropriations authority to the supervisors.

The superintendent, administrative staff, school board members, and county representatives stated in interviews with MGT that the most significant challenge is overcoming barriers to effective relationships and communications between the governing bodies, and developing and funding programs and the initiatives related to improving student performance including maintaining full accreditation of all schools, establishing division-wide accreditation, and meeting the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation.

2.2 School Board Governance

The educational system in Bath County Public Schools is the result of Commonwealth of Virginia legislation authorizing the establishment of city and county school divisions. The five-member school board is elected from resident districts for four-year terms.

Exhibit 2-1 provides an overview of the members of the BCPS School Board. The exhibit shows that:

- Experience on the school board ranges from two years to nine years of consecutive service; and
- All five school board member terms expire on the same date.

**EXHIBIT 2-1
BCPS SCHOOL BOARD
FEBRUARY 2006**

NAME	TITLE	DISTRICT	TERM EXPIRES	YEARS OF SERVICE AS OF END OF APRIL 2006	OCCUPATION
Kaye May	Chair	Millboro	12/31/07	2	Bookkeeper
Eddie Ryder	Vice Chair	Cedar Creek	12/31/07	13	Self-Employed
Urban Cleek		Warm Springs	12/31/07	2	Retired Principal
Sandra Hicklin		Williamsville	12/31/07	2	Retired Teacher
Sarah Redington		Hot Springs	12/31/07	6	Former Teacher

Source: BCPS superintendent's Office and the Deputy Clerk of the Board, April 2006.

* Mr. Ryder's total number of years of service is 13, although they are not consecutive.

Regular school board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month and are held at the Administrative Center facility in an appropriate meeting room that easily accommodates the public. At the time of the on-site visit, regular meeting locations, dates, and times were posted on the BCPS Intranet site and advertised as required by law. Regular open meetings are held at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted. The public is welcome to attend all regular meetings and citizens wishing to address the school board are provided an opportunity to do so.

In addition to regular meetings, the school board holds closed meetings for certain purposes. Closed meetings may include:

- discussion of individual personnel;
- student discipline hearings;
- negotiations of material terms for purchase of property or a specific contract for employment;
- attorney-client privilege as it relates to litigation preparation and execution; and
- other matters as permitted under Commonwealth of Virginia law.

Minutes of all regular meetings are recorded and transcribed by the board deputy clerk and approved by the school board at the next regular meeting. Approved minutes are then published on the Intranet site. Minutes are not maintained for closed meetings; rather, the school board deputy clerk prepares a record of motions and related votes.

Minutes and supplementary data are stored in secured cabinets in a non-fire rated hallway.

FINDING

The school board meeting agenda is comprehensive and provides for public, administrative, and board member input. Approximately two weeks prior to the school board meeting the superintendent's secretary begins developing the agenda in collaboration with division staff, compiling all information and develops a tentative agenda to be provided the superintendent and the school board chair for review, revision, and final approval. When the agenda is approved and all information organized into a board packet, the superintendent's secretary notifies board members that their packets are ready. Then, the agenda and packets are hand delivered to the board members.

The regular school board meeting agenda is typically organized into the following sections:

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Approve or Add to Agenda
- Closed Session (if required)
- Certification of Closed Meeting
- Public Comments
- Approval of Minutes
- Approval of Claims
- Reports
- Student Representative Issues
- Superintendent's Report
- Action Items
- Information Items
- Items for Board Members/Correspondence
- Items by Board Members
- Public Comments
- Adjournment

Interviews with school board members show satisfaction with the information provided for each meeting and the availability of additional information if needed. MGT's review of meeting documents confirms this assertion.

On the Thursday prior to the Monday meeting, the agenda is posted on the BCPS Intranet site for viewing and made available to the media and other concerned parties.

COMMENDATION

The Bath County Public Schools School Board, superintendent, administration, and staff are commended for developing a comprehensive meeting agenda information packet.

FINDING

The BCPS School Board meeting agenda and approved meeting minutes are posted on the division's Intranet site, which provides a convenient way to view topics for consideration by the school board; however, at the time of the on-site visit, the same information was not posted on the Internet site.

Since this information is not on the Web site that is accessible by the general public a valuable communication link to certain elements of the population is lacking.

Many districts or divisions now use the Web as an additional means of communication to the citizens.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-1:

Post school board agendas and approved minutes on the Internet.

Implementing this recommendation should result in publishing the school board agendas and approved minutes on the on the Internet (public Web site) and should provide an important information and communication link to the public.

Placing meeting agenda and minutes on school division or district's Web sites is now a common practice among school systems and other governmental bodies. Subsequent to MGT's on-site review, BCPS began posting board agendas and minutes on the division's Internet site.

FISCAL IMPACT

Since this recommendation has been implemented, there is no need for additional fiscal resources.

FINDING

Board Policy BHB addresses school board members in-service activities. The policy reflects the requirements of Commonwealth of Virginia code and supports active member involvement in training activities; however, records of attendance do not reflect full board involvement in training activities.

Some board members and the superintendent are involved in training and conferences offered by the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) and other activities. Records of the 2005-06 school year show that all except one member have been involved in related activity during this period.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-2:

Develop and implement a full school board member in-service development program.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in the development of a comprehensive local school board member development program that, minimally, should cover the following topics:

- the role of the board member as reflected in Commonwealth of Virginia law and by best practices. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) and VSBA can provide valuable information for this portion of the training;
- development of strategies designed to refine relationships with other governmental bodies;
- policy development;
- effective community and media relations;
- use of technology in carrying out board responsibilities;
- effective committee development and work;
- a review of the division's planning documents and related processes for their development/updating;
- a review of the division's budget and associated development and adoption time-lines; and
- other local items that are deemed important to include.

The program should be implemented over a scheduled series of meetings allowing the participants to assimilate information in an orderly and systematic fashion in order to avoid overloading participants with too much information at any one session.

A Board Development Program can be developed in conjunction with VSBA. An additional resource for board development can be secured from NSBA.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of this recommendation cannot be estimated until the program is designed and decisions are made as to where training services are to be obtained and delivered.

FINDING

MGT’s review of records and interviews with division personnel during the on-site visit revealed that each member of the school board has a committee responsibility. Exhibit 2-2 shows that:

- all school board members have at least one committee assignment;
- the number of meetings required for school board members ranges from four to six or more meetings a year or on an “as needed” basis; and
- there are total of six standing school board committees and one ad hoc committee (School Safety Audit)

Membership by school board members on the various committees is voluntary and typically is based on members’ interest. Staff members with the responsibility of preparing information for the committee meetings report the results of the meetings to the BCPS School Board. When combined with monthly regular school board meetings and other special meetings, board members are expected to be in meetings from 24 to 48 or more times during a year.

**EXHIBIT 2-2
BCPS SCHOOL BOARD
COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR**

COMMITTEES	MEMBERS	FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS
Career and Technical Education	Eddie Ryder	As needed
Gifted Education	Kaye May	Meets four times a year
School Health Advisory	Sarah Redington	Meets six times a year
Special Education Advisory	Sarah Redington	Meets five times a year
Technology Advisory	Kay Hicklin	As needed
Calendar	Jake Cleek	Meets four times a year
School Safety Audit	Kay Hicklin	As needed

Source: BCPS Office of the School Board, 2006.

During interviews with school board members, it was apparent that several members were not pleased with the infrequency of superintendent evaluations. Also, the school board had not done its annual evaluation of board performance in the discharge of duties that they were elected to perform even though it is their policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-3:

Create board committees for board evaluation and the superintendent evaluation.

The board has a Policy AFA which indicates that the school board will review its performance annually to ensure its proper discharge of responsibilities to the community. A school board committee could serve as a reminder of this very important function and provide the leadership in the development of an evaluation instrument and procedures.

