

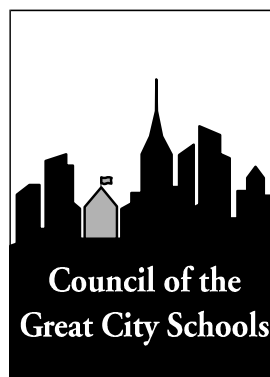
# **Review of Human Resource Operations in the Guilford County Schools**



**STRIVING. ACHIEVING. EXCELLING.**

**Submitted to the  
Guilford County Schools**

**By the  
Council of the Great City Schools**



**March 2007**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Council of the Great City Schools thanks the many individuals who contributed to this review of the human resource operations in the Guilford County Schools. The efforts of these individuals were vital to the Council's ability to present the school district with the best possible recommendations for improving this critical area of the district operations.

First, the Council thanks the Superintendent of the Guilford County Schools, Dr. Terry Grier, who requested that the Council convene a Strategic Support Team to review and evaluate the district's human resource operations. The request demonstrates the superintendent's interest in addressing the human capital needs of the district. We also thank Peggy Thompson, the district's Chief Human Resources Officer, who provided the required background information and facilitated the review process. And we thank the district staff and other stakeholders who were interviewed and made every effort to provide an objective assessment of district functions and operational imperatives.

Second, the Council thanks the individuals who served on the Strategic Support Team. They included Roger Buschmann, Chief Human Resources Officer for the Los Angeles Unified School District; Marjorie Adler, Human Resources Officer (Retired), Miami-Dade County Schools; Beatrice Garza, Executive Director for Human Resources for the Houston Independent School District; and Debra Ware, Operations Executive for the Dallas Independent School District. The enthusiasm and generosity of these individuals, who contributed their time *pro bono*, serve as an example of how the nation's urban public schools are working together to improve services to schools and the students they serve.

Finally, we thank Dan Cochran, former Executive Director of Human Resources for the School Board of Broward County, who served as the project's principal investigator and drafted the report. And we thank Bob Carlson, the Council's Director of Management Services, who directed the overall project and completed the final report. Their work was excellent and critical to the project's success.

Michael Casserly  
Executive Director  
Council of the Great City Schools

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Superintendent of the Guilford County Schools, Dr. Terry Grier, asked the Council of the Great City Schools to review and evaluate the school district's human resources operations and provide the following—

- An evaluation of human resource leadership, operational practices, and procedures for effectiveness, efficiency, customer service, and results.
- An assessment of human resource effectiveness in the recruitment, development, and retention of a highly functioning workforce.
- A review of human resource organizational, administrative, and staffing structure with recommendations for improvements.
- An evaluation of human resource focus on customer service and its ability to service the needs of schools and departments.
- A review of human resource's leadership role in helping to support the strategic objectives of the school district.

In response, the Council assembled a Strategic Support Team comprised of current and former senior managers with extensive experience in human resource administration and operations in other large urban school systems across the country.

To do its work, the Strategic Support Team conducted two assessments of the district's Human Resources Department. The first involved a review of documents provided by the district and a four-day site visit to Greensboro to interview staff and other stakeholders. This visit occurred on October 18-21, 2006. The second involved a self-assessment in which the department was asked to rate itself on a series of "best practices."

The recommendations presented in this report are not meant to be exhaustive. They were designed, instead, to provide the district with a number of strategies and actions to improve the leadership, management, and operations of the human resource operations of the Guilford County Schools.

### **Overarching Recommendation**

As a starting point, the Strategic Support Team recommends that the school district adopt a new management philosophy that supports the reengineering of human resources and realigns its functions with the district's strategic objectives. This would require that the district's human resources department place greater emphasis on strategic rather than transaction personnel functions; that it provide maximum "value-added" to

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the district; and that it supply the strategic “human capital” that the school district needs to meet its strategic objectives.

The rationale for reengineering the school district’s human resources is grounded in the following three premises—

- The ability of the Guilford County Schools to meet its challenges depends on its organizational ability to learn and grow.
- The enablers for learning and growth come primarily from employees, systems, and organizational alignment.
- Strategies for superior performance require significant investments in people, systems, and the processes that build the district’s capabilities. Consequently, objectives and measures for these enablers of superior performance should be driven by the district’s human resource operations and play an integral part in the district’s performance.

As envisioned by the Strategic Support Team, the human resource operations of the Guilford County Schools should be the organization’s leader in attracting, developing, and retaining a highly motivated and strategically focused workforce. Three employee-based measures – satisfaction, productivity, and retention – should provide the outcome measures by which investments in employees, systems, and organizational alignment are assessed. Indices of strategic job coverage, strategic information availability, and degree of personal, team, and departmental alignment with strategic objectives should drive department operations.

The following summarizes the recommendations and strategies emerging from the team’s site visit—

### **Departmental Leadership and Senior Management**

- Assess the ability and willingness of the department’s current leadership and senior management team to reengineer the human resource’s functions of the district so that they are more in alignment with district objectives. Retain the department’s current leadership and senior managers and/or recruit new personnel for these positions who can make necessary changes, and hold that leadership accountable for—
  - Developing and implementing a multi-year strategic plan and action plans with specific target indicators that are aligned with the district’s ISO standards and with districtwide goals.<sup>1</sup>
  - Establishing expectations and enforcing performance standards.

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<sup>1</sup> The International Organization of Standardization (ISO) has set technical standards that deal with quality management systems to improve various aspects of business processes, quality and customer service.

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- Conducting focus groups and surveys to improve customer satisfaction with human resources.
- Implementing consistent “quality control” over standard policies, practices, and procedures.
- Developing a districtwide annual forecasting model for budget and work force needs based on trend and market data and multiple contingencies for both legislated and board-directed revisions.
- Establishing a proactive, results-oriented departmental philosophy focused on strategic-change management, continuous improvement, and elimination of the “we’ve always done it that way” mentality.
- Setting expectations and performance standards based on strategic performance and customer service rather than on tactical and transactional operations.
- Implementing a senior-level, Superintendent’s Compensation Advisory Council charged with making recommendations for districtwide compensation and salary equity that is competitive with the external environment and consistent with budget limitations.
- Establishing an employee workplace-satisfaction survey.
- Determining the “owners” of the district’s position control system in both the budget and human resources offices and holding them accountable for its coordination and appropriate implementation.
- Reorganizing the human resource department with cross-functional service teams rather than with individual “silo” units in order to insure a more balanced workload for staff.
- Providing, coordinating, and communicating to all employees a districtwide training and development calendar of activities and opportunities.
- Implementing a plan for improving workplace satisfaction in both departments and schools in order to increase retention and reduce attrition.
- Establishing a service-to-the-customer delivery model to guide the overriding attitude and performance of the department.
- Developing a plan for maximum use of IT information and communications systems to improve customer service, operational performance, and employee self-service, and to reduce reliance on spreadsheets.

### **✚ Management and Operations**

- Realign major-workflow processes in order to improve functional efficiency, add value to department operations, focus on customer satisfaction, and use electronic rather than paper processes to increase productivity and manage a constantly increasing-work volume.
- Revise and implement instructional and non-instructional process for hiring, orienting, and inducting new staff, to improve efficiency in the use of time and service to the customer.
- Improve department operations by—
  - Establishing a “hot-line” for use by staffing specialists, principals, and supervisors.
  - Responding to principals’ emails and phone calls on the same day.
  - Extending hours of operation during the “peak” hiring season to ensure that offices are never closed to principals.
- Analyze staff jobs in the human resources department by needed skill-levels to determine appropriate compensation, workloads, and staff deployment requirements.
- Conduct an internal and external compensation analysis of salaries and compensation to determine a “baseline” for strategic recommendations to improve both internal equity and external competitiveness of salaries.
- Develop a prioritized schedule for possible job reclassifications based on such factors as difficulty-to-fill and turnover rates for specific slots and/or job families.
- Develop on-line standard-operating procedures and frequently asked questions for internal staff cross-functional training and to facilitate external communications with customers.
- Implement daily cross-district “pop-up” departmental and inter-departmental communications to improve understanding, teamwork, and customer service.
- Implement a comprehensive performance-based principal and assistant principal training and induction program to be completed prior to being eligible for promotion.
- Develop a districtwide training and development program for non-instructional leaders and staff to improve both individual capacity and overall departmental performance.

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- Implement a process to purge the employment application data base so that only “active” candidates are listed and to ensure that “code 20” or similar unqualified candidates are deleted.
- Establish a “one-stop” call and service center focused on customer service for both applicants and employees.
- Develop and require both principals and staff to utilize an automated human resources HRMS system, in coordination with revised workflow efficiencies, to reduce “bottle necks” and improve productivity, efficiency, and customer service.
- Consistently utilize large-group new hire “one-stop” staffing, placement and paperwork processing that would require new hires to make only one personal visit to the human resources office.
- Establish a clearly communicated annual schedule for Haberman interviews, with emphasis on keeping principals on-campus as much as possible.
- Simplify, streamline, and standardize or automate forms and processes requiring multiple signatures to no more than two for processes such as extending pay or assignment of supplements.

The Strategic Support Team did not make specific recommendations related to the district’s self-assessment results. A careful review by the Human Resources Department of the best management practices that were not used or were only partially used should lead to the adoption of those that would improve the district’s human resources management operations. The team encourages the Department to examine the following areas carefully--

- Planning, coordinating, providing, and evaluating staff and professional development programs in both non-instructional and instructional areas.
- The HR Department’s management practices that relate to the following—
  - Accountability mechanisms to ensure performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its programs.
  - The organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes.
- The efficient and readily accessible manner of maintaining personnel records.

