

Project overview: WASA management review

Background

To best prepare for the future, the district conducted a management review to help craft effective plans. The review was conducted by the Washington Association of School Administrators, and the \$12,000 cost was paid through a state grant. The topics covered in the review include

- Administrative Services
- Business and Operations
- Teaching and Learning

The review team included nine current school administrators from various-sized districts statewide. The project's facilitator is a former school district administrator.

The review team analyzed volumes of district materials, and in late-January it conducted numerous interviews with administrators, staff members, board members, and students.

Team members worked both independently and collectively in preparation of the final report.

Findings

The district received a written report in late-April. The 43-page report highlights both district strengths and 31 recommendations for improvement planning.

Commendations

The district is

- Genuinely focused on providing high quality opportunities for students and helping students achieve academic success
 - Staffed by individuals at all levels who are committed to student success
 - Receptive to assessment and improvement—as evidenced by its initiating the management review
 - Forward-looking with a strategic focus
 - Maintaining its facilities with good care
 - Investing in appropriate technology
 - Interested in communication improvements
 - Led by a superintendent whose open style is greatly valued and appreciated
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Recommendations

Upon verbal feedback following the analysis in January, the superintendent began immediate work on several recommendation areas, so work had commenced before receipt of the written report. The report's themes are highlighted on the next page. The themes reflect a combination of the recommendations that are referenced in parenthesis.

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Project overview: WASA management review, Continued

Recommendations
(continued)

Themes (reflecting recommendations)	Action
Determine funding, authorize, and track numbers of staff positions by budget account code--position control (1, 12)	Initiated 3/09
Establish board-determined negotiating parameters prior to bargaining with employee groups (2)	Board executive session 4/13
Clarify and strengthen employee evaluation processes (3)	
Clarify special education administrative responsibilities and communication processes; strengthen the Parent Advisory Committee (28, 29, 31)	
Assess the lean administrative structure and possible re-alignment to cover possible gaps; clarify responsibilities (6, 8)	
Develop a system to determine district wide academic improvements consistent with Professional Learning Communities methods and implement a more focused and sustained professional development plan (23, 26)	
Develop a clear budget development procedure including participants, training, timelines, forecasts, decision-making processes, supervision, budget capacity, contingencies (10, 13, 14, 24)	
Restore the ending fund balance: target 5% (11)	Planning includes additional \$1.6 million for the ending fund balance, 2009-2010
Explore a single monthly payroll (15)	
Explore efficiencies and cost savings on building upgrades, transportation, and warehousing (16)	
Develop ways to increase parental access and increasing student learning outcomes through the effective use of technology (17, 18, 19, 20)	Parent access offered 2/09; grade book set for 8/09
Consider unifying elementary and secondary level directions and better define central office roles, communication (21, 26)	Initiated 4/09
Continue collaboration-building among administrators, and continue to improve communication with all constituents at the schools and departments (4, 6, 7, 19, 22, 25, 26)	
Increase consistency between schools in the areas of programs, standards, handbooks, and opportunities (27)	Handbook work initiated 4/09
Update the district's policy set and consider restructuring consistent with WSSDA's system (page 16)	Work scheduled to begin 8/09
Create a clear Technology Advisory Committee charter (17)	
Implement system-wide assessments K-12 (possibility utilizing technology) to help provide data to guide instruction and to accomplish and measure specific school improvement plans (9, 20)	