

Commendations and Related Comments–MGT Report

School Efficiency Review of Charlottesville City Schools

January 8, 2009



“THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION DEMONSTRATES MANY EXEMPLARY PRACTICES AIMED TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. THESE PRACTICES ARE SOME OF THE FINEST CURRICULUM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT THAT MGT HAS SEEN IN VIRGINIA AND THROUGHOUT THE NATION.”

MGT Report, page 4-29

This document provides the commendations presented in the MGT efficiency review report. The charts present the commendation number, report page number on which the commendation is cited, and related comments derived either from the report itself or additional annotation supplied by CCS staff. While this document quotes the wording of each commendation, it does not present all of the related details. Those interested in the full details should refer to the complete report.

Section 1: DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
1-A	1-4	The CCS school board, superintendent, and staff are commended for using comprehensive meeting agenda formats and information packets for board meetings, and ensuring that the packets are delivered to board members at least seven days prior to board meetings	
1-B	1-9	The school board is commended for exemplifying a commitment to professionalism and continued professional growth and development of its members through board member participation in seminars and conferences.	
1-C	1-12	CCS is commended for having current policies that are reviewed and updated on a frequent basis as needed.	
1-D	1-13	CCS is commended for having comprehensive written procedures that govern the daily operations of all departments.	
1-E	1-14	CCS is commended for using cost containment measures and procedures when procuring legal services for the division.	
1-F	1-26	CCS is commended for developing, adopting, and implementing a comprehensive strategic plan that is monitored, evaluated, and modified at frequent intervals.	
1-G	1-27	CCS is commended for using a strategic plan update format that provides specific and quantifiable data that can be used to reasonably show whether or not progress is being made in meeting the goals and objectives of the plan.	
1-H	1-31	CCS is commended for creating an array of communications mechanisms to provide information to the public and administrative and instructional personnel regarding the affairs of the division.	

Section 2: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
2-A	2-4	CCS’s finance department staff are cross-trained on the primary functions of the department.	
2-B	2-9	CCS produces well-documented and useful budget information to help both internal and external users.	
2-C	2-10	CCS’s finance department has implemented a system of sound internal controls.	
2-D	2-11	The division uses scanning technology to reduce paperwork and access historical documents with ease.	
2-E	2-15	CCS has successfully outsourced a portion of its employee benefits administration, allowing finance department staff to focus on core finance-related functions.	
2-F	2-15	The division takes steps to prevent potential losses through check fraud.	

Section 3: PURCHASING

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
3-A	3-4	The division’s finance department maintains a well run bidding process, with documentation that is well organized.	
3-B	3-5	The division’s finance department implemented an automated receiving system to improve internal controls as well as to increase efficiency.	
3-C	3-6	CCS’s food service department uses cooperative and joint procurement mechanisms to help it to run an efficient and effective operation.	

Section 4: EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
4-A	4-29	CCS demonstrates an array of exemplary practices for the management of curriculum and instruction.	<i>The department of curriculum and instruction demonstrates many exemplary practices aimed to improve student achievement. These practices are some of the finest curriculum planning and management that MGT has seen in Virginia and throughout the nation. MGT Report 1/8/2009</i>
4-B	4-30	CCS offers a challenging, rigorous course of study for high achieving students through advanced placement courses and as measured by advanced placement exams and the Scholastic Assessment Test.	
4-C	4-32	The Scholars Program provides opportunity to students who face obstacles to achievement through a continuum of support and ancillary services in fifth through twelfth grade.	
4-D	4-33	The CCS school board, administration, and the community embrace a nationally recognized visual and performing arts program throughout the division.	
4-E	4-43	The English language learner program offers a continuum of comprehensive instructional and support services to students with limited English proficiency.	
4-F	4-44	The gifted education program offers a research-based curricula model that supports enriched, differentiated, and accelerated courses for students.	

Section 5: SPECIAL EDUCATION

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
5-A	5-7	CCS is commended for maximizing Medicaid reimbursements to offset the costs of special education and related services for students with disabilities.	Participation by CCS staff in administrative time study for Medicaid and detailed recordkeeping for allowable services have allowed CCS to receive approximately \$600,000 in Medicaid reimbursements between 2002 and 2008.
5-B	5-13	CCS is commended for providing a comprehensive special education policies and procedures manual to schools through the division.	
5-C	5-15	CCS is commended for the effective and timely implementation of the special education processes for referral, assessment, identification, and placement of students with disabilities.	Time lines for the special education process are clearly defined in federal special education law. The special education department maintains a system for tracking students from referral through placement.
5-D	5-16	CCS is commended for adhering to the mediation, due process, and complaint procedures of the Regulations Governing Special Education for Children with Disabilities in Virginia.	CCS is committed to the provision of free appropriate public education for students with disabilities. The number of complaints filed against the division represent far less than one percent (one unfounded complaint and three mediations over three years). The division adheres to the Virginia regulatory procedures for resolution of parent complaints.
5-E	5-17	CCS is commended for its active and effective Special Education Advisory Committee.	In addition to the required meetings, the SEAC offers additional services: Parent Partners Program offers support and information from trained parents; a newsletter is published; and the Parent Resource Center services families in the PREP region. The activities of the CCS SEAC far exceed the requirements of Virginia regulations.