## **I. DISTRICT OVERVIEW**

### **A. Demographics**

Guilford County encompasses approximately 650 square miles and is part of the Piedmont Triad Region, which is located in the north-central part of North Carolina. The county has a population of over 420,000, and includes the cities of Greensboro (229,110 people) and High Point (91,543 people) and the smaller communities of Stokesdale, Colfax, Summerfield, Gibsonville, and Brown Summit. The Guilford County Schools encompasses over 2,200 acres of land in both urban and rural settings, and operates over 280 buildings with over eight million square feet of floor space.

The school district is the third largest in the state. Its growing enrollment of over 70,000 students (See Exhibit I) is 58.3 percent minority who speak over 122 languages and dialects from over 107 identified cultural and ethnic groups. About 33,025 students are low income, and 47.6 percent receive free and reduced price meals. There are approximately 12,811 students identified as accelerated learners, and 10,469 special education students.

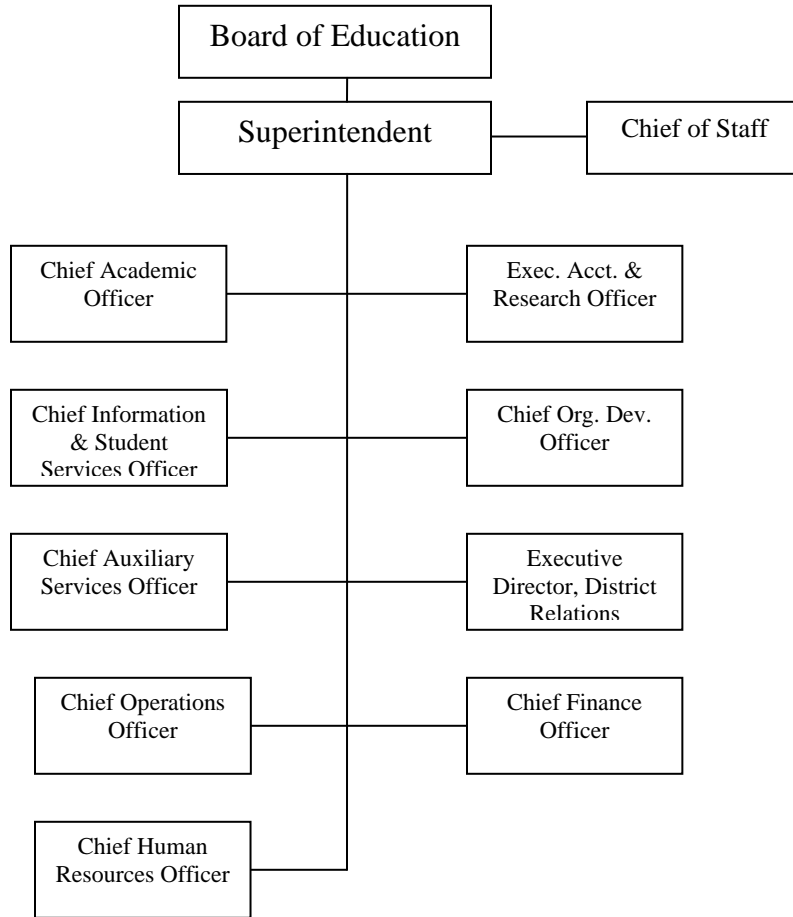
### **B. Organization**

The district operates 115 schools, which are supported by three main administrative sites and several satellite offices. There are 65 elementary schools, 21 middle schools, 24 high schools, two special education schools, two sites that provide an alternative to long-term suspensions, and one high school that offers students a flexible schedule to complete graduation requirements.

The school system is financially dependent upon Guilford County to levy taxes on its behalf. The district's budgeted revenues for the 2005-2006 school year totaled \$511,695,680, including state funds of \$305,596,312, local funds of \$171,885,408, and federal funds of \$34,213,960. The district expended \$395,272,982 (75.5%) for salaries and benefits; \$39,502,390 (7.6%) for supplies and materials, \$62,418,131 (11.9%) for purchased services, \$15,881,749 (3.0%) for buildings, equipment and vehicles, and \$7,518,330 (1.4%) for heating, electrical and plumbing contracts, and \$2,935,678 (.56%) for fund transfers (including transfers to charter schools).

The leadership and administration of the school district are politically independent of county and municipal governments. An eleven-member Board of Education oversees the district and is comprised of nine members elected from single-member districts and two members elected at large. The school board appoints the superintendent, who oversees the district's administrative operations and has nine direct-line reports. (See Exhibit I).

**Exhibit I. GCPS Organization**



The Guilford County Schools, with more than 9,976 full- and part-time personnel, is the second-largest employer in a 12-county area. The district employs 56 administrators and managers, and 221 principals and assistant principals. Instructional and student support personnel include 4,844 elementary, secondary, and other classroom teachers, 815 guidance counselors, psychologists, librarians, audiovisual specialists, consultants, and other professionals, and 1,135 teacher assistants. The district also employs 1,940 support services personnel, including 72 technicians, 478 clerical and secretarial staff, 1,207 service workers, 165 trades people, and 18 laborers.

**C. Human Resources**

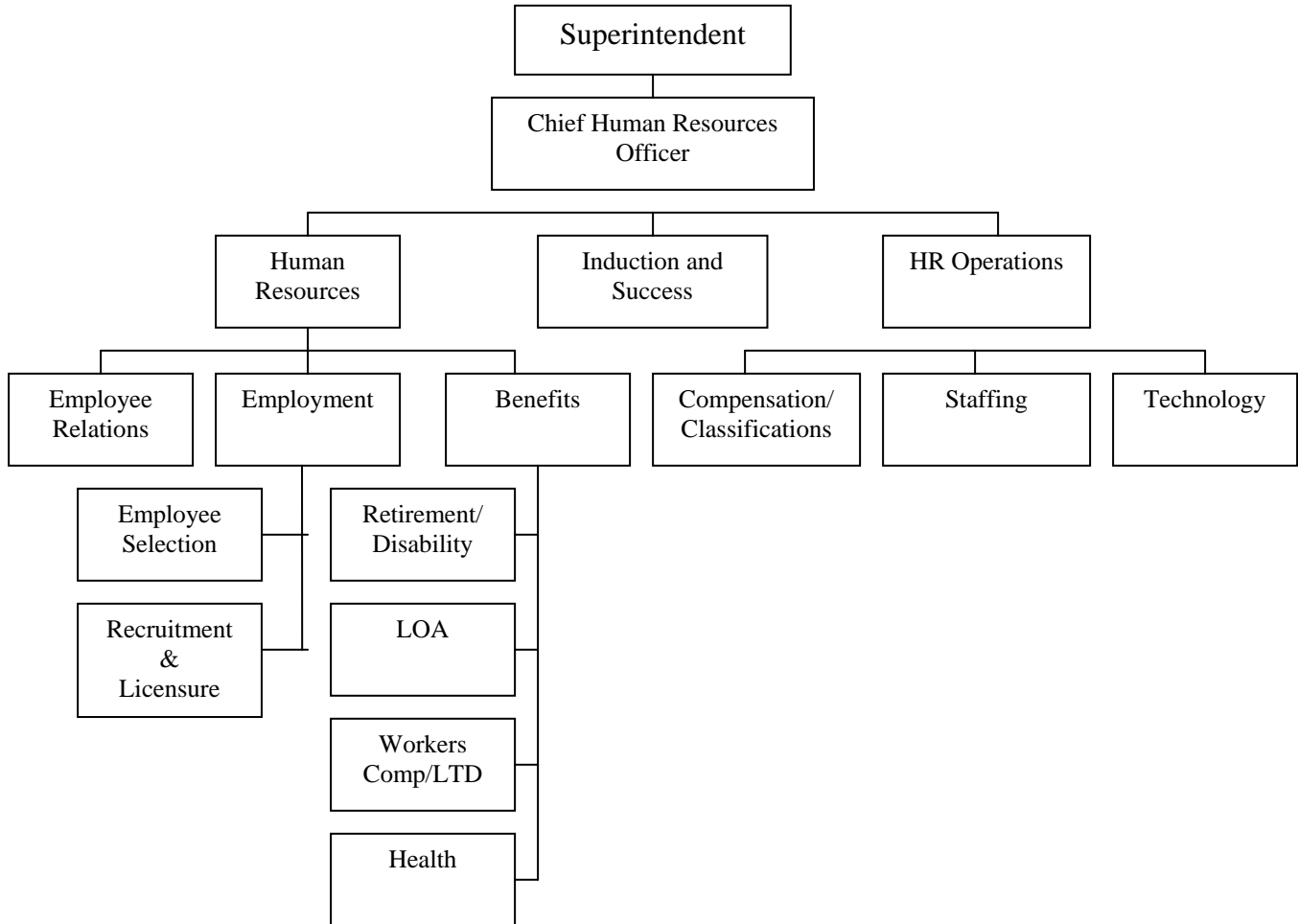
The district's Human Resource Officer reports directly to the Superintendent. The Human Resource Department is composed of three units: Human Resources, which is responsible for employment, employee relations, and benefits; Induction, which is responsible for induction and other similar programs; and Operations, which is responsible for compensation and classification, staffing, and information technology. (See Exhibit II)

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There are approximately 50.5 regular full-time positions allotted for human resources operations. The district allocated \$425,508 of its FY 2007 Operating Budget for the Human Resources Department. Those dollars are allocated for criminal background checks, advertising, professional development, mentoring, interviewing, and recruiting.

### Exhibit II. GCS Human Resources Department



## **II. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The Council of the Great City Schools (“the Council”) has conducted more than 140 instructional, management, and operational reviews in more than 35 large urban school districts over the last eight years. The organization conducts these reviews using Strategic Support Teams of current and former senior managers with strong reputations for developing and promoting effective operations and innovative practices in major urban public school systems across the country. (Appendix E lists the reviews conducted by the Council.)

