Operational Audit of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District

FINAL REPORT

Evergreen Solutions, LLC

January 27, 2011

REVISED JUNE 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2010, the towns of Hamilton and Wenham contracted with Evergreen Solutions, LLC to conduct an Operational Audit of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD) in all functional areas, including district administration, human resources, financial management, educational services, facilities, food services, transportation, technology, and athletics and extracurricular activities. An Operational Audit Committee was created to oversee this project.

The audit followed a detailed work plan, including 14 comprehensive tasks, which was designed by Evergreen consultants and finalized in discussion between Evergreen consultants and selectmen of both towns, town administrators, HWRSD School Committee members, and district leaders. **Exhibit 1** provides an overview of Evergreen's work plan for this study.

The overriding objective of this Operational Audit was to assist the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District in continuing to succeed and improve in its primary mission—the education of all students. Ultimately, the purpose of the Operational Audit was to conduct an external review of the efficiency of all departments and operations within HWRSD and to present a final report of the findings, commendations, recommendations and projected costs or cost savings associated with the recommendations. For each operational area, Evergreen reviewed the overall structure, staffing, processes, practices, and organizational culture in order to ensure service has been optimized by the district in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service.

Specifically, one goal of the audit was to ensure that non-instructional functions were operating efficiently and to identify short- and long-term savings that could be gained through the implementation of best practices, including potential collaboration, regionalization, and cost sharing. While a second goal of the audit was to examine the efficiency of instructional services. The instructional efficiency review results provide guidance to HWRSD in determining whether educational dollars are being used to the fullest extent possible; and when indicated, provide recommendations to reduce costs while maintaining or improving the quality of education.

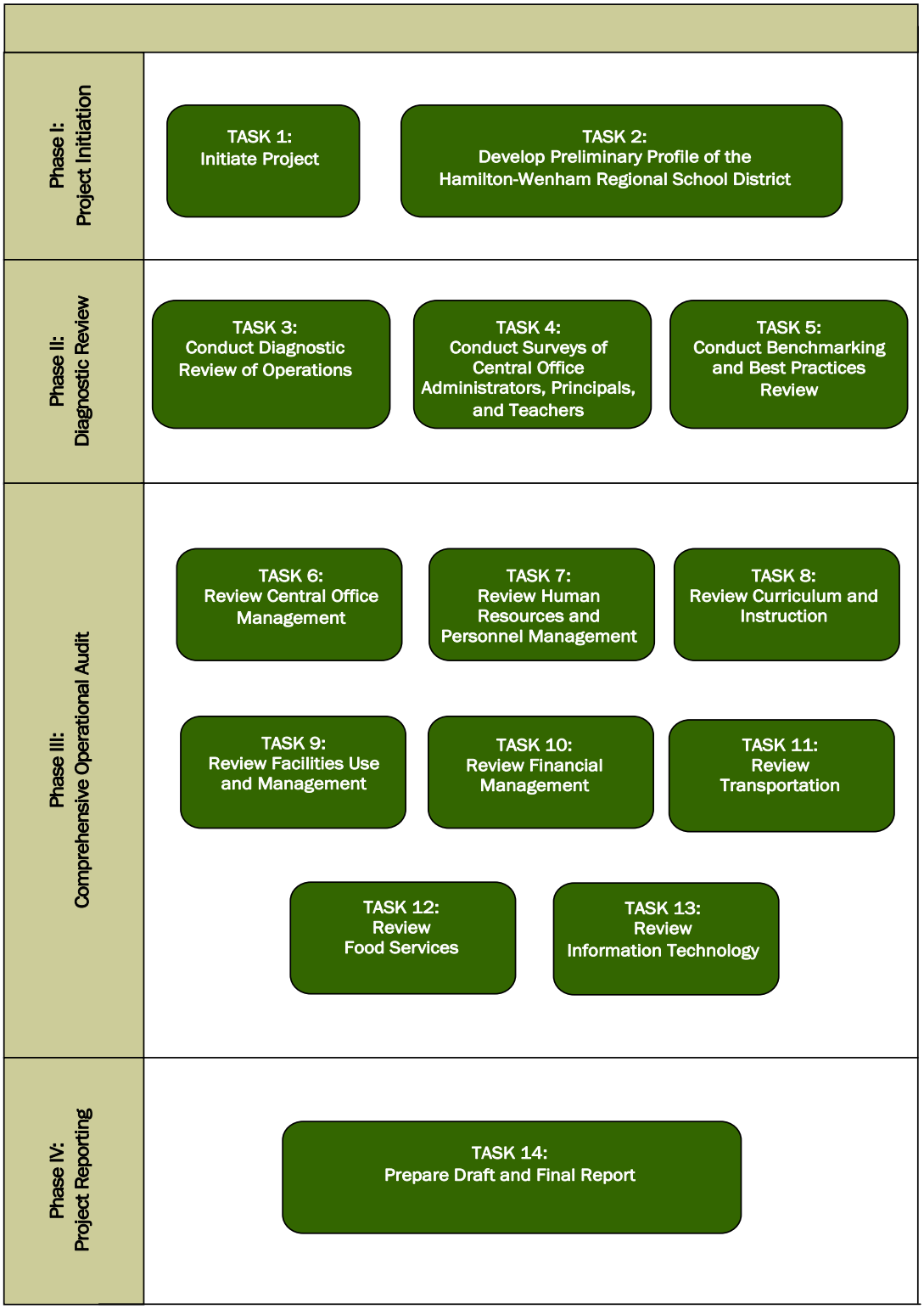
SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The towns of Hamilton and Wenham outlined specific objectives for the Operational Audit in their initial Request for Proposals. One requirement was to address findings in existing documents, including the Blue Ribbon Committee Report, Request for Design Services – Comprehensive Facilities Assessment, Space Needs Study, and the Warrant Article. Evergreen reviewed these documents to ensure that work was not replicated, and that findings in past reports were integrated into the audit.

The study encompassed review of several elements including the following which were stated in the Request for Proposals:

1. *Personnel policies and procedures including compensation, benefits, and performance evaluation process for all staff.*

Exhibit 1
Work Plan for the Operational Audit of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

2. *Union contracts negotiations, procedures and management.*
3. *School District Administration staffing (including professional and clerical staffing) policies and procedures.*
4. *Instructional Staffing – include an evaluation of the number, allocation, and composition of all instructional-related staffing, including but not limited to student-staffing ratio analysis.*
5. *Accounting system - policies, practices and procedures including payroll, accounts payable and accounts receivable and the overall budget process and associated budget controls.*
6. *Time keeping policy, procedures, practices and controls.*
7. *Purchasing policy, procedures, practices and controls.*
8. *Inventory control procedures and practices including store minimum/maximum items and capital expense items.*
9. *Curriculum policies, procedures, management and controls Pre. K - 12.*
10. *SPED (Special Ed.) policies, procedures, management and controls of Special Education Services.*
11. *Traffic policies, procedures and management including buses, cars and communications.*
12. *Cafeteria staffing policies, procedures, management and controls.*
13. *Building maintenance staffing, policies, procedures and management including Heating, AC, Electrical, Plumbing, routine maintenance, etc. The review should evaluate the efficacy of consolidating functions with either or both of the two Towns.*
14. *Information Technology (IT) systems, staffing, procedures and controls.*
15. *Medical / Nurse staffing policies and controls.*
16. *Athletic Programs - staffing, management, controls and financial reporting.*
17. *Misc. extracurricular programs non-athletic staffing, management, controls and financial reporting.*
18. *HWRSD Liaison - Costs associated with interaction between HWRSD, State Departments, Associations, and other Towns. Travel costs and expenses.*
19. *School Committee – Administrative costs, expenses and financial reporting.*
20. *Elementary level grade/class configuration analysis to include space/facility utilization options.*
21. *Evaluation of the Center School as a site for Administrative Services.*

METHODOLOGY

An Operational Audit by nature is designed to evaluate district operations at the macro level (the school district as a whole) as well as at the micro level (by specific department or functional area). At both levels, Evergreen consultants conduct both internal and external analyses. That is, consultants look at how the district and individual departments or operational areas function individually, as well as how they work together to create synergies and coordination with other functional areas and the community. This approach ensures that a comprehensive audit is conducted, and that the district is evaluated as the sum of its parts.

The process includes a variety of quantitative and qualitative data analyses in order to ensure information is sufficiently validated and also to ensure data reflect actual stakeholder perceptions. As such, throughout the report, Evergreen shares both nationally recognized research data collected by our expert consultants, as well as feedback from teacher and administrator surveys, focus groups, and interviews. This mix of best practice research data and stakeholder feedback solidifies the findings and recommendations developed by the Evergreen Team.

As shown in **Exhibit 1**, Evergreen's methodology followed a four-phase, 14-task work plan for conducting this audit which included the following components:

- reviewing existing reports and data sources;
- conducting a diagnostic review and interviews with town leaders and selectmen, school committee members, central office administrators, principals, teachers, association leaders, students, and parents;
- conducting employee surveys;
- making comparisons with national benchmark and best practices databases;
- making comparisons to peer school districts;
- conducting the formal on-site review;
- meeting with district contractors;
- visiting all schools in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District; and
- preparing the draft and final reports.

Review of Existing Records and Data Sources

Initially, Evergreen consultants collected existing reports and data sources that provided the team with information related to the various administrative functions and operations to be reviewed in the school district. This process ensured that the consultants not only understood past events in HWRSD, but also that this information was integrated within the audit. In addition, this

information helped the team to conduct a preliminary assessment of district reporting standards, ultimately identifying any shortfalls in data collection and dissemination at HWRSD.

A multitude of documents were requested from HWRSD. Examples of materials Evergreen requested include, but are not limited to, the following:

- School Committee policies and administrative procedures;
- organizational charts;
- program and compliance reports;
- staffing information;
- annual performance reports;
- annual budget and expenditure reports;
- job descriptions;
- salary schedules;
- past reports created by third-party contractors; and
- procedural handbooks.

District leaders played a key role in this process, and successfully facilitated the collection of the majority of available documents. However, as in most school districts, there were documents and data not available. Data and reports were analyzed from each of the above sources and the information was used as a starting point for collecting additional data during our on-site visit. Many of the documents and data sets collected were integrated into various chapters of this report, and are used to support Evergreen's findings and recommendations.

Diagnostic Review

A diagnostic review of Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District was conducted in the last week of September 2010. Evergreen consultants interviewed School Committee members, members of the Boards of Selectmen, central office administrators and staff, and community leaders concerning the management and operations of HWRSD.

In addition to interviews, Evergreen consultants visited all HWRSD facilities to assess buildings and structures, view campus layouts, and gain a better understanding of the workflows behind the various aspects of district operations. The diagnostic review provided the overview necessary for conducting a successful comprehensive Operational Audit.

Employee Surveys

To secure the involvement of employees in the study, online surveys were prepared and disseminated in early October 2010—one for central office administrators, one for principals/assistant principals, and one for teachers. To access the surveys, group participants were provided with a unique URL which directed them to instructions on how to complete the survey.

Through the use of this anonymous survey, central administrators, school administrators, and teachers were given the opportunity to express their views about the management and operations

in HWRSD. Many survey items were similar in format and content to provide a database for determining how the opinions and perceptions of these groups vary. The survey contained 104 unique questions and asked stakeholder opinion and informative questions pertaining to the following topics:

- district administration;
- instruction;
- human resources;
- community involvement;
- facilities use and management;
- financial management;
- purchasing;
- transportation;
- food services;
- technology management;
- overall operations; and
- general questions.

HWRSD survey results were compared to administrators and teachers in Evergreen's survey database. This database is a culmination of recent responses and feedback from a mix of large and small school districts across the nation. Evergreen's data, collected in-house by our team, is constantly updated with new school district feedback. This practice allows Evergreen to benchmark HWRSD against current trends in school districts operating in the same context of today's dynamic economic, political, and cultural environment.

The survey results are provided in the **Appendix** of the full report. Specific survey items pertinent to findings in the functional areas are presented within each chapter as appropriate to support study findings.

Moving forward, it may be beneficial for HWRSD leaders to use these surveys on an annual basis to assess stakeholder perception, and use results as a baseline benchmark to measure yearly improvements.

Peer School Districts

Peer school districts are generally neighboring or regionally located districts that are comparable in size, demographics, budget, and a number of other features. In most Operational Audits, peers are chosen in order to provide a group average for comparison with the district in question. For the HWRSD study, peer school districts were chosen in collaboration with town and district leaders.

The five comparison school districts for this audit include:

- Groton-Dunstable
- Manchester-Essex
- Mendon-Upton
- Nashoba
- Pentucket

Our research on these districts included the aggregation of state-level data, district-level data (generally found on each district's website), and direct contact with leaders of the peer districts to solicit additional data not available through other means. The third option is usually exercised when highly specific data are necessary. Collected information was essential to an effective audit of HWRSD operations, and throughout the report, a number of exhibits share HWRSD data compared to peer school district data.

On-Site Review

Evergreen consultants conducted the formal on-site audit of HWRSD during the week of October 11, 2010. Prior to conducting the on-site review, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about HWRSD operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted a detailed review of the structure and operations in their assigned areas of responsibility.

OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

The report details the findings and recommendations of the Evergreen Team. As part of the process, a draft report was developed and delivered to members of the Operational Audit Committee and HWRSD administrators, and then, with the feedback received, a final version of the report was prepared and submitted.

The final report for the Operational Audit consists of the following 11 chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: District Administration and Governance
- Chapter 3: Human Resources Management
- Chapter 4: Financial Management
- Chapter 5: Educational Service Delivery and Management
- Chapter 6: Facilities
- Chapter 7: Food Service
- Chapter 8: Transportation
- Chapter 9: Technology Management
- Chapter 10: Athletic and Extracurricular Activities
- Chapter 11: Costs and Savings Summary

Chapters 2 through 10 contain findings, commendations, and recommendations for each operational area, and provided in the following sequence:

- a description of the operation in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District;
- a summary of our study findings;
- a commendation or recommendation for each finding; and
- estimated costs or cost savings over a five-year period which are stated in 2011 dollars.

We conclude this report with a summary of the fiscal impact of our audit recommendations in Chapter 11, which is also included at the end of this Executive Summary.

MAJOR FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section we include the major findings, commendations, and recommendations for each operational area as found in Chapters 2 through 10 of the full report.

District Administration

Leaders of school districts are typically at the forefront of decision-making processes and must constantly decide on actions that impact the overall direction of the district as a whole. This responsibility is met with the challenge of consistently adhering to policies and procedures to ensure decisions are made in an equitable and effective manner. Additionally, the organization and management of a school district involve cooperation between elected members of the school committee or board, and administrators and staff of the school district.

Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- An exemplary and model School Committee working group structure which could be emulated by other school committees and school boards.
- Dr. Buchanan's commitment to improving and building relationships with the towns and the community.
- Active financial support of all HWRSD schools by the Friends' groups.
- The effectiveness of the HWRSD endowment fund—the Edfund.

Major recommendations on District Administration and Governance include:

- Completely revise the HWRSD Policy Manual.
- Expand the online agendas to include handouts and related documents that are provided to the School Committee.
- Implement a yearly self-evaluation by the HWRSD School Committee.
- Develop a comprehensive Administrative Procedures Manual that contains administrative procedures, and which can be used by school and central office administrators to ensure consistency.
- Modify the span of control of the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance, staff both the middle school and high school with a principal, and delete the assistant principal at the middle school.

- Improve teacher relations with the administration by creating a Teacher Advisory Council.
- Create a performance-based central office evaluation system.
- Expedite plans to develop a Strategic Plan and District Improvement Plan, as required by state law.

Human Resources Management

The Human Resources function has evolved significantly in the last quarter century. As an increased need for competitive compensation, resolving work place issues, and administering ever complex benefits programs has emerged, human resources has changed from a once minimal task, to a full-fledged and crucial operation. Managing a public education agency is a labor-intensive undertaking; personnel costs typically consume the largest portion of the average school district budget. Consequently, successful and effective school districts place a major emphasis on human resources management.

The employees of any school district are its most valuable asset. They possess distinctive institutional knowledge and experience that can be difficult and costly to replace. The recruitment, selection, orientation, training, salary, and benefits provided to the workforce contribute greatly to the effectiveness of the district.

In Human Resources, Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- delivering generally positive human resources services to its staff;
- assembling a comprehensive evaluation packet for teacher evaluations;
- working together with its teachers union in the best interest of the district by extending the existing contract for one year; and
- working with labor unions to develop comprehensive, best-practices working agreements and contracts which outline universally important human resources practices in the absence of a true human resources department.

Major recommendations on Human Resources include:

- Explore the possibility of hiring a shared Human Resources Administrator with the Town of Hamilton and the Town of Wenham to provide centralized leadership for the personnel function.
- Re-title the Administrative Assistant's position to more accurately reflect the large concentration of her duties in the personnel operation.
- Develop a mission and vision statement as well as performance goals for the human resources operation in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

- Develop key performance indicators, monitor performance results on a quarterly or semi-annual basis, and provide an annual report of accomplishments for the human resources function.

- Using available online personnel policy guides, develop and adopt a comprehensive set of personnel policies.

- Develop written internal practices, procedures, and workflow processes, and develop a plan for the annual review and revision of personnel procedures.

- Implement a plan focused on increasing recruitment and retention of qualified employees.

- Develop an Employee Handbook with explanations of and references to relevant policy and procedural information for employees.

- Explore the possibility of expanding the teacher step plan to alleviate compression at the top end of the 12-step series.

- Review, revise, and create job class descriptions that accurately reflect HWRSD job duties and requirements with consistent and legally defensible content.

Financial Management

Financial management in any school district must ensure that resources are properly aligned with district goals and objectives. When this equation is balanced, school districts realize the optimum amount of success based on the resources available. With recent fluctuations in economic conditions, it has become even more imperative to ensure that financial management policies, procedures, and practices used foster optimized gain. The planning and budgeting process must support district goals.

In addition, an effective purchasing program provides districts with quality materials, supplies, services and equipment in a timely manner at the lowest price. Proper accounting reduces the risk of lost assets and ensures their appropriate use. The district must provide the School Committee, administrators, and interested public with timely, accurate and useful reports concerning its financial condition.

Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- developing and using a payroll balancing process that helps ensure district employees are paid accurately;

- using an employee direct deposit program, where 98 percent of all employees are participating;

- establishing a detailed budget calendar that helps to ensure that the district's budget is developed in an orderly manner; and

- ensuring reports are accurate by reconciling bank accounts in a timely manner and making adjustments prior to reports being prepared.

Major recommendations on Financial Management include:

- Prepare quarterly financial reports for special revenue and revolving funds and accounts.
- Implement additional shared services opportunities with the towns of Hamilton and Wenham to reduce cost and increase efficiencies.
- Establish a policy that does not allow accounts to be negative, hold managers accountable for expending only funds available, and take action to correct the negative fund balances.
- Develop and document a cost methodology to be used when calculating fees, and identify and allocate indirect costs to activities that charge fees.
- Adopt a formal policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of report/audit recommendations made to the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.
- Examine budget trends and identify areas where expenditures have increased at higher than average rates, determine the reason for the increases, and determine how the trends can be reversed. Establish budget targets for all functions and do not allow expenditures to exceed state average increases.
- Establish a budget control system where schools and departments are held accountable for their budgets, develop a budget adjustment policy that provides guidance as to when budget adjustments are to be prepared, and document adjustments requiring School Committee's approval in minutes.
- Improve the district's budget information, compile data into a comprehensive budget document, and use guidance from national associations to continually improve the budget document.
- Create user-friendly formats for monthly budget reports that provide summary and easily understood financial reports for the School Committee, and train Committee members on how to interpret the information.
- Develop a policy requiring competitive proposals for professional independent auditing services at a designated interval of at least every five years.

Educational Services Delivery and Management

The educational service delivery of a school district depends on central office administrators and staff to serve as the support system, and provide leadership and coordination for education that is provided in the district's schools. The effectiveness of instructional delivery depends on factors such as organization, staffing, and procedures that have been created and monitored in order to ensure consistency of instruction and student assessment. The way in which these central office operations are designed can either support or prevent progress towards high achievement for students.

Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- determining the most pressing instructional needs for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, and for initiating plans to address these needs in order to build upon current academic success;
- embracing diverse opportunities for student learning beyond traditional textbooks;
- addressing the math instructional needs of middle school students with disabilities;
- taking pro-active steps to increase direct services to students, while at the same time, contain expenditures; and
- working diligently to build capacity among HWRSD teachers to individualize instruction and provide support for all students.

Major recommendations on Educational Services include:

- Schedule regular meetings of school resource staff with central office leaders to maintain a uniform focus on curricular and instructional priorities.
- Develop a plan and timeline for the evaluation of educational programs and services.
- Develop policies guiding instructional programs, evaluation, and curricular issues.
- Ensure that School Improvement Plans are developed in compliance with timelines set by the State of Massachusetts, have specific accountability practices embedded, and include three-year as well as annual goals.
- Standardize and reduce teacher planning time.
- Increase the HWRSD student to teacher ratio towards the peer district average.
- Compare special education staffing in light of programs offered for HWRSD peer school districts to determine equivalency.
- Eliminate stipends for activities such as bus duty and substitute calling.
- Create processes that ensure consistency of technology in HWRSD schools.
- Convene a group of teachers, parents, and administrators to examine factors that may impact graduation and dropout rates of HWRSD special education students and, as needed, develop strategies to ameliorate these factors.
- Use the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards and guidelines as a basis for a comprehensive instructional professional development plan, and ensure that a professional development committee includes non-instructional and low incidence staff members.

- Re-examine the way HWRSD rewards teachers for national board certification, and consider changing it to a set stipend that is the same for every teacher and paid for a reduced period of time.

Facilities

Effective facilities management inevitably leads to the success of many other functions in the school district. Useful, well-maintained, up-to-date, and cheerful learning environments can help reinforce positive attitudes and performance by students, teachers, and administrators. In addition, these conditions lead to a sense of pride and passion in both students and staff. Aside from these results, facilities that are optimized lead to a safe environment, as well as promote savings and revenue in the district.

Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- the diligent and frugal organizational structure of its facilities maintenance activities;
- its foresight in contracting for major facilities assessments to determine space needs, demographic trends, and current building conditions;
- achieving a high level of satisfaction with maintenance and custodial services indicated in survey responses by central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers;
- hiring a hands-on manager as Director of Facilities, who sees the advantages of being at the work areas of his employees, outside contractors, and principals;
- maintaining an appropriate number of FTE custodians to clean the district's buildings and perform minor maintenance operations; and
- implementing and operating a facilities-use program that makes available the assets of the school district for community programs and organizations.

Major recommendations on Facilities include:

- Prepare and implement a five-year facilities master planning process in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.
- Include a thorough and exhaustive schedule of preventive maintenance actions that must be funded and completed as part of the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan.
- Renovate the high school auditorium at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Maintain the HWRSD elementary school grade distribution and configuration as it currently exists.
- Relocate the district administration to the high school and terminate the lease of the Center Building.

- Create a proper chart of maintenance categories and accounts for budgeting and spending purposes.
- Develop a set of contemporary and official HWRSD policies for facilities planning, design, construction, use and management.
- Make a firm commitment to a minimum funding of building maintenance and repair in HWRSD at two percent of building replacement cost.

Food Services

Increased demand has been placed on food services operations in schools to provide increasingly more healthy meals to students. In addition, school food service leaders have sought ways to increase student participation in meal programs in order to reduce costs and improve service delivery. When delivered in an efficient and effective manner, school food service operations not only provide ample nutrition to students, but also operate as a completely self-sustaining program.

Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- regularly assessing its own productivity for food services;
- providing food service managers and staff important training on food service safety;
- preparing and presenting an Annual Operational Performance Report to the HWRSD School Committee; and
- focusing on nutrition and operational effectiveness, and receiving national recognition from the National School Nutrition Association for its efforts.

Major recommendations on Food Services include:

- Actively use all aspects of the National Food Service Management Institute's six quality performance management measurements.
- Develop and implement a formal plan for improving productivity at schools that meets the established minimum range of Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH).
- Purchase a Point of Sale (POS) software system to improve efficiency and operational effectiveness.
- Develop an action plan to increase student participation.
- Consolidate food service operations on the high school and middle school campuses.
- Create, implement, and report results of a formal evaluation process to annually review the food services operation versus outsourcing alternatives.

Transportation

The safe and timely transportation of students is important to every school district. However, when faced with budget cuts or increased ridership, it can be extremely difficult to balance these factors. When looking to increase efficiency in transportation, safety is the number one priority, followed by a strategic approach to planning routes and driver times to most cost effectively transport students to and from school. In addition, activities requiring additional transportation needs must be analyzed, such as field trips, athletic events, and summer school programs.

Major recommendations on Transportation include:

- Formally reconcile annual transportation routes prior to communicating to stakeholders.
- Update the HWRSD student transportation policy.
- Document hazardous route criteria in HWRSD for official records.
- Establish quarterly reporting from SALTER Transportation to HWRSD on key performance indicators.
- Review, monitor, and implement all reporting requirements authorized in the SALTER bid specifications and contract.
- Accurately document and report reimbursable verses non-reimbursable students for the State's End-of-Year Report.
- Conduct a formal documented review and analysis of special education transportation.

Technology

Technology is one area of a school district that supports all administrative and instructional personnel, allowing employees to conduct business in a way that maximizes resource utilization. Organizing technology resources to effectively achieve this outcome can be challenging, but is essential for operational success. Accomplishing this goal not only requires optional staffing levels, but also necessary skills, tools, and leadership.

Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- making advances in its network and technology infrastructure;
- developing a multi-year Technology Plan which attempts to address critical areas of needed development; and
- installing a unified modern telephone system to simplify telephonic connectivity.

Major recommendations on Technology include:

- Eliminate the district's relationship with the external contractor.

- Hire a half-time Computer Support Technician who would report to the HWRSD Technology Coordinator.
- Create an IT organizational infrastructure to formalize responsibilities, reporting relationships, and work flows to encourage consistency and accountability in technology.
- Create a Technology Planning Committee comprised of leaders from across the district to assess future IT needs.
- Prepare a comprehensive multi-year Technology Plan which focuses on strategy and more fully explore areas where the present plan either excludes or provides no strategic direction.
- Develop a disaster recovery plan to address critical systems in the event of interruption of service.
- Create a Technology Procedures Manual.
- Develop a more detailed technology training expectation for HWRSD staff.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

School activities undoubtedly represent an integral part of the total educational process. However, in many cases, these activities can contribute to significant costs for the district. As innovative practices are implemented to support these programs, district leaders must ensure that decisions made regarding these programs trigger an increase in efficiency in their operations. Deleting these activities is simply not an option as high school athletic and extracurricular programs often serve as one of the best dropout prevention activities for students in their educational journey.

Evergreen commends HWRSD for:

- its innovative approach to develop the co-op program with a neighboring school district to maintain athletic student participation opportunities; and the
- successful implementation of its 100 percent pay-to-play program to maintain effective sports programs for students.

Major recommendations on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities include:

- Develop and maintain annual comparative data related to stipends in peer school districts.
- Evaluate the gate receipt process annually and make recommendations as appropriate.
- Develop a formal annual performance report on Athletics for the School Committee.
- Maintain a full-time Athletic Director in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the analyses of data obtained from interviews, surveys, community input, HWRSD documents, and first-hand observations, the Evergreen Team developed 124 recommendations in this report; 28 recommendations have fiscal implications.

Exhibit 2 shows the total costs and savings for all study recommendations that have fiscal impacts. As can be seen, the total net savings is about $16.5 million over five years.

The five-year costs and savings are shown in 2011 dollars. It is important to keep in mind that the identified savings and costs are incremental.

Exhibit 2
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 2: DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE								
2-9	Staff Secondary Schools with Two Principals and One High School Assistant Principal	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($75,000)	
Chapter 2 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($75,000)**	**$0**
CHAPTER 3: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT								
None								
Chapter 3 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT								
4-2	Account for Special Funds	$150,000	$150,000	$0	$0	$0	$300,000	
4-3	Continue to Explore Shared Services Opportunities	$0	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$400,000	
4-4	Establish Policy that does not Allow Accounts to Have Negative Balances	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$139,180	
4-5	Develop and Document a Cost Methodology	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$345,925	
4-9	Reduce General Fund Expenditures	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$8,515,660	
Chapter 4 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$1,950,153**	**$2,050,153**	**$1,900,153**	**$1,900,153**	**$1,900,153**	**$9,700,765**	**$0**

Exhibit 2 (Continued)
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 5: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT								
5-8	Reduce High School Planning Time	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$465,490	
5-9	Eliminate 17.4 Teaching Positions	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$6,230,420	
5-10	Reduce Special Education Teachers	$0	$329,424	$329,424	$329,424	$329,424	$1,317,696	
5-11	Eliminate Four (4) Traffic Control Stipends Eliminate Fourteen (14) Bus Duty Stipends Eliminate Two (2) Substitute Dispatcher Supplements	$20,992	$20,992	$20,992	$20,992	$20,992	$104,960	
5-17	Eliminate One Nurse Position	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$258,490	
5-18	Add a Middle School Guidance Counselor	$0	($71,614)	($71,614)	($71,614)	($71,614)	($286,456)	
5-20	Change Compensation for National Board Certification	$15,332	$19,165	$22,998	$26,831	$30,664	$114,990	
Chapter 5 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$1,427,204**	**$1,688,847**	**$1,692,680**	**$1,696,513**	**$1,700,346**	**$8,205,590**	**$0**
CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES								
6-1	Prepare a Five-Year Facilities Master Plan	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($20,000)
6-10	Fund Building Maintenance at Two Percent	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($2,920,000)	
6-11	At 2 Percent Maintenance Expenditure (see **Recommendation 6-11**)	$20,000	$20,000	$82,400	$82,400	$82,400	$287,200	

Exhibit 2 (Continued)
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES (CONTINUED)								
6-12	Select and Implement a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMS)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($10,000)	
6-13	Implementation Best Practices for Community Use of Facilities	$4,000	$12,000	$16,000	$16,000	$20,000	$68,000	
Chapter 6 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**($562,000)**	**($554,000)**	**($487,600)**	**($487,600)**	**($483,600)**	**($2,574,800)**	**($20,000)**
CHAPTER 7: FOOD SERVICE								
7-3	Develop and Implement plan to Meet Minimum MPLH Standards	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$62,855	
7-5	Purchase POS System	$0	$9,514	$9,514	$9,514	$9,514	$38,056	($30,000)
7-7	Consolidate Cafeterias at Secondary Schools	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$427,500	
7-9	Improve Participation by Minimum of 26 Percent	$11,861	$17,222	$29,945	$38,446	$55,741	$153,215	
7-11	Add Two Vending Machines	$312	$312	$312	$312	$312	$1,560	
7-12	Account for and Support Indirect Costs	$0	$44,329	$88,658	$88,658	$88,658	$310,303	
Chapter 7 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$110,244**	**$169,448**	**$226,500**	**$235,001**	**$252,296**	**$993,489**	**($30,000)**
CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION								
8-3	Generate Valid Data and Modify Board Policy	$0	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$300,000	
Chapter 8 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$0**	**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$300,000**	**$0**

Exhibit 2 (Continued)
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 9: TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT								
9-1	Eliminate IT Contractor	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$137,915	
9-2	Hire Technician	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($150,000)	
9-9	Purchase IT Tracking Package	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($5,000)
Chapter 9 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($12,085)**	**($5,000)**
CHAPTER 10: ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES								
None								
Chapter 10 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
TOTAL COST		**($631,000)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($3,441,456)**	**($55,000)**
TOTAL SAVINGS		**$3,539,184**	**$4,114,645**	**$4,091,930**	**$4,104,264**	**$4,129,392**	**$19,979,415**	
TOTAL NET SAVINGS		**$2,908,184**	**$3,412,031**	**$3,389,316**	**$3,401,650**	**$3,426,778**	**$16,537,959**	
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS AND ONE TIME SAVINGS								**$16,482,959**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In September 2010, the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham engaged Evergreen Solutions, LLC, to conduct an Operational Audit of Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD). The overriding objective of this study was to assist HWRSD in continuing to succeed and improve in its primary mission—the education of all students. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District enrolls approximately 2,000 students. The district consists of five schools and employs about 200 teachers. The district's budget for 2011 is $27.5 million.

1.1 SCOPE OF STUDY

As stated in the RFP:

> *The purpose of the operational audit is to conduct an external review of the efficiency of various departments and operations within the HWRSD and to present a final report of the findings, commendations, recommendations and projected costs and or cost savings associated with the recommendations.*
>
> *The first goal of the review is to ensure that non-instructional functions are operating efficiently and to identify short- and long- term savings that can be gained through the implementation of best practices including potential collaboration, regionalization and costsharing.*
>
> *A second goal of the review is to examine the efficiency of instructional services. The instructional efficiency review results should provide guidance to the HWRSD in determining whether educational dollars are being utilized to the fullest extent possible; and where indicated, identify recommendations to reduce costs while maintaining or improving the quality of education.*

The operational audit was required to include a review of the following 21 components:

- *Personnel policies and procedures including compensation, benefits, and performance evaluation process for all staff.*
- *Union contracts negotiations, procedures and management.*
- *School District Administration staffing (including professional and clerical staffing) policies and procedures.*
- *Instructional Staffing - Include an evaluation of the number, allocation, and composition of all instructional-related staffing, including but not limited to student-staffing ratio analysis.*
- *Accounting system - policies, practices and procedures including payroll, accounts payable and accounts receivable and the overall budget process and associated budget controls.*

- *Time keeping policy, procedures, practices and controls.*
- *Purchasing policy, procedures, practices and controls.*
- *Inventory control procedures and practices including store minimum/maximum items and capital expense items.*
- *Curriculum policies, procedures, management and controls Pre. K - 12.*
- *SPED (Special Ed.) policies, procedures, management and controls of Special Education Services.*
- *Traffic policies, procedures and management including buses, cars and communications.*
- *Cafeteria staffing policies, procedures, management and controls.*
- *Building maintenance staffing, policies, procedures and management including Heating, AC, Electrical, Plumbing, routine maintenance, etc. The review should evaluate the efficacy of consolidating functions with either or both of the two Towns.*
- *Information Technology (IT) systems, staffing, procedures and controls.*
- *Medical / Nurse staffing policies and controls.*
- *Athletic Programs - staffing, management, controls and financial reporting.*
- *Misc. extracurricular programs non-athletic staffing, management, controls and financial reporting.*
- *HWRSD Liaison - Costs associated with interaction between HWRSD, State Departments, Associations, and other Towns. Travel costs and expenses.*
- *School Committee – Administrative costs, expenses and financial reporting.*
- *Elementary level grade/class configuration analysis to include space/facility utilization options.*
- *Evaluation of the Center School as a site for Administrative Services.*

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Evergreen's approach methodology for conducting this operational audit included the following steps:

- reviewing existing reports and data sources—including independent financial audits, annual budget and expenditure reports, budget guidelines and procedures, accounting

procedures, salary schedules, organizational charts, staffing ratios, School Committee policies, strategic plan, technology plan, and annual performance reports;

- conducting surveys with HWRSD employees;
- generating comparisons to peer school districts—this peer group of Massachusetts school districts included:
  - Groton-Dunstable
  - Manchester-Essex
  - Menham-Upton
  - Nashoba
  - Pentucket
- conducting a diagnostic review and interviews with School Committee members, town officials, and staff, the HWRSD Superintendent, and other HWRSD administrators and staff;
- collecting additional reports and data from sources inside and outside HWRSD;
- conducting the formal on-site review with a team of six consultants; and
- preparing draft and final reports.

Diagnostic Review

A diagnostic review of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District was conducted in the last week of September 2010. Evergreen consultants interviewed central office administrators and School Committee members concerning the management and operations of the district.

On-Site Review

A team of six consultants conducted the formal on-site review of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District during the week of October 11, 2010. Prior to conducting the on-site review, each team member was provided with an extensive set of information about HWRSD operations. During the on-site work, team members conducted a detailed review of the structure and operations in their assigned functional areas.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

The final report for this study consists of the following 11 chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: District Administration and Governance
- Chapter 3: Human Resources Management
- Chapter 4: Financial Management
- Chapter 5: Educational Service Delivery and Management
- Chapter 6: Facilities

- Chapter 7: Food Service
- Chapter 8: Transportation
- Chapter 9: Technology Management
- Chapter 10: Athletic and Extracurricular Activities
- Chapter 11: Costs and Savings Summary

Chapters 2 through 10 contain findings, commendations, and recommendations for specific operational areas, and are organized in the following sequence:

- a description of the operation in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District;
- a summary of our study findings;
- a commendation or recommendation for each finding; and
- estimated costs or cost savings over a five-year period which are stated in 2011 dollars.

CHAPTER 2:
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

2.0 DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

This chapter reviews the staffing, organization, and management of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD), and includes six major sections:

2.1 Governance and School Committee Issues
2.2 Policies and Procedures
2.3 Organization and Management
2.4 Planning and Accountability
2.5 Communication and Public Relations
2.6 Endowment Fund

The organization and management of a school district involves cooperation between elected members of the school committee or board, and administrators and staff of the school district. The school committee's role is to determine the policies by which a school district will be governed, approve the plans to implement those policies as set forth by the administration, provide the funding sources necessary to carry out the plans, and evaluate the results of the plans.

Once policies are adopted by the school committee, it is the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff to establish administrative procedures to achieve the end results. That achievement involves the hiring and retention of employees as well as ongoing communication with the community to ensure an understanding of the district's efforts to accomplish these results.

2.1 GOVERNANCE AND BOARD ISSUES

Local school boards (school committees) have traditionally governed public education in the United States with authority vested in them by the state. From the mid 1800s through the early 1900s, the number of school boards increased dramatically. The last major reform of school boards involved a shift to smaller elected school boards comprised of community members with a professional superintendent as the CEO. There are approximately 95,000 school board members on 15,000 local boards across the nation. Most boards have five to seven members. Eighty (80) percent of school districts across the country have fewer than 3,000 students.

In a widely cited 2000 report (entitled *Recommendations for 21st Century School Board/ Superintendent Leadership, Governance and Teamwork for High School Achievement*), Goodman and Zimmerman found that school districts with quality governance had, among other things:

- a focus on student achievement and policy making;
- effective management without micromanagement;
- a trusting and collaborative relationship with the superintendent;

- a yearly evaluation of the superintendent, according to mutually agreed upon goals and procedures;
- governance retreats for evaluation and goal setting;
- long-term service of board members and the superintendent; and
- a budget that provides needed resources.

The RFP requested that, as part of Evergreen's review of governance, the consultants review administrative costs, expenses, and financial reporting of the School Committee. An analysis of the 2008-09 and 2009-10 expenditure reports found that School Committee expenses included association dues, training expenses, food services, and incidental expenses. The expenditures are in line with those found in other school districts. In the 2009-10 school year, approximately $20,000 was paid to Future Management Systems for the Superintendent's search. Once again, this expense is comparable with expenditures for superintendent searches in other school districts. Recommendations regarding financial reporting of all district expenditures are contained in **Chapter 4**.

FINDING

The HWRSD School Committee is comprised of nine members. The range in tenure of school committee members is from one year to almost 20 years. As can be seen in **Exhibit 2-1**, four of the nine members have served for more than five years. School Committee member terms are for three years unless a School Committee member is asked to fill an unexpired term of a member who has resigned. The term for a School Committee member begins the first School Committee meeting after the Election Day and ends Election Day in the month of May.

Exhibit 2-1
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
School Committee
2010-11 School Year

School Committee Member	Position on School Committee	Working Group Liaison (Chair)	Year First Elected	Current Term Expires
Richard L. Boroff	Member		2004	2011
Kym M. Donnellan	Member		2010	2013
Donald E. Gallant	Member	Finance	1992	2013
Theresa Foley Leary (Tess)	Assistant Secretary	Policy	2009	2011
Alexa McCloughan	Chair	Negotiations - Teacher and Office Personnel; Custodians	2006	2012
Ann M. Minois	Member		2010	2013
John Joseph O'Keefe (Jack)	Vice Chair	Facilities	2006	2012
Lauren Prior	Secretary	Communications	2008	2011
Dacia A. Rubel	Assistant Treasurer	Legislative	2009	2012

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

The Superintendent, in consultation with the chairman of the School Committee, develops an agenda and background information for each meeting. This information is provided to the School Committee members on the Friday before the Thursday committee meeting. In general, meetings are held once a month on the third Thursday of the month commencing at 7:00 p.m. When two monthly meetings are held, the second meeting usually occurs on the third Thursday. The public is welcome to attend, and there is time on the agenda for citizen comments.

All nine board members were interviewed individually by Evergreen consultants. Evergreen found HWRSD School Committee members to be well-informed and diligent about their roles and responsibilities. Nonetheless, survey results indicate that School Committee members in HWRSD are not ranked as highly as would be expected when compared to survey responses in other school districts.

Survey results are illustrated in **Exhibit 2-2**. As can be seen:

- About 35 percent of HWRSD teachers *agree* with the statement that "school committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division," compared to 53 percent in the comparison group of teachers (i.e., teachers in Evergreen's survey database).

- About 35 percent of teachers also *agree* with the statement that "school committee members know and understand the operations of the school division", compared to 59 percent of the comparison teacher group.

- Approximately 40 percent of HWRSD principals/assistant principals *agree* with the statement that "school committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school division", compared to 57 percent in the comparison group of building administrators.

- About 67 percent of HWRSD central office administrators *agree* with the statement that "school committee members know and understand the operations of the school district," compared to 72 percent of central office administrators in the comparison group.

There are numerous reasons why HWRSD School Committee members are rated lower by HWRSD teachers and school administrators when compared to survey results in other school districts. One reason might be the teacher contract which was agreed upon for this year. Another might be community unrest or the fact that the administration is in transition. No matter what the cause, the less than positive rating needs to be examined and improved.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-1:

Work on strengthening the relationship between HWRSD school administrators and teachers regarding the School Committee's important role in governance and leadership.

Exhibit 2-2
Comparison of Central Administrator, School Administrator, and Teacher Survey Results on the School Committee in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and School Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Survey Statement	HWRSD Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
School committee members know and understand the operations of the school district.	35.0%	45.3%	52.5%	32.4%
School committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school district.	34.8%	38.3%	58.8%	24.9%
Survey Statement	**HWRSD School Administrators**		**School Administrators in Evergreen's Survey Database**	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**	**Strongly Agree & Agree**	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**
School committee members know and understand the operations of the school district.	40.0%	20.0%	57.3%	32.5%
School committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school district.	20.0%	40.0%	65.3%	28.2%
Survey Statement	**HWRSD Central Administrators**		**Central Administrators in Evergreen's Survey Database**	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**	**Strongly Agree & Agree**	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**
School committee members know and understand the operations of the school district.	83.3%	16.7%	73.9%	22.0%
School committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school district.	66.7%	33.3%	72.4%	23.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

Positive perceptions of administrators and teachers are critical for an effective school district, including a positive relationship with the School Committee. Outreach activities to school employees may be one way for School Committee members to strengthen and improve this relationship. Perhaps an increase in School Committee recognition of teacher and administrators or involvement in school activities will facilitate relationship building.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The School Committee has an excellent working group structure. A working group is comprised of three to four school committee members. School committee working groups for the 2010-11 school year include:

- Finance
- Policy
- Negotiations

- Facilities
- Communication
- Legislative

The chairs (liaisons) for each working group are shown in **Exhibit 2-1**.

In analyzing working group meetings for October 2010, Evergreen consultants found that all working groups met at least once, and the Communications Working Group met weekly. Each working group prepares agenda items and most have minutes recorded by a designated secretary.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD School Committee's working group structure is exemplary and a model which could be emulated by other school committees and school boards.

FINDING

The agenda for regular school committee meetings consists of several topics. Major groupings for the agenda include recognitions, reports and correspondence, information and communications, old business, new business, and approval of previous minutes. A sample agenda is shown in **Exhibit 2-3**.

While it is clear from the agenda that is published which items are presented for school committee action versus which items are presented for information only, the agenda does not appear to be as well-organized as it could be. A modified format for the agenda would streamline the meeting, and perhaps allow more time for thoughtful discussions about the strategic goals and objectives.

It would be clearer to School Committee members, HWRSD employees, and the community at large if the School Committee adopted an alternative format for its agenda. A consent agenda at the beginning of the meeting would reduce the amount of time spent on routine matters. The remaining agenda items could be placed under either information or action items, thereby making the public more readily aware of what items are under consideration for adoption at the school committee meeting. Consideration should also be given to developing a standard reporting format for information and action items.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-2:

Revise the School Committee meeting agenda so that it includes a consent agenda/ information items and action items.

Exhibit 2-3
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Sample School Committee Agenda

HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Mission: Educate our children to become knowledgeable, healthy, responsible, and productive adults.

Buker Elementary School **Thursday, September 9, 2010** **7:00 p.m.**
Multipurpose Room

- AGENDA –

KEY
I.O. - Information Only
A.R. - Action Requested

1.	**Call to Order**	
	A. Recognition	
	1. 25 Year Service Recognition	
	2. Professional Status Teacher Recognition	
2.	**Statement of Guests**	
3.	**Reports & Correspondence**	
	A. Leadership Team Reports	
	(a) School Opening 2010	I.O.
	(b) Enrollment	I.O.
	(c) New Staff	I.O.
	B. Working Group Liaison Report	I.O.
4.	**Information and Communications**	
	A. Curriculum Night Schedule	I.O.
	B. MASC/MASS Conference – November 3-6, 2010	I.O.
5.	**Old Business**	
	A. Update on the Cutler HVAC Project, HS Wastewater Treatment Facilities and other summer projects	I.O.
6.	**New Business**	
	A. Teaching and Learning Topic: Summer Curriculum Report	I.O.
	B. Prior Years' Unpaid 6-12 Curriculum Leaders Stipend Partial Payment	A.R.
	C. Donation of Equipment	A.R.
	D. Appoint of School Attendance Officers	A.R.
	E. Vote to authorize the Superintendent to vote as a member of the Northshore Consortium and the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative	A.R.
	F. HS Field Trip – Annual Rhode Island Cross Country Meet	A.R.
	G. Office Personnel Agreement	A.R.
	H. Level 3 Assessment	I.O.
7.	**Approval of Minutes**	
	A. Minutes of regular meeting – June 17 & July 20, 2010	A.R.
8.	**Adjournment**	A.R.

Source: Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, School Committee Agenda, September 2010.

A proposed agenda is shown in **Exhibit 2-4**. As can be seen, grouping the agenda items differently provides the public with a snapshot view of the action to be taken at the School Committee meeting. This type of grouping also provides the School Committee with more time to discuss matters that are of significant importance to HWRSD. Needless to say, School Committee members may choose to remove any items from the consent agenda if further discussion is warranted.

Exhibit 2-4
Proposed School Committee Agenda Format for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District

7:00 Regular Meeting:

1. Call to Order
2 Statement of Guests
3. Reports and Correspondence
4. Information and Communications
5. Consent Agenda
    a. Reports and Correspondence
        1. Leadership Team Reports
            i. School Opening 2010
            ii. Enrollment
            iii. New Staff
        2. Working Group Liaison Report
    b. Information and Communications
        i.. Curriculum Night Schedule
        ii. MASC/MASS Conference – November 3-6, 2010
    c. Old Business
        i. Update on the Cutler HVAC Project, HS Wastewater Treatment Facilities and other summer projects
    d. New Business
        i. Teaching and Learning Topic: Summer Curriculum Report
        ii. Level 3 Assessment
6. Action Items
    a. Prior Years' Unpaid 6-12 Curriculum Leaders Stipend Partial Payment
    b. Donation of Equipment
    c. Appoint of School Attendance Officers
    d. Vote to authorize the Superintendent to vote as a member of the Northshore
    e. Consortium and the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative
    f. HS Field Trip – Annual Rhode Island Cross Country Meet
    g. Office Personnel Agreement
7. Approval of Minutes
        i. Minutes of regular meeting – June 17 & July 20, 2010
8.. Adjournment

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The HWRSD School Committee meets once or twice a month on a regular basis, with additional meetings called as needed. The meetings are properly publicized with agendas distributed in advance to School Committee members. The members of the School Committee generally receive their agendas, with supporting background materials on agenda items, the Friday prior to the Thursday meeting.

The minutes of School Committee meetings are posted on the district's website as are the agendas. However, related documents that are used to guide the School Committee discussions and actions are not included on the website.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-3:

Expand the online agendas to include handouts and related documents that are provided to the School Committee.

The availability of the meeting agenda complete with background materials on the HWRSD website will provide ready access to all meeting materials. These efforts will ensure that staff and the public have access to information prior to School Committee meetings. Making agendas and related documents accessible promotes goodwill in the community.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

As part of the Operational Audit, Evergreen consultants conducted an analysis of background materials provided to School Committee members for several regular School Committee meetings. This analysis showed that, while at times these materials were comprehensive, many times the items could be organized more clearly.

Exhibit 2-5 provides a cover page which could be used by the Superintendent and other senior managers for each action agenda item. Such a tool could be used for senior staff to communicate effectively with the School Committee on each agenda item, providing an overview of background information. The cover page would provide detail on each staff recommendation for School Committee action, an explanation for the item, financial impact, support documentation, and the employee submitting the request. An additional item included on the form is a reference to the district's strategic plan once that document is developed (see **Section 2.4**).

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-4:

Create and implement a form for use with each agenda item which requires action by the HWRSD School Committee.

Exhibit 2-5
Example Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date	**Agenda Item Number**
Title:	
Requested Action:	
Summary Explanation and Background:	
Priority Goal (Linked to Strategic Plan):	
Financial Impact:	
Exhibits (List):	
Requested School Committee Action:	**Source of Additional Information** _____ _____ **Name** **Phone**

Office of the Superintendent _____

Department Head (if applicable) _____

Approved in Open Board Meeting On: _____

By: _____ **School Committee Chairperson**

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

The HWRSD School Committee should request that the Superintendent develop an agenda item cover page (similar to the one shown in **Exhibit 2-5)**. The purpose of this form would be to convey important information, including the financial impact, of each agenda item requiring action by the School Committee. This form should not take the place of background materials on the agenda item; rather, the tool should supplement the materials sent to the School Committee prior to a regular meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The self-evaluation of a School Committee can be very useful. The intent of a self-evaluation is to improve the performance of others within the school district by improving the performance of the School Committee. There are several reasons why self-evaluation is important, but perhaps the most critical is that it promotes the concept of accountability throughout the school district with the School Committee setting the example.

A sample School Committee self-evaluation is shown in **Exhibit 2-6.**

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-5:

Implement a yearly self-evaluation by the HWRSD School Committee.

An evaluation process that includes all levels of an organization is critical to establishing accountability throughout the organization. It is important for the governing body to engage in a process of regular self-evaluation to ensure that it continues to serve its constituents in an effective manner. The HWRSD School Committee should create a self-evaluation instrument and evaluation itself annually.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.2 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All states require school boards to develop policies to ensure the efficient operation of school districts. Commonly, policies are drafted by staff and adopted by the school board (or committee) at a public meeting.

Policies reflect the rules that govern the implementation of district operations. Administrative procedures or regulations, on the other hand, relate to the implementation of policies. As new processes change over time, so should board policies and procedures. Policies and procedures must be continually reviewed for currency, accuracy, and appropriateness.

Exhibit 2-6
Sample School Committee Self-Assessment Instrument

	Assessment Areas	Adequate	Needs Improvement
1.	The School Committee has a common understanding of its roles and responsibilities.		
2.	School Committee members understand the mission and programs of the division.		
3.	The relationship of the members to staff is clear.		
4.	The School Committee attends to policy decisions which guide the staff's activities.		
5.	The School Committee receives regular reports on finances, programs, and other important matters.		
6.	The School Committee has approved comprehensive personnel policies.		
7.	The School Committee regularly evaluates and develops the Superintendent.		
8.	The School Committee regularly monitors and evaluates progress towards its strategic goals.		
9.	The School Committee's discussions are confined to published agenda items.		
10.	School Committee members follow parliamentary procedures during meetings.		
11.	All members of the School Committee are prepared for discussion by reading materials ahead of time.		
12.	Our meetings are business-like and cordial.		

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

There is a definite distinction between governing the school district and administering its daily activities. While school boards (school committees) are ultimately responsible for major decisions concerning the school district, they employ a professional staff of administrators (led by the school superintendent) to manage day-to-day functions.

The National School Boards Association's (NSBA) definition includes the following statement:

> *Like Congress, state legislatures, and city or county councils, school boards establish the direction and structure of their school districts by adopting policies through the authority granted by state legislatures. Policies are the means by which educators are accountable to the public.*

NSBA provides the following distinction between board of education policies and administrative procedures/regulations.

> ***Policies*** *are principles adopted by the board to chart a course of action. They tell what is and may include why and how much. They are broad enough to indicate a line of action to be taken by the administration in meeting a number of day-to-day problems; they need to be narrow enough to give the administration clear guidance.*
>
> ***Regulations*** *(or administrative procedures) are the detailed directions developed by the administration to put the board's policy into practice. They tell how, by whom, where, and when things are to be done. Often the state and federal governments require school boards to make detailed rules. Included in this category would be federally funded programs, such as Title I.*

The Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) position is very clear:

> *Good policy is basic to good management. Education reform has clearly defined policy making as a critical important responsibility for school committee.* ***There is no other responsibility more important to the smooth and effective operation of the schools.***

School Committee policies provide:

- a system of two-way communication between employees and the local board and administrative staff;
- the selection and evaluation of all instructional materials;
- the standards of student conduct and attendance;
- school-community communications and community involvement;
- guidelines for parents to provide instructional assistance to their children in the home;
- information about procedures for addressing concerns;
- a cooperatively-developed procedure for personnel evaluation; and
- grievance and dismissal procedures of teachers.

Policies and procedures are an important vehicle for communicating expectations to students and employees. In addition, policies and procedures provide a way to:

- establish a distinction between board policymaking and procedures development by the administration;
- provide guidelines for personnel and students to use;
- provide some assurance of consistency and continuity in decision making by staff;
- help orient school committee members and employees to the school district; and
- assist the general public in understanding how decisions are made.

Policies are an important tool for a School Committee and should be stated clearly enough to provide appropriate direction to staff.

FINDING

No HWRSD administrator is responsible for policy development. While a Policy Working Group of the School Committee has existed for years, it has been less than effective. The newly appointed chairman (liaison) of this work group recognizes this weakness and intends to make change and improve the policy development process.

The HWRSD Policy Manual is in need of a major reconstruction. Currently, the HWRSD Policy Manual includes a limited number of policies as shown in **Exhibit 2-7.** A review of board agenda minutes found that a few policies have been revised and adopted at School Committee meetings. In addition, as needed, some new policies have been added. However, there has not been a comprehensive review of the policy manual in decades, and the current manual lacks numerous policies found in most other school districts.

Exhibit 2-8 presents the policy classification system used by the National School Boards Association. This is similar to the classification system used by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

NSBA states that there is no substitute for written policies because policies promote stability and:

- maintain continuity and consistency;
- lend legitimacy to board actions;
- provide guidance for the superintendent;
- allow the board and administration to operate in a more efficient manner; and
- provide the basis for a legal record.

The NSBA website also suggests that operating procedures may be included in the same manual (whether in hard copy format or online) with the board policies or in a separate, but cross-referenced document. Staff and student handbooks, special guides, and many forms that transmit information between the school district, and its employees, students, and the community, are also considered regulations or administrative procedures.

Both the online version of the HWRSD Policy Manual and the hard copy version available in the district office are very out-of-date.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-6:

Conduct a comprehensive review of all policies of the HWRSD School Committee.

The HWRSD School Committee and Policy Working Group should conduct a comprehensive review of the HWRSD Policy Manual. Clear, comprehensive, and up-to-date policies should provide a framework for the School Committee and school district decisions. Generally, we find that the school board policy manual necessitates a complete comprehensive review at least every five years.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Exhibit 2-7
Policies in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Table of Contents of the Policy Manual

FOUNDATION A 1000-1999			
	1992-1993	Core Values	A1001
✓	Oct. 2, 2008	Tobacco Free Policy	A1002
✓	Oct. 2, 2008	Acceptable Use Policy Technology	A1003
	Nov. 11, 2007	Website Development & Maintenance	A1005
✓	Nov. 6, 2008	Harassment Policy	A1005
	Oct. 21, 1999	Section 504: Grievance Procedure	A1006
	Dec. 13, 2001	AIDS/IHIV Policy	A1007
✓	Nov. 6, 2008	C.O.R.I. Requirements Policy	A1008
✓	Nov. 6, 2008	Private Tutoring of Students Policy	A1009
✓	June 17, 2010	Religious Observances Policy	A1010
SCHOOL COMMITTEE B 2000 - 2999			
	April 10, 2010	By Laws	B2001
✓	Jan. 21, 1999	Public Participation at Sch. Com. Mtgs.	B2002
✓	Dec. 11, 2008	Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members	B2003
ADMINISTRATIVE C 3000 - 3999			
	April 16, 1998	Parent Notification of Sex Education	C3001
	Feb. 15, 2001	Investigative Guidelines for Administrators	C3002
✓	Dec. 11, 2008	Pest Management	C3003
✓	March 31, 2005	Family and Medical Leave	C3004
✓	Nov. 2, 2006	Observations of Students and Programs by Parents, Advocates and other Designees	C3005
FISCAL D 4000 - 4999			
	June 13, 1997	Student Activity Accounts	D4001
✓	June 2, 2003	Private Funding Policy	D4002
✓	Feb. 10, 2005	Advertising in Schools	D4003
✓	March 17, 2005	Scholarships	D4004
✓	Oct. 5, 2006	No Child Left Behind Programs - Supplement not Supplant	D4005
SUPPORT SERVICES E 5000 - 5999			
✓	June 15, 2006	Wellness Policy	E-5001
FACILITIES F 6000 – 6999			
✓	June 23, 2005	Public Use of School Buildings Policy	F6001
✓	May 6, 2010	Vehicle Idling on School Grounds Policy	F6002
✓	May 6, 2010	Vehicle Use Policy	F6003
PERSONNEL G 7000 - 7999			
✓	Sept. 7, 2006	Gifts & Contributions to Individual Employees	G7001
STUDENT H 8000 - 8999			
	April 17, 1997	Student Assignment Policy	H8001
✓	Dec. 14, 2004	Student Admission	H8002
✓	Dec. 16, 2004	Potential Resident Policy	H8002A (Amended June 2005)
✓	March 17, 2005	Home Education Policy	H8003
	Sept. 18, 1997	Class Size Policy	H8004 (Amended 2/5/09)
	April 16, 1998	Homework Policy	H8005
	April 16, 1998	Coordination of Preschool Services Policy	H8006
	Feb. 18, 1999	Student Transportation Policy	H8007
	March 4, 1999	Elementary Student Placement Policy	H8008
	April 27, 2000	Bicycle Safety Policy	H8009
	Dec. 19, 2002	Administration of Medications Policy	H8010
	Feb. 13, 2003	Physical Restraint of Students Policy	H80011
	Feb. 27, 2003	Student Records Policy	H8012
	Feb. 27, 2003	Education of Pregnant and/or Parenting Students	H8013
	Nov. 6, 2003	Student Withdrawal from School	H8014
✓	Jan. 5, 2006	School-Sponsored Field Trips	H8015
	March 18, 2004	Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services	H8016
✓	Nov. 2, 2006	Educational Services in Home or Hospital	H8017A
✓	March 17, 2005	Tutorial Services Provided by HWRSD	H8017B
✓	June 15, 2006	English Language Learners Policy	H8018

Source: HWRSD Policy Manual, 2010.

Note: Policies noted with a check (✓)are also available online.

Exhibit 2-8
National School Boards Association
Classification for Organizing School Board Policies

SECTION A: FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS

Section A of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on the district's legal role in providing public education and the basic principles underlying school board governance. These policies provide a setting for all of the school board's other policies and regulations.

SECTION B: SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

Section B of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on the school board – how it is appointed or elected; how it is organized; how it conducts meetings, and how the board operates. This section includes bylaws and policies establishing the board's internal operating procedures.

SECTION C: GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Section C of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on school management, administrative organization, and school building and department administration – including the administrative aspect of special programs and system wide reforms such as school- or site-based management. It also houses personnel policies on the superintendent, senior administrators (management team), and school principals. All phases of policy implementation – procedures or regulations – are properly located in this section.

SECTION D: FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Section D of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on school finances and the management of funds. Policies on the financing of school construction and renovation, however, are filed in Section F, Facilities Development.

SECTION E: SUPPORT SERVICES

Section E of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on non-instructional services and programs, particularly those on business management such as safety, building and grounds management, office services, transportation, and food services.

SECTION F: FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Section F of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on facility planning, financing, construction, and renovation. It also includes the topics of temporary facilities and school closings.

SECTION G: PERSONNEL

Section G of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on all school employees except for the superintendent (policies on the school chief are located in Section C, General Administration). The category is divided into three main divisions: GB has policies applying to all school employees or to general personnel matters; GC refers to instructional and administrative staff; and GD refers to support or classified staff.

SECTION H: NEGOTIATIONS

Section H of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on the process of negotiating with bargaining units recognized by the school board and authorized under state law.

Exhibit 2-8 (Continued)
National School Boards Association
Classification for Organizing School Board Policies

SECTION I: INSTRUCTION

Section I of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on the instructional program: basic curricular subjects; special programs, instructional resources, and academic achievement.