Section 6: HUMAN RESOURCES

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
6-A	6-10	The CCS HR department is commended for identifying technological solutions to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness.	
6-B	6-12	The CCS HR department Web site provides comprehensive personnel information in a user-friendly format and represents best practice in design and utility.	
6-C	6-14	The CCS HR department personnel policies are well-written, up-to-date, and representative of best practices.	
6-D	6-15	The CCS HR department is commended for creating and disseminating procedures manuals and other informational documents for internal staff and current and prospective employees.	
6-E	6-21	The CCS HR department has developed a detailed analysis process for determining the viability of recruitment venues, and modifies the recruitment calendar based on those results.	

Section 7: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
7-A	7-7	The division has developed annual enrollment projections using sound methodology and multiple sources of data.	This is one of the essential components of a comprehensive long-term facilities plan and the CIP. This already developed assessment will save staff time in the future development of the comprehensive long-term facilities plan.
7-B	7-7	The “Facility Condition Assessment” utilizing an external source to provide an encompassing facility assessment of the physical condition of building needs has been completed.	
7-C	7-11	CCS has successfully used the services of the city’s department of public works for electronic storage of blueprints, construction management, and controlling change order costs.	
7-D	7-18	CCS and the city have entered into a joint agreement for the purpose of achieving “cost savings and eliminating duplicative efforts” by combining the CCS and city maintenance staffs in order for the city to provide buildings and grounds services to the division.	
7-E	7-19	The funding of the facility maintenance is at a level that will protect the public’s investment.	Surveys conducted of CCS staff by the review team found that the majority felt that facilities were healthy, clean and well maintained,
7-F	7-20	CCS’s annual rate of completion for maintenance work orders is high.	
7-G	7-24	CCS performs a semi-annual inspection of the cleanliness levels of school buildings.	
7-H	7-26	The division is staffing housekeeping services at or near a best practice level.	The cleanliness level in the division as reported in the survey and through interviews is good. The amount budgeted for housekeeping services is sufficient. The overall staffing is lower than the AS&U reported median and very close to best practice.

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
7-I	7-30	Working with the city’s facilities maintenance division, CCS has initiated an energy management program and has made energy management a high priority.	<p>Through the city’s facilities maintenance division, CCS has instituted a variety of energy management measures which have already produced substantial savings. Some of these measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility consumption analysis which provides building specific data. • The use of EPA’s Energy Star Portfolio Manager software. • Building automated systems coordinated with facility scheduling. • Completion (98% completed to date) of lighting and water fixture improvements in each building. • School board updates, monthly meetings with principals, quarterly principals’ meetings, energy saving tips in staff e-mails, and sample lesson plans. • Individual schools which achieve energy savings received a financial incentive. • Monthly award for most efficient school. • Green cleaning program developed and start up-funding included in the budget for FY 09.

Section 8: TRANSPORTATION

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
8-A	8-5	CCS is commended for working with the city to provide quality transportation services.	In addition to conducting the survey, MGT consultants interviewed many CCS staff and transportation stakeholders on overall transportation quality issues. Without exception, comments regarding transportation services were positive. Further, the morale of transportation staff was observed to be exceptional.
8-B	8-8	CCS is commended for adherence to best practices in utilization of the school bus fleet.	With a small operational area of approximately 10-square miles, a staggered school start bell schedule, and with the use of a computerized bus routing software system, PTS provides multi-tiered school bus schedules to increase the utilization of the buses.
8-C	8-25	The mechanics of the fleet maintenance division are commended for the outstanding service they provide in maintaining the school bus fleet.	
8-D	8-25	The transit division and fleet maintenance division of the City of Charlottesville are commended for reducing the diesel exhaust emissions throughout the city and by reducing the potential of harmful exhaust emissions in the vicinity of school bus routes.	

Section 9: TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
9-A	9-11	CCS has subscribed to an online reporting system that enables immediate feedback on student progression for more effective and efficient teacher analyses of course learning.	
9-B	9-17	CCS has created and implemented a thorough internet safety program for the division and its community members.	The division created the program with the assistance of the Internet safety committee, comprised of staff and administration throughout the division, including user support staff and ITRTs. The charge of the Internet safety committee was to examine the standards of learning and design or identify lessons that would support a school-based technology curriculum. While an Internet safety component for students that is integrated in a division's instructional program is required by the Code of Virginia § 22.1-70.2., the division seems to have taken a rather systematic approach using curriculum guidelines to produce and implement the program.
9-C	9-18	The division has created and incorporated an innovative robotics program to enhance math and science curriculum for the upper elementary grades.	Problem-solving activities are utilized in this program to teach critical thinking in math and science.

Section 10: NUTRITION SERVICES

#	Page	Commendation	Related Comments
10-A	10-8	The division is to be commended for applying for and implementing the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program for 2008-09 at Greenbrier Elementary School.	
10-B	10-8	The division’s approach to proper nutrition in meal selection has resulted in nine schools receiving the Governor’s Scorecard in 2007-08.	Nutrition services implements high standards for nutritional requirements of snack foods and quality meal participation.
10-C	10-9	Walker Upper Elementary has implemented the CHOICE Program, which serves as a model for educating students about making healthy food choices.	Creating Healthy Opportunities and Initiatives in the Cafeteria for Everyone (CHOICE) is a point-of-purchase information program that uses traffic light symbols to convey basic nutritional information to students. Red, yellow, and green symbols are placed next to each food item, indicating its healthfulness based on fat content. The goal of this program is to teach students how to make healthy food choices both in the cafeteria and outside of school.
10-D	10-10	CCS is to be commended for implementing the universal breakfast program at Clark Elementary School.	
10-E	10-20	CCS nutrition services is commended for providing Creative Cooking classes at Walker Upper Elementary School.	