The first step in this process should include the development and adoption of a policy to govern the establishment and operation of each committee. This policy should address the following areas:

- committee membership, composition, numbers, and length of terms;
- responsibilities for school board members;
- guidelines for any community members who may be involved;
- scope of responsibilities; and
- *administrative support.

* It is to be understood that the superintendent can be involved at any time.

The responsibilities for the school board should include:

- selecting school board membership;
- establishing the committee work plan and providing policy guidelines for meeting agendas that are developed in concert with the administration;
- determining committee chairs who will facilitate the meetings;
- permitting any school board member to attend any committee meeting (however, if more than two are to be present the meeting must be properly advertised); and
- ensuring that committee chairs make certain that all board members and other impacted parties are apprised of committee activity.

Guidelines for community members who may be asked to participate in committee work should include:

- experienced, open-minded, and interested in topics that come before the specific committee;
- available to attend at least three-quarters of the scheduled meetings;
- willing to provide input and offer recommendations to the committee for the full school board review and decision; and
- able to attend an orientation for serving on committees.

The staff liaison should be required to:

- ensure that appropriate training is provided to all committee members and assigned staff;
- record minutes, develop executive summaries of meetings, and provide for distribution to committee members and other School board members and impacted parties promptly following meetings;
- work with committee chair(s) to form committee agenda; and

- provide materials to the committee for review, approval, or work/study.

Once appointed, the committee should develop the board self-evaluation process and form(s). The first series of self-evaluation should include an assessment of the number and duration of meeting held during the year.

It is recommended that all committee participants undergo specific training as they assume their roles. The Facilitative Leadership model is one that can provide special skills in leading and becoming constructive partners in important, and often controversial, events. This training can provide valuable tools for the constructive management of meetings and participants' interactions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing personnel. Training of all committee members and assigned liaison staff can be provided by school district leadership.

FINDING

The current working relationship between the Bath County Board of Supervisors and the Bath County School Board is experiencing difficulties and has for several years. As a result, benefiting from shared services has not been realized.

Neither BCPS nor the county have been able to realize the benefits of shared services. Input from the community, the on-site visit, and interviews with members of the board of supervisors and the school board indicate that there is continual conflict and dissention between the two entities. Funding from the board of supervisors is problematic every year, and this ongoing problem is a frequent feature in the local newspapers.

The lack of a memorandum of agreement or similar document has allowed each entity to focus on any issue whether it is best for both or not. Many similar organizations have a common document, or agreement, which keeps them focused on what is best for each organization. It also allows them to focus on issues, not personalities.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-4:

Appoint a community-based task force charged with coordinating with the Bath County Board of Supervisors and BCPS School Board to collaboratively develop a memorandum of agreement for shared services.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in the appointment of a community-based task force charged with the drafting of a memorandum of agreement or resolution to be jointly adopted for the purpose of guiding the development and assessment of joint services between BCPS and the board of supervisors.

This process can bring the two boards closer together and result in developing important common ground for agreeing on actions beneficial to all. Accomplishing this should be

an important step in resolving conflict and building mutual respect for the responsibilities each is assigned by Commonwealth of Virginia law.

The resolution should place responsibility for developing recommendations for shared services with the task force. This task force then should play a major role in overseeing coordination of the resolution's implementation. (Shared services could be formalizing the recreation department's usage of the elementary school.)

MGT consultants suggest the following protocols for the appointment of members to this task force:

- A total of nine voting members only two of whom may be members of any locally elected body, none employed by either the board of supervisors or the school board, and none employed by any major supplier of goods or services to either the board of supervisors or BCPS;
- Two appointed by the board of supervisors;
- Two appointed by the school board;
- One each, member of the board of supervisors and school board; and
- Three members appointed by the Board of Directors of the local Chamber of Commerce.

The county manager and the superintendent of schools are to serve as administrative liaisons to the task force, providing such information as is necessary to carrying out their assignments. Upon adoption of a resolution or memorandum of agreement, the task force should be reconvened to fulfill its mission of establishing recommendations on shared services. The types of services that should be examined could include the following:

- building and grounds maintenance
- warehousing
- legal services
- capital projects management
- grounds services
- courier and mail services
- technology applications
- records management
- risk management including related training
- staff development
- surplus property/storage/disposal
- fleet maintenance
- workers' compensation
- purchasing/procurement
- recreation
- human resources, and
- possibly others

Such a memorandum of agreement should provide for:

- the authority to the task force to make recommendations on shared services and coordinate the implementation of all aspects of the resolution or memorandum of agreement;
- a protocol for the review of potential shared services including team member selection, community representation, requirements to identify all pros and cons (factors supporting and constraining factors), and process for resolving conflict;
- the development of a realistic plan of action with thoroughly developed procedures for implementation and management of shared services;
- a process for resolving disputes, by an outside neutral party, that may arise during the implementation of a shared service and during the term of its existence;
- an expressed understanding of the responsible coordinating agency and department within the assigned agency;
- a specific provision for funding and other needed resources;
- requirements for evaluation of those shared services that are developed including time-lines and benchmarks for assessment; and
- other considerations as deemed necessary.

The concept of involving local business representatives along with county and division personnel has been employed as one possible means of ensuring the successful development of needed agreements to guide shared services development. The development and sign-off should create a spirit of cooperation for saving money and improve the political tension between the board of supervisors and board.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources and at no additional cost to the Division.

FINDING

BCPS School Board meeting records are not maintained in a fire, water, disaster protected storage area and, consequently, could be easily destroyed.

Important school board records of meetings and supporting (supplemental minutes) are prepared by the deputy school board clerk and placed in a regular storage hallway that is not fire rated and no other backup copy of important proceedings is maintained in any other medium and safeguarded from potential disasters (tornadoes, floods, etc.), however, for about fifteen years the superintendent's secretary and deputy school board

clerk have been maintaining electronic copies of agendas and agenda information on a computer, but no backup data are kept in secured storage.

Fire or severe weather could result in the loss of essential records. Best practices suggest that duplicates of valuable records should be kept off premises in safe storage or maintained in fire-rated vaults or cabinets on premises.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-5:

Provide fire-rate storage for valuable BCPS School Board meeting records.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in purchasing one four-drawer, fire-rated lockable storage file cabinet. This cabinet should be used to store old records that have not yet been submitted to the state archives for permanent storage. This should ensure that important documents would not be lost in the event of a severe catastrophe.

Current board agenda and minutes and other records that are now stored on the hard drive of the computer can be duplicated onto CD ROMs. The CDs could then be conveniently stored in a fire-rated small secured safe-box or placed in a bank safe deposit box or similar secure location.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished by purchasing one four-drawer, fire-rated lockable storage file cabinet and one small, lockable fire-rated safe-box. Office suppliers have file drawers meeting these requirements for approximately \$1,300 and stores such as Wal-Mart offer safe-box that could easily contain over 100 CDs at less than \$70. The total one-time cost for this implementation of this recommendation could be \$1,370.

Recommendation	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Purchase One Four-Drawer, Fire-Rated Lockable Storage File Cabinet	(\$1,300)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Purchase One Small, Lockable Fire-Rated Safe-Box	(\$70)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	(\$1,370)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

2.3 Policies and Procedures

The development of policy and procedures constitutes the means by which an organization can communicate expectations to its constituents. In addition, adopting policy and establishing related procedures provide the mechanism for:

- establishing the school board's expectations and what may be expected from the board;
- keeping the school board and the administration out of trouble;
- establishing an essential division between policy making and administration roles;
- creating guidelines within which people operate;
- providing reasonable assurances of consistency and continuity in decisions;
- providing legal basis for the allocation of funds, facilities, and other resources;
- facilitating and guiding the orientation of the school board members and employees; and
- acquainting the public with, and encouraging citizen involvement within, structured guidelines.