### **A. Project Goals**

The Superintendent of the Guilford County Schools, Dr. Terry Grier, asked the Council of the Great City Schools to review and evaluate the district’s human resources operations and to provide the following—

- An evaluation of human resource leadership, operational practices, and procedures for effectiveness, efficiency, customer services, and results.
- An assessment of human resource effectiveness in the recruitment, development, and retention of a highly functioning workforce.
- A review of human resource organizational, administrative, and staffing structure, with recommendations for improvements.
- An evaluation of human resource focus on customer service and its ability to service the needs of schools and departments.
- A review of the human resource leadership role in accomplishing the district’s strategic objectives.

### **B. Strategic Support Teams**

In response, the Council assembled a Strategic Support Team comprised of current and former senior managers with extensive experience in human resource administration and operations in other large school systems from across the country. The team was composed of the following members (See Appendix D for biographies of the Strategic Support Team members)--

- **Strategic Support Team**

Roger Buschmann  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
Los Angeles Unified School District

Dan Cochran (principal investigator)  
Executive Director, Human Resources (Retired)  
Broward County School District

Marjorie Adler  
Human Resources Officer (Retired)  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Beatrice Garza  
Executive Director, Human Resources  
Houston Independent School District

Debra Ware  
Operations Executive, Human resources  
Dallas Independent School District

- **Council Staff**

Robert Carlson  
Director of Management Services  
Council of the Great City Schools

### **C. Project Activities**

To meet the objectives for this project established by the district, the Strategic Support Team performed the following activities during and subsequent to its four-day site visit to Greensboro on October 18-21, 2006. (The Working Agenda for the site visit is shown in Appendix A.)

- The team reviewed relevant information and documentation provided by district staff before and after visiting the district. (A list of documents reviewed by the team is presented in Appendix B.)
- Interviewed key district and human resource staff members as well as other relevant stakeholders, such as school principals. (A list of people interviewed by the team is presented in Appendix C.)<sup>2</sup>
- Conducted additional analyses of issues identified during the interview process.
- Assessed critical issues and sought opportunities to improve the district's human resource practices.

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<sup>2</sup> The Council's review was based on interviews with staff and others, a review of documents provided by the district, observations of operations, and the team's professional judgment. The team conducting the interviews rely on the willingness of those interviewed to be truthful and forthcoming, and made every effort to provide an objective assessment of district functions, but cannot always judge the accuracy of statements made by all interviewees.

- Developed recommendations to assist the district in its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its human resource program.
- Synthesized and refined the team’s findings and recommendations.

The Council sent draft copies of the report to the team members for review to ensure its accuracy and obtain their concurrence with its recommendations. The final draft was then forwarded to the superintendent before the report was put in final form.

### **D. Project Benefits**

The reports generated by the Council of the Great City Schools and its Strategic Support Teams are occasionally critical. As such, they serve as the foundation for improving the operations, organization, instruction, and management of many urban school systems nationally. In other cases, the reports are complimentary and form the basis for identifying innovative practices for other urban school systems to replicate. This peer review approach has a number of unique benefits:

- **Credibility.** The teams are highly credible because they are made up of subject matter experts who understand the issues and challenges that urban school districts experience and know how to provide realistic recommendations that can be implemented in the real world.
- **Collegiality.** By working with current and former school administrators, the school district’s staff members expand the list of colleagues with whom they can share ideas. This collegiality promotes the sharing of efficiencies, as administrators benefit from the lessons learned in other large school districts across the country.
- **Cost-Efficiency.** Since the teams have first-hand knowledge of school district administration and operations, they are able to identify issues and concerns quickly, knowing where and how to probe. This efficiency reduces the “learning curve” for team members and enables the Council to offer high-quality services at a reasonable cost.

## **IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Council of the Great City Schools conducted two kinds of assessments on the operations of the Human Resources Department in the Guilford County Schools. The first assessment involved the site visit by the Council’s Strategic Support Team to review documents and interview staff. The second was a self-assessment that involved having the department rate itself on a series of “best practices.”

### **A. Strategic Support Team**

#### **Findings, Observations and Concerns**

The first method used by the Council to assess the district’s Human Resource operations involved a four-day site visit to the district by the Council’s Strategic Support Team. The team’s analysis resulted in a number of findings, observations, and concerns in the following categories—

- Commendations
- Organization and Resource Allocation
- Leadership and Decision Making
- Management and Operations

#### **Commendations**

The team noted the following commendations--

- The Chief Human Resources Officer serves at the senior management level and reports directly to the Superintendent, which is a critical requirement for strategic leadership. Many other major urban school systems do not have—but should have—their HR directors reporting directly to their superintendents.
- The teacher recruitment team performs at an exceptionally high level, with impressive strategies and results that rank among the best in the nation.
- The “Mission Possible” teacher salary-incentive program represents a “cutting edge” strategy that should have an immediate impact on teacher satisfaction.
- Use of the Haberman interview process in teacher selection demonstrates the district’s commitment to the special requirements of urban education.

#### **Organization and Resource Management**

- Existing salary and compensation levels and practices are not consistent. The result is perceived inequities and the source of morale problems.

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- Salaries for staffing-specialist’s positions do not reflect the advanced level of analytical skills required for the job. The result is frequent turnover.
- Salary and compensation levels are not competitive with the external market. The result is numerous jobs going unfilled.
- The department is not appropriately organized and staffed to eliminate “bottle-necks” and related inefficiencies.
- The department is not organized for maximum workflow efficiencies. The benefits unit, for example, is located with recruitment rather than with staffing.
- Written procedures do not reflect adequate value-added analyses. The result is procedures that provide little value in improving day-to-day workflow.
- Compensation and job-evaluation classifications and reclassification requirements and procedures are not adequately communicated or consistently followed. The result is credibility and morale issues.
- Interdepartmental and top down decisions, organizational changes, and communications are often inadequate. The result is confusion and miscommunications.
- Workflow processes have not been revised recently, and staff training has not been provided to meet demands of an ever-increasing volume and complexity of work. The result contributes to staff turnover and diminished morale.
- The new-hire orientation process for non-instructional employees is fractured by department and is not adequate to enhance new-employee satisfaction.
- Training and development opportunities for non-instructional employees are inadequate and offer little opportunity for staff capacity building.
- The principal and assistant principal training, development, and mentoring process is inconsistently implemented, resulting in some candidates being promoted before they are able to meet expectations.
- There is a weak and poorly defined relationship between the organizational development department’s responsibilities and those of human resources when it comes to staff orientation and induction.
- The non-instructional hiring process is not well understood by supervisors or candidates. The result is inefficiencies and miscommunications.
- The ISO process is not utilized to guide day-to-day performance and its integration with balanced scorecard and district objectives is not evidenced.

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- A review of various ISO goals indicates a department focus on transactional processes rather than strategic, value-added functional improvements.
- High turn-over rates adversely impact staff performance and productivity.
- The employee relations unit is a one-person department assigned multiple tasks, including background checks and employee discipline. This situation may expose the district to potential liabilities.
- Classified-job postings are often generic, requiring more specificity by both the department and the candidates.
- Candidates for positions are not always notified in a timely manner about their selection status.
- The departmental hierarchy appears top-heavy with more executive directors and directors than span-of-control requirements would dictate.
- The division is fractured along functional lines, weakening cross-functional and cross-departmental teamwork.
- Applicant pools for teachers and school administrators are not purged and updated regularly in order to include only active candidates. Some “do not hire (code 20)” candidates remain in the pool.
- Policies and procedures are not consistently applied, resulting in the same issue being reviewed numerous times.
- Professional development and training objectives and opportunities are not clearly defined or communicated and vary widely across the district.
- The roles and responsibilities of the human resource office for program input and records maintenance on professional development is not clear.

### **Leadership and Decision Making**

- The district does not utilize an annual “early decision” forecasting model for budget and manpower-allocation decisions (normally based on trend and market data) in order to determine needs for the coming year.
- Decisions related to the allocation of positions are not provided in a timely manner and are often revised resulting in a lack of credibility in the process.
- There is no clear ownership and accountability for the position control system, and it does not appear to be well managed or strategically aligned.

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- The position control process is not clearly communicated or understood by principals.
- Multiple contingencies for annual decision-making are not developed, resulting in the need for numerous changes in directives over the course of the year.
- Job descriptions, required for all positions, are seldom linked to job announcements and appear to be underutilized.
- The district implemented site-based management without first providing the organizational infrastructure and training essential for its success.
- The staffing and allotment process has been inconsistently applied over the years often with multiple revisions, including seven notebooks one year.
- Proactive results-oriented leadership is not evidenced in the human resources department. The department appears to have a “this the way we’ve always done it” perspective.
- The human resources department has not provided the necessary initiatives focused on enhanced performance and customer service required to make the department a strategic leader for the district.
- The human resources department has not provided a plan to automate processes incorporating workflow efficiencies within the HRMS system.
- The district lacks a systemwide strategic plan for employee workplace satisfaction, retention, and reduction of job turnover.
- Leadership meetings often focus on tactical rather than strategic issues.
- The district lacks an integrated long-term strategic plan linked to its mission and vision with clearly established ownership of processes and services with targets based on performance results.
- Staffing numbers in the human resource department appear to be driven by low-paying clerical positions and filled by staff required to perform multiple complex tasks beyond their job descriptions. The result is diminished performance and high turnover.
- Department management has failed to clearly articulate performance expectations and accountability standards.