SECTION J: STUDENTS

Section J of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on students – admissions, attendance, rights and responsibilities, conduct, discipline, health and welfare, and school-related activities.

SECTION K: SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, AND HOME RELATIONS

Section K of the NEPN/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on parent and community involvement in schools. Except for policies concerning education agencies, statements on public sector relations with the school district also are located in this section.

SECTION L: EDUCATION AND AGENCY RELATIONS

Section L of the EPS/NSBA classification system contains policies, regulations, and exhibits on the school district's relationship with other education agencies – including other school systems, regional or service districts, private schools, colleges and universities, education research organizations, and state and national education agencies.

Source: National School Boards Association, 2009.

FINDING

The HWRSD Policy Manual has many policies that require administrative procedures or guidelines for administrators to use during the implementation of the specific policy. There are no procedural documents incorporated into the HWRSD Policy Manual, as there are in many, if not most, school districts.

While Evergreen consultants found that effective procedures are sometimes in use, and while some departments have developed their own procedures, there is no central listing of these administrative procedures or regulations, and in fact, very few exist in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

Required or recommended administrative procedures developed as a result of policy are not identified, nor is there a general index where such procedures are referenced. It is not possible to link from policy to administrative procedure in any area by using a coded system, nor is it possible to link from procedure to policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-7:

Develop a comprehensive Administrative Procedures Manual that contains administrative procedures, and which can be used by school and central office administrators to ensure consistency among staff.

The proposed Administrative Procedures Manual should include information that reflects policies adopted by the School Committee and appropriate departmental procedures which have been developed to implement policies of the School Committee. The manual would be an important reference tool that would be readily accessible to administrators.

Sections of the Administrative Procedures Manual should include:

- General Information
- Instruction
- Records Management
- Student Services
- Special Education
- Health Services
- Financial Procedures
- Technology
- Human Resources
- Transportation
- Maintenance
- Food Services

The Procedure Manual should be cross-referenced to School Committee policy and also available online.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Currently, no one is responsible for pulling revised policies together, ensuring that they are placed online, and facilitating the creation of administrative procedures when they are needed.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-8:

Assign the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance as the administrative liaison for policy development.

We recommend that the Assistant Superintendent and his administrative assistant be responsible for policy development and serve as the administrative liaison with the Policy Working Group of the School Committee. We envision this person being responsible for coordinating the process on behalf of the Superintendent, and not for writing new policies which should be assigned to appropriate staff working with the Policy Working Group.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.3 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

How well an organization performs is in large measure a reflection of how well it is organized and managed. To determine how well the organization and management are performing, usually a set of standards are used to measure performance.

While there has been much written about effective organizations, David Hardesty, the president of West Virginia University, has recently summarized this research with the following ten characteristics:

- The mission is clearly articulated and communicates the essence of the organization to the public.
- There is a powerful vision that is well-articulated and easily understood that guides the organization into the future.
- There is an adherence to shared values throughout the organization.
- There is a balanced and cohesive group of leaders who reflect different talents and styles.
- There are clear and measurable objectives that guide the work of those within the organization.
- There are mechanisms for receiving customer feedback and input, through such strategies as focus groups, surveys, and open hot lines.
- Continuing education is a top priority in the organization.
- There is a determined pursuit of excellence.
- There is a well thought out decision-making process that involves people in a meaningful way.
- There are periodic celebrations of successes.

FINDING

The HWRSD Superintendent, Dr. Raleigh Buchanan, has been at the helm of Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District since July 2010.

Exhibit 2-9 shows the current organizational chart of Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. As shown, the following positions report directly to the Superintendent:

- four building principals (with the middle school and high school sharing a position);
- the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance who has six primary responsibilities and three direct reports;
- the Director of Educational Services; and
- the Director of Student Services.

With three of the top four management positions starting in July and August 2010, it is very difficult to evaluate the current management schedule. Evergreen's first visit to HWRSD was less than three months after these three senior managers had been hired. In response to the items regarding central office administration, several respondents expressed that it was too early to evaluate the new structure. As would be expected, some respondents expressed confusion as to which structure they were actually being asked to assess.

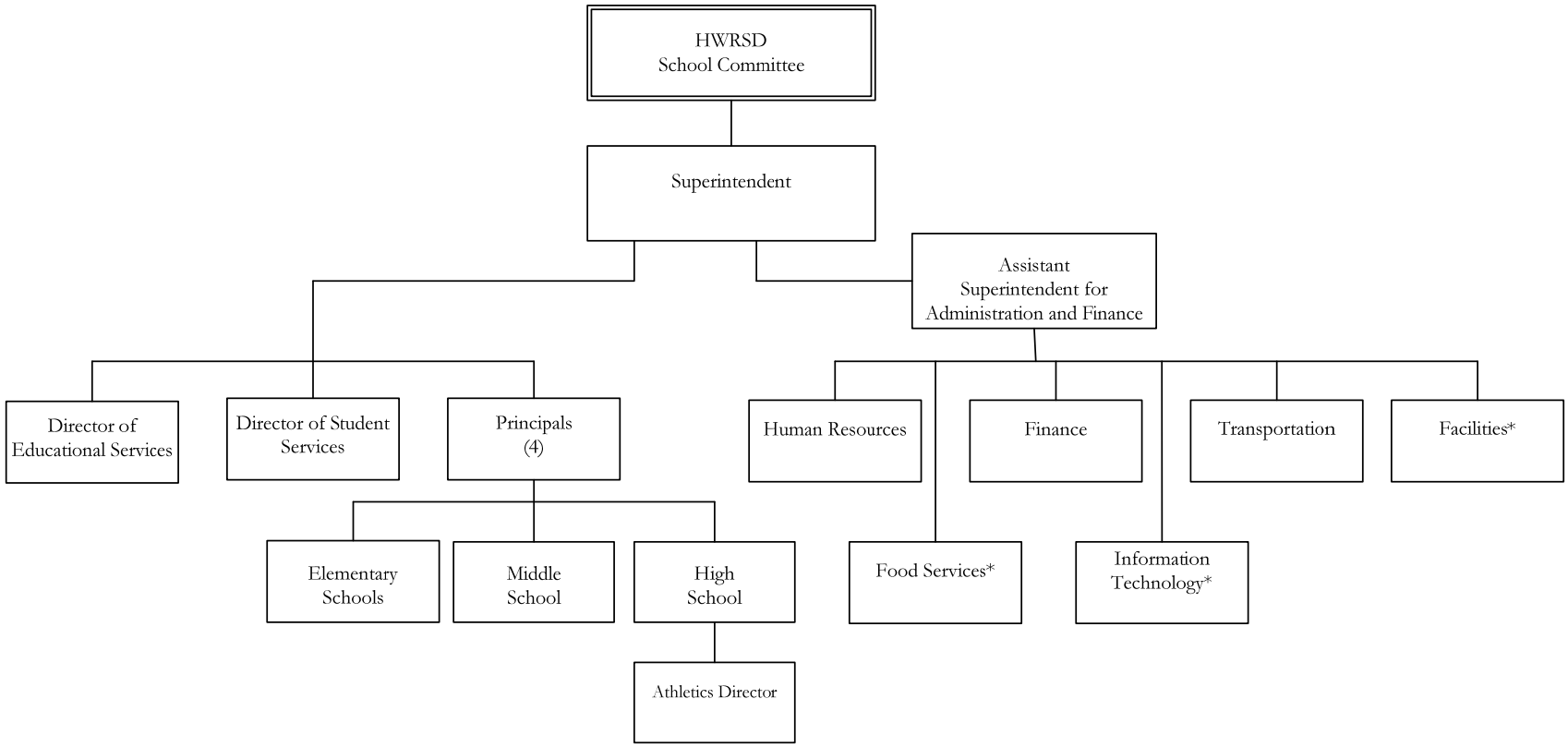
The organizational chart shown in **Exhibit 2-9** is basically one that was inherited by Dr. Buchanan. Clearly, the HWRSD central office is not overstaffed. In fact, the number of administrators in the central office is quite low.

In 2009, the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) conducted a study of central office staffing for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). The study examined central office staff and their roles or functions in terms of district size. HWRSD central office positions were commensurate with other districts of its size (about 2,000 students).

An analysis of the HWRSD organizational structure revealed some weaknesses:

- The Assistant Superintendent has too many responsibilities since several functions under him (e.g., HR, finance) lack a director.
- The human resources function is disaggregated with many administrators handling discrete functions with little coordination (see **Chapter 3**).
- The positions of high school and middle school principals are combined positions.
- The outsourced transportation function is under the Assistant Superintendent while the in-house transportation function is under the Director of Student Services (see **Chapter 8**).
- There appears to be very little coordination between the Director of Educational Services and the Director of Student Services (see **Chapter 5**).

Exhibit 2-9
HWRSD Organizational Chart
2010-11 School Year



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

*Have dedicated program directors.

Exhibit 2-10 provides the AdvancED standards*. Middle and secondary schools should have one assistant principal once enrollment reaches 500 and two once enrollment reaches 1,000 students. Other accrediting agencies have similar ratios. In HWRSD, the current enrollment at the middle school is about 450 and at the high school about 690.

Exhibit 2-10
AdvancED Standards
Recommended School Administrative Staffing Guidelines

Staff Category	School Enrollment					
	1 - 249	250 – 499	500 – 749	750 – 999	1000 – 1249	1250 - 1499
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Principal	0	0.0 0 (elementary)	1 0.5 (elementary)	1.5 1 (elementary)	2 1.5 (elementary)	2.5 2 (elementary)

Source: AdvancED Standards, May 2009.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-9:

Modify the span of control of the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance, staff both the middle school and high school with a principal, and delete the assistant principal at the middle school.

FISCAL IMPACT

This multifaceted recommendation can be implemented with existing resources except for the principal/assistant principal part of the recommendation. The salary data provided to Evergreen consultants show the high/middle school principal with a combination of two salaries:

- high school $70,621
- middle school $47,081

$117,702 total salary

The two middle school assistant principals each make $97,615. The assistant principal's figure includes a $2,500 salary increase for each assistant which was made when the principal position was combined. The elimination of one assistant principal, creation of secondary principal, and reduction of salary for the modification should cost no more than $15,000.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Staff Secondary Schools with Two Principals and One High School Assistant Principal	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)

*In 2006, the North Central Association Commission of Accreditation and School Improvement, the Southern Association of Colleges and School Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, and the National Study of School Evaluation came together to form one strong and unified organization under the name AdvancED.

FINDING

The Superintendent recognizes the importance of two-way communications between the central office and the community, including groups which might be less than supportive of HWRSD and increased educational spending. The following are examples of the activities Dr. Buchanan is using to reach out to the community.

- attendance at town meetings and other community associations;
- monthly meetings with the town managers;
- cable television show;
- Saturday chat with the Superintendent;
- newspaper article(s) for District Corner; and
- the creation of a parent council.

Community and town leaders applauded the Superintendent for these efforts. Some School Committee members were cautiously optimistic regarding these new outreach efforts, but clearly understand that this is needed. In fact, this was one strong characteristic that the Superintendent's Search Committee was looking for in choosing the new HWRSD superintendent.

COMMENDATION

Dr. Buchanan is applauded for his commitment to improving and building relationships with the towns and the community.

FINDING

A review of the teacher survey results shown in **Exhibit 2-11** found that, in general, teachers are not as supportive of the central office as they could be. For example:

- only 67 percent of HWRSD teachers believe that the district administrators support the education process, as compared to 78 percent in comparison school districts; and

- similarly, only 50 percent of teachers believe the district administration is efficient compared to 64 percent in comparison school districts.

Clearly, improvements are needed. One way to affect change is to get teachers more involved in working with the Superintendent and other central office staff.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-10:

Improve teacher relations with the administration by creating a Teacher Advisory Council.

Exhibit 2-11
Comparison of Central Administrator, School Administrator, and Teacher Survey Results on the Administrative Responsibilities in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and School Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Survey Statement	HWRSD Teachers		Teachers in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree	Strongly Agree & Agree	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
The district administration is efficient.	49.6%	24.3%	63.5%	22.8%
The district administration supports the educational process.	67.0%	13.9%	77.8%	13.5%
Most administrative practices in the school district are highly efficient and effective.	43.0%	34.2%	58.8%	19.5%
Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	44.3%	33.9%	58.6%	19.8%
School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	59.6%	27.2%	64.2%	18.9%
Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	21.6%	33.6%	29.2%	20.9%
Survey Statement	**HWRSD School Administrators**		**School Administrators in Evergreen's Survey Database**	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**	**Strongly Agree & Agree**	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**
The district administration is efficient.	100.0%	0.0%	65.5%	15.2%
The district administration supports the educational process.	100.0%	0.0%	85.2%	5.1%
Most administrative practices in the school district are highly efficient and effective.	80.0%	20.0%	70.2%	13.0%
Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	100.0%	0.0%	68.6%	14.8%
School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100.0%	0.0%	83.2%	5.5%
Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	20.0%	40.0%	44.8%	32.2%
Survey Statement	**HWRSD Central Administrators**		**Central Administrators in Evergreen's Survey Database**	
	Strongly Agree & Agree	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**	**Strongly Agree & Agree**	**Strongly Disagree & Disagree**
The district administration is efficient.	83.3%	16.7%	76.5%	12.1%
The district administration supports the educational process.	100.0%	0.0%	81.6%	8.7%
Most administrative practices in the school district are highly efficient and effective.	83.3%	0.0%	75.8%	11.7%
Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	66.7%	33.3%	77.5%	12.1%
School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100.0%	0.0%	85.0%	10.5%
Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	50.0%	16.7%	50.6%	33.4%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

Many districts have used teacher advisory councils to build more effective teacher relations with central office administrators and improve communications up and down the district's chain-of-command. A teacher from each school should serve on the council, and this should be a rotating position. The Teacher Advisory Council should meet monthly with the Superintendent.

The teacher representative on the Teacher Advisory Council should be responsible to report on Council meetings to faculty members at each school.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

On October 4, 2010, Dr. Buchanan submitted his first weekly update (Update #1) to the School Committee. Since that time, updates have been provided on October 19, and October 29, and November 12, 2010. Such weekly updates are used by many superintendents to keep the school board/committee informed on a weekly basis on:

- personnel activities;
- upcoming events;
- school-related activities and events;
- community issues;
- state education issues; and
- other important activities.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-11:

Continue to submit weekly updates to School Committee members on a weekly basis—preferably the same day each week (e.g., Friday Report).

Having regular reports on the same day of the week can strengthen communication between the Superintendent and School Committee members. Also, the consistent weekly practice sets a designed time for such a report on everyone's calendar. Obviously, more frequent or immediate communication would be needed in crisis situations or at busy times of the year.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Superintendent's Leadership Team consists of:

- Superintendent;
- Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance;

- Director of Education Services;
- Director of Support Services; and
- all principals.

For the 2010-11 school year, the Leadership Team met on the following dates:

- August 12, 2010
- September 21, 2010
- October 5, 2010
- October 21, 2010

Meetings are also scheduled for November 16 and December 7, 2010.

Evergreen consultants reviewed the agenda of all Leadership Team meetings that had taken place prior to our on-site visit. The August 12 meeting was highly strategic and included a leadership discussion on the items shown in **Exhibit 2-12.**

A review of agendas of subsequent meetings found that they were much more informational. No minutes or follow-up/monitoring on Leadership Team meetings were found.

Exhibit 2-12
HWRSD Leadership Team Meeting
Discussion Items
August 12, 2010

- Recruitment and Selection of Professional Staff
- Evaluation and Assessment
- 21st Century and Beyond
- Technology – what is our greatest need?
- Administrative Professional Development
- What will be our five priorities for the year 2011?
- What are some of our achievements we can celebrate?
- At the end of the 2010-11 school year, what would we select as our three group achievements?

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-12:

Provide minutes, as well as a follow-up and monitoring system, as component parts of the Leadership Team process.

Minutes or notes would be kept of all Leadership Team meetings and shared with team members. In addition, a mechanism should be created as action items occur at each Leadership Team meeting. The Superintendent should hold all senior managers accountable for action items. A form similar to the one shown in **Exhibit 2-13** could be used.

Exhibit 2-13
HWRSD Leadership Team Meeting
Follow-up on Action Items

Date of Leadership Team Meeting	Action Item	Person Responsible	Time Line	Task Completed

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The evaluation process used for central office administrators in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District assesses basic information, but does not rate an administrator on his or her annual performance. For example, the evaluation provides no information on the school or district improvement processes, the degree of student achievement, nor the achievement of measurable goals and objectives for educational administrators. A review of personnel files for both principals and central office administrators found that several administrators were not evaluated annually. In fact, in at least one case, an individual was evaluated in June 2010 for the FY 2009 and FY 2010 school years. Such practice is clearly unacceptable and can be demoralizing to employees.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-13:

Create a performance-based central office evaluation system.

The Superintendent and Leadership Team should take the initiative to develop new tools for the performance assessment of central office administrators. The principal evaluation system could be used as an example of a quantifiable evaluation instrument. The documents should build on best practices of other school districts and provide for a meaningful method of measuring employee performance.

All central office administrators should be evaluated annually as should principals. HWRSD could tie a portion of administrative salary increases to results of the performance-based evaluations to communicate that measurable high-quality performance will be rewarded, and to encourage outstanding performance.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.4 PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic planning is essential for the successful functioning of a school district; planning is one of the most important activities of a School Committee and administration. The planning process is critical for identifying goals, benchmarks, and measurements; for assessing progress toward achieving goals; and for determining alternative courses of action based on those assessments.

Planning also guides the school district in resource allocation for goal accomplishment, in identifying staff needs, and in selecting professional development needs in order to reach intended ends. Consolidating all of those aspects of the planning process in a concerted,

thoughtful, strategic manner facilitates the district's execution of its educational programs and activities.

The evaluation of planning efforts must be ongoing, consistent, and objective. Evaluation must provide staff information to judge progress and set a course of action to achieve long-term administrative, instructional, and student success. Effectively used, it forms a basis for professional as well as district and student growth. Effective planning and evaluation is one of the most elemental components of effective resource management. Decisions that affect the educational service delivery system and its resources should be based on comprehensive data analysis and systematic planning.

This process starts with the School Committee and the Superintendent, and with a strategic plan. The strategic plan clearly states the organization's mission, upon which decisions will be based, sets forth goals and objectives the School Committee expects the school district to accomplish for its students, identifies explicit measurements that will be used to monitor progress, and assigns accountability to individuals or groups in the system. The strategic plan guides the School Committee as it makes decisions regarding policy focus and resource allocation.

In order for a strategic plan to steer a school district and its employees in their decisions and actions, it must:

- be constantly used as a basis for decisions;
- be continually examined as to its applicability for students and the school system as time progresses and circumstances change;
- have benchmarks specifically identifying how progress will be measured; and
- have benchmarks that must be continually examined for fine-tuning and determination of success.

Strategic planning is an important management tool that is used for several reasons:

- it helps a school district focus its energy;
- it ensures that all members of the school district are working towards the same goals; and
- it allows the organization to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.

Effective strategic planning:

- leads to action;
- builds a shared vision that is based upon shared values;
- is an inclusive, participatory process in which a school board and staff have shared ownership;
- promotes accountability to the community;
- is based on quality data;
- requires an openness to questioning the status quo; and
- is a key part of effective management.

Strategic planning assumes that school districts must be responsive to a constantly changing, dynamic environment. Strategic planning emphasizes the importance of making decisions that will ensure the organization can response to these changes. As such, a strategic plan is a document that changes as circumstances change.

A strong strategic plan includes the following components:

- a mission statement that answers the question: "Why do we exist?";
- a vision statement that answers the question: "What will success look like?" (This vision statement is often what inspires a group to achieve its mission);
- a set of overarching goals with specific strategies designed to help reach the goals;
- an action plan that specifies timelines and responsibilities; and
- an evaluation plan that includes specific measurable outcomes to determine the attainment of goals.

FINDING

A Strategic Plan for the Hamilton-Wenham School District was developed in 2004-05 for the 2005-2010 school years. A description of the Strategic Plan is shown in **Exhibit 2-14**. This description was written in the latest Annual Report (2008-09) which was disseminated in January 2010.

According to most administrators and staff, this strategic plan is:

- very outdated;
- has not been used as a "living document" for years; and
- does not have outcomes which have been monitored nor evaluated.

The Superintendent recognizes this deficiency and, working with the School Committee, has initiated efforts to develop a new Strategic Plan for 2011.

Exhibit 2-15 shows Evergreen's survey results compared to respondents in peer districts.

Surprisingly, many central office administrators, unlike principals and teachers, stated that the current 2005-10 strategic plan was *outstanding* or *adequate*. Unfortunately, the language included in the January 2010 Annual Report was out of date. At the time, the strategic plan was not recognized as a "living document" as stated in the Annual Report.

In addition, the District Implementation Plan is not operational. The document entitled "district improvement plan" was not provided to Evergreen consultants until well after the on-site review. Many administrators did not know that this document existed, and it certainly was not envisioned districtwide (at the time of our on-site visit) as a document used to make improvements as stated in the district's annual report.

Exhibit 2-14
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Strategic Plan

The Hamilton-Wenham Strategic Plan focuses on student learning. It categorizes the needs of the school district in terms of School Culture and Climate, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Student Support Services, Personnel and Professional Development, Facilities and Technology, Community Relations and Communications, Organizational Renewal, Leadership, and Management, and Educational Funding.

The HW Strategic Plan is the foundation document and framework for the development of the annual District Improvement Plans and individual School Improvement Plans. We keep the plan dynamic through regular evaluation and communication to the school community regarding our progress. As a guiding document, the strategic plan is reviewed and updated annually. It is our intention that this annual review process enables the strategic plan to serve effectively as a "living document", providing clear guidance for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Schools as it responds to changing trends, events, challenges, and opportunities that each year inevitably brings.

The superintendent, leadership team, staff and school site councils use the strategic plan as the starting point when developing the required annual district improvement plan (DIP) and individual school improvement plans (SIPs). The DIP and SIPs identify and describe the goals and objectives that the district and each school will work to accomplish on an annual basis. This progress is then measured against the overall goals and strategies of the strategic plan.

The district improvement plan is designed to provide for greater specificity to the strategic plan. The DIP is not specific to each individual school, rather it is an overarching plan to meet the needs of the district as a whole. The greater specificity is provided by each school's SIP within the context of the district improvement plan. It is the intent of each school's SIP to emulate the DIP at an individual level based on those schools' needs, but within the realm of the individual school's core values, mission and vision.

The district and school improvement plans provide the schools with a well-defined and easily implemented system for accountability, measurement of outcomes, and evaluation of progress. They are essentially the blueprint for the efforts that will occur during implementation of the plan. All strategies and resources can be directly connected to the strategic plan.

The HW Strategic Plan is one of which we are all very proud. It provides us with direction and focus for the future, as well as a level of accountability based on its measures of success and timelines. The strategic plan is designed to ensure continued excellence in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Schools.

Source: Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Annual Report, 2008 – 2009, January 2010.

Exhibit 2-15
Rating of Strategic Planning by HWRSD Groups
Compared to Peer School Districts

Respondent	HWRSD		Peers	
	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate / Outstanding
Central Office Administrators	33.3%	50.0%	55.2%	34.7%
Principals	100.0%	0.0%	44.8%	49.6%
Teachers	32.3%	27.3%	37.1%	37.8%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-14:

Expedite plans to develop a Strategic Plan and District Improvement Plan, as required by state law.

The Superintendent and School Committee should concentrate efforts to create its new strategic plan. This document should be operational prior to the start of the 2011-12 school year.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

2.5 COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Communications and public relations are critical to the success of school districts today. Teachers and administrators, research literature, and areas of best practice speak widely about the need for parental and community understanding of and involvement in the public schools in order for achievement to improve for all students. It is through significant partnerships between the schools and their stakeholders that the resources and perceptions, policies, and practices will evolve to support education sufficiently to have an impact on every student. Classroom teachers, school principals, schools, and school districts working in isolation from their communities cannot achieve the goals of higher achievement and more fully developed young citizens.

In today's educational and political climate, it is not sufficient to be a good school district; the public must be continually shown the advances of the school district. A school district must be publicly accountable for every dollar spent, every program created, and every student.

In **Section 2.3**, the Superintendent was praised for his outreach efforts. In this section, community support and outreach to parents are addressed.

One vital aspect of community relations is communication to parents about their child's school. School principals, faculty, and staff communicate to parents in various ways. Teachers also regularly communicate with parents about student assignments and progress. **Exhibit 2-16** shows respondents survey results which indicate that teachers regularly communicate with parents of the students they teach.

Exhibit 2-16
HWRSD Survey Results on Communications

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.					
Teachers	28.8%	61.3%	4.5%	5.4%	0.0%
Central Office Administrators	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
School Administrators	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

Another important aspect of community relations is communication from the district to the community. Evergreen interviews indicate that the district, especially its new Superintendent, communicates with parents and the community to solicit input on a regular basis. **Exhibit 2-17** shows the survey results which indicate that a majority of each respondent group *agree* or *strongly agree* that the district is reaching out to parents and the community. This is a clear difference between the new administration and the previous administration.

Exhibit 2-17
HWRSD Survey Results on Communications

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district regularly communicates with parents.					
Teachers	26.1%	62.2%	7.2%	4.5%	0.0%
Central Office Administrators	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%
School Administrators	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

COMMENDATION

HWRSD staff is commended for using effective communications to establish strong community relations.

FINDING

In 2008-09, the Friends groups for each of the five schools, contributed $108,695 for specific school-based projects, creative arts funds, cultural enrichment, teacher materials, playground equipment, reduction of user fees for extracurricular activities, teacher professional development and technology hardware and software. Parents and community members also donated countless volunteer hours helping with classroom enrichment, technology, classroom activities, and a variety of other important tasks such as painting classrooms and teacher workrooms, and landscaping. Also, in 2008-09, the HWRHS Friends group provided $12,000 which enabled 502 students to participate in after-school extracurricular activities and clubs with reduced user fees of $78/student/activity.

In 2009-10, the Friends groups augmented its revenue contributions to HWRSD. For example, at Cutler Elementary, $25,000 was received, of which $13,000 was for playground equipment. At the high school, $27,785 was received from the Friends group in 2009-10.

COMMENDATION

The Friends' groups are commended for their active financial support of all HWRSD schools.

2.6 ENDOWMENT FUND

Information from the National Center of Public and Private School Foundations identify educational foundations as privately operated, non-profit organizations established to assist public schools. These foundations qualify as charitable organizations, different from school districts, public institutions, or local governments. Public school foundations are designed to augment, supplement, or complement programs and activities current being provided by school districts. There are currently over 4,800 school foundations that have their own board of relationship to the school district they support.

While it is fairly common for a school district to lend in-kind and staff support for the initial development of an education foundation, the goal should ultimately be for a foundation to become self-sufficient, reducing the burden on district staff and providing a supplemental resource for the school district itself.

Generally, foundations are 501(c) (3) designated so that contributions are 100 percent tax deductible.

FINDING

The HWRSD Education Foundation is called the Edfund. The Edfund was established over 20 years ago to provide support and resources for innovative programs and projects aimed at enhancing the quality of education and educational opportunities for all students. Endowment donations fund programs and projects that might otherwise be cost prohibitive because of decreased state aid and budget and program cuts.

Exhibit 2-18 shows Edfund allocations to the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District for the past five years.

Exhibit 2-18
Edfund Allocations to the
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
FY 2006 – 2010

	Edfund Allocations to HWRSD				
	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Total Grants	**$84,980**	**$92,550**	**$100,068**	**$86,290**	**$31,000**
HW Regional High School	$42,432	$23,550	$30,568	$13,490	$ 8,060
Miles River Middle School	$12,600	$15,000	$20,000	$13,200	$ 7,760
Buker Elementary	$14,144	$11,300	$16,500	$13,200	$ 5,060
Cutler Elementary	$14,144	$11,300	$16,500	$13,200	$ 5,060
Winthrop Elementary	$14,144	$11,300	$16,500	$13,200	$ 5,060
Districtwide		$20,000 High School Auditorium Study			

Source: http://www.hwedfund.org/grants.htm

Most recently, Edfund grants have supported programs and purchases of technology over and above current district budgets. Technology purchases have included items such as computer labs, computer stations and laptops, Smart boards, LCD projectors, and digital cameras. Foundation funding has also provided the latest training opportunities for teachers, supported classroom initiatives, and purchased technology and programs that support individual learning styles. With the mini-grant program, individual teachers request funding for smaller, short-term projects that directly and immediately benefit their students. Edfund grants have affected all aspects and levels of the educational experience in HWRSD.

In 2009-10 alone, almost $85,000 in Edfund grants were awarded. Examples of grants that have been funded include:

- **Connecting Our Students to the 21st Century-** Grant requested new technology to broaden the capabilities of elementary classroom Smartboards previously purchased by the Edfund and parent groups.

- **SENTEOs for Mathematics -** Grant purchased four sets of SENTEO hand-held interactive response systems that were made available to all grade 6-8 math classrooms. The new math program has numerous components that directly link to the system.

- **Computers for Writers** -Grant purchased two desktop computers for each grade 6-8 English classroom. Students will use computers to work on writing and editing assignments in the classroom.

- **Mobile Technology Lab -** Grant created a mobile laptop lab with 30 laptops and a printer, providing high school students a much-needed alternative venue for conducting research and writing projects.

Grants also included:

- $42,432 - **Elementary Schools**

  Buker, Cutler, Winthrop
  15 SMART Document Cameras
  18 SMART Wireless Slates
  18 SMART Response Systems
  12 FLIP Video Cameras

- $8,580 - **Middle School**

  4 SENTED Response Systems
  Support Components

- $29,848 - **High School**

  30 HP Laptop Computers
  1 printer
  1 Wireless Access Port
  1 Cart

The Edfund embarked on a strategic planning process in 2009 to determine the future role in developing a public/private partnership to advance public education in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

The new Edfund vision statement captures the intent of its Strategic Plan:

> *The Hamilton-Wenham Education Fund will be a dedicated advocate committed to enhancing educational excellence in Hamilton and Wenham. We will be a leader in harnessing community involvement and collaboration to advance our public schools.*

The Ed Fund's Strategic Planning Committee began its work in March 2009 and completed its task in December. The multifaceted planning process included a visioning exercise; interviews of HWRSD personnel, leaders of school support organizations, Hamilton and Wenham town officials, state representative, representatives of educational foundations/organizations in other communities, the North Shore Coalition for School Funding, and educational experts; a review of the history of the Edfund since its founding in 1990; environmental study using SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) analyses; review and amendment of the Edfund's mission; and vision formation, strategy development, and implementation plans.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for its effective endowment fund—the Edfund.

FINDING

Students can also serve as a resource to generate funds for the endowment fund. As one example, a marketing class in rural Clinton Public Schools (Oklahoma) organized a project to build a brick wall with the school logo near the entrance of a school. The students sold bricks for $100 each; they sold 500 bricks for the projected income of $50,000 and make a profit of almost $40,000.

The student's promotional plan included the use of direct mail, the Clinton website, cooperative advertising, and the involvement of radio and press media. Students are also requested alumni to help with the effort through golf, football, and soccer competitions.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 2-15:

Involve students in supporting the HWRSD Edfund.

Students can be recruited to assist in fund raising for the Edfund. A marketing or other appropriate high school class could spearhead this effort.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

CHAPTER 3:
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

3.0 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Managing a public education organization is a labor-intensive undertaking; personnel costs typically consume the largest portion of the average school district budget. Consequently, successful and effective school districts place a major emphasis on human resources management. The employees of any school district are its most valuable asset. They possess distinctive institutional knowledge and experience that can be difficult and costly to replace. The recruitment, selection, orientation, training, salary, and benefits provided to the workforce contribute greatly to the effectiveness of the organization.

Human resources management begins with the organization and direction of the personnel function. Ultimately, the human resources operation is a customer service effort—even in a small organization without a fully staffed human resources department—employees responsible for human resources processes must deal with applicants, current employees, and often times employees who have left the organization. In order to be able to deliver the proper level of support and assistance, employees performing personnel functions must be organized and trained appropriately, and have the right delineation of job responsibilities. Employees must know that, if they have a question on a particular issue that is critical to their job, the right person will be handling the issue for them. Staff of the organization must feel confident in the abilities of the human resources operation to address personnel-related issues and challenges that are common in a public education environment.

Within the scope of human resources management, there are a number of responsibilities—including staffing analysis, recruiting, hiring, salary and benefits administration, and performance evaluation. Effective personnel management requires compliance with equal employment opportunity statutes and other applicable federal and state laws. As part of human resources management, it is important to establish fair and workable policies, procedures, and training programs that are important to recruiting and retaining competent staff.

A well-organized human resources function can help district leaders meet the needs of employees, students, parents as well as the data needs of the administration. By assigning clear responsibilities to staff, the district can effectively and efficiently deliver necessary services to ensure the sound management of the human resources function.

Chapter 3 includes the following sections:

3.1 Organization and Management
3.2 Policies and Procedures
3.3 Human Resources Records
3.4 Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention
3.5 Compensation and Classification
3.6 Performance Management
3.7 Collective Bargaining Contracts

3.1 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

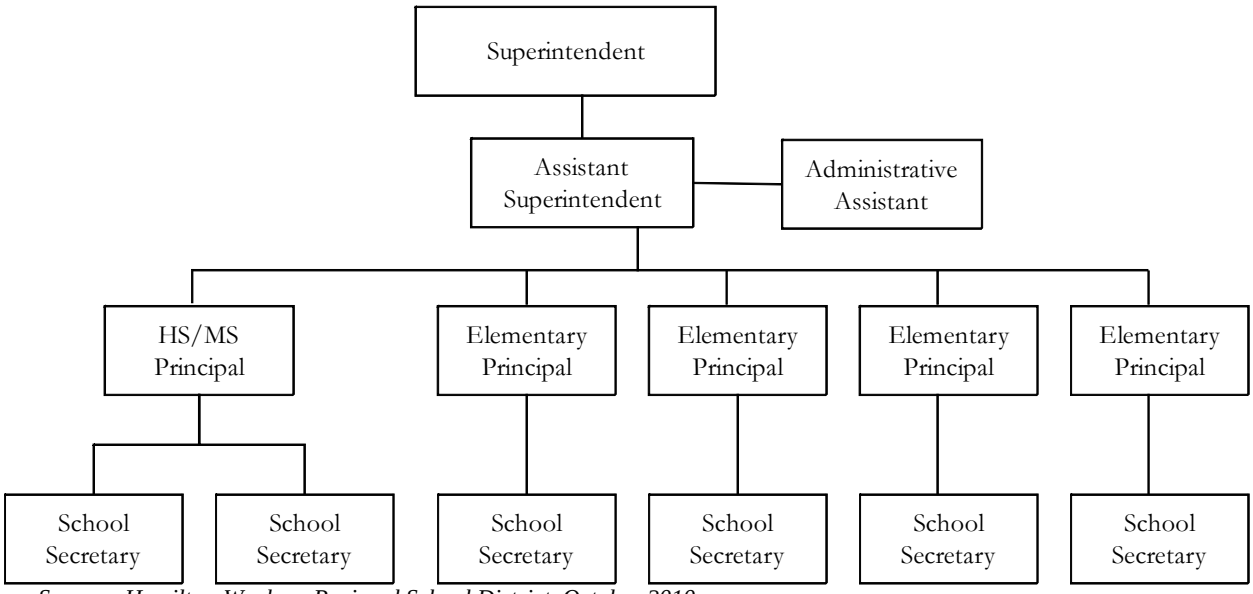
The effectiveness of personnel services is significantly influenced by the manner in which a human resources department is organized and managed. The organizational structure of a human resources department should be driven by the functions that it performs, and these functions should be periodically reviewed to ensure that the needs of the organization are being effectively served.

FINDING

In HWRSD, personnel functions are handled by a cadre of district staff members in a decentralized fashion. There is no present formal organizational structure associated with human resources.

Exhibit 3-1 illustrates the group of district staff members who, in one way or another, provide personnel-related services. Once again, there is no formal Human Resources Department. In the absence of a formal department, the various personnel processes have fallen to several individuals.

Exhibit 3-1
Organizational Structure of the Human Resources Function



Source: Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, October 2010.

The HWRSD reporting structure for human resources shows that processes involving school staff members flow through the various school secretaries, to the principals, and up to the central office where they are predominantly handled by the Administrative Assistant in the Business Office and the Superintendent's Secretary.

Given the regional nature of the district and the relative size of the towns of Hamilton and Wenham, it makes little sense for the district to employ a full-time Director of Personnel on its own. What has been accomplished in some other smaller districts, where shared services are more prevalent, is that a single personnel administrator can be hired and paid by the town(s) and the district, and each respective organization contributes a representative portion of the costs of salary and benefits of this administrator.

By creating a more centralized human resources department, the HWRSD, as well as the towns, would benefit by:

- formulating a consistent series of policies and processes for the personnel business of the district;
- bringing needed consistency to the processes followed in the core personnel functions;
- granting more importance to human resources in the district as a whole by having a leader in the area that would possess more strategic and less tactical responsibilities; and
- creating a single point of contact for personnel-related decision making, allowing the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to focus on the strategic direction of the district as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-1:

Explore the possibility of hiring a shared Human Resources Administrator with the Town of Hamilton and the Town of Wenham to provide centralized leadership for the personnel function.

One place where this has been successfully performed is in the Haverhill City School District (HCSD) in the City of Haverhill, MA. In conversations with the Human Resources Director in Haverhill, the following information was provided about the functionality of that arrangement:

- The Human Resources Director for the City of Haverhill is responsible for three primary areas of the school district's human resources function including unemployment issues, workers' compensation insurance issues, and civil service issues. The city and district are looking for ways to slowly expand the role of the HR Director in the school district over time.
- The school district pays the director a stipend to perform these three primary components. This stipend accounts for less than 10 percent of her total salary, and thus provides a great deal of value to the district.
- The school district has a labor attorney who handles all labor relations associated with collective bargaining agreements.

- The City Solicitor contributes legal guidance to the district's human resources function as well in other areas.
- The district's Executive Secretary to the Superintendent for Personnel handles the majority of day-to-day human resources functions, much the same as the Administrative Assistant in the Business Office does for HWRSD.
- Shared payroll and budget systems between the district and the city may be the next major goal.
- The school district and city are exploring unifying benefits plans between them to save money and gain economies of scale. The Human Resources Director feels that this would be the most beneficial and meaningful change that could occur between the two entities, but has been delayed because of cultural and political pressures. The school district and city tried to move the Benefits Coordinator from the school district to the City, but it caused a significant amount of turmoil as people resisted change. Most of this resistance came from the unions.
- The Human Resources Director for the City of Haverhill developed a comprehensive plan dealing with how to fully integrate the human resources functions of the two entities. Due to struggles with the cultural changes associated with such an endeavor, they are working through the plan at a slow pace in a methodical manner. **Exhibit 3-2** shows a sample introduction to a comprehensive consolidation plan used in this district.
- If the Human Resources Director were to take full-responsibility for all personnel functions, further reorganization and relocation would need to be considered, but the present model is working well. At present, her work space is housed in the city's facilities as opposed to the school district.

The HWRSD could best ensure that its administrative and personnel needs are being addressed by having a centralized leader managing these functions and providing consistent direction to ensure equity of treatment and adherence to policy. In the absence of such leadership, the district is more open to adverse litigation, as well as regulatory non-compliance issues.

In the interim, or if the determination is made that the human resources consolidation with the towns is not feasible, the Superintendent (and not the Deputy) should provide human resources coordination in HWRSD (see **Chapter 2**).

A sample classification description containing the essential functions of this position and the recommended requirements are displayed in **Exhibit 3-3**. This model could be used by the towns in the job posting process.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no cost to conducting a feasibility analysis for human resources consolidation. If the district were to adopt a similar arrangement as the one observed in the City of Haverhill, a stipend to the Director would need to be determined.

Exhibit 3-2
Comprehensive Human Resources Consolidation Plan

Consolidation Plan for the City of Haverhill
City/School Human Resources/Personnel Departments Merger

Goals:

- Provide Human Resources services to all departments, elected officials, active/retired employees, and citizens of the City of Haverhill.
- Better allow departments to focus on their core missions by removing Human Resources responsibilities.
- Provide services in a more efficient and cost effective manner through a consistency of process.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Human Resources Division is to provide an effective and efficient service to our internal and external customers

Why Consolidate?

Currently there are two separate departments performing human resources functions. There is some redundancy between the two operations. The existing duties of the School Personnel Director/Personnel Office will be reallocated to the various positions within the new consolidated Human Resources Division.

A consolidated city Human Resources Division would have several advantages:

- allow the school department to better focus on its core mission of educating the children of Haverhill;
- elimination of redundant functions between the Municipal and School departments;
- in a time of limited financial resources, the opportunity for increased accountability lies in consolidation; and
- depend on the expertise of the current staff of both divisions to improve the HR component throughout all city departments.

Source: City of Haverhll, November 2010.

Exhibit 3-3
Sample Human Resources Director
Classification Description

General Statement of Job

Under the administrative direction of the Hamilton and Wenham Town Managers as well as the HWRSD Superintendent, this position is responsible for overseeing, directing, and administering human resource activities, programs, and processes so as to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, meet organizational goals and objectives, and promote employee satisfaction, well-being, and quality of work life.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

Essential Functions:

Reviews and recommends revisions to human resource policies; oversees implementation and uniform application of human resource policies and procedures.

Consults with managers and supervisors regarding interpretation of policy, performance, and disciplinary issues.

Consults with principals, managers and supervisors regarding a wide variety of employment related legal issues, i.e., FMLA, ADA, EEO, Workers' Compensation, and administers all employee benefits plans (pension, health, life insurance, disabilities, etc.).

Drafts required correspondence to personnel and monitors activities consistent with Federal and State mandated regulations.

Assists in the development of new policies and procedures.

Oversees employee disciplinary procedures in consultation with line management; recommends suspension/dismissal as appropriate.

Serves as District liaison with employee benefit vendors, Workers' Compensation carriers, and related; reviews proposals for renewals and revisions of existing coverage.

Responds to Writs of Garnishment, IRS tax levies, Child Support Enforcement Orders, and related; effects necessary agency and employee liaison as required.

Functions as employee advocate with regard to workplace issues and concerns; meets with individual employees to hear grievances, and explain District policy, management's role, and prerogatives.

Prepares and administers personnel budget; reviews/revises as appropriate.

Responds to outside agency, applicant, and public requests for information.

Serves as member of the District's Senior Management Team.

Coordinates the District's Drug Free Workplace Program.

Maintains knowledge of Medicaid prepaid health contracts.

Ensures compliance with Abuse Registry and FDLE criminal history background checks for all employees.

The list of essential functions, as outlined herein, is intended to be representative of the tasks performed within this classification. It is not necessarily descriptive of any one position in the class. The omission of an essential function does not preclude management from assigning duties not listed herein if such functions are a logical assignment to the position.

Position Qualifications

Education:

Bachelor's degree required, Master's desired, in personnel administration or related field

Experience:

Ten (10) years progressively responsible experience in a field of personnel administration, five (5) of which shall be acquired in a manger/director capacity for a public or healthcare organization

Certification:

SPHR or PHR Certification preferred

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FINDING

The person in the district currently responsible for the majority of personnel functions is the Administrative Assistant in the Business Office who works closely with the principals, the Assistant Superintendent, and the Superintendent's Secretary to accomplish the day-to-day tasks associated with human resources management. The Administrative Assistant is conducting the majority of the personnel business of the district without formal training in that area or a classification title which fairly describes those tasks. When one considers the typical duties of an Administrative Assistant, clerical duties and other support-oriented functions come to mind. According to information gathered from the incumbent themselves and confirmed by the Superintendent, the Administrative Assistant spends as much as 75 percent of her time on human resources work and typically 25 percent of her time on other clerical support tasks.

With that being said, this individual received high praise across the district for the quality of service she provides and the knowledge she possesses with regard to how the various human resources functions work in the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-2:

Re-title Administrative Assistant to more accurately reflect the large concentration of her duties in the personnel operation.

Combined classification titles such as "Human Resources Assistant" or "Personnel Assistant" are common for such individuals. A more accurate class title provides a clearer illustration of the delineation of duties and the way in which work is organized in this important operation of the district.

Exhibit 3-4 illustrates a typical class description of a Human Resources Assistant. While this may not be the best new title for the current Administrative Assistant, these are the types of duties already being performed by the individual and should be integrated into her existing class description along with the new title.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

As stated in **Chapter 2**, HWRSD is in the process of developing an updated strategic plan at this time. The existing plan is outdated and was developed originally in 2005. A statement pertaining to the mission and vision of the human resources function would be a typical component of such a plan. In a public education arena, where the natural focus is placed on the advancement of educational goals for the children of a community, it is often difficult to justify spending time or

Exhibit 3-4
Sample Human Resources Assistant
Classification Description

General Statement of Job

This position participates in the full range of human resource programs, ensuring compliance with County policies and Federal/state employment guidelines. Supports employees and management in all aspects of Human Resources. Administers policies and procedures relating to several functional areas and activities of Human Resources for the County. This includes: FMLA, Workers' Compensation, Tuition Reimbursement, processing performance appraisals, all personnel changes in database, orientation training, maintenance of licensure/certification records, and providing backup to the Benefits and Recruitment functions. This position may at times be project-oriented. Performs other duties as assigned.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

Essential Functions:

Performs human resource professional level functions requiring independent judgment, discretion, and policy interpretation.

Serves as the point of contact for supervisors and employees in Human Resource related areas.

Conducts new employee orientation.

Assists in providing employees with pertinent HR-related information.

Develops and maintains filing, logs, and other tracking mechanisms in order to process and maintain human resource information systems. Performs Internet and other research as needed.

Maintains all performance evaluation logs and develops tickler systems in order to ensure managers complete evaluations accurately and timely.

Processes employee payroll change notices and maintains highly accurate personnel records, both in the computer database and hard copy.

Maintains Human Resource files, employee files, and all records in accordance with retention requirements.

Maintains process for all leave of absences. Ensures that the County policy and state/Federal regulations are followed. Ensures the proper documentation and tracking of FMLAs.

Answers incoming telephone calls and refers calls to proper individuals, demonstrating outstanding customer service skills at all times.

Facilitates excellent communication between employees and management.

Assists in performing research for the purpose of designing new/modified plans/programs applicable to the County's classification and/or compensation or benefits system.

Processes the tuition reimbursement for employees. Ensures policy is followed and instructs employees on the proper procedures to request reimbursement. Ensures accuracy and completeness of all requests.

Develops spreadsheets and other human resource reports.

Drafts a wide variety of routine correspondence and memoranda.

Develops and makes recommendations to streamline administrative processes and procedures.

Serves as liaison to Payroll on personnel/payroll matters.

Coordinates and maintains all workers' compensation programs.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

money in a way that is not directly reflected in the classroom. What must be realized, however, is that when effective personnel decisions are made, the likelihood of classroom success is improved dramatically.

While an entire strategic plan for human resources/personnel issues may be unnecessary, adding specific language to planning documents would benefit the district in many ways, primary among them would be to show that the many diverse employees of the district are a priority of management.

Currently, the district has a statement pertaining to Vision, Mission, and Core Values on its website. Amending this existing document to include a vision for personnel functions within the district would accomplish many of the same goals as a complete human resources strategic plan.

Sample human resources strategic mission, vision, goal, and objective statements, aligned according to a continuous improvement model, are provided in **Exhibit 3-5**.

Exhibit 3-5
Sample Mission, Vision and Goals
For a Human Resources Function

Human Resources Departmental Vision and Mission Statement

The Human Resources Function will be a strategic quality leader for the District. The Human Resources Function will recruit, employ, induct, train, evaluate, and retain a high quality workforce to support the District enabling employees to achieve their maximum potential and meet operational and advocacy needs of the workforce and student body.

Performance Improvement Goals

- The processes for recruitment and staffing for all jobs will be completed on a timely basis.
- All personnel policies, rules and procedures will be written and communicated.
- Job descriptions will be continually revised and updated to reflect current assignments.
- Classification and compensation studies will be conducted regularly to ensure internal and external equity.
- Employment processes will be revised to improve support for principals and supervisors.
- Payroll and benefits information updates will be systematically communicated to employees annually.
- Employee records will be purged according to all legal requirements and a formal process for check-out, confidentiality and security will be administered.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-3:

Develop a mission and vision statement and performance goals for the human resources operation in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

The adoption of a mission statement, with corresponding implementation goals, objectives, action plans, targets, timelines and results measures, can provide enhanced functional alignment, improve staff performance, help prioritize workflow, and provide guidelines for service delivery improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD, mostly due to a general absence of structure, lacks appropriate human resources accountability measures. In order to accurately document performance improvements, it is important that key performance indicators (KPIs) be identified to monitor results. Regular monitoring of performance towards the accomplishment of written goals and objectives is essential for accountability.

In order to facilitate this process, the Administrative Assistant and Superintendent should produce a quarterly or semiannual monitoring report of results and accomplishments. Human resource functions or goal areas, the key measures by which results can be determined, and the results should be provided in these reports. Reporting can include a variety of data such as objective and subjective results, progress and status of projects, and customer survey results. Larger districts may require more frequent reporting, but given the relatively small size of the HWRSD, quarterly or semi-annual reports of basic performance measures is sufficient.

Exhibit 3-6 provides an outline for reporting primary areas of responsibility in the form of key performance indicators (KPI).

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-4:

Develop key performance indicators, monitor performance results on a quarterly or semi-annual basis, and provide an annual report of accomplishments for the human resources function.

Goals, objectives, and performance results should be reported on quarterly or semi-annual basis. An annual report should be used to determine the accomplishments and performance of the human resources operation, and to guide any revision or reestablishment of goals and objectives for future years.

Exhibit 3-6
Example of Key Performance Indicators in Human Resources

Core Function: Processing of New Job Applications
KPI: # of applications processed and candidates notified within 5 days of receipt
Status/Results this quarter: 75% completed per the KPI standard

Core Function: Processing of employee benefits change requests
KPI: # of status changes completed within 1 day of receipt of request
Status/Results this quarter: 35% completed by the KPI standard

Core Function: Qualified candidate lists
KPI: Lists provided within 10 days from date of receipt of request for candidates to fill vacancy
Status/Results this quarter: 15% completed by the KPI standard

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2009.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

According to the teacher and central office administrator surveys completed during the diagnostic phase of Evergreen's study, employees and supervisors are generally more satisfied with the human resources functions of HWRSD than those in their peer districts. This is particularly true in the area of competitive compensation where 66.7 percent of HWRSD central office administrators feel that salary levels are competitive compared to just 34.5 percent among peers. HWRSD teachers were less enthusiastic about salary levels; 46.5 percent *agree* or *strongly agree* that they are competitive, but this is still higher than the 33.5 percent observed in peer districts.

When asked about the quality of the district's orientation program for new employees, 59.1 percent *agree* or *strongly agree* that it was of high quality which is strong compared to the 48.1 percent in peer districts. Overall job satisfaction also rated high; 82.9 percent of teachers and 100 percent of central office administrators *agree* or *strongly agree* when asked if they are satisfied with their jobs. This compares favorably with peer districts where 81 percent of teachers and 76 percent of central office administrators answered in the same way.

Exhibit 3-7 illustrates HWRSD teacher responses to diagnostic survey inquires pertaining to Human Resources compared to the average responses to the same questions among peer districts.

The results of the survey were not universally positive, areas such as recruitment and staff planning, were not as positive compared to peer districts; however, overall, employees of the district are as satisfied or more satisfied with the quality of the HWRSD employment environment than those in their peer districts.

Exhibit 3-7
HWRSD Human Resources Diagnostic Survey Results

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Salary levels in the school district are competitive.	46.5%	42.9%	33.5%	53.1%
My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	47.7%	43.2%	30.0%	61.1%
Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	30.6%	33.3%	28.9%	37.0%
Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	31.3%	28.6%	27.7%	34.6%
The district has a good orientation program for new employees.	59.1%	24.5%	48.1%	24.8%
The district accurately projects future staffing needs.	41.1%	35.7%	45.9%	24.2%
The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	28.6%	23.2%	41.3%	21.0%
District employees receive annual performance evaluations.	66.1%	22.3%	86.2%	3.6%
The district rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	29.5%	41.1%	30.0%	43.8%
I am satisfied with my job in the school district.	82.9%	7.2%	81.0%	9.6%
I am actively looking for a job outside the school district.	4.5%	74.1%	21.6%	63.0%
The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	30.0%	7.3%	28.7%	14.7%
There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	34.8%	50.0%	25.1%	57.7%
There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	8.1%	16.2%	11.4%	30.7%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for delivering generally positive human resources related customer service to its staff.

3.2 PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Clearly written personnel policies and procedures are required to identify areas of responsibility and outline expected performance. Policies provide direction, while procedures provide guidelines for implementation. Written policies and procedures should be used to ensure consistency of processes and to provide for oversight by the School Committee and Superintendent.

FINDING

HWRSD has very few personnel policies. A list of "Approved Policies" is provided on the HWRSD website (*http://www.hwschools.net/sc/policy/Policies.htm).* This list of policies is not categorized nor clearly organized, and only a few relate to personnel issues.

HWRSD personnel-related policies include:

- Harassment Prevention & Response
- Gifts and Contributions to Individual Employees
- Tobacco Free Policy
- Technology – Acceptable Use Policy

This list does not constitute complete or comprehensive personnel policies; in fact, policies are lacking in several areas. It is understood that some aspects of typical personnel policies are covered in the individual labor contracts in place between the district and its various bargaining groups.

Centralized personnel policies are essential for the long-term success of any district. Policies provide important consistency and point of reference when enforcing rules and administering corrective actions.

Twenty (20) districts in the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) participate in a program whereby their policy manuals are published online for peer review and reference. The Concord-Carlisle Regional School District (CCRSD), for example, has an online policy manual which contains a comprehensive set of policies and procedures associated with human resources in a dedicated section titled "Personnel.".

A list of the CCRSD's personnel policies is shown below:

- Personnel Policies Goals
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Affirmative Action
- Harassment
- School Committee-Staff Communications
- Staff Ethics/Conflict Of Interest
- Nepotism
- Staff Conduct
- Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff
- Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Tobacco Use on School Property by Staff Members
- Staff Personal Security and Safety
- Staff Participation in Community Activities
- Staff Participation in Political Activities
- Personnel Records
- Staff Complaints and Grievances
- Professional Staff Positions
- Professional Staff Salary Schedules

- Employment of Principals
- Professional Staff Supplementary Assignment
- Staff Family and Medical Leave
- Professional Staff Recruiting/ Posting Of Vacancies
- Professional Staff Hiring
- Part-Time and Substitute Professional Staff Employment
- Philosophy of Staff Development
- Professional Teacher Status
- Evaluation of Professional Teaching Staff
- Tutoring for Pay
- Support Staff Contracts And Compensation Plans
- Support Staff Supplementary Pay Plans
- Support Staff Recruiting/Posting Of Vacancies
- Support Staff Hiring
- Support Staff Probation
- Evaluation of Support Staff
- Retirement of Support Staff Members
- Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members

Given the smaller size of the HWRSD, each of these policies might not be necessary, but using these as a framework for development of a more comprehensive set of personnel policies could be useful.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-5:

Using available online personnel policy guides, develop and adopt a comprehensive set of personnel policies.

In the absence of centralized personnel policies and procedures for basic human resources functions, individual principals have and will continue to develop their own methods for performing certain personnel processes. From the standpoint of avoiding unnecessary litigation, consistency of operations is critical.

Centralized personnel practices also benefit the employees by emphasizing a sense of fairness in how employees across the district are treated and valued. Over time, when employees perceive their treatment to be inconsistent across the district, employee morale can suffer. Accountability of leaders to adhere to a prescribed set of human resources policies and procedures can prevent this sense of unfairness.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources and should have no fiscal impact if these policies are drafted by the School Committee's Policy Workgroup.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have written personnel procedures or standard operating procedures (SOPs) for any of its personnel workflow processes.

Written standard operating procedures document the actions required to perform major personnel tasks. A desk reference or online web reference manual would help maintain consistency of operations across schools and departments, and promote staff teamwork and cross training. This practice helps institutionalize processes and practices, and can be used as a training guide for new employees.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-6:

Develop written internal practices, procedures, and workflow processes, and develop a plan for the annual review and revision of personnel procedures.

Procedures should be organized by topic and include all the required steps to complete routinely performed work processes and tasks. They should be reviewed on a regular basis with staff to ensure practices are followed on a consistent basis. They should be used as a basic training guide for new employees and as a tool for cross-training staff. This is particularly important for a smaller organization where the long-term absence of a single employee could cause a potentially significant and damaging knowledge gap in personnel functions.

Consideration should be given to inclusion of these administrative procedures in a procedures manual to clarify the functional workflow processes to be performed as shown in **Exhibit 3-8.** Procedures should be clearly linked to personnel policies adopted by the School Committee.

Exhibit 3-8
Human Resources Procedures Manual
Example Outline

District personnel procedures and requirements for completion of the following workflow processes should be written and reviewed with staff on a continuing basis. These procedures and practices should be the basis for training new employees and for the cross-functional succession planning of leadership and staff.

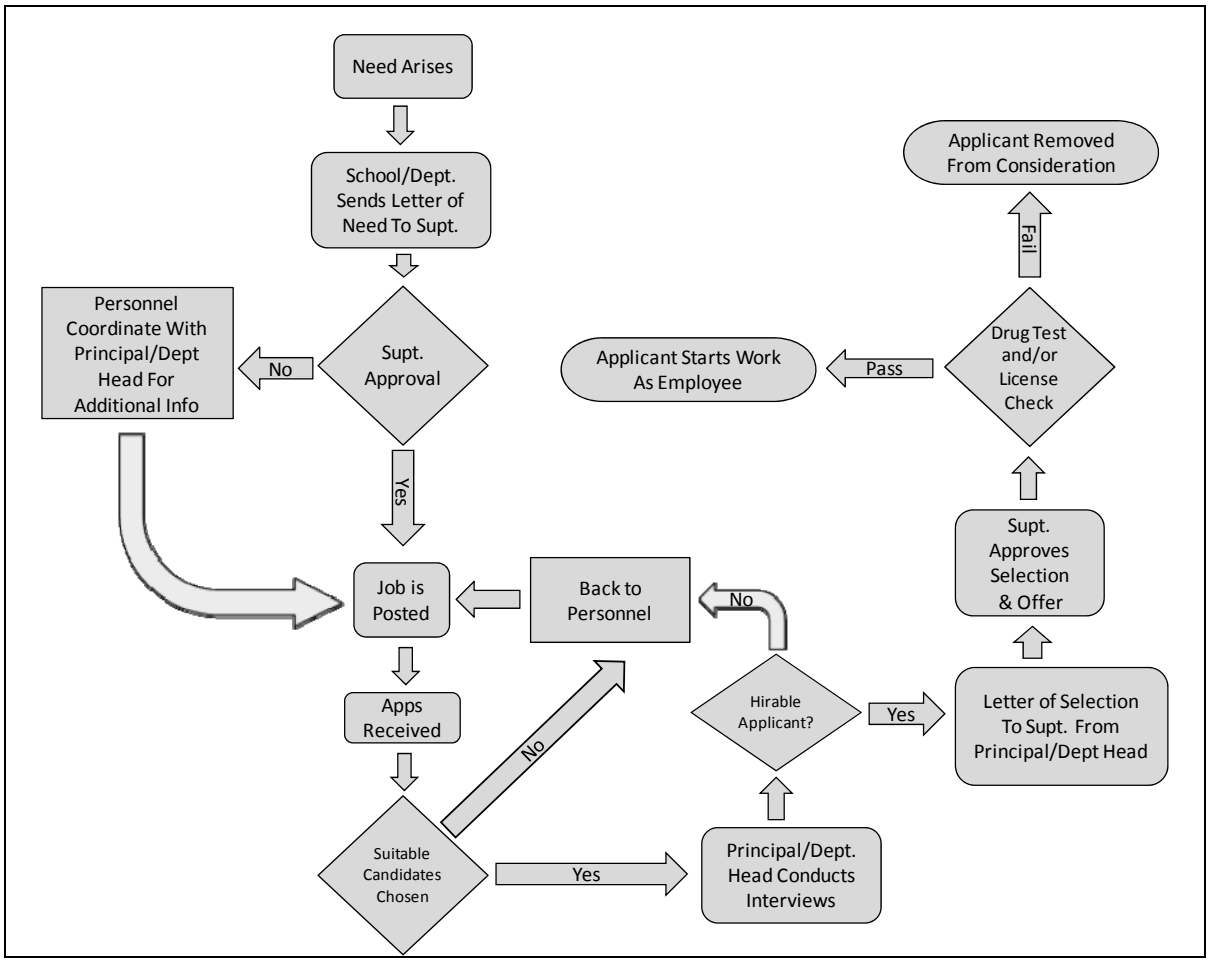
1) Recruitment of employees.
2) Employment applications communications and processing.
3) Qualified candidate requirement verifications and communications.
4) Candidate interview and selection.
5) New hire paperwork, payroll, and benefits enrollment.
6) Personnel file development and contents.
7) Employee transfer and reassignment.
8) Payroll updates and processing.
9) Benefits employee communications and management.
11 Salary and compensation administration and management.
12) Board report requirements and development.
13) Employee leave and absence processing and management.
14) School Committee policy and procedure implementation.
15) Termination and retirement communications and processing.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

One area where consistency was observed to be an issue was in new hire documentation. The central office maintains a packet of information while each school distributes a different set of specific papers, manuals, booklets, and handouts. There should be a consistent set of documents distributed to new employees upon their joining the district's workforce and these materials should be centrally controlled. If school-specific items (such as codes of conduct and emergency planning documents) need to be unique to each school, they should be created; however, they should be uniform in design and gain approval from the Superintendent. Currently, this does not appear to be the case.