Policy and procedures, therefore, reveal the philosophy and position of the school board and should be stated clearly enough to provide for executive or staff direction.

Commonwealth of Virginia law (22.1-253.13:7) contains specific provisions governing school board policy. The law requires that policies be up-to-date and reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed. The policies must address the following eight overall areas:

- a system of two-way communication between employees and the local school board and its administrative staff;
- the selection and evaluation of all instructional materials purchased by the division, with clear procedures for handling challenged controversial materials;
- standards of student conduct and attendance, and related enforcement procedures;
- school-community communications and involvement;
- guidelines to encourage parents to provide instructional assistance to their children;
- information about procedures for addressing school division concerns with defined recourse for parents;
- a cooperatively-developed procedure for personnel evaluation; and

- grievance, dismissal procedures, and other procedures as prescribed by the General Assembly and school board.

Each division school and the public library has a copy of the BCPS policy manual. The policy manual has been placed on intranet.

Generally, the board addresses policies as a total group. Policies are presented for adoption and reading at a regular meeting, and then acted upon at the next regular meeting. Rarely are policies adopted at the first reading. Policies are overseen and managed in the office of the Director of Instruction and Personnel by the secretary assigned to that office. The official policy manual is located in the superintendent's office.

The policies have been codified using the NSBA model with specific model policy language procured from VSBA. The policy manual is composed of 12 chapters or major classifications denoted as sections with each section containing a detailed table of contents. Individual policies are coded within these A-L sections (chapters). The manual contains alphabetical subject and topical indices in the front of the document following an overall table of contents.

Exhibit 2-3 presents the BCPS policy manual classifications (chapters), titles, and policy codes.

**EXHIBIT 2-3
BATH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL BOARD
ORGANIZATION OF POLICY HANDBOOK**

CLASSIFICATION	SECTION TITLES	POLICY CODES
	Table of Contents	n/a
	Topical Index	n/a
	Code Finder Index	n/a
A	Foundations and Basic Commitments	AA - AFA
B	School Board Governance and Operations	BB - BHE
C	General School Administration	CA - CMA
D	Fiscal Management	DA - DO
E	Support Services	EA - ET
F	Facilities Development	FA - FG
G	Personnel	GA - GDQ
H*	Negotiations	None
I	Instructional Program	IA - INDC
J	Students	JB - JP
K	School-Community Relations	KA - KQ
L	Education Agency Relations	LA - LI

Source: BCPS School Board Policy Manual, February 2006.

* The Supreme Court of Virginia has stated that neither Virginia constitution or statutory authority exists for school boards to enter into collective bargaining agreements with their employees.

Exhibit 2-4 shows the revision status of BCPS School Board policies. As can be seen, all provisions in the policy manual have been reviewed or adopted within the required time limits of Commonwealth law. However, during 2006-07, the process of review will have to begin a new cycle commencing with those reviewed or adopted in the 2001-02 era.

FINDING

The school board has a contract with VSBA for a policy updating service designed to assist the division in maintaining a current manual in compliance with Commonwealth of Virginia law at a very economical cost.

The annual cost for this update service is \$1,480. This compares with outsource services fees that range from a low of \$4,000 to as high as \$12,000 or more annually.

COMMENDATION

The BCPS School Board and administration are commended for approving specific measures designed to ensure a cost-effective method for maintaining a current policy manual.

**EXHIBIT 2-4
REVISION STATUS OF BCPS BOARD POLICIES
APRIL 2006**

CHAPTER	TITLE	NUMBER OF POLICIES EXAMINED	NUMBER OF POLICIES ADOPTED/UPDATED/RESTATED IN:		
			2001-04	2004-05	2005-06
A	Foundations and Basic Commitments	12	3	7	2
B	School Board Governance and Operations	38	27	7	4
C	General School Administration	15	11	3	1
D	Fiscal Management	17	12	3	2
E	Support Services	27	21	6	
F	Facilities Development	5	2	3	
G	Personnel	83	59	12	12
H	Negotiations *	0			
I	Instructional Program	84	58	16	10
J	Students	90	57	26	17
K	School-Community Relations	34	26	6	2
L	Education Agency Relations	16	8	3	5
TOTALS		421	284	82	55

Source: BCPS School Board Policy Manual, February 2006.

* The Supreme Court of Virginia has stated that neither Virginia constitution or statutory authority exists for school boards to enter into collective bargaining agreements with their employees.

FINDING

Bath County Public Schools has placed the policy manual on its Intranet site along with readily accessible forms that are referenced in policy.

MGT’s review of documents found that a total of at least 14 copies of the policy manual are available throughout the division and county consistent with Policy BF, BCPS School Board Policy Manual, which prescribes that hardcopies of the manual shall be available to the parents and public in each school and public library.

Whenever new or revised policies are developed, hard copies of the revisions are printed and distributed to all policy manual holders and placed within the Web site document.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for having a user-friendly policy manual and related forms and procedures placed on the division’s intranet site.

FINDING

School board policies are codified in an alphabetical system as previously noted in Exhibit 2-3. The Commonwealth of Virginia Statute 22.1-253.13:7 provides a variety of policy provisions that the school board must address and include in its policy manual.

Exhibit 2-5 shows samples of required state provisions that are addressed in the updated policy manual along with the specific codes.

**EXHIBIT 2-5
SAMPLE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA REQUIRED POLICY TOPICS
AND RELATED BATH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL BOARD POLICY**

REQUIRED TOPIC	APPLICABLE POLICY
Selection and evaluation of all instructional materials	IM, IIA, IIAA, IIAB
Process for parents to address concerns related to the division	KL, KLB, GBLA
System of two-way communication between employees and school board	BG, GBB, GBD
Cooperatively developed personnel evaluation procedures	GCM, GCN, GDN
Grievance, dismissal, and other procedures	GBM, GBMA, GCDA, GCPD, GDPD
Standards of student conduct and attendance	JED, JFC, JFCB, EEACC
School-community communications and involvement	KA, KC, KD, KG, KM
Guidelines encouraging parents to provide instructional assistance to their children	IGBC, IKA
Procedures for handling challenged and controversial materials	KLB

Source: BCPS School Board Policy Manual, April 2006.

Additionally, federal law and related regulations require that local boards of education include other provisions. Some relate to IDEA, labor standards, *No Child Left Behind*,

Family Medical Leave, and other topics. However, at present, school board members and school division personnel cannot easily identify those policies that are a result of these requirements. If board members or division staff are not specifically familiar with the state, federal or other requirements, they cannot easily refer to the policy manual to see if the particular policy or issue is included.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-6:

Assign an asterisk to school board policies that are required by Commonwealth of Virginia code and other controlling regulations so they can be easily identified.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in placing an asterisk by the letter code of each policy that is required by Commonwealth of Virginia code and other controlling regulations. This designation should enable school board members, central office personnel and school-level employees, as well as other stakeholders to know which policies must be developed and adopted by the school board. Furthermore, this coding system should make it easier for staff to readily identify important provisions that must be kept up-to-date and consistent with all requirements, thus increasing employee efficiency in this process.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and at no additional cost to Bath County Public Schools.

FINDING

A central listing of policy referenced handbooks and other documents is unavailable.

The policy and procedures manual contains a number of references to procedural documents related to policy implementation but it is difficult to obtain these when needed. For example Policy AC references nondiscrimination and could identify related division documents that support the policy; KG identifies a facilities use procedure and use fees document that must be developed by the superintendent and is included in the manual; DJA, purchasing controls; and CF, School Building Administration, references severe weather and disaster plans. To obtain some of these documents a person would have to visit several offices, consuming large quantities of valuable time and effort.

Requirements for student behavior, procedures related to drug testing, and other matters are included in this referencing process. While MGT consultants were able to review some of these documents on-line and in various offices, we were unable to identify a central listing of all such materials and documents. This situation suggests that neither the school board nor various administrators and other employees could, if required, identify and review these documents in an expeditious manner.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-7:

Create a policy provision containing a listing of existing procedural manuals, handbooks, and planning documents and, on the Web site, create a series of hot links from the manual to the cited documents or procedures.

Creating this document should provide BCPS with a compilation of important procedures and operation manuals, handbooks, and other materials. Also, this provision should serve as a valuable tool for the orientation of new school board members as well as new school division personnel. Some school systems have included in their policy manual such a provision within the equivalent Section B, *School Board Governance and Operations*.

This provision may be phrased as follows:

SCHOOL BOARD AND SCHOOL SYSTEM PLANS AND PROCEDURES

The School Board has plans, manuals, handbooks and codes that outline procedures to be followed relative to stated topics. The plans, manuals, handbooks, and codes listed below may be adopted by reference as part of these policies when required by other board provisions, Commonwealth of Virginia code, or other controlling requirements. These include, but are not limited to...

Within this portion of the policy manual, the titles of various documents could be listed. This list should become an important resource for school board members and employees to understand the extent of activity and responsibilities involved in managing a complex organization.

Exhibit 2-5 provides a partial listing of the types of documents often included in such a document. Upon the cyclical review of policies as required by Commonwealth code, the development and adoption of the list of documents and a series of hot links should be created between the policy manual and related documents. This action should result in providing the policy manual user easy access to other related information thus increasing user efficiency by reducing time required to locate needed documents.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be accomplished with existing personnel and at no additional cost to BCPS.

2.4 Legal Services

Throughout the United States, school systems procure legal services either through in-house counsel, with the use of outside counsel for situations for which additional expertise is required, or exclusively with outside firms or attorneys. In the latter situation, some school systems, particularly those in urban areas, can secure the services of a single, large, diversified firm while other systems must depend on more than one firm. Fees for services vary greatly, depending on the locale and the specialization required.

Costs for legal work have increased dramatically over the last three decades due to a number of factors. These factors include due process activity associated with disciplinary proceedings, complicated issues related to special education students, risk management matters, and a variety of other issues. Areas of special education and student disciplinary activity are particularly troublesome and require special legal expertise. These areas are typically complicated by the complexities of federal requirements and the relationship to local and state regulations coupled with the school system's need to maintain an orderly educational environment.

Commonwealth of Virginia code (22.1-82) provides authority for the school board to:

...employ legal counsel to advise it concerning any legal matter or to represent it, any member thereof or any school official in any legal proceeding to which the school board, member or official may be a party, when such proceeding is instituted by or against it or against the member or official by virtue of his actions in connection with his duties as such member or official.

**EXHIBIT 2-5
SAMPLE LIST OF PROCEDURAL, OPERATIONAL, PLANNING
AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Administration

Crisis Management Plan(s)
Emergency Plan
Employee Handbook(s)
Facility Use Fees
Strategic Plan
Staff Development Plan
Safety Plan
General Outline of Revenue and Meal Accountability Procedures
Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) Plan
Capital Project Priority List
Transportation Procedures Manual
Food Service Procedures

Instructional & Student Services

After-School Child Care Program Manual
Code of Student Conduct
Testing Procedures Manual
Alternative Education Plan
Instructional Material Manual
Instructional Technology Plan
Limited-English Proficient LEP Plan
Manual for Admissions and Placement in Special Education Programs
Student Graduation Requirements
School Handbooks
School Health Procedures Manual
School Improvement Plans
Special Programs and Procedures Manual
Student Education Records Manual
Student Services Plan
Truancy Plan

Add other documents that are available

Source: Created by MGT of America, April 2006.

FINDING

Legal services are obtained through private firms and attorneys. Expenditures have been kept to a minimum by limiting the use of services at some school board meetings and with careful management of student hearings, special education protocols, and human resources.

The Exhibit 2-6 shows the expenses as reported to MGT consultants for a three-year period, but not including the last three months of 2005-06.

**EXHIBIT 2-6
LEGAL EXPENSES
2003-06 SCHOOL YEARS**

VENDOR	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06*	TOTAL
Reed Smith	\$490.75	\$1,255.20	\$641.80	\$2,387.75
John Singleton	\$5,850.00	\$2,632.50	\$2,070.00	\$10,552.50
TOTAL	\$6,340.75	\$3,887.70	\$2,711.80	\$12,940.25

Source: BCPS Business Office, April 2006.

* Through 1/6/06

Assuming that 75 percent of the legal costs have been realized for 2005-06 as of the April 2006 accounting, we could reasonably expect costs for 2005-06 to be approximately \$3,615.00 or total \$4.80 per student.

This steady pattern of declining legal expenses is unusual in the current climate of litigious activity. A steady student enrollment pattern over the three years has helped contain the costs, but the efforts of the school board and administration must be commended.

COMMENDATION

The BCPS School Board and administration are commended for containing legal services expenses.

FINDING

The BCPS School Board does not have a written contract with its attorney outlining fees and conditions for routine legal services. Additionally, there is no record of the assessment of services even though personnel and school board members report a high degree of satisfaction with the current providers.

An examination of school board minutes for January 3, 2006 show the approval of the board's attorney, but without any reference to fees or other conditions.

While the costs for legal services are kept to a minimum as reflected in Exhibit 2-8, it is common practice to establish a contract with those attorneys or firms providing services. Periodically, the services should be reviewed and formally assessed by the school board and administration.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-8:

Establish a written BCPS School Board approved contract for legal services and annually assess those services.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in the creation of a standard contract for legal services. Such a contract should include provisions for standard hourly fees for attorney, paralegal, clerical assistance, expenses, and other cost items. Additionally, the types of services to be provided including attendance at board meetings and student hearings, consultations, contract reviews, and other matters should be addressed. The contract should state if on retainer or simple hourly fee basis or combination and provide for a termination clause.

Additionally, the board should establish a cycle for assessment of legal services.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and at no additional cost to Bath County Public Schools.

2.5 Organization and Management

Section 2.5 reviews the BCPS organization, decision making, management, planning and accountability, public information, and school organization and management functions.

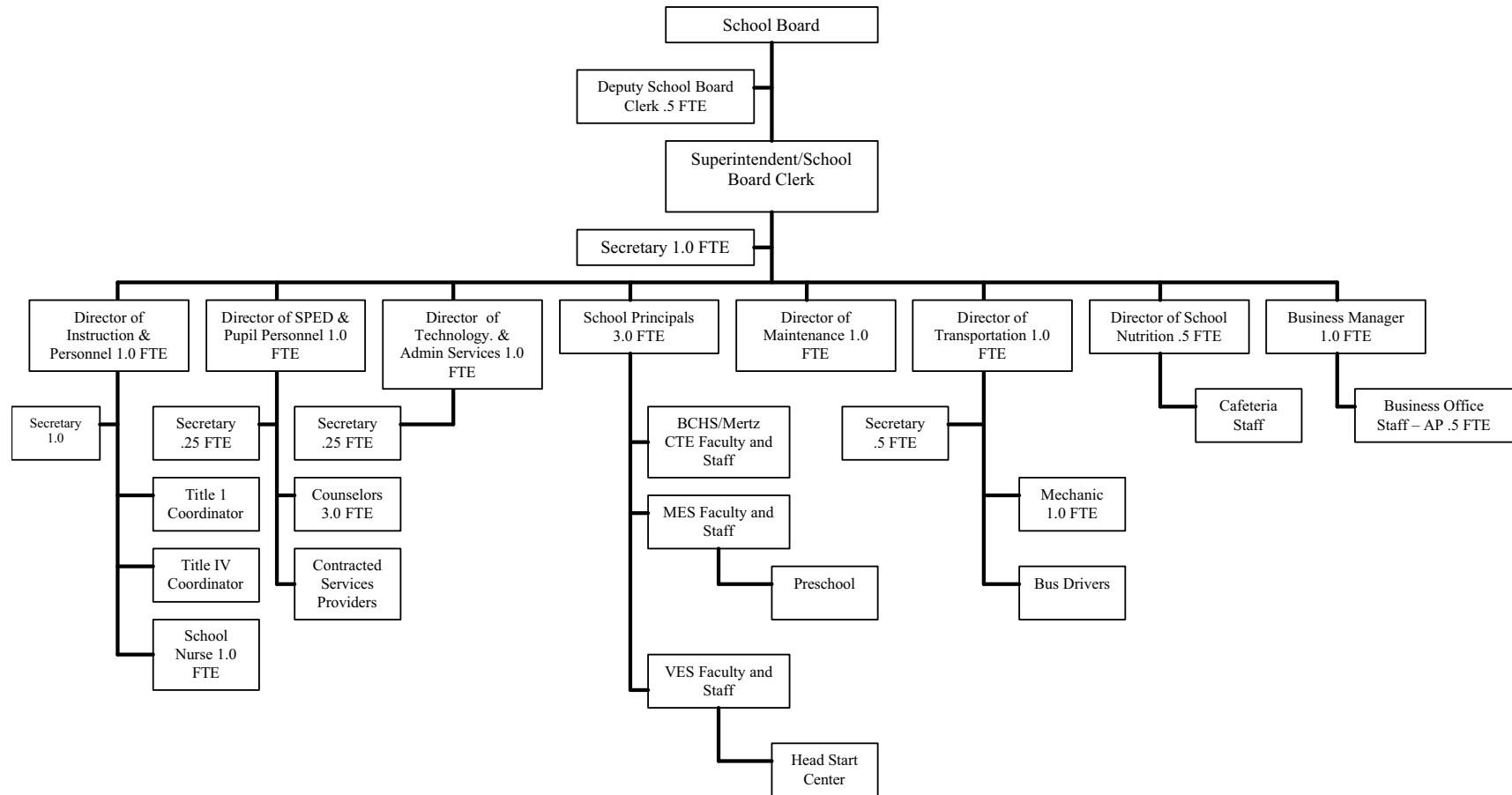
2.5.1 Division Organization

The executive and administrative functions of BCPS are managed through a system that is organized into line and staff relationships that define official spans of authority and communication channels.

Bath County Public Schools has one primary layer within the central office. This minimum of one layer should facilitate ensuring effective and efficient communication of information and decisions through the system and to its public; however, they create special challenges because of some broad spans of control and responsibility. Each administrator and secretary in central administration is responsible for multiple job tasks and responsibilities. Maintaining a minimum number of layers requires the system to address issues related to span of control and to take actions to preclude the development of a large, bureaucratic-type central administration. The superintendent and his executive staff have been very diligent in not increasing the number of employees at the central office, although there are instances where additional personnel would be a valuable addition.

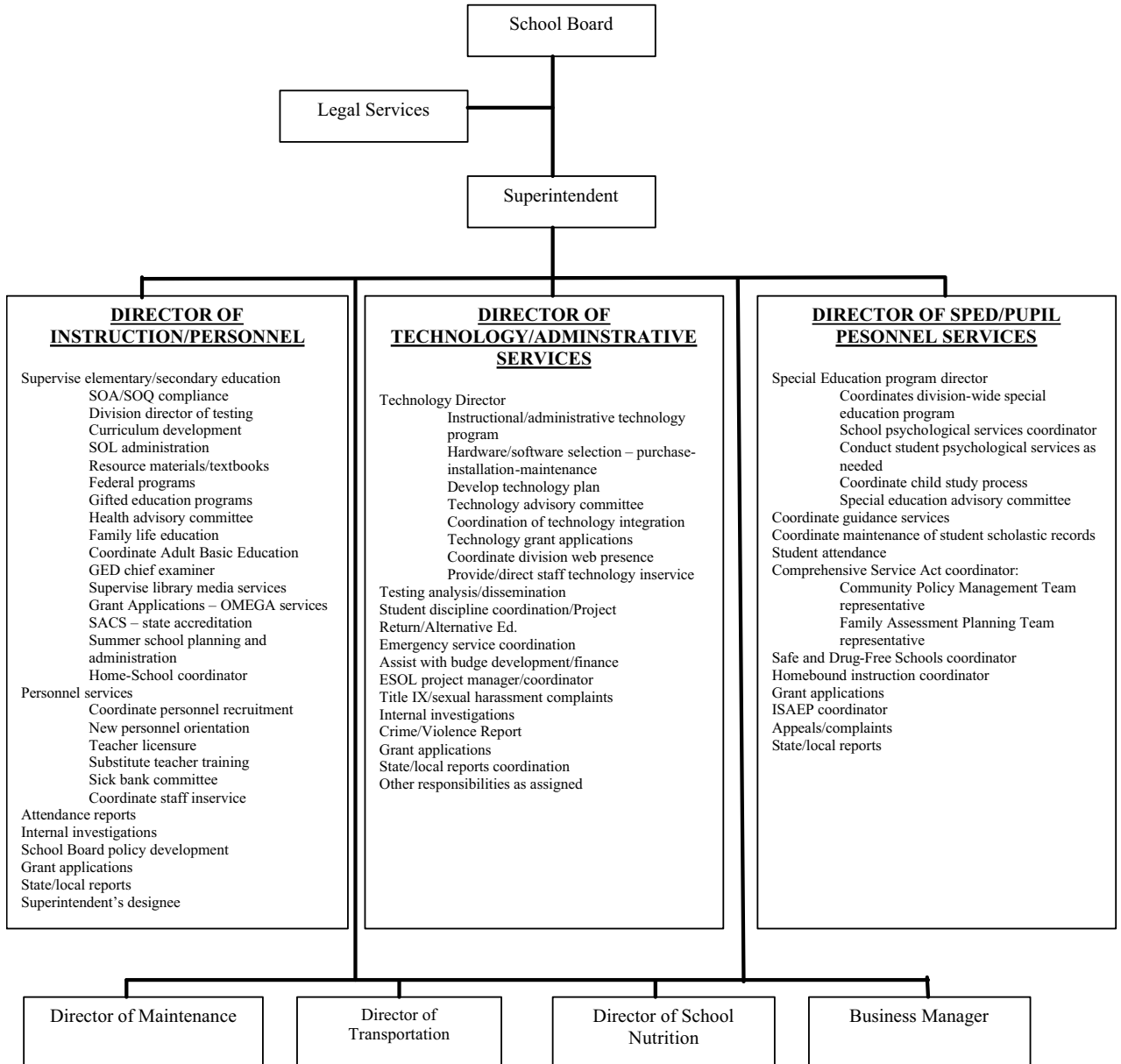
As is reported in this section, BCPS is a relatively traditional organization as shown in Exhibits 2-7 and 2-8. Exhibit 2-7 shows the organization as it existed during the on-site review. Exhibit 2-8 shows the current assignment of functions within the central office organization. As shown in Exhibit 2-8, the primary layer of central office authority under the superintendent is shown.

**EXHIBIT 2-7
BATH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
APRIL 2006**



Source: BCPS, Office of the Superintendent, 2006.

**EXHIBIT 2-8
BATH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FUNCTION ASSIGNMENTS
APRIL 2006**



Source: BCPS, Office of the Superintendent, 2006.

Exhibit 2-8 shows the current assignment of functions to each of the major departments. As shown, the following assignment/alignment issues exist:

- Facilities and maintenance are under the direction of the Director for Maintenance, who is the only person hired by the school district;
- Purchasing is conducted among all of the departments;
- Human resources functions and curriculum are under the direction of the Director of Instruction and Personnel;
- Food services is lead by a half-time director;
- Insurance and risk issues are shared among departments including student insurance in the superintendent's office, and benefits are taken care of in the Business Office; and
- The student services functions including nurses, psychologists, guidance, student hearings and transfers are split between the Director of SPED/Pupil Personnel and the Director of Instruction/Personnel.