### **✚ Management and Operations**

- IT information and communication systems are underutilized throughout the district. In addition, HRMS customizations may actually be contributing to a reliance on spreadsheets and paper forms.
- HR staffing office communications and response times are extremely slow during the summer-hiring season and offices are sometimes closed completely to principals.
- Principals do not have a direct “hot-line” phone number to enhance communications with their respective staffing specialists.
- The lack of customer focus and inefficiency results in newly hired employees being required to come in person to the personnel offices as many as 2-4 times on different days.
- The lack of clearly articulated job expectations results in personnel staff often “doing it for” principals who routinely refuse to use the HRMS system. The result is increased inefficiency.
- There is an apparent imbalance in the workloads of HR department staff resulting in some being overloaded while others are not.
- Highly efficient large-group processing of new hires is utilized during the pressure-packed summer-hiring season but abandoned during the highly inefficient one-on-one processing of new hires at other times.
- Human resource staff members frequently fail to respond to phone calls and emails within the performance standard 48 hours period.
- There is a general lack of customer-service focus within the human resources department.
- Human-resource leaders were unable to articulate the degree to which principals and other customers were satisfied with HR services.
- There is a lack of point-of-service, focus group, or customer-satisfaction surveys being utilized by the human resource department to determine performance effectiveness.
- Principals expressed concerns over having the Haberman-type interviews and other HR interactions scheduled at times and locations that increase time off campus.

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- There is an absence of district-level IT employee self-service capability, with the exception of the cafeteria plan, that could dramatically reduce work loads in benefits and payroll.
- Paper forms and procedures for simple processes requiring multiple signatures, such as extending employment or assigning supplements, are unnecessarily complex and time consuming.
- There is a lack of clearly defined, articulated, and updated accountability standards, processes, and procedures in the human resources unit.
- HR staff members are trained as specialists with little opportunity for cross-training or teamwork, making cross-functional teaming difficult to utilize.
- Workflow processes and personnel-record keeping is very paper intensive.
- The IT interface between HR and finance is inadequate. The result is a heavy reliance on paper spreadsheets.
- Newly hired teachers must wait extended periods for their correct salaries due to a cumbersome previous employment verification process.
- Job vacancy postings on the district web site are not very user-friendly.
- The district web site is underutilized for advertising and marketing the district and its career opportunities.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations presented in this report are not meant to be exhaustive. They are designed to provide the district with a number of strategies and actions to improve the leadership, management, and operations of the human resource functions of the Guilford County Schools.

#### **Overarching Recommendation**

As a starting point, the Strategic Support Team recommends that the district adopt a new management philosophy that will allow for the reengineering of its human resource operations and the realignment of its functions with the district's strategic objectives. This would entail moving human resources away from being a department focused increasingly on performing personnel functions that are largely transactional in nature, that provides little "value" to the district, and that fails to provide the strategic "human capital" that is essential to accomplishing the district's strategic objectives—to one that does.

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The rationale for reengineering human resources is grounded in the following three premises—

- The ability of the Guilford County Schools to meet the challenges it faces depends on its organizational ability to learn and grow.
- The enablers for learning and growth come primarily from employees, systems, and organizational alignment.
- Strategies for superior performance require significant investments in people, systems, and processes that build the district’s capabilities. Consequently, objectives and measures for these enablers of superior performance should be human-resource driven and should serve as an integral part of district performance.

The human-resource operations of the Guilford County Schools should be the organizational leader in attracting, developing, and retaining a highly motivated and strategically focused workforce. Three employee-based measures – satisfaction, productivity, and retention – should provide the outcome measures for assessing the district’s investments in employees, systems, and organizational alignment. The drivers of these outcomes should include indices of strategic job coverage, strategic information availability, and degree of personal, team, and departmental alignment with strategic objectives.

### **Departmental Leadership and Senior Management**

- Assess the ability and willingness of the department’s current leadership and senior management to reengineer and realign the human resource functions with the district’s strategic objectives. Retain the current leadership and senior managers and/or recruit new personnel for these positions who can effect the necessary changes. Hold the leadership accountable for—
  - Developing and implementing a multi-year strategic plan and action plans with specific targets that are aligned with ISO standards and district goals.<sup>3</sup>
  - Establishing expectations and performance metrics.
  - Conducting focus groups and surveys to assess and improve customer satisfaction with human resource services.
  - Implementing consistent “quality control” standards, policies, practices, and procedures.

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<sup>3</sup> The International Organization of Standardization (ISO) has developed technical standards for quality management systems to improve various aspects of business processes, quality, and customer service.

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- Developing a districtwide annual “early decision” forecasting model for budget and manpower needs that is based on trend and market data with multiple contingencies for both legislated and board directed revisions.
- Establishing a proactive, results-oriented department focused on strategic change management, continuous improvement, and elimination of its “we’ve always done it that way” mentality.
- Setting and implementing expectations and performance standards based on strategic rather than tactical and transactional workflow performance. Standards should include improved customer service.
- Enforcing performance standards, such as the 48-hour response time requirement.
- Implementing a senior level Superintendent’s Compensation Advisory Council charged with recommending districtwide compensation and salary levels consistent with budget limitations.
- Establishing an employee workplace satisfaction and retention advisory committee of senior managers headed by the chief human resources officer and charged with improving district-wide employee satisfaction and retention.
- Determining the “owners” of the position control system in both the budget and human resource offices and holding them accountable for its coordination and appropriate implementation.
- Reorganizing the human resource department with cross-functional service teams rather than individual “silos” to insure a more balanced workload for all staff and greater-cross-functional teaming.
- Developing and providing a districtwide training and development calendar of activities and opportunities for all employees.
- Developing and implementing a plan to improve workplace satisfaction in the central office and in schools to increase retention and reduce attrition.
- Establishing a “service-to-the-customer” orientation as the overriding attitude to guide performance across the district.
- Enhancing partnerships with area colleges and agencies such as the Center for Creative Leadership to enhance management expertise and promote awareness of district personnel needs.
- Developing a plan for systems integration and maximum use of IT information and communications systems in order to improve customer

service, operational performance, employee self-service, and reduce reliance on spreadsheets.

### **Management and Operations**

- Realign major workflow processes to enhance functional efficiency, value added orientation, customer focus, and electronic rather than paper-dependent processes to increase productivity and help manage a constantly increasing volume of work.
- Revise the instructional and non-instructional hiring processes, orientations, and induction activities with a focus on the efficient use of time and staff, and service-to-the-customer orientation.
- Improve department operations, including the use of the following—
  - A “hot-line” phone to staffing specialists for principals and supervisors to use
  - Same-day response to principals’ emails and phone calls
  - Extended hours of operation during the “peak” hiring season with offices always open to principals.
- Analyze the need for higher-level skills versus clerical requirements in human resource jobs in order to determine the appropriate numbers of staff for each skill set and to better balance workloads.
- Conduct an internal and external compensation analysis of salaries and compensation to determine a “baseline” for strategic recommendations that would enhance both internal equity and external competitiveness.
- Prioritize a schedule for job evaluations and possible reclassifications based on such factors as “difficulty to fill” and turnover rates for each job and/or job family.
- Develop standard operating procedures and frequently asked questions in a web-based environment for internal cross-functional training and to facilitate external communications with customers.
- Implement daily IT cross-district “pop-up” departmental and inter-departmental communications to improve understanding, teamwork, and customer service across the district.
- Implement a comprehensive performance-based principal and assistant principal training and induction program that must be completed prior to eligibility for promotion.

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- Develop a districtwide training and development program for non-instructional leaders and staff to promote individual capacity building, job satisfaction, and overall performance.
- Implement a process to purge the employment-application data base so that only “active” candidates are listed and to ensure that “code 20” or similar unqualified candidates are deleted.
- Establish a “one-stop” call and service center focused on customer service for both applicants and employees.
- Develop and require both principals and staff to utilize an automated human resources HRMS system in coordination with revised workflow efficiencies to reduce “bottle necks,” improve productivity, efficiency, and customer service.
- Consistently use large-group, new-hire “one-stop” staffing, placement, and paperwork processing that would require that newly hired staff need make only one personal visit to the human resource office.
- Establish a clearly communicated annual schedule for Haberman interviews that keep principals on-campus as much as possible.
- Simplify, streamline, standardize, or automate forms and processes requiring multiple signatures so that no more than two signatures are needed for such processes as extending pay or assignment of supplements.

### **B. Best Practices Indicators**

The second assessment method used by the Council as part of this project to review the district’s Human Resources Department involved the use of an instrument that allows the department to rate itself on a series of “best practices.” The assessment was adapted from one developed by the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) and Florida’s Auditor General, and was endorsed by the Council’s Chief Human Resources Officers at their 2004 meeting as a model for assessing school system operations.

The instrument, which can be used as either a self assessment or a third-party assessment, was developed to help districts 1) use performance and cost-efficient measures to evaluate programs; 2) use appropriate benchmarks based on comparable school districts, government agencies, and industry standards; 3) identify potential cost-savings; and 4) focus budgets and resources on district priorities and goals, including student performance. The surveys were based on a set of “best practices and indicators” identified from extensive literature reviews, interviews of education personnel experts, representatives from professional organizations, and educators in other states. The survey measures 17 standards and 161 indicators in five functional HR areas—

## **Review of Human Resource Operations in the Guilford County Schools**

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- Staff Development (3 Standards and 39 Practices)
- Recruitment, Hiring and Retention (2 Standards and 33 Practices)
- Human Resources Management (8 Standards and 52 Practices)
- Personnel Evaluation (2 Standards and 24 Practices)
- Absenteeism and Personnel Records Management (2 Standards and 13 Practices)

In sum, the Guilford County Schools' (GCS) Human Resources Department's self-assessment indicates that the unit uses 108 (67.1%) of the 161 indicators of "best human resources management practices" assessed in the survey.

### **Staff Development**

The GCS Human Resources Department reported that it uses 16 (41.0%) of the 39 best practices in this area.

- **Standard 1:** The district's HR Department provides a comprehensive staff-development program to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance among non-instructional employees.
  - The HR Department uses three of the 11 (27.3%) best practices, including—
    - The HR Department's orientation programs include information on district procedures, performance expectations and evaluations, training and career opportunities, and personnel policies regarding such issues as absences, leave approval, and tardiness.
    - The responsibility for training classes of non-instructional employees may be delegated to another unit within the district (i.e., transportation employees may be trained by the district's transportation unit), but that unit provides the district training officer with copies of annual plans, training schedules, and attendance rosters.
    - The district has procedures to evaluate individual in-service training activities.
  - The HR Department makes limited or partial use of the following best practice—
    - The HR Department conducts orientation programs for all new employees.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The district reported that the orientation program is available for some non-instructional employees; and that it was working on launching an orientation program for all non-instructional employees sometime in October.

- **The HR Department does not use any of the following practices—**
  - The HR Department has mentoring programs, as appropriate, for new non-instructional employees.
  - The HR Department plans training programs based on district-wide needs assessments that include input from employees and their supervisors.
  - The HR Department establishes and implements formal staff development plans to provide on-going training of non-instructional employees.
  - The HR Department uses employee feedback to evaluate individual in-service training activities.
  - The procedures to evaluate individual in-service training activities include the extent to which the efforts meet identified long-term training objectives.
  
- **The HR Department reported that the following practices were not applicable<sup>5</sup>—**
  - The HR Department has a districtwide training program and maintains training records on each staff member.
  - The HR Department solicits and uses input from supervisors and employees hired within the last three years to establish, revise, or affirm its new employee orientation programs for non-instructional employees, including content and approach.
  
- **Standard 2:** The district’s HR Department provides a comprehensive staff development program for instructional employees to attain and maintain high quality instruction and to achieve high levels of student performance.
  
- The HR Department uses nine of the 23 (39.1%) best practices in this area, including—
  - The HR Department conducts orientation programs for all new instructional employees, including information on district procedures, performance expectations and evaluations, training and career opportunities, and personnel policies regarding such issues as absences, leave approval and tardiness.

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<sup>5</sup> The team notes that training and orientation are functions performed by various departments throughout the district. It suggests, however, that there are technical roles for the HR Department to perform that should include maintaining training records on all staff members and developing the content and approaches to ensure that the employment orientation program for all employees is comprehensive and accurate.

## **Review of Human Resource Operations in the Guilford County Schools**

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- The HR Department has a professional development system that meets the requirements of State law, including approval by the state Department of Education.
  - The HR Department maintains training records on each staff member.
  - The HR Department solicits and uses input from supervisors and from new employees within the last three years to establish, revise, or affirm its orientation and induction programs for new instructional employees, including content and approach.
  - The HR Department has a comprehensive induction program that provides new teachers with the opportunities to learn the additional skills necessary to be successful in specific school environments.
  - The HR Department's induction program includes a mentoring component for new teachers.
  - The HR Department assigns mentors to each new teacher to provide guidance and advice as the new employee learns the various aspects of the job.
  - The HR Department trains mentors in the purposes of mentoring and in mentoring techniques and practices.
  - The HR Department uses analyses of disaggregated student data pertaining to goals for student learning and development to plan training programs.
- **The HR Department does not use the following practices—**
- The HR Department plans training programs for instructional employees based on districtwide needs assessments that include input from employees and their supervisors.
  - The HR Department uses analyses of the aggregated results of employee evaluations to plan training programs.
- The HR Department reported that 12 practices were not applicable since they were the responsibility of the district's Office of Organizational Development—
- The HR Department establishes, implements, and publishes an annual staff development plan for its instructional employees.
  - The HR Department's staff development plan includes clearly identified objectives for training.
  - The objectives for the HR Department's staff development training objectives include improved student performance.
  - The HR Department uses training funds in a cost-effective manner to enable instructional employees to further their professional development in a way that benefits the district and/or improves student outcomes.
  - The HR Department has procedures to evaluate individual in-service training activities.

- The HR Department evaluates the impact of in-service training activities on student outcomes and employee feedback.
  - The HR Department evaluates the extent to which annual training efforts meet identified long-term training objectives.
  - The HR Department’s training programs for instructional staff includes research-based teaching strategies that increase student learning and development.
  - The HR Department’s training programs for instructional staff includes strategies for assessing student performance.
  - The HR Department’s training programs for instructional staff includes follow-up necessary to ensure improvement.
  - The HR Department’s training programs for instructional staff include a variety of training approaches (e.g., lecture, simulation of techniques, observation, classroom practice, and feedback).
  - The HR Department has developed policies to encourage instructional personnel to pursue certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.
- **Standard 3:** The district’s HR Department provides a comprehensive staff development program for school-based administrators.
    - The HR Department uses four of the five (80%) best practices in this area, including--
      - All principals, assistant principals, and school site administrators have completed (or anticipate completing within the current school year) the HR Department’s leadership training program for administrators and school-based managers.
      - The HR Department has a process for identifying employees with the potential for employment in administrative positions.
      - The HR Department provides training to new administrators prior to their appointment to an administrative position.
      - The HR Department’s training program for new school administrators includes a mentoring component.
    - **The HR Department does not use the following practice—**
      - The HR Department’s decisions regarding the retention of school administrators in administrative positions are made after considering feedback solicited and received from non-administrative personnel and from parents.

### Recruitment, Hiring, Salary & Benefits Practices

The GCS Human Resources Department reported that it uses 30 of the 33 (90.1%) best recruitment, hiring, salary, and benefits practices in three standards areas.

- **Standard 1:** The district’s HR Department has efficient and effective processes for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel.
  - The HR Department uses all (100%) of the 19 best practices in this area, including—
    - The HR Department has standard districtwide procedures to announce vacancies and to receive and process applications.
    - The HR Department conducts its employment procedures in a manner that assures equal opportunity regardless of age, race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.
    - The HR Department completes background checks of all new employees prior to placing the employee in a position that involves contact with students.
    - The HR Department maintains up-to-date, clear, concise, and readily accessible position descriptions that accurately identify the duties of each position and the education, experience, knowledge, skills, and competency levels required for each class of positions, and for each district-level administrative position.
    - The HR Department can demonstrate that its recruiting practices generate a sufficient number of qualified applicants to fill vacant positions in a timely manner.
    - The HR Department can demonstrate that its recruiting strategies are cost-effective.
    - The HR Department’s job vacancy announcements provide information on positions to be filled, education, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities required, and compensation range.
      - Vacancy information is accessible through both a telephone job-line and through the Internet.
      - The job application procedures are applicant-friendly.
      - Application forms are easily accessible.
      - Applications are easily shared within the district so that the applicant is not required to take a separate copy of their application to every different school that they wish to apply.
      - The HR Department has a procedure for matching applicants with available openings.
      - Applicants can readily ascertain the status of their application.

- In those areas in which the district has experienced a shortage of qualified applicants, the HR Department has developed and implemented short- and long-term strategies to remedy the situation.<sup>6</sup>
  - The HR Department periodically compares its entry-level salaries with neighboring districts, and adjusts entry-level salaries as necessary to compete for qualified applicants.
  - The HR Department can demonstrate that the employees hired within recent years generally reflect the population of the district.
  - If certain races or ethnicities are underrepresented, the HR Department has implemented a long-term plan to remedy that situation.
  - The HR Department can demonstrate that it verifies the qualifications of all of its instructional employees, and that all instructional employees are qualified for the positions that they hold.
  - The HR Department has procedures to monitor the number of out-of-field teachers who have been hired, and the status of those teachers' efforts to attain certification in the field in which they are teaching.
- **Standard 2:** The district's HR Department maintains a reasonable stable work force through competitive salary and benefit packages.
    - The HR Department uses 11 of the 14 (78.6%) best practices in this area, including <sup>7</sup>--
      - The HR Department has implemented strategies to improve the retention of good employees, such as linking pay increases to performance.
      - The district has developed a policy and/or procedures that give a preference based on instructional performance when selecting instructional personnel for positions that receive supplemental pay (i.e., team leaders, mentors, etc.).
      - The district has developed incentive policies to encourage and reward effective teachers, critical shortage teachers, and teachers in hard to place schools.
      - The HR Department maintains data on turnover rates for major classes of employees, and monitors this data to identify unusual variations in the turnover rate.
      - The HR Department periodically compares its turnover rates with the turnover rates of peer districts.
      - Unless the district's turnover rates are lower than the rates in most of its peer districts, the HR Department can demonstrate attempts to identify and

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<sup>6</sup> The district indicates there is a need for continual refinement in this area.

<sup>7</sup> The team noted that the response to this standard was repeatedly contradicted during the interview process. The team was repeatedly informed that the under market salaries paid by the district negatively affected the recruitment effort and the ability to retain both certificated and classified employees. The district intends to contract for a compensation study to determine what market salaries would stabilize the district's employee base.

remedy factors that adversely affect the district's ability to retain qualified instructional and non-instructional personnel.

- The HR Department identifies factors that adversely affect the district's ability to retain qualified instructional and non-instructional personnel through climate surveys, exit interviews, the collective bargaining process, or districtwide personnel reviews.
  - The HR Department monitors data related to portions of the workforce approaching retirement, with attempts to forecast any large numbers of retirements that are likely to create a need for an abnormally high number of qualified applicants for any given year.
  - In setting employee compensation and benefit packages, the district periodically compares its compensation and benefit package with that of neighboring and similar sized school districts, and of other public and private employers in the area.
  - When criteria such as position, years of experience, education level, district cost of living, and job requirements are considered, the district's compensation and benefits package, including the contribution to the state retirement system, is competitive with the value and compensation of other public and private employers in the area.
  - The district periodically analyzes and compares major classes of positions within the district for internal equity, and adjusts salaries as appropriate based upon those reviews.
- **The HR Department makes partial or limited use of the following practices<sup>8</sup>—**
- The HR Department conducts exit interviews with employees who terminate their employment.
  - The HR Department periodically compiles and analyzes the results of its exit interviews.
- **The HR Department does not use the following practice—**
- The HR Department compiles the results of their exit interviews and the analyses of turnover rates are provided to the superintendent and to the board for their information and consideration at least annually.

### Human Resources Management Practices

The GCS Human Resources Department reported that it uses 31 of the 52 (59.6%) best human resources management practices in this area.

- **Standard 1:** The district's HR Department maintains clear and effective channels of communication with employees.

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<sup>8</sup> The team interpreted the HR Department's responses that it would conduct exit interviews "if requested" as a partial way of compiling and analyzes the reasons for employees terminating their employment.

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- The HR Department uses six of the eight (75%) best practices in this area, including—
  - The HR Department produces and distributes an employee handbook, which includes information on such subjects as employee rights and responsibilities, fringe benefits, general working requirements (workdays, leave policies, holidays, etc.), personnel evaluation process, grievance procedures, and compensation policies; a copy of applicable collective bargaining agreements; and pamphlets or other written material explaining district benefit programs.
  - The HR Department maintains an internet/intranet-based site that contains correct and current detailed information for employees, including district personnel policies, a district calendar, district office staffing information (who is responsible for what and how to contact), and other relevant district data and information.
  - The HR Department has established cost-effective means of directly informing employees of district news, policy and personnel changes, and other relevant information.
  - The HR Department has clearly articulated the responsibilities for each office at the district level in the employee handbook, in documents provided to parents, or school website so that district employees, parents, and the school board can determine the functions of those offices.
  - The HR Department has customer-friendly processes that enable employees, parents, and school board members to contact and to obtain information from knowledgeable sources at the district office.
  - When developing or revising major policies, the HR Department solicits and uses input from interested and affected employees through surveys, task forces, work groups or other consensus-gathering approaches.
  
- **The HR Department does not use the following practices—**
  - The HR Department officials schedule periodic visits to individual schools and other work sites to meet with employees.<sup>9</sup>
  - The HR Department has established a system for soliciting feedback from its employees. The process for receiving and acting upon employee feedback is clearly articulated, and the district can demonstrate that it has regularly solicited feedback and responded to the feedback as it has received.
  
- **Standard 2:** The district’s HR Department has developed efficient and cost-effective policies and practices for providing substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.

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<sup>9</sup> The HR Department indicates that this practice was newly implemented this year.

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- The HR Department uses six of the seven (85.7%) best practices in this area, including—
  - The HR Department monitors rates of absenteeism among teachers and other essential employees.
  - The HR Department has defined what constitutes excessive absenteeism, and has developed policies/practices to deal effectively with the problems created by excessive absenteeism.
  - The HR Department recruits and maintains a sufficient number of substitute teachers to cover most absenteeism peaks.
  - The HR Department has clearly defined procedures for teachers and essential non-instructional personnel to notify the appropriate school or district officials of an anticipated absence and for substitutes to be contacted.
  - The HR Department provides ongoing training and orientation for substitute teachers.
  - The HR Department equitably assigns substitutes among schools.
  
- **The HR Department does not use the following practice—**
  - The HR Department routinely provides special assistance (training and oversight) to those who must substitute for extended teacher absences.
  
- **Standard 3:** The district’s HR Department maintains personnel records in a highly efficient and accessible manner.
  - The HR Department uses six of the seven (85.7%) best practices in this area, including--
    - The HR Department maintains personnel records, including confidential records, in accordance with State statutes and regulations.
    - The HR Department has an efficient and effective record-keeping system for both automated and hardcopy personnel records, and uses appropriate and cost-efficient archiving methods.
    - The HR Department uses automated record-keeping systems and minimizes the use of antiquated or time-consuming hardcopy record systems.
    - The HR Department has developed an automated personnel system that enables officials at school sites to access personnel records on the automated personnel system.
    - The HR Department can demonstrate that it updates personnel records in a timely manner.
    - Hardcopy records are generally filed into individual personnel records in a prioritized fashion so that needed records can be found in the file.

- **The HR Department does not use the following practice—**
  - When appropriate, personnel records can be amended by school personnel, diminishing the need for the transfer of paper from the school to the district office.
- **Standard 4:** The district’s HR Department has developed cost-containment practices for its Workers’ Compensation Program.
  - The HR Department uses four of the five (80%) best practices in this area, including--
    - The HR Department can demonstrate that it reviews its Workers’ Compensation Program to evaluate workers’ compensation claims and expenses.
    - The HR Department uses a comparison with state and national statistics, peer and area school districts, and as appropriate for some positions, other government agencies and private industry in the review of its Workers’ Compensation Program.
    - The HR Department uses the results of these evaluations to be proactive in attempts to cost effectively reduce frequency and cost of Workers’ Compensation claims.
    - The HR Department has procedures that are distributed to all employees concerning prompt reporting of all on-the-job injuries.
  - **The HR Department reported that the practice was not applicable since it was conducted by the maintenance unit<sup>10</sup>—**
    - The HR Department has a safety inspection program that determines the corrective actions necessary bases upon past workers’ compensation claim experience and proactive inspection of known and probable high-risk areas and professions.
- **Standard 5:** The district’s HR Department has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its programs.
  - The HR Department uses one of the four (25%) best practices in this area—

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<sup>10</sup> The team is concerned that the safety inspection program being performed by the department responsible for maintaining facilities. There is an apparent conflict of interest in this practice that could impact risk management and district exposure and potential liabilities

## **Review of Human Resource Operations in the Guilford County Schools**

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- The HR Department regularly evaluates the performance and cost of its programs and analyzes potential cost savings of alternatives, such as outside contracting and privatization.
- **The HR Department partially uses the following practice—**
  - The HR Department has clearly stated goals and measurable objectives that reflect the intent (purpose) and expected outcomes of its program and address the major aspects of the program’s expenditures.<sup>11</sup>
- **The HR Department does not use the following practices—**
  - The HR Department uses appropriate performance and cost-efficiency measures and interpretive benchmarks to evaluate its programs and uses these in management decision-making.
  - The HR Department has established and implemented strategies to continually assess the reliability of its program performance and cost data.
- **Standard 6:** The district’s HR Department periodically reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of its office to minimize administrative layers and processes.
  - The HR Department uses one of the five (20%) best practices in this area--
    - The HR Department periodically compares its own staffing levels to human resources operations in comparable districts using appropriate measures such as number of human resource staff per district employee or human resource cost per district employee, and reports the results of this review in writing to the school board.
  - **The HR Department does not use the following best practices—**
    - The HR Department periodically conducts a review of its organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes. The results of these reviews are provided in writing to the school board.
    - The HR Department can demonstrate that it has an appropriate structure and that staffing levels are reasonable based on applicable comparisons and/or benchmarks.
    - As presently aligned, the structure of the HR Department includes reasonable lines of authority and spans of control given the responsibilities of each organizational unit.
    - At least annually, the director of the HR Department prepares a report to the superintendent and/or the school board on the activities of the program

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<sup>11</sup> The district reported that the HR Department’s goals and objectives do not address the major aspects of the program’s expenditures.

and on any changes that are needed to improve the organizational structure.

- **Standard 7:** The district's HR Department periodically evaluates its personnel practices and adjusts these practices as needed to reduce costs and/or improve efficiency and effectiveness.
  - The HR Department uses seven of the nine (77.8%) best practices in this area, including—
    - The HR Department periodically conducts a review of its service delivery to identify ways of reducing costs and improving efficiency and effectiveness.
    - The HR Department periodically solicits feedback from staff throughout the district as to whether its operations are efficiently and effectively serving the district.
    - Requests for personnel assistance from administrators and employees are handled efficiently by the HR Department.
    - The HR Department makes use of automated phone systems, email, faxing, and the district website as a means of answering inquiries whenever possible.
    - The employee benefits offered by the district provide value to the employees at a level that justifies the cost of those benefits to the district.
    - The HR Department identifies and adopts less costly approaches to providing employee benefits whenever possible.
    - To reduce the costs of writing checks, the HR Department requires all new employees to receive salary warrants through direct deposit unless this requirement is waived due to special circumstances.
  - **The HR Department does not use the following practices—**
    - The HR Department substantially implements the recommendations resulting from review of its service delivery.
    - The HR Department puts the results of this feedback, including recommendations for program improvements, into writing to the superintendent and/or the school board.
- **Standard 8:** For classes of employees that are unionized, the district's HR Department maintains an effective collective bargaining process.
  - The HR Department reported that none of the seven practices was applicable since the district is in a right-to-work state.

### Personnel Evaluation Practice

The GCS Human Resources Department uses 21 of the 24 (87.5%) personnel-evaluation best practices.

- **Standard 1:** The district's HR Department has designed a system for formally evaluating employees to improve and reward excellent performance and productivity, and to identify and address performance that does not meet the district's expectations for the employee.
  - The HR Department uses 12 of the fifteen (86.7%) best practices in this area, including—
    - The HR Department has established and implemented procedures for assessing the performance of all instructional personnel as required by State law, and these procedures have been approved by the Department of Education.
    - The HR Department provides written information regarding the performance assessment process to all personnel at the beginning of a rating period, including performance criteria that will be used in the assessment and the process that will be used to make the assessment.
    - The HR Department has performance criteria including measures and standards related to student outcomes for instructional personnel, as required by State law.
    - The HR Department provides employees with a written employee disciplinary procedure that includes provisions of due process.
    - The HR Department regularly provides training, guidance, and coaching to persons who conduct personnel evaluations to ensure they evaluate personnel properly.
    - The HR Department has developed a system for evaluating instructional employees that includes an appraisal of the employee's content knowledge in the area of instruction.
    - The HR Department developed a process by which it determines/verifies that immediate supervisors have completed performance evaluations at least once a year or as required by district policy.
    - The HR Department uses master teachers to assist in the evaluations of new teachers.
    - The HR Department has structured an evaluation process in such a way that poorly performing employees are clearly informed that their performance does not meet the district's expectations.
    - When an employee's performance does not meet expectations, the HR Department provides employee with a written notice as to when their performance will be reevaluated, and a copy of this notice is provided to the district.
    - The HR Department has developed procedures regarding the maintenance of records regarding instructional employees who have been notified that

- their performance has been unsatisfactory, instructional employees who have been placed on probationary status, and disciplinary actions taken against instructional personnel due to poor performance or for any other reason.
- The HR Department has developed policies regarding the drug-testing of employees and regarding the provision of employee assistance to employees who are impaired by alcohol or drug abuse, in accordance with State law.
- **The HR Department partially uses the following practice—**
    - The HR Department has developed and implemented policies and/or procedures that link a portion of instructional employee salary to measures of student performance.<sup>12</sup>
  - **The HR Department does not use the following practices—**
    - The HR Department has developed and used a 360-degree evaluation procedure to solicit input from peers and subordinates, and, when appropriate, from parents and from other classes of employee.
    - The HR Department annually compiles information on employee evaluations to determine what employee performance issues need to be addressed by management and through training.
- **Standard 2:** The district's HR Department ensures that employees who repeatedly fail to meet the district's performance expectations, or whose behavior or job performance is potentially harmful to students, are promptly removed from contact with students, and that the appropriate steps are taken to terminate the person's employment.
- The HR Department uses all (100%) of the nine best practices in this area, including--
    - The HR Department regularly provides training, guidance, and coaching to managers on the procedures and issues associated with working with poorly performing employees.
    - The HR Department has established procedures and criteria to identify the employee behaviors and performance problems that are potentially harmful to students.
    - The HR Department has developed a plan for ensuring that marginal or poorly performing employees receive counseling, individual development plans, official notice of probation and employee appeal procedures.

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<sup>12</sup> The linkage of instructional employee salary to measures of student performance has been implemented in the district's Mission Possible Schools.

- The HR Department has a process for monitoring the ongoing performance of marginal or poorly performing employees to ensure that either performance is improved or employment is terminated.
- The HR Department has a process for monitoring the progress and performance of students who are under the instruction of a teacher who has been identified as a poor performer.
- At least one official in the HR Department is charged with the responsibility of working with principals to appropriately document poor performance and to provide administrative and legal consultation to the principals in making and implementing decisions to terminate employees.
- The HR Department has developed procedures that provide for the prompt investigation and resolution of allegations of behavior by district employees that is potentially harmful to students.
- The HR Department has developed procedures that expeditiously remove from contact with students those employees whose behavior, attitude, or performance may be harmful to students.
- The HR Department has procedures in place to ensure that poorly performing employees are not repeatedly transferred among school sites in lieu of termination of their employment.

### **Absenteeism & Personnel Records Management Practices**

The GCS Human Resources Department uses 10 of the 13 (76.9%) best absenteeism and personnel records management practices in this area.

- **Standard 1:** The district's HR Department has efficient and cost-effective systems for managing absenteeism and the use of substitute teachers and other substitute personnel.
  - The HR Department uses all (100%) of the seven best practices in this area, including--
    - The HR Department monitors rates of absenteeism and the use of substitutes among teachers and other essential employees.
    - The HR Department has defined the rate of absenteeism that requires review, and has developed policies/practices to deal effectively with the problems created by excessive absenteeism.
    - The HR Department recruits and maintains a sufficient number of substitute teachers to cover most absenteeism peaks.
    - The HR Department has clearly defined procedures for teachers and essential non-instructional personnel to notify the appropriate school or district officials of an anticipated absence and for substitutes to be contacted.
    - The HR Department provides ongoing training and orientation for substitute teachers.

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- The HR Department routinely provides special assistance (training and oversight) to those who must substitute for extended teacher absences.
- The HR Department has implemented ways to decrease absenteeism, which may include an incentive program to reward good attendance.
- **Standard 2:** The district’s HR Department maintains personnel records in an efficient and readily accessible manner.
  - The HR Department uses three of the six (50%) best practices in this area, including—
    - The HR Department maintains personnel records, including confidential records, in accordance with State statutes and regulations.
    - The HR Department uses automated record-keeping systems and minimizes the use of antiquated or time-consuming hardcopy record systems.
    - The HR Department can demonstrate that it updates personnel records in a timely manner, and, when dealing with a filing backlog, files hardcopy records in a prioritized fashion so that needed records can be found in the file.
  - **The HR Department does not use the following best practices—**
    - The HR Department has an efficient and effective record keeping system for both automated and hardcopy personnel records, including a system for identifying and archiving old records.
    - The HR Department has established procedures to allow officials at school sites to access automated personnel records.
    - School administrators can amend personnel records without compromising the security of those records, thus diminishing the need for the transfer of paper from the school to the district office.

### **Recommendations**

The Strategic Support Team did not make specific recommendations related to the district’s self-assessment. A careful review by the Human Resources Department of the best practices that are not and/or are only partially used should lead to the adoption of those practices that would improve the district’s human resource operations. In doing so, the team encourages the Department to examine the following areas carefully--

- Planning, coordinating, providing, and evaluating staff and professional development programs in both non-instructional and instructional areas.
- The HR Department’s management practices that relate to the following—

## **Review of Human Resource Operations in the Guilford County Schools**

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- Accountability mechanisms to ensure performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its programs.
- The organizational structure and staffing levels to minimize administrative layers and processes.
- The efficient and readily accessible manner of maintaining personnel records.

**APPENDIX A: WORKING AGENDA**

**Strategic Support/Technical Assistance Team  
Human resources Operations  
Guilford County Schools (Greensboro, NC)  
October 18-21, 2006**

**Contact: Peggy Thompson  
Chief HR Officer  
Office: 336-370-8340  
Cell: 336-215-5269**

**Working Agenda**

**Wednesday, October 18**

**Team Arrival**  
Marriott Hotel Greensboro Downtown  
304 N. Greene Street  
Greensboro, NC 27401  
336-379-8000

6:30 p.m.

**Dinner Meeting**

**Terry Grier**, Superintendent  
**Eric Becoats**, Chief of Staff

**Thursday, October 19**

**Team Arrival**

8:00 - 9:30 a.m.

**Team Meeting**

**Sharon Ozment**, Chief Finance Officer  
**Kevin Lear**, Chief Operations Officer  
**Terrence Young**, Chief Information Officer  
**Mack McCary**, Chief Academic Officer  
**John Wrght**, Chief Auxiliary Services  
**Gongshu Zhang**, Chief Research Officer  
**Valerie Collins**, Chief Organizational Dev.

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

**Team Meeting**

**Peggy Thompson**, Chief HR Officer

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Working Luncheon

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

**Team Meeting**

**Shirley Morrison**, Ex. Dir., HR  
**Steve Foster**, Ex. Dir., HR Operations  
**Martha Snavelly**, Ex. Dir., Induction

2:45 - 4:15 p.m.

**Team Meeting**

**Alan Hooker**, Dir., Employment  
**Cheryl Lowe**, Admin. Employee Selection  
**Tracey Dungee**, Admin., Recruitment  
**Janet Chandler**, Admin., Staffing

4:15 - 5:30 p.m.

**Team Meeting**

**Carla Alphin**, Admin. Employee Relations  
**Patty Kinkade**, Dir., Benefits

5:30 p.m.

Team Discussion of Work Plan for Balance of Site Visit

## Review of Human Resource Operations in the Guilford County Schools

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### Friday, October 20

8:00 - 9:30 a.m.	<b>Team Meeting</b>	<b>Barbara Campbell</b> , Admin. Compensation <b>Sherri Thomas</b> , Admin., Technology
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	<b>Team Meeting</b>	<b>Desk Audits (TBD)</b> Or <b>Donna Yow</b> , Dir., Technology
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Working Luncheon	
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	<b>Team Meeting</b>	<b>Regional or Area Superintendents</b>
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.	<b>Team Meeting</b>	<b>Employee Association Reps.</b>
3:30 - 5:00 a.m.	<b>Team Meeting</b>	<b>Principals</b> , Randomly Selected

### Saturday, October 21

8:00 – 12:00 Noon.	<b>Team Meeting</b>	<b>Discussion of Findings &amp; Recommendations</b>
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Working Luncheon & Debriefing	<b>Terry Grier</b> , Superintendent <b>Eric Becoats</b> , Chief of Staff <b>Others (TBD)</b>
1:00 p.m.	Adjournment & Departures	

**APPENDIX B : DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

- District Organization Chart
- HR Organization Chart
- HR Staffing Office Organization
- Progress Report 2005-2006
- Annual Report
- Goals and Objectives (Goals, Balanced Scorecard)
- Personnel Handbook, 2006-2007
- ISO Procedures
- Policies
- HR Budget
- Links to Website including—
  - Extended Employment Manual
  - Benefits
  - Job Descriptions
  - Lateral Entry Teaching
  - Retirement Seminars
  - Retirement Booklet
  - Salary Schedules
  - Staffing Forms
  - State Health Plan

**APPENDIX C: INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED**

- Terry Grier, Superintendent
- Eric Becoats, Chief of Staff
- Sharon Ozment, Chief Finance Officer
- Kevin Lear, Chief Operations Officer
- Terrence Young, Chief Information Officer
- Mack McCary, Chief Academic Officer
- John Wright, Chief Auxiliary Services
- Gongshu Zhang, Chief Research Officer
- Valerie Collins, Chief Organizational Dev.
- Peggy Thompson, Chief HR Officer
- Shirley Morrison, Ex. Dir., HR
- Steve Foster, Ex. Dir., HR Operations
- Martha Snavely, Ex. Dir., Induction
- Alan Hooker, Dir., Employment
- Cheryl Lowe, Admin. Employee Selection
- Tracey Dungee, Admin., Recruitment
- Janet Chandler, Admin., Staffing
- Carla Alphin, Admin. Employee Relations
- Patty Kinkade, Dir., Benefits
- Barbara Campbell, Admin. Compensation
- Sherri Thomas, Admin., Technology
- Donna Yow, Director of Technology
- Area Superintendents
- Employee Association Representatives
- Selected Principals

**APPENDIX D: STRATEGIC SUPPORT TEAM**

**Marjorie Adler**

**Marjorie Adler** is the Director of Human Resources for the City of Coral Gables, Florida. Prior to accepting this position, Ms. Adler was the Executive Director of Human Resources for the School District of Philadelphia. She was appointed to that position in August 1997. During her tenure as Chief Negotiator, she has successfully overseen the bargaining and administration of five reform contracts, representing 98% of the District workforce. Under her leadership Human Resources has increased the effectiveness of its recruiting and hiring efforts and teacher vacancies have been reduced by more than 400%. Prior to joining the District, Ms. Adler was vice president of Organizational Development at Roy F. Weston, Inc. for seven years, served as Deputy Mayor for Mayor W. Wilson Goode, and held increasingly responsible positions with Sunoco over a 15-year period. Ms. Adler holds an AB in Economics (Cum Laude) from Bryn Mawr College and a Master's Degree in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Robert Carlson**

**Robert Carlson** is Director of Management Services for the Council of the Great City Schools. In that capacity, he provides Strategic Support Teams and manages operational reviews for superintendents and senior managers; convenes annual meetings of Chief Financial Officers, Chief Operating Officers, Human Resources Directors, and Chief Information Officers and Technology Directors; fields requests for management information; and has developed and maintains a Web-based management library. Prior to joining the Council, Dr. Carlson was an executive assistant in the Office of the Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools. He holds doctoral and masters degrees in administration from The Catholic University of America; a bachelor's degree in political science from Ohio Wesleyan University; and has done advanced graduate work in political science at Syracuse University and the State Universities of New York.

**Roger Buschmann**

**Roger Buschmann** is the Chief Human Resources Officer for the Los Angeles Unified School District with more than 80,000 employees. Mr. Buschmann has helped lead the district's Human Resources Division for more than five years after having completed a highly successful career as a U.S. Naval Officer. In addition to serving as commanding officer of various ships as well as fleet and area commands, he served as Chief Naval Recruiting Officer in various areas of the nation. Under his leadership, he and his staff consistently exceeded recruitment goals. Since assuming his duties with LAUSD, he has dramatically improved the recruitment and placement of teachers while at the same time increasing the number of fully credentialed and highly qualified teachers. At the same time, the HR department has become more responsive to the needs of employees and supervisors through various initiatives implemented at his direction. He encourages and expects staff involvement and accountability at all levels toward the achievement of the

Division's Strategic Plan objectives and targets. Under his leadership, the Human Resources Division has consistently improved performance in all functional areas.

### **Daniel Cochran**

**Dan Cochran** has more than 25 years experience in human resources having served as Chief Human Resources Officer in Atlanta, Georgia and Broward County, Florida. He currently works as a consultant with the Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Personnel Officer in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Mr. Cochran has successfully implemented major school district human resource "re-engineering" in both the southeast and west coast. His primary emphasis is in strategic planning and customer focused results and has a proven track record of achievement in all primary human resources functional areas including recruitment, employment, payroll, benefits, compensation, evaluation, documentation, employee relations, union negotiations, staff development, employee services and employee retention. In addition to his extensive experience, Mr. Cochran has completed doctoral and legal course work, served on various regional and state committees and has made presentations at both state and national conferences.

### **Beatrice Garza**

**Beatrice Garza** serves as the Executive Director of Human Resources for the Houston Independent School District (HISD). Ms. Garza supervises all operations of a full-service Human Resources department including recruitment, employment, EEO services, professional standards, compensation, strategic planning, policy development, employee assessment and discipline services for approximately 30,000 employees and a budget of over \$7 million. She brings 15+ years of HR experience as well as 9 years as an educator in the public school sector. Ms. Garza earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Stephen F. Austin University and her Master of Business Administration from the University of Houston.

### **Debra Ware**

**Debra Ware** has held positions in instruction as well as operations during her 23 years of public school district service. She is the former Director for Staffing and Employee Services for the District of Columbia Public Schools. Currently Ms. Ware is one of three Process Improvement Executives in the Dallas Independent School District (DISD). During her six years with DISD, she has served as Operations Executive for Human Resources as well as Interim Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Ms. Ware also has served as the district's Operations Executive for Negotiated Contract Services, the Project Manager for the DISD Oracle ERP Implementation, as well as Operations Executive for Auxiliary Services.

**APPENDIX E: COUNCIL REVIEWS**

<b>District</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
Albuquerque		
	Facilities and Roofing	2003
	Human Resources	2003
	Information Technology	2003
	Special Education	2005
	Legal Services	2005
Anchorage		
	Finance	2004
Broward County		
	Information Technology	2000
Buffalo		
	Superintendent Support	2000
	Organizational Structure	2000
	Curriculum and Instruction	2000
	Personnel	2000
	Facilities and Operations	2000
	Communications	2000
	Finance	2000
	Finance II	2003
Caddo Parish		
	Facilities	2004
Charleston		
	Special Education	2005
Cincinnati		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
Cleveland		
	Student Assignments	1999, 2000
	Transportation	2000
	Safety and Security	2000
	Facilities Financing	2000
	Facilities Operations	2000
	Transportation	2004
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005

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<b>District</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
Columbus		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Human Resources	2001
	Facilities Financing	2002
	Finance and Treasury	2003
	Budget	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
Dayton		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2001
	Finance	2001
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Budget	2005
Denver		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Personnel	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Bilingual Education	2006
Des Moines		
	Budget and Finance	2003
Detroit		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2002
	Assessment	2002
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Assessment	2003
	Communications	2003
	Textbook Procurement	2004
Greensboro		
	Bilingual Education	2002
	Information Technology	2003
	Special Education	2003
	Facilities	2004
	Human Resources	2006
Hillsborough County		
	Transportation	2005

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District	Area	Year
	Procurement	2005
Jacksonville		
	Organization and Management	2002
	Operations	2002
	Human Resources	2002
	Finance	2002
	Information Technology	2002
	Finance	2006
Kansas City (MO)		
	Human Resources	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Finance	2005
	Operations	2005
	Purchasing	2006
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
Los Angeles		
	Budget and Finance	2002
	Organizational Structure	2005
	Finance	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Human Resources	2005
	Business Services	2005
Louisville		
	Management Information	2005
Miami-Dade County		
	Construction Management	2003
Milwaukee		
	Research and Testing	1999
	Safety and Security	2000
	School Board Support	1999
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
Minneapolis		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Finance	2004
	Federal Programs	2004
New Orleans		

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<b>District</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
	Personnel	2001
	Transportation	2002
	Information Technology	2003
	Hurricane Damage Assessment	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
Norfolk		
	Testing and Assessment	2003
Philadelphia		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003
	Food Service	2003
	Facilities	2003
	Transportation	2003
	Human Resources	2004
Pittsburgh		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Technology	2006
	Budget and Finance	2006
Providence		
	Business Operations	2001
	MIS and Technology	2001
	Personnel	2001
Richmond		
	Transportation	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003
	Special Education	2003
Rochester		
	Finance and Technology	2003
	Transportation	2004
	Food Services	2004
San Francisco		
	Technology	2001
St. Louis		
	Special Education	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004

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<b>District</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Year</b>
	Federal Programs	2004
	Textbook Procurement	2004
	Human Resources	2005
Toledo		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
Washington, D.C.		
	Finance and Procurement	1998
	Personnel	1998
	Communications	1998
	Transportation	1998
	Facilities Management	1998
	Special Education	1998
	Legal and General Counsel	1998
	MIS and Technology	1998
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Budget and Finance	2005
	Transportation	2005

**APPENDIX F: ABOUT THE COUNCIL**

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of sixty-six (66) of the nation's largest urban school systems. Its Board of Directors is composed of the Superintendent of Schools and one School Board member from each member district. An Executive Committee of twenty-four (24) individuals, equally divided in number between Superintendents and School Board members, provides oversight of the 501(c)(3) organization in-between Board meetings.

The mission of the Council is to advocate for and to assist in the improvement of public education in the nation's major cities. To meet that mission, the Council provides services to its members in the areas of legislation, research, communications, teacher recruitment, curriculum and instruction, and management.

The group convenes two major conferences each year on promising practices in urban education; conducts studies on urban school conditions and trends; and operates ongoing networks of senior managers in each city with responsibility in such areas as federal programs, operations and finance, personnel, communications, research, technology, and others.

The Council, founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1961, has its headquarters in Washington, D.C.