Exhibit 3-9 provides an example of a hiring process workflow. This exhibit was easily developed using basic office software based on a single 30-minute conversation with a knowledgeable employee. The workflow pictured is representative of a general hiring process and serves as an example of what can be accomplished with relative ease given the appropriate time and attention.

Exhibit 3-9
Sample Hiring Process Workflow
In the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and should have no additional cost requirement.

3.3 HUMAN RESOURCES RECORDS

The maintenance of complete, well-organized, and accurate personnel records is one of the most important assignments of any human resources operation. Personnel records contain confidential and historically valuable information on all employees. These records must be maintained in a secure environment that is accessible only by authorized staff. Personnel files are used on a regular basis by staff to provide job and salary verifications, produce personnel reports, develop required compliance documents, and maintain accurate data on the school district's workforce.

FINDING

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District has informal, but well-executed standards for storing and maintaining personnel files at the central office. Files are kept in locked cabinets and employee medical information is kept in separate files. Overall, the central personnel files are well-maintained. Where the problems arise, however, is in how individual schools maintain school-based personnel files.

Schools maintain individual personnel files according to the standards established by each principal in concert with the school's secretary. Some school personnel files contain only basic information, such as certifications and basic correspondence, while other locations maintain personnel files that are a hundred or more pages and contain historical information. It is unclear whether school-based personnel files are necessary or what benefit they serve, but it is very clear that there is no consistency in file contents and that duplication exists with these files.

In a random audit of school-based personnel files, some were found to contain medical information, banking information, and other personal information that should be kept under tighter control at the central office and likely serve no purpose at the school site.

A random audit of 13 central personnel files maintained in the Superintendent's office area revealed generally well-organized personnel files. **Exhibit 3-10** shows a matrix of audited information and which randomly selected files contained that information. As previously stated, these central files were found to be in good condition, well organized, and properly secured.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-7:

Develop a policy and administrative procedure on central office and school-based personnel records that ensures security of access, confidentiality, consistency of contents, legal compliance, and a process for purging of these records.

Exhibit 3-10
Central Personnel File Audit Matrix

Position	Certifications	Correspondence	Employee Records/Contracts	Evaluations	Medical Information	Job Description	Retirement Benefits Info	Health Insurance Info	Original Job Description	W4
Teacher Assistant		X	X	X					X	X
Instructional Aide	X	X	X	X			X			X
Accounts Payable Coordinator	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Head Custodian	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Secretary		X	X	X	X		X	X		X
IT Coordinator	X	X	X				X		X	X
Elementary Principal	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
RN School Nurse	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Special Education Teacher	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Math Teacher	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Elementary Principal	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Kindergarten Teacher	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Secondary Principal	X	X	X				X		X	X

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

Federal and state laws dictate the legal requirements for maintaining personnel files. The adoption of a policy and related procedures for legal adherence, as well for timely document retrieval, should act to guide staff in appropriate enforcement and utilization. Duplicate of files at the school site should be avoided.

Exhibit 3-11 contains a sample policy which HWRSD can use to develop a customized policy for HWRSD records management.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Exhibit 3-11
Sample Policy on Employee Records

Employee personnel files contain personal, sensitive and confidential information as well documentation of their term and status of employment with the District. Employee personnel files are to be maintained in a secure environment and accessible only to authorized personnel. Information contained in employee personnel files should be retained according to applicable records retention statutes and purged of non-required documents on an annual basis. Files should be maintained in an electronic format and back-up files should be stored in a remote location to prevent loss due to fire, water or other hazards.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FINDING

HWRSD does not scan personnel records and keep electronic copies. Personnel records are critical documents. They contain the history of all personnel-related activities and serve as a critical line of defense against potential complaints and possible litigation. Given the importance of personnel records, the fragile nature of paper documents, and the reduced cost of electronic scanning devices, it is increasingly common for human resources departments to implement programs to scan personnel documents and maintain electronic filing systems. Electronic files can be kept both on-site (for desk-top access) and off-site (to serve as a critical back-up in the event of fire or other natural disaster).

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-8:

Utilize the district's multi-function copier/scanner and implement a scanning process for HWRSD personnel records.

HWRSD is in an advantageous position of having a modern multi-function copier/scanner that is capable of high volume, multi-file scanning processes. Using the existing office machinery can save the district from additional costs associated with the purchase of a scanner.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and staff time.

3.4 RECRUITMENT, HIRING, AND RETENTION

Perhaps the most critical functions performed by a typical human resources department are the recruitment, employment, and retention of a stable high quality workforce that can support the district in meeting its varied and unique challenges in educating students. The ultimate success of

a school district in meeting its goals and objectives is dependent upon the workforce being able to implement initiatives and accomplish results.

The recruitment and retention of a high quality workforce requires a commitment of all departments and supervisors, in a joint partnership with the human resources operation, to initiate workplace satisfaction and employee support programs designed to retain employees.

Another benefit of an effective recruitment process is that, over time, it will improve the quality of candidates hired and lead to longer tenure, thus reducing turnover. Turnover is proven to have an associated cost. A number of online tools and resources exist that can assist in the calculation of the precise cost of turnover, but a widely cited number is that turnover costs approximately 30 percent of the departed incumbent's annual salary.

FINDING

HWRSD presently has no written plan for the recruitment or retention of qualified employees. The benefits of a well-defined recruitment and retention plan include increases in efficiency and the recruitment of a more qualified workforce that is prone to remain employees of the district for a longer period of time.

Retention and turnover are not currently major concerns of HWRSD. Turnover is very low and the tenure of the workforce is very high. However, in the next decade, many HWRSD employees will retire. The district would benefit from more intentional planning for its recruitment efforts. Some activities are being done already, particularly with the use of internet-based recruitment of teachers.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-9:

Implement a plan focused on increasing recruitment and retention of qualified employees.

While HWRSD finds itself in a comfortable position of not struggling with turnover or retention issues, developing long-term strategies designed to improve the quality of hired employees will undoubtedly benefit the district over time. In addition, recruitment plans can have an overall positive impact on diversity within an organization.

Sample elements of a recruitment plan are displayed in **Exhibit 3-12**.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have a formal plan to conduct or evaluate the results of exit surveys collected from personnel who leave the district.

Exhibit 3-12
Sample Elements of a
Recruitment Plan

- Timeline that includes fixed dates for advertising, receiving applications, performing reference and/or background checks, interviews (first and second round), offer of employment, confirmation letter, and start date
- List of potential staff who will work on a focused campaign
- Survey of public relations/marketing materials — and ideas for revision if necessary
- Budget
- Number of member positions
- Target number of applications
- Standardized application form
- Comprehensive member descriptions that include position title, location and program summary, description of typical service activities, duties and responsibilities, and member benefits
- Support network strategy for members
- Role of staff in relation to members and volunteers
- Orientation and training plan
- Accessibility and inclusion issues related to people with disabilities and cultural diversity
- Assessment of physical space and resources

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

Exit survey data serve as an integral component for workforce planning that focuses on improving the quality of the workforce. This information can be used to make data-driven decisions about changes to benefits packages, compensation plans, organizational structure, and the strategic delivery of training and professional development activities.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-10:

Conduct an exit survey for each departing employee for the purpose of analyzing and improving retention strategies in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

Exit surveys completed by employees who leave the district will provide valuable information regarding the reasons people leave. Workplace satisfaction and retention initiatives focused on the creation of a stable, highly-skilled workforce will enhance the efficiency of the work environment.

A sample exit survey is provided in **Exhibit 3-13** and can act as a template for creating one tailored for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources**.**

Exhibit 3-13
Sample Exit Survey Instrument

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District wants to thank you for the dedication and loyalty you exhibited during your employment with the HWRSD. Your contribution to the district and community was valuable. Although your departure is a loss, we wish you the very best in your new position and future career choices.

We feel that our departing employees are in the best position to tell us how the management of the district works and if we are meeting employees' needs. We value your opinion and would appreciate it if you would take the time to complete and return this *confidential* survey to our office within one week. Please explain any "no" answers and give additional comments/suggestions in the space provided below. Thank you!

	Yes	No
Were employees informed ahead of time about changes?	☐	☐
Did you feel in control of your workload?	☐	☐
Did management care how you really felt about your work?	☐	☐
Was management open and honest in dealing with employees?	☐	☐
Did management have the ability to solve major administrative problems?	☐	☐
Was more emphasis placed on the quality rather than the quantity of the work?	☐	☐
Did you have a clear understanding of what was expected of you?	☐	☐
Were employees eager to come to work most of the time?	☐	☐
Was the working environment between staff, teachers and school leadership comfortable?	☐	☐

Name three things we could do to better serve our employees:
1. _____
2. _____
3 _____

Additional Comments:

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have a comprehensive employee handbook. Some schools within the district, however, maintain their own facsimiles of such handbooks independent of the central office. Employee handbooks are important sources of information that help staff understand district expectations as well as rules and regulations that govern their employment. The handbook would include rules and regulations that overarch the negotiated elements of the various union contracts. Handbooks also provide insight regarding district policies and procedures that impact day-to-day operations and the working environment.

An employee handbook should contain complete information that is updated on an annual basis. This comprehensive manual should include references to applicable regulatory language for relevant jobs and provide general information on most employee-related issues, services, and requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-11:

Develop an Employee Handbook with explanations of and references to relevant policy and procedural information for employees.

A well-written Employee Handbook should be produced in both paper copy and in an online, web-based format. This handbook should contain clarifying information that can assist employees in both understanding requirements and working in accordance with HWRSD expectations.

The Employee Handbook should contain information with references to applicable union contracts, policies, and procedures explaining services provided, where to find related information, and how to access or comply with each. New employees need to know the roles of each department or office as well as the contact information for seeking additional information or assistance.

Employees should be informed of all job and work-related expectations and requirements with appropriate references on how to access additional information from responsible officials or departments. A sample Table of Contents for such a handbook is illustrated in **Exhibit 3-14**.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3.5 COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION

A well-organized plan for classification and compensation is essential for a school district to maintain a stable high quality workforce. Classification systems and compensation schedules must be regularly monitored to maintain their internal fairness and consistency, while at the same time, stay competitive with the external marketplace.

Exhibit 3-14
Sample Employee Handbook
Table of Contents

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION
1.0 Welcome Message from the Superintendent

- **The Company Mission**
- **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Affirmative Action Plan**
- **Employment-At-Will**
- **Sexual Harassment**
- **Safety**
  - Safety Rules
  - Hazardous Wastes
  - Reporting Injuries and Accidents
- **Drug Free Workplace**
  - Prohibitions
  - Drug Awareness Program
  - Disciplinary Actions

SECTION 2 - EMPLOYMENT
2.0 Personnel Administration

- **HR Personnel Records**
  - Contents of Personnel Files
  - Employee Information
  - Employee's Request for Review of Personnel Records
  - Management Review of Personnel Files
- **Service**
  - Employee Categories
  - Job Posting Procedures
  - Employment of Relatives
  - Employment of Minors
  - Promotions
  - Separation of Employment
  - Work force Reductions
  - Probationary Period
  - Extra Income
- **Process Improvement**
  - Employee-Management Forums
  - Employee Suggestion Program

SECTION 3 - COMPENSATION & BENEFITS
3.0 Benefit Eligibility

- **Payroll Information**
  - Time Records
  - Pay Periods
  - Salary Compensation for Partial Pay Period
  - Pay Rate Schedule / Hourly Paid Employees
  - Payroll Deductions
  - Overtime
  - Payroll Errors
  - Garnishment of Employee Wages
  - Authorized Check Pickup
  - Pay at Time of Separation
- **Attendance & Leave**
  - Medical Leave Policy
  - Sick Leave Credit Limit
  - Sick Leave Policy / Usage
  - Medical, Dental and Optical Appointments
  - Exhaustion of Accumulated Sick Leave
  - Pallbearer, Funeral, Emergency Leave
  - Civic Leave or Jury Duty
  - Voting
  - Military Leave
  - Maternity Leave
  - Parental Leave
  - Leave of Absence

Exhibit 3-14 (Continued)
Sample Employee Handbook
Table of Contents

- **Transportation & Travel**
  - Company Owned Vehicles
  - Personal Vehicles
  - Living Expense Allowance
  - Other Travel Expenses
  - Expense Records
  - Travel Advances
  - Expense Reimbursement / Third Party
  - Expense Policies / Violations
  - Company Credit Cards
- **Insurance**
  - Hospitalization and Medical Insurance
  - Continuation of Group Health Insurance (COBRA)
  - Life Insurance
  - Long Term Disability Insurance
  - Social Security
  - Workers' Compensation
  - Unemployment Compensation
- **Savings Plan 401 (K)**
- **Break Room**
- **Employee Discounts**
- **Educational Assistance**

SECTION 4 - EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Work Schedules**
  - Working Hours
  - Salary Employees
  - Hourly Employees
  - Clean Work-Place
- **Legal & Ethical Conduct**
  - Ethical Standards
  - Conflicts of Interest
  - Personal Conduct
  - Confidentiality
- **Misconduct**
  - Serious Misconduct
  - Very Serious Misconduct
  - Inexcusable Misconduct
  - Misconduct Investigations
- **Appearance & Belongings**
  - Personal Appearance
  - Business Attire
  - Casual Attire
  - Inappropriate Attire
  - Personal Belongings
  - Alcohol and Drugs
  - Medication
  - Smoking Policy
- **Equipment & Facilities**
  - Parking
  - Telephone Use
  - Motor Vehicle and Workplace Equipment Operation
  - Safety Equipment
  - Company Tools
  - Waste Prevention
  - Solicitation and/or Distribution
  - Security
  - Bulletin Board

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FINDING

In the absence of a formal human resources department, the Superintendent or his designee is principally responsible for the maintenance of all aspects of the compensation and classification plan. The majority of such issues are often covered in the context of negotiated union contracts; however, the district needs to be concerned with the big picture of compensation and classification.

A strong compensation and classification system fails to meet an organization's needs if it does not have strong administrative support. Maintenance is the hidden need and cost of most systems. HWRSD possesses an experienced executive leadership team from diverse backgrounds who is able to meet most standards set by similar-sized organizations. However, the district currently has no established administrative practices to maintain a competitive and equitable compensation and classification structure.

The employment market for any organization is fluid and constantly changing, and given the district's proximity to such a major employment market, this is particularly true. HWRSD must make every effort to keep pace with local growth in terms of employee salaries. In order to ensure it maintains its level of market competitiveness, district staff responsible for human resources should work with the Superintendent and his staff to select a small sample of classifications and conduct an annual survey of peer organizations to determine the relative values of these classifications. HWRSD could contact market peers directly or access readily available secondary resources to make determinations about market competitiveness and recommend appropriate adjustments.

While annual surveys of identified classifications can provide a general idea of the district's market competitiveness, HWRSD should consider completing a comprehensive compensation and classification study every three to five years to ensure internal and external equity across union lines.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-12:

Create a formal plan and schedule for regular review and maintenance of the Compensation and Classification Plan for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

Annual processes for updating the compensation plan may include targeted telephone surveys of compensation trends in the surrounding area and the commissioning of comprehensive studies every three to five years to address the district as a whole.

Understanding that the district is engaged in many unique collective bargaining relationships, this evaluation is best conducted across all bargaining units. Findings from the regular evaluations can be used to facilitate data-driven decision making during negotiations.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at no cost to the district.

FINDING

According to a recent headcount report generated by the district, HWRSD employees 217 teachers. Those teachers fit into a standard step-based pay plan based on tenure with the district. The pay plan consists of 12 steps. Over time, one would expect something resembling a normal distribution of employees across these steps. In a chart, it would resemble a standard "bell-shaped curve" with the majority of teachers being in the middle steps with a few at the lowest and highest steps.

This is not the case, however, in HWRSD. There are a dramatic number of employees in the 11th and 12th steps of the pay plan which indicates an extremely long-tenured staff. The majority of staff (132 of 217 or 61 percent) are paid at or within one step of the top available salary. This is undoubtedly having an impact on payroll costs for the district. Inevitably, many of these teachers will retire, thus normalizing the distribution across the step plan.

One alternative interpretation of these data would lead to the conclusion that the step plan in place is too narrow and does not contain an adequate number of steps. Twelve (12) steps are a low number of steps for a pay plan of this type. Best practices generally support about 20 steps. A 20-step plan would provide additional room for growth of teachers and would help to prevent the compression that is observed at the top of the current pay plan.

Exhibit 3-15 shows a breakdown of teachers by step which illustrates the distribution of teachers in their respective steps.

Exhibit 3-15
HWRSD Teacher Step Plan
Distribution of Incumbents

Step	B	B+33/M	M+30	M+45	M+60/DR	Total
1	1	1				2
2	1	4				5
3	1	4			1	6
4	1	7				8
5		6				6
6		7			1	8
7	1	6	1		2	10
8		5	1	2		8
9	11	6	2	1	3	23
10		3	3	2	1	9
11		50	3	2	1	56
12			11	10	55	76

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions with data received by HWRSD, 2010.

This exhibit shows the uneven distribution of employees across the step plan for teachers during the 2010-11 school year. **Exhibit 3-15** illustrates clearly that the district has a disproportionate number of highly-tenured, highly-paid teachers. One likely conclusion that can be drawn from

these data is that the plan does not contain a sufficient number of steps. A plan with as many as 20 steps would alleviate some of this compression and allow teachers to continue to advance past their 12th year.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-13:

Explore the possibility of expanding the teacher step plan to alleviate compression at the top end of the 12-step series.

An informal survey of peer districts could provide important market-based information as to how teachers are being compensated in neighboring districts. The compensation structures of these peer districts could be discussed, evaluated, and used for assistance in developing a broader pay structure that would prevent institutionalized compression in the manner in which it currently exists.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Job class descriptions are typically developed and disseminated for every position in a given organization. HWRSD does not appear to have written classification or job descriptions for many positions.

The lack of job descriptions presents a significant problem in the district as there is no centralized description of how work is organized, particularly among support staff. Work is assigned according to historical consistency. In many cases, "that is how it has always been done" would accurately describe the reasoning behind how assignments are distributed, and how the tasks and activities of the school district's workforce are conducted.

Without accurate and up-to-date centralized job class descriptions, HWRSD does not have a consistent voice on issues such as compliance and reasonable accommodation for the Americans with Disabilities Act, or accurate assessment of designation under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). FLSA compliance dictates who is eligible to receive overtime compensation according to their exempt or non-exempt status.

Even in cases where union contracts contain language describing the activities and responsibilities of a position, that position should still have a fully formed and consistently formatted job description which is maintained by the central office.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-14:

Review, revise, and create job class descriptions that accurately reflect HWRSD job duties and requirements with consistent and legally defensible content and formatting.

New and revised job class descriptions should include provision for the requirements of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, along with other legal requirements. Many components of what would constitute a typical job description are present in the various union contracts in the district. The information is at least considered and covered in these documents, but the district still has a responsibility to maintain up-to-date classification descriptions for every job in the district.

A recommended sample of categories to include in job descriptions is provided in **Exhibit 3-16.**

Exhibit 3-16
Example of Job Description Components

Classification Title:

Department:

Pay Grade/Step:

Reports to:

FLSA Status:

Prepared/Revised Date:

Approved By:

Approved Date:

General Statement of Job:

Essential Duties and Responsibilities: *(Other duties may be assigned)*

Supervisory Responsibilities:

Qualifications:

- Education and/or Experience
- Language Skills
- Mathematical Skills
- Reasoning Ability
- Certificates, Licenses, Registrations
- Physical Demands
- Work Environment

Terms of Employment:

Evaluation Criteria:

EEO Statement:

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

3.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Employee performance assessment is an essential component of a well-managed school district. Regular feedback on work performance in both an informal as well as a formal basis helps employees better understand and work towards meeting expectations. Employees should be held accountable for meeting performance expectations while leaders and supervisors should be held accountable for performing their duties, as well as monitoring the performance of subordinates and conducting effective performance evaluations.

The provision of regular performance assessments provides direction and guidance for quality performance. Performance assessments can be an effective tool for setting expectations, monitoring performance, identifying training needs, and developing performance improvement plans.

FINDING

Annual performance assessments are conducted using a series of four forms. Separate forms exist for teachers, administrators, office personnel, and custodians.

The official evaluation document for teachers is a comprehensive packet which contains much more than a simple evaluation form. The packet as a whole, which exists as one document, contains procedures for evaluation, a description of the philosophy behind the evaluation process, a description of the evaluation process as a whole, relevant Massachusetts regulations, and supporting information regarding the completion of the evaluation. The teacher evaluation instrument itself is designed based on Massachusetts requirements and is comprehensive.

COMMENDATION

HWRSD is commended for assembling a comprehensive evaluation packet for teacher evaluations.

FINDING

The evaluation forms used for office personnel and custodians both contain specific performance criteria or competencies that are each scored on a scale centered around "expectations"—where an employee is rated to be below, at, or above expectations for a given performance criteria.

In the custodial evaluation form, supervisors are allowed to choose one of four options which are listed as follows:

- EE - Exceeds Expectations: goes beyond what is asked, takes initiative
- ME - Meets Expectations: competent, does tasks that are asked and expected

- NI - Needs Improvement: has difficulty or is inconsistent at meeting the expectations
- NA - Not applicable

The Custodian Evaluation affords space on the form for the individual employees to conduct a self evaluation, which is then compared to the supervisor's interpretation. This is a relatively innovative step which is growing in popularity among public sector organizations, but is still not the norm or standard.

The Office Personnel Evaluation allows reviewers to check one of the following options for each performance criteria:

- Needs Improvement
- Meets Expectations
- Exceeds Expectations

Some employees stated that, even though they are regularly evaluated, the process itself was not meaningful nor does it provide great incentives for performance improvements. Employees shared insightful feedback on what the evaluation process should be by pointing out what it is not accomplishing.

The goal of an effective performance evaluation process is to accomplish three things:

- First, it should identify areas of improvement for employees.
- Second, an evaluation should allow individual employees to recognize how their own performance links to the overall success of the organization.
- Third, the evaluation and assessment process should provide valuable tools to use in the management of employees.

Often times, the feedback received from supervisors portrays a situation where a problematic employee, who the department desires to terminate, has received high performance ratings with no documentation of poor results or below standard performance. This presents an untenable situation where terminated employees, who may be low performers, may seek to litigate for wrongful termination, and the school district possesses no proof of poor performance.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-15:

Refine and unify the performance evaluation instruments for non-instructional employees, and implement a true performance management system that has established goals and objectives for documenting and improving employee performance.

The results of annual performance assessments provide a measure for leadership accountability, and for the identification of staff development and training needs for the district's workforce. In order to establish and reinforce employee performance expectations, an annual evaluation of work performance is essential. Supervisors have a responsibility to communicate expectations

and to monitor the performance of employees under their supervision. Employees need guidance and feedback on their performance in order to maintain and improve overall performance.

In addition, performance assessments should provide the basis for the assessment of professional development and workforce training needs. Training and professional development programs should target major workforce performance issues and needs in order to enable the accomplishment of district goals and objectives.

A sample Performance Evaluation form that can be customized to apply to each department or work area in HWRSD is provided in **Exhibit 3-17**. In addition to the material shown in the exhibit, sections could be added to address performance competencies at the school level, as well as classification-specific information. Beyond the evaluation of performance competencies, sections should be added to allow for the regular and mandatory setting of goals.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING

Supervisors and managers, especially newer ones, are not provided specific training on performance assessment strategies and requirements for most employee classifications. The lack of comprehensive training can result in the inconsistent assessment of employees. Training is required in order to ensure fair and consistent implementation of performance assessment procedures and requirements by supervisors.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-16:

Develop and implement an employee performance assessment training program for managers and other supervisors.

HWRSD supervisors who conduct performance assessments with subordinate employees should be required to complete this training. An annual update of requirements should be provided to ensure consistency and reliability of assessments for all classifications of employees.

Performance management training for supervisors should include information on the following:

- review of the evaluation instrument;
- refresher of the definitions of performance levels and point values;
- information on goal setting for employees;
- common scoring errors and tendencies;
- methods for avoiding these errors; and
- guidelines for providing performance feedback to employees.

Exhibit 3-17
Sample Performance Evaluation Form

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM

The performance evaluation forms are located and stored at the Central Office. They are dynamic forms that can be typed on the computer then printed. Please remember to save the form to your computer before you fill it out. Once the form is completed, please forward through your department to the Human Resources Department.

Employee Name	
Department	Business Office
Job Title	
Date	

This performance evaluation covers the period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. The categories below provide criteria for the performance rating found in the sections below. When rating an evaluation, please indicate the number of points the employee's performance warrants based on the scale below.

(4 Points) EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (EE): Performance consistently exceeds the requirements of the position. Performance is regularly of an unusually high quality.

(3 Points) MEETS EXPECTATIONS (ME): Performance completely meets the requirements of the position. Indicates that all assignments and objectives have been met. All core competencies were performed according to the requirements of the position.

(2 Points) NEEDS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT (ND): Performance either does not meet or partially meets some but not all expectations. Further improvement is required for successful performance of the area in question.

(1 Point) IMPROVEMENT EXPECTED (IE): Performance does not meet most expectations. If the employee does not improve before the next quarterly review, employment may be terminated.

In the event that an employee scores 2 points or lower in any competency, quarterly reviews will be initiated to evaluate the improvement process.

Half points may be awarded to indicate a level of performance that falls between two of these prescribed levels. Possible scores for any competency include 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5 and 4.

Exhibit 3-17 (Continued)
Sample Performance Evaluation Form

DISTRICTWIDE COMPETENCIES

District-wide performance competencies are those basic elements or requirements of any employee working for the District at any level, in any department. They are derived from the strategic plan and are the cornerstone to our overall success

Exceeds Expectations 3: Meets Expectations 2: Needs Further Development 1: Improvement Expected

		Score (1-4)
ATTENDANCE	*Regularly in attendance; use of leave and notification of such is acceptable; not often absent*	
PUNCTUALITY	*Prompt and timely; not often late.*	
ABILITY TO WORK WITH OTHERS	*Has good working relationships with other County employees; helpful, polite, and courteous.*	
FOLLOWS INSTRUCTIONS	*Follows oral and written instructions well; does not have difficulty understanding new procedures.*	
ATTITUDE	*Good attitude and interest in work; does not complain excessively; provides positive suggestions or ideas.*	
FOLLOWS RULES	*Follows District and departmental rules and policies with regularity; does not break or bend rules to suit own needs.*	
PERSONAL APPEARANCE	*Maintains appropriate appearance, cleanliness, and personal hygiene.*	
Average Section Score		
SUPERVISOR COMMENTS:		

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

3.7 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACTS

Within many school districts, labor unions or collective bargaining units play an important role in defining how work is accomplished. These bargaining units maintain unit-specific contracts which dictate the manner of work to be performed by each union's respective members, specifically define the terms of classification to be used, and in some cases, contain explicit classification description, disciplinary rules, and other personnel-related requirements.

Union relationships between bargaining units and management can range from amicable and friendly to hostile and distrustful. These relationships can have a significant impact on morale and quality of service delivery. Fortunately, the HWRSD has positive and effective bargaining relationships with its various collective bargaining units.

Negotiations

The negotiation process for collective bargaining agreements present within the district occurs between interested parties at appropriate levels of authority. With the largest collective bargaining group being teachers, the level of organization in the bargaining committees is evident and necessary. Nothing about the negotiation process or procedures for any of the bargaining units evaluated fall outside of recommended standards.

When one considers salary ranges, the most outward-facing facet of negotiations, the district maintains compensation as a function of its existing collective bargaining unit. Analyzing the market competitiveness of these negotiated pay levels is one effective way to gauge the effectiveness and fairness of the negotiations. Comparative data were collected for teacher pay from the five comparison school districts. Given the numerous variables that play a role in determining individual salary—including level of education, years of experience and individual district compensation policies—the most effective way to compare salaries for competitiveness is to assess the average salary of teachers as a cumulative class. This is accomplished by dividing the total dollars expended on teacher salaries by the full time equivalent (FTE) number of teachers. These data are displayed in **Exhibit 3-18** for the 2008 and 2009 school years.

Exhibit 3-18
Market Data for Teachers

	2008			2009		
School District	Salary Totals	Average Salary	FTE Count	Salary Totals	Average Salary	FTE Count
Hamilton-Wenham	**$10,804,573**	**$67,953**	**159.0**	**$11,135,225**	**$68,210**	**163.3**
Groton-Dunstable	$10,759,704	$59,446	181.0	$11,303,492	$62,772	180.1
Manchester-Essex	$6,864,319	$65,940	104.1	$7,137,651	$68,726	103.9
Mendon-Upton	$11,750,352	$52,224	225.0	$11,818,910	$63,051	187.5
Nashoba	$17,138,766	$69,388	247.0	$18,142,909	$72,918	248.8
Pentucket	$14,368,303	$63,019	228.0	$14,632,540	$62,789	$233
Statewide	$4,448,732,392	$64,166	69,331	$4,614,826,373	$67,577	68,290

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

When a dollar to dollar comparison is made, HWRSD finds itself in the top half of the six districts shown in the comparison. They are just less than $500 lower than Manchester-Essex and more than $5,000 higher than Mendon-Upton. Nashoba currently leads the group with an average teacher salary of $72,918.

This advantageous position is likely the result of an effective and fair negotiation process. The district has a statement in Article XXX of the agreement between the teachers and the School Committee. The agreement specifically states *"Should the need arise, due to economic considerations both parties mutually agree to make a good faith effort to enter into midterm bargaining."* Such a statement is not found in the other agreements pertaining to changes in the economy. In this way, the teacher's contract is slightly more flexible. The absence of such provisions in the other contracts could prevent the district from making short-term changes to compensation in response to shortages in the budget.

PROCEDURES

With respect to analysis of procedural components of the union contracts, Evergreen consultants found the specific procedures to be appropriate, consistent, and within the scope of standard best practices. Areas such as recognition of bargaining groups are detailed in accordance with Commonwealth law.

Procedures associated with the actual negotiation process, recognition, fair practice, performance management, compensation plan progression, reprimands, and grievances were all evaluated and are well within recommended standards. These variables warrant no immediate corrective action. It is clear that the district has worked closely with legal counsel in developing these agreements to ensure that the specific procedural components meet legal requirements.

MANAGEMENT

Day-to-day management of HWRSD union agreements is typically a relatively hands-off process. Agreements which enjoy the quality observed within HWRSD typically require little interim managerial attention, other than the standard personnel related administration of such things as compensation or classification plans, performance evaluations, and the renewal of the negotiation process towards the end of the contract term.

One area for potential improvement is in the interim negotiation process and general areas of "Mutual Concern" between the bargaining groups and the School Committee.

The district would ideally avoid being in the position of needing to reduce staff in order to meet its budget. In worst-case scenarios, where mid-term renegotiation is disallowed by a contract, it can become necessary to make such choices. The largest contract for teachers, takes this into account by specifically providing for mid-term bargaining in good faith.

An important part of collective bargaining arrangements is the makeup of the designated negotiating committees. Fair and consistent membership to this Committee can go a long way in maintaining amicable negotiations.

Within the HWRSD agreement with the teachers union, a *"Committee of Mutual Concerns"* exists to facilitate communication and cooperation between the parties of the agreement. The district's agreement between the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee and the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Education Association specifically outlines the membership of this committee as follows in Article IV, Section 4.2:

1. The President of the Association
2. Two other officers of the Association
3. Four other members of the staff selected by the Association
4. The Chairman of the School Committee
5. The Vice Chairman of the School Committee
6. The A member of the School Committee
7. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee
8. The Principal of the High School, a Middle School, and an Elementary School Principal

According to this wording, the Committee has a membership of 14 individuals and is comprised of seven from the Association and seven from the School Committee. This represents fair and equal representation of both groups. It is explicitly stated that the Mutual Concerns Committee will not hear grievances; rather this Committee exists to foster discussion and communication of common interests pertaining to the administration of district operations relative to the work of teachers.

Such committees can facilitate effective and mutually beneficial communication between negotiating bodies. This is the case with the teacher's union and the makeup of its Committee of Mutual Concern. The Committee of Mutual Concern has appropriate levels of authority to discuss issues which come up from time to time; however, it does not have authority to decide issues related to specific compensation or grievances.

Article IV of the agreement between the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee and the Hamilton-Wenham Nurses' Association outlines, in nearly identical language, the desire to meet in a similar fashion as the teachers' arrangement. Given the smaller size of the group of nurses, the creation of a Committee of Mutual Concerns is not outlined, but the language in the contract provides for the two groups to meet to "…discuss such other matters of concern or interest to the Association, the Committee, or school administration." The language also stipulates that Article IV does not allow for making decisions related to grievances or bargaining.

Neither of the agreements between the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee and the Hamilton-Wenham Office Personnel or the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) have specific articles dealing with Mutual Concerns, nor do they allow for the creation of such a committee to this end. These bargaining units consist of Custodians, Head Custodians and all full-time and part-time Secretaries, Payroll and Accounting Supervisors, Bookkeepers, and Accounts Payable Clerks, respectively. While the creation of a committee similar to that which is present within the agreement between the teachers and the School Committee is not absolutely necessary, language in the contract like is present with the nurses' union would be beneficial in describing how mutual concerns are to be handled short of any grievance process. The AFSCME agreement does stipulate how complaints are to be handled

short of grievances proceedings, but more formal language dealing with mutual concerns would be helpful.

The respective groups are encouraged to reference the language in Article IV of the agreement between the Nurses' Association and the School Committee when developing an agreement. It is not the recommendation of Evergreen Solutions that additional formal committees of the nature observed in the agreement with the Education Association (teachers) be created, rather given the relatively smaller size of the bargaining units in question, they can be addressed through language which outlines the less formal discussion of mutual concerns.

FINDING

HWRSD maintains many collective bargaining agreements with various employee and employee groups (teachers, nurses, office personnel, senior leaders, and in some cases, individual clerical personnel who possess their own single-person agreements). Some of these agreements are restrictive in a way that limits the district's ability to freely execute a broader compensation or classification-related plan. This is a very delicate situation and the working relationship between the district and these collective bargaining groups/individuals should not suffer; however, the district could look for ways to make the present union agreements more flexible given the current state of the economy.

The teachers, for example, came to the table this year and agreed to a single-year extension of the contract at their present salaries in response to the questionable economic future of the district. This is a very rare yet commendable step in the negotiation process where the two groups agreed that doing what was in the best interest of the district was a higher priority than seeking salary increases in the face of questionable fiscal strength.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and the teacher's union are commended for their ability to work together in the best interest of the district by extending their existing contract for one year.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-17:

Seek to negotiate flexibility of compensation practices and policies at the next negotiating opportunity between the district and its various collective bargaining groups.

Union contracts can be positive and mutually beneficial arrangements when management and labor unions are able to maintain positive and amicable relationships through the negotiation process. When both groups have as their primary goal the effective delivery of key services, such as providing high quality education for the students of the Hamilton and Wenham communities, it becomes easier for both sides to consider what is in the best interest of the district as a whole, rather than being focused on one's own self interest. The district appears to have such a relationship with the teacher union, and this relationship should be intentionally preserved and protected.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The district's contract with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is scheduled to expire in June 2011. In addition, the agreement with the Hamilton-Wenham Nurses Association is scheduled to conclude on June 30, 2012. In light of recent negotiations with the teachers union designed to alleviate budget stress associated with pay increases, the district should consider the possibility of similar single-year extensions for its other collective bargaining units if fiscal conditions necessitate this action.

Other unions should see the teachers union as providing a valuable example of mutually beneficial collective bargaining. The teacher union's contract is highly complex and regular negotiation can also be a time intensive process for all parties involved. The amicable nature of the relationship between the HWRSD and its collective bargaining groups is highly desirable.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 3-18:

Begin the communication process with union leaders to discuss the possible need to extend existing contracts as depicted by the "Tentative Agreement Between The HWRSD and the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Education Association" one-year contract extension.

The one area most school districts try to protect before all others in times of budget pressure is employee compensation. The recognition and reward of employee efforts in completing their assigned duties and meeting stated goals is at the core of why employees come to work. One core tenant of most collective bargaining contracts is the regular and predictable nature of salary increases, and asking those groups to forgo those increases for any reason is the last thing that any management team wants to do. However, in economically strained times such as these, this action is sometimes the necessary step. Early communication of the possibility of such a step is key in obtaining buy-in from the employees and the union's leadership. Every available step should be investigated to avoid such an action, but it must be considered.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Throughout the years, HWRSD has adapted in many ways to not having a fully formed human resources department. One of the ways this is most evident is in how the individual union contracts have been written to include standard operating procedures and policies for dealing with many of the typical day-to-day human resources functions.

One example of this can be found in the contract with the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Nurses' Association. This contract contains sections pertaining to Employment Practice, Sick Leave Bank, Travel Compensation, Insurance, and Course Reimbursement. The agreement with the office personnel contains sections including Hours of Work and Overtime, Inclement Weather, Sick Leave Buy-Back, Vacation Leave, Holidays, Reduction in Force, Vacancies and Promotions, Workmen's Compensation Benefits, and Professional Development.

There is evidence of a long-term commitment to cooperation and professionalism on the parts of both the unions themselves as well as senior leadership within the district. The individuals who helped to develop these contracts should be consulted as the district seeks to add needed structure to overall human resources operations.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for working with its respective labor unions to develop comprehensive, best-practices working agreements and contracts which outline universally important human resources practices in the absence of a true human resources department.

CHAPTER 4:
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

4.0 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Sound school district financial management involves the effective use of limited resources to support services. School districts must maximize their resources available from all sources and must account for use of these resources accurately to local taxpayers, and state and federal governments. The planning and budgeting process must support district goals. An effective purchasing program provides districts with quality materials, supplies, services and equipment in a timely manner at the lowest price. Proper accounting must reduce the risk of lost assets and ensure their appropriate use. The district must provide the School Committee, administrators, and interested public with timely, accurate and useful reports concerning its financial condition.

Financial managers collect, analyze, and provide financial information for decision makers. Successful financial operations require qualified personnel with an adequate separation of duties, as well as an accounting system that provides timely, useful, and accurate information to support operating decisions. Comprehensive policies and procedures that ensure proper management of financial resources are important.

Chapter 4 reviews the financial management, purchasing, asset and risk functions of Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD). The chapter is organized around four sections:

4.1 Organization and Financial Management
4.2 Budgeting
4.3 Purchasing
4.4 Risk and Asset Management

HWRSD is one of 329 school districts in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Five other Massachusetts regional school districts were selected as peer districts and are included in a number of exhibits for comparison purposes to HWRSD. These districts are Groton-Dunstable, Manchester-Essex, Mendon-Upton, Nashoba, and Pentucket.

Exhibit 4-1 compares the district's enrollment, appropriation and expenditures data for HWRSD and the peer districts. As can be seen, the district's enrollment is second lowest of the peers and approximately 700 less than the peer average. For 2008-09, the expenditures per pupil of $13,955 in HWRSD was the highest among the peer districts, and $2,189 greater than the peer average.

The district's total expenditures per pupil increased 32 percent between 2004-05 and 2008-09. An increase of $3,387 was the highest among the peer districts and 9.3 percentage points higher than the peer average. **Exhibit 4-2** compares total expenditures per pupil in HWRSD to the peer districts for 2004-05 through 2008-09. Total expenditures include expenditures from General Fund appropriations as well as expenditures from grants, revolving and other funds.

Exhibit 4-1
Enrollment, Appropriations, and Total Expenditures
2008-09 Fiscal Year

School District	Enrollment	General Fund Appropriations	Grants Revolving and Other Funds	Total Expenditures	Expenditures Per Pupil
Hamilton Wenham	**2,115**	**$26,532,862**	**$2,986,426**	**$29,519,288**	**$13,955**
Groton-Dunstable	2,907	$28,987,434	$4,130,617	$33,118,051	$11,391
Manchester-Essex	1,406	$17,119,550	$2,117,691	$19,237,241	$13,684
Mendon-Upton	2,937	$25,683,673	$5,252,163	$30,935,836	$10,534
Nashoba	3,486	$38,991,384	$4,232,709	$43,224,093	$12,398
Pentucket	3,400	$30,656,815	$6,134,687	$36,791,502	$10,822
Peer Average	**2,827**	**$28,287,771**	**$4,373,573**	**$32,661,345**	**$11,766**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008-09.

Exhibit 4-2
Total Expenditures Per Pupil
2004-05 through 2008-09 Fiscal Years

School District	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Percent Increase 2004-05 through 2008-09
Hamilton-Wenham	**$10,568**	**$10,921**	**$12,105**	**$12,616**	**$13,955**	**32.0%**
Groton-Dunstable	$9,143	$9,644	$10,284	$10,790	$11,391	24.6%
Manchester-Essex	$11,905	$12,436	$12,772	$12,998	$13,684	14.9%
Mendon-Upton	$8,182	$8,534	$9,194	$10,007	$10,534	28.7%
Nashoba	$10,560	$11,020	$11,410	$12,071	$12,398	17.4%
Pentucket	$8,471	$8,809	$9,361	$10,124	$10,822	27.8%
Peer Average	**$9,652**	**$10,089**	**$10,604**	**$11,198**	**$11,766**	**22.7%**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004-05 through 2008-09.

Exhibit 4-3 compares expenditures per pupil for HWRSD and the peer districts for expenditures from the General Fund for 2004-05 through 2008-09. The increase in expenditures per pupil in HWRSD between 2004-05 and 2008-09 of 35.1 percent was higher than all the peer districts and over twice the increase of the peer average.

The percentage of total expenditures by function for 2008-09 is shown in **Exhibit 4-4** for HWRSD and the peer districts. As can be seen, for 2008-09, HWRSD expended 2.0 percent more on instructional leadership and 3.0 percent more for instructional materials, equipment and technology than the peer district average. While the percentage for instructional materials, equipment, and technology is only 3.0 percentage points greater than the peer average, it represents almost a 50 percent difference. The percent expended for insurance, retirement programs and other, and payments to out-of-district schools, were both 2.3 percent less than the peer average.

Exhibit 4-3
General Fund Expenditures Per Pupil
2004-05 through 2008-09 Fiscal Years

School District	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Percent Increase 2004-05 Through 2008-09
Hamilton-Wenham	**$9,282**	**$9,937**	**$10,800**	**$11,386**	**$12,543**	**35.1%**
Groton-Dunstable	$8,437	$8,728	$9,256	$9,802	$9,970	**18.2%**
Manchester-Essex	$10,806	$10,635	$11,233	$11,454	$12,178	**12.7%**
Mendon-Upton	$7,405	$7,728	$8,195	$8,914	$8,745	**18.1%**
Nashoba	$9,629	$9,888	$10,336	$10,923	$11,184	**16.1%**
Pentucket	$7,535	$7,639	$8,289	$8,871	$9,018	**19.7%**
Peer Average	**$8,762**	**$8,924**	**$9,462**	**$9,993**	**$10,219**	**16.6%**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004-05 through 2008-09.

Exhibit 4-4
Percent of Total Expenditures By Function
2008-09 Fiscal Year

Function	HWRSD	Peer Average	Percentage Points Over (under) Peer Average
Administration	3.0%	3.2%	(0.2%)
Instructional Leadership	8.2%	6.2%	2.0%
Classroom and Specialist Teachers	37.7%	37.6%	0.2%
Other Teaching Services	8.0%	7.4%	0.7%
Professional Development	1.3%	1.2%	0.1%
Instructional Materials, Equipment and Technology	6.1%	3.1%	3.0%
Guidance, Counseling and Testing	3.6%	2.3%	1.3%
Pupil Services	8.2%	9.2%	(0.9%)
Operations and Maintenance	6.3%	7.7%	(1.4%)
Insurance, Retirement Programs and Other	11.2%	13.5%	(2.3%)
Payments To Out-Of-District Schools	6.3%	8.6%	(2.3%)

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008-09.

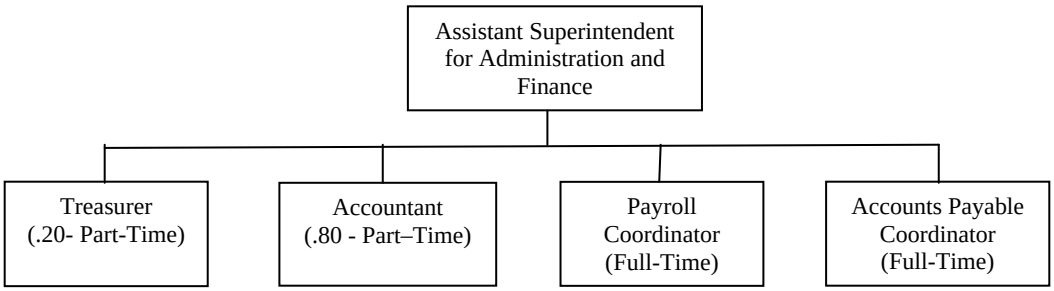
4.1 ORGANIZATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A district's financial management operation includes the functions of collection, disbursement, and accounting for all funds. An effective fiscal operation implements detailed policies and internal controls to process the district's daily business transactions efficiently while providing accurate, complete, and timely information to district management and the School Committee. Payroll is a major part of any district, since it normally represents the bulk of the expenses.

In HWRSD, financial operations are under the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance who reports directly to the Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance is responsible for the functions associated with accounting, budgeting, reporting, accounts payable, payroll, purchasing, and asset and risk management.

Exhibit 4-5 presents the organizational structure for the district's finance operations. The finance functions are performed by approximately three full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions. The Treasurer works approximately 20 percent and the Accountant works approximately 80 percent.

Exhibit 4-5
Organizational Chart for Finance in the
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
2010-11 School Year



Source: Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, November 2010.

FINDING

The HWRSD Payroll Coordinator completes a very thorough balancing of the district's payroll each month to ensure that all employees are paid accurately. Payrolls are completed bi-weekly for all district employees. Prior to running the actual monthly payroll that produces employee paychecks and deduction warrants, the Payroll Coordinator uses a payroll verification and reconciliation process to help ensure employee paychecks are accurate. For each payroll, the Payroll Coordinator performs a payroll reconciliation process using a spreadsheet that essentially includes the balances from the previous payroll and posts each change to an employee's pay or deductions to arrive at totals for the current payroll which are then checked to preliminary payroll report balances.

This balancing or reconciliation of payroll totals with separate summary spreadsheets adds greatly to the assurance that all changes to employees pay records have been properly included in the district's actual payroll system prior to employee paychecks being produced. In addition, the Payroll Coordinator has developed a timesheet that ties teacher absences to substitute teachers to facilitate the payroll process and help ensure that time records are kept up-to-date. The time reporting process enables all employee time balances to be reported on payroll stubs each month.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Payroll Coordinator is commended for developing and using a payroll balancing process to help ensure district employees are paid accurately.

FINDING

HWRSD realizes 98 percent participation by employees in the district's direct deposit program. In 2005-06, the district had only 70 percent of employees using direct deposit. Although between 2005-06 and 2008-09, the district actively promoted direct deposit, the promotion was only able to increase the percentage to 80 percent. The volunteer program was not producing the results desired.

On January 1, 2010, the district implemented a requirement that all employees must use direct deposit and receive pay information via email. The district now has 98 percent of employees participating. The remaining two percent is split between a few employees who do not use email, but do have direct deposit, and a few employees who have refused to provide banking information for direct deposit. For employees refusing to adhere to the direct deposit requirement, their checks are no longer delivered through internal distribution or US mail, and are held at the Payroll Office until the employees come to pick them up.

COMMENDATION

HWRSD is commended for its employee direct deposit program where 98 percent of all employees are participating.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have a policy for its excess and deficiency account. There are no reports that routinely present account status and use of the funds in the account. In addition, district documents make it appear that conflicting data are shown on various documents.

The Excess and Deficient Account is described in a publication title *The Community Connection Budgets – 2010-11* produced by the towns/school budget process committee as:

> *This fund (also know as the E&D or the reserve fund balance) is the school's equivalent of the town's "free cash". The E&D fund must be certified annually by the Department of Revenue (DOR) prior to the school committee making expenditures. Once certified by DOR, the school committee can approve expenditures for "unanticipated expenses" i.e., special education, major maintenance and capital projects, shortfall in state aid, regional transportation, etc. The school committee approves funds to be expended from the "E&D" by a vote of two-thirds. By law, the "E&D" can not exceed 5% of operating budget. Auditors recommend that a minimum of 3% of the operating budget should be in the "E&D" at all times.*

Section 11, Title XII, Chapter 70 of the Massachusetts states:

> *If in any fiscal year a district's actual expenditure for public education is less than the amount required to be appropriated for public education pursuant to this chapter, the difference, up to 5 per cent of the amount required to be appropriated, shall be spent for public education in the following fiscal year; provided, however, that any unexpended funds, whether appropriated to the school committee account or to town accounts for expenditure to meet public education costs, shall be deemed reappropriated for public education in the following year without further action by the appropriating authority; provided, further, that the amount of state school aid for the following fiscal year shall be reduced by the amount said difference exceeds 5 per cent of the amount required to be appropriated; and provided, further, that in any year in which additional money is required to be spent due to a spending deficiency in the prior year, if a district fails to spend the carried forward amount or under-spends its current year budget by more than 5 per cent of the amount required to be appropriated for that year, state school aid in the following year shall be reduced by the entire difference between those amounts. The board shall promulgate regulations to enforce the provisions of this section".*

A district document entitled "Excess & Deficiency" was used during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 and included data pertaining to the balance and use of the fund for 2009-10**. Exhibit 4-6** shows the information contained in this document. As presented, the balance on July 1, 2009 was $1,296,899 and was reduced through School Committee approvals by $710,477, resulting in a balance at June 30, 2010 of $566,422. The same balance of $1,296,899 was shown in documents used in budget development process for the 2010-11 budget and entitled "FY 10 Certified E & D."

Exhibit 4-6
Excess & Deficiency Used During Fiscal Year
as of June 30, 2010

Balance and School Committee Meeting Dates	Description	Amount
Certified Balance July 1, 2009		**$1,296,899**
9-10-2009	WWTF – Martinage Contract	($40,000)
3-11-2010	WWTF – Martinage Contract amendment	($250)
3-11-2010	Waterline Contract	($537,977)
4-8-2010	Central Building Roof Repair	($40.000)
5-27-2010	HS Locker Replacement	($99,460)
6-30-2010	Rescind– HS Locker Replacement	$99,460
6-39-2010	Facilities Assessment	($110,000)
Available Balance prior to 6-3-2010		**$566,422**

Source: HWRSD Finance Office, 2010.

Another document provided by the district pertaining to the E & D that was reported as being sent to the DOR for certification for 2010-11 contained the information as shown in **Exhibit 4-7.** As shown in the document, the district estimated the balance of the E & D account as of June 30, 2010 was $964,458. This was sent to DOR for certification. Also the document showed that the balance of $964,458 was $467,963.40 below the five percent maximum allowed of $1,422,421.40.

Exhibit 4-7
Estimated Excess & Deficiency
as of June 30, 2010

Description	Amount
Fund Balance – Unreserved	**$1,222,971**
Less: Deficits	($268,513)
Estimated E&D	$964,458
FY 2011 Operating Budget	$27,455,383
FY 2011 Debt Budget	$993,045
Total FY 2010 Budget	$28,448,428
Five Percent	$1,422,421
Amount over Five Percent	($467,963)

Source: HWRSD Finance Office, November 2010.

The equivalent of the Excess and Deficiency Fund Balance is reported in the district's Annual Financial Statements that are audited by an outside auditor. The title used in the annual report is the "General Fund's Unrestricted Fund Balance." The balance as reported in the annual financial statements for the 2006-07 through 2008-09 fiscal years is shown in **Exhibit 4-8.** The General Fund balance decreased in 2006-07 by $496,564—from $861,739 to $365,175. In both 2007-08 and 2008-09, the fund balance increased by $1,486,012 and 1,113,372, respectively. At the end of 2008-09, the General Fund unrestricted balance was $2,613,551.

Exhibit 4-8
Summary of General Fund Balance
June 30, 2006 to June 30, 2009

	Fiscal Year		
	2006-07	**2007-08**	**2008-09**
Beginning Balance	**$861,739**	**$365,175**	**$1,500,179***
Revenues	$28,556,915	$30,441,584	$32,608,386
Expenditures	$29,160,039	$29,594,683	$31,753,292
Other Financing Sources (Uses)	$106,560	$273,936	$258,278
Excess (deficiency) of revenues And other sources over expenditures and other uses	$496,564	$1,120,837	$1,113,372
Ending Balance	**$365,175**	**$1,486,012**	**$2,613,551**

Source: HWRSD, Annual Financial Statement, 2007 to 2009.

*Fund balance restated from previous year's ending balance for $14,167 of capital project funds previously misstated.

As shown in the previous exhibits, it appears that data pertaining to the E & D presented in different documents conflict. While **Exhibit 4-6** shows the certified balance at July 1, 2009 was $1,296,899, **Exhibit 4-8** shows the audited ending General Fund balance at June 30, 2009 as $2,613,551. In addition, **Exhibit 4-6** shows the balance prior to June 30, 2010 as $566,422 and **Exhibit 4-7** shows the estimated E&D balance at June 30, 2010 as $964,458.

Many reports are prepared by public entities presenting financial data in a variety of formats to meet specific reporting requirements. While the reports meet the reporting requirements, it is very confusing to the public when data seem to be conflicting. Although data may be accurate for specific reports, when it appears to be conflicting, it makes readers question its integrity and accuracy. Financial reports that present similar or the same data in different ways need to be reconciled to show the differences and why they are different.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-1:

Develop a policy on the Excess and Deficient (E&D) account to establish a minimum account balance, provide specific guidance on what the funds can be used for, and require routine status reports to the School Committee.

An Excess and Deficiency (E&D) Account balance policy, developed and adopted by the School Committee, should help ensure that a reasonable balance is maintained in the fund and only used for emergencies. Reconciling reports and presenting information pertaining to the fund in a consistent manner will help eliminate confusion, and provide all interested parties with information they can easily understand.

The School Committee should provide guidance through adopting an account balance policy that establishes a minimum balance, describes how to achieve the balance, and outlines use of the district's account balance that exceeds the minimum target amount to help ensure that the funds are only used for critical priority items. Reports to the School Committee will help the members monitor the account balance, and have an understanding of the impact of actions that impact the balance.

HWRSD should reconcile the data presented in various reports and documents to help ensure that accurate data are being reported in each. In addition, all future reports should be reconciled to the balance as shown in the district's financial system or to the previous audited financial statements to ensure consistency of reporting.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Financial reports for the district's special revenue and revolving funds and accounts are not prepared during the year. Also, the district's annual financial report or budget documents do not include data pertaining to the individual funds and accounts.

Special revenue and revolving funds are created for specific operations of a governmental entity that provide services on a fee or cost recovery basis. HWRSD has unique activities where cost is to be recovered including child nutrition, day care, athletic and other extracurricular activities.

For example, the day care fund has an accumulated balance of up to $300,000. This $300,000 could be used instead of the General Fund for certain future costs.

A governmental entity's ability to effectively manage cost recovery operations is dependent upon receiving regular financial reports showing balances and results of operations. Similar to a business, enterprise managers need financial data that make available whether the entity is incurring an income or lose for the reporting period. Management needs to be keep informed about accumulated balances, such as the balance in the day care account, so that the excess in the fund can be appropriately used.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-2:

Prepare quarterly financial reports for district special revenue and revolving funds and accounts.

Accumulated funds should be identified and used were appropriate instead of the General Fund.

Providing the School Committee and district management with reports for special revenue and revolving funds should enable district leaders to have needed information to properly manage the district's funds maintained in the accounts. Without routine and timely reports showing the operation and status of the funds and accounts, School Committee members and district managers are unable to provide required oversight to the operations to help ensure the financial integrity of the funds are maintained and expended as intended.

Using the accumulated balance in the day care fund instead of the General Fund will provide a one-time benefit to the General Fund. Monitoring the account balance could provide additional benefits to the General Fund in the future.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation would result in an estimated $300,000 being available to the General Fund by using the accumulated balance in the Day Care Fund. To help ensure that the funds are used appropriately, it is projected that one-half or $150,000 will be provided to the General Fund in 2011-12 and the other one-half would be used in 2012-13.

Additional savings to the General Fund could be made available should other funds be identified with excesses balances. The actual amount cannot be reasonably estimated without reports that show the complete financial status of each of the funds.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Account for Special Funds	$150,000	$150,000	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

The Town of Hamilton, Town of Wenham, and the HWRSD have held discussions related to shared services. Although these discussions have not produced formal agreements, there are instances where sharing of services between the towns and the school district have occurred.

Shared services is a process that involves centralizing functions that most times are performed by more than one entity. Service sharing is recognized as an innovative way to lower operating costs and improve overall performance. Sharing a service provides the opportunity to reduce redundancy and inefficiencies by sharing personnel and investments with others. Entities that participate in shared service arrangements can cut costs while improving the quality of the services shared. Districts and municipalities that have implemented shared services also enjoy savings by standardizing practices and procedures, and by creating economies of scale.

Often times, school districts and municipalities of small to median size have difficulties finding and funding specialized personnel with the skills necessary to support the increasing needs of the entities. Many times sharing the skills of specialized personnel increases the level of services and reduces costs. Also, sharing the skills of management level staff and consolidating support processes reduces costs and increases production.

It is always a good business practice to document in writing specific provisions of agreements for sharing a service. A shared services agreement should be in the form of a contract tailored to the specific needs of the entities involved that, at a minimum, includes the following:

- nature and scope of the service(s) to be performed;
- measurable performance standards;
- assignment of responsibility;
- cost allocation;
- duration of the contract;
- procedure for payment; and
- dispute resolution.

Many comments were received from district administrators and teachers, and from the staff of the two towns, pertaining to the concept of sharing of services. Some comments pertained to the merits and benefits of consolidating the local governments of the Town of Hamilton and Town of Wenham; however, that is outside the scope of this audit. Nonetheless, opportunities do exist for sharing services between HWRSD, Hamilton, and Wenham (also see **Chapter 6**).

Although almost any administrative or support function could be performed on a shared basis, each entity is still responsible for ensuring that its needs are met, responsibilities fulfilled, and the services are provided at a cost that is in the best interest of its students and taxpayers. Sharing a service normally adds an administrative burden to the entity that provides the shared service, and the entity that agrees to have the service provided by another entity loses a degree of control over the service provided. Many shared service opportunities originate in activities associated with a district's administration, transportation, operations and maintenance, and food services programs.

Each of the public entities performs a number of administrative functions separately such as purchasing, human resources, accounting, and payroll. Other functions such as building and grounds maintenance are also provided individually. The towns do provide snow removal for the district and allow district athletic programs to use city facilities at no cost to the district. In addition, the two towns share an expanded library.

HWRSD, the Town of Hamilton, and the Town of Wenham have separate purchasing programs that acquire commonly used items through separate bids and contracts. They do not have purchasing agreements to share purchasing functions. Both the district and the two towns purchase general office, custodial, and building maintenance supplies. Purchasing agreements are many times entered into by entities to get better pricing from vendors and to reduce administrative costs. Generally, each entity will determine an approximate amount of merchandise they intend to purchase during a 12-month period. One of the entities will then consolidate all amounts and perform the competitive purchasing. All entities are allowed to process individual purchase orders from these bids. Vendors normally offer better pricing to consolidated purchases because the amounts to be purchased are generally larger than if purchased by a single entity.

Other districts have or have explored shared services arrangements with cities/towns that include:

- athletic facilities at both the district and towns;
- health services including consolidated employee health insurance;
- technology including systems, software, and contracted services;
- use of city staff as attendance officer;
- energy management program;
- ground maintenance;
- snow removal;
- use of inmates for general building maintenance such as painting;
- vehicle maintenance;
- accounting services;
- payroll services;
- purchasing services;
- shared purchasing arrangements for commonly acquired office, custodial and building supplies, as well as fuel and vehicle maintenance supplies; and
- sharing of police officers for district security.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-3:

Implement additional shared services opportunities with the towns of Hamilton and Wenham to reduce cost and increase efficiencies.

Identifying and implementing shared service opportunities will help the district and towns to realize efficiencies and cost savings. Cost savings in support functions through shared services will make more funds available for direct educational services in the school district.

FISCAL IMPACT

Although this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, the actual fiscal impact cannot be reasonably estimated without detailed data for each potential possibility. There may not be actual cost savings for some shared services arrangements, and only improved processes that may be more efficient and provide better service. Similar to findings in the report by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (dated June 2009 and titled *Towns of Hamilton and Wenham – Enhanced Regionalization and Merger Analysis*) which stated that combining the two Finance Departments would save $185,583 a year, some shared services have the potential to reduce costs include:

- shared athletic facilities will reduce the need for duplicated facilities;
- health service costs could possibility be reduced for both cities and the school district by increasing the number of participants in a combined plan;
- centralizing accounting, payroll, purchasing functions for both cities and the school district could enable each entity to reduce staff who are performing similar duties at each entity;
- shared purchasing arrangements could reduce the cost of commonly acquired items by obtaining volume purchasing; and
- sharing city staff with the district for security and attendance officers could reduce the need for the district to obtain the services elsewhere.