FINDING

The superintendent has overseen a natural evolution of functions to the present organization structure of various departments of the central office since his appointment, resulting in focusing on individual's strengths and on improving services to schools and other issues. However, the superintendent has a total of 12 direct reports including the Deputy School Board Clerk and a secretary, five directors, the Business Manager, and three principals.

The Director of Instruction and Personnel wears two very large and difficult hats. In a school district of larger student enrollment, these functions would be split between two individuals. The director on the curriculum side serves as the division director of testing, SOA/SOQ compliance, curriculum development, SOL administration, resource materials/textbooks, federal programs, gifted education, health advisory committee, family life education, coordinates adult basic education, GED chief examiner, supervises the library media services, handles grant applications – OMEGA system, SACS – state accreditation, summer school planning and administration, and home-school coordinator.

On the human resources side of the position, the director coordinates personnel recruitment, new personnel orientation, teacher licensure, and substitute teacher training. The director also serves on the sick bank committee and coordinates staff in-service.

Other hats worn by this individual is the position of superintendent designee when the superintendent is out of the district, attendance reports, internal investigations, school board policy development, and state/local reports.

The Director of Technology/Administrative Services also wears two hats handling the technology issues of the district and many general administrative duties. As the technology director, he selects all the division's hardware and software (purchases, installs, and maintains), develops the technology plan, technology advisory committee, coordinates the technology integration, does the technology grant applications, coordinate the division's Web presence, and provides/directs the staff technology in-service.

The administrative functions for which he is responsible consist of testing analysis/dissemination, student discipline, Project Return, alternative education, emergency services, budget development, ESOL project manager/coordinator, Title IX, sexual harassment complaints, internal investigations, crime/violence report, grant applications, and state/local reports coordination.

The Director of Pupil Personnel Services and School Psychologists has numerous responsibilities under his direction. As director in special education, he coordinates the divisionwide special education program, school psychological services coordinator, conducts student psychological services as needed, coordinates child study process, and the special education advisory committee. In addition, he coordinates the guidance services, student attendance, coordinates the maintenance of student scholastic records, is the homebound instruction coordinator, the safe and drug-free schools coordinator, ISAEP coordinator, handles appeals and complaints, is the Comprehensive Services Act coordinator, and handles state/local reports.

The additional director positions will be covered in this report in their specific area of concentration. This includes the Business Manager, Director of Maintenance, Director of School Nutrition (.5 FTE), and the Director of Transportation.

The multi-tasking that the administrators must assume is also a part of the duties of the four secretaries who serve central office. Each secretary must do multiple tasks and in several instances, report to different individuals to complete their assignment.

The superintendent's secretary has the following functions as part of her assignment: superintendent's memos, division goals and objectives, administrative staff meeting agenda, budget development, health insurance surveys, CIP preparation, construction costs, calendar committee, advisory committees, non-resident student applications, GED administration, kindergarten testing, BSBO forms, report cards, business cards, school bus regulations brochure, milk bids, school board meeting agenda, newspaper contact about agenda, cafeteria menus, newspaper and website, bus route schedules, snow routes, calendar updates, board room calendar, annual teacher/subject list, and all telephone, correspondence and filing.

The Deputy School Board Clerk has the following functions as part of her assignment: prepare board room or other meeting location, attend board meetings and work sessions, maintain board agenda, official board minutes, board meeting notebooks, VSBA conference registration and reservations, order law book updates, get statement of economic interest forms from all board members, get the clerk and deputy clerk oath, school board appreciation month, and the VSBA region student art forum. In addition, a large portion of her time is spent in the area of transportation providing: travel schedules for the entire year, annual vehicle list update, bus driver in-service which also includes first aid and CPR training, bus driver notebooks, bus driver physicals, safety and

compliance (drug and alcohol testing), report for DOE, report for state police, report for crash report, payroll, VAPT emergency contact lists, order inspection station stickers, DMV records, and bus driver contracts (including safe driving supplement.) Additional responsibilities include fixed assets list, fuel bids, petty cash, and handling telephone, correspondence, and filing.

The secretary serving the Office of Instruction and Personnel also does multiple jobs. Her tasks in instruction include: textbooks (adoption, samples, orders, distribution), curriculum support, instructional materials (order and prepare), in-service activities (new teacher orientation, substitute teacher, preschool workdays, etc.). In personnel, she has the following responsibilities: hiring (job postings/advertisements, applications, applicant correspondence), background checks and health screening, new hire report, licensure workshop(s), licensure (applications, certificate renewals, upgrades, name changes), employee recognition (service and retirement), substitute lists, calendar of 12 month employee leave/absences, personnel directory, personnel evaluation forms, and personnel files. She also prepares recruitment registrations, develops information packets and display materials. This office also keeps board policy current by attending policy workshop(s), doing policy updates both paper and electronically. Attendance reports for day 5, 10, 5, monthly, and yearly are prepared in this office. Overall functions: paper order (division), office Xerox machines, and telephone, correspondence, and filing.

The secretary serving the Business Office has her job split half-time in the Business Office, .25 for the SPED and pupil personnel director, and .25 for the Director of Technology and Administrative Services on paper. In reality, a very large portion of her time is spent in the Business Office. For special education, she performs the following functions: Rights and Procedural Safeguards booklets, IEP on-line, SPED progress reports, exit reports, December 1 Child Find, annual plan, SPED preschool grant, SPED flow-through grant, and RFBD contract. For technology, she orders and inventories equipment/supplies. A large portion of her time is spent with accounts payable. For the Business Office, in addition to accounts payable, she does employee checks, revenue reports, personnel absence/leave records, first aid/CPR training, and the telephone, correspondence, and filing.

The current organization structure and assignment of functions can easily lead to miscommunications and difficulties in coordination of the various related functions that are dispersed among the departments.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-9:

Clarify the organizational chart to more clearly reflect the structure of the organization.

Implementing this recommendation should result in moving the Deputy School Board Clerk noted in Exhibit 2-7, on the organizational chart, to the space directly across from secretary 1.0, and replacing the spot vacated by the Deputy School Board Clerk with Legal Services.

An organizational chart should clearly describe the structure of the school district and what the functions are and who they report to in the school district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.5.2 Decision Making, Communications, Planning, Accountability, and Management

The current superintendent is in his seventh year of service as executive officer in BCPS. The superintendent's current contract, recently renewed for a four-year period, provides the terms and conditions for employment. The contract includes specific provisions for benefits and compensation increases consistent with those of BCPS teaching employees. Additionally, the BCPS School Board provides automobile use for school business. The contract in all respects is consistent with Commonwealth of Virginia law and sound business practice.

FINDING

The BCPS Comprehensive Plan is developed primarily by the staff of the school district and presented to the BCPS School Board for adoption. It lacks community-based input which would give it more validity and dissemination throughout the school district.

The BCPS Comprehensive Plan 2005–2006 is current and is complete with mission statement, goals and objectives, strategies, key initiatives, assigned personnel, resources, and performance measures. The plan also contains the specific provisions for technology, gifted program, special education, and career and technical education.

The schools also have two-year plans reflecting the school board goals and objectives, reflecting an important relationship between school and division plans. However, the community input factor is lacking in the division plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-10:

Follow the board-adopted Policy AF more closely and obtain more community involvement in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementing this recommendation should result in important community input in the division planning process. Having community involvement gives an opportunity for buy-in and ownership on what the school district is trying to achieve.

Each school board member should appoint a citizen from their representative area to serve in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Board Policy AF says that the comprehensive plan "will be developed with staff and community involvement and will include, or be consistent with, all other division-wide plans required by state and federal laws and regulations."

By having citizens serve on this planning committee, greater communication of what the school district and school board are trying to achieve will be known by the public.

FISCAL IMPACT

There should not be any additional cost created by adding five citizen members to help develop the comprehensive plan.

FINDING

The superintendent leads and manages the division through a series of core groups, including the administrative staff meetings, superintendent's advisory committee, and the office staff meetings; however, there is evidence that strategies could be employed to improve communications.

The superintendent's administrative staff meetings are held twice a month with the three principals and directors in the central office. There is an agenda, but no votes are taken and no minutes are kept of these meetings. Other administrators are invited when the agenda item would be of concern to them.

The superintendent's advisory committee is composed of one teacher from each of the three schools. Meetings are held once a month. The superintendent generally shares an overview of items that he feels will be of interest to the teachers and then allows them to share what is occurring at their school.

The superintendent's office staff meeting occurs following a school board meeting. This meeting is for all personnel housed in the central administration building and consists of sharing what happened at the previous school board meeting. This has been especially effective in getting out a consistent message of board actions.

The superintendent holds meetings with the principals on an as-needed basis.

Somewhat paradoxically, even with this number of contacts with various division groups, MGT consultants' discussions with groups of employees, the survey of BCPS administrators, principals, and teachers that was conducted as part of this performance audit, and, in particular, the citizens forum, numerous instances of lack of employee understanding of actions and communications by the superintendent and administration arose.

Teacher responses in the BCPS survey were overly negative when responding to items such as school board members' knowledge of the education needs of students in the district, board members' knowledge of operation in the school district, board members' work at setting or revising policies for the school district, and the school district superintendent's work as the educational leader of the school district.

Three important strategies may be considered to deal with these issues and the employee survey responses that are not as strongly supportive of the divisions as is desirable.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-11:

Organize and implement three strategies to improve communications within BCPS and monitor organizational health.

The implementation of this recommendation should involve consideration of each of the following three strategies:

- First, an annual survey of all employees to determine the organizational health of the organization is needed. Researchers, Hersey and Blanchard have developed instruments that have proven useful to many school organizations. The information yielded by this survey should guide the leadership in making important decisions regarding internal communications, overall short term planning, and other matters related to organizational health;
- Second, revamp the meetings structure. Create a support workers (food service, maintenance, custodial, and transportation) roundtable. Eliminate the formal, prepared agendas and instead be more informal, yet produce reports of discussions. It is possible that a formal agenda for the roundtable discussions has an unintended consequence of “dampening” conversation and minimizing discussion of topics that may really be on the minds of employees; and
- Third, reorganize the bi-monthly director’s meeting to a weekly session with a focus on organizational health and other recommended areas. Prepare to review these discussions with the Advisory Committee in its monthly meetings.

The superintendent and the directors, as the key leadership group, should perform the following functions:

- coordinate all planning development;
- review projections and alternative “what if” analyses as part of long-range planning;
- establish and maintain focus on mission, goals, and related initiatives of the system;
- analyze and interpret data to ensure that decisions are based upon accurate and complete information;
- ensure community involvement;
- monitor internal communications to ensure effective communication of decisions and related information;
- communicate the vision of the organization to all stakeholders;

- guide program evaluation;
- engage in orchestrating the specific and purposeful abandonment of obsolete, unproductive practices and programs;
- maintain focus on continuous division and school improvement;
- monitor the division's organizational climate; and
- coordinate the development and equitable allocation of resources (fiscal, personnel, facilities, technology, etc.).

Decisions should be based upon the best information available and have appropriate input. Day-to-day operation decisions would rest with the administrators responsible for their respective units and departments. Within the organizational plan, the members would maintain effective, frequent communications (almost daily) to ensure consistency and effective monitoring of activities. The superintendent would continue to maintain daily communications with various key administrators.

The superintendent's directors should continue meeting on a regularly scheduled basis and with a developed agenda. This group should focus upon consensus building to achieve important goals and objectives. Decisions and activities of the group would be effectively communicated to impacted parties through copies of meeting activity and e-mail requiring confirmation of receipt.

Planning should become the centerpiece of activity from the perspective of responsibility for ensuring that all related planning processes and effective plan monitoring are ongoing processes.

The sophisticated development of this process should contribute information that can drive the school system's planning and accountability implementation processes.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

FINDING

In the administrators' response to the BCPS survey concerning community relations, they reported that it needs major improvement.

In addition to survey responses, several comments at the community input session indicated that more visibility by the top leader (superintendent) of the school district is needed.

MGT consultants recognize the difficulties in managing the modern school system and maintaining important visibility with employees, students, and citizens. However, the demands of the position require attention to this important detail.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-12:

The superintendent should begin a written monthly employee communication that shares with all employees the state of the district and with items of employee interest and develop a system for increasing visibility.

By utilizing the directors and himself, a small one or two-page communication document could be produced each month that would not take much additional time. The effort and time should be rewarded by getting the same message to all employees.

Additionally, the superintendent should consider scheduling more routine “walk-throughs” that permit him to compliment personnel for the many fine acts that occur daily in the school division. This on-going type of recognition is important to personnel.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

FINDING

When responding to the BCPS survey question, “School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in this school district,” teachers gave this item very low marks.

The geography of the district makes it difficult to call meetings involving large numbers of staff, therefore, it is very important that the leadership make the effort to get to the staff involved in important decision areas. Involvement can be as simple as meeting periodically with a school’s representatives to discuss issues of concern.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-13:

The superintendent should visit each school’s principal advisory committee once each semester.

Implementation of this recommendation should contribute to accomplishing Recommendation 2-10, as well as providing an important avenue for teachers and others to provide input to the superintendent.

Visiting the principal advisory committee should give the superintendent more visibility and allow him to hear what the faculties are talking about at the individual schools. This will also give him additional information when district-wide decisions are made.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

FINDING

The personnel of the school division report that the local newspaper tends to focus on the less positive news and does not often recognize the many good things that are occurring in the division.

It is a good practice by superintendents to take advantage of opportunities to get the positives of the school division before the public. One vehicle for this is the local newspaper.

Throughout the United States, superintendents on a regular basis, provide informational news releases and items for the local paper, and in many cases a formal monthly publication. This not only allows the superintendent to express opinions and get the good news out, it represents another form of visibility.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-14:

The superintendent should prepare a monthly article “Superintendent’s Corner” for the local newspaper emphasizing the positives of the Bath County Public Schools.

Implementation of this recommendation should result in the superintendent and board chairperson contacting the local news media and offering to provide a weekly column on school matters.

Getting the positive effort of the teachers, students, and administrators before the entire public of Bath County should be of special interest to the superintendent and BCPS School Board. It appears that the local newspaper would be receptive to this recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

FINDING

The superintendent’s advisory council membership includes one teacher from each school in the division.

Since there are only three schools, there is limited school-level membership on the council. By adding non-certified employees, membership would be expanded and a broader range of topics and concerns could be dealt with on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-15:

The superintendent should expand the membership of the superintendent's advisory council to include non-certified personnel and other personnel.

Implementation of this recommendation should increase representation on the council. By expanding the membership on the superintendent's advisory council there will be a broader base representing more school district functions. Such areas as secretarial/clerical, guidance, media, support services should be considered.

This should help get the message out that the administration is listening and that they are a team.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

FINDING

The superintendent does not have a student advisory group while many small school systems employ such a group as an additional means of maintaining effective communications with students.

It is standard practice for superintendents to get student input from the high school level. This student input is very valuable as many management topics are dealt with throughout the district. Students can give important input on many issues and many times can prevent the issues from becoming major problems. This also would add to the superintendent's visibility throughout the school district.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-16:

The superintendent should initiate a student advisory council at the high school.

A monthly or quarterly student advisory council composed of four members from each class in the high school and the principal will give students an opportunity to share their student life with the superintendent. A student from the group could prepare and deliver a report to the BCPS School Board after a meeting was held.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

FINDING

The quantity of e-mail received by the superintendent at his e-mail address is not yet as excessive as to impede his fulfillment of responsibilities; however, increases could become a detriment.

The superintendent's secretary also serves as the school board agenda preparer and information gatherer, and in this role she processes all superintendent's office incoming mail, preparing responses for his review and approval.

The superintendent processes his own e-mail and, as is appropriate has his secretary prepare responses or take assigned action. MGT consultants have observed in other divisions and school districts that e-mail review and response can become a very time-consuming activity for the executive officer and that strategies for reducing the amount of time involved can become very important to maintaining effective use of time.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-17:

Monitor the quantity of e-mail correspondence received by the superintendent at his assigned e-mail address and assess the time spent processing.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in the superintendent's secretary monitoring the time the superintendent must commit to processing his e-mail. The superintendent's secretary should do this on a random day basis and maintain a record of her findings. At the point that the superintendent is committing more than 30 to 45 minutes a day to this activity consideration should be given to assigning the e-mail processing function to the Secretary to the superintendent. This action should not increase other contacts with the superintendent since the Secretary would be responding in his name and would seek his approval for responses that are not routine matters.

Whenever this occurs the superintendent should acquire a second e-mail address to be provided only to those who must communicate directly with him. Such persons could include school board members, his leadership group, and other selected persons. This action then should result in freeing up superintendent's time for important work while still providing access by selected persons.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no additional cost to the division.

2.5.3 Public Information

Effective communication is a key aspect of developing and maintaining organizations that facilitate the realization of essential goals and objectives. Phillip Schlechty in his most recent publication, *Working on the Work (WOW)—An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents*, continues his important theme that articulates his 12 standards for the WOW school. The underlying piece, as always, is fundamentally sound

communications. The modern organization, having emerged to an age of producing results tailored to the individual client, must engage in effective communication to all stakeholders and, furthermore, produce needed responses in a timely fashion.

Community involvement programs are essential for bringing financial resources and community support to schools and school divisions. Involved schools and school divisions strive to build and maintain effective partnerships with parents, area businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, and other concerned citizens, who provide valuable support for each student's academic success. Members of the community, including parents and grandparents, can offer needed volunteer services to the schools. Building and maintaining open lines of communication with parents and community members help in building long-term public support for its efforts.

FINDING

In a public forum conducted during the on-site visit, participants' comments were given relating to improving communications to the community and penetration of all areas of a very large (geographically) county as well as within the division.

A review of the Bath County Public Schools mission, goals, and objectives lists an objective that says "Enhance communication between and among students, parents, personnel (school level to superintendent), school board, board of supervisors, and community. The strategies listed are: conduct "reminder" assemblies for school rules and expectations (Student Code of Conduct) – opening of school and October; continue joint meetings of board of supervisors and school board; develop annual school division report to the community incorporating "School Report Cards" as required by NCLB and to meet local needs (SOQ); utilize a variety of communication methods: paper, email, eb site, news media, meetings between and among all division students, staff, and members of the community; and utilize chain of command – in both directions – to express concerns, make suggestions, or resolve problems. However, the entire listing is overwhelming and doesn't really contain the strategies necessary to reach the objective when it is considered in the context of one employee charged with oversight and, primary implementation. MGT consultants were unable to identify other personnel throughout the divisions with specific responsibilities for assisting in carrying out the strategies other than Web staff.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-18:

Reorganize and prioritize the listing of strategies designed to improve communications and present to the superintendents' administrative staff for assignment of support responsibilities.

The implementation of this recommendation should result in formalizing the improvement of the internal and external communication program and include assigning support responsibilities to other division personnel. Accomplishment of this task and the implementation of prioritized strategies should contribute to improving the image of the division in the community as well as provide more effective channels of communication to all employees. This process should also lead to the following:

- updating the overall public information plan for the division and all schools as an outgrowth of the Division Improvement plan as it is reviewed and updated for 2006-07;
- developing a broad-based division community support initiative that is designed to reach into all areas of the county;
- coordinating the involvement of central office and school administrators in civic and other community organizations;
- providing for citizen and business recognition programs when such activity is warranted and may include the development of Golden Apple Teacher of Year Awards sponsorship that could have a community-wide impact;
- identifying an information liaison from each school;
- ensuring that photographs for press releases, brochures, and other materials to promote the division are taken;
- coordinating public information strategy/techniques training delivery to school personnel when needed;
- arranging for press conferences; and
- developing and coordinating production and distribution of internal and external publications and news releases.

This recommendation is designed to unify the public information/community relations dimension, and promote systematic coordination of related activity.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation could be implemented within existing resources and at no additional cost to BCPS.

2.5.4 School Organization and Management

To meet the requirements of providing appropriate administrative and instructional support to schools, standards to guide the determination of positions to be budgeted and assigned to each school are typically adopted.

BCPS provides instructional programs to students in one high school (grades 8-12) and two elementary schools (grades PK – 7). The high school is staffed with a principal and assistant principal, activities/athletic, guidance, and library positions. Exhibit 2-9 shows data related to various positions in BCPS as compared to five peer divisions. As can be seen BCPS has fewer school-based administrators than the average for the peer divisions and more teachers and teacher aides than the average for the peers. However, BCPS has fewer guidance and librarians than the average for the peers and no

technology instructors. See Chapter 6 for discussion of educational services including guidance and libraries.

Exhibit 2-10 shows BCPS enrollment and the number of assistant principals, guidance counselors, librarians, and activities positions assigned to each school.

FINDING

The administrative and support staffing of BCPS is consistent with and meets all state standards. When the BCPS is compared to six school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the staffing ratios are generally higher than the average of the peer school divisions. This can be attributable the geography of the school locations, the organizational structure of the schools (PK – 7) (8 – 12), and in some cases, the difficulties of offering a full-curriculum to a limited number of students.

**EXHIBIT 2-9
PEER SCHOOL DIVISIONS
STAFF ANALYSIS PER 1,000 STUDENTS
2003-04 SCHOOL YEAR**

SCHOOL DIVISION	STUDENTS AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP	PRINCIPALS/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS PER 1,000 STUDENTS	TEACHER PER 1,000 STUDENTS	TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTORS PER 1,000 STUDENTS	TEACHER AIDES PER 1,000 STUDENTS	GUIDANCE COUNSELORS/ LIBRARIANS PER 1,000 STUDENTS
Bath County	784	5.10	107.77	1.28	22.32	7.84
Bland County	912	4.38	83.85	0.00	19.73	4.38
Craig County	697	4.45	81.36	0.36	20.95	5.74
Mathews County	1,281	3.90	76.04	0.23	34.36	5.47
Rappahannock County	1,024	3.90	83.56	0.00	24.41	4.88
Richmond County	1,211	4.96	70.98	0.00	14.48	4.96
Surry County	1,067	6.56	105.35	0.00	26.23	5.62
Division Average	997	4.75	85.81	0.27	23.21	5.56

Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, 2006.

**EXHIBIT 2-10
BATH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ENROLLMENT AND
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL POSITIONS**

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT MARCH 2006	POSITIONS	
		PRINCIPAL	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Elementary			
Millboro	164	1	
Valley	279	1	
Elementary Total	443	2	
Secondary			
Bath County High School	333	1	1
Secondary Total	333	1	
GRAND TOTAL	776	3	1

Source: Prepared by MGT from BCPS Central Administration, March, 2006.

* Includes Pre-K enrollment.

COMMENDATION

The BCPS School Board is commended for meeting all minimum Commonwealth school administrative staffing criteria as set forth in the revised Standards of Quality.