Implementing shared services arrangements with Wenham and Hamilton should provide the district with cost reductions similar to the *Enhanced Regionalization and Merger Analysis* in which cost savings of $185,583 were estimated for combining the two cities Finance Departments, about $90,000 for each city. Estimating the same savings for the district for consolidating its finance department and roughly estimating saving from the other functions in the listing above could save the district more than $200,000 a year. Yet, a conservative savings of $100,000 is being estimated.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Continue to Explore Shared Services Opportunities	$0	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000

FINDING

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District lacks a process to keep account fund balances from being negative. HWRSD accounts, including student activity funds, are routinely allowed to expend more than has been collected. The district also does not have a formal process to hold account managers accountable for the negative balances or a process to obtain approvals to correct the negative balances.

A number of district funds have been allowed to operate at a loss and some have continued with a negative balance for sometime. **Exhibit 4-9** presents a list of funds that have been reported with negative fund balances. The 2007-08 and 2008-09 annual financial statements included a listing of funds that had negative balances at the end of the fiscal year. A similar listing produced from the district's automated financial system for June 10, 2010 shows a number of accounts with the same negative fund balances continuing uncorrected. Many of these accounts are student activity funds, some are grant funds, and others are for capital projects and scholarships.

A process that allows funds to operate with a negative balance is an internal control weakness. The process allows managers of the funds to expend money they do not have, and normally results in the school district having to use money from the General Fund, intended for the education of students, to be used for special non-educational costs.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-4:

Establish a policy that does not allow accounts to be negative, hold managers accountable for expending only funds available, and take action to correct the negative fund balances.

A process that ensures fund balances do operate at a loss will help funds from being expended for unintended purposes. Holding managers accountable will help ensure that the General Fund does not have to divert monies budgeted for specific purposes to cover negative balances in other funds and accounts where funds have been over spent.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation is estimated to be approximately $27,836 annually. The estimate is based on the assumption that 20 percent of the accounts that have been allowed to expend more than they receive would require General Fund transfers to fund their negative fund balances. The estimate is based on the average of the three years shown in **Exhibit 4-9** ($43,150 + $106,192 + $268,205 / 3) x 20 percent or $139,182 x 20 percent = $27,836.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Establish Policy to Not Allow Accounts to Have Negative Balances	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836

Exhibit 4-9
HWRSD Negative Fund Balances
June 30, 2008 through June 30, 2010

Account	Financial Statements		June 30, 2010 Listing from Financial System
	2007-08	2008-09	
Title 6B		$40,535	$40,535
Staying Connected	$26,357	$26,729	$26,729
C.W. Physical Ed	$14,091	$14,091	
Lighthouse Title 1	$301		
Regional High School Trust	$422		
Special Revolving		$7,164	
MRMS Math Team		$5,133	$5,133
RHS Math Team		$2,530	$2,530
Cafeteria		$1,987	
Yearbook		$1,855	$1,855
Eisenhower Grant	$1,215	$1,215	
Control Account		$1,133	
RHS Literacy Magazine		$893	$893
MRMS Talent Show		$784	
Drug Free	$678	$678	$678
RHS College Bowl		$557	$557
SPED Curriculum Framework		$381	$381
Enhances Sch Health		$256	
Improve Educator Quality	$86	$86	
CPC P&C		$79	$79
Sum Academic Support		$70	
Peabody Trust Fund		$29	$29
Boy's Tennis		$6	$6
Boy's Soccer		$1	$1
Cutler Revolving			$1,500
MRMS Revolving			$5,098
RHS Revolving			$2,175
Unreserved Fund			$11,038
C.W. Physical Ed Program			$14,091
CSI (Control)			$38,046
Project Focus			$532
Undesignated			$1,827
CPC Transition			$1,243
Waste Water Treatment			$113,249
Total	**$43,150**	**$106,192**	**$268,205**

Source: 2007-08 and 2008-09 Annual Financial Statements and Financial Management System, June 30, 2010.

FINDING

HWRSD lacks a consistent, documented methodology for calculating cost recovery fees for its special revenue and revolving accounts. In addition, indirect and support costs paid by the General Fund are not identified and not required to be recovered.

The district has a number of operations where cost is attempted to be recovered from participants. Cost recovery fees are charged for participation in district athletics and other extracurricular activities. In addition, fees to recover costs are charged for the district's day care program and child nutrition program. A centralized standard methodology has not been prepared

to guide staff when calculating rates that should be charged to recover the cost associated with the activities. The Athletic Director calculates the rates for athlete programs and, according to district documents, normally includes only direct costs for salary supplements for coaches, transportation, officials, personnel cost for timers, announcers, supervisors, ticket sellers, consumable supplies, and other fees. Without a standard methodology, there is no assurance that recovery fees are being calculated and charged to recover the costs that management intended them to recovery.

The costs for utilities and maintenance of facilities used by extracurricular and day care activities are not allocated to, or not required to be recovered from, the activities. The costs of utilities and maintenance of facilities are also not allocated or required to be recovered from the child nutrition program (see **Chapter 7**). Unless costs paid from the General Fund are allocated to cost recovery operations, the district does not know the total cost of these activities.

In addition, indirect and support costs are not calculated, allocated, or recovered from cost recovery activities. Indirect and support costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular program or department (such as payroll, accounting and other central office functions that are paid from the General Fund). Since it is very difficult and time consuming to track specific work performed by administrative and support functions when they occur, indirect cost allocations are used to distribute the costs. An indirect cost allocation is a simply mechanism for determining fairly and conveniently what proportions of administration costs each cost recovery activity is provided. By not allocating indirect administrative and support costs to its cost recovery activities, the district understates the full costs of operating activities. Since the General Fund has been used to pay for these costs, General Fund expenditures have been overstated and fewer funds are available for direct educational purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-5:

Develop and document a cost methodology to be used when calculating fees, and identify and allocate indirect and support cost to activities that charge fees.

A standard cost methodology will help provide assurance that cost recovery fees or rates are being calculated in a standard and consistent manner. Allocating total costs of conducting an activity (including direct cost such as utilities and facilities maintenance and indirect and support costs such as the proportionate cost of payroll and accounting initially paid by the General Fund) will identify the total cost of conducting activities and operations. Reports for each of the cost recovery activities, including the child nutrition program, will routinely provide management, School Committee members, and interested public with proper information to stay informed.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation is based on the revenues collected in 2009 for charges for services and an estimated percentage that should be added to the revenue for indirect and support costs. The district's 2008-09 financial report indicted that $1,383,692 was received for charges for services during the year, and using an estimated percentage of 5 percent, the annual

increase to the General Fund would be $69,185. **Note**: Indirect costs for food services are addressed separately in **Chapter 7**.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Develop and Document a Cost Methodology	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185

FINDING

HWRSD does not have a formal policy to track the status of recommendations included in audits and other reports to ensure appropriate recommendations are implemented in a timely manner. Various types of reviews and audits are performed on school districts, and reports prepared for the reviews and audits contain recommendations for needed improvements.

Audits of the HWRSD financial processes are performed by certified public accountants each year as they audit the annual financial report. External auditors issue a management letter in conjunction with the annual audit where comments on noncompliance issues and internal control weaknesses are addressed. A review of comments contained in the last three audit management letters revealed that corrective actions are not always implemented.

Exhibit 4-10 shows the issues/recommendations contained in the management letters for 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09.

Many issues and recommendations in HWRSD audits are repeated year after year indicating that the district does not make the necessary improvements that the external auditor recommends. An example of this is the recommendation contained in each of the management letters that stated *Improve accounting for student activity funds (significant deficiency)*. The same identical district response was contained in both the 2007-08 and 2008-09 management letters that stated:

> *Management has presented a summary of deficiencies noted by the auditors to all account managers and individuals responsible for the maintenance of all Student Activity Accounts. A corrective action plan has been discussed and will include group training for all account managers; a review and updating of the Student Activity Policy and an assessment of the specific exceptions noted, for the purpose of determining the underlying cause that contributed to the deficiency.*

HWRSD responses were not included in the 2006-07 management letter. Discussions with school secretaries indicated that they have never received any communication on auditor-noted deficiencies associated with student activity accounts nor attended any training sessions.

A part of the fee paid to the external auditor is a review of district financial practices to enable district management to make improvements, but unless actions are taken on auditor recommendations, the district receives no value from the money expended. More importantly, uncorrected deficiencies pertaining to district financial practices places the district at risk for funds not being accounted for in a proper manner.

Exhibit 4-10
Management Letter Issues/Recommendations
2006-07 through 2008-09 Fiscal Years

Issue/Recommendation	Contained in Management Letter for Year		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Establish internal controls over the preparation of audited financial statements	X		
Document - components of internal control	X		
Consider implementing internal control improvements	X	X	X
Establish internal audit function	X		
Improve accounting for student activity funds (significant Deficiency)	X	X	X
Develop procedures for department receipts	X	X	X
Remit athletic user fees to the district	X	X	
Other Issues - procedures or controls should be improved for financial reporting, procurement, petty cash (cafeteria/food service department), and budget.	X	X	
Improve controls over disbursement (significant deficiency)		X	X

Source: HWRSD's Financial Audit Reports 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09.

Without a system to track and report on the status of recommendations, HWRSD runs the risk of failing to take needed action. Committee members and district administrators need periodic information on the current status of recommendations in order to hold district personnel accountable and to ensure needed improvements are made.

Critical components of a tracking system for report recommendations include assigning responsibility for initial identification of recommendations, providing frequency and a format for reporting to administrators and the School Committee, establishing management responsibilities for implementing recommendations, and assigning responsibility for periodically reporting the status of recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-6:

Adopt a formal policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of report/audit recommendations made to the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

By adopting a policy for tracking and periodically reporting on the status of report recommendations, the district will ensure that corrective actions are addressed in a timely manner. Reports to the School Committee will enable them to monitor the completion of actions by HWRSD staff that are needed to improve processes.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented within current resources.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have procedures for critical financial processes that must be performed. Documented procedures are necessary for proper internal controls and to help ensure that financial transactions are completed in a manner approved by management.

In a previous management letter, the outside auditor recommended that procedures should be documented. The auditor stated:

> *In order to establish an effective system of internal controls, the District should document the policies, procedures and controls over key financial transactions, including cash, departmental receipts, purchasing, vendor disbursements, employee benefit/payroll disbursements, and general ledger maintenance. This documentation could be used by departments as guidance to help safeguard assets, properly record transactions, and provide a basis for continuing operations when turnover occurs in key financial departments. Although the District maintains certain polices and procedures, they are either not complete or current.*

District financial procedures are normally compiled in a comprehensive districtwide document or manual. At a minimum, the manual usually includes:

- budget policies and procedures;
- payroll policies and procedures;
- district accounts payable processing;
- activity fund policies and procedures;
- district procedures governing approvals for checks and journal vouchers;
- procedures for travel reimbursements;
- grants management;
- textbook management;
- district purchasing processes; and
- district procedures governing distribution of financial reports.

Districts with effective, comprehensive procedures manuals update them regularly to ensure that staff have accurate information. Manuals clearly convey acceptable and unacceptable practices as well as the consequences of violating established requirements. To ensure its availability to staff, many districts also put the manual on their website. The manual identifies roles, responsibilities, and controls to be observed, as well as areas for secondary review and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-7:

Identify all critical functions performed by finance staff, and document procedures in a comprehensive procedures manual.

A comprehensive finance procedures manual will assist staff in conducting their duties, and help ensure that the processes are being performed in the approved manner. When employees perform

their duties without the benefit of up-to-date written procedures, they may fail to perform those functions in a manner that complies with office practices due to being uninformed or misinformed as to what the appropriate process actually is.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD departments and schools are not provided with detailed user manuals to guide them in completing duties related to finance and budget responsibilities. In addition, employees in schools and departments are provided little training on how to complete their duties pertaining to financial operations.

School and department staff must follow specific processes and complete a variety of finance-related documents in an accurate and timely manner. A variety of processes must occur in order to help ensure employees are paid timely and accurately, materials and services are ordered and received when needed, vendors are paid in a timely and accurate manner, and activities such as those relating to travel reimbursement are completed.

Processes related to financial activities are often difficult for employees who do not perform these functions on a continuous basis, and who are also required to perform a variety of other duties. An easily understood reference manual for financial duties and processes greatly reduces errors, and also reduces the amount of time required by business office staff to repeatedly explain processes.

Although the district has Policy 4001, Student Activity Accounts, in its policy book, school secretaries were not aware of the policy. The policy is a copy of a letter dated May 31, 1996 from the Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education discussing guidelines for student activity funds.

Annual audit management letters each year discuss improprieties with management of student activity funds which are either caused by untrained staff or carelessness of staff. The Treasurer has begun developing new procedures for HWRSD student activity funds which, when completed, should help address the reported deficiencies. The procedures are being developed using Massachusetts Association of School Committees guidelines. In addition, schools have begun using QuickBooks to document activity in their accounts. Although the Treasurer has not completed a detailed procedures manual for activity funds, she has developed and presented to school secretaries a document titled “Frequency of Deposits” that provides guidance on using a turnover form when monies are turned in to the Treasurer, and when funds collected have to be delivered to the central office for deposit.

Many school districts provide school and department staff with a users manual to provide policy and direction on completing financial and operational duties. These manuals routinely include guidance for:

- purchasing policy and procedures;
- vendor payments;
- student activity funds;
- payroll activities;
- leave reporting;
- fixed asset inventory processes;
- mail delivery;
- travel;
- workers' compensation; and
- other topics that impact district employees and administrative staff duties.

The users manual is discussed at orientation for new employees and discussed each year in work sessions prior to the beginning of school. Administrative staff better understand the processes and requirements for various finance-related operations that impact their responsibilities when they have a manual available for reference. Errors occur less often and administrative employees spend less time asking how to perform a process. A user manual also provides a means of documenting acceptable processes and enables accountably to be enforced.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-8:

Develop a user manual for school and department staff, to assist them in completing finance and budget-related duties, and provide periodic training.

Useful manuals not only provide detailed procedures on how to complete a particular form, but also include policies such as delegated purchasing and the associated penalties for not following the policies. Manuals should also be made available on the HWRSD website, and training sessions should be routinely offered where processes covered in the manual are discussed and questions answered.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4.2 BUDGETING

A budget enables a school district to adequately maintain and control its financial resources. The School Committee, central office managers, school administrators, department heads, teachers, and community members should be involved in the budgeting process. The budget should reflect the overall goals and objectives of the district's long-range strategic plan. Given the scarcity of resources in both Towns and available to the school district, it is critical that the district budgets its dollars effectively. Sound fiscal management entails forecasting a reasonable but conservative revenue number, as well as reasonable but aggressive expenditures to ensure that adequate funds are available.

FINDING

HWRSD publishes a detailed budget calendar. Developing and publishing a budget calendar helps ensure a district's budget is completed on schedule, and that the participants in the development of the budget have a reference for when their input is required so they can effectively schedule time to complete their required tasks. A publicized calendar also provides information to the general public as to when its input can be provided.

Exhibit 4-11 presents the HWRSD budget calendar for development of the 2010-11 budget.

Exhibit 4-11
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Operating Budget Guidelines
for the Fiscal Year Ending on June 30, 2011

2009	Action
October 8	Finance Liaisons review FY11 Budget Guidelines, Process and Calendar
October 15	School Committee Reviews Draft FY 11 Budget Timeline and Guidelines
October 26	Superintendent "Budget Kickoff" Discussion with Principals and Directors
November 5	School Committee Approves School FY 11 Budget Assumptions & Guidelines
December 4	Budgets due to Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent
December 7-11	Superintendent and Assistant meet with LT to review budget requests
2010	
January 1-22	Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent develop FY 11 budget
January 4	School Committee reviews FY 11-15 special projects plan
January 14 & 21	FY11 Budget Workshops with Principals and Directors to review requests
January 28	School Committee votes recommended special project requests
February 4	Superintendent presents FY 11 Budget to School Committee and Joint Boards
March 18	Public Hearing: FY 11 Budget
March 31	School Committee votes FY 11 Budget
April 1	HWRSD SC Approved FY11Budget sent to Hamilton and Wenham
May 1	Wenham Annul Town Meeting
May 8	Hamilton Annual Town Meeting
May 27	School Committee Budget Update – if needed
July 1	Start FY 11 Budget

Source HWRSD Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance, October 2010.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for establishing a detailed budget calendar that helps ensure that the district's budget is developed in an orderly manner.

FINDING

HWRSD does not effectively conduct an analysis of historical expenditure trends when developing its annual budget in order to control costs. As a result, the district's general fund expenditures per pupil have increased at a significantly higher rate than the state average.

Also, the current budget process focuses on incremental expenditures as opposed to total expenditures. This approach assumes that prior-year resource levels are efficient, and that all programs provided in the current year will continue indefinitely.

Exhibit 4-12 compares the district's total expenditures per pupil categorized by function for 2004-05 and 2008-09 to the state average for the same two years. As shown in the exhibit, the district's total cost per pupil increased 32.0 percent compared to the state increase of 22.4 percent. Expenditure per pupil for administration increased 30.1 percent compared to the state increase of 20.4 percent, and instructional leadership increased by 65 percent compared to the state increase of 16.8 percent. Equipment and technology had the greatest percentage increase of 99.1 percent compared to the state increase of 5.9 percent. Professional development was the only function that had a decrease which was 38.1 percent compared to the state increase of 15.5 percent.

Exhibit 4-12
Total Expenditures Per Pupil
Comparison of HWRSD and the State
2004-05 and 2008-09 Fiscal Years

Function	2004-05		2008-09		Percent Change	
	HWRSD	State	HWRSD	State	HWRSD	State
Administration	$326	$363	$424	$437	30.1%	20.4%
Instructional Leadership	$701	$707	$1,157	$826	65.0%	16.8%
Teachers	$4,482	$4,194	$5,345	$4,907	19.3%	17.0%
Other Teaching Services	$764	$713	$1,139	$938	49.1%	31.6%
Professional Development	$289	$194	$179	$224	(38.1%)	15.5%
Equipment and Technology	$436	$337	$868	$357	99.1%	5.9%
Testing	$376	$296	$511	$353	35.9%	19.3%
Pupil Services	$1,018	$938	$1,167	$1,170	14.6%	24.7%
Operations and Maintenance	$828	$878	$896	$1,100	8.2%	25.3%
Programs and Other	$964	$1,594	$1,592	$2,214	65.1%	38.9%
Payments to Out of District Schools	$37,090	$18,908	$58,173	$20,928	56.8%	10.7%
Total Expenditures	**$10,568**	**$10,626**	**$13,955**	**$13,006**	**32.0%**	**22.4%**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004-05 and 2008-09.

Note: Totals are not functions due to method used to present payments to out-of-district schools.

Sometimes it is justifiable for certain expenditures to increase faster than other expenditures (such as costs related to instruction that are reflected in cost of teachers when a district is trying to improve its direct education delivery process). However, this has not been the case for HWRSD. As shown in **Exhibit 4-12,** the expenditures per pupil for teachers increased only 19.3 percent while total expenditures per pupil increased 32.0 percent. The increase in teacher costs was the fourth lowest of the 11 functions.

Not only has the district allowed total cost per pupil to increase at a significant higher pace than the state average, but has allowed functions such as administration, instructional leadership, and other teaching services to increase at a faster rate than for teachers, thus the overall percentage of expenditures per pupil for teachers has decreased from 42.4 percent in 2004-05 to 38.3 percent in 2008-09. This is shown in **Exhibit 4-13**.

Exhibit 4-13
Percent of Total Expenditures Per Pupil
2004-05 and 2008-09 Fiscal Years

Function	2004-05		2008-09	
	Expenditures Per Pupil	Percent of Total	Expenditures Per Pupil	Percent of Total
Administration	$326	3.1%	$424	3.0%
Instructional Leadership	$701	6.6%	$1,157	8.3%
Teachers	$4,482	42.4%	$5,345	38.3%
Other Teaching Services	$764	7.2%	$1,139	8.2%
Professional Development	$289	2.7%	$179	1.3%
Equipment and Technology	$436	4.1%	$868	6.2%
Testing	$376	3.6%	$511	3.7%
Pupil Services	$1,018	9.6%	$1,167	8.4%
Operations and Maintenance	$828	7.8%	$896	6.4%
Programs and Other	$964	9.1%	$1,592	11.4%
Payments to Out of District Schools	$37,090	351.0%	$58,173	416.9%
Total Expenditures	**$10,568**	**100.0%**	**$13,955**	**100.0%**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004-05 and 2008-09 and Evergreen calculations.

Note: Totals are not summation of functions due to method used to present payments to out-of-district schools.

It is important to review historical expenditures when developing the budget and identify any trends that should be closely monitored or reversed. In reviewing the actual expenditure trends, any misallocation of monies can be identified and corrected. Key budget drivers such as increases and decreases in enrollment must be identified and the budget prepared accordingly. District management, with the assistance of school administrators and department heads, must review all historical expenditures to determine where increases will not be allowed and where any cuts can be made without having a negative impact on programs.

To properly manage its budget, HWRSD should establish a budget target for each category of expenditures. The target should involve two components:

- the percentage of the total budget that should be allocated to each function; and
- the percent increase over time allocated to each function.

If the district closely monitors the targets, it can manage its expenditures and ensure that costs are not increasing without justification, and that the dollars are going where they are most needed—the classroom.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-9:

Examine budget trends and identify areas where expenditures have increased at higher than average rates, determine the reason for the increases and determine how the trends can be reversed. Establish budget targets for all functions and do not allow expenditures to exceed state average increases.

By examining budget trends and comparing the trends to the state and comparative peer districts, HWRSD will be able to identify where expenditures have been allowed to increase without justification, and where further analysis should be conducted to determine steps necessary to reduce costs. By establishing budget targets and annually analyzing historical expenditures, HWRSD will be able to keep budgets within established limits.

FISCAL IMPACT

While this recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, it can be debated that the district should reduce its General Fund appropriation needs to reflect the General Fund expenditures per pupil that existed in 2004-05 and adding only the state average increases. This approach would reduce the district's General Fund appropriations by $1,703,132.

In 2004-05, the district expended $20,855,756 from the General Fund compared to $26,532,862 in 2008-09—a $5,677,106 increase. If the district's General Fund expenditures had increased at the per pupil state average of 22.4 percent, rather than the 32.0 percent as shown in **Exhibit 4-12,** the increase would have been $3,973,974 rather than $5,677,106, resulting in the General Fund needing $1,703,132 less in appropriations for 2008-09 and subsequent years.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Reduce General Fund Expenditures	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132

*Following release of the report, the Operational Audit Committee asked for additional analysis of **Exhibit 4-12** and clarification of what Evergreen is recommending. The narrative below responds to this request:

> ***Exhibit 4-12*** *compares the district's total expenditures per pupil categorized by function for 2004-05 and 2008-09 to the state average for the same two years. As shown in the exhibit, the district's total cost per pupil increased 32.0 percent compared to the state increase of 22.4 percent. Expenditure per pupil for administration increased 30.1 percent compared to the state increase of 20.4 percent, and instructional leadership increased by 65 percent compared to the state increase of 16.8 percent. Equipment and technology had the greatest percentage increase of 99.1 percent compared to the state increase of 5.9 percent. Professional development was the only function that had a decrease which was 38.1 percent compared to the state increase of 15.5 percent.*
>
> *Sometimes it is justifiable for certain expenditures to increase faster than other expenditures (such as costs related to instruction that are reflected in cost of teachers when a district is trying to improve its direct education delivery process). However, this has not been the case for HWRSD. As shown in* ***Exhibit 4-12****, the expenditures per pupil for teachers increased only 19.3 percent while total expenditures per pupil increased 32.0 percent. The increase in teacher costs was the fourth lowest of the 11 functions.*

When Evergreen spoke with HWRSD officials on the April 1st conference call, we asked for the district's explanation as to what constitutes the "Function" column so that we would ascertain, from a district prospective—why expenditures in certain functions had increased as rapidly. ***We did not receive these data.*** *Nor could administrators during interviews provide an explanation, perhaps because they were new to the district. Nonetheless, Evergreen attempted to provide clarification using the state's chart of accounts (as per MGL.c72, s.3) for those areas in which expenditures appear to be excessive. The data are summarized below. Without district clarification, Evergreen is assuming that the data HWRSD provided to the State in 2004-05 and 2008-09 were correct.*

- ***Function 1000*** *– Administration – Expenditures include 30 percent between 2004-05 and 2008-09 compared to the state's overall increase of 20.4 percent.*

  Included in Administration are expenditures for:

  - *School Committee (1100)*
  - *Districtwide administration (1200)*
  - *Finance and Administrative Services (1400)*
    - ✓ *Finance and Business*
    - ✓ *Human Resources*
    - ✓ *Legal Services*
    - ✓ *Districtwide technology*

- ***Function 2100/2200 – Instructional Leadership Expenditures*** *– increased 65 percent compared to 17 percent by state. This includes salaries, contractual services, supplies, travel, stipends for both district and school leaders.*

- ***Function 2315-2340 – Other Teaching Services*** *– Expenditures increased 49 percent as compared to 31 percent for the state. These subfunctions include salaries and support for instructional coordinators, student support services, substitutes, and librarian/media personnel.*

- ***Function 2700 – Guidance, Counseling, T-testing*** *- Expenditures increased 99 percent, but only 6 percent at state level. Includes salaries and support for guidance as well as testing and assessment and psychological services.*

- ***Function 3000 – Pupil/Other School Services*** *– Expenditures increased 36 percent. This function includes attendance and parent liaison services, health services, student transportation, food services and athletics.*

- ***Function 5000 – Insurance, Retirement Programs and Other*** *– HWRSD increased 65 percent as opposed to 39 percent at state. Expenditures include employee retirement, insurance programs, rental and debt services.*

- ***Function 9000 - Payments to Out-of-District Schools*** *- This expenditure category is self-explanatory and increased by 57 percent in HWRSD compared to 11 percent or state.*

This analysis did not include teachers, as teachers expenditures (Function 2300) only increased 2 percentage points above the State (19.3 percent compared to 17 percent), and was fourth lowest to the 11 functions as shown in ***Exhibit 4-12****. In fact, as shown in* ***Exhibit 4-13****, the overall percentage of expenditures per pupil for teachers decreased from 42.3 percent in 2004-05 to 38.3 percent in 2008-09.*

In part, ***Recommendation 4-9*** *states "do not allow expenditures to exceed state average increases." Of the $1.7 million in recommended cost savings; only a minimal amount would be in Function 2300. Therefore, we believe our recommendation is justifiable and does not duplicate the recommendation for a reduction of teachers in* ***Chapter 5****.*

FINDING

HWRSD has not documented the level of budgetary control that the School Committee desires over approved budgets. Although budgets are established in the district's financial management system, HWRSD does not have a policy as to when budget adjustments are required or what approvals are required before adjustments can be made.

The district's financial management has a control feature that shows a warning when a purchase requisition exceeds a budgeted amount; however, the warning can be overridden and negative budget balances are allowed to exist. It was reported in interviews that the previous Assistant Superintendent would routinely require a list of negative budget balances and sometimes make budget adjustments for the negative balances.

The Evergreen Team received a number of comments pertaining to the manner in which district funds are expended after the approval of the budget. A number of the comments were related to the budget for building maintenance, and the perception that funds budgeted for building maintenance have not been expended for that purpose, but transferred and used for other costs in the district. It was further stated that reports presented to the School Committee were difficult to understand and, except for adjusted budgets for the total amount budgeted to schools, for special needs, and a combined total for all other district costs (that includes building maintenance), they did not show how budgeted amounts were adjusted during the year.

Frequent budget adjustments are not advisable since they defeat the purpose of the budget as a planning and control tool. If budgets are prepared with a reasonable amount of care, and at an appropriate level, few amendments are normally necessary. When officials desire to amend a budget they should state their case in writing to the Committee that includes:

- identifying expenditures to be increased;
- determining how the increase is to be funded (e.g., by a reduction in estimated year-end fund balance, by a reduction in other expenditures, or by an increase in receipts above budgeted amounts);

- justifying for the amendment; and
- setting the course of action if the amendment is not approved.

For any budget system to work and to be a tool to manage district funds, it is imperative that a system of accountability be in place. Budgets and subsequent expenditures within defined budget limits are very important for effective budget management. Not identifying budget adjustment limits enables expenditures to be incurred for items that possibly have not received School Committee approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-10:

Establish a budget control system where schools and departments are held accountable for their budgets, develop a budget adjustment policy that provides guidance as to when budget adjustments are to be prepared, and document adjustments requiring School Committee's approval in minutes.

A budget adjustment policy will ensure that all expenditures receive the approval of the School Committee and help ensure that budgeted funds are not exceeded. A policy that states when a budget must be adjusted and the process that must be followed to obtain approvals should also be developed.

In developing the budget control policy, it should be decided at what level school and department budgets are to be controlled. The district should consider managing salary budgets at the district level and not allow amounts to be transferred from salary budgets for other purposes without School Committee approval. Many school districts place budget controls at a high level for each school and department (such as an amount for utilities, other operating costs, and capital outlay). Although expenditures are still recorded at detailed levels, the expenditures rollup to higher-level budget categories, and department and schools then have the ability to expend budget amounts for a variety of expenditures. Strict controls and accountability are established at the high budget category level.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have a comprehensive budget document. Although there are a number of reports and schedules on the HWRSD website, the final approved budget is not compiled into a comprehensive document.

Six budget documents are shown on the district's website that provide data for the budget development process and summary information for the eventual final approved budget. The six documents are:

- **FY 11 SC Approved Budget WB – March 31, 2010.** This is a one-page summary separated in three sections that presents budgets for 22 expenditure categories, 10 revenue categories, and town appropriations. Each category shows columns for 2009-10 approved budget, dollar and percent change from 2008-09 budget, 2010-11 budget, and dollar and percent change from 2009-10 budget.

- **FY 11 SC Approved Budget by DAC – March 31, 2010**. A three-page document that presents expenditure budgets in seven sections that includes the five schools, Administrative Offices, and Special Needs. The document has four columns that show amounts for 12 to 17 expenditure classifications for the 2009-10 budget, the 2010-11 preliminary budget, and the dollar and percent change for each.

- **FY 11 SC Approved Budget Summary – March 31, 2010**. A one-page summary that shows 22 expenditure classifications in seven columns. The seven columns are titled Actuals FY2009, Adopted Budget FY2009, Adopted Budget FY2010, Proposed Budget FY2011, FY2010 to FY2011 $$ Change, and FY2010 to FY2011 Percent Change.

- **FY 11 SC Approved Final – March 31, 2010.** A 14-page document that shows copies of power point sheets used to discuss budget information. The sheets primarily show summary information for discussion such as budget assumptions, projected non-town revenues, projects town appropriations with 2.5 percent limit, recommended budget reductions, positions to be eliminated, total amounts for salaries and other expenditures, and three pages that list priority maintenance projects.

- **FY 11 Proposed Budget – Public Hearing – March 18, 2010**. A 28-page document of copies of power point sheets used to discuss the proposed budget. Summary information shown on each sheet for discussion purposes.

- **FY Preliminary Budget – February 4, 2010.** A 22-page document of copies of power point sheets used to discuss the proposed budget.

Although HWRSD budget documents provide a significant amount of useful information in a number of reports that pertain primarily to expenditures and revenues, improvements can be made to make budget data more user friendly and informative. A school district's budget is most effective when it is useful to district staff, Committee members, and the community at-large in understanding the district's fiscal accountability. A budget document can and should be more than just a financial plan.

A budget document serves three major purposes. This document serves as:

- a communications device;
- a policy document; and
- a financial plan.

Items not included in the HWRSD budget documents that would make it easier to obtain an understanding of the total budget responsibilities, if compiled into a comprehensive budget document, include:

- executive summary or overview of key initiatives and financial priorities;
- table of contents;
- narrative to explain the numbers;
- organization charts;
- benchmarks and comparative data presenting district budgets for expenditures, revenues, salaries, and positions to comparative districts and state averages;
- number and type of positions by school and department with comparison data for the previous two to three years;
- additional data for comparison purposes including two or three years of actual revenues and expenditures;
- all funds for which the district has expenditures including all special revenue funds such as the child nutrition and revolving funds such as extracurricular and day care funds; and
- where grant money is expected to be used to fund specific purchases.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) is a national organization that promotes excellence in the form, content, and presentation of budget documents through award programs. Many school districts across the country use the criteria to apply for awards granted by GFOA and the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO), but some use it primarily to improve their budget document's content, format, and presentation.

School districts have an opportunity to "tell their story" when their budgets communicate what is behind and beyond the numbers. ASBO promotes excellence in the school business management profession through entity award and recognition programs, and it provides an excellent source for training materials in developing budgets and financial reports.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-11:

Improve the district's budget documents, compile data into a comprehensive budget document, and use guidance from national associations to continually improve the budget document.

Improving the HWRSD budget documents and compiling data into a single budget document will enable the School Committee, towns, and community to better understand how taxpayer dollars are being used in educating students of the district. Submitting the budget document to either the GFOA or ASBO for review and comment will enable the district to continue improving the district's budget document as a useful tool.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The School Committee receives monthly financial reports during the year; however, they could include additional information to make them more useful and be formatted differently to make them easier to understand. Timely, accurate, and easily understood reports are a necessity for School Committee members to effectively monitor the district's financial activity, status of funds, and budgets.

The HWRSD budget approved by the School Committee includes extensive detailed information on expenditures and 12 classifications of revenues. Nonetheless, neither the budget nor reports to the School Committee contain information on district positions. For the 12 classifications of revenues, School Committee reports have included columns for:

- approved budget;
- adjusted budget;
- current month received;
- year-to-date received; and
- balance due.

Summary expenditure reports have been provided to the School Committee that presents the totals for seven locations, including all five schools, special needs, and a line entitled "Regional School District" which is the total for all expenditures (except for the schools and special needs).

Similar to the revenue, the expenditure report shows total expenditures for each of the locations with columns for:

- approved budget;
- adjusted budget;
- current month expenditures;
- year-to-date expended;
- balance unexpended; and
- encumbrances.

In addition to the summary reports, very detailed reports have been provided that show the expenditures for each location. Expenditures for the high school are shown for about 100 classifications and approximately 50 to 60 for the other locations. Although each of the expense classifications has a title for the expense, many are abbreviated and difficult for a reader to understand.

Financial information needs to be submitted to the School Committee routinely using easily understood formats to enable them to make informed decisions. **Exhibit 4-14** provides a general description of routinely provided reports to School Committee members.

Exhibit 4-14
Examples of Basic School Committee Reports
2010-11 Fiscal Year

Sample Contents	Frequency
Comparison of budgeted expenditures by department and related variance. Budgeted amounts should show beginning budget amounts and adjustments that are made during the year.	Monthly or Quarterly
Comparison of budgeted positions to filled and unfilled positions.	Monthly or Quarterly
Notes explaining significant variances (5 percent or more) in the budgeted categories.	Monthly or Quarterly
Bar graphs and pie charts depicting comparative expenditure information.	Monthly or Quarterly
Summary of monthly grant activities, including number and dollar value of grants submitted, number and dollar value of grants awarded, and the ratio of grants awarded to grants submitted - all compared to prior years.	Quarterly or Quarterly
Summary reports for enterprise funds such as food services and adult education showing a simplified balance sheet and operating statements.	Quarterly

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, November 2010.

One of the main things that School Committee members, HWRSD administrators, town administrators, and interested public members want to know is, if the district continues to receive revenues at the same rate and expend funds at the same rate, what balances will the district have left at the end of the year. In order to provide these data, district staff must analyze revenue and expenditure trends, adjust the trends for unusual circumstances, and make projections for the remainder of the year.

The Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance has begun working with the Finance Committee to develop more useful and informative reports. Many school districts and other governmental entities find the format similar to the one shown in **Exhibit 4-15** to be useful for providing budget information. The format is used both when reporting revenues and expenditures by object. Reports are prepared for an entire fund and also by schools and departments. Many reports also include comparisons to the previous year.

Exhibit 4-15
Example of Budget Document
2010-11 Fiscal Year

Description	Current Year				Projected to End of Year	Projected Remaining Balance
	Original Budget	Adjusted Budget	Current Month Expended	Year to Date Expended		
Expenditures						
XXXXXX	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000
XXXXXX	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000
XXXXXX	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000
XXXXXX	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000	$0,000
Total Expenditures	**$0,000**	**$0,000**	**$0,000**	**$0,000**	**$0,000**	**$0,000**

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, November 2010.

For management reports to be useful, they must be formatted in a way where data are easily understood, are consistently accurate, and users are trained sufficiently to enable them to interpret the data. Executive-level reports need not be extensive, but should provide basic summary financial and program-related information in an easy to understand format to enable efficient decision making by the School Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-12:

Create user-friendly formats for monthly budget reports that provide summary and easily understood financial reports for the School Committee, and train members on how to interpret the information.

Developing easily understood monthly budget status reports will provide the School Committee and executive administration better oversight of the district's budgets. Should funding for the district become more restricted, closer oversight could prove to help identify problem areas more timely or where savings could be obtained.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Although the School Committee approves recommendations presented each year by staff for School Choice participation in the next school year, as required by Massachusetts General Law, reports are not provided once the year begins. In addition, there has not been an analysis presented to the School Committee showing the impact on class sizes after the first year that students are admitted.

The Massachusetts School Choice Law (General Laws Chapter 76, Section 12B) was enacted in 1991 to allow parents to send their children to public schools in communities other than that in which they reside. School committees choose whether or not to become school choice receiving districts, and they may designate a maximum number of available school choice seats for an upcoming year. If there are more applicants than available openings, the selection of students must be conducted on a random basis, and must be free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national original, sex, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need or academic proficiency.

Selected sections of General Laws Chapter 76 12B state:

- *Not later than May first of every year, the school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall submit a report to the department stating: (1) The capaTown of each school in said city, town or regional school district for the following academic year. (2) The number of students expected to attend each school in said city, town or regional*

school district in the following academic year. (3) The number of students attending said school district under the terms of this section in the prior school year and the number of those students who are expected no longer to be attending said school district in the next school year. (4) The number of additional seats therefore available to non-resident students reduced by the number of students enrolled under the program for the elimination of racial imbalance as provided in section twelve A, in said charter school or each school in said city, town or regional school district.

- *Each city, town or regional school district shall enroll non-resident students at the school of such non-resident student's choice; provided, however, that such receiving district has seats available as stated in said report; provided, however, that this obligation to enroll non-resident students shall not apply to a district for a school year in which its school committee, prior to June first, after a public hearing, adopts a resolution withdrawing from said obligation, for the school year beginning the following September.*

- *For each student enrolling in a receiving district, there shall be a school choice tuition amount. Said tuition amount shall be equal to seventy-five percent of the actual per pupil spending amount in the receiving district for such education as is required by such non-resident student, but not more than five thousand dollars; provided, however, that for special education students whose tuition amount shall remain the expense per student for such type of education as is required by such non-resident student.*

- *School committees may establish terms for accepting non-resident students; provided, however, that if the number of non-resident students applying for acceptance to said district exceeds the number of available seats, said school committee shall select students for admission on a random basis.*

- *Any child accepted to attend a public school in a community other than the one in which he resides pursuant to this section shall be permitted to remain in that school system until his high school graduation, unless there is a lack of funding of the program as authorized by said sections.*

For a student with an individualized education plan (IEP), a special education increment augments the standard $5,000 tuition. The amount of the increment is determined by applying annual cost rates to the specific services cited in a pupil's individual education plan. For any pupil with a special education increment, it is the responsibility of the receiving district to keep a record of what services were counted toward the cost. When transportation services are required by a student's IEP, the sending district must pay the full cost. When districts agree that the receiving district will provide the transportation, the Department of Education should be notified so that the cost can be added to the student's tuition charge.

The basic intent of the HWRSD School Choice Program is to allow students from outside the district to attend school at a HWRSD school only when unfilled classroom seats are projected. The philosophy is that resources including teacher salaries are already budgeted and will be expended whether the seat is filled or unfilled. Allowing a student to transfer into the district and fill a vacant seat allows the district to collect $5,000 from the State.

Exhibit 4-16 indicates that, for 2007-08 through 2010-11, the district budgeted from $559,000 to $609,229 for 111.8 to 116.3 students to attend HWRSD schools through the School Choice Program.

Exhibit 4-16
School Choice Budgeted Revenue
2007-08 through 2010-11 School Years

Revenue/Students	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Amount Budgeted as Revenue	$580,000	$581,566	$609,229	$559,000
Equivalent estimated number of students	116	116.3	121.8	111.8

Source: HWRSD Budgets 2007-08 through 2010-11.

A review of the School Committee minutes indicated that Committee actions were taken at meeting on February 5, 2009 for 2009-10 and on February 4, 2010 for 2010-11. **Exhibit 4-17** provides the actions that the School Committee took pertaining to School Choice for 2009-10 and 2010-11. In each of these years, the School Committee elected to participate in only grades 9-12, and the capacity for the high school was established at 720 students. For 2009-10 only 32 ninth grade slots were approved to be filled, and in 2010-11, 25 ninth grade slots and 34 tenth grade slots were approved.

Exhibit 4-17
School Choice School Committee Actions
2009-10 and 2010-11 School Years

Actions	2009-10	2010-11
Voted to participate in School Choice Grades	9-12	9-12
High School Capacity established at	720	720
Number of Ninth Grade Students voted to be admitted	32	25
Number of Tenth Grade students voted to be admitted	0	34

Source: HWRSD School Committee Minutes, 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Prior to the School Committee approving the School Choice Program, district staff make a determination each year as to the projected number of vacant seats available in grades 9-12 that can be filled through the School Choice Program and thus increase revenue to the district without increasing cost. However, an analysis is not presented to the School Committee showing the impact from students from previous years.

As shown in **Exhibit 4-17,** only 32 slots were available for students to apply for in the ninth grade, meaning that there were an additional 80 already enrolled from previous years having somewhat of an impact in grades 10-12, since no slots were available in those grades. It is very possible that the School Choice students in grades 10-12 did not increase cost; however, without an analysis it cannot be certain. The assumption that School Choice does not increase cost and brings in additional revenue per student certainly is a valid assumption, but whether the entire $5,000 is additional revenue is questionable.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-13:

Develop a process to determine the impact on class sizes for School Choice students in the years subsequent to their initial enrollment and present results to the School Committee.

Providing additional information pertaining to the School Choice Program will keep School Committee members and other interested parties better informed about the impact of students who are allowed to attend classes in the district. An analysis will provide needed data to show the impact on classes for the years students continue in the district after the first year when they were approved to attend classes.

The actual impact cannot be determined without detailed data that shows which classes each of the School Choice students attend and the actual number of students in each of the classes. These data are not maintained by HWRSD. When collected, these data need to analyzed and correlated to the actual number of teachers that were required for each of the classes.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4.3 PURCHASING

Effective purchasing functions provide school districts with supplies, materials, equipment, and services of acceptable quality when districts need them, and at the lowest possible prices. Purchasing includes those activities associated with the acquisition of supplies, materials, services, and equipment.

FINDING

HWRSD purchasing procedures which district employees are required to follow requires all purchases to have a purchase request approved prior to purchase. Regardless of the dollar amount, all purchases must follow an established process.

The district follows the purchasing guidelines established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Chapter 30B of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Uniform Procurement Act, establishes uniform procedures for local governments to use when contracting for supplies, services, and real property. **Exhibit 4-18** presents the basic purchasing guidelines that district staff follow when making purchases.

The district's purchasing process is decentralized; there is no centralized purchasing function. All purchasing activity is performed by school or department staff who are responsible for securing quotes, developing specifications, and receiving bids. School and department staff are required to purchase off state contracts if items are available. Although the Accounts Payable Coordinator checks purchase requests to help ensure quotes or bids are taken when necessary, there is no checking to see if established contracts are used.

Exhibit 4-18
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Purchasing Guidelines

Transactions	Requirement
Under $5,000	Use of sound business practices
$5,000 up to $24,999	Solicitation of three quotes
$25,000 or more.	Competitive sealed bids or proposals

Source: HWRSD, November 2010.

The process used by the district is shown in **Exhibit 4-19**. Although the process is made efficient by using the district's automated financial system, it requires a number of employees to be involved, even for low dollar purchases.

Exhibit 4-19
HWRSD Purchasing Process
2010-11 School Year

Employee	Action
Requestor usually principal or administrator's secretary	Creates a purchase requisition in Budget Sense showing what is to be purchased, vendor to purchase from, coding for expenditure, and notes if quotes or bids were taken.
Principal or Administrator	Reviews purchase requisitions in Budget Sense and approves if appropriated.
Superintendent	Reviews purchase requisitions in Budget Sense and approves if appropriated.
Account Payable Coordinator	Creates a Purchase Order to the selected vendor
Requestor	Prints Purchase Order and makes purchase

Source: HWRSD Finance Office, November 2010.

Many school districts and other governmental entities have found that following a very rigid pre-approval process for small dollar purchases is very inefficient and not cost effective. The amount of administrative time required to complete detailed processes adds significant cost to the items purchased. In addition, due to the time required to complete all the steps in the detailed process used by HWRSD, it is difficult for schools and departments to obtain needed items in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-14:

Revise purchasing procedures to allow principals and department heads to purchase small dollar items without requiring pre-approval.

Establishing purchasing procedures that allow small dollar items to be acquired without being pre-approved will provide efficiencies to the district. By allowing principals, department heads, and selected managers to acquire needed materials and services up to a set limit will reduce the administrative time to process paperwork associated with those types of purchasing and decrease

the amount of time to obtain the needed items. Procedures should also include specific guidelines as to what can be acquired and establish penalties for non-compliance.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD makes very limited use of credit cards to pay for purchases. A limited number of regular credit cards are used by the district to pay for purchases, but are not a part of a centralized procurement card contact.

Although the district does not use procurement cards, it does have 11 credit cards that are used to make payments. All charge cards, except a Visa charge card, are charge cards from specific vendors that are used regularly by district staff.

Exhibit 4-20 shows the 11 credit cards provided to district staff.

Exhibit 4-20
HWRSD Credit Card Holders
2010-11 School Year

Card	Location	Used For
Visa Charge Card	Kept in lock box by Superintendent's Secretary	Superintendent and Business Manager authorize who my use it on a case by case request.
Purchase Advantage (Shaw's) cards	Kept at the High School by the Health Science Teacher.	Payment of purchases from vendor.
Two - Purchase Advantage (Shaw's) cards	Kept at Middle School by Associate Principal's Secretary	Payment of purchases from vendor.
Purchase Advantage (Shaw's) card	Shared by the Aspire Program at the High School and Middle School	Payment of purchases from vendor.
Five – Lowes Cards	Kept at each school by the head custodian.	Payment of purchases from vendor.
Lowes Card	Kept by Director of Facilities	Payment of purchases from vendor.

Source: HWRSD Finance Office, November 2010.

Procurement cards are designed to maintain control of expenses, while reducing administrative costs associated with authorizing, tracking, and paying specific small, recurring purchases. Procurement cards are similar to debit cards, but are designed to provide a high level of control while streamlining and simplifying the process for making low-dollar, high-volume purchases.

Cards can be controlled at several levels, including by department and by employee. Card limits can be set by individual employee; by single purchase limits; with monthly, weekly, or daily

limits; or some combination. Merchant category codes can also be established with each card so that employees can only make purchases through pre-approved vendors.

Districts can set spending limits for each card at issuance and place restrictions on the types of purchases made. An effective procurement card program centralizes the approval of cardholders, restricts cardholders to employees or job positions specifically approved by the School Committee, lists examples of appropriate types of transactions, and imposes limits based upon particular positions.

Procurement card expenditures are paid monthly to the issuing bank in the form of one lump-sum payment. Card holder payments can be reviewed daily, weekly, or monthly by both the cardholder and accounts payable staff. Using procurement cards significantly reduce the number of purchase orders and payments processed annually. Procurement card policies normally state that violations can result in revocation of the card and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Information received indicates that HWRSD processed 5,560 invoices during 2009-10. Detailed records are not kept that track the payments by amounts such as those under $500, between $500 and $1,000, and over $1,000. Many school districts that do track payments by amounts have found that almost 50 percent of the invoices processed are for payments less than $1,000—the amount that many use as the limit for using procurement cards. Should this be the case in HWRSD, the number of invoices that are less than $1,000 would be approximately 2,780.

Using procurement cards can significantly reduce the number of purchase requests and payments processed. Procurement cards have produced savings by reducing the number of purchase orders and payments, and in some instances by obtaining lower prices from their suppliers due to faster payments. Some districts receive rebates as established in the procurement card contract.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-15:

Implement a purchasing card program to increase efficiencies in the purchasing and payment processes in Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

The use of procurement cards will provide the district with a more efficient process to obtain small dollar purchases and make subsequent payments to vendors. Time savings in the accounts payable process could be significant depending upon the procurement card limits and provisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

4.4 RISK AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

An effective asset and risk management program controls costs by protecting districts against significant losses. Risk management includes the identification, analysis and reduction of risk to the district's assets and employees through insurance and safety programs. Fixed asset management should account for district property efficiently and accurately, and safeguard it against theft and obsolescence.

FINDING

Bank reconciliations are performed in a timely manner by the Treasurer. All bank accounts are normally reconciled by the end of the second week of the following month. Reports produced from the financial management system for a month are not produced until reconciliations have been completed and any adjustments or additional entries are made. Reconciling accounts timely and making adjustments before reports are run helps ensure that information contained in reports is accurate and reflect all transactions that cleared bank accounts.

COMMENDATION

HWRSD is commended for ensuring reports are accurate—by reconciling bank accounts in a timely manner and making adjustments prior to reports being prepared.

FINDING

Although bank accounts are reconciled in a timely manner, they are not reviewed by someone other than the person completing the reconciliation. Internal controls are weakened when bank reconciliations are not reviewed.

The Treasurer receives monthly bank accounts and uses transactions in the district's financial management system to reconcile bank account balances and transactions. All transactions are reconciled between district records and bank records until there are no items unaccounted for. Once a reconciliation is completed, a reconciliation sheet is produced that shows there are no items unaccounted for. The sheet, however, is not signed or dated by the Treasurer and not reviewed by any other employee.

To ensure that bank accounts are always being reconciled in a timely manner, they need to be reviewed by another district employee. Having another staff member review completed reconciliations provides assurance that any problems or errors are identified and corrected in a timely manner. Identification and correction of any errors noted in the reconciliation process also ensures that financial information is accurate.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-16:

Review the Treasurer's bank reconciliations to ensure that bank accounts continue to be reconciled in a timely manner.

The Accountant should conduct this review. A process whereby the Accountant reviews and approves bank reconciliations completed by the Treasurer will help ensure bank reconciliations are completed timely regardless of who actually fills the two positions. The Treasurer and Accountant should develop a process where each month the reconciliations completed by the Treasurer are reviewed by the Accountant. The reconciliation sheets should show the date the reconciliation was completed and be signed by the Treasurer. They should also include the signature of the Accountant and the date she reviewed the completed reconciliations.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources

FINDING

HWRSD does not track its investment in fixed assets and does not complete comprehensive physical inventories to determine if fixed asset items that belong to the district are still in the custody of the district. The district also does not have any formal policies or guidelines to direct the management of its investment in fixed assets.

Although HWRSD does not maintain a listing of fixed assets, some data are accumulated for inclusion in the annual financial report. The district could not provide documentation for the data, and believed it was produced by the audit firm who has prepared the statements for many years. Capital assets, which include property, and plant and equipment, as reported in the district's annual financial statements are shown in **Exhibit 4-21**. Capital assets are defined for inclusion in the annual report as assets with an initial individual cost of more than $5,000 and an estimated life in excess of two years. Such assets are recorded at historical cost or estimated historical cost if purchased or constructed. Donated capital assets are recorded at estimate fair market value at the date of donation.

Exhibit 4-21
Summary of Fixed Assets
2008-09 Fiscal Year

Description	Beginning Balance	Increases	Decreases	Ending Balance
Capital Assets, being depreciated:				
Buildings and improvements	$31,945	$0	$0	$31,945
Machinery, equipment, and furnishings	$232	$120	$0	$352
Total capital assets, being depreciated	$32,177	$120	$0	$32,297
Less accumulated depreciation:				
Buildings and improvements	($8,080)	($827)	**$0**	($8,907)
Machinery, equipment, and furnishings	($139)	($50)	**$0**	($189)
Total accumulated depreciation	($8,219)	($877)	**$0**	($9,096)
Capital Assets (net of depreciation)	**$23,958**	**($757)**	**$0**	**$23,201**

Source: HWRSD Annual Financial Statements 2008-09.

Fixed asset transactions are not identified and tracked during the year. HWRSD does not have a complete listing of its fixed assets where additions and deletions are made as they occur. The district also does not have a complete listing of the fixed assets acquired from school district funds. There are no guidelines that require reimbursement for items lost due to negligence or what approvals are required for lost or stolen items, such as a requirement for a police report or employee affidavit.

Policies normally address many issues pertaining to an entity's investment in fixed assets. Policies include guidelines for all fixed assets and regularly address:

- who is responsible for accounting for the district's investment in fixed assets and the system that is used for the accounting;
- responsibility and accountability for the property and equipment owned;
- a requirement for annual physical inventories;
- capitalization thresholds for property, equipment, land, and infrastructure;
- depreciation methods, salvage value, and a schedule of estimated useful lives;
- capitalized improvements versus maintenance expenses;
- reporting junked, stolen or missing property, and what approvals are required to delete these items from the inventory;
- receiving donated property; and
- transferring assets between schools and departments.

To protect its investment in fixed assets, school districts track their assets and have policies that provide direction on how the assets are to be managed. As items are acquired, they are immediately added to the listing, and when the district disposes of an item through normal processes, it is taken off the listing. When an item cannot be found, the situation is reviewed and appropriate action taken. Normally all deletions are required to be approved by the School Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-17:

Track fixed assets acquired with district funds, and develop a fixed asset policy.

A system to track fixed assets, and a fixed asset policy adopted by the School Committee, should help ensure that the district's investment in fixed assets is being managed as desired by the School Committee. The system should protect investments by assigning accountability and holding staff accountable for the proper care and protection of district assets.

The School Committee should adopt a detailed fixed asset policy to provide guidance on how district fixed assets are to be managed. HWRSD should consider adopting a threshold of $2,500. Once the Committee approves the policy, the Superintendent should communicate the new policy to staff and begin implementation. A physical inventory should be performed, and results used to create an inventory listing of all items over the established threshold.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have a formal policy for competitively soliciting and rotating external auditors. Selecting an external auditor without using a competitive process does not provide HWRSD with assurance that they are using the best firm to provide auditing services.

An external auditor conducts an annual audit of the district's financial operations and issues an opinion on the annual financial report. Staff at the district stated that they were not aware of an attempt to competitively bid for audit services. It was reported by district staff that the same audit firm has been conducting the annul audit for the district for more than 20 years.

The rotation of audit services helps ensure that district financial practices and internal controls are reviewed from a fresh prospective. According to the Governmental Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) recommended audit procurement practices, "Governmental entities should enter into multiyear agreements of at least five years in duration when obtaining the services of independent auditors." At the conclusion of that multiyear contract, GFOA recommends that, "Governmental entities should undertake a full-scale competitive process for the selection of independent auditors." GFOA also recommends that governments choosing an external auditor actively seek the participation of all qualified audit firms, including the current one, assuming its past performance was satisfactory.

Many school districts have established policies requiring periodic use of a competitive process for the procurement of external audit services. These policies usually require competitive solicitations to be conducted every five years.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-18:

Develop a policy requiring competitive proposals for professional independent auditing services at a designated interval of at least every five years.

Implementing a policy that requires the rotation of audit services helps ensure that district financial practices and internal controls are reviewed from a fresh prospective. Receiving proposals also helps ensure that the district receives the services of one of the most qualified auditing firms.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The current banking arrangement has been in place for a number of years and staff could not recall when or if the district had ever competitively bid banking services. A signed copy of a depository contract could not be located.

District funds are deposited in the DanversBank. A number of accounts are maintained at the local bank, including the vendor checking, payroll checking, and student activity funds. District funds were previously with Beverly National Bank until February 2010 when it was purchased by DanversBank. It was reported by staff that Beverly National Bank did not charge any fees except for an occasional bounced check. When ownership of the bank changed the new bank began charging the district various fees that were up to $700 a month. The district has been successful so far in having the fees reversed, but without a depository contract, it is difficult to determine what if any fees should be charged and the rate of interest the district should be receiving on deposits.

Although the banking arrangement with DanversBank provides for interest to be paid on fund balances, a sweep account is not used. Sweep accounts automatically move funds from regular checking accounts into an overnight investment account normally allowing for a higher interest rate to be paid on all balances.

HWRSD is aware that periodically soliciting and evaluating proposals for banking services helps ensure districts receive the best services with the lowest fees and highest interest earnings. It was reported that the district plans to solicit for banking services for the 2011-12 school year.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 4-19:

Ensure that the process to establish selection criteria for local banking services is completed and proposals solicited.

Developing a request for proposals for banking services that properly identifies the district's banking needs will help ensure that a banking arrangement that best meets district needs can be identified. A written depository contract will protect the district from paying unnecessary fees and help earn the maximum interest possible.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Although a sweep account can provide increased interest earning when interest rates are higher, the extremely low rates that are currently available will not provide much of an increase at this time.

CHAPTER 5: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

5.0 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

Chapter 5 addresses instruction in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD) and includes the following four sections:

5.1 Instructional Delivery and Student Performance
5.2 Staffing
5.3 Special Education
5.4 Professional Development

The educational service delivery of a school district depends on central office staff to serve as the support system, and provide leadership and coordination for education that is provided in district schools. The effectiveness of instructional delivery depends on factors such as organization, staffing, and procedures that have been created and monitored in order to assure consistency of instruction and student assessment across the school district. The way in which these central office factors are designed can either support or prevent progress towards high achievement for students.

5.1 INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Successful school districts have established guidelines and expectations that underlie a sound, challenging curriculum designed to foster the success of every student. They extend beyond state standards, providing enrichment and remediation opportunities for students based upon individual needs. Regularly collected and analyzed data guide ongoing instructional and programmatic decisions. Grounded in research-based strategies, curricular documents and processes define the realization of clear learning goals. The curricula encompasses relationships among goals, specific learning objectives, instructional activities, and student assessments. The curricula also identify a scope and sequence in which information, skills, and concepts are taught and reinforced throughout the years to inculcate learning into the student knowledge base.

Effective curriculum guiding documents also build in assessments and periodic monitoring of both student achievement and the effectiveness of the documents themselves. Materials can then be identified and purchased that assist in teaching concepts and knowledge not otherwise addressed in curricular resources and that provide for student remediation and enrichment.

Efficient and effective educational processes promote the highest possible levels of student achievement at the classroom level when a school district:

- is organized with procedures that are conscientiously aligned;
- systematically communicates them to employees and constituents; and
- monitors them regularly.

Central office managers must have expertise in their area of responsibility. Processes that allow managers time to direct that knowledge towards improved student achievement must be in place. Effective districts identify key educational elements on which to focus actions and resources, and use them as filters for decision making. Sufficient staff members are employed to ensure that time is able to be devoted to functions the district has determined essential. School and central office personnel systematically analyze available sources of data for information they can provide relating to curricular and instructional adjustments. Data analysis also informs managers about individuals and groups of students who either require additional enrichment or remediation to achieve at their highest capability. Clear and frequent communication between schools and the central office enable district leaders to ensure consistency of policies and procedures. Ongoing communications also help the district to focus on core activities it has identified as critical for high levels of student achievement.

FINDING

The new HWRSD Superintendent recognized immediately that the district did not have a comprehensive instructional plan to guide the district's curriculum, instruction, assessment, and long-range plan for student achievement. Without such a plan, there are no purposeful decisions driving the district's high levels of student performance, integrating curriculum, and determining essential professional development for instructional staff.

The Superintendent has proposed using the National Institute of School Leadership's Elements of a Standards-Based Instructional System and the Curriculum Development Wheel to the School Committee as the foundation for the district's curriculum and instruction. The plan will address reading as central to student success, regardless of the content area students are studying. It will also focus on student special needs, early education as a foundation for success, and technology as an integral teaching tool to enrich curricula. Each of five years, a different content area will have the highest priority with another content area rising to the top the following year. All of this takes place over a five-year period so that the curriculum is regularly reviewed and revised in that period of time. Focusing on one curricular area each year enables the district to budget for in-depth training, and support professional development for the program to be implemented with fidelity.

The Superintendent also plans to expand opportunities for students to be challenged. One goal is to introduce International Baccalaureate programs in district schools at all levels. The rigorous program teaches students an understanding of culture and equips them with the skills and a second language to live and work internationally. The program encourages inquiry, challenge, critical reflection, research, and community service.

With the School Committee's encouragement, Dr. Buchanan has made arrangements for some HWRSD principals to receive intensive training and plans for all leaders to be trained in the processes. Many staff revealed the opinion that "HWRSD undertakes so many initiatives that they do nothing well." This initiative should directly address that concern, focusing curricular attention year-to-year on various content areas in a systematic, purposeful manner.

Successful schools use an instructional plan as an umbrella document that outlines and specifies what good teaching looks like. Regardless of the content area, research is clear that there are practices, routines, teacher behaviors, questioning techniques, and cross-curricular pedagogies that have high impact on student learning. These factors have a foundational set of research-based effective teaching and instructional strategies, practices, and behaviors woven into all curricular areas as part of a districtwide instructional plan.

COMMENDATION

The Superintendent has determined the most pressing instructional needs for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, and he has initiated plans to address them in order to build upon current academic success.

FINDING

Teachers are frustrated by a lack of clear vision and focus within the district as it relates to curriculum and instruction. There have been long-range plans in place, including a technology plan, but budget cuts have prevented funding. Thus, when teachers and administrators have been part of the planning process, the time they have invested has not been rewarded with a comprehensive, interdisciplinary plan to move curriculum forward from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

The curricular decision-making process is in transition since the majority of district-level administrators are new. Although testimony reflected uncertainty surrounding the new administration, most staff interviewed noted a past sense of collaboration that existed as a basis of decision making and they hope this will continue with new leadership.

Current district-level plans have not yet been communicated to classroom teachers, although there was an indication from staff interviewed that they felt there was a “breath of fresh air” blowing in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. Broad understanding of the Superintendent’s plans for curriculum development should alleviate reservations about how new leadership’s plans regarding curriculum and instruction will affect teachers in their classrooms.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-1:

Develop a communications plan to provide all instructional staff timely information on district leadership plans.

In any school district, word of mouth can either work effectively to disseminate important information or it can undermine district progress through rumor and innuendo. Particularly in a small district, the best means of keeping communications clear and accurate is frequent, timely communications with all stakeholders.

Some superintendents use daily or weekly emails, regularly scheduled meetings with union leaders, or rotating weekly meetings with faculties around the district. Regardless of the vehicle the Superintendent chooses, he should immediately develop and implement a communications plan. This will bring more people on board with district-level plans and reduce the energy sometimes expended addressing inaccurate information in the community.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

There are a number of school resource positions which are critical to implementing district curricular and instructional initiatives. This staff is building-based, but quasi-supervised by central office administrators. There has been limited opportunity for them to meet with those administrators who are essential to the conduct of their daily work and the implementation of district initiatives. HWRSD has not yet established a regular schedule for these individuals to meet, discuss curriculum or case-related issues, and problem solve and plan together. This also stands in the way of the district having a long-term, cohesive instructional plan.

This lack of face-to-face meetings and planning prevents ongoing dialogue about either specific content areas or interdisciplinary curriculum planning and transitional issues across school boundaries. It also has the potential to create a barrier to representative data analysis and continuous improvement in HWRSD programs and instructional methodologies. Many teachers interviewed expressed a desire to be able to meet on a regular basis with their peers in their own and other schools to discuss curricular and instructional issues. They further noted the need to meet and plan with district leaders.

The district does have a K-12 Curriculum Committee meeting structure that represents:

- English/Language Arts
- Math
- Technology
- Wellness
- Professional Development
- Fine Arts

Committee composition represents district and school-level administrators, parents, schools coaches, curriculum leaders, teachers, media staff, physical education, and food service. Testimony from one School Committee member did reflect that one of the committees is functioning to discuss content and provide direction for the district. Other staff noted that they had not yet met new district administrators other than the Superintendent, but were anxious to meet them and hear their plans for the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-2:

Schedule regular meetings of school resource staff with central office leaders to maintain a uniform focus on curricular and instructional priorities.

Periodic staff meetings will keep HWRSD staff focused on key tasks, and provide opportunities for ongoing professional development, sharing of best practices, and problem solving among staff with similar responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

As in many other school districts across the nation, Evergreen found no evidence of districtwide systematic program or process evaluation to ensure that the programs and practices being used are those that have been deemed most effective. The only program reviews Evergreen was provided were in the area of special education, since the state requires regular reviews of these programs.

Systematically collecting and analyzing information regarding programs—both qualitative and quantitative— will provide district leaders evaluative information they can use to make decisions about the effectiveness of programs and procedures. HWRSD can then decisively correlate available data with program success and implementation fidelity. A regular examination of mid-year data sources at the district level for programs would allow project/ program modifications to improve or assess its impact on students, teachers, or the school climate. Also, analysis of other readily available data sources could shed light on the effectiveness of program elements, but are not yet routinely tracked for making determinations that could guide interim modifications.

The purpose behind a comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of a program is to glean quantitative, qualitative and anecdotal information to inform decisions about additions, deletions, or revisions to the program, as well as about the effectiveness of the program as a whole and its individual elements. Such information is essential to aligning scarce district resources with effective practices.

Research and program evaluation are critical to creating high performance schools and a central office organized by principles of high performance management. One aspect of evaluation is the need to identify the match between programs being considered for students and their academic needs and demographics. Additionally, programs in place should have formative evaluations conducted to determine the need for change and to refine strategies for effectiveness.

Without having a system of identifying programs to be regularly evaluated, HWRSD puts itself in the position of funding programs that are not meeting the intent behind their adoption and/or

spending time and dollars on ineffective programs. Use of an ongoing systemic means of continuous program improvement keeps many factors that affect student achievement at the forefront of staff's minds, and focuses resources and training in areas where they are most needed.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-3:

Develop a plan and timeline for the evaluation of educational programs and services.

Effective districts not only examine programs that are required to be evaluated by state or federal requirements, but also new initiatives and district processes to determine if they:

- are effective;
- remain relevant;
- need revision or even elimination; and
- are still meeting their intended purposes.

When, in the long-term, performance metrics focused on improving student achievement are developed, the district's processes continue to build upon success, leading to ongoing improvement in practices and outcomes.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Although HWRSD is a small district with only a few staff in central administration and four principals, it has not yet established procedures that systematically capitalize on district promising or best practices. For instance, 93 percent of Buker Elementary School's fifth grade students scored Advanced or Proficient in Science. Having so many students achieve such levels of comprehension in science demonstrates that Buker teachers have knowledge, skills and/or training that all HWRSD elementary teachers and students could benefit from.

In no conversation throughout the on-site visit did anyone describe a system in which the district uniformly either makes an effort to identify effective staff or practices or recognize them in ways that promote replication.

There are exceptional HWRSD principals analyzing data, serving as strong instructional leaders and coaches for their teachers, and taking the initiative to innovate and push the envelope of traditional expectations. They are likely stimulating positive change as well as using effective practices that others could benefit from. Similarly, in each school, there are likely strong teacher leaders whose students, regardless of their abilities or needs, make academic strides each and every year. Their ability to teach the same students from the same backgrounds as other students

throughout HWRSD should be examined and used as a means of promoting similar instructional approaches among other teachers in other HWRSD schools.

The purposeful collection and dissemination of best practices taking place in schools is a hallmark of effective schools. Districts often create symposia in which their own teachers and instructional leaders have the opportunity to interact with and present to their peers in other school districts. In this way, districts develop and market their own talents, further building skills and knowledge among presenters and infusing effective ideas in other schools. The practice is also a low-cost way to foster innovation and convey the message that risk taking is acceptable when results are documented, analyzed, and replicated. Teachers in focus groups stated that they appreciate being given the opportunity to share, problem solve, and learn from colleagues, but that it happens infrequently.

A closer look at the effective schools research can also be used to frame or build a foundation for improved instruction. Dr. Larry Lezotte, Dr. Ron Edmonds, and Dr. Wilbur Brookover—researchers from Michigan State University—began research on effective schools in the 1960s. Their work has been characterized as simply observing schools that are successful, where student achievement is high, then finding out how they make it happen. The strongest findings, known as Correlates of Effectiveness, came from successful schools located in areas of high crime and poverty, with marginal facilities and resources, and with ethnic and culturally deprived student populations. Over time, the terms describing effective schools correlates have changed but the basic concepts still stand true.

Effective schools are characterized as having:

- safe positive environment;
- strong instructional leadership;
- clearly aligned curriculum maximizing student learning time;
- positive home, school, community communication;
- frequent monitoring of student progress;
- clearly stated, focused mission; and
- high expectations for all students.

This robust research from the past several decades should be used as guiding tenets in developing a districtwide plan for instruction and identifying best practices in schools for duplication. It has produced spiraling levels of student achievement with the most academically and socio-economically challenged students, and is equally effective used as a foundation for improvement with high-performing students.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-4:

Identify and replicate those successful processes, procedures, and practices where standards-driven curriculum is operationalized and student performance is improving.

This can be done as simply and informally as school representatives sharing during regularly scheduled meetings. Those who are open to innovation will hear about a new idea they can use to improve practices in their own schools. Replication of best practices can be incorporated into regularly scheduled professional development training, news publications, staff meetings, administrative meetings, and web-based information. When practiced more regularly, program evaluations could also form a basis for discussion and learning. If an evaluation reveals a higher degree of implementation and greater success rate, how it was accomplished should be investigated and actions replicated.

Many school districts have principals who use instructional walk-through forms which could show areas for noting evidence of best practices related to faculty discussions, accommodations for special needs students, and differentiated instruction. The forms could also provide information to identify staff development needs and lead to discussions in administrative and faculty meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

For the first time in decades of school district reviews, Evergreen consultants found that the HWRSD policy book has no School Committee policies that relate to instruction **at all**. The district only has sections on:

- Foundation
- School Committee
- Administrative
- Fiscal
- Support Services (one policy)
- Facilities
- Personnel
- Students

Curriculum and instructional policies offer guidance to district staff and inform the public of essential information about curricula selection, implementation, review, programs, and aspects of the district that directly affect teaching and learning.

Most districts have entire sections of policies relating to instruction, including such policies as:

- Academic freedom
- Organization of instruction
- Curriculum development
- Student services programs

- Remedial instruction
- Alternative instruction
- Curriculum adoption
- Health education
- Parental consent for sex education
- Student study teams
- English Language Learners
- Instructional materials
- Access to electronic media
- Evaluation of instructional programs
- Internet acceptable use
- Academic achievement
- Graduation requirements.

Pentucket, one of HWRSD's peer districts, has 16 policies relating to curriculum and instruction. Nashoba, another peer district states that:

> *Policy development in a modern, forward-looking school system is a dynamic, ongoing process. New problems, issues and needs give rise to the continuing need to develop new policies or to revise existing ones.*

Sample policies can be found at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees website *http://www.masc.org/policy/online-policy-manuals*. This website shows typical policies relating to instruction used in other Massachusetts districts. As HWRSD addresses policy revision and development as recommended in **Chapter 2**, it should also add policies relating to instruction.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-5:

Develop policies guiding instructional programs, evaluation, and curricular issues.

Policies relating to instructional programs are an essential part of any school board/school committee policy manual. Without having to explicitly direct school and district leaders on what to do with respect to specific programs or instructional activities, policies help districts maintain uniformity among their schools and instructional programs. Policies assist educational leaders in guiding district decisions, and are a ready reference for teachers, parents and administrators with questions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD teachers, unlike those in many districts across the nation, are not dependent on textbooks as instructional tools. Many districts today spend hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, often in response to community pressure, to ensure that every child has a copy of a textbook for each and every subject. Some districts even provide individual textbooks as well as classroom sets, so that, early in the year students can take a copy home and leave it for homework, but have one available for instruction in the class. This practice prevents students from being burdened with heavy backpacks between home and school. Other districts take a more conservative approach, purchasing only classroom sets for students. These customs are rampant across the nation, despite the fact that new technologies offer far more diverse and timely opportunities for student learning than textbooks, many of which, in some content areas such as history, are almost outdated when they are printed.

Instead of holding to outmoded customs and expenses, HWRSD teachers and administrators report that teachers in the district commonly use alternative methodologies such as online research, student-driven discussion, readings, novels, poetry, and active primary reading sources. In many cases, teachers generate their own learning materials and use the textbook as a supplementary learning tool. Teachers who co-teach work together to ensure that units they develop work for all students and contribute to better reading skills. Many of the new programs the district has purchased recently have both hard copies of textbooks and online adjuncts that students can access at home for homework. Assessment tools correlated to the content are also available online for students to demonstrate mastery and data to be collected.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District has embraced diverse opportunities for student learning beyond traditional textbooks.

FINDING

Middle school students lagged in math performance for five years with no apparent district-level plan of intervention being developed. While 70 percent of middle schools in the State of Massachusetts are also not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) according to *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) criteria, the district still has accountability for addressing the lack of performance of HWRSD students. Comments regarding the issue reflected an apparently lax attitude towards evaluating the issue and developing strategies that might remediate the problem. The district has, at last, taken numerous steps to attempt to improve the instruction and the math achievement of those students.

The students contributing to the school's lack of progress in mathematics are Students With Disabilities (SWD)—middle school special education students. NCLB makes federal expectations for the performance of SWDs clear. They are to reach proficiency by 2013-14 just as every other student in the nation. The federal government does allow for districts to make accommodations, modifications, or alternate assessments for demonstrating expected

proficiency. Most students are expected to take the same test as general education students, but with accommodations (such as extended time or the use of assistive technology).

HWRSD provided to Evergreen four documents dated 2009 or 2010 relating to student performance, only one even referenced the performance of SWDs, despite strong evidence that the district collects and analyzes data on areas where student achievement has improved. Similar data on the achievement of SWDs is essential for the district to be able to demonstrate that all of its students have met proficiency as is expected in NCLB. None of the documents demonstrated a plan to address the lagging performance of SWDs.

A possible indication of awareness of district administrators and teachers is evidenced in survey responses in **Exhibit 5-1** regarding NCLB implementation in HWRSD compared to peer districts surveyed. Far fewer HWRSD teachers and administrators believe the district has effectively implemented this federal legislation. This may be an indication of their understanding that they need to take a more aggressive road to addressing the lagging math performance of middle school special education students.

Exhibit 5-1
Survey Responses
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and
Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

	HWRSD		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
Survey Statement	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**
NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school district.				
Administrators	33.3%	16.7%	80.2%	7.3%
Teachers	52.7%	6.3%	60.4%	8.4%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

HWRSD has, within the past year, identified a number of deficiencies with respect to the mathematics program, instruction, and related middle school SWD student achievement. They have developed several strategies that promise to positively impact their performance.

Last year, the district implemented a new elementary mathematics program. Typically in the first year of implementation of a new program, students experience an "implementation dip" with scores decreasing before they later improve. This did not happen in HWRSD; elementary student math scores continued to improve with more students attaining Advanced or Proficient scores. Some staff testified that a poor elementary foundation had been a contributing factor to poor middle school scores.

Another strategy devised to improve middle school SWD math scores was a change in delivery of math instruction at the middle school. The assistant principal and the K-12 math curriculum committee studied a variety of programs before piloting three, and then choosing one closely aligned to MCAS. Previously, special education teachers who were not math specialists were

responsible for math instruction. Along with a change in the middle school math curriculum, HWRSD also changed the format of math classes for SWDs, training general education and special education teachers in co-teaching skills using the regular program math materials.

In the high school, this model had been used effectively for approximately three years with student math scores improving. They also reduced some intensive math class sizes still maintaining general education math teachers who were trained in strategies to assist struggling students and the use of language-based skills. This comprehensive, districtwide approach to examining programs, training, and re-deploying staff is a model that HWRSD could use for other programs.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for recently addressing the math instructional needs of middle school students with disabilities.

FINDING

The HWRSD School Choice Program began several years ago when the middle school enrollment had declined slightly, making room for additional students from other districts. Leadership determined they could add approximately 1.5 students per class. Currently, there are 107 Choice students on the campus. These students are fully integrated into the student body.

The community has expressed a concern about Choice students having an impact on student achievement and costs in HWRSD. Leaders interviewed stated that the students are seamlessly integrated into the school, scores for them are not tracked separately*, and that, with current numbers, the program actually generates enough funds to support itself and create some fund balance. However, they noted that the numbers must be carefully monitored to ensure that balance continues to be maintained. Only nine of the 107 Choice students are enrolled in the special education program. No data were available from HWRSD regarding the performance of those special education Choice students as a group in comparison to other Choice students.

HWRSD had 30 Choice students who were in grades 7 and 10 in 2010. Since the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is administered in grades 3 through 10, excluding grade 9, Evergreen consultants were able to obtain limited test score data to compare Choice and non-Choice students.

Exhibit 5-2 provides information on 30 Choice students who were at the grade levels tested by MCAS state tests in 2010. This exhibit also provides a comparison in MCAS performance scores with all HWRSD students in grades 7 and 10 for the same year. As can be seen, the state does not grade on a 0 – 100 system, nor provide a mean score. Instead, scaled scores are provided and equate with a Performance Level score, (e.g., Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Warning).

*Despite repeated requests, Evergreen was not able to get complete test score data from HWRSD.

Exhibit 5-2
English/Language Arts and Mathematics Scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) 2010

English Language Arts

Grade	Performance Label	Number of Choice Students	Comparison of Choice Students and Non-Choice Students
Grade 10			
21 students	Advanced	8	**Choice Students:** 38% Advanced 57% Proficient 1% Need Improvement **All Students:** 46% Advanced 48% Proficient 6% Need Improvement 1% Warning
	Proficient	12	
	Needs Improvement	1	
	Warning	0	
Grade 7			
9 students	Advanced	2	**Choice Students:** 22% Advanced 55% Proficient 10% Needs Improvement 10% Warning **All Students:** 22% Advanced 64% Proficient 11% Need Improvement 3% Warning
	Proficient	5	
	Needs Improvement	1	
	Warning	1	

Mathematics

Grade	Performance Label	Number of Choice Students	Comparison of Choice Students and Non-Choice Students
Grade 10			
21 students	Advanced	17	**Choice Students:** 38%Advanced 57% Proficient 1% Need Improvement 0% Warning **All Students:** 77% Advanced 17% Proficient 6% Need Improvement 1% Warning
	Proficient	4	
	Needs Improvement	0	
	Warning	0	
Grade 7			
9 students	Advanced	2	**Choice Students:** 22% Advanced 22% Proficient 33% Needs Improvement 22% Warning **All Students:** 13% Advanced 55% Proficient 21% Need Improvement 10% Warning
	Proficient	2	
	Need Improvement	3	
	Warning	2	

The limited test score data shown in **Exhibit 5-2** are not sufficient for analyses.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-6:

Continue to monitor revenues verses expenses for School Choice students to maintain a balance.

Although the district receives $5,000 per student, a shortage of about $7,000 from current per pupil expenditures, the revenue currently more than covers the expenditures (also see **Recommendation 4-13** in **Chapter 4)**.

FISCAL IMPACT

HWRSD is currently covering the salary and benefit costs of Choice students attending HWRSD schools. There are ancillary costs associated with them, such as utilities and other staff time, that would not be worth prorating. Using the average teacher salary plus benefits of $71,614 and the $5,000 per student revenue generated by the School Choice Program, it takes 14.3 students to generate revenues to cover one teacher's salary and benefits. One hundred seven students at $5,000 generate revenues of $535,000, or the equivalent of 7.5 teaching positions valued at $537,105.

FINDING

The School Improvement Planning (SIP) process in HWRSD is not uniform across the district nor does the process currently comply with Massachusetts timelines established in M.G.L. c. 69, § 1I. Moreover, there is no accountability for achievement of goals and objectives embedded in the process.

While some staff interviewed stated that their school's goals were directly tied to the district's strategic plan or district improvement plan, others said that their goals were not. Principals stated that they were currently working on their SIPs for this school year despite the law specifically stating that "Each school improvement plan shall be submitted to the superintendent for review and approval not later than July 1, of the year in which the plan is to be implemented according to a plan development and review schedule established by the district superintendent."

Additionally, central office staff reported that they did not review the individual school's plans. Another central office employee stated that there is no planning at the central level with principals to identify potential district resources that could be tapped for specific school goals. Resource allocation is an essential component of successfully achieving any goals and should entail a collegial conversation between school and district leaders. During Evergreen's on-site review, no senior manager identified the district improvement plan, also required by state law.

The Massachusetts Department of Education shares 11 Essential Conditions for School Effectiveness (**Exhibit 5-3)** on its website which states:

> *…are necessary conditions for schools to educate their students well; they guide the actions taken by both districts and the Department at all levels of the accountability and assistance system. While schools are responsible for developing the school level practices that ensure implementation of these essential conditions, schools need to be supported in these efforts by the policies and practices of their districts.*

These essential conditions are grounded in Effective Schools Research.

While M.G.L. c. 69, § 1I stipulates that districts must create a three-year improvement plan with annual action plans designed to achieve goals, it specifies that, "each year, every school shall adopt school performance goals and develop and implement a written School Improvement Plan to advance those goals and improve student performance." It does not, however, appear to preclude a school's ability to mirror the district planning process of three-year plans with annual action plans.

The HWRSD School Improvement Plans are annual, rather than multi-year, and they are not uniform in being a part of a districtwide process (through a District Improvement Plan) that ties goals and resources together. Sample SIPs showed little accountability for accomplishment of goals, referencing generic staff members such as "classroom teachers" as the responsible parties for actions and timelines as broad as 2009-10 rather than having interim benchmarks throughout the year. Developing plans during the year in which they are to be implemented does not provide schools sufficient time to be able to achieve the goals they set, and also can force schools to set less lofty goals knowing that the timeline for completion is short.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-7:

Ensure that School Improvement Plans are developed in compliance with timelines set by the State of Massachusetts, have specific accountability embedded, and include three-year as well as annual goals.

Some School Improvement Plans do include three-year timelines and interim benchmarks, but the majority Evergreen reviewed had only one year goals and expected completion dates. Additionally, there was no evidence of targeting the achievement of subgroups that may be experiencing lower performance. Adding specific goals for each student subgroup in all school improvement plans will increase accountability at the teacher and school level for the improved learning of all students, to better enable schools to move toward the 100 percent proficiency expected by NCLB federal legislation by 2013-14. These same standards should also be incorporated into the District Improvement Plan.

Exhibit 5-3
Massachusetts Department of Education
Essential Conditions for School Effectiveness

1. **Effective district systems for school support and intervention:** The district has systems and processes for anticipating and addressing school staffing, instructional, and operational needs in timely, efficient, and effective ways, especially for its lowest performing schools.
2. **Effective school leadership:** The district and school take action to attract, develop, and retain an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to improving student learning and implements a clearly defined mission and set of goals.
3. **Aligned curriculum:** The school's taught curricula are aligned to state curriculum frameworks and the MCAS performance level descriptions, and are also aligned vertically between grades and horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and across sections of the same course.
4. **Effective instruction:** Instructional practices are based on evidence from a body of high quality research and on high expectations for all students and include use of appropriate research-based reading and mathematics programs; the school staff has a common understanding of high-quality evidence-based instruction and a system for monitoring instructional practice.
5. **Student assessment:** The school uses a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments.
6. **Principal's staffing authority:** The principal has the authority to make staffing decisions based on the School Improvement Plan and student needs, subject to district personnel policies, budgetary restrictions and the approval of the superintendent.
7. **Professional development and structures for collaboration:** Professional development for school staff includes both individually pursued activities and school-based, job-embedded approaches, such as instructional coaching. It also includes content-oriented learning. The school has structures for regular, frequent collaboration to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. Professional development and structures for collaboration are evaluated for their effect on raising student achievement.
8. **Tiered instruction and adequate learning time:** The school schedule is designed to provide adequate learning time for all students in core subjects. For students not yet on track to proficiency in English language arts or mathematics, the school provides additional time and support for individualized instruction through tiered instruction, a data-driven approach to prevention, early detection, and support for students who experience learning or behavioral challenges, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English language learners.
9. **Students' social, emotional, and health needs:** The school creates a safe school environment and makes effective use of a system for addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of its students that reflects the behavioral health and public schools framework.
10. **Family-school engagement:** The school develops strong working relationships with families and appropriate community partners and providers in order to support students' academic progress and social and emotional well-being.
11. **Strategic use of resources and adequate budget authority:** The principal makes effective and strategic use of district and school resources and has sufficient budget authority to do so.

Source: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/school/process.html?section=essential

Some items to consider include:

- setting interim benchmark dates such as at the end of each semester for schools to measure progress and report to the board on progress toward goal achievement;
- including target measurable improvements based on disaggregated student performance data for all subgroups as a fundamental element in all plans;
- targeting percentage improvement goals with specific baseline and end goals;
- identifying specific individuals or groups by name or job title (beside "teachers") who are responsible for completion of strategies;
- more specifically identifying evaluative resources; and
- including start dates for strategy implementation as well as intermediate timelines and frequency of evaluations.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

5.2 STAFFING

An effective way of viewing the efficiency of a school district is by benchmarking staffing ratios. The intent of an efficient school district is to provide as much direct classroom instruction to students as possible, while keeping the overall ratios of total staff to students within an acceptable range. The level of effectiveness in reaching this goal can be determined, in large part, by comparing the percentages of total staff and instructional staff in the system of interest to other peer school systems. A school district compares favorably by exhibiting a higher percentage of instructional staff and a lower percentage of overall staff.

FINDING

All high school teachers by contract teach five classes and a study hall in a cycle of eight classes. The teacher contract states that they will teach five (5) classes as a teaching load, essentially giving each teacher two preparation periods. Planning times vary by school level with secondary teachers having far more planning time than either middle school or elementary teachers. The teacher contract specifies that:

- High school teachers will have a minimum of 410 minutes per week of non-assigned preparation time during the student day.
- Middle school teachers will have:

- a minimum of 300 minutes per week of non-assigned preparation time during the student day;
- in addition, academic teachers will be provided with 90 minutes per week of common planning time during the student day;
- integrated academic teachers will be provided a minimum of 40 minutes of common planning time weekly within the student day; and
- an additional five minutes will be assigned to either individual or common planning time.

- Elementary teachers will:
  - be guaranteed a minimum of 200 minutes per week of non-assigned preparation time during the student day;
  - be guaranteed one 60-minute planning period on Wednesday; and
  - be allocated a 20-25 minute block of time surrounding the 20-minute duty free lunch. This block will be defined as teacher administrative time.

While a scheduled common planning time for teachers in grade level, interdisciplinary, or subject area teams is considered a key element in school improvement and the development of professional learning communities, those results occur when districts set expectations for collaboration, analysis, evaluation, professional development, and experimentation during these planning times.

For planning time to be used effectively, schools need to:

- Set expectations for work products developed during planning time using prepared agendas for efficient use of time and weekly schedules with designated purposes for individual, interdisciplinary teams, and subject areas (Kassissieh & Barton, 2009; Prager, 1992);
- Create an instructional schedule that supports time for team collaboration (Mclaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Kassissieh & Barton, 2009; Prager, 1992);

HWRSD does not provide parameters for the use of planning time in its schools. In fact, with the loss of team planning time at the secondary level, the contractual minutes allocated for common planning time have simply been rolled into overall planning time, resulting in 395 minutes (6.6 hours) per week for academic middle school teachers and 345 minutes for IA teachers (art, drama, PE, music, life skills). The district currently lacks common planning time as a vehicle for teacher collaboration as well as the necessary accountability for the planning time it provides. Additionally, that amount of planning time is excessive compared to the majority of school districts Evergreen has reviewed across the nation.

In addition to having such a generous allocation of planning time, HWRSD teachers are also compensated at a rate higher than both the state and peer district average. **Exhibit 5-4** shows the related compensation rates. Only two peer districts, Manchester-Essex and Nashoba, have higher average salaries. The HRWSD average salary is only $516 less than Manchester-Essex's average teacher salaries and $4,708 less than Nashoba's average teacher salaries. In contrast, HWRSD's average salary ranges from $5,438 to $5,159 higher than the other two peer school districts.

Exhibit 5-4
Average Teacher Salaries in HWRSD,
Peers School Districts, and the State of Massachusetts
2008-09 School Year

School District	Average Teacher Salary
Hamilton-Wenham	**$68,210**
Groton-Dunstable	$62,772
Manchester-Essex	$68,726
Mendon-Upton	$63,051
Nashoba	$72,918
Pentucket	$62,789
Peer Average	**$66,051**
Statewide	**$67,577**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-8:

Standardize and reduce teacher planning time to one period per day in all schools.

Disparate planning times in HWRSD schools create inequities among teachers at different levels in how they can effectively plan for instruction; capitalize on team or grade-level meetings; and use planning time for professional discussions, curriculum planning, and training. This practice also creates challenges, combined with the high school and middle school block schedules in scheduling classes and sharing teachers between the middle and high school. Additionally, the number of hours the district is paying for this period does not involve direct student contact, is costly in terms of fiscal resources, and results in less instructional time for students.

FISCAL IMPACT

Conservatively, just using a 50-minute planning period at the high school, even though some periods are 70 minutes, each teacher would have 500 minutes of planning time per week (5 x 100 daily minutes/60=8.3 hours). Using an instructional day of 6.6 hours, there are 33 (6.6 x 5) available hours each week for each teacher to teach. Reducing those hours by 8.3 for double planning times each week places the district in the position of paying for only 24.7 hours of instruction. The reality is that many of the planning hours are not 50-minute but 70-minute planning hours. Reducing planning time to 50 minutes per day (rather than 100 to 140 minutes) will recoup instructional time for the district.

For the 51.6 high school teachers, HWRSD could regain 43 hours (51.6 x 50=2,580 minutes/60=43 hours), or the equivalent of 1.3 FTE (43 hours/33 hours in a teacher week). Using the average teacher salary of $71,614, including benefits, brings the annual savings to $93,098.

Similar savings could be garnered by reducing planning times to simple per day minutes at each school in the district. The fiscal impact shown below only shows estimated savings at the high school and does not reflect total districtwide savings that could be garnered from implementation of this recommendation in all schools.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Reduce High School Planning Time	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098

FINDING

A comparison of student to teacher ratios between HWRSD and peer school districts (**Exhibit 5-5)** shows that HWRSD has fewer students per teacher than any of its peer districts. The HWRSD Class Size Policy (H8004), approved February 5, 2009, sets class sizes for various grade configurations in its schools. The policy sets the following class sizes:

- Preschool: 8-10 students
- Grades K-5: 22-24 students
- Grades 6-8: 24-28 students
- Grades 9-12: 26-30 students (including English and foreign language)

Exhibit 5-5
Students Per Teacher Ratio
HWRSD and Peer School Districts
2009-10 School Year

School District	Students Per Teacher	Teachers
Hamilton-Wenham	**12.4**	**163.6**
Groton-Dunstable	16.5	169.6
Manchester-Essex	13.9	104.8
Menham-Upton	15.5	184.3
Nashoba	14.2	241.4
Pentucket	14.3	225.8
Peer School District Average	**14.9**	**181.6**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

The teacher contract states that high school class sizes will not "normally" be more than 24 with certain exceptions; the maximum middle school class size is 25; and the elementary "desired objective" is 25.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-5**, the average number of students per teacher in HWRSD is 12.4. Peer averages range from a low of 13.9 to a high of 16.5. As can be seen, the average student: teacher ratio for peers is 14.9.

The timeline and scope of the Operational Audit did not allow for an intensive examination of the parameters of all class size requirements or individual class sizes, but merely an analysis of average secondary class size data by course. **Exhibits 5-6** and **5-7** show numbers for each course at the middle and high schools. **Exhibit 5-6** shows that at the middle school, only three courses have average class sizes over the 24 to 28 student level recommended in policy. Those courses are Band 7 and Chorus 6 and 8. Only two courses have average student enrollments over 24—PE 6 and 7. All of the rest of the classes have average student enrollments below the 24-28 range set as a goal for middle school classes.

Exhibit 5-6*
Middle School Average Class Sizes by Course in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District 2010-11 School Year

Course	Average Class Size	Course	Average Class Size
Academic Support 6	20.6	Life Skills 8	22.0
Academic Support 7	20.3	Life Skills Eng 6	3.0
Academic Support 8	19.5	Life Skills Eng 8	1.0
Algebra	23.7	Life Skills Math 6	4.0
Art 6	23.7	Life Skills Math 7	1.0
Art 7	22.8	Life Skills Math 8	1.0
Art 8	21.7	Life Skills Science 6	4.0
ASPIRE English	1.0	Life Skills Social Studies 6	4.0
ASPIRE Math	1.0	Life Skills Social Studies 8	1.0
ASPIRE Science	1.0	Math 6	20.6
ASPIRE Social Studies	1.0	Math 7	20.4
Band 6	23.0	Music 6	23.5
Band 7	39.0	Music 7	23.0
Band 8	21.0	Music 8	21.7
Chorus 6	35.0	PE 6	24.4
Chorus 7	21.0	PE 7	24.6
Chorus 8	35.0	PE 8	22.3
Civics	21.3	Pre-Algebra	16.2
Comp Skill	1.0	Reading 6	1.9
Drama 6	23.3	Reading 7	1.7
Drama 8	21.9	Reading 8	1.3
English	6.0	Science 6	20.7
English 6	23.0	Science 7	20.4
English 7	23.0	Science 8	19.1
English 8	20.4	Spanish 6	22.7
ESL Tutor	1.3	Spanish 7	22.3
Geography	23.5	Spanish 8	20.4
IRWL Eng 6	5.00	Speech	14.1
IRWL Eng 7	2.0	Tutorial 6	2.3
IRWL Eng 8	9.0	Tutorial	3.5
IRWL History	5.0	Tutorial	2.8
Life Skills 6	23.2	World History	23.3
Life Skills 7	22.7	Writers Workshop	5.3

Source: HWRSD High School, January 2011.

*Evergreen requested that these data be sorted by special education, life skills, regular and advanced classes, but that request was not responded to by HWRSD.

As shown in **Exhibit 5-7**, nine of the 159 courses offered at the high school have average class sizes between the recommended enrollments of 26 to 30 students. Only two exceed those recommendations. That leaves 148 courses whose average class sizes are lower than the numbers set in policy. Numerous courses have been developed for special education students to have low class sizes. The merits of those programs are discussed in the Special Education section of this chapter.

Additionally, the district offers 24 sections of study hall. That is the equivalent of more than three teacher FTEs, since HWRSD teachers teach only five of eight periods per day. Without a further examination by period, teacher, and any additional state recommendations or restrictions in course sizes, Evergreen cannot make specific recommendations for reductions in teaching staff, but there is ample evidence that the district can save funds by more closely examining class sizes for better utilization of its teaching staff and the potential combining of classes.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-9:

Increase the student to teacher ratio towards levels comparable to peer school districts.

Staffing levels in peer school districts still maintain lower student: teacher ratios. Moving towards peer staffing levels for HWRSD teachers would garner additional dollars that could be re-directed towards other district instructional needs (such as technology and professional development).

FISCAL IMPACT

Increasing the student: teacher ratio by 1.5 students per teacher, and bringing the HWRSD average to that of Manchester-Essex's (13.9) would save the district 17.4 instructional positions. At an average salary with benefits of $71,614, that would be an annual savings of $1,246,084.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate 17.4 Teaching Positions	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084

FINDING

An examination of the number of special education teachers in HWRSD and peer school districts in **Exhibit 5-8** shows that, compared to peer districts, HWRSD employs a higher percentage of teachers for special education (18.6%) than other peer districts. That percentage is also higher than the peer average of 12.9 percent. The district closest to HWRSD in percentage of special education teachers is Pentucket with 17.7 percent of its teachers dedicated to special education.

Exhibit 5-7*
High School Average Class Sizes by Course in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District 2010-11 School Year

Course	Average Class Size	Course	Average Class Size	Course	Average Class Size
3D Art 2	21.0	Eng 12 A1S	15.0	Photo 2 A1	14.5
3D Art A1	21.3	Eng 12 AP	22.0	Phys A1	23.3
A & P A1	26.0	Eng 12 H	20.0	Phys A1S	12.5
A & P H	19.5	Eng 9 A1	15.0	Phys H	28.5
AB Calculus AP	21.0	Eng 9 A1S	10.0	PR Fitness	27.3
Academic Support 9	1.8	Eng 9 H	17.0	Pre Cal A1	22.3
Academic Support 10	2.5	EXP DES A1	23.5	Pre Cal H	17.5
Academic Support 11	2.3	Fab Tech	19.0	Prtflio A1	7.0
Academic Support 12	3.2	Fine IS	1.0	Prtflio H	3.0
Adv TV A1	10.0	French 3 A1	6.0	Psych A1	11.5
Algebra 2 A1	20.0	French 4 A1	5.0	Psych A1S	2.0
Algebra 2 H	18.7	Geometry A1	20.3	Psych H	6.8
Algebra A1	17.2	Geometry H	17.5	Pub spk EC	23.0
Ancient History	6.0	Gra Des A1	24.0	Pub Spk PP	20.0
Art 1 A1	20.0	Harmony	24.0	Reading	1.2
Art 2 A1	18.0	Health 10 S1	23.9	Retail 1	21.0
Art Pref	17.0	Health 10 S2	24.0	Retail 2	6.0
Astronomy A1S	20.0	Health 11 CG	26.7	Robotic	12.5
AT Algebra 2	20.0	Health 11 WA	26.0	Sch Srv	4.2
Band A1	36.0	Health 9	28.6	Sci & Eng IS	3.5
Band H	16.0	Health IS	1.0	Sml Gas	16.0
Biology A1	16.7	Humanities 1	5.0	Span 1 A1	19.5
Biology A1S	10.0	Humanities 2	4.0	Span 2 A1	16.3
Biology AP	16.5	INT TV A1	14.0	Span 2 H	20.7
Biology H	20.7	Internship	1.0	Span 3 A1	18.3
Calculus A1D	17.0	Jazz Band H	21.0	Span 3 H	22.5
Cav Emp A1	31.0	Latin 3	19.0	Span 4 A1	21.3
CHD Dev A1	22.0	Learn Port	27.0	Span 4 AP	28.0
Chefs 1 A1	23.4	LS Academic Support	1.3	Span 5 A1	29.0
Chefs 2 A1	23.5	LS Eng 1	1.0	Span 5 AP	15/0
Chem A1	21.5	LS Eng 2	1.0	Span 5 H	20.0
Chem A1S	12.5	LS Eng 3	2.0	Span L IS	1.0
Chem H	20.3	LS Eng 4	1.0	Stats A1	22.0
Choir A1	25.0	LS Math 4	1.0	Stats AP	20.0
CMP Grph 1	18.0	LS Science 4	1.0	Th Tech A1	14.0
CMP Grph 2	7.0	LS Social Studies 3	1.0	Thtr 1 A1	13.5
Con HS H	10.3	LS Social Studies 4	2.0	TV HR	16.0
Con HS A1	7.5	MANSTRT 10	2.0	US His AP	20.0
Con HS A1S	1.5	MANSTRT 11	4.0	US & W 1 A1	22.8
CR Math 1A	6.0	MANSTRT 9	2.0	US & W 1 A1S	10.0
CR Math 1B	5.0	Math 1 A1S	10.0	US & W 1 H	20.3
Creat A1	23.0	Math 2 A1S	10.0	US & W 2 A1	20.3
Drawing A1	22.3	Math 3 A1S	10.5	US & W 2 A1S	17.0
Econ A1	6.3	Math IS	1.3	US & W 2 H	20.5
Econ H	14.0	Mid ea A1	7.5	Virt HS	1.5
ELC PRF A1	11.0	Mid Ea A1S	1.0	W Hist A1	17.0
Eng 10 A1	17.2	Mid Ea H	8.0	W Hist A1S	8.0
Eng 10 A1S	14.0	Mnfctrg	17.7	W Hist H	19.0
Eng 10 H	23.0	Mod Tech	15.5	Web Pg A1	18.5
Eng 11 A1	17.3	Org Bio A1	22.0	Wld Af A1	10.8
Eng 11 A1S	11.5	Org Bio H	11.0	Wld Af A1S	3.0
Eng 11 H	25.5	Paint A1	13.0	Wld Af H	15.8
Eng 12 A1	17.5	Photo 1 A1	20.3	Wrldhst 10	4.0

Source: HWRSD High School, January 2011.

*Evergreen requested that these data be sorted by special education, life skills, regular and advanced classes, but that request was not responded to by HWRSD.

Exhibit 5-8
Comparison of General and Special Education Teachers
HWRSD and Peer School Districts
2009-10 School Year

District	Enrollment	General Education	Special Education	Percent of All Teachers Who are Special Education
Hamilton-Wenham	**2,039**	**133.1**	**30.5**	**18.6%**
Groton-Dunstable	2,745	146.3	23.2	13.7%
Manchester-Essex	764	99.3	5.5	5.2%
Menham-Upton	2,804	160.5	23.8	12.9%
Nashoba	3,260	212.5	25.6	9.2%
Pentucket	3,176	185.9	39.9	17.7%
Peer Average	**2,465**	**156.3**	**24.8**	**12.9%**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

Without knowing the programs each district has, though, the picture is incomplete. In recent years, HWRSD has developed a number of programs with the goal of providing services to students who might otherwise have to be placed in day or residential programs in other districts. Each of these new programs requires additional staff, but reduces overall costs to HWRSD for special education services. It is quite likely that these new programs that require small student to teacher ratios are responsible for the higher percentage of special education teachers in HWRSD than its peers. Examining peer district programs in comparison to HWRSD programs to delve into the reasons underlying staffing differentials would have required more time than was available under the constraints of this audit; a more in-depth special education study may be warranted.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-10:

Compare special education staffing in light of programs offered for HWRSD peer school districts to determine equivalency.*

Evergreen cautions the district to carefully examine a comparison of staff with respect to special education programming in terms of benefits to students of existing programs and related staffing costs in contrast to out-of-district placement costs before determining the need to reduce special education teacher staff. There are many possible areas of programming with respect to services for special education students and populations that could account for higher percentages of staff compared to general education numbers. While co-teaching is more costly to districts, since it requires both a general education and special education teacher, co-teaching reaps far greater benefits for both general and special education populations, and, again, may prevent students from being placed out of district, depending on the severity of their disabilities.

***** The exhibits we used for student and teacher data from DESE were accurate. The data for both SPED and general education teacher numbers and numbers of students per teacher came directly from 2010 Massachusetts DESE data. This information is for the 2008-09 school year—the latest one for which state-level data exists for all school districts. Making references and comparing 2010-11 to 2008-09 data are not appropriate for a cursory study such as this. Evergreen was charged with conducting an overview analysis of special education and the comprehensiveness of the study prohibited an extensive review of special education currently operating in peer districts—as would be conducted should a special education study be authorized.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources, depending on comparability of programs and co-teaching levels among districts that may affect the higher HWRSD percentage. However, if the comparison were to show that there is no programmatic basis for the higher percentage of special education teachers in HWRSD, a reduction of teachers by 2.8 percent (4.6 FTE), halfway between the current staffing percentage in the district and the peer average would accrue savings to the district of salary and benefits of $329,424 (4.6 x $71,614 including benefits). This is a conservative cost savings which should be established as a goal for 2012-13, if the outcome of a comparative analysis shows there is not a programmatic basis for the difference.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Reduce Special Education Teachers	$0	$329,424	$329,424	$329,424	$329,424

FINDING

HWRSD pays stipends for duties that are either provided during an individual's work day or for activities that, in many other districts, are assignments beyond the work day that are rotated among staff. This practice costs the district funds that could be better spent for other purposes.

Teacher contracts restrict activities that teachers can be assigned without receiving stipends. For example, bus duty is a stipend task. This limits the number of teachers who patrol bus and car loading as well as student walking areas by the number of positions receiving stipends. The result is, in at least one principal's opinion, less safety for students. In addition to receiving the stipend for this duty, teachers are also relieved of duties such as homeroom, lunch, or study duty. Thus, the district is paying twice in teacher time and fiscal resources. There are provisions in the contract stipulating that, if necessary for teachers to be assigned bus duty, they will not be assigned to it more than twice a week.

HWRSD currently pays stipends to staff for duties they perform during regular hours. For instance, school secretaries are paid stipends to receive teacher calls regarding the need for substitutes and to then call available individuals to substitute. While this may occur before school hours, it is only for a small portion of the day, and could be addressed by adjusting work hours to accommodate the time spent on the activity.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-11:

Eliminate stipends for activities such as bus duty and substitute calling.

As HWRSD is addressing this recommendation, it should make plans for schedule accommodations and rotate schedules to cover assignments. The district should also examine other areas where such adjustments could be made to reap cost savings. Eliminating stipends,

particularly for bus duty and assigning a rotating schedule for teacher supervision, will also enhance safety and security by allowing more staff to supervise additional areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

Evergreen estimates that, by eliminating stipends for bus duty and substitute dispatchers, the district can save about $21,000 per year using FY 2010 supplement schedules. Stipends are as follows:

- four for traffic control duty at the high school @ $1,607;
- two substitute dispatchers at the middle and high schools @ $1,458 (although there was testimony that elementary staff received supplements for this responsibility as well, it is not in the contract where other supplements are covered, perhaps because at the secondary level, they are teachers); and
- fourteen (14) supplements of $832 are paid to elementary staff for either morning or afternoon bus duty.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate Four (4) Traffic Control Stipends	$6,428	$6,428	$6,428	$6,428	$6,428
Eliminate Fourteen (14) Bus Duty Stipends	$11,648	$11,648	$11,648	$11,648	$11,648
Eliminate Two (2) Substitute Dispatcher Supplements	$2,916	$2,916	$2,916	$2,916	$2,916
Total Savings	**$20,992**	**$20,992**	**$20,992**	**$20,992**	**$20,992**

FINDING

An HWRSD study of paraprofessionals in 2009 examined the numbers and assignments of paraprofessionals used in special education. The district has begun implementing some of the recommendations and studying other issues which were identified. The study found that, although they were hired to support students in special education programs, their use for recess coverage across three elementary schools totaled 36.6 hours per week, the equivalent of one entire teaching assistant position. The study recommended changes in organization and use of paraprofessionals targeted toward greater assurance that their time is focused on active instructional support.

The study suggested:

- restructuring staff to create liaison positions instead of paraprofessionals to serve more than one grade level (Note: This was done this year to add a Student Support Center teacher for students with emotional and behavioral issues at the middle school and that person would assign paraprofessionals as needed daily);

- increasing team teaching;
- creating a transitional paraprofessional pool where teacher assistants provide students assistance for short periods of time (e.g., when new to the district, during implementation of a new behavior plan, or for short-term focused periods of intervention);
- clearly defining roles and expectations for the positions for staff, students, and parents;
- as teacher assistant positions are eliminated, HWRSD could use those captured resources to create positions of special education liaisons to serve multiple grades (Note: The district has begun this at the elementary level); and
- implementing a learning center/resource center model where both general and special education teachers supported students according to their needs.

Additional strategies proven effective that might be considered to address the findings of the study include:

- when human resources are written into IEPs, there should be a plan for weaning the student from that personal assistance toward independence;
- the liaisons could spend a portion of their day co-teaching in general education classrooms; and
- availing students of "new technologies suitable to meet the needs of special education students" which could replace "the need for a paraprofessional's time in some instances"— again encouraging independence.

Data from the report show a comparison of special education student enrollment in HWRSD and one peer district—Manchester-Essex. Data show that HWRSD had 352 students and 56 paraprofessionals at the time of the study (June 2009). That equates to one paraprofessional to every 6.3 special education students. Manchester-Essex had 223 students supported by 26 paraprofessionals, or one paraprofessional to every 8.6 special education students.

The benefits of co-team teaching are that two teachers share planning, curriculum development, identification of appropriate resources, and classroom instruction. The joint activity builds the skills and knowledge of both, expanding their repertoire of strategies and further strengthening the district's ability to address the Response to Intervention required by the federal government.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-12:

Continue to implement paraprofessional study recommendations, clarify the roles of paraprofessionals assigned through the IEP process, and determine the rationale for paraprofessional assignments.

A clear definition of the role of the paraprofessional is necessary so that resources can be best allocated and staff deployed for targeted student support. This includes not only paraprofessional roles, but also those of the general and special education teachers. Undertaking this critical task will better ensure that, in every classroom throughout the district, the needs of all learners are being most effectively met.

Training for all staff, paraprofessionals, teachers (both special and general education) and principals should lead to more opportunities for consultation and team teaching, better use of paraprofessionals when and where they are most needed, and also support the development of a team model in which liaisons schedule and assign them based on IEP compliance and daily needs. Creating or strengthening a pool of liaisons would increase teacher capacity to differentiate instruction for a range of student learning styles more effectively. Current Student Assistance Team Coordinators who receive stipends for their responsibilities might assume the liaison's role.

FISCAL IMPACT

Differences in programs certainly impact the number of staff used to support students in special education. However, the disparity between growth in special education teachers and paraprofessionals certainly demonstrates a need to carefully consider the paraprofessional study recommendations to move towards more teacher support and less paraprofessional support for students with special needs. As HWRSD moves more towards co-teaching, savings experienced through elimination of paraprofessional positions should create additional funds for instruction.

FINDING

Some district practices stand as barriers for integration of technology into instruction to enrich student learning, research capabilities, and interface technology with demonstration of their skills and knowledge. When schools receive equipment, there does not appear to be a uniform plan to maximize use for instructional purposes. Since schools do not receive allocations for technology purchases, they are largely dependent upon donations from Friends; therefore, inventories vary from school to school. Purchases of instructional technology do not appear to be made according to the district's long-range plan for technology.

Awareness of both disparities and the lack of sufficient technology for accomplishing one's job responsibilities are reflected in Evergreen's survey results shown in **Exhibit 5-9**. On the three questions, there is a marked disparity between responses from peer school districts and HWRSD.

A recent example is that, two years ago, $310,340 was made available to schools, and principals were told the purchases needed to be made quickly. The decision was made to use some of the funds to purchase SMART boards for all district classrooms that did not yet have them. In one school, the number needed was determined by counting the number of teachers rather than classrooms.

Exhibit 5-9
Survey Results
Technology Access and Adequacy in
HWRSD and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The school district provides adequate instructional technology.				
Administrators	50.0%	16.7%	83.3%	7.3%
Teachers	58.4%	29.6%	73.9%	20.8%
I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.				
Administrators	83.4%	16.7%	92.8%	6.4%
Teachers	61.7%	33.6%	71.0%	25.0%
All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.				
Administrators	50.0%	0.0%	63.5%	23.7%
Teachers	58.0%	25.0%	48.4%	34.8%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

This caused an excess to be purchased, since teachers share rooms throughout the day, depending on their instructional schedules. In many instances, SMART boards were installed without considering the instructional use of the space, and they are not in the most advantageous locations for teachers and students. At the same time, another school very purposefully considered the location within the classroom that was best for teaching, the placement of outlets for those locations, and the height of the students who would need access to the SMART boards prior to their installation.

As in other school districts across America, integration of technology into instruction differs from class to class within HWRSD. Once the SMART boards identified above were purchased, little time was available at most schools for training teachers to use the boards. In other schools, staff leveraged creativity to find time for teachers to be able to learn how to use this new equipment.

The age of computers in schools varies widely. Wireless access is not universal. One school used ingenuity to make the school wireless using resources garnered through grants and negotiating with vendors, but others have not been so pro-active or fortunate in providing the same technological experiences for their students. This is an inequitable practice affecting opportunities for student learning.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-13:

Create processes that ensure consistency of technology in HWRSD schools.

HWRSD must develop explicit uniform expectations for student learning regarding technology and support it with training and a budget that ensures equity. When used appropriately, instructional technology serves as a means to an end, not generally as a separate subject for

students to be taught. Technology should be an integral part of teaching as well as student demonstration of learning. Technology takes many forms in today's classes and offers both students and teachers many opportunities to become engaged in the teaching and learning enterprise. Also see **Chapter 9**.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented by re-allocating existing resources.

5.3 SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education provides supplemental or extended support for students and their families and enhances student performance and academic achievement. Special education is provided to supplement, accommodate, or modify the general academic course of study, and is intended to provide adequate support to ensure the academic success of students with disabilities. The student support role is to provide supplemental or extended support for students and their families that contribute to enhanced student performance and academic achievement.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997) mandates that special education services be provided to students with disabilities in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible. NCLB reinforces that goal with its express expectation that all students will be proficient by 2013-14. Towards that end, for years many districts have provided training and encouragement to help regular classroom teachers learn how to accommodate the needs of special education students in their classes.

FINDING

To address increases in the costs of the special education program and serve students closer to home, HWRSD has developed a number of high quality local programs that have prevented students from having to be placed out of the district. District staff—both general and special education—has also received extensive training to meet the needs of students with more complex needs who, even five years ago, would out of necessity, have been served in placements out of district. This practice has reduced both out-placement costs and contracted services. Next year, a proposed cut of 27.8 percent in contracted services has been included in the special education budget as a result of some of the programming that has been put in place. Recognizing the district's strong internal program development, one of the recommendations in an analysis of special education expenditures conducted by Walker Partnerships in May 2010 was for the district "to continue to invest in the development of internal programs to meet the needs of students who are in out-of-district placement."

The Blue Ribbon Committee—convened to develop recommendations to reduce the rate of growth in the cost of providing a quality education to HWRSD students—examined, among other factors, the district's special education spending as a percentage of total district expenditures. The Blue Ribbon Committee found HWRSD to be at the top of a peer group they identified. That is, HWRSD had the highest special education spending as a percentage to total district expenditures. The Committee's concern was based on the reality that these expenses

potentially prevent a high percentage of district funds from being spent on student services, materials, technology, or personnel that could potentially impact a larger number of students. Nonetheless, the department has successfully taken numerous steps to creatively and cost-effectively either defer legal costs or provide high quality local services to students who would not, even five years ago, have been able to be integrated into public educational settings. The department has done this despite the fact that state and federal laws prevent cost containment in many ways.

Another factor that may not have been considered with respect to concerns about costs of special education programs is that, as district funds have decreased in other areas, they have not in special education since its costs, in many cases, cannot be cut due to state and federal laws and regulations. This, in effect, makes special education costs increase mathematically as a proportion of overall expenditures, but not necessarily as a result of an actual increase in expenditures for special education (see the second bullet below).

Massachusetts, in particular, has extremely high special education costs compared to the nation. A report published in Spring 2009 by the *Commonwealth* found:

- The State spends close to $2 billion a year on special education with nearly a quarter of that for tuition to expensive private schools.
- One superintendent stated his plans to cut his budget by nearly $2 million, but that none of the reductions will come out of special education. "You cannot cut special education services…How do you set up a class of human beings who are entitled to an education [while] everyone else gets what's left over?"
- The 1971 Massachusetts Law Chapter 766 was a precursor to federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act three years later.
- Today, Massachusetts spends nearly 25 percent of its education budget on teaching and transporting special education students, who represent 17 percent of the student population. This is in contrast to a national percentage of only 13 percent.
- Autism is the fastest growing category of special education children, having increased almost 500 percent between 1997 and 2006. Costs for those students are nearly three times those for general education students.
- More than 20 percent of Massachusetts costs are associated with private schools that serve just seven percent of students. Since 1998, the cost of out-of-state and private tuition has increased 126 percent while overall special education spending has gone up 85 percent—and total school spending in the state rose 52 percent in that same period. Tuition ranges from $27,000 for placement in a private day school to $300,000 for year-round residential placement. The price tag of $426 million for these placements has tripled since 2000.
- District transportation costs of $43* million a year for these students often include the cost of an aide to accompany a student.

*includes transportation costs for all districts in the state.

- Massachusetts serves more than twice the national average of early intervention children between birth and two.

- At the Landmark School in Beverly (which the article characterizes as 'a prep school…cater[ing] exclusively to children with dyslexia), students tend to come from wealthier communities.

- Massachusetts has more private special education schools and programs than only Ohio and Pennsylvania.

- Massachusetts recognized the high costs of providing specialized programs by establishing a "circuit breaker" to compensate districts, to some extent, for those increased costs. This action set a foundation level for special education expenditures of $30,000 with the intent of reimbursing districts for costs exceeding that base. However, the reality is that 100 percent of those excess costs are rarely, if ever, reimbursed.

While cost containment should always be a consideration in all school district departments, special education departments are often hampered more than other departments in that effort and a balance must be maintained between cost and quality. Federal laws related to special education which impact the bottom line of special education spending require that:

- districts provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students with disabilities;

- students be served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) so, as much as is feasible and meets their needs, they should be included in general educational experiences and classes;

- students be evaluated regarding their needs and together with parents, a team of educators and other specialists develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student placed in the special education program;

- at each annual review, Assistive Technology is a required area of assessment and discussion; and

- students have access to the general curriculum and state frameworks.

The Federal Rehabilitation Act: Section 504 extended opportunity and access to all people with disabilities, including those in regular, not special, education programs. Furthering equitable treatment for all people, the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act extended the goal of eliminating discrimination against individuals with disabilities even more. More students than ever are now eligible for services most frequently offered through or supported by special education departments. Those laws, along with advances in medical technology, have opened opportunities for more students than ever to receive their education in the public schools of the nation.

Other factors increasing the need for and concomitant costs of special education, early intervention, and prekindergarten include:

- deinstitutionalization of special needs students who can now receive services through public schools;
- a rise in advocacy for students with disabilities and related attorney intervention;
- students who had birth weights below 3.3 pounds have increasingly higher survival rates to age 5, but often require school services;
- alternative privatized services for those students;
- an epidemic of students identified as autistic;
- consequences related to a higher percentage of students in poverty; and
- an increase in the number of families experiencing social and economic stress.

When a school district and parents disagree over services related to a disability that are needed for students to have a FAPE in a least restrictive environment, procedures are available to resolve those differences. These procedures frequently entail legal costs as well as administrative time preparing for hearings, mediation, and due process challenges in which impartial external parties hear both sides and resolve the issues. District staff have been careful in considering challenges to unilateral placements by parents. Steps that the district takes when parents have made a unilateral placement of their student with special needs into an external setting are:

- the administration writes a letter informing them that there is an appropriate program within the district, when one is available;
- district staff examine documentation from outside evaluators justifying the external placement;
- HWRSD personnel observe the student and evaluate him/her themselves;
- the administration consults legal representation; and
- a decision is made regarding the strength of the case to determine the costs of settlement versus those that would be involved in a hearing before proceeding. A loss would generally cost the district approximately $30,000 for an attorney for a hearing in addition to parent legal and consultation fees of close to $100,000.

In Evergreen's experience, this is a prudent and effective approach to cost containment. That is especially true when coupled with other programmatic changes HWRSD has made that strengthen its position in offering a diversity of programming to meet multiple student needs within the district.

Specific steps HWRSD has taken to provide high quality services that are cost effective for the district include the following:

- The district contracts with an Assistive Technology (AT) specialist who has a software repertoire and can, therefore, try many options with students to determine tools to address their needs without the district having to purchase the AT software first and then, as many districts do, find that students will not use it.

- HWRSD is considering conducting a cost analysis of in-district staff training to expand capacity within staff for AT evaluations and collection of its own repertoire of technologies.

- One of the related outgrowths of today's social trends is the number of students whose tuition in private settings are often paid by public schools, either through agreement or through legal processes. A document provided Evergreen by the HWRSD Special Education Department shows that tuition costs for the nearby Landmark School between FY06 and FY10 have decreased (**Exhibit 5-10)**.

  In numerous instances, settlements were reached in which the district and parents agreed to a compromise regarding which party was responsible for fees such as total/partial tuition or transportation. This results in a cost-sharing arrangement between the family and the school district, reducing district costs based on the confidential terms of the settlement agreement. Those settlements compared to tuition for FY 2010 resulted in a cost avoidance of close to $129,000.

Exhibit 5-10
Landmark School Tuitions
2005-06 through 2009-10 Fiscal Years

Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Expense	$285,264	$345,235	$220,557	$164,460	$109,191

Source: HWRSD Special Education Department, October 2010.

- HWRSD designed a Student Support Center at the middle school to meet the increasing mental health needs of the student population and help elementary students requiring substantial assistance transition to middle school with assistance from a school adjustment counselor, behavioral specialist, and psychologist.

- Programs initiated in the last few years for students with severe special needs have, on one hand, increased district costs by adding personnel and related expenses. On the other hand, they have saved the district an estimated $1.6 million. The ASPIRE Program, for example, serves few students, and has high per students costs for those requiring significant curriculum modification, individualized therapies, pre-vocational skills, community participation, and recreation and leisure skills. Compared to the potential out-of-district costs for placement in a day school or residential program, though, HWRSD saves dollars by spending them.

Exhibit 5-11 shows costs and estimated savings.

Exhibit 5-11
Special Program Costs, Students Served, and Out-of-District Costs Avoided
2010-11 School Year

Program	Cost	Class Size	Per Pupil Cost	Out-of-District Cost	Number of Students Served	Cost Avoidance
Intensive[1] Primary	$144,0055	4	$36,001	$354,840	4 students	$210,835
Intensive Reading and Written Language[2]	$310,492	19	$16,341	$550,000	10 students	$239,508
Intensive Learning[3]	$430,658	11	$39,150	$755,158	8 students	$324,500
ASPIRE[4]	$79,251	3	$26,417	$168,600	2 students	$89,349
Learning Skills[5]	$167,000	8	$20,875	$555,283	7 students	$388,283
STAY[6]	$197,153	12	$16,429	$525,993	7 students	$328,840
Projected Totals	**$1,328,559**	**57**	**$23,308 (avg.)**	**$2,909,874**	**38 students**	**$1,581,315**

Source: HWRSD Special Education Department, October 2010.

1. PreK-K, severe special needs, Winthrop School, implemented FY08
2. Grades 4-8, language based learning disabilities, Buker and Miles River Middle School, implemented FY09
3. Grades 2-5, severe special needs, Winthrop, implemented FY07, renamed Intensive Learning Program, FY10
4. Grades 6-12+, severe special needs, MRMS and HS, long-standing program implemented prior to FY00
5. Grades 9-12, severe special needs (subgroup of ASPIRE), HS, implemented FY08
6. Grades 9-12, alternative program, HS, implemented FY08

A 2009 study of teaching assistants noted that programs such as ASPIRE, STAY, Learning Skills, IRWL and the K-5 Intensive Learning Program have a "documented track record of cost-avoidance."

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Special Education Department has taken pro-active steps to increase direct services to students, while at the same time, working diligently to contain expenditures.

FINDING

Testimony from staff involved in Student Assistance Team meetings reflected that procedures for identification of students for special education, as well as services for these students, are not uniform from school to school. This observation was verified by Walker Partnerships in its May 2010 analysis of special education expenditures. They found that the pre-referral process in HWRSD may even serve as an obstacle to referrals.

Needs they identified related to improving fidelity of implementation of the process include:

- a review of data to determine characteristics of the process used when students are found ineligible for special education;
- a review of roles and responsibilities of team members;

- participation of principals in the pre-referral process; and
- training to systematize the process in every school and to provide team members a plethora of intervention strategies upon which to call for students before referral.

One school uses a Student Assistance Team Request Form, but those who use the form stated that it needs to be improved considerably. Other schools do not use such a form. There are no documents used districtwide to ensure that all Student Assistance Teams make referral processes in a uniform manner. Using a uniform referral checklist across HWRSD would help ensure that certain basic steps are taken before students are referred for consideration by a Student Assistance Team. This would be one method to ensure that identification of students for services is systematic among the district's schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-14:

Develop procedures, forms, and training for Student Assistance Teams to ensure consistency of identification and services for all students in the district.

HWRSD has already demonstrated its commitment to serving its special needs students within regular classes. The implementation of this recommendation would buttress the ability of students with special needs to be served in regular classes, and likely prevent a number of them from ever being referred for special education. The implementation of this recommendation would further prepare district staff for Response to Intervention implementation.

Since HWRSD has special education chairpersons in each school who receive stipends for their services, they should become trained as leaders to individualize preventive measures for more students requiring additional support. The program could begin with a pilot in two schools and be expanded as experience and needs dictate. It is essential for staff in all schools to have the same awareness of intervention tools that can be suggested for use in general classrooms prior to consideration for referral to special education. Often, effectively serving students in general education classrooms prevents the need for special education program placement.

Other school districts, such as Clarke County, Virginia, have aggressively worked to address student needs within regular classrooms before initiating referral procedures for testing for placement in special education classes. Although demographics between the two communities differ, some of Clarke's preventive methods could be adapted for use in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. The practices they have employed have resulted in a reduction in the number of students served in the district's special education program over time.

Clarke County has effectively used the following strategies to reduce the percentages of identified special education students:

- communications and guidelines from the Office of Student Personnel constantly ask the question of whether the disability is what negatively impacts the student's educational performance and promotes alternative strategies within the student's classroom;

- all pupil personnel staff provide service to non-identified students who need interventions for success;
- reading specialists in schools enhance and intensify success in reading for all students;
- all teachers and paraprofessionals participate annually in training regarding differentiating instruction within the regular classroom prior to referral for testing;
- in the content of the equivalent of HWRSD Student Assistance Teams, discussions are focused on instructional, staffing, staff development and classroom strategies that might be employed, rather than student disabilities so problem solving occurs around the child's needs rather than deficiencies;
- teaching candidate interviews probe for congruence with the division's philosophy of accommodating students' various learning needs;
- English as a Second Language (ESL) services address possible language barriers preventing success;
- co-teaching is extensive in the district, allowing all students to benefit from the strengths of regular and special education students and teachers to share and learn from each other;
- much individualization and differentiation of instruction occurs to address student differences and learning styles;
- regular education teachers receive a copy of accommodations required for students in their classes, and sign and return them to the special education lead teacher at the school;
- students are taught how to advocate for themselves and, at the high school level, taught study skills with a special educator to reinforce those skills; and
- support is provided to students after dismissal from special education services.

The district's collaborative approach to meeting student needs helps educators focus on curriculum and teaching styles rather than purported student deficiencies. Teams match classroom teacher strengths with student needs and monitor the success of strategies implemented. As teams continue to meet and solve problems together, additional personnel and strategies are employed as attempts are made to develop a process that provides appropriate support for student learning throughout the year. Only when actions have not proven effective in meeting needs are students then referred for consideration of special education interventions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Staff expressed concern that often HWRSD provides services and programs for students without an associated commitment on the part of parents. For example, summer programs are offered to students who could benefit from year-round programs, yet parents do not appear to value the opportunities the district provides their children. When the district plans such programs, they base staffing on the anticipated number of students. Interviewees reported that, although the programs are fixed lengths of five weeks and schedules set early, parents sometimes take vacations or do not encourage full attendance for their children.

Staff expressed concern that this wastes scarce district resources and children are placed in the position of not benefiting from programs designed to meet their needs. They report that when parents say that they do not want their children to go a day without services, accommodations are made. Another example is that HWRSD use to allow students to ride any bus any day to a friend's house, regardless of eligibility for transportation. Many stated their belief that the district needs to learn to say no when there are sound reasons for the district's position.

This concern expressed by staff is more than simply an attitude. As noted in the *Commonwealth* article, it is likely a factor of community resources and expectations. The reality is that it costs HWRSD funds when decisions to please parents or prevent confrontation are grounded more in those desires than in sound decision making.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-15:

Agenda immediately, for School Committee action, a discussion of the need for parameters for decision making that will explicitly identify ways to balance the need to consider overall student welfare along with the public's desires.

Before this item is discussed by the School Committee, school and district leaders should have an in-depth discussion of specific examples they can provide the Committee where individual/group desires have overridden the general welfare of the school district and its students as a whole. Staff should develop proposed suggestions to the School Committee as a part of this discussion.

At the School Committee level, the discussion should arrive at agreements they, as Committee members, are willing to make and hold to so that district goals are central to their decisions. Agreements should be committed in writing, communicated to the public and staff, and adhered to consistently at School Committee meetings with each holding the other accountable. This agreement and consistency should be adhered to among administrators as well as the School Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and may generate cost savings.

FINDING

Special education staff reported that they receive extensive support from central office leaders. They benefit from that support by having students stay in the district, working with a well-trained staff, an ability to continue training, and encouragement to grow in capacity. These employees also noted that those opportunities have, in recent years, been extended to general education teachers as well.

COMMENDATION

The Special Education Department has worked diligently to build capacity among HWRSD teachers to individualize instruction and provide support for all students in the district.

FINDING

Exhibit 5-12 shows the comparative cohort graduation data between HWRSD and its peer districts for special education students. The exhibit shows that:

- Eighty-seven and eight tenths (87.8) percent of HWRSD special education students graduate within those four years, a percent that is higher than three of its five peer districts.
- Four and nine tenths (4.9) percent of students remain in school, a lower percentage than all peer districts except one; this 4.9 percent is one-third the percent that are still in school in Pentucket and less than one-half those in Mendon-Upton.
- The dropout rate of HWRSD special education students of 7.3 percent is higher than all peer districts except one (Pentucket) where the dropout rate for those students is 7.7 percent.

Exhibit 5-12
Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for Special Education Students
2008-09 School Year

School District	Number in Cohort	Percent Graduated	Percent Still in School	Percent Non-Grad Completers	Percent GED	Percent Dropped Out	Percent Permanently Excluded
Hamilton-Wenham	**41**	**87.8%**	**4.9%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**7.3%**	**0.0%**
Groton-Dunstable	24	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Manchester-Essex	12	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mendon-Upton	23	82.6%	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%
Nashoba	28	85.7%	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Pentucket	39	71.8%	15.4%	0.0%	5.1%	7.7%	0.0%
Statewide	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

Exhibit 5-13 compares the graduation rate of special education and regular education students in HWRSD in 2008-09. This exhibit reveals that the HWRSD graduation rate for special education students is higher than all but one peer district and the state. HWRSD exceeds the state graduation rate for these students by 20 percent. However, the exhibit also shows that the special education graduation rate is lower than that of general education students in the district by over 12 percent.

Exhibit 5-13
Special Education Student Graduation Rate
2008-09 School Year

School District	Students in Cohort		Number of Graduates		Graduation Rate	
	Special Ed	General Ed	Special Ed	General Ed	Special Ed	General Ed
Hamilton-Wenham	**41**	**148**	**36**	**147**	**87.8%**	**99.3%**
Groton-Dunstable	26	181	22	176	84.6%	97.2%
Manchester-Essex	17	86	15	82	88.2%	95.3%
Mendon-Upton	27	159	20	154	74.1%	96.9%
Nashoba	35	185	29	178	82.9%	96.2%
Pentucket	46	181	33	167	71.7%	92.3%
Statewide	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	64.9%	85.5%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-16:

Convene a group of teachers, parents, and administrators to examine factors that may impact graduation and dropout rates of HWRSD special education students and, when indicated, develop strategies to ameliorate these factors.

Students with disabilities drop out of school at over twice the rate of their same-age peers, demonstrating that states and local education agencies are in need of dropout prevention interventions that yield positive results.*

It is apparent that HWRSD is doing something right when one examines its success at graduating special education students compared to peer school districts. The data of concern could well be simply a reflection of the students with significant needs that the district has retained or brought back as a result of its creation of programs tailored to their needs. However, without a thorough analysis of students who did not graduate, programs they attended, and performance throughout their school careers, HWRSD cannot know, and, therefore, cannot develop strategies to potentially address these factors.

*Cobb, B., Sample, P., Alwell, M., & Johns, N. [2005]). Riccomini, P., Bost, L. W., Katsiannis, A., & Zhang, D.'s (2005) practice brief, Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: An Effective Approach to Help Students with Disabilities Stay in School published by the National Dropout Center for Students with Disabilities is a useful resource to guide this work once factors have been identified and suggests effective models. Other excellent resources are http://www.ndpc-sd.org/ and, for transition issues, www.cenmi.org/tspmi.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. However, once the study is complete, it may require additional resources that have related costs.

FINDING

HWRSD is following the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' recommendation that each school have a nurse. Guidelines are dependent upon the number of students in each school with the number of special education students factored in. HWRSD employs five nurses, four of whom are RNs and one LPN who is grandfathered in prior to regulations changing to recommend RNs.

The number and severity of health issues of students for whom each HWRSD nurse is responsible varies greatly. With its programs for more severely disabled special education students, Winthrop likely requires more nursing care than the other two elementary schools. Yet, each nurse is assigned to a specific school full-time.

Using numbers from the recent Space Needs and Demographic Study, enrollments at each school are:

- Buker Elementary School - 237
- Cutler Elementary School - 302
- Winthrop Elementary School - 332
- Miles River Middle School - 483
- Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School - 732

One of the tasks that HWRSD nurses perform each day is school attendance. When they do not receive calls from parents that their children will be absent, the nurses have to go to the classes and try to locate the students, call the parent's phone numbers to check that they are home, and, if the student is truant, turn them over to administration for further action. Nurses reported that the task is not as onerous at the elementary schools as at the secondary schools, but they are seeing more such children in elementary grades.

Nurses report a challenge in finding substitutes when one is out, speculating that it is largely because an RN is paid $65 per day to substitute in HWRSD whereas they can make $25 per hour in nearby Gloucester for the same responsibilities. Thus, by substituting in Gloucester, a nurse could make approximately $150/day compared to only $65/day in HWRSD. The high school and middle school nurses are in the position of being able to cover for each other when one is out. However, the number of students for which each of those nurses cover is far larger than those at the elementary schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-17:

Remove responsibility for attendance from all nurses, eliminate one nursing position, and assign responsibility for the two smallest elementary schools to one nurse.

While attendance information is often related to health issues, it is not cost effective for professional staff (such as nurses) to use their time for tasks that could just as well be assigned to clerical or paraprofessional staff. With elementary school sizes so small and the proximity of schools in the communities, HWRSD could provide nursing care to students in two schools with one staff position.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementing this recommendation would save the district the average nurse's salary in HWRSD of $51,698, including benefits.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate One Nurse Position	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698

FINDING

A study of the middle school mental health services conducted by Walker Partnerships in Needham found a lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of the School Psychologist, Adjustment Counselor, and Behavior Specialist serving students with substantial needs for services. A Student Support Center was created to address increasing needs as students transition from elementary school and growing numbers of students with mental health issues (such as adjustment, social, interpersonal, family, suicidal ideation, substance use/abuse, or eating disorders). These issues require assistance to enable students to better focus on student performance, outcomes, and relationships.

The study notes the necessity of "understanding 'who is doing what' especially without guidance services to bolster the services those three positions provide students." Testimony by district staff further reiterated the need for roles to be clarified as well as for the middle school to have a guidance counselor on staff to prevent staff who are overextended from being able to provide appropriate and targeted services.

The high school has 3.8 FTE guidance counselors, but the middle school has no one hired to perform that essential responsibility for students as they prepare to move into high school with a strong foundation for success in the years in which they prepare for college and/or career success. Also, without a guidance counselor, the middle school no longer has an opportunity for teams with common planning times to sit and discuss student issues that may require counseling

or referral for outside services. In addition, the middle school has seen a rise in referrals for guidance-related issues, since team common planning times were cut.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-18:

Examine the tasks currently conducted by the School Psychologist, Adjustment Counselor, and Behavior Specialist regarding their work responsibilities, and consider adding a Guidance Counselor to the middle school staff.

A thorough review of the skill sets of the individuals in these positions should be undertaken with respect to current tasks they are engaged in. The goal should be increased direct student contact. An examination of student-related needs, in concert with the responsibilities each of these highly skilled professionals, should provide higher levels of service to students and assign responsibilities more closely aligned to each of their intended roles. Once that is completed, a better determination can be made of the need for an additional guidance counselor to assume responsibilities which may now be performed by other staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

The addition of a guidance counselor is calculated at the average teacher salary of $71,614 including benefits. This cost is not shown until 2012-13 since the recommendation needs to reviewed.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Add a Middle School Guidance Counselor	$0	($71,614)	($71,614)	($71,614)	($71,614)

5.4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teacher preparation and the ability to apply lessons learned during professional development experiences is essential to effective instruction. Teacher abilities to differentiate instruction for all students, and not just those who are identified in need of special support, is also the foundation for a school district's ability to reach the lofty goals of 100 percent proficiency for all students envisioned in *No Child Left Behind.*

In 2001, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) developed a set of standards for professional development that supports the whole school improvement effort. These standards are organized around the context, processes, and content necessary for teachers to focus their expertise on improving instruction and student learning at all levels of a school district.

Context standards involve the following:

- organizing adults into learning communities in which goals are aligned with those of the school and the district;
- deploying skilled school and district leaders to guide continuous instructional improvement; and
- allocating resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

Powerful professional development creates conditions in which school stakeholders can have honest and open conversation about quality and excellence. In a school district focused on learning, participants develop a level of trust that allows them to:

- share their instructional strengths and weaknesses;
- look at student work together as a way to create working definitions of rigor, creativity, and excellence; and
- ask the questions necessary to improve their practice.

Schools and districts must work to cultivate the facilitative leadership necessary to develop learning communities as well as honor the in-house expertise of the participants. There will be times when outside experts can offer valuable content knowledge, but often teachers and administrators working together become their own best consultants. Research has shown that teachers tend to implement what they help design. A supportive context will provide the space and time for them to meet regularly; apply new learning; and get feedback from colleagues on which to reflect, learn, and implement.

Process standards important for ongoing improvement in teaching and learning revolve around data collection, data use, and tools for collaboration in which educators:

- use knowledge about how people learn;
- are given the knowledge and skills for collaboration;
- use multiple sources of information for data collection and analysis; and
- develop data-driven, research-based decisions making focused on outcomes.

Content standards are broad and must be flexed to match the particular projects undertaken by a learning community. The standards may relate to content about students, a particular academic discipline, or community issues. These standards:

- understand and appreciate how all students learn;
- understand how to create supportive learning environments for students;
- hold high expectations for achievement;

- deepen teacher subject area content knowledge;
- deepen teacher pedagogical and assessment knowledge; and
- provide teachers with knowledge and tools for involving community stakeholders in the education process.

When school and district leaders attend to these broad context, process, and content standards for professional development and integrate them into their school improvement goals, administrators and teachers join their students as learners, and the energy of whole school improvement begins to transform individuals and schools.

FINDING

Professional development in HWRSD is not yet addressed in a comprehensive manner based on assessment of teacher pedagogical needs nor student performance data. There is a pressing need for an organized means of planning for and delivering professional development that is aligned with the district's instructional initiatives and strategic goals. Yet a number of impediments stand in the way.

Schools report that they are not given an allocation for professional development, so they must find dollars within school resources. Low incidence groups, such as nurses or psychologists, do not have profession-related training supported by the district. Some central staff also believe that school-based decisions regarding staff training could override district direction. If this is so, then it is imperative that HWRSD leaders, along with school principals, define priorities for developing capacity for all staff.

Staff interviewed reported that, for the most part, the professional development that has been provided in recent years by the central office has been through funding and organization led by the Special Education Department. This has been beneficial as the district moves towards integrating general and special education students, and broadening its approach to instruction through differentiation for all students rather than pull-out instruction for special education students.

Nonetheless, the personal and professional development of all staff must model the learning expected of students. Without staff growth opportunities being encouraged and offered by the district, educators and other staff can neither remain in touch with current trends and research nor be well-prepared to challenge students to higher learning opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-19:

Use the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards and guidelines as a basis for a comprehensive instructional professional development plan, and ensure that a

professional development committee includes non-instructional and low incidence staff members.

A guiding document that takes into account student performance data, varying levels of teacher skills and knowledge, and student characteristics will focus the precious time there is in HWRSD for professional development. An effective comprehensive professional development plan connects the school and district improvement action plans and uses the NSDC context, process, and content standards to ensure the plan's quality, coherence, and effective implementation.

HWRSD must make professional development a higher priority if it is to change student learning. It must base its offerings on a data-based analysis of student needs and identify core required professional development geared to address these needs. An annual needs assessment should also inform HWRSD planners of teacher needs. Accountability should be part of the plan to ensure that adult learning is tied to student needs, that district dollars expended are maximized, and that there is a plan for participants to demonstrate learning either through sharing at faculty meetings or through assignments tied to the training.

Finally, the district's approach to professional development must recognize that teachers have different needs and abilities depending on their own experiences and backgrounds, and develop a tiered approach to training rather than a "one size fits all." This takes into consideration the needs of adult learners and develops the specific skills and knowledge needed by each teacher, much like differentiating instruction for students.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards initiated an advanced teaching credential that is above and beyond state licensure. Four HWRSD teachers have attained the certification and four more teachers are working on this rigorous program. Currently, the teacher contract states that teachers who attain this national certification will be placed on the M+60/Doctorate column of the salary schedule. District staff stated that this then becomes their base pay for the rest of their tenure. The certification lasts for 10 years.

Many other districts recognize the work entailed in becoming certified with a stipend for the duration of the certification. However, in the majority of instances, it is a stipend that is only for the ten-year certification period and does not become a base for salaries.

National Board Certification is achieved upon successful completion of a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize effective and accomplished teachers who meet high standards based on what teachers should know and be able to do. As part of the certification process, candidates complete ten assessments that are peer reviewed by trained teachers in their area of certification. A Congressionally-mandated study recognized the program as having a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention, and professional development.

Some school districts even use the standards upon which the program is based as the foundation for ongoing teacher and school counselor professional development. Massachusetts recognizes this certification in its re-certification process. When a teacher receives national board certification, he/she is awarded enough professional development points for their next re-certification cycle.

Exhibit 5-14 shows data for 37 Massachusetts school districts on national board certification. The document, provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, is based on contracts (many of which expired in 2008) and conversations with two superintendents show that rewards were provided to teachers in 37 other Massachusetts districts.

Exhibit 5-14 shows various methods of reimbursement for National Board Certification, including:

- reimbursement of partial or all application and/or testing fees only or in addition to financial stipends;
- a four percent increase to base salary for the duration of the certification;
- movement up the salary schedule 1-6 columns, to the Masters' level, or PDPs toward advancement;
- a one-time bonus between $500 and $5,000;
- salary increases; and
- graduate credit toward an M+30 or M+60 salary.

According to the document, two districts appear to be eliminating the reward. As can be seen, HWRSD has the most generous recognition. Only one other district moves teachers to the M+60 salary column, but only for one year.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-20:

Re-examine the way HWRSD rewards teachers for National Board Certification, and consider changing it to a set stipend that is the same for every teacher and paid for a reduced period of time.

HWRSD is commended for recognizing the effort that becoming certified in this rigorous program requires. The current method, though, does not reward each teacher the same, as raising salary from different bases depending on the teachers' tenure to the M60+/Doctorate salary will vary.

Exhibit 5-14
Massachusetts School Districts that Recognize National Board Certified Teachers

District	*Monetary	Other
Agawam	Application Fee	Three release days/year while in the process of fulfilling requirements
Amesbury	$2,500	
Andover	$1,000	
Ashland	Reimburse expenses up to $2,000	
Auburn	$1,000	
Billerica	Placed on MA+60 column	
Boston	Reimburse application and testing fees plus 4% added to annual base salary while certified	
Brockton	$2,000	10 month work year
Brookline	6 credits to salary column	
Cambridge	$1,000	
Cape Cod RVTSD	$500	
Carlisle	$1,000 for 5 years and up to $2,000 application fee	
Danvers	$1,000	
Easthampton	$500 – one time payment	
Fairhaven	Reimburse for fees	
Franklin	$2,000	
Frontier	$2,500	
Hamilton-Wenham	Placed on M+60/Doctorate column	
Hampden-Wilbraham	Placed on Master's Column if not already there	
Hopedale	Up to $2,000 for fees and one-time bonus $5,000	
Hull	$5,000 – appears that it's being eliminated	
Manchester-Essex	$3,000	
Lynn	Advance one column up on salary schedule not including Doctorate	
Malden	$1,000 for 5 years	
Mount Greylock	Up to $3,000 application fee. $3,000 to salary	PD days, loaned equipment for application. Once certified, serve as mentors, delivering PD, facilitate school change, develop curriculum
Natick	18 grad credits toward M+30 or M+60	
New Salem-Wendell	$600	
Norfolk	$1,000 for application or recertification fee	Additional 2 PD days in the year of application/recertification
Norfolk County Agricultural	$1,000	
Northampton	$1,000	
Norton *	$1,230	
Pittsfield *	$5,000 and up to 50% app fee	
Revere	$3,000 and reimbursed for application/recert fees	Have to mentor new teachers in the induction program
Springfield	Placed on level V of salary schedule	
Stoneham	30 PDPs toward advancement on salary schedule	
Uxbridge	Up to $1,764	
West Springfield		Exempt from observation during evaluation
Wrentham	$3,000 if certified before 8/30/07 - eliminating	

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, November 2010.

*Unless otherwise stated, the monetary amount is on an annual basis while maintaining certification.

An additional consideration of this practice is that the way the district currently provides remuneration for teachers (by changing their base pay rather than providing a stipend) does not provide incentives for teachers to renew their certification at the end of the ten-year period. Additionally, HWRSD pays more than any other Massachusetts district and for a longer term. This is a costly practice as it exists and is far more generous than in other Massachusetts school districts.

FISCAL IMPACT

In HWRSD, the increase in pay for one individual was $10,833 the first year. If that individual had stayed for an additional 15 years without a subsequent certification, HWRSD would pay that additional salary for five more years beyond the duration of the certification period. Also, benefits cost would go up due to an increase in base rather than the additional dollars being a stipend. A 23 percent benefit cost on an annual $66,158 salary would be $15,216 compared to benefits on a $76,991 salary of $17,708. This additional benefit cost of $2,492 is an additional annual cost when the additional dollars are added to base pay rather than treated as a stipend. Thus for 15 years, it would cost the district an additional $37,380 ($2,492 x 15) in benefits per teacher plus the increased salary cost of $162,495 ($10,833 x 15) for that period of time. Total per teacher costs would be $199,875.

Reducing the fee to the highest of most school districts ($5,000 one-time fee and $2,000 toward expenses) would save the district not only benefit costs, but extended salary costs. The per teacher cost of the proposed one-time $7,000 stipend and reimbursement compares to an estimated annual salary and benefit increase for 15 years of $162,495, excluding the possibility of overall salary increases for all teachers that are likely to occur within that timeframe. The chart below estimates savings on the four currently certified teachers with one being phased in each year for the subsequent years. Savings are calculated in this way:

- Initial savings of $3,833 x 4 teachers equals $15,332; and
- those savings would be realized each subsequent year in addition to savings of $3,833 for each newly certified teacher.

Thus, the savings would be cumulative for five teachers; in 2012-13, for six; and, in 2013-14, for seven teachers, etc.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Change Compensation for National Board Certification	$15,332	$19,165	$22,998	$26,831	$30,664

FINDING

For decades, HWRSD has released students early on Wednesday afternoons so that district or school meetings, grade level or content area meetings, or training could be held during the school day. When this practice is used effectively, it generates collegial sharing, group learning, and

deeper discussions of content or pedagogical topics with regular follow-up on a monthly basis. There should be a demonstrated positive impact that can be clearly demonstrated in order to excuse students early from instruction. However, Evergreen did not find evidence of an accountability system to ensure that the intended purposes are faithfully followed in all schools.

A Campus Release Time and Inservice Calendar provides a schedule for each Wednesday afternoon throughout the year. It also shows foci of training at each school level. The calendar shows "SP Wednesdays" for special projects, and "PD Wednesdays" for mini-courses. There were two potential funding sources for teachers to be able to either take advanced courses or work on these special projects. All staff interviewed testified that those funds are no longer available. Neither school nor district leaders provided either anecdotal or hard evidence, though, that communications flow between the central office and school leaders, so the central office has input into what is happening in schools on those afternoons, or to inform school staff of purposes and results of school-based activities.

Survey results shown in **Exhibit 5-15** demonstrate agreement by administrators and teachers that there is a greater need for accountability in HWRSD for student learning. Administrators, in particular, perceive an increased need for accountability for student learning. Survey responses reflect a greater sense of the need among HWRSD teachers and administrators than in comparison districts surveyed. Yet, HWRSD administrators, more than comparison districts, believe the HWRSD principals are effective instructional leaders, substantiating Evergreen's observations that even without accountability processes, HWRSD administrators are focusing on improving learning for district students and teachers.

Exhibit 5-15
Survey Results on
Accountability and Student Learning
HWRSD and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

	HWRSD		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
Survey Statement	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**
Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.				
Administrators	50.0%	33.3%	71.1%	18.2%
Teachers	82.9%	7.2%	86.7%	7.1%
Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.				
Administrators	50.0%	16.7%	79.7%	12.0%
Teachers	64.3%	13.4%	75.8%	11.7%
Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.				
Administrators	83.4%	16.7%	75.5%	15.7%
Teachers	52.2%	29.5%	76.4%	19.0%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 5-21:

Develop processes that create a two-way feedback channel between schools and the central office regarding Wednesday afternoon professional development and curriculum meetings.

Testimony across the district reflected an evident commitment on the part of school leaders for the time to be well-used for instructional and professional development purposes. However, that is the result of personal commitment, not district processes that ensure the time is being used to improve teaching and learning. Trust is highly commendable, but also dependent upon individuals holding particular positions. Specific written district procedures will ensure that, regardless of personnel, time set aside for curriculum and instructional purposes is used in concert with agreed upon district goals and objectives.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES

6.0 FACILITIES

Note: Costs/Cost Savings in this chapter do not include the projections made by Dore & Whittier Architects in their concurrent study.

The manner in which a school district manages its facilities can have a significant effect on other school functions. Useful, well-maintained, up-to-date, and cheerful learning environments can help reinforce positive attitudes and performance by students, teachers, and administrators. For example, high indoor air quality and thermal comfort have been shown to improve concentration and learning. Facilities that are neither overcrowded nor underutilized create an educational community where team work, cooperation, and other positive attributes can be practiced and promoted. Clean facilities help maintain a level of appreciation and respect for the buildings of a school district.

A recent article on the Iowa Association of School Boards website provides an excellent summary of the significant benefits and contributions of school buildings to teaching and learning. Entitled *The Link Between Buildings and Learning,* the article addresses such issues as extended learning areas, interdisciplinary instruction, varied schedules, student teams or academies, a productive environment, acoustics, ventilation, light, and color.

An excerpt from the website states:

> *A school building is an important tool to support learning. Experts agree that school facilities should be designed to facilitate what we know today about providing the best possible education for all students.*
>
> *IASB interviewed a number of experienced school architects and reviewed several articles to learn more about trends affecting school building design. This article summarizes what we found.*
>
> ***Buildings Reflect the Education Program***
>
> *Schools are being designed and remodeled to accommodate how educators want to deliver instruction to improve student learning.*
>
> *Most Iowa schools were designed to support education based on large-group, teacher-centered instruction in individual classrooms. But current knowledge and research about learning call for new models of education that are characterized by more active student involvement.*
>
> *Students are doing rather than just receiving; creating rather than absorbing; they are thinking, working and solving problems. They are supported by teaching strategies such as cooperative, project-based and interdisciplinary learning. All require students to move about, work in various sized groups and be active.*
>
> *Source: http://www.ia-sb.org/SchoolFacilities.aspx?id=560*

Well-planned facilities are based on the educational program and on accurate student enrollment projections. The design process should have input from all stakeholders— including administrators, principals, teachers, security specialists, parents, students, and maintenance and operations staff. The selection of building materials; interior finishes; hardware; mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; and other major building components should be made according to life-cycle cost analyses for an optimum total cost of construction, operations, and maintenance.

The maintenance and operation of a district's facilities must be accomplished in an efficient and effective manner in order to provide a safe and secure environment that supports the educational program, and efficiently utilizes the school district's resources. Efficiencies and economies of maintenance and operations are critical to ensuring that resources for direct instruction are maximized. On the other hand, extreme actions to reduce the cost of maintenance and operations can result in higher than acceptable costs of repair and replacement in the years to come. Consequently, a balance must be achieved between reasonable economies and unreasonable cost reductions.

This chapter contains the following sections:

6.1 Organizational Structure
6.2 Capital Planning and Facilities Use
6.3 Operations and Maintenance
6.4 Community Use of Facilities

6.1 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The HWRSD Director of Facilities is responsible for the operation and maintenance of five schools, and the Center Building—which houses much of the HWRSD administration. In all, the buildings comprise 364,460 gross square feet.

The individual gross square footage of each facility is shown in **Exhibit 6-1.**

Exhibit 6-1
HWRSD School Facilities
Gross Square Footage

Site	Gross Floor Area (s.f.)
Buker Elementary School	44,700
Cutler Elementary School	45,800
Winthrop Elementary School	46,000
Miles River Middle School	91,200
Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School	125,600
Center Building	11,160*
TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA	**364,460**

Source: HWRSD Facilities Office, 2010.

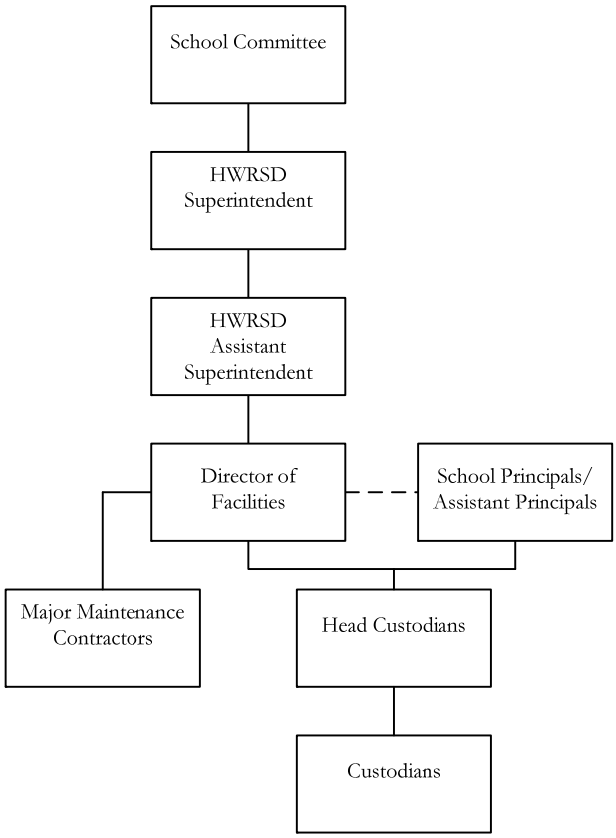
*Figure does not include 5,580 square feet of unfinished basement space.

HWRSD is a comparatively small school district serving slightly above 2,000 students. As such, its facilities functions must be staffed and organized sufficiently, yet minimally, to operate and maintain its five school buildings and administrative offices.

FINDING

Exhibit 6-2 shows the organization of the Office of the Facilities in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

Exhibit 6-2
Organization of the HWRSD
Facilities Director's Office



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

Exhibit 6-2 shows the Director of Facilities in a direct reporting position to the HWRSD Assistant Superintendent, sharing supervisory responsibility with the building administrators (principals and assistant principals) for the custodial staff at the five schools and the Center Building.

As is often the case with smaller school districts, no permanent maintenance trades are employed full-time or part-time by the school district. Instead, to prevent excessive and possibly costly outsourcing of maintenance work, some maintenance duties are assigned to head custodians or

custodians when their known abilities match such assignments. For example, a head custodian with plumbing skills was recently given an assignment to replace automatic toilet flush valves, rather than hiring a plumbing firm. Although the custodian was paid overtime, the cost was significantly lower than the outsourcing alternative.

HWRSD also places maintenance contractors under a retainer for major preventative maintenance tasks, and for any unexpected mechanical, electrical, plumbing, roof repair, and other needs. In all cases, the work requiring licensed professionals is outsourced by the district.

This arrangement represents a frugal and diligent best practice. According to *American School and University Magazine*,* over 70 percent of schools in the United States outsource one or more major maintenance tasks.

> *What are the advantages of outsourcing? Outsourcing enables budget flexibility. It lets organizations pay for only the services they need and when they need them. It also reduces the need to hire and train specialized staff, brings in expertise from the outside, and reduces capital expense, yielding better control of operating costs. The outsourcing arrangement can change as your maintenance needs change.*

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for the diligent and frugal organizational structure of its facilities maintenance activities.

6.2 CAPITAL PLANNING AND FACILITIES USE

Like groundskeeping and cleaning, the planning for the upkeep, renovation, expansion, alteration, and construction of school facilities must be a continuing activity. As described in the resource section on facilities master planning of the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, school districts should never deactivate their planning activities. Successful facilities planning must be an ongoing process. **

FINDING

Beginning two years ago, HWRSD commissioned outside professionals to conduct several major facilities studies. Evergreen consultants were provided the following documents:

- *Space Needs and Demographic Study,* Final Draft Report, October 23, 2008;
- *High School Auditorium Feasibility Study,* Final Report, March 31, 2010; and
- *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment;* Draft Report, October 28, 2010.

**http://www.plantservices.com/articles/2004/159.html.*
*** http://www.ncef.org/rl/masterplan.cfm.*

These reports were prepared principally by the firm of Dore & Whittier Architects of Newburyport, Massachusetts, and South Burlington, Vermont, with additional data supplied by demographers and consulting engineers. Collectively, these reports contain detailed, comprehensive and timely information on HWRSD facilities, and present a professional and financial evaluation of major options for next steps in planning, maintenance, and operations.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for its diligence and foresight in contracting for major facilities assessments to determine space needs, demographic trends, and current building conditions.

FINDING

In the past, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District routinely maintained a facilities master plan with a four-year time horizon. This plan allowed priorities to be set and goals to be pursued in a transparent and accountable fashion.

Unfortunately, this excellent past practice has been all but discontinued in recent years in the district. As noted in this section's introduction, facilities planning should be an ongoing activity. As such, it helps everyone concerned—school committee members, central office administrators, school administrators, fiscal managers, parents, and the general public—to better understand, agree upon, and support the district's goals and objectives in the management of its buildings.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-1:

Prepare and implement a five-year facilities master planning process in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District should prepare a "Five-Year Facilities Master Plan for 2012-16", update it annually, use it as the official facilities plan for HWRSD, and measure progress against the plan. The Five-Year Facilities Master Plan for 2012-2016 should be established as a living document that guides the facilities planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance activities of HWRSD.

The plan's characteristics are described below:

- The Facilities Master Plan document should be officially monitored and updated, and its contents distributed by the Facilities Office to the HWRSD School Committee and the Boards of Selectmen of both Towns. Only planning actions compatible with this planning document should be initiated. If plans contrary to the document, or not contained in the document, are contemplated, then the plan must be amended.

- The initial document should be completed in time for the 2012-13 budget preparation, and should contain an immediate funding request for 2012-13 for such items as new construction, renovation, additions, and maintenance and operations with cost data

provided in the Dore & Whittier and Evergreen studies. The funding request should also contain a forecast for the remaining four-year period to fiscal planners in both towns of needs that will come up in the future.

- Every year (as one year of the plan is implemented), a new year should be added to the plan. (e.g., the following year it becomes the Five-Year Capital Facilities Plan 2013-2017.) This type of updating activity for the plan should become mandatory to keep the Master Plan current as well as useful as a guide.

- The Master Plan's priorities for funding in each upcoming fiscal year should be proposed by the School Committee to the Town Selectmen. The Selectmen should discuss and possibly revise the proposal of the School Committee. If possible, a joint session of the Town Selectmen and the School Committee should agree on the final items to be included in the current year, and on the tentative plans for the ensuing four years. A formal vote by the Selectmen and the School Committee should then ratify the plan.

Prototype Plan Description

The Five-Year Facilities Master Plan should address the following:

- the strategy required to meet the need for facility improvement and for the capital investments necessary to support existing and projected educational needs;

- the educational goals of HWRSD to satisfy the needs of students, parents, educators, administrative staff, and the community; and

- realistic strategies to help HWRSD provide for its short- and long-range facilities needs.

The planning process never ends. As such, when the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan for 2012-2016 has been adopted, HWRSD should then commence a re-evaluation of the plan in light of current and future needs. These reviews should occur as often as a new need arises, but not less than annually.

While the process for developing and maintaining a Five-Year Facilities Master Plan can be complex and intricate for very large school districts, an effort should be made to keep the process uncomplicated in HWRSD.

Goal-setting Around Four Priorities

Planners must address four critical factors throughout the planning process: quality, educational program, budget, and time.

Before the planning process begins, HWRSD should decide which of these four priority areas is most important:

- Financial constraints
- Time constraints
- Educational specifications (facility programs)
- Quality

For example, if HWRSD is having financial problems, then the budget may cause HWRSD to follow a certain path to its end. Likewise, if time is a constraint, then HWRSD staff and town officials must consider that quality and educational specifications may have to take a back seat. It would be advised that key personnel address all four factors when considering compromises on the needs of the educational program.

Goal-setting for the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan should include the following:

- School Committee Members, Selectmen and pertinent staff should conduct a thorough review, analysis, and evaluation of the recently completed reports on HWRSD facilities. This process will enable understanding of the issues that require resolution.
- Recommend priorities and strategies concerning operations and maintenance, proposed projects, student and faculty stations, and potential financial sources that will meet the facility needs and educational goals of HWRSD.
- Continue gathering data and prepare a Project Plan of Action. The Project Plan of Action should identify necessary routine operating and maintenance actions, special projects and their priorities, define the scope, budgets and construction/renovation schedules. It will help to coordinate the financial and project phase issues.
- Provide a process that includes and involves all stakeholders: community, schools, administrators, the school committee, selectmen, and other agencies of government.
- Develop implementation guidelines for the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan and the Project Plan of Action.

Facilities Master Plan Team

HWRSD should assemble a Facilities Master Plan Team to oversee the steady, transparent, and accountable implementation of the Facilities Master Plan.

This Master Plan Team should include one or two School Committee members, and designated Town Selectmen, as well as facilities and real estate experts, demographers, educators, the superintendent, and stakeholders in the community. The Team would guide the facilities planning, design and construction effort in HWRSD, and focus especially on educational philosophy, financing, and facilities needs.

Initially, team meetings should be conducted not less frequently than every two weeks. This will speed the process and focus the membership on those issues that are being researched, developed or contemplated. As the entire process becomes more routine, the meetings may occur monthly and occasionally less frequently. However, caution is advised not to let the planning process stall.

It may be valuable to include members from other local and state government agencies on the team. Other school districts have found that by partnering with non-educational agencies during the planning process, it is often possible to develop school facilities that provide for other needs and activities in the community, thus increasing prospective facilities use revenue.

Community Meetings

Authentic community engagement instills a sense of ownership within a community, which is a key factor in sustaining school improvement efforts. Community input is essential in any Five-Year Facilities Master Planning process. It is advised that the Team conduct a series of "open forum" meetings, in Hamilton and Wenham, encouraging community participation. Initially, there should be at least three rounds of meetings in strategic locations that maximize the potential for community involvement. * During the first round of meetings, the planning process should be explained, goals and objectives presented, and community input solicited on the educational needs. Included in this appraisal should be discussions eliciting information about any new or unmet needs of students.

During the second round of meetings, the community should be apprised of the data collection efforts to date (e.g. the reports prepared recently by Dore & Whittier, the current status of HWRSD school facilities, and the demographic data affecting the master plan). Many of these needed accomplishments have already occurred.

- A profile has been developed of the implications of the HWRSD educational goals for its facilities.
- An analysis has been completed of the impact of current and projected enrollment vis-a-vis the capacity of the existing facilities.
- The physical condition of the schools, along with any additional school-related buildings owned or leased by HWRSD, has been assessed.
- Major construction costs and costs of renovations have been estimated.

The third round of meetings should present the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan, including the facilities condition assessment, the project plan, the implementation plan, and the financing plan. Any recommendations to construct new facilities, abandon existing facilities, or consolidate two or more facilities should be explained in detail. Sufficient time should be allotted to ensure full community awareness of the impact of all plan recommendations.

While there may be little community interest in the mundane aspects of facilities maintenance and operations, this information should also be presented because it is an essential and often costly element of any Facilities Master Plan.

As there may be considerable community discussion regarding the proposed project plan and financing plan, additional meetings may be held to address these concerns.

Professional Consultant

The Team should hire, as soon as possible, a professional firm to help the district establish and implement the facility planning process. While HWRSD apparently has had such a process in place, there appears to be little institutional memory remaining on how it was established and implemented. In addition, the process ended or perhaps was purposely discontinued years ago.

**For a resource list on community participation, see http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/community_participation.cfm .*

This gives credence to the possibility that the purpose, scope and seriousness of facility master planning were not sufficiently understood in HWRSD.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of creating and then updating the Facilities Master Plan is estimated at $20,000.

The full implementation of the plan, and its official use as a guide document for decision making, has the potential of creating a transparent set of actions that can be easily understood and thus supported or opposed by the general public. Savings due to an avoidance of errors, and less need to react rapidly to unanticipated or crisis situations, are palpable, but cannot be easily quantified at this time.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Prepare a Five-Year Facilities Master Plan	($20,000)	$0	$0	$0	$0

FINDING

Evergreen consultants examined the Dore & Whittier reports listed previously and found estimated capital improvement costs for the five schools and the Center Building in the amount of $46,264,160. While not all of these estimated costs can be attributed to the consequences of required routine maintenance having been deferred, a certain fraction thereof is likely the result of such maintenance neglect.

The U.S. Government (*www.FASAB.gov*) in its Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standard 6, defines deferred maintenance in this way:

> *"Deferred maintenance" is maintenance that was not performed when it should have been or was scheduled to be and which, therefore, is put off or delayed for a future period. For purposes of this standard, maintenance is described as the act of keeping fixed assets in acceptable condition. It includes preventive maintenance, normal repairs, replacement of parts and structural components, and other activities needed to preserve the asset so that it continues to provide acceptable services and achieves its expected life. Maintenance excludes activities aimed at expanding the capacity of an asset or otherwise upgrading it to serve needs different from, or significantly greater than, those originally intended.*

According to research completed in 2001 by David Todd Geaslin, the cost of repairing the damage from failure due to deferred maintenance is usually the square of the original cost of the needed maintenance task. Thus a $1,000 roof repair deferred or never done can result in a $1,000,000 cost of a failed roof. *

> *When we attempt to force maintenance spending into specific lumps of time that do not meet the needs of our machines, we create the need to defer maintenance. Maintenance budgets fail because final budgeting authorities do not understand the disastrous consequences of deferring maintenance.*

** http://www.petersonpredict.com/whatispm_deferredmaint.htm.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-2:

Include a thorough and exhaustive schedule of preventive maintenance actions that must be funded and completed as part of the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan.

Dore & Whittier Architects did not provide a cost amount for deferred maintenance at HWRSD in the *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment* Report. However, they have provided a "Capital Improvement Plan" that estimates the cost of all recommended major improvements, including:

- Roofing
- Site improvements
- Exterior upgrades
- Flooring
- Ceilings
- Safety
- Life safety
- Ongoing (life extending) maintenance
- Handicapped accessibility
- HVAC upgrades
- Code compliance
- Energy efficiency
- Plumbing
- Telephone, data, PA systems updates
- Security
- School clock system
- Hazardous materials abatement

Exhibit 6-3 shows the estimated capital improvement costs for the five schools and the Center Building. The first column reflects detailed estimates from the Dore & Whittier Report, while the last column reflects upward revisions from the Dore & Whittier slide presentation on October 28, 2010. These costs must be borne by HWRSD as part of future building renovations, additions, or building replacements. It is equally important that all future maintenance actions be funded sufficiently in order to avoid the build-up of a future deferred maintenance backlog. This is accomplished best by incorporating and funding a preventive maintenance schedule for each building HWRSD maintains.

The steps in creating an effective preventive maintenance program are simple and yet complex. Douglas Chasick, a facility management professional, provides a well-structured explanation. * Although the topic is the maintenance of condominiums and cooperatives, the basic ideas apply to all types of buildings, including schools.

**http://www.smmonline.com/Articles_PreventativeMaintenance.htm.*

Exhibit 6-3
HWRSD School Facilities
Estimated Capital Improvement Costs
as of October 2010

Site	Estimated Capital Improvement Cost	Revised Capital Improvement Cost (as of 10/28/10)
Buker Elementary School	$7,445,674	$8,200,000
Cutler Elementary School	$8,554,261	$9,400,000
Winthrop Elementary School	$9,772,612	$10,700,000
Middle School and High School	$17,741,165	$19,500,000
Center Building	$2,750,448	$3,000,000
TOTAL	**$46,264,160**	**$50,800,000**

Source: Comprehensive Facilities Assessment, Dore & Whittier, October 28, 2010.

- First, a list is needed of all of the items in HWRSD buildings that need to be inspected periodically, and provided preventive maintenance. The most exhaustive list of this type is available from the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA). A sample of such a list is shown in **Exhibit 6-4.** This particular list focuses on roof components, but all building components with a limited service life must be on the preventive maintenance list. The components include exterior envelope, interior finishes, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, elevators, and structure.

- Second, the preventive maintenance schedules prepared for use by HWRSD can be employed as manual checklists, or incorporated into a software system that monitors the schedule, issues reminder notices, prepares work orders, processes invoices, and accounts for internal labor hours spent, materials costs, and many other items.

- Third, whether or not manual or automated systems are used, the end result of a preventive maintenance system should be a clear and easily viewed record of such work accomplished, and of its cost. If work is unable to be completed according to the schedule, then adjustments should be made in staffing, funding, sourcing of work, or all of these variables. Preventive maintenance should not be deferred. If extraordinary circumstances require a short-range deferral, arrangements should be made to catch up immediately.

FISCAL IMPACT

The incorporation of a preventive maintenance schedule can be accomplished under the provisions and costs of **Recommendation 6-1.** The full funding requirements of preventive maintenance and the cost of a computerized maintenance management software program (CMMS) are discussed later in this chapter.

FINDING

The Dore & Whittier *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment* Report lists extensive actions that need to be taken in order to make HWRSD's facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Exhibit 6-4
Sample List of Roofing-Related Preventive Maintenance Items According to the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)

Building: System / Component / Unit	Name or Number of Building	BOMA Life-Years	Frequency of inspections, and types of routine preventive maintenance tasks and costs listed below
D. Roofing			***Manufacturers' warranties should be obtained, and manufacturers' recommendations should be used to schedule Inspections and maintenance actions. In the case of a small School district such as HWRSD, major preventive maintenance work should be outsourced in the manner that the District already does for its heating and ventilating systems.***
01. 4-Ply Built-Up			
	a. Asphalt		
	i. Flat (dead level)	18	
	ii. Sloped (1/4 " per foot)	25	
	b. Cold Tar	35	
	c. Hot Applied Rubberized Asphalt (Protected Membrane Assembly)	30	
02. 2-Ply Modified Bitumen (Mopped Down)			
	a. Flat (dead level)	15	
	b. Sloped (1/4" per foot)	20	
03. Single Ply			
	a. EPDM		
	i. Flat (dead level)	15	
	ii. Sloped (1/4" per foot)	20	
	b. Thermoplastic (Hypalon, PVC)	15	
	c. Modified Bitumen (Touched On)		
	i. Flat (dead level)	10	
	ii. Sloped (1/4" per foot)	15	
04. Metal			
	a. Structural Roof Panels (Prefinished Galv. Steel)	25	
	b. Premanufactured Architectural Roof Panels--(Prefinished Alum. Or Galv. Steel)	25	
	c. Custom Fabricated Standing Seam Roofing-- (Copper, Lead Coated Copper, Terne Coated Stainless Steel)	75+	
	d. Custom Fabricated Flat Seam-- (Copper, Lead Coated Copper, Terne Coated Stainless Steel)	50+	
05. Asphalt Shingles			
	a. 15 Year	15	
	b. 20 Year	20	
	c. 25 Year	25	
	d. 30 Year	30	
06. Slate			
	a. S-1	100	
	b. S-2	75	
	c. S-3	50	
07. Clay/Concrete Tile		50+	
08. Spray-On Polyurethane Foam Roofing		10	

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from BOMA Standards, 2010.

A review of the Dore & Whittier Report by Evergreen consultants, and site visits by the Evergreen Team to all schools and the Center Building, confirm that the school district has made little more than token gestures in the direction of providing accessibility to its buildings. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

Only religious facilities and private clubs are specifically exempt from the Americans with Disabilities Act—a federal law. HWRSD cannot ignore this law.

The Dore & Whittier *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment* Report lists a total of $2,126,330 in estimated ADA compliance costs for all of its buildings. The details are shown in **Exhibit 6-5.**

Exhibit 6-5
Estimated ADA Compliance Costs
November 2010

Site	ADA Compliance Cost
Buker Elementary School	$369,222
Cutler Elementary School	$261,280
Winthrop Elementary School	$228,620
Middle School and High School	$204,125*
Center Building	$1,063,083
TOTAL COST	**$2,126,330***

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from Comprehensive Facilities Assessment, Dore & Whittier, October 28, 2010.

*This figure does not include ADA compliance for the high school auditorium.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-3:

Include full ADA compliance in the initial formulation of the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan as described in Recommendation 6-1.

The Dore & Whittier *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment* Report contains a detailed description of all requirements for making the HWRSD facilities fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

While the required corrections are noted for all buildings, it is important to emphasize that the costs of ADA corrections in the high school auditorium are treated separately, as they are inextricably connected to a full renovation and upgrade of this space (see **Recommendation 6-4**).

FISCAL IMPACT

Exhibit 6-5 shows a total estimated cost of $2,126,330 for making all HWRSD facilities ADA accessible, with exception of the high school auditorium, which is treated separately by Dore & Whittier. These upgrades must be made as quickly as possible. It should be noted that $1,063,083 of this total amount would be required for the Center Building's ADA compliance updates.

In a separate recommendation (**Recommendation 6-8),** Evergreen advocates the non-renewal of HWRSD's lease for the Center Building. If this recommendation is accepted by HWRSD, then only $1,063,247 needs to be spent on making the school facilities ADA compliant. The $1,063,247 is based on present day values and may increase with the passage of time.

Available assistance from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) may reduce the cost to HWRSD by 31 percent or more (s*ee http://massschoolbuildings.org/uploadedFiles/About_MSBA/Policies_and_Guidelines/RateCalculation.pdf).* A reimbursement of about $330,000 is therefore plausible. The cost to Hamilton-Wenham taxpayers is $763,247.

Note: Evergreen is not including this cost in our fiscal summary as it was contained in the Dore & Whittier Report.

FINDING

Dore & Whittier Architects have studied the upgrade needs for the high school auditorium extensively in a separate report,* funded by the Hamilton-Wenham Education Fund. The architects have included the estimated cost of these upgrades in their *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment* Report at $4,082,500.

The report narrative summarizes the scope of the upgrade work as follows:

> *Completely renovate the existing auditorium: Remove entire slab and reconstruct to meet sloping requirements for (handicapped access). Provide new seats and VCT/carpeting, paint. Refinish stage and provide integrated ramp and stairs to stage. Provide new addition to accommodate theatrical needs that are currently in code violation (set storage and repair, costumes, green room, etc.) – estimate 1,000 sf. Gut control booth area and renovate with new stairs and lift. Provide new lighting, theater rigging, etc.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-4:

Renovate the high school auditorium at the earliest possible opportunity.

The costs of the renovation should be included in the first three years of the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan.

In the opinion of Evergreen consultants, this upgrade work is long overdue. The lack of ADA compliance of a major school district facility should not be permitted to persist. In addition, it was reported to Evergreen by HWRSD employees that the lack of ADA accessibility, plus the worn-out seating and outdated backstage and stage infrastructure, have caused many outside organizations to reject this venue as a location for plays, concerts, and other performances and events.

**Available at see http://www.hwschools.net/sc/auditoriumstudy/auditorium.htm.*

Such potential income sources will more likely book the auditorium once it has been brought up to current accessibility and technology standards (see **Recommendation 6-13** for further details).

FISCAL IMPACT

The $4 million estimate by Dore & Whittier Architects is based on current values, and may increase with the passage of time. However, assistance by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) may reduce the cost to HWRSD by 31 percent or more. * A reimbursement of $1,265,575 is plausible. Consequently, the cost to Hamilton-Wenham taxpayers is shown as $2,816,925, which should be evenly spread over the first three years of the Five-Year Master Plan. (**Note: This is the cost recommended by Dore & Whittier.**)

In addition, it is acceptable practice for public school districts across the United States to enlist the support of private companies in the sponsorship of such facilities as football stadiums, basketball arenas, and auditoriums in return for "naming rights." The pursuit of such funding has been controversial and emotional, and is not advocated by Evergreen Solutions. However, we feel obligated to point out that such arrangements have been discussed, pursued and occasionally consummated, by public school districts.

Evergreen recommends that the auditorium renovation be timed to coincide with the renovation of the central office in the high school, in time for occupancy by the district administration in the next three to five years (see **Recommendation 6-8**).

FINDING

All HWRSD buildings seem to be in need of considerable energy retrofit work. Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools have extremely poorly insulated building envelopes. While the former has recently received a new heating/ventilating plant, the latter requires one at the earliest possible opportunity. The brick-enveloped Buker Elementary School requires more energy efficient window and roof installations, and a new heating/ventilating plant.

The high school/middle school complex also requires much upgrading, including a better envelope design and a new heating/ventilating plant.

The Center Building is completely uninsulated and has single pane windows with the exception of the first floor. This building also requires an upgrade of its heating/ventilating system. In general, more energy efficient plumbing upgrades, especially toilet fixtures, are included with the ADA accessibility compliance retrofits.

Exhibit 6-6 shows the estimated costs of energy retrofits for the five schools and the Center Building, based on the estimates furnished in the Dore & Whittier *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment*.

**http://massschoolbuildings.org/ uploadedFiles/About_MSBA/Policies_and_Guidelines/RateCalculation.pdf* .

Exhibit 6-6
Estimated Energy Retrofit Cost
November 2010

Site	Energy Retrofit Cost
Buker Elementary School	$2,122,107
Cutler Elementary School	$2,397,506
Winthrop Elementary School	$4,227,103
Middle School and High School	$7,538,993
Center Building	$1,154,245
TOTAL COST	**$17,439,954**

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from Comprehensive Facilities Assessment, Dore & Whittier, October 28, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-5:

Perform energy retrofits under a performance contract with an Energy Service Company (ESCo), and incorporate the actions in the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan.

HWRSD should make a full energy retrofit a high priority for all of its facilities. While an energy efficiency assessment is not in Evergreen's scope of work, we feel compelled to emphasize the importance and potential for money savings of addressing energy retrofit issues in the recommended Five-Year Facilities Master Plan. Any energy retrofit work should be coordinated with planned renovations and additions.

Evergreen consultants were informed that Hamilton and Wenham are in the process of implementing an ESCo program. In addition, HWRSD is working with the CMC and Johnson Controls to perform an initial energy audit of the high school and middle school complex. This is a prelude to HWRSD's hiring of an ESCo to prepare and execute a performance contract for the purpose of financing energy retrofit projects with projected utility bill savings as collateral. This action can be an excellent solution for school districts with limited or exhausted bonding capacity, especially because the ESCo guarantees payment of the loan, in the event that energy savings should ever be lower than the loan repayment requirement. However, Evergreen cautions against selecting an ESCo without consideration of competing offers and estimates.

In many jurisdictions, the hiring of an ESCo is not covered by competitive bidding rules, but due diligence should be followed in any event, as ESCo fees and performance contract provisions may vary widely to the benefit or detriment of the school district.

If a performance contract is selected that is favorable to HWRSD, and the ESCo is both reputable and has an impressive performance record, then it is likely that the cost of energy retrofits will be beneficial to HWRSD. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) offers school districts desiring to hire an ESCo advice and technical assistance.*

* *www.massschoolbuildings.org)*

FISCAL IMPACT

If a proper performance contracting instrument is entered into by HWRSD, the net cost of energy retrofits to the school district should be negligible. While some school districts working with Evergreen Solutions have opted to self-finance energy retrofits to realize greater savings due to no fees being paid to an ESCo, smaller districts such as HWRSD typically do not have the internal resources to take on major energy retrofit efforts.

If HWRSD does not renew its lease for the Center Building (see **Recommendation 6-8**), then the school district will not be responsible for the estimated energy retrofit costs of $1,154,245. However, the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham are already working with an ESCo to pursue similar work.

FINDING

A desire to reconfigure the three elementary schools has apparently existed for many years in the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham. During the on-site evaluation, members of the Evergreen Team had discussions about a variety of reconfiguration options with many officials of the school district and both towns.

In addition, in its *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment Report*, Dore & Whittier was charged specifically with evaluating several reconfiguration options ranging from simply updating the three elementary schools, to demolishing Winthrop School and creating new space at the remaining elementary schools, or rebuilding Winthrop Elementary School at a new site. It is of interest that the architects chose to suggest additional options for future evaluation at the conclusion of their report. Evergreen Solutions was asked by town officials (in the RFP) to consider yet another possible reconfiguration option.

Here is synopsis of all options under consideration:

- Dore & Whittier **Option 1**: Address space needs and physical improvements at Buker, Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools based on space needs assessments, a demographic survey, and the current facilities assessments. No improvements to the high school and middle school other than those items identified in the capital improvements of the site and building assessments.

  Winthrop Elementary School concepts for **Option 1** are split into three suboptions:

  1a. renovations and additions to all schools to meet current space need (**1a**); or

  1b. same as **1a**., except a new Winthrop Elementary School on its existing site; or

  1c. same as **1b**., except new Winthrop Elementary School on as yet to be identified new site.

- Dore & Whittier **Option 2**. Consolidate three elementary schools into two. Review possible expansion of Buker and Cutler Elementary Schools on their sites to absorb

Winthrop students. Winthrop would be demolished to open its site for a mixed use, tax revenue producing, development. High school and middle school improvements remain as in **Option 1**.

Exhibit 6-7 summarizes the estimated capital improvement costs (if only improvements are made and no options exercised), as well as the costs for **Options 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2**. The previously cited costs for ADA compliance, energy retrofits, and high school auditorium renovations are included in the figures for capital improvements in this exhibit. In **Option 1c**, the cost of the new site and any revenue from the sale of the existing site has not been calculated. **Option 2** reflects demolition cost for the Winthrop Elementary School only, and no revenues from the sale of the site to development interests.

Exhibit 6-7
Summary of Costs for Capital Improvements and Options 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2 from Dore & Whittier Facilities Assessment (in millions of dollars)

Building Name	Capital Improvements	Option 1a	Option 1b	Option 1c	Option 2
Buker Elementary School	$8.2	$18.2	$18.2	$18.2	$24.5
Cutler Elementary School	$9.4	$20.6	$20.6	$20.6	$33.5
Winthrop Elementary School	$10.7	$21.3	$26.0	$27.1	$.77
HS/MS (Capital Improvements Only)	$19.5	$19.5	$19.5	$19.5	$19.5
Center Building (Capital Improvement Only)*	$3.0	$3.0	$3.0	$3.0	$3.0
TOTAL COSTS	**$50.8**	**$82.6**	**$87.3**	**$88.4**	**$81.3**

Source: Dore & Whittier Facilities Assessment Presentation to HWRSD School Committee, October 28, 2010.

*If Center Building lease is terminated at its expiration, these costs will not accrue to HWRSD.

In the October 28, 2010 presentation to the School Committee, Dore & Whittier summarize their findings and views, and offered for consideration other options they were not asked to analyze:

- *All (HWRSD) schools have educational and physical inadequacies that should be addressed to meet the needs and demands of a 21st Century education.*
- *Consider a new school on the Cutler site. This will allow for easier phasing of construction with less impact on educational function. The new Cutler school could be a consolidation (opportunity) by removing Buker.*
- *Consider renovations and expansions to Winthrop. The existing building is not worthy of demolition.*
- *Consider reducing the number of students at Buker to fit within MSBA guidelines, using the existing building footprint and renovate to meet needs. This will reduce traffic congestion at this site while keeping a neighborhood school and continue use of playfields by students and residents – a very important asset.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-6:

Commit firmly and by formal resolution to a plan of action that preserves operations at all three elementary schools.

In general, Evergreen consultants agree with the basic sentiments expressed by Dore & Whittier Architects. The School Committee should, by resolution, make a commitment to the continued operation of primary grades at the Buker, Cutler, and Winthrop sites.

Demographic projections do not justify the future closing of one of the three schools due to lack of student enrollment. Instead, the elimination of one elementary school would require the significant expansion of the remaining two schools. One of these schools (Buker) does not have sufficient acreage to permit a sensible expansion plan. The rebuilding of Winthrop Elementary School on a new site would likely place it at the periphery of the district, thus increasing transportation costs and contradicting the well-regarded principles of smart growth.

Specifically, Evergreen recommends the following:

- Renovate and expand Winthrop Elementary School to meet the current and projected space and facility needs as forecasted in the demographic, space, and facility assessment reports. The building is located on a generous site, and ideally positioned for short response time adjacent to the public safety and emergency services building of the Town of Hamilton.

  Although it was built in 1958-59, the design emphasizes the current design philosophy of daylighting. Unlike many of the school buildings erected during this era, it was not designed for the now almost universally discredited "open classroom" philosophy. In addition, the building's layout is straightforward and allows relatively easy oversight and control. An excellent sound attenuation quality is also evident in the design.

  Moreover, unlike any of the other buildings of HWRSD, Winthrop Elementary School was designed by the well-known and critically-acclaimed American architect Hugh Stubbins (1912-2006). His biography and list of major building commissions may be found *at http://www.greatbuildings.com/architects/ Hugh_Stubbins.html.* Having studied at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, he was especially active in the State of Massachusetts, and in the northeastern United States as a whole.

  As such, Winthrop Elementary School is an architectural work worthy of recognition not only in the body of work of a highly-praised architect, but also by the National Register of Historic Places.* Evergreen does not take advocacy positions for National Register nominations, but feels obliged to point out this building's significance.

**http://www.nps.gov/nr/national _register_fundamentals.htm*)

There is more evidence of deferred maintenance at Winthrop Elementary School than on the other two schools. This may be because the fate of Winthrop Elementary School has been uncertain for many years due to speculation over its replacement by a private mixed use development. This indeterminate state may have caused reluctance on the part of HWRSD to invest not only in building improvements, but also in routine maintenance.

- Renovate Buker Elementary School to meet current and projected educational needs. This building should not be significantly expanded, other than perhaps to make its already existing, but poorly used, basement spaces more usable for ancillary functions (music, art, physical education), and to increase the size of its gymnasium to resemble more closely the MSBA guidelines. [**Note**: An option Evergreen consultants were asked to consider might fit into the preference of not expanding the footprint of Buker appreciably. This option advocates placing the lower primary grades into Buker – e.g., PK – 1 or PK – 2. Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools would then house grades 2 – 5 or 3 – 5. Such a move might only require the mere renovation at the Buker site, without any need to increase the gymnasium or make the basement spaces usable for educational purposes. This option is considered separately (see **Recommendation 6-7**). However, the "renovation-without-significant-additions" stance remains Evergreen's recommendation for Buker Elementary School regardless of other decisions concerning the distribution of grades in the three elementary schools].

- Renovate and expand Cutler Elementary School to meet the current and projected space and facility needs as forecasted in the demographic, space, and facility assessment reports. Of the three HWRSD elementary schools, Cutler appears to be the most likely candidate for demolition and rebuilding, but the facility can and should be renovated and expanded. Demolition and rebuilding should only be considered if such a move would save considerable money over renovations and additions. Since the school is located on the largest of the three elementary school sites, a new school could conceivably be erected while the existing school remains in use.

- Evergreen agrees that only the Capital Improvements listed for the high and middle schools should be funded in the Five-Year Facilities Plan, including the full renovation of the auditorium. These improvements should also include the possible expansion of space to accommodate an office suite for the HWRSD central office administration (see **Recommendation 6-8).**

- Evergreen consultants recommend the termination of the lease of the Center Building at or before its termination date, approximately 54 months from now (see **Recommendation 6-8**).

FISCAL IMPACT

Evergreen's **Recommendation 6-6** is essentially the same as **Option 1a** presented in the Dore & Whittier *Facilities Assessment*. The only major difference is that Evergreen recommends eventual elimination of the Center Building as the administrative location, and the return of the central office to a suite in the high school (see **Recommendation 6-8**).

This action eliminates capital improvement costs for the Center Building and lowers the energy costs for HWRSD, but there will be capital improvements expenditures to accommodate the HWRSD administrative functions in the high school.

For the purposes of these preliminary cost estimates, Evergreen considers the fiscal impact to remain in the order of magnitude of **Option 1a** of $82.6 million (see **Exhibit 6-7).** Of this amount, expenditures for energy retrofits have already been accounted for in prior recommendations. Thus, the remaining cost to exercise **Option 1a** is $82.6 million minus $17.5 million, or about $65 million.

Assistance by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) may reduce the cost to HWRSD by 31 percent or more.* A reimbursement of $20.2 million is plausible. Consequently, the cost to Hamilton-Wenham taxpayers is shown as $45 million, presumably to be financed with a public bond issue. Assuming a 5 percent interest rate and 12 monthly payments per year, the annual debt service would be approximately $4,271,000 spread over the next 15 years. **Note: This cost is shown in the Dore & Whittier Report and not replicated in Evergreen's report.**

FINDING

A plan to reconfigure the three HWRSD elementary schools was considered by Evergreen consultants. In essence, we were asked to look at the following:

- place Grades PK-2 (or PK-1) at Buker Elementary School. (This would take advantage of the smaller size of Buker and its equally smaller, more protected playgrounds. It would eliminate the need to enlarge the gymnasium and other support spaces, and the basement spaces would not be in need of renovation); and

- place Grades 3-5 (or 2-5) at Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools.

Exhibit 6-8 shows the current distribution of grades and classes at the three HWRSD elementary schools: Buker, Cutler, and Winthrop. Some data were derived from the *Comprehensive Facilities Assessment* by Dore & Whittier Architects. According to demographic studies completed in late 2008 (*Space Needs and Demographic Study*, Dore & Whittier Architects, October 28, 2008), no significant changes are expected in student enrollment within the foreseeable future. However, in the opinion of Evergreen consultants, based on interviews with school administrators and other district officials, the internal distribution of students may increase in special education, requiring in some cases additional dedicated classroom space.

On the basis of **Exhibit 6-8,** the total membership in Grades PK – 2 at Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools is 281. This population could not be placed into Buker Elementary School, especially since it has a K – 2 membership of 126 that would remain there. Thus, a move of all PK – 2 grades into Buker is not feasible.

**http://massschoolbuildings.org/uploadedFiles/About_MSBA/ Policies_and_Guidelines/RateCalculation.pdf.*

Exhibit 6-8
Distribution and Membership in Grades PK-5 in Buker, Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools October 2010

Buker Elementary School

Original construction:	1953						
Additions:	1955 and 1989						
Gross floor area:	44,700 sf						
Site acreage:	7.13 acres						
Total students:	263 as of October 2010 (258 in Dore & Whittier Facilities Assessment Report)						
Grade distribution:	K	K (a.m.)	1	2	3	4	5
Number of classes:	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Pupils per grade:	16	23	46	41	47	50	40
Avg. pupils/class:	16	23	23	21	23	25	20
*Primary + (S) teachers:	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
*Teacher aides (S or R):	1(S)	1(R)	.5(S)	.5(S)	2(S)	2(S)	2(S)

*S=Special Education; R=regular

Cutler Elementary School

Original construction:	1951						
Additions:	1952, 1956, and 1989						
Gross floor area:	45,800 sf						
Site acreage:	11.5 acres						
Total students:	295 as of October 2010 (300 in Dore & Whittier Facilities Assessment Report)						
Grade distribution:	K	K (a.m.)	1	2	3	4	5
Number of classes:	1	1	2	3	2	2	3
Pupils per grade	18	23	41	52	52	52	57
Avg. pupils/class:	18	23	20	17	26	26	19
Primary + S teachers:	1	.66	2.1	3.3	2.3	3.1	4
Teacher aides:	.2(S)	.6(R)	.1(S)	1.1(S)	.1(S)	.1(S)	.2(S)

Winthrop Elementary School

Original construction:	1958-1959						
Additions:	1989						
Gross floor area:	46,000 sf						
Site acreage:	14.8 acres						
Total students:	287 as of October 2010 (330 in Dore & Whittier Facilities Assessment Report)						
Grade distribution:	PK (a.m.)	K	1	2	3	4	5
Number of classes:	1	3	2	2	2	2	2
Students per grade:	11	53	40	43	48	52	40
Avg. students/class:	11	18	20	21	24	26	20
Primary teachers:	.5	3.6	2	2	2	2	2
Teacher aides :	1	1.5	2	1.5	1	1	1

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from information provided by HWRSD, October 2010.

A similar examination was then conducted by Evergreen on the premise of moving all PK – 1 grades at Buker Elementary School. As shown in **Exhibit 6-8,** the total membership in Grades PK – 1 at Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools is 186. The K – 1 membership at Buker Elementary School is 85. The combined PK-1 membership at Buker Elementary School would therefore be 271 students. With a current student population of 263, a reconfiguration of Buker to PK – 1 appears feasible purely from a student count perspective. The question remaining to be answered is if the number of classrooms available at Buker is sufficient to house the classrooms that would be transferred from Cutler and Winthrop.

The total number of spaces currently used as classrooms at Buker is 12. According to current grade and classroom data in **Exhibit 6-8**, four K – 1 classrooms would remain at Buker, and eight classrooms currently housing grades 2 – 5 would become available to house grades PK – 1 from Cutler and Winthrop. Cutler currently uses four classrooms for its K – 1 students. One of these is a half-day morning Kindergarten. Winthrop currently uses six classrooms for its PK – 1 population, one of these is a half-day morning Pre-Kindergarten. Even if the two half-day classes could be combined into one classroom by switching one of the classes to afternoon, an additional classroom would still need to be found at Buker Elementary School to accommodate this re-arrangement. The only classroom spaces available at Buker Elementary School are presently set aside for art and music programs. One, or perhaps both, of these spaces would need to be converted to classroom use. This is a plausible scenario, as separate art and music programs are rarely operated for PK – 1 students. In addition, a space now serving as the Buker Computer Lab could also be converted to classroom use. Given these provisos, a PK – 1 reconfiguration of Buker without major additions or renovations is narrowly feasible. Such a move will not allow much classroom flexibility nor growth potential in the lower grades in HWRSD. In addition, there may not be enough flexible space for the provision of special education spaces as that need may arise (see **Exhibit 6-9** for a Floor Plan of Buker Elementary School).

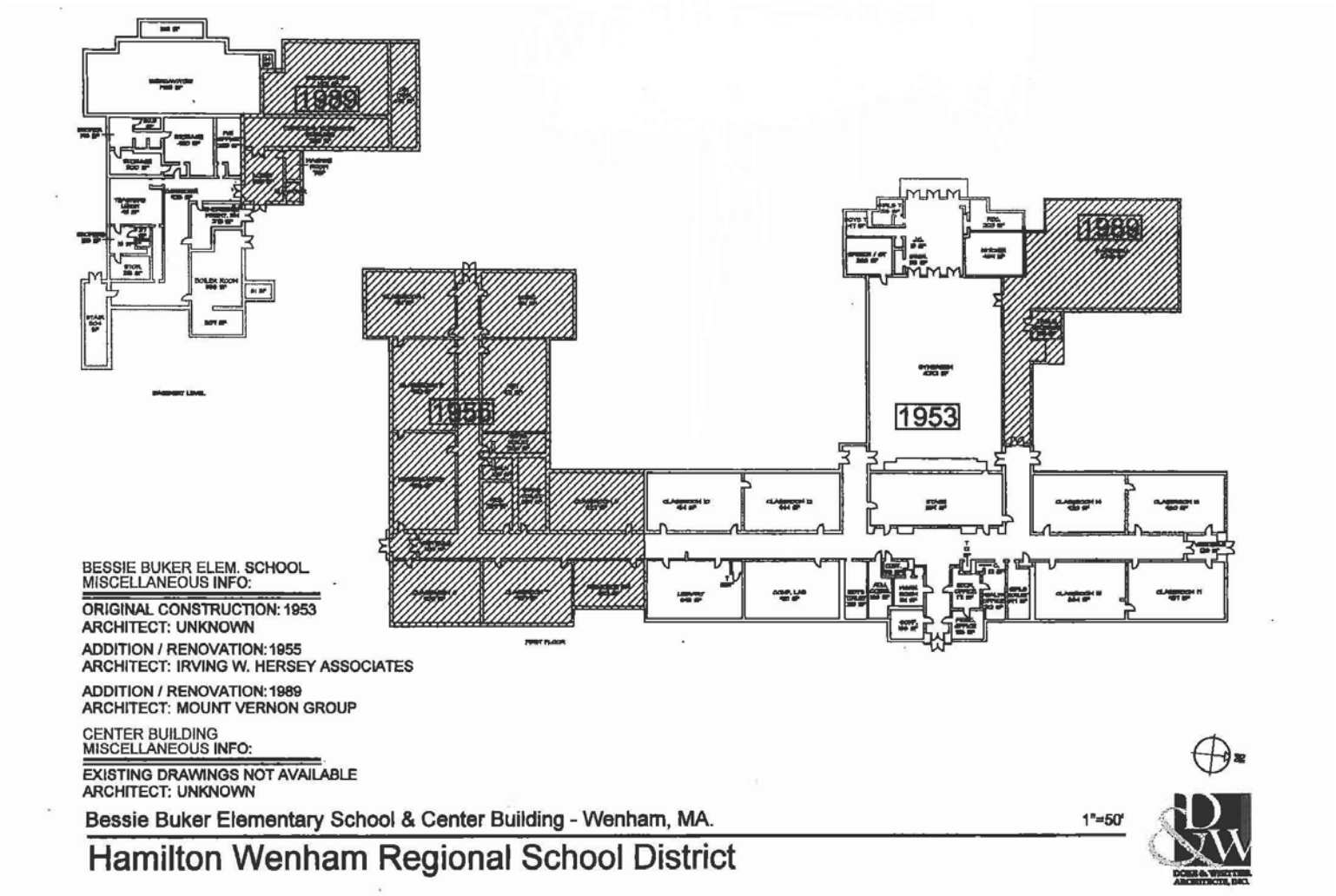
Evergreen did not examine the feasibility of creating grade 2 – 5 configurations at Cutler or Winthrop Elementary Schools. The safe assumption can be made that such configurations are feasible, given the need to renovate and add to these schools.

Aside from the question of the adequacy of physical facilities for this reconfiguration, two other questions should be considered:

- What is the pedagogical soundness of this reconfiguration?
- Can teaching positions be eliminated by this action?

Educational literature answers the first question as being educationally unsound. Reconfiguring schools in a way that causes students, especially students with special needs, to make numerous transitions (e.g. from a PK-2 school to a 3 – 5 school to a middle school) creates challenges that potentially can affect academic progress, social development, ability to maintain focus, and self-confidence. This structure also offers multiple complications in terms of planning for these students. Transition planning from grade to grade occurs for these students annually as their IEPs are re-discussed and tailored to meet individual needs.

Exhibit 6-9
Floor Plan of Buker Elementary School
Showing Classrooms and Other Spaces Available
For PK – 1 Reconfiguration
November 2010



Minor, in *Effective Practices in Early Intervention Planning Transitions to Preschool* (Summer 2002), also identifies transition factors that need to be considered for all special education students:

- make arrangements to meet the family and child before the child begins;
- provide pictures, brochures, tours, time for observation for the family or previous service providers;
- identify physical barriers that may impede the child's access;
- conduct environmental analysis to determine modifications for children with visual and hearing needs;
- identify and supply special materials and equipment needed (adaptive seating, eating utensils, colorful and musical toys, trikes);
- arrange the classroom environment so that children feel safe to explore and socialize;
- adapt the environment to reduce the noise level by using shelves as dividers, chair tips to reduce the noise of moving chairs, adding carpet to bare floors and using foam place mats for hammering or construction activities;
- provide appropriate lighting throughout classroom;
- prepare volunteers, parents, and classmates about the new student (i.e. pictures, introducing new equipment before the child arrives);
- provide the staff information about the child's specific diagnosis and needs;
- obtain strategies used in previous program;
- clearly define the role of aides and para-professionals as they assist with the child;
- provide in-service training and information on young children with dual sensory impairment;
- provide support to classroom staff from specialized consultants;
- access technical assistance from the State Deaf-Blind Services;
- project for consultation as needed; and
- evaluate the child's adaptation to the new program and participation in classroom activities.

Given the small size of HWRSD and the limited staff to address each of those considerations, there is the possibility that the foundation for successful transitions among schools may miss some important needs, even with the best planning and most sincere intentions.

It is especially important for special education students and their parents to form strong relationships with the professionals in their lives and to understand the environment and procedures in their school. Changing schools causes relearning of each of these elements that impact student learning and adjustment.

Additional IEP issues will also need to be addressed beyond a simple change in grade within a school:

- busing;
- one-on-one paraprofessional support or a plan for increasing independence from that support;
- participation in different types of educational activities, music programs, library activities, and physical education classes;
- movement in a different school environment, whether to special classes (such as music) or to the cafeteria;
- class changes at off times in the general education schedule; and
- support for behavior plans and therapy.

Again, limited personnel may challenge the delivery of services (e.g., therapy).

In the early 1900s, about 96 percent of 18-year-olds had not completed high school. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1999), that percentage has dropped to only 14 percent. However, of those who do not complete high school, about 36 percent are students with learning disabilities and 59 percent are students with emotional/behavioral disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

In *Students with Disabilities who Drop Out of School—Implications for Policy and Practice*, The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition found that:

> *In the early 1990s, three projects funded by OSEP successfully implemented interventions to prevent student dropouts among those students with disabilities who were at greatest risk—those with learning disabilities and those with emotional or behavioral disabilities. These projects carefully tracked students so that they knew who continued in school and who dropped out.*
>
> *Five intervention strategies used by the projects helped to prevent school dropouts among a high risk population (Thurlow, Christenson, Sinclair, Evelo, & Thornton, 1995):*
>
> - *Persistence, Continuity, and Consistency—these were always provided concurrently, to show students that there was someone who was not going to give up on them or allow them to be distracted from school, that there was someone who knew the student and was available to them throughout the school year, the summer, and into*

the next school year, and that there was a common message about the need to stay in school.

- *Monitoring—the occurrence of risk behaviors (e.g., skipped classes, tardiness, absenteeism, behavioral referrals, suspensions, poor academic performance) were consistently tracked, as were the effects of interventions in response to risk behaviors.*
- *Relationships—a caring relationship between an adult connected to the school and the student was established.*
- *Affiliation—a sense of belonging to the school was encouraged through participation in school-related activities.*
- *Problem-Solving Skills—skills students need for solving a variety of problems were taught and supported so students were able to survive in challenging school, home, and community environments.*

Each of those findings must be carefully considered and purposefully addressed in each transition a student with special needs makes.

An answer to the second question about the possibility of eliminating teaching positions may be found in **Exhibit 6-10.** This exhibit shows the FTE teacher data for HWRSD and its peer districts.

Exhibit 6-10
FTE Teacher Distribution Across Grades
in HWRSD and Peer Districts
October 2010

School District	Grades PK-2 Teacher FTE	Grades 3-5 Teacher FTE	Grades 6-8 Teacher FTE	Grades 9-12 Teacher FTE
Hamilton-Wenham	**26.9**	**29.0**	**38.6**	**51.6**
Groton-Dunstable	28.0	34.7	39.6	48.8
Manchester-Essex	16.4	15.0	22.8	26.4
Mendon-Upton	32.9	39.5	42.2	57.0
Nashoba	44.9	40.6	47.8	57.7
Pentucket	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Peer Average	**30.6**	**32.5**	**38.1**	**47.5**

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from data of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

Exhibit 6-10 shows that HWRSD is below the district average of its peers in teacher FTE for grades PK – 2 and grades 3 – 5, whereas the teacher count for HWRSD is above the peer average for grades 6 – 8 and 9 – 12. While this observation makes no clear case against cutting more positions in the lower grades, it does show that HWRSD is already leaner than most of its peer districts in these grade categories.

Because there are no class size limits, and only floor area guidelines for school spaces in Massachusetts, it is theoretically possible to increase class sizes and eliminate some classrooms, thus permitting teaching positions to be eliminated. However, HWRSD class sizes already appear to be near the upper limits of best practice in many areas.

An article from 2004 stresses the benefits of class size reductions and limitations. An excerpt of this article* states:

> *Research, for the most part, tends to support the belief in the benefits of small classes. While not all studies on the subject have shown that students learn more in smaller settings—and while many are still ongoing—most studies have found some benefits.*
>
> *The biggest and most credible of them, a statewide study begun in Tennessee in the late 1970s, has even found that the learning gains students make in classes of 13 to 17 students persist long after the students move back into average-size classes. What's more, the Tennessee researchers found, poor and African-American students appeared to reap the greatest learning gains in smaller classes. After kindergarten, the gains black students made in smaller classes were typically twice as large as those for whites.*
>
> *Likewise, a 2001 evaluation by researchers at the Education Policy Studies Laboratory and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found that a 5-year-old program of class-size reduction in Wisconsin has resulted in higher achievement for children living in poverty.*

For reference, the current class size figures at Buker, Cutler, and Winthrop are summarized in **Exhibit 6-11.** These figures reveal a moderate class size in HWRSD. Only the half-day morning PK class at Winthrop is truly small; all other classes are average by most educational best practice parameters.

Exhibit 6-11
Average Class Sizes at Buker, Cutler and Winthrop Elementary Schools
November 2010

Elementary School	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5
Buker	n/a	20	23	21	23	25	20
Cutler	n/a	20	20	17	26	26	19
Winthrop	11	18	20	21	24	26	20

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions from HWRSD data, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-7:

Maintain the HWRSD elementary school grade distribution and configuration as currently exists.

**http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/class-size/)*

To change the configuration to PK – 1 at Buker, and 2– 5 at Cutler and Winthrop, respectively, is physically feasible, but is not pedagogically sound. In addition, an increase in elementary level class sizes is not recommended by Evergreen.

This recommendation is not intended to supersede other curricular recommendations in this report that might advocate changes or rearrangements in the manner in which special education or other programs are taught.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation has no fiscal impact.

NOTE: Evergreen's **Recommendation 6-7** is based on best practice principles. After our January 2011 report was submitted, we were made aware of the desire by HWRSD to re-configure the three elementary schools in another manner—as one large single elementary school. However, we continue to recommend instead leaving the three schools in their basic current configuration for the pedagogical reasons elaborated in our findings. As other facilities-related recommendations show, Evergreen also advocates for HWRSD to keep all three elementary schools, and definitely do not advocate developing one, large single elementary school.

It would be more efficient and cost effective to transfer teachers within single schools as shown below. Evergreen offers the following additional thoughts (shown in *italics*), with the two right columns added to the table:

Grade	Number of Classes	Average Number Students/Class	Changed Number of classes	Changed Average Number of Students/Class
Kindergarten	7	19		
First	6	21		
Second	7	19	*6*	*22.2*
Third	6	24	*7*	*20.6*
Fourth	6	26	*7*	*22.3*
Fifth	7	20	*6*	*23.3*

As can be seen, reducing the 2nd grade's 133 students from having 7 teachers to 6 teachers would keep class sizes within the HWRSD policy of 22-24 students. Moving that teacher to the third grade's 144 students would reduce the class size there from 24 students/class to 20.6 students.

Using a similar transfer between fourth and fifth grades would change class sizes as shown on the chart above.

Class sizes and projections should be reviewed annually by the district.

FINDING

According to the Dore & Whittier's *Facilities Assessment* Report, the Center Building is the original school house building for the town of Wenham. Its construction dates back about 130 years. The building has two finished floors totaling 11,160 square feet, and an unfinished basement of approximately 5,580 square feet. Most of the HWRSD administration is currently housed in the building; however, some administrators are at the high school. The building is leased from the Town of Wenham for one dollar, and the lease is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2015. Many of the administrative offices are on the first floor, while a few additional offices and conference/seminar spaces are on the second floor.

Although the Center Building's age and history would likely qualify it for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, it is at this time not even located in the official historic district in the Town of Wenham. In fact, because of its age and minimal upkeep over the years, the Center Building has several significant shortcomings.

The Dore & Whittier *Facilities Assessment* Report highlights some of the building's inadequacies:

- *The building envelope is completely uninsulated.*
- *The wood clapboard siding and exterior architectural trim are in poor condition, with several layers of paint peeling and some areas exhibiting wood rot.*
- *Only the first floor windows are insulated vinyl replacement windows. All other windows are the original single-pane, double-hung windows with storm windows added.*
- *The building makes only one concession to wheelchair accessibility by means of a ramp on its back wall, leading to an entrance door to the first floor.*

HWRSD has recently spent over $60,000 on repairs to the slate roof at the Center Building. This action has halted roof leaks. However, water intrusion problems persist in the foundation and in the basement.

The Dore & Whittier Report estimates the need for nearly $3 million in capital improvements to fix the shortcomings previously identified. In addition, the Center Building's utility costs have averaged about $8,000 per year for electricity and $25,000 per year for fuel oil.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-8:

Relocate the district administration to the high school and terminate the lease of the Center Building.

HWRSD should coordinate the renovation of the high school auditorium with changes that need to be made for the future re-accommodation of the central office suite at the high school. If these actions can be arranged before June 30, 2015, HWRSD should arrange an early termination of the lease.

Relocating the HWRSD administration to the high school will save the district nearly $3 million in Capital Improvement costs, as well as annual operating costs of at least $33,000 in utility bills.

The high school once housed the HWRSD Superintendent and administrative staff in a suite specifically designed for this purpose. Currently, these spaces at the high school are used as technology labs and industrial arts instructional areas. These spaces could be reclaimed, and a small addition constructed to accommodate the technology and industrial arts spaces. In addition, a recommendation made in **Chapter 7, Food Services** (**Recommendation 7-7**) advocates the

creation of one kitchen and one cafeteria to serve the high school and middle school. The action would free up additional space for use by the HWRSD administration.

Alternatively, the HWRSD administration could be relocated on a lease basis into an office park or similar location. This would still save the district from having to spend nearly $3 million in capital expenditures, but may add a small monthly net cost for the lease and utilities over the amounts currently spent at the Center Building. Regardless of where they are eventually placed, HWRSD's administrative offices should be easily accessible to the public and fully ADA compliant.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost for the Center School renovation ($3 million) was included in the Dore & Whittier Report. HWRSD would not have to incur these costs if it were to vacate the Center School.

The cost of renovating the high school cannot be estimated with reasonable accuracy until actual preliminary plans and specifications have been prepared. For the moment, Evergreen uses an estimate of $120 per square foot as a conservative figure for the average renovation cost. Approximately 11,000 square feet of floor area will be needed for the central office function, resulting in an estimate of approximately $1.3 million.

After the inception of the 2008 recession, office lease rates in the Greater Boston area declined 12 percent to $28.11 per square foot in the second quarter of 2009, according to Lincoln Property Co., a real estate services firm.* Using 11,000 square feet as the floor area required for the central office function, an annual lease amount of $310,000, or a monthly cost of $25,800 is possible. However, in view of possible market changes in the coming years, these figures may be higher or lower, and must necessarily be viewed as highly speculative and tentative at this time.

FINDING

In HWRSD, it does not appear to have been unusual for funds allocated originally for maintenance to be transferred without major approvals or scrutiny to an unrelated purpose (e.g., special education). Such fund transfers have apparently not required the approval of the School Committee nor the Superintendent. In fact, a search of HWRSD policies has not revealed any provisions governing the transfer of budgeted funds from one category to another. As this appears to be a problem not limited to facilities allocations, a districtwide policy has been recommended to regulate the transfer of funds between budget categories (see **Recommendation 4-10**).

HWRSD does have a school district policy for use of facilities and grounds by outside organizations (see **Recommendation 6-14).** While this policy search of HWRSD's records was conducted, it became apparent that the district should proceed with the development of pertinent policies concerning facilities planning, design, construction, use and management.

**http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2009/07/10/office_rental_rates_fall_in_hub/*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-9:

Develop a set of contemporary and official HWRSD policies for facilities planning, design, construction, use and management.

HWRSD should examine facilities policies in other school districts in Massachusetts, and select pertinent policy ideas for inclusion in a set of policies for HWRSD. In the case of HWRSD and other Massachusetts school districts, the policies must be based on laws, statutes, and ordinances in Massachusetts. A legal review will be necessary to assure that any proposed policies do not prescribe any actions or provisions contrary to the laws of Massachusetts.

Evergreen Solutions has found facilities policies in Martinsville (Virginia) City Public Schools to be especially comprehensive. A link to these policies is provided herewith because the Commonwealth of Virginia has a similar taxing structure to the one in Massachusetts: school districts are funded by their local jurisdictions (e.g. counties, cities, towns, etc.) and have no taxation authority of their own.** In addition, further sample facilities policies ideas may be found at *http://www.ncef.org/ search/ index.cfm#citations.* For sample policies for the joint use of facilities check *http://www. edfacilities.org/rl/joint_use.cfm.*

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

6.3 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Maintenance protects the investment made in facilities. If the facilities were constructed with materials and systems that are easy and inexpensive to maintain, then true life-cycle costing is practiced. If a sufficient maintenance workforce has been hired to complete all work orders in a timely manner and without a backlog, then the buildings can last and perform satisfactorily for decades, or even centuries, to come.

In addition to heavy facilities maintenance, custodial work not only keeps facilities clean and sanitary, but minor maintenance tasks can often be included in the work portfolio of custodians. Such tasks include the replacement of filters, lamps, and perhaps ballasts. Most importantly, however, custodians serve as trained eyes and ears—they often identify the early warning signs/sounds of looming mechanical failures, roof leaks, and other facilities problems.

FINDING

Exhibit 6-12 shows the responses of HWRSD administrators, principals, and teachers compared to responses in peer school districts in Evergreen's survey database regarding school maintenance.

***http://www.martinsville.k12.va.us/hr/policies/School%20Board%20Policy%20 Manual.html.*

As shown in **Exhibit 6-12**, 83 percent of central office administrators and 100 percent of school administrators responding to the Evergreen survey *agree* or *strongly agree* that schools are well-maintained, whereas two-thirds of teachers *agree* or *strongly agree*.

Exhibit 6-12
Central Office Administrators, Principals and Teachers Survey Results on Maintenance Issues in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Central Office Administrators	Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
Survey Statement	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**
Schools are well-maintained.	83.3%	16.7%	80.5%	12.8%
Schools are clean.	100.0%	0%	85.0%	10.0%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	83.3%	16.7%	62.3%	28.5%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	100.0%	0%	77.7%	12.0%
School Administrators	**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District**		**Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database**	
Survey Statement	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**
Schools are well-maintained.	100.0%	0.0%	71.4%	28.1%
Schools are clean.	100.0%	0%	78.2%	17.4%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	75.0%	25.0%	69.4%	25.1%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	100.0%	0%	71.0%	14.8%
Teachers	**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District**		**Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database**	
Survey Statement	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**	**Strongly Agree/Agree**	**Strongly Disagree/Disagree**
Schools are well-maintained.	66.7%	23.4%	58.9%	32.9%
Schools are clean.	83.8%	13.5%	61.6%	29.2%
Repairs are made in a timely manner.	46.8%	35.1%	49.5%	41.0%
Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	70.3%	9.0%	67.2%	15.8%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

Similarly, 100 percent of central office administrators and school administrators responding to the Evergreen survey *agree* or *strongly agree* that schools are clean, whereas 84 percent of teachers *agree* or *strongly agree*.

These responses compare favorably to the responses from comparison districts, and indicate a high level of satisfaction with maintenance and custodial functions in HWRSD.

A visual inspection by the Evergreen Solutions team of the school facilities supports these survey results.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Facilities Office is commended for achieving a high level of satisfaction with maintenance and custodial services indicated in survey responses by central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers.

FINDING

According to **Exhibit 6-12**, 83 percent of central office administrators and 75 percent of school administrators responding to the Evergreen survey *agree* or *strongly agree* that repairs to buildings are made in a timely manner. Only 47 percent of teachers *agree* or *strongly agree* that repairs are made in a timely manner—the only facilities survey response under 50 percent. Teachers often represent the front line of needed repairs, and are more likely frustrated when such repairs are not made immediately.

Similarly, 100 percent of central office administrators and school administrators responding to the Evergreen survey *agree* or *strongly agree* that emergency maintenance is handled promptly, whereas 70 percent of teachers *agree* or *strongly agree*, while only nine percent *disagree* or s*trongly disagree*.

The responses indicate a high level of satisfaction with the promptness of emergency maintenance, and a slightly lower level of satisfaction with the timeliness of repairs. These responses also compare favorably with those from the comparison districts, including the under 50 percent response from teachers for repairs made in a timely manner.

A visual inspection by the Evergreen Solutions team of the school facilities supports these survey results.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Facilities Office is commended for achieving a high level of satisfaction with the promptness of emergency maintenance, and a slightly lower but acceptable level of satisfaction with the timeliness of repairs, as indicated in survey responses by central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers.

FINDING

The HWRSD Director of Facilities has incorporated into his management style the well-regarded "MBWA" – Management by Walking (Wandering) Around. The following definition illustrates this management style:

> *Unstructured approach to hands-on, direct participation by the managers in the work-related affairs of their subordinates, in contrast to rigid and distant management. In MBWA practice, managers spend a significant amount of their time making informal visits to work areas and listening to the employees. The purpose of this exercise is to collect qualitative*

*information, listen to suggestions and complaints, and keep a finger on the pulse of the organization. Also called management by wandering around.**

This management approach fits well with the nature of the position of Director of Facilities in HWRSD. There are no full-time or part-time maintenance trade employees on the staff at the district. Instead, some of the head custodians also possess a variety of maintenance skills in such areas as carpentry, plumbing and electrical work. In addition, heavy routine maintenance is outsourced to professional contracting companies. The Director of Facilities is a licensed electrician, and can also perform some plumbing tasks. Consequently, it is beneficial for the Facilities Director to be a hands-on manager, interacting with the custodial staff on an ongoing basis, as well as with school administrators and representatives of outsourced maintenance companies.

COMMENDATION

HWRSD is commended for hiring a hands-on manager as Director of Facilities, who sees the advantages of being at the work areas of his employees, outside contractors, and principals.

FINDING

HWRSD employs a total of 14 FTE custodians, five of which are head custodians. On average, each custodian's share of the 365,000 total square feet of HWRSD buildings is 26,071 square feet.

According to the 38th Annual Survey of Operating & Maintenance costs for schools by the *American School and University Magazine (ASUMAG)*, the recommended benchmark is a national average of 32,100 gross square feet per custodial worker, based on responses from K-12 schools across the United States. Thus, the HWRSD floor area per custodian is about 19 percent below the average across the United States. However, it must be pointed out that the HWRSD custodians also perform tasks often done by maintenance tradespersons in other school districts.

A formula used by the State of North Carolina may also be of interest. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has developed a more detailed allocation formula. This formula includes the number of teachers and students as follows:

[# of Teachers / 10) + (# of Students / 260) + (Total Square Footage / 15,000]

The resulting figure is then divided by three to obtain the custodial allotment.

Based on the foregoing, the DPI calculation for HWRSD is as follows:

$$\frac{206/10 + 2{,}026/260 + 365{,}000/15{,}000}{3} = 15$$

Based on this formula, the FTE custodian count of 15 is one position higher than the FTE count of 14 at HWRSD. The custodial staffing at HWRSD is appropriate by this benchmarking.

Custodial staffing can be greatly affected by the overall maintenance and condition of the area to be cleaned. Older buildings, such as those in HWRSD, are often more difficult to keep satisfactorily clean than newer ones, and some building materials are more difficult to keep satisfactorily clean than others. HWRSD elementary school buildings, due to their age, require more intensive cleaning work than the newer middle and high schools in the school district.

Because custodians are assigned to individual schools in HWRSD, the square footage for which each of them is responsible varies as follows:

- Buker Elementary School 25,000 square feet
- Cutler Elementary School 21,025 square feet
- Winthrop Elementary School 22,070 square feet
- Miles River Middle School 30,384 square feet
- High School 31,404 square feet

Consequently, the middle and high school custodial assignments conform more closely to the 32,100 square feet average in the ASUMAG survey, whereas the older elementary schools require a smaller square footage assignment for each custodian.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for maintaining an appropriate number of FTE custodians to clean the district's buildings and perform minor maintenance operations.

FINDING

In response to Evergreen's data request for maintenance costs, the information shown in **Exhibit 6-13** was provided.

Exhibit 6-13
HWRSD Yearly Maintenance Expenditures
FY 2010

Building Name	Maintenance Budget	End-of-Year Budget Balance
Buker Elementary School	$19,285.00	$2,830.62
Cutler Elementary School	$39,600.00	$48.15
Winthrop Elementary School	$22,475.00	$46.94
Middle School	$38,210.00	$21.35
High School	$75,305.00	$4.80
Center Building	$11,000.00	$425.37
TOTAL	**$205,875.00**	**$3,377.23**

Source: HWRSD Facilities Office, 2010.

Exhibit 6-13 shows a maintenance expenditure of $202,497.77, with an end of year unspent balance of $3,377.23, from a total maintenance budget of $205,875.

An examination by Evergreen consultants of approved budgets on the HWRSD website, however, revealed the information shown in **Exhibit 6-14.**

Exhibit 6-14
Approved HWRSD Budgets
FY 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011

School Committee Approved Budgets (FY)	Total HWRSD Budget	Maintenance Budget	Approval Date
2007-2008 (FY '08)	$24,625,610	$676,377	March 29, 2007
2008-2009 (FY '09)	$27,031,567	$595,013	March 31, 2008
2009-2010 (FY '10)	$27,259,415	$577,010	July 9, 2009
2010-2011 (FY '11)	$27,522,889	$644,515	March 31, 2010

Source: HWRSD website, http://www.hwschools.net/pages/Hamilton-Wenham_SD/SC_Groups/Budget.

The information in **Exhibit 6-14** appears to be in stark contrast to the figures shown in **Exhibit 6-13**. The amount shown as spent in FY 2010 of $202,497.77 is only about one third of the amount of $577,010 shown in the approved budget for the same calendar period.

Consequently, Evergreen consultants examined official HWRSD data displayed on its web page (*http://www.hwschools.net/pages/Hamilton-Wenham_SD/SC_Groups/Budget)* to determine the amount of funds added to, or removed from, the approved maintenance budgets for each available fiscal year shown in **Exhibit 6-14**. **Exhibit 6-15** displays this information.

Exhibit 6-15
Additions to, or Subtractions from, approved Maintenance Budgets
FY 2008, 2009, and 2010

School Committee Approved Budgets (FY)	Approved Maintenance Budget	Modifications to Approved Maintenance Budget	Final Amount of Maintenance Budget
2007-2008 (FY '08)	$676,377	$-169,948	$506,429
2008-2009 (FY '09)	$595,013	$0.00	$595,013
2009-2010 (FY '10)	$577,010	$1,200	$578,210
2010-2011 (FY '11)	$644,515	N/A	N/A

Source: HWRSD website, http://www.hwschools.net/pages/Hamilton-Wenham_SD/SC_Groups/Budget.

The final maintenance budgets shown in **Exhibit 6-15** are still significantly higher than the amounts provided in **Exhibit 6-13**. Consequently, Evergreen consultants requested further information from the HWRSD Administration concerning their maintenance expenditure records for FY 2009 and 2010, including any funds removed from, or added to, the maintenance budgets.

A breakdown of maintenance costs for the five schools and the administration building (Center School) was also requested. **Exhibit 6-16** displays the information which was provided to Evergreen.

Exhibit 6-16
FY 2009 and 2010 Maintenance Expenditures

Category	FY 2009	FY 2010
Original Amount Budgeted for the Fiscal Year	$278,031	$265,205
Amount Expended in the Fiscal Year	$263,598	$405,404
Amount Added to, or Deleted from, Original Amount	$-7,825	$140,199
Major Maintenance Tasks Accomplished and Costs by School		
Buker ES Allocation	$12,179	$16,114
Cutler ES Allocation	$48,900	$38,127
Winthrop ES Allocation	$38,338	$18,472
MS Allocation	$16,860	$2,778
HS Allocation	$5,215	$223,238
Center School Allocation	N/A	N/A

Source: HWRSD Administration, 2011

In an additional attempt to reconcile the maintenance figures provided, the allocations provided in **Exhibit 6-17** are compared to the amount provided originally in **Exhibit 6-13.**

It is clear that maintenance budgets at HWRSD lack transparency and consistency. While the School Committee has in recent years approved maintenance budgets in the order of magnitude of $500,000 to $600,000, the amount actually spent is generally shown to be in the $200,000 range. It is unclear to Evergreen where the difference of $300,000 to $400,000 is accounted for. Custodial and maintenance salaries, for example, are listed as a separate category in the approved annual budgets. This fact makes it increasingly difficult to justify the huge discrepancy between monies budgeted, versus monies actually spent, on maintenance. This lack of clarity is apparently shared by members of the Operational Audit Committee, who have expressed frustration with these same issues.

Exhibit 6-17
Discrepancies in Maintenance Budgets

School Name	FY 2009 from Exhibit 6-16	FY 2010 from Exhibit 6-16	FY 2010 Maintenance Budget from Exhibit 6-13
Buker Elementary School	$12,179	$16,114	$19,285.00
Cutler Elementary School	$48,900	$38,127	$39,600.00
Winthrop Elementary School	$38,338	$18,472	$22,475.00
Middle School	$16,860	$2,778	$38,210.00
High School	$5,215	$223,238	$75,305.00
Center School	N/A	N/A	$11,000.00

Source: Prepared by Evergreen from data furnished by HWRSD.

In addition, two requests for maintenance cost data by Evergreen have resulted in divergent information that cannot be reconciled. This points possibly to a lack of uniform definition at HWRSD of what should, or should not, be included under the rubric of "maintenance."

Some of these concerns may be rooted in issues raised earlier in this chapter. For example, **Recommendations 6-1** (Prepare and implement a five-year facilities master planning process in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District) and **6-2** (Include a thorough and exhaustive

schedule of preventive maintenance actions that must be funded and completed as part of the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan) point to the need for a much clearer articulation of what maintenance comprises, and how much needs to be expended at a particular time.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-10:

Create a proper chart of maintenance categories and accounts for budgeting and spending purposes.

HWRSD should, in collaboration with officials of the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham, use in-house and possibly outsourced accounting expertise to prepare proper categories and tasks for maintenance. These tasks must be detailed as noted in the example of **Exhibit 6-4** within **Recommendation 6-2.**

In addition, the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan must incorporate a long-range facilities maintenance budget that is fully refined before it is made part of the current fiscal year budget.

Finally, the Towns and the School District must devise a mutually acceptable procedure of accountability so that the spending of budgeted amounts can be clearly and unobtrusively demonstrated so without leaving any lingering doubts or questions as is currently practiced.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In its Report Number 131, *Budgeting for Facilities Maintenance and Repair Activities*, the National Academies Press notes:

> *In 1990, the Building Research Board (BRB) published a report entitled "Committing to the Cost of Ownership—Maintenance and Repair of Public Buildings." The report has been widely distributed, and one finding and recommendation in particular has been quoted often:*
>
> *An appropriate budget allocation for routine M&R [maintenance and repair] for a substantial inventory of facilities will typically be in the range of two to four percent of the aggregate current replacement value of those facilities (excluding land and major associated infrastructure). In the absence of specific information upon which to base the M&R budget, this funding level should be used as an absolute minimum value. Where neglect of maintenance has caused a backlog of needed repairs to accumulate, spending must exceed this minimum level until the backlog has been eliminated.**

**http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=9226*

Exhibit 6-13 on page 6-36 shows the yearly maintenance expenditures HWRSD posted in 2009-10 of approximately $202,500. While it is unclear whether or not the figures in this exhibit are fully accurate, Evergreen does believe that they represent the order of magnitude of facilities maintenance expenses at HWRSD.

Exhibit 6-18 provides expenditures by school; HWRSD could not provide the documentation as to what was accomplished at each school.

Exhibit 6-18
HWRSD Yearly Maintenance Expenditures
2009-10 School Year

Building Name	Maintenance Budget	End-of-Year Budget Balance
Buker Elementary School	$19,285.00	$2,830.62
Cutler Elementary School	$39,600.00	$48.15
Winthrop Elementary School	$22,475.00	$46.94
Middle School	$38,210.00	$21.35
High School	$75,305.00	$4.80
Center Building	$11,000.00	$425.37
TOTAL	**$205,875.00**	**$3,377.23**

Source: HWRSD Facilities Office, 2010.

Evergreen consultants have rarely found a school district that is funding building maintenance at the two percent level, let alone at the three or four percent level. HWRSD is proving to be no exception.

Exhibit 6-19 displays the replacement values of HWRSD buildings. In addition, the second column shows the values of two percent of replacement cost, while the right-most column shows the actual maintenance expenditures and the value thereof as a percentage of replacement cost.

As **Exhibit 6-19** demonstrates, HWRSD funds its building maintenance and repair at slightly above one half of one percent of building replacement cost. **This level of funding is insufficient by all respected and accepted standards and benchmarks.**

Exhibit 6-19
HWRSD Maintenance Expenditures
2009-10 School Year

Building Name	Replacement Value	Two Percent of Replacement Value	Actual Annual Maintenance Expenditure ($) and (%)
Buker Elementary School	$3,402,627	$68,052.54	$19,285.00 (.57%)
Cutler Elementary School	$5,423,955	$108,479.10	$39,600.00 (.73%)
Winthrop Elementary School	$4,169,937	$83,398.74	$22,475.00 (.54%)
Middle School	$12,133,784	$242,675.68	$38,210.00 (.31%)
High School	$13,189,359	$263,787.18	$75,305.00 (.57%)
Center Building	$1,182,043	$23,640.86	$11,000.00 (.93%)
TOTAL	**$39,501,705**	**$790,034.10**	**$205,875.00 (.52%)**

Source: HWRSD Facilities Office, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-11:

Make a firm commitment to a minimum funding of building maintenance and repair at two percent of building replacement cost in HWRSD.

This funding level should be incorporated in the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan described in **Recommendation 6-1.** At current building replacement values, this amount should be no less than $790,000.

It is clear that a portion of the $50.6 million capital improvement needs identified in the Dore & Whittier *Facilities Assessment* is the consequence of a systemic underfunding of building maintenance in HWRSD. The exact magnitude of this deferred maintenance has not been identified by Dore & Whittier, and it is not necessary at this point to do so. What must be done, however, is for HWRSD to retire the capital improvement needs in successive years of the Five-Year Facilities Master Plan, and to stop underfunding facilities maintenance and repair from this point forward.

FISCAL IMPACT

HWRSD currently funds its maintenance and repair activities at approximately $200,000 per year. By having to increase this annual funding level to $790,000, HWRSD will realize the fiscal impact of an additional cost of $584,000. **Note:** This projected cost was not included in the Dore & Whittier Report and is therefore provided by Evergreen. In addition, please note that even if maintenance expenses were at the budgeted levels of $500,000 to $600,000, additional monies would need to be allocated.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Fund Building Maintenance at Two Percent	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)

FINDING

The Towns of Hamilton and Wenham initiated a concerted effort to explore the possibility of obtaining cost-saving efficiencies from a merger, or from a method of "regionalization" of certain joint activities that would stop short of a merger.

In its July 2009 Report, *Hamilton-Wenham Merger and Regionalization Enhancement Analysis,* the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services offered the following conclusions:

- *The conclusions of this report support the fundamental premise that the merger of two towns into one can produce overall dollar savings, higher service levels and efficiencies in the operation of local government. Communities will then have a choice whether to divert savings to other municipal purposes, to leave savings unspent or to reduce*

property taxes. However, unless dollar savings are significant and are applied directly to the levy, property tax relief will not occur or will not flow equitably to residents in both towns.

- *Salary savings are directly attributable to the elimination of 14.8 net general government positions. The initial calculation of operating expenses also produced savings, of $385,477, which were fueled by a reduction of $156,228 in town retirement contributions, employee health benefits, FICA and Medicare payments associated with fewer staff. However, operating expense savings are consumed and overwhelmed by a revenue loss associated with the conversion to a local school system from a regional system. The annual transportation reimbursement from the state to the regional school district ($548,185 in FY2009) will not be available to the new town school district. Compensating for the revenue loss represents an added cost to the school (and town) budget. Rather than a reduction, the result is a net increase of $162,708 in operating costs were the towns to merge.*

Consequently, the Towns have since pursued an approach at regionalization, consisting essentially of merging certain common operations instead of the Towns as a whole. On November 10, 2010, a report on Collaborative Options for the Departments of Public Works by the Capital Management Committee (CMC) of the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham was approved by the Joint Selectmen of the two Towns. At this meeting, the CMC received authorization to start Task 1: a joint Hamilton-Wenham Grounds Maintenance Department.

The CMC will continue to study other identified options, and present its further recommendations and conclusions to future meetings of the Joint Board of Selectmen. It is expected that this gradual and cautious process will permit the CMC to move to other options as permitted, eventually concluding the process at either a full consolidation of the two DPW operations, or at a partial consolidation, if this appears to be advisable.

The approved option will eventually include HWRSD, but initially it will be started as a collaborative effort of the two Departments of Public Works only. **Exhibit 6-20** shows the organization of the Hamilton-Wenham Grounds Operations Department authorized as Task 1.

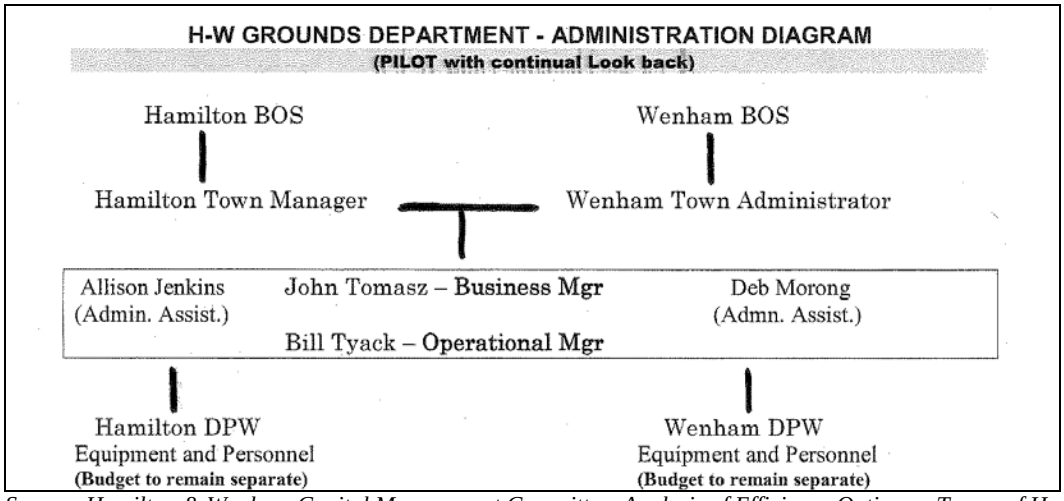
The CMC's voting and non-voting composition is shown in **Exhibit 6-21.** As can be seen, HWRSD does not have voting representation, but non-voting Associate Membership by the Assistant Superintendent and the HWRSD Facility Manager.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-12:

Pursue proactively the district's constructive, beneficial, and appropriate participation in the process currently being pursued with the eventual goal of merging the Departments of Public Works of both Towns.

Exhibit 6-20
Combined Hamilton and Wenham Grounds Department Administration Diagram



Source: Hamilton & Wenham Capital Management Committee, Analysis of Efficiency Options – Towns of Hamilton and Wenham Departments of Public Works, November 10, 2010.

Exhibit 6-21
Composition of the Capital Management Committee

Members (Voting)	Number of Members
Hamilton Selectmen	1
Wenham Selectmen	1
Hamilton Finance Committee Member	1
Wenham Finance Committee Member	1
Hamilton Town Manager	1
Wenham Town Administrator	1
Hamilton DPW Director	1
Wenham DPW Director	1
H-W Facility Maintenance Director	1
5-7 Residents	5-7
Associate Members (Non-voting)	
Assistant Superintendent – HWRSD	1
HWRSD Director of Facilities	1
Unlimited Resident and Non-resident Members with specific expertise	

Source: Capital Management Committee, Towns of Hamilton and Wenham, 2010.

The process being pursued jointly by the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham appears to be succeeding in a deliberate, but cautious phased manner. The Assistant Superintendent and the HWRSD Director of Facilities should work with the Superintendent and the School Committee to discuss how they could be as supportive as possible of this process.

Although the school district's participation in the CMC is on a non-voting and advisory basis (see **Exhibit 6-21**), the role of the school district should be to make sure its participation in DPW mergers is fully beneficial to itself and the two Towns. The following actions support this position:

- incorporate in the Facilities Master Plan process (**Recommendation 6-1)** the implementation phases of the DPW merger process;
- work with the CMC and Selectmen to expand the merger to facilities maintenance, and provide the opportunity to benefit from an increase in economy of scale; and
- consider the eventual possibility of hiring a Maintenance Technician as a joint-employee of the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham, and HWRSD.

FISCAL IMPACT

The actual fiscal impact of this recommendation is yet to be determined. However, in the experience of Evergreen Solutions, the respective maintenance budgets of all entities engaged in joint or cooperative activities have been reduced by at least five percent, and often by ten percent or more.

Consequently, a plausible savings for HWRSD could be in the range of $20,600 after grounds and facilities maintenance are shared. In keeping with the scenario of grounds maintenance followed by grounds and facilities maintenance, the timeline below shows a likely savings of $5,000 during the first two years, followed by $20,600 thereafter. However, if the school district were to follow **Recommendation 6-11** and spend two percent of its facilities replacement costs beginning in 2011-12, the savings would be greater: $20,000 during the first two years, and $82,400 during ensuing years.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Pursue HWRSD Participation in DPW Merger	$20,000	$20,000	$82,400	$82,400	$82,400

FINDING

HWRSD performs its facilities maintenance recordkeeping work in a manual fashion, and does not, as a rule, issue formal work orders. This manner of work may have been acceptable when computer software to assist in these tasks was either unavailable, too costly, or still unsophisticated and primitive. Even though HWRSD is a small school district, there are many valid reasons why it should automate its management of maintenance activities.

Primary among these are the following:

- accuracy and transparency of recordkeeping will be significantly enhanced;
- recordkeeping efficiency and productivity will be increased;

- work-order tasks and assignments for in-house staff and outsourced vendors can be more easily monitored and tracked;
- annual reports can be assembled with greater speed, thoroughness, completeness, and precision;
- just-in-time ordering and delivery of materials, parts and equipment are easily integrated with work order generation; and
- some computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS) have modules that extend management to capital projects, security and safety, and cleaning/sanitation.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-13:

Select and implement a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS).

HWRSD should have a much larger facilities maintenance budget, if Evergreen's recommendation is implemented. Moreover, large capital projects involving energy retrofits, ADA compliance, renovations and additions, and the reduction of deferred maintenance will increase facilities work in the district. HWRSD should have in place automated software that permits easier and more efficient and effective tracking and documentation of all maintenance and capital project activities.

The Director of Facilities should identify, analyze, and evaluate CMMS products for school facilities, and then recommend the selection and implementation of a particular product to the Assistant Superintendent.
The selection should focus on a basic package for a small school district. The selected CMMS should be easy to learn in inexpensive training sessions. The software should be web-based, as this would allow data entry as well as data searches from remote locations, such as laptop computers and smart mobile telephones.

An incomplete, partial list of some of the software products currently on the market is shown below. The sequence of this list does not suggest a recommended order of preference, nor does the list imply that these products are endorsed by Evergreen consultants.

- Tero Software *http://www.tero.ca/schools.asp*
- Hippofm Software *http://www.hippofm.com/school-facility-building-management-software.html*
- Micromain Systems *http://www.micromain.com/cmms.asp*
- Portolan Group *http://www.portolangroup.com/mainttips-cmmscompanies.html*
- EZ Maintenance *http://ez-maintenance.com/school-maintenance-software.php*
- School Dude *http://www.schooldude.com/products/maintenancedirect/*

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of purchasing a CMMS will vary with the capabilities and functionality of the system, plus the cost of each seat or projected concurrent user in the system. Additional costs include

vendor installation of the software, annual system maintenance agreements, and offers of additional features for the system. Managers should plan for system installation and annual maintenance agreements when budgeting for the new CMMS.

For school districts the size of HWRSD, CMMS products cost between $1,000 and $2,000 per application per year. Contracts offered to HWRSD should have the following provisions:

- there should be no contract buy-out fee if a certain long-term commitment is not met;
- the system should not limit the number of users or work stations;
- training should not be limited to a certain number of days or hours; and
- there should be no mandatory hardware or software upgrades to buy.

The timeline below assumes the purchase of a basic work order management system in the first year, and the addition of other modules, such as a preventive maintenance scheduling system, in future years.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Select and Implement a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMS)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)

6.4 COMMUNITY USE OF FACILITIES

Public school facilities—especially auditoriums, athletic fields, cafeterias and meeting/seminar rooms—are significant assets in any community. HWRSD facilities are frequently booked for events ranging from after-hours and weekend civic organization meetings, amateur athletic leagues, picnics, and many other types of events and meetings.

FINDING

HWRSD is well-organized for the rental or lease of its facilities to organizations and groups in the community. **Exhibit 6-22** shows HWRSD's request for use of school facilities form, and **Exhibit 6-23** is the Policy for the Public Use of School Buildings and Grounds.

According to HWRSD records, there were 66 school buildings used for events in 2009-10. Rental fees in the total amount of $3,832.50 were collected for only 11 of the 66 events. Custodial fees were charged for 54 events, while kitchen fees were charged for 14 events.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for its implementation and operation of a facilities-use program that makes available the assets of the school district for community programs and organizations.

Exhibit 6-22
Request Form for Facilities Use
in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Request for Use of School Facilities
www.hwschools.net, District Calendar powered by Eventkeeper

Submit form to: Building Use Coordinator, 775 Bay Road, Hamilton, MA 01982
buccod@hwschools.net

(for office use only)
Facility:
Room:
Date(s) of event:

Category:
Principal approval:
Fine Arts approval:
Kitchen:
Custodian:
Confirmation:
CC:

Entered into EK:
Final invoiced fee:
Date invoice sent:

Applicant Information

Name of Organization:

Name of Responsible Individual:

Address:

Tel. #: Cell #

E-Mail:

Day & Date Requested:

Building Entry Time: Event BEGINS At: Event ENDS At:

Expected Attendance: Admission Charge: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Purpose of Use:

Select Area(s) Requested:

☐ **High School** ☐ **Middle School** ☐ **Buker** ☐ **Cutler** ☐ **Winthrop**
☐ Auditorium ☐ Cafeteria ☐ Classrooms (s) ☐ Gymnasium
☐ Playing Field ☐ Kitchen* ☐ Field ☐ Multipurpose Room
☐ MS/HS Library ☐ Other (be specific)

** Requires kitchen form (obtained from district Food Services Director)*

Select Equipment Requested:

☐ Tables ☐ Chairs
☐ Microphone* ☐ Spotlight*
☐ Sound/Lighting*
☐ Other

**Requires operators at additional charge*

Fee Information

Rental Fees – total is an estimate based on information given prior to use of the facilities. Additional charges may result after use of facilities.

Custodial Fees – reflect the need for custodial hours (time & ½ on weeknights, double time on Sundays & holidays) and include a minimum of three hours per custodian.

Rental Fee Calculation:
(Office Use Only)

Auditorium $
Gymnasium $
Classroom (s) $
Custodial $
Kitchen $
Other $

Room fee (s):
X number of hours =
X number of days =
X percentage =
Rental fee:

Rental fee (above):
+ Custodial fees =
+ Kitchen fees =
Total fee for event:

Applicant Understanding

I accept responsibility for fee(s), supervision, damage, and compliance with the facility use requirements of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. I understand that a custodian is required ½ hour before entering the building. A food service worker is required for any use of the kitchen (kitchen form must be completed) and, when necessary, police may be required. Police will arrive ½ hour before scheduled event.

Note: The use of school facilities is subject to existing policies and regulations and, as school purposes are primary, the school authorities reserve the right to cancel any contract.

Please note:
A Certificate of Liability Insurance is required.

Signature of Applicant & date

Source: HWRSD Facilities Office, 2010.

Exhibit 6-23
HWRSD Policy for the Use of School Buildings and Grounds

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Wenham, Massachusetts

Policy

Public Use of School Buildings and Grounds

I. Policy

A. Introduction

The school district recognizes that the public schools are created and supported by the citizens of Hamilton and Wenham; therefore the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee shall encourage the use of the schools by community individuals, groups, and associations for educational, cultural, and civic activities. Such use shall be in accordance with the requirements of the schools and Chapter 7l, Section 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws as amended. Policies regarding access to the school facilities will be the responsibility of the Superintendent (and/or designee) and the School Committee. The policy shall include rates and fees.

This Policy is intended to set, coordinate, and schedule all (school and non-school) events which use any building, field and/or any portion thereof leased, owned and/or operated by the School District. This Policy is also intended to address fee collection for usage by groups and/or organizations from within and outside of the Hamilton - Wenham Community.

B. Designated District Facilities Coordinator

The Hamilton Wenham Superintendent shall designate a District Facilities Coordinator who is responsible for maintaining a master schedule. The schedule shall cover all usage of school buildings, fields, and District Staff, and equipment as required.

C. Process

As an integral part of this policy, it is important that the District Facilities Coordinator be contacted directly by anyone seeking to utilize school buildings and/or grounds. The District Facilities Coordinator in consultation with other pertinent District administrators (i.e. Principal, District Business Manager, and District Director of Facilities) will confirm rental and inform the requestor of availability, rental cost, staffing requirements, and all other fees as necessary.

All final decisions on matters pertaining to facility usage, fee structure and appropriateness of events to be held on District property will be made under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools. Additionally, all events that take place on District property will be held in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal regulations.

All contact must be made prior to the contemplated use date. It is required that the process be initiated no less than thirty days prior to the usage.

A Building Use/Facilities Request Form must be completed in full and submitted by a duly authorized community, civic or public representative who has the authority/ responsibility to accept any liability (financial or otherwise) on the behalf of the requesting organization.

The District Coordinator shall ensure that the Building/Facility Use Request Form is maintained for a period not less than one calendar year from the date of the use of the school property.

D. School Property

School District property includes, but is not limited to, buildings, grounds and facilities. Specifically and without limitation this shall include any property owned and/or leased by the school district such as; gymnasiums, weight training rooms, theaters, stages, cafeterias, multi-purpose rooms, classrooms, and outdoor playing fields. It is also understood that requests for District Staff (i.e. custodians, cafeteria workers, technicians, etc.) will also be made through the completion of the Building Facility/Use Request Form.

E. Fees Insurance, and Notification

The rate/fee may be a flat fee or an hourly rate and may be established based upon any or all of the following factors:

1. Type of space is being requested
2. Time of year
3. Time of the day
4. Availability of the requested space
5. Anticipated wear and tear on the property
6. Duration of the event(s) requested

The fee structure may be negotiated for groups that are either community based and/or have previously used District facilities in a similar capacity such as Hamilton-Wenham youth athletic organizations. Any such arrangement or other consideration of this policy must have the prior written approval of the Superintendent and/or designee.

The District Facilities Coordinator will coordinate both the invoicing and collection of all rentals and associated fees for each specific request. All fees collected will be placed in the Rental Revolving Account.

The rental fee will not include applicable District Staff fees, including custodial fees, kitchen staff, and technical staff fees if applicable. Police details, if necessary, shall be the additional fiscal responsibility of the organization and/or group utilizing the school property and is not included in any fee.

Exhibit 6-23 (Continued)
HWRSD Policy for the Use of School Buildings and Grounds

All users/organizations must supply a "Certificate of Liability° to the District confirming coverage and stipulating the dates that our facility will be used. The certificate must be filed with the District Facilities Coordinator one week prior to the event. The District reserves the right to cancel any event for which it does not have a "Certificate of Liability".

Any damage or destruction to school property shall be the responsibility of the organization and/or group using the school property. The District Facilities Coordinator in consultation with other pertinent District administrators (i.e. Principal, District Business Manager, and District Director of Facilities) will have the responsibility for determining the nature, extent, and impact of any damage or destruction to District property.

All groups using District facilities must notify the District of schedule changes or cancellations at least 24 hours in advance.

F. Reciprocity

The District gratefully acknowledges and anticipates that it will also utilize community property and that reciprocal arrangements may be made between the District and the communities, and/or other organizations or groups. Any such arrangement or other consideration of this policy must have the prior written approval of the Superintendent and/or designee.

G. Priority

It is acknowledged that the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District will always have first priority in requesting District building/facility usage. Consideration for other organizations/groups from the local Hamilton Wenham community will follow. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate those various organizations and groups who are seeking to utilize school property. District reserves the right to revoke permission previously granted and shall not be held responsible either directly or indirectly for any loss or expenditure incurred by the applicant.

H. General Guidelines

The following have been established by the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District as guidelines in the use of school facilities.

1. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on any school premises M.G.L. Ch. 272.
2. The use of tobacco products are not permitted on any school premises M.G.L. Ch. 71 S 37H.
3. Granting permission to use school premises should not be construed as an endorsement of any individual or group by the Hamilton Wenham School Committee.
4. All users/organizations must supply a "Certificate of Liability" to the District confirming coverage and stipulating the dates that our facility will be used.
5. Only the facilities requested, and approved on the Building/Facility Use Request Form shall be used, and only for the time stipulated.
6. The building principal or designee, shall be responsible for the supervision and operation of any equipment requiring specialized knowledge or skill.
7. No group/organization may sublet any District facility.
8. All groups using District facilities must notify the District of schedule changes or cancellations at least 24 hours in advance.

ll. Policy Review and Revision

Review and revision of these policies and procedures shall occur as needed, but at least every two years.

III. Legal References

M.G.L. Ch. 71 S 37H
M.G.L. Ch. 71 S 71
M.G.L. Ch. 272

IV. Approvals

First Reading: May 26. 2005

Second Reading June 9.2005

Third Reading and Adoption: June 23. 2005

Approval: June 23. 2005

Vote: 6 to 0

HWRSD School Committee Chairperson Elaine M. Carey **(Signature on file in Supt.'s Office)**

Original Policy Adopted: May 3, 1984
Amended: March 27, 1997
Amended: April 27, 2000
Amended: June 23, 2005

Exhibit 6-23 (Continued)
HWRSD Policy for the Use of School Buildings and Grounds

SCHEDULE OF FEES FOR SCHOOL RENTAL/USAGE
June 2005

Middle School and High School (Rental fees, excluding staff and equipment)		Elementary Schools (Rental fees, excluding staff and equipment)	
Cafeteria - HS	$50 per hour wl a 3 hr min.		
Cafeteria - MS	$50 per hour w/ a 3 hr min.	Cafe/GymlAuditorium	$50 per hour wl a 3 hr min.
Kitchen (actual use) [5]	$50 per hour wl a 3 hr min.	Kitchen (actual use)	$50 per hour wl a 3 hr min.
Gym (each time)	$85 per hour wl a 4 hr min.	Computer Labs [3]	$35 per hour wl a 3 hr min.
Auditorium	$100 per hour wl a 4 hr min.	Library	$50 per hour wl a 2 hr min.
Classroom	$50 per hour w/ a 3 hr min.	Classroom	$50 per hour wl a 3 hr min.
Dumpster Use [2]		Dumpster Use [2]	
Computer Labs [3]	$50 per hour w/ a 3 hr min.	Audio Visual Rental [4]	
Audio Visual Rental [a]		Field Use	$50 per hour wl a 3 hr min.
Library	$50 per hour w/ a 2 hr min.		
Field Use	$50 per hour wl a 3 hr min.		

[1]All groups using the Auditorium must utilize the Hamilton Wenham crew trained by the Technical Director and assigned to the auditorium by the Fine Arts Department Chair in order to use the space. This applies to all rehearsal time as well as performances. The required crew will be determined by the specific needs/abilities of each group. All parties shall meet with the Technical Director to determine their specific needs/requirements and review the house rules.

Additional auditorium fees:

Mandatory Staff

Technical Director	$50lhour
Stage Manager (student)	$15/hour
Lighting Control (student)	$15/hour

Optional Staff

Sound Tech (student)	$15/hour
House Manager (student)	$15/hour
Spot Light (student)	$15/hour

[2]Should the dumpster at any school require an additional pickup, the fee will be set by calling the dumpster company for the going rate.
[3]For Computer Labs use of a Technology Coordinator or Technology Teaching Assistant must be present at a rate of $25/hour.
[4]AudioNisual Rentals including: slide projectors, overhead projectors, digital projectors, VCRs, DVD players, televisions and/or screens will be made available upon request for an additional fee.
[5]HWRSD Food Service personnel must be must be present at all times for kitchen use

Exhibit 6-23 (Continued)
HWRSD Policy for the Use of School Buildings and Grounds

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Wenham, Massachusetts 01984

Schedule of Fees for School Rental & Usage
June 2005

All groups, regardless of category, must have liability insurance and will be responsible for paying for police-fire coverage as required by the event, custodial fees, equipment, required personnel fees, and damages to the school property as per the District Policy.

Category A **School or Town** sponsored activities	Category B **Reciprocal Town/School Use** HWRSD uses these field for school athletics programs	Category C **Short-Term Use** Community Groups that charge admission fees (4 weeks or less)	Category D **Long-Term Use** Community Groups (Resident and Non-Resident – 5+ weeks)	Category E **Market Rate** Person/Organization charging market rates for services
No Rental Charge	No Rental Charge 1. Pingree Park 2. Patton Park 3. H & W Tennis Courts 4. Iron Rail	Sports, Recreation, Arts Groups 40% of total rental fee	HW Adult Recreation If majority of participants are H or W residents – 25% of total rental fee Non-HW Adult Recreation If majority of participants are NOT H or W residents – 50% of total rental fee	Rental fee charges as per the HWRSD "Schedule of Fees for School Rental/Usage"
For example (not meant to be an exclusive list): 1. HWRSD Friends' 2. H & W Scout Groups 3. Churches 4. Town Boards 5. Town Hall Meetings 6. Police/Fire Meetings /Trainings 7. School Booster Club Awards Events	*For example (not meant to be an exclusive list):* 1. Youth Football 2. Youth Lacrosse 3. Youth Soccer 4. Little League 5. Youth Awards	*For example (not meant to be an exclusive list):* 1. Youth Theatres 2. Dance Companies 3. Quilter Groups	*For example (not meant to be an exclusive list):* 1.Community House 2.Youth Basketball 3. Youth Cheerleading 4. Men's Basketball 5. Badminton 6. Fine Arts Org. Events	*For example (not meant to be to exclusive list):* 1. Driving Schools 2. For. Lang. Classes 3. Test Prep Businesses 4. Private Instruction

Source: HWRSD Policy Manual, 2010.

FINDING

One software vendor—SchoolDude* has the capability to schedule events for outside groups, while simultaneously arranging for after-hours heating or cooling, custodial services, set-up of tables and chairs, filing of insurance certificates, and invoicing. Similar modules may exist in the portfolios of other vendors, but Evergreen Solutions is not aware of other vendors. This SchoolDude subroutine makes it possible to streamline and integrate the facilities lease and rental process with other key facilities management functions.

A facility scheduling cost recovery analysis can be performed by SchoolDude of the potentials for rental and lease income by HWRSD. In the opinion of Evergreen consultants, the potential for increasing rental and user fee income in HWRSD is considerable. In Evergreen's judgment, HWRSD has granted too many fee exemptions and other special considerations in its operation of the school facilities use program.

Based on Evergreen's prior experience with analyses by SchoolDude of districts sized similarly to HWRSD, the following prospects might be possible:

- Current annual rental and lease income realized by HWRSD - $3,800
- Average rental and lease income by similar U.S. school districts - $15,000
- Top 10 percent of peer school districts collect this amount - $23,000

Especially in the current economic times, but also as a rule, such extra income should be generated by HWRSD. In addition, if the high school auditorium were an attractive venue instead of an outdated, poorly maintained facility, the above fee speculations might be higher (see **Recommendation 6-4**).

It may be argued that some organizations may no longer lease the school district's facilities, if the current fee schedule were enforced, let alone if the fees were increased. However, a counterargument is that the fees at HWRSD still compare favorably against lease and rental charges for other facilities in the community.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 6-14:

Seek the advice of a facilities use vendor (e.g., SchoolDude) to determine best strategies for raising the income from community use of school facilities.

HWRSD should seek the advice of a facilities use vendor. While it is unlikely that HWRSD can generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in fees, an increase of up to four or five times the current income is possible and plausible.

**http://www.schooldude.com/products/ maintenancedirect/)*

FISCAL IMPACT

As noted above, the estimate of increased fee income is speculative. The timeline below therefore estimates an eventual increase in facilities lease income from about $4,000 to about $20,000, showing a net increase of $16,000. Year Five estimated revenues include those collected from the renovated auditorium.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Implementation Best Practices for Community Use of Facilities	$4,000	$12,000	$16,000	$16,000	$20,000

ADDENDUM FOR CHAPTER 6

Following submission of the draft report, members of the Operational Audit Committee asked Evergreen to add an analysis of the operational costs of consolidating three elementary schools into two, as well as three schools into one school.

A detailed, comprehensive analysis of this request would require more time than is available under the current provisions of Evergreen's contract. However, an initial, cursory examination of this matter is provided herewith. Caution is advised against use of this preliminary information as the basis for decision making. Instead, it is provided as a basis for further indepth inquiry prior to decision making, in the event that such action appears promising.

In addition, please note that other recommendations in this report have already stated Evergreen's position to keep the three elementary schools in operation. This analysis must therefore be considered separate from this recommendation and any other recommendations that may appear to be in conflict.

This preliminary analysis includes operating costs only. Costs of land acquisition, renovation, expansion, demolition, and new construction are not included. Nor does this analysis include potential income from the sale of land or buildings no longer needed. Finally, the analysis makes no judgment as to the pedagogical advisability of reducing the number of elementary schools from the current three.

The impact of the two options on the following operating costs will be examined:

- Number of administrators
- Number of teachers
- Number of custodians; kitchen/cafeteria staff
- Utilities
- Transportation

Exhibit 6-24 provides estimated costs or cost savings (in parentheses) of having HWRSD reduce the number of elementary schools from three to two. The rationale for each estimate is described in the exhibits.

Exhibit 6-24
Estimated (Savings) or Costs of Operating Two Elementary Schools Versus Three

Cost Category	Estimated Cost (or Savings)
Staffing cost: annual savings due to two principals instead of three, and a slightly smaller number and possibly lower rank of other administrators; no expectation of savings in number of teaching staff, custodians, or kitchen staff, as the number of students remains the same	($150,000) annually
Utility cost of renovated and expanded schools (annual savings due to improved energy efficiency and smaller aggregate building envelope to enclose required building volume) 10% less than cost for three schools – figured on basis of FY 2010 cost of $174,000	($17,400) annually
Transportation – added costs due to fewer students walking to school – 2 % increase over present cost – figured on basis of FY 2010 unreimbursed costs of $554,600	$11,100 annually
Total Net Savings of operating two versus three elementary schools	**$156,300 annually**

Source: Prepared by Evergreen Solutions in part from data supplied by HWRSD, 2011.

Exhibit 6-25 provides estimated costs or cost savings (in parentheses) of having HWRSD reduce the number of elementary schools from three to one. The rationale for each estimate is described in the exhibit.

HWRSD should fund and conduct an objective analysis of these two options, if the above preliminary analysis results appear to be promising. This analysis should include all attendant costs, including those of new construction, renovation, expansion, land acquisition, and infrastructure development. Also included should be potential income from the sale of land and buildings.

Exhibit 6-25
Estimated (Savings) or Costs of Operating One Elementary School Versus Three

Cost Category	Estimated Cost (or Savings)
Staffing cost: annual savings due to one principal instead of three, and a slightly smaller number and possibly lower rank of other administrators; minor savings in number of teaching staff, custodians, or kitchen staff.	($300,000) annually
Utility cost of renovated and expanded schools (savings due to improved energy efficiency and smaller aggregate building envelope to enclose required building volume) 10% less than present cost of operating HS/MS– figured on basis of FY 2010 cost of $260,000	($26,000) annually
Transportation: added costs due to no students walking to school – 10% increase over present cost – figured on basis of FY 2010 unreimbursed costs of $554,600	$55,400 annually
Total Net Savings of operating one versus three elementary schools	**$270,600 annually**

Source: Prepared by Evergreen Solutions in part from data supplied by HWRSD, 2011.

Once again, Evergreen does not recommend using the preliminary data furnished herein as the basis for decision making, other than to fund a deeper, objective and thorough analysis, in the event that HWRSD wants to pursue further consideration of either option for elementary school reconfiguration in the district.

In Evergreen's experience, the proper funding of such an in-depth analysis is in the range of $75,000 to $100,000, and should require approximately three months to complete.

CHAPTER 7:
FOOD SERVICE

7.0 FOOD SERVICE

Chapter 7 reviews organization and management, policies/procedures, organizational processes, student meal participation, and financial effectiveness for the food service program in Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD). Four sections are included:

7.1 Policies and Procedures
7.2 Organization and Management
7.3 Student Meal Participation
7.4 Financial Performance

School meal programs began when the Child Nutrition Act of 1946 authorized the National School Lunch Program to "safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children." The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is open to all public and nonprofit private schools and all residential childcare institutions. HWRSD participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), created by Congress in 1975, and the USDA Donated Food (Commodity) Program. School districts that participate in these federal programs receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from USDA for each eligible meal they serve. In return, the district must serve its students meals that meet federal guidelines for nutritional value and offer free or reduced price meals to eligible students. The HWRSD free and reduced student population is very small in comparison to many school districts and is influenced by the composition of the population in the local community.

HWRSD, like other districts participating in the federal feeding programs, receives federal support in the form of a cash reimbursement for each meal served, depending on the economic status of the student. The less fortunate students qualify for free lunches, while others qualify for reduced price lunches. All meals served according to federal guidelines receive some level of reimbursement, including those served to students who pay full price.

The 2009-10 and 2010-11 federal reimbursement rates for breakfast and lunch are shown in **Exhibit 7-1.**

Exhibit 7-1
National School Breakfast and Lunch Reimbursement Rates
2009-10 and 2010a-11 School Years

	Severe Need Breakfast		Breakfast		Lunch	
Program	**2009-10**	**2010-11**	**2009-10**	**2010-11**	**2009-10**	**2010-11**
Free Meal	1.6100	1.6800	1.5900	1.6600	2.4900	2.5900
Reduced Price Meal	1.3100	1.3800	1.3100	1.3800	2.0900	2.1900
Paid Meal	.2400	.2500	.2400	.2500	.2600	.2600

Source: http://www.fns.usda.gov, 2010.

Evergreen's survey included several questions related to the food service operation. The survey was completed by HWRSD administrators (both central office and school-based) and teachers. The results are shown in **Exhibits 7-2** and **7-3**. The HWRSD responses are compared to responses provided by administrators and teachers in other school districts where Evergreen has collected data. As can be seen, HWRSD administrators were generally more positive regarding food service operations than teachers and administrators in other school districts.

Exhibit 7-2
Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses Related to Food Service in Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Survey Statement/ Respondent Group	Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The School Nutrition Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.				
Central Office Administrators	83.3%	16.7%	55.7%	17.7%
Principals	80.0%	20.0%	57.2%	18.2%
Teachers	65.4%	21.5%	42.6%	34.4%
Vending machines are not available to students during lunch period.				
Central Office Administrators	16.7%	33.3%	71.4%	12.0%
Principals	60.0%	40.0%	73.9%	12.5%
Teachers	47.2%	22.2%	64.3%	18.0%
Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.				
Central Office Administrators	66.7%	33.3%	41.9%	26.1%
Principals	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	29.2%
Teachers	17.8%	15.0%	24.6%	32.8%
Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.				
Central Office Administrators	66.7%	16.7%	80.0%	10.0%
Principals	40.0%	0.0%	92.3%	7.7%
Teachers	11.2%	11.2%	75.4%	6.9%
Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.				
Central Office Administrators	100.0%	0.0%	84.3%	11.0%
Principals	80.0%	20.0%	86.0%	10.4%
Teachers	34.3%	47.2%	37.8%	38.0%
Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunch.				
Central Office Administrators	0.0%	100.0%	30.0%	30.0%
Principals	20.0%	60.0%	23.1%	76.9%
Teachers	26.9%	40.7%	41.1%	34.9%
Many students bring their lunch from home every day.				
Central Office Administrators	33.3%	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%
Principals	60.0%	0.0%	23.1%	69.2%
Teachers	45.8%	8.4%	10.3%	54.9%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

Teachers in HWRSD do not agree with administrators that the "cafeterias are calm environments" by more of a significant difference then even the comparison database. This may be an area that principals and food service staff want to address. A student spending too much time in line does not appear to be an issue for HWRSD as it typically does in comparison groups.

The most telling and compelling disparity between HWRSD and the comparison database has to do with "many students bring lunch from home". This item is of significant concern given it

directly affects school lunch participation rates which drive the profitability of the school district's food service operation. Participation is a primary challenge for HWRSD.

HWRSD administrators and teachers are comfortable with the food service operation in general and noticeably more than the comparison database districts as reflected in **Exhibit 7-3.**

Exhibit 7-3
Comparison of Administrators and Teachers Responses
Related to Food Service Overall Operations in
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database

Respondent Group	HWRSD Teachers and Administrators		Teachers and Administrators in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding	Needs Major or Some Improvement	Adequate or Outstanding
Central Office Administrators	16.7%	83.4%	30.50%	48.70%
Principals	20.0%	80.0%	34.2%	43.9%
Teachers	21.8%	67.3%	24.5%	30.6%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 were passed to address obesity and promote healthy eating and physical activity through changes in school environments. The Act encouraged the creation of local school wellness policies as well as improved menu planning requirements and continuation of nutrition standards.

Reimbursable meals for the National School Lunch Program have specific requirements based on the type of menu planning approach used. Typical school operations offer one of two approaches—either the Food-Based approach or the Nutrient Standard approach.

The Food-Based approach consists of a meal pattern based on the type (breakfast/lunch) of meal served. The meal must contain a specified quantity by age/grade group for each food component.

The Nutrient Standard approach uses computer software to conduct nutrient analyses of school meals. Instead of working with specific components in specific amounts, the menu planner usually analyzes the nutrient contributions from menu items served over a one-week period with the nutrient requirements having to meet the age/grade group served on a per day basis.

HWRSD uses the Food-Based approach. The school district purchased Nutrikids software with a grant in 2003-04; the grant required that at least one school had to be on the Nutrient Standard approach. According to food service managers, the district started with the Nutrient Standard approach, but switched back to the Food-Based approach due to the comfort level of staff plus children having difficulty with the process. The Nutrikids software does currently provide menu planning, tracking of nutrients, and production records for manager use. The current Nutrikid software requires a $300 per year annual license fee to maintain.

A la carte items sold in both the cafeteria and vending machines are required to meet the established recommendations by the Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids criteria published in 2004. HWRSD a la carte items meet these standards.

Massachusetts House Bill 4919, filed in July 2010, impacts numerous requirements for food service operations, including wellness and other areas of potential impact for school districts. This new legislation will have an impact on all school food service operations across the state. Section 23B encourages use of "produce grown in the Commonwealth." Section II of Chapter 69 of MGL is amended to include "nutrition and wellness programs; Section III of General Laws Section 222(a) adds "competitive foods or beverages and "nutritional standards" to the section with the Department of Education to develop the nutritional standards (not later than January 1, 2011 to be implemented no later than August 1, 2012) and guidelines on competitive foods. The department will establish guidelines for training for public school nurses in area of obesity including eating disorders; department regulations shall "include but not be limited to making available plain, portable water to all public school students during the day at no cost to the students; enhance school food service director training in nutrition and diet; recommend the duration of school lunch periods; and create regulations requiring local health officials to conduct food safety inspections at schools. "

Motivational initiatives within the HWRSD food service operation include the creation of the motto "providing food, preparing minds" for all food service staff to display on small laminated cards. One of the newer creative changes implemented is the introduction of a deli counter in the high school cafeteria to provide healthy cold cuts as an option for students to try to increase participation. The child nutrition program administered by the HWRSD food service operation plays a critical role in making sure that all students are ready to learn by supporting nutritious meal service.

In addition to the Nutrikids software, the Food Service Department designs its menus using Calendar Artist software which is compatible with Nutrikids. The Food Service Director's office has two PCs maintained by the Technology Department. The high school manager's office also has a PC which is maintained by the Technology Department. No other school site food service operations have technology, and the district does not currently have a Point of Sale (POS) system.

The HWRSD General Operating Fund does not provide any funded-training opportunities for food service professional development. Most of the training, including mandated safety activities for staff, is typically done on their own time with their own funds or, if possible, funded out of the food service operation. There are opportunities for staff to attend training sessions, including attending SNA conferences, meetings, webinars, ServSafe certification, in-house training and others.

Training included meals per labor hour calculations, nutrition basics, and offer verses serve training. The Food Services Director and managers are provided similar opportunities. Grants and award funds are used to send food service staff to state conferences, food shows, and other select opportunities. Funds are budgeted for SNA membership for the Director, all managers, and others who may be interested. Funds are also budgeted to send the Director to state conferences.

A Massachusetts School Nutrition Task Force stated, "Nutrition influences a child's development, health status, well-being and potential for learning." The Task Force recognized that good nutrition is a prime factor in a student's ability to learn. The Task Force noted that the school environment will shape a child's nutritional health in several ways:

- *students eat one to two of their meals in the school cafeteria;*
- *classroom teachers provide factual instruction on human health and biology;*
- *peer relationships and adult role models influence eating patterns and provide subtle but strong messages in body image development;*
- *physical education and school sports programs strengthen student's bodies; and*
- *school health services, guidance counselors and classroom teachers provide essential support for student physical and psychological growth.*

The Task Force went further to state the role of support the school community has in helping to create a healthy environment:

> *…for a truly comprehensive approach to school-based nutrition programs and services, it is crucial that all members of the school community help to create an environment that supports healthy eating practices. Administrators, teachers, school food service and other personnel, parents and students, all need to be involved in the effort.*

7.1 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The development of policies and procedures constitutes the means by which a district and its departments communicate expectations and ensure consistent efficient operations across a number of locations. Effective policies and procedures that are widely understood and implemented are critical in a food service operation. Individual food service workers are responsible for making daily decisions that directly affect the quality and safety of food served, as well as the profitability of their food service program.

On June 30, 2004, the President signed Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. Section 204 of this law states that each local educational agency participating in a program authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 is required to establish a local wellness policy for students by June 30, 2006.

The minimum requirements for this policy are shown in **Exhibit 7-4.** In compliance, HWRSD adopted a wellness policy on May 18, 2006.

Exhibit 7-4
Federal Requirements for a Local Wellness Policy

At a minimum, the policy must:
(1) Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines are appropriate.
(2) Include nutrition guidelines selected by the local educational agency for all foods available on each school campus under the local educational agency during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;.
(3) Provide an assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
(4) Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons within the local educational agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy.
(5) Involve parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy.

Source: Public Law 108-265.

FINDING

During the development of the HWRSD Wellness Policy, the communities of Hamilton and Wenham created a joint Wellness Council that assisted in developing the framework for the HWRSD Wellness Policy. In May 2007 the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Nutrition Council, steered by the Director of Food Service and funded by a Team Nutrition Grant, developed "Nutrition Guidelines for Compliance with the District Wellness Policy."

The Council's recommendations included the following:

- *monitor nutrition practices must be done at school level with principals;*
- *establish a School Nutrition Council with each principal appointing one individual; and*
- *outline nutritional value of foods to be served on school campus*
  - *celebrations, foods available for students, foods available on campus beyond school day, food as reward/punishment, school meals*
  - *allergies management*
  - *communication with parents*
  - *time for meals*
  - *staff modeling behaviors*
  - *monitoring.*

In its wellness policy, the HWRSD School Committee "recognizes the link between student health and learning, and desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting healthy eating and physical activity in district students."

The policy establishes numerous goals in the areas of:

- nutrition education and healthy eating;
- physical activity;
- health education and services;
- healthy school environment; and
- family and community involvement.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-1:

Readdress the HWRSD wellness policy, procedures, and overall program.

Based on interviews and review of documents, Evergreen consultants found that the School Nutrition Council is inactive. In fact, HWRSD has not updated its Wellness Policy since 1999, even though the policy indicates it will be reviewed every two years for compliance and amended as needed. The fact that the School Nutrition Council is inactive is contrary to the original intent of the federal directive and local guidelines as well as the policy itself. The School Nutrition Council's roles, responsibilities, and membership need to be incorporated into the policy.

In keeping with the policy's intent and purpose, each of the items developed as guidelines need to be put in place and actively implemented and monitored.

The membership of the Wellness or School Nutrition Council should include:

- Food Service Director;
- School Committee representative;
- physical education representative;
- health education representative;
- Friends association representative;
- dietitian;
- representative of local school health advisory council;
- elementary/middle/high school principal or designee;
- local physician; and
- assessment/evaluation representative.

The policy should designate frequency of meetings (typically minimum of twice per year).

A further subset of this recommendation is to create a document on the HWRSD Wellness Program to serve as the details behind the policy. The original guidelines address many of the areas to be covered by such a programmatic document. Goals should be specifically outlined,

nutrition education should be defined, and physical activities should be outlined across the district. Each component or section of the policy should be provided with details.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Key performance indicators are important for any operation which should be self-supporting. Normal reporting requirements to the State only demand submission of Profit and Loss Statements and a Cash Flow Analysis. Labor costs are a critical element of any public enterprise and food service is no different. Properly managing labor involves having timely and accurate data to make informed data-driven decisions.

Based on discussions with staff, the calculation of 'meals per labor hour' is an optional requirement and not always completed and definitely not submitted to the State. Nonetheless, this key performance indicator is crucial in balancing staffing alignments in order to account for the changing environment of food service such as rising costs or changes in participation levels. School districts do not have the flexibility to raise prices of lunches once a rate has been established which is totally different than a private enterprise that could automatically increase prices to cover any increase in costs.

The National Food Service Management Institute has been funded by the federal government for years and is highly recognized for its Financial Management Information System. The six quality performance measurements the Institute has identified for food service operations are:

- *statement of revenues and expenditures, net gain/loss and fund balance which measures profitability;*
- *utilizing a standard unit of measurement for meal equivalents;*
- *per meal costs including total cost and cost by category(food, labor and supplies);*
- *expenditure costs by category (food, labor) as a percentage of total revenue;*
- *participation rates by program and eligibility category; and*
- *meals per labor hour and percentage of labor to revenue as measures of productivity.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-2:

Actively use all aspects of the National Food Service Management Institute's six quality performance management measurements.

The HWRSD Food Service Department uses most of the six key performance indicators identified by the National Food Service Management Institute in some capacity. Only Items 1 and 5 above are required to be reported to the State of Massachusetts on a regular basis, and it is difficult to obtain comparative data which would be very beneficial in terms of benchmarking performance beyond just being self-supporting.

Exhibit 7-5 displays some common food service performance indicators developed by Evergreen consultants and based on performance area—such as safety, staffing, cost efficiency, and cost effectiveness.

Exhibit 7-5
Common Food Service Performance Indicators

Performance Area	Performance Indicator
Safety	• Kitchen accidents per number of meals served • Workers' compensation claims
Staffing	• Staffing based on internally or externally established MPLH rates • Hours of training provided to cafeteria workers and managers • Labor costs as percentage of total costs • Administrative staffing costs as percentage of total costs
Cost Efficiency	• Food costs as percentage of total costs • Per meal costs
Cost Effectiveness	• Measures of student satisfaction with menu items • Number of new food items introduced • Cafeteria worker absentee rate • Annual turnover rate of cafeteria staff • Average student line wait time in minutes • Average student eating period (from tray receipt to end of allotted lunch time) • A la carte revenues

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

The HWRSD Food Service Department creates a monthly internal cash flow report as well as a monthly profit and loss statement to support its efforts to be fiscally responsible.

According to the Director of Food Service, selected financial and participation data are shared with all managers on a monthly basis through the department newsletter. In addition, the Department has quarterly meetings to discuss general issues or concerns, as well as performance data with the managers. In addition, all performance data are shared with staff at the end of the year.

It would be beneficial if the quarterly managers meetings, as a priority, addressed all performance indicators, soliciting ideas on how to improve results. Written reference material should be provided to support the efforts of each manager in conveying these important data to managers and food service staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

On a monthly basis, the Director of Food Services and the administrative assistant develop productivity reports based on the commonly used measure of Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH). They use the Massachusetts standard for developing MPLH data for each cafeteria.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not maintain a mandated range of meals per labor hour as the goal or standard for school districts. Productivity in food service operations at some schools is lower than expected based on the application of acceptable national standards employed by the Director in evaluating the HWRSD food service operation. **Exhibits 7-6, 7-7,** and **7-8** reflect an analysis of "Meals per Labor Hour" for September 2009, December 2009, and September 2010.

Districtwide, the meals per labor hour ratio has declined from September 2009 to September 2010—from 11.2 in 2009 to 10.5 in 2010.

Food service staffing is typically determined based on meal equivalents served. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts recommended meal equivalent formula is defined as revenue $/number of serving days/free reimbursement rate. Many states use a conversion method which typically includes:

- count each lunch as … 'some number'
- count each two breakfasts as … 'some number'
- count each determined dollar amount-$0.00 in a la carte sales as … 'some number'.

Industry standards have also been developed for use by school food service operations for comparison purposes. These standards provide benchmarks for evaluating performance and are included in **Exhibit 7-9**. National standards are also reflected in the Food Service Department material shown in **Exhibits 7-6, 7-7**, and **7-8** in the lower section of these exhibits. The three exhibits noted cut off the number of meal equivalents at 800+, and **Exhibit 7-9** goes beyond that number up to 901+ which obviously considers national larger size school districts as well.

As **Exhibits 7-6, 7-7,** and **7-8** reflect, HWRSD uses MPLH data on a monthly basis to assess its productivity challenges and opportunities.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD School Food Services Department is commended for regularly assessing its own productivity.

FINDING

Exhibits 7-6 through **7-9** display comparative data for Meals per Labor Hour for HWRSD along with national or industry standards. The 2008-09 and 2009-10 time periods are reflected to capture points in time and specific results to provide more meaningful analysis.

Exhibit 7-6
Meals per Labor Hour in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
September 2009

Number of Serving Days	19	HWRHS	Miles	Winthrop	Cutler	Buker	Total
Breakfast	meals/serving days*.66	5					
Lunch	ADP	148.9	176	130	125	101	
Non- Reimbursable Lunch	ADP	12	10	7	3	6	
Meal Equivalents	$$/serving days/2.68	218	50	17	13	16	
Total All Meals		**383.9**	**236**	**154**	**141**	**123**	**1037.9**
Manager		8	6	6	6	6	
FSW		6	6	5	5		
FSW		3.75	5	3.25	3.75	6	
FSW		6.25	3				
FSW		6.75					
FSW		1					
total		31.75	20	14.25	14.75	12	92.75
							0
MPLH		**12.091339**	**11.8**	**10.807018**	**9.559322**	**10.25**	**11.190296**
		14 - 16	12 - 14	10 - 12	9 -10	9 - 10	

	MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH) TOTAL HOURS			
	CONVENTIONAL		CONVENIENCE	
NUMBER OF MEAL EQUIVALENTS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS
Up to 100	8	9-12	9	9-11
101-150	9	12-16	10	11-14
151-200	10-11	16-17	12	14-16
201-250	12	17-20	14	16-18
251-300	13	20-22	15	18-20
301-400	14	22-29	16	20-25
401-500	14	29-35	18	25-28
501-600	15	35-40	18	28-34
601-700	16	40-43	19	34-37
701-800	17	43-47	20	37-40
800+	18	47+	21+	40+

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-7
Meals per Labor Hour in Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
December 2009

Number of Serving Days	16	HWRHS	Miles	Winthrop	Cutler	Buker	Total
Breakfast	meals/serving days*.66	12					
Lunch	ADP	159	162	140	141	115	
Non- Reimbursable Lunch	ADP	12	11	10	7	7	
Meal Equivalents	$$/serving days/2.68	201	59	23	11	14	
Total All Meals		**384**	**232**	**173**	**159**	**136**	**948**
Manager		8	6	6	6	6	
FSW		6	6	5	5		
FSW		3.75	5	3.25	3.75	5.5	
FSW		6.25	3				
FSW		6.75					
FSW		1					
total		31.75	20	14.25	14.75	11.5	80.75
							0
M/LH		**12.094488**	**11.6**	**12.140351**	**10.779661**	**11.826087**	**11.739938**
		14 - 16	12-14	10 - 12	10-12	9-10	

	MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH) TOTAL HOURS			
	CONVENTIONAL		CONVENIENCE	
NUMBER OF MEAL EQUIVALENTS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS
Up to 100	8	9-12	9	9-11
101-150	9	12-16	10	11-14
151-200	10-11	16-17	12	14-16
201-250	12	17-20	14	16-18
251-300	13	20-22	15	18-20
301-400	14	22-29	16	20-25
401-500	14	29-35	18	25-28
501-600	15	35-40	18	28-34
601-700	16	40-43	19	34-37
701-800	17	43-47	20	37-40
800+	18	47+	21+	40+

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-8
Meals per Labor Hour in Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
September 2010

Number of Serving Days	20	HWRHS	Miles	Winthrop	Cutler	Buker	Total
Breakfast	meals/serving days*.66	8.316					
Lunch	ADP	165.7	157.5	110.4	111	102	
Non- Reimbursable Lunch	ADP	13	7.5	2	6	8	
Meal Equivalents	$$/serving days/2.72	154	52	18	15	12	
Total All Meals		**341.016**	**217**	**130.4**	**132**	**122**	**942.416**
Manager		8	6	6.5	6	6	
FSW		6	6	5.5	5		
FSW		3.75	5		3.75	5.5	
FSW		6.25	3				
FSW		6.75					
FSW		1					
total		31.75	20	12	14.75	11.5	90
							0
M/LH		**10.7406614**	**10.85**	**10.866667**	**8.949153**	**10.6087**	**10.47129**
		14 - 16	12-14	9 - 10	9 - 10	9 - 10	

	MEALS PER LABOR HOUR (MPLH) TOTAL HOURS			
	CONVENTIONAL		CONVENIENCE	
NUMBER OF MEAL EQUIVALENTS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS	MPLH	TOTAL HOURS
Up to 100	8	9-12	9	9-11
101-150	9	12-16	10	11-14
151-200	10-11	16-17	12	14-16
201-250	12	17-20	14	16-18
251-300	13	20-22	15	18-20
301-400	14	22-29	16	20-25
401-500	14	29-35	18	25-28
501-600	15	35-40	18	28-34
601-700	16	40-43	19	34-37
701-800	17	43-47	20	37-40
800+	18	47+	21+	40+

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October, 2010.

Exhibit 7-9
Industry Standard Recommended Meals per Labor Hour

	Meals Per Labor Hour (MPLH)			
	Conventional System		Convenience System	
Number of Equivalents	Low Productivity	High Productivity	Low Productivity	High Productivity
Up to 100	8	10	10	12
101-150	9	11	11	13
151-200	10-11	12	12	14
201-250	12	14	14	15
251-300	13	15	15	16
301-400	14	16	16	18
401-500	14	17	18	19
501-600	15	17	18	19
601-700	16	18	19	20
701-800	17	19	20	22
801-900	18	20	21	23
901 and up	19	21	22	23

Source: School Foodservice Management for the 21st Century, 5th Edition.

Based on September 2010 Meals per Labor Hour reflected in **Exhibit 7-8**, both the high school and middle school do not meet the minimum end of the expected range of performance and productivity. The high school has a MPLH range of 14-16 and is achieving 10.74, while Miles River Middle School has a range of 12-14 and is achieving 10.85.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-3:

Develop and implement a formal plan for improving productivity at schools that meets the established minimum range of Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH).

As reflected in the finding, currently both HWRHS and Miles River Middle School do not meet their minimum MPLH range for productivity efficiency. Miles River Middle School must achieve at least 1.2 additional MPLH and HWRHS must achieve at least 3.3 MPLH.

Staffing and hours allocated for both schools must be reviewed in terms of how many meals are being served. The plan of action needs to address improved meal production per labor hour utilized by the assignment of individual staff. The Director of Food Service and staff will need to continue to monitor and assess individual staff levels of productivity to meet national expected standards. Observations of individual staff and ongoing Manager and Director dialogue need to be focused on improving this area. Changes in staffing allocations must be adjusted as necessary. The Director of Food Service has a firm understanding of the changes needed and should be authorized to implement the necessary steps to align the MPLH requirements.

This recommendation specifically highlighted schools to allow for other situations that might influence the elementary schools that fall below their MPLH requirement at any time in the future.

FISCAL IMPACT

If the minimum of each range is achieved for both the middle school and high school the combined hours saved would be 4.5 hours per day. The annual hours saved would be approximately 837 (4.5 hours per day x 186 days worked per year). At an estimated average annual salary of $12,496, including extended service hours, plus fringe benefits estimated at 23 per cent ($2,874), the total salary and benefit costs is $15,370. The total compensation cost equates to $15.02 for an average hourly wage (186 days worked x 5.5 hours worked per day = 1023 total hours divided into $15,370).

The annual hours saved of 837 would amount to an annual savings of $12,571(837 x $15.02).

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Implement Plan to Meet Minimum MPLH Standards	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571

7.2 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A sound organizational structure serves as the foundation for efficient and effective operations. A streamlined organizational structure is particularly important for school food service operations, since the largest expenses are labor and food costs.

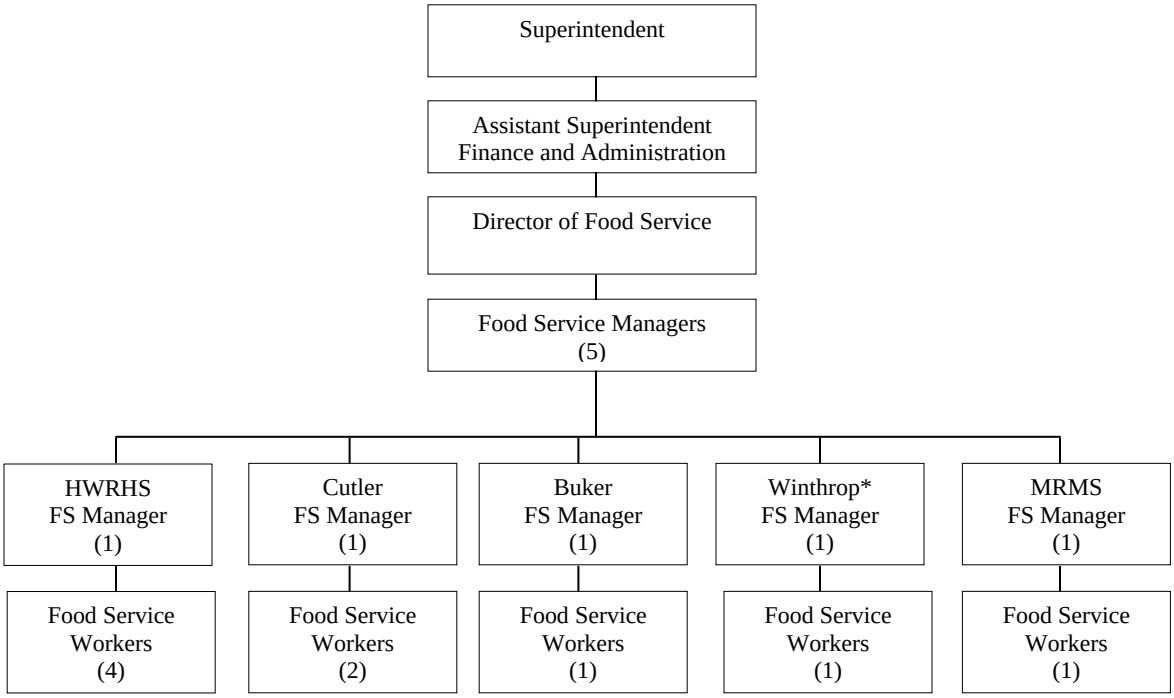
The organization of the HWRSD Food Service Department is shown in **Exhibit 7-10**. The Director of Food Services handles most of the menu planning, free and reduced applications, hiring of food service staff, budgeting, purchasing, and required reporting, as well as day-to-day administration with the support of an administrative assistant. Food Service Managers are responsible for the food service program at each of their sites and their respective staff. The Food Service Managers report directly to the Director of Food Services.

The Food Service Department is comprised of five full preparation kitchens at each of the five schools in the district. Approximately 40 percent of the food preparation is conventional cooking and 60 percent convenience cooking. There are national staffing standards tied to the type of cooking and kitchen arrangements in place as reflected in **Exhibit 7-9**.

Exhibit 7-11 shows the Food Service Department's Annual Performance Report for meals served in 2009-10.

The Food Service Department uses the HACCP principles for its food service operations. Glossary definitions found in the food service manual come from the Food and Drug Administration document *Managing Food Service: A Safety Manual for the Voluntary Use for HACCP Principles of Food Service and Retail Establishments* (draft September 29, 2004).

Exhibit 7-10
HWRSD Food Service Department
Organizational Chart



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, October 2010.

*Had one additional part-time 3 hr/day worker not return and position not filled.

Exhibit 7-11
HWRSD Reimbursable Meals*

Lunch	Breakfast (high school only)
Lunch for 2010 was 118,989 for 34%	2010 was 2872 for 2.3%
Lunch for 2009 was 132,432 for 36%	2009 was 3146 for 2.7%

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, October 2010.

*Data extracted from Food Service Annual Performance Report 2010.

The Food Service Department identified key goals and objectives for the 2010-11 school year. The areas included:

- administration (maintain a financial break even point and successfully complete SMI and CRE reviews);
- communication and marketing (utilize Connect Ed to promote events;
- developing webpage;

- attend Friends meetings—maintain community relationships with seniors in community;
- nutrition and nutrition education (remain current on trends and regulations);
- continue to improve nutrient quality of school meals;
- continue professional development activities; and
- operations (increase participation, maintain sanitation and food safety).

The Food Service Department creates and distributes a monthly Food Service Newsletter with the Department logo—"Providing Food-Preparing Minds" strategically displayed. The Newsletter reflects meal participation for the prior month by school, reflects special events planned for each school site, and provides the Manager's Corner which focuses on important information for managers.

According to an on-site review of documents, observations and interviews, Winthrop and Cutler Elementary Schools are the only two sites currently maintaining cashiers at the front of the lunchroom line. The decision was influenced by the principals at each site concerned about the time taken in the line by children moving too slow and having to hold onto their cash for so long. This process is contrary to the other three sites and to the typical process for cashier placement in lunchroom operations.

FINDING

The HWRSD Food Service Department is providing food service staff with training opportunities in ServSafe. The ServSafe Food Safety Program was developed by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF). It is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-Conference for Food Protection (CFP). Requirements vary by state, but most require that the on-site manager in a food preparation facility be ServSafe certified. All HWRSD food service managers and six food service staff have been certified in ServSafe.

Some of the elements taught in the ServSafe Program are shown in **Exhibit 7-12**.

As part of ServSafe, instruction is also provided in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, or HACCP. HACCP is a new program through the USDA that provides guidance for juice, meat, poultry, and seafood processing in order to prevent food-borne illness. All school food providers had to implement programs that complied with HACCP in 2005-06.

The key elements of a HACCP program relate to sanitation, temperature, and standard operating procedures. These are shown in **Exhibit 7-13.**

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for providing food service managers and staff important training on food service safety.

Exhibit 7-12
Instructional Modules of the ServSafe Certification Course

Unit 1 The Sanitation Challenge
Section 1 Providing Safe Food
- The Dangers of Foodborne Illness
- Preventing Foodborne Illness
- How Food Becomes Unsafe
- The Keys to Food Safety

Section 2 The Microworld
- Microbial Contaminants
- Classifying Foodborne Illnesses
- Bacteria, Viruses, Parasites, Fungi

Section 3 Contamination, Food Allergens, and Foodborne Illness
- Biological Contamination
- Chemical Contamination
- Physical Contamination
- The Deliberate Contamination of Food
- Food Allergens

Section 4 The Safe Food Handler
- How Foodhandlers Can Contaminate Food
- Diseases Not Transmitted through Food
- Components of a Good Personal Hygiene Program
- Management's Role in a Personal Hygiene Program

Unit 2 The Flow of Food through the Operation
Section 5 The Flow of Food: An Introduction
- Preventing Cross-Contamination
- Time and Temperature Control
- Monitoring Time and Temperature

Section 6 The Flow of Food: Purchasing and Receiving
- General Purchasing & Receiving Principles
- Receiving and Inspecting Food

Section 7 The Flow of Food: Storage
- General Storage Guidelines
- Refrigerated Storage
- Frozen Storage
- Dry Storage
- Storing Specific Food

Section 8 The Flow of Food: Preparation
- Thawing Food Properly
- Preparing Specific Food
- Cooking Food
- Storing Cooked Food
- Reheating Food

Section 9 The Flow of Food: Service
- General Rules for Holding Food
- Serving Food Safely
- Off-Site Service

Section 10 Food Safety Management Systems
- Prerequisite Food Safety Programs
- Active Managerial Control
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)
- Crisis Management

Unit 3 Sanitary Facilities and Pest Management
Section 11 Sanitary Facilities and Pest Management
- Sanitary Facilities and Equipment
- Designing a Sanitary Establishment
- Materials for Interior Construction
- Considerations for Specific Areas of Facility
- Sanitation Standards for Equipment
- Installing & Maintaining Kitchen Equipment
- Utilities
- Cleaning and Sanitizing
- Cleaning Agents
- Sanitizing
- Machine Dishwashing
- Cleaning and Sanitizing Equipment
- Cleaning and Sanitizing the Premises
- Tools for Cleaning
- Storing Utensils, Tableware, and Equipment
- Using Hazardous Materials
- Developing a Cleaning Program
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Denying Pests Access to the Establishment
- Denying Pests Food and Shelter
- Identifying Pests
- Working with a Pest Control Operator
- Using and Storing Pesticides

Section 12 Food Safety Regulation and Standards
- Government Regulatory System for Food
- The FDA Food Code
- The Inspection Process
- Self Inspection

Section 13 Employee Food Safety Training
- Initial and Ongoing Employee Training
- Delivering Training
- Training Follow Up
- Food Safety Certification

Source: www.servsafe.com, 2010.

Exhibit 7-13
Key Elements of a HACCP Program

Sanitation — Be sure that all of your food preparation areas are clean and sanitary, such as workers' hands, utensils, and food contact surfaces. Avoid cross contamination.

Temperature — Temperature control means keeping cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Cook to proper temperatures and hold at proper temperatures, and be sure to record those temperatures. A basic, properly calibrated food thermometer (digital or dial) is all you need to check for proper temperatures.

SOPs — SOPs can be used both for sanitation and to verify that proper temperatures are being observed, as well as other aspects of a foodservice operation.

Source: Guidance for School Food Authorities: Developing a School Food Safety Program Based on the Process Approach to HACCP Principles, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, June 2009.

FINDING

In October 2006, the Massachusetts Department of Education conducted a National School Lunch Program Administrative Review of the HWRSD food service operation which required a corrective action plan (CAP) to address recommendations. The review process covered the following procedures and processes:

- meal count system and claim consolidation;
- meal pattern/offer vs. serve requirements;
- school nutrition program participation and nutrition education activities;
- school nutrition and food service management and operational procedures;
- free and reduced application process, including benefit issuance documentation; and
- documentation for revenues and expenditures from non-profit school food service account.

Nine areas of opportunity were identified, and the school district responded appropriately with a Corrective Action Plan addressing each issue within the flexibility provided by the program deficiency narrative. The report identified two schools, Winthrop and Cutler, who had cashiers at the front of line as an area of opportunity for improved efficiency.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-4:

Align all cashier physical placements at end of cafeteria line to maximize efficiency.

Although the Food Service Department responded appropriately in its Corrective Action Plan for the review, the more effective and efficient way of work is to have the placement of cashier stations at the end of the cafeteria line.

If concerns are still evident as to the time in line for students, additional training of food service workers should be conducted to enhance the process and eliminate delays. Experiences gained by the other three schools should provide available positive reference points for making the change successful.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD does not have a point-of-sale software system. POS systems improve the accuracy of reimbursement claims by capturing the data at POS with minimal manual intervention. The POS system greatly improves the accountability for individual lunchroom operations. It was noted that the Friends group at the high school, at one time, had offered a contribution towards purchasing a POS system.

Many POS software systems provide back office features. Some of these features would include the ability to:

- track student purchases;
- upload and download data;
- custom-develop reports;
- track sales by menu items;
- create data on a students allergies or medical reminders;
- receive and create prepayments for meals; and
- e-mail a student's transaction history report to a parent/guardian.

These are only a few of the options available.

In addition, improving efficiency and effectiveness in the cashier activity area would incorporate items such as: providing a touch screen technology, displaying on screen class rosters, having the ability to automatically calculate ala carte sales and reimbursable meal sales, identify a prepaid meal versus a cash only meal, identify student allergies or medical notes, and display the cashier's cash counting function at the end of the day. These are some of the functional areas that help provide better efficiency of operations within individual sites and the overall food service operation.

One reason the HWRSD Food Service Department did not purchase the POS software when they purchased the Nutrikids software is due to the fact that HWRSD has a very low free and reduced lunch population. It is estimated the cash collections being deposited daily amount to approximately $8,000. Based on food service feedback, they estimate that it takes approximately

five labor hours per day to process these collections. The potential exists for free and reduced applications to increase with a POS system, in perception alone, with individuals being truly anonymous when making payment at the cash register. This would obviously help increase participation—an issue that plagues the district.

Currently, money provided to students by parents for lunches may or may not get spent for lunch. With the controls and online payment options, this would provide more direct control for parents wanting to be sure funds are spent on lunches. This will generate more meal counts, which will result in more reimbursement revenue.

A review of current internal communication indicated that rough estimates for the purchase of a POS system can run anywhere from $28,000 to $32,000. It should be noted that the POS systems will improve the cashier functionality as well as provide upgraded technology for the food service operation beyond the administrative office.

Nutrikids software functionality provides more than what HWRSD is currently utilizing in its food service operation. The software itself is suppose to provide effective integration options with other software which is an advantage if it can interact seamlessly with a student information system and other software packages which would enhance the attractiveness and efficiency of the operation.

Some of the integration options include:

- a data warehouse for student real-time data;
- a biometric capability for fingerprint recognition;
- scanning functionality that would allow scanning and processing of free and reduced meal applications, increasing processing speed and accuracy while determining eligibility or denial within the system;
- options for parental notification creating unique and targeted messages related to food service meal account balances (option for online payments and tracking eliminating the need for cash collections); and
- perpetual inventory system capability providing item availability in an instant by site, management of separate inventories, variance reports to reduce inventory costs allowing managers to monitor waste, overstocking and possible shortages which should help cut inventory costs with better planning.

Given parents have indicated they prefer to get their communications from the schools online, it becomes even more important for the Food Service Department to develop its website to provide more timely and accurate data to the parents. Misconceptions about the food service operation and lunchroom activities can be better supported through the website. A POS system would help by providing a parent notification message option.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-5:

Purchase a Point of Sale (POS) software system to improve efficiency and operational effectiveness.

A subset recommendation of this area is for the Technology Department to focus dedicated efforts in getting a food service website operational and user friendly for all stakeholders.

In addition to the cash receipts handling savings, the school district will realize additional efficiencies such as:

- cash register process improved efficiency;
- more effective, accurate and timely reports for decision making;
- increased free and reduced applications thus improved participation;
- improved free and reduced processing efficiency;
- improved accuracy of reimbursement claims;
- improved inventory control reducing costs;
- expanded functionality;
- streamlined management practices;
- better technology improving efficiency; and
- more informed parents and stakeholders.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on current estimates to purchase a POS system, the average potential cost would amount to a one-time cost of $30,000 plus a continuation maintenance agreement fee of approximately $1,600 to protect the investment. These estimates are based on tentative proposals in the local community obtained internally.

The current cash collection process of handling approximately $8,000 per day was estimated by food service management to be costing the district an estimated five labor hours per day to handle the process. Utilizing five labor hours as a basis then multiplying by an hourly rate of $12.63 (a typical food service worker with some tenure) per hour for 5 days per week over 176 day work year period would equate to a cost avoidance of approximately $11,114 or a 37 percent reduction in the cost of the POS system itself. For the 2012-13 fiscal year, the net saving would amount to approximately $9,514 ($11,114 in savings less estimated $1,600 for maintenance costs equates to $9,514 net savings per year)

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Purchase POS System	($30,000)	$9,514	$9,514	$9,514	$9,514

FINDING

During early 2010, the HWRSD Food Service Department conducted a School Lunch Survey of elementary/middle school parents, high school students, and middle school students. The focus of the survey was to determine how often students purchase school lunches; if parents have visited their child's school cafeteria for lunch; menu variety; how menu options are reviewed with students; if the meal is considered nutritious; why students are not purchasing school lunches; and other issues.

Students were asked similar questions as to frequency of buying school lunches, what is the option if not buying a lunch, what would make a student eat lunch more often, if the children know what the menu is before lunch, are there enough options for variety, and other questions. Both results reflect that students are only eating in the lunchroom 1-2 times per week or never, and most either bring a lunch or buy snacks.

The same students seemed to indicate they would eat lunch more often if the food tasted better and if they had more options. Another significant area of comment from both student groups indicated that they do not know what is being served for lunch before they get there so it would appear there is an opportunity for improved communication with students in this area. Only 86 high school students completed the survey, 61 middle school students, and 89 parents so the survey was somewhat limited in its scope of respondents; however, it is still a representative sample.

The overall message from the internal Food Service survey and Evergreen's recent survey would indicate that the Food Service Department has work to do in changing perceptions of the lunch quality and attractiveness along with better overall focused communications to all stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-6:

Develop an action plan to increase student participation.

HWRSD should formally analyze and utilize internal food service customer satisfaction survey results to improve operational effectiveness.

Although the food service operation continues to extend efforts to improve its financial posture, the fact remains that participation in the lunch program is considerably below industry standards for school districts.

In addition to poor participation levels, the operation continues to struggle to balance its bottom line and (without a true total cost of operation reflecting expenses such as utilities, custodial services and maintenance charges included in the equation), the food service operation will not reflect the real cost of doing business while remaining profitable.

Both the internal customer satisfaction survey and Evergreen's survey indicate customers need more timely communication, more involvement, more choices, and improved quality. Establishing an action plan to focus on these concerns is an important step to gain support of customers while working on improving overall operational effectiveness.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Evergreen conducted on-site observations, ate lunch with students, and conducted interviews. Both secondary school campuses have their own cafeteria and kitchen. From a facility perspective, the middle school has a larger kitchen by approximately 210 square feet while the high school has a larger cafeteria by approximately 325 square feet. Utilization of the open courtyard for lunch was seen as a positive by many students and its continued use should be considered.

Consolidating of the middle and high school lunchroom operations is an activity that has been already analyzed by HWRSD. Based on the internal analysis, it would generate revised staffing by reducing two food service worker positions, downgrading a manager position to an assistant, and create savings in salary and benefits of approximately $85,500. This type of consolidation has been done in other Massachusetts school districts, and it's usually tied to a construction project. The Manchester-Essex Regional School District, one of the peer comparison districts, is one example of a school district combining its middle and high school lunchroom operation to maximize efficiency and reduce expenditures.

An alternative to the concept of consolidation would be to adjust the hours of staff across the board which again was previously analyzed by the district and determined that the reduction in hours would generate approximately $43,000 in savings and create a loss in health insurance benefits for individuals whose hours would be reduced below the required 20 hours per week.

With the continued operational deficit in the Food Service Department, which is impacted by the high cost of employee insurance as an operational cost, the profit and loss picture has continued to be negative by as much as $65,000.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-7:

Consolidate food service operations at high school and middle school campuses.

With continued cost increases and negative budgetary economic circumstances, the questions become:

- Can HWRSD afford to maintain two food service operations?
- Is this the best use of taxpayer's dollars?

Consolidating the food service operations for both sites must factor the physical characteristics of the consolidated campus. If students will walk from a separate building to another, consideration may have to be given to a protected walkway for changing weather situations. This

change, if deemed necessary, should be factored into planned facility changes that are considered as part of the capital outlay program.

Recommendation 7-5 calls for a Point of Sale (POS) software system to be purchased for efficiency and effectiveness. Consolidation of these two food service operations should be timed to occur after the implementation of the POS. Based on feedback from other local school district food service operations, the POS enhanced their ability to reduce as much as 6-8 minutes in time needed for students to process through the lines for meals.

Currently, HWRHS has two lunch periods and Miles River Middle School has one lunch period for a total of three lunch periods. Based on data provided from Manchester-Essex, this district also has three effective lunch periods for both middle school and high school students in one consolidated operation with the first lunch period starting approximately as the same time as the current HWRHS Wednesday lunch period. It is realistic to conclude that HWRSD's current lunch schedules may serve its total middle school and high school student population without having to add an additional lunch period.

Although it may not be preferred to co-mingle both middle school and high school students in one cafeteria, it has worked in other facilities and continues to work for Manchester-Essex. Accommodations may be necessary in how the process is established (such as seating middle school students closest to the kitchen to allow better oversight by staff and better processing time). Adequate time to eat lunch and length of time in line to obtain lunch are two factors to be considered in establishing the HWRSD process. These items are not obstacles for other consolidated operations provided a POS is used and physical changes necessary are incorporated into the process.

An internal Food Service Department survey was conducted of the peer districts to determine how they funded health insurance costs. **Exhibit 7-14** reflects that most peer districts in Massachusetts fund food service health insurance costs out of their general operating fund. It is more common nationally to determine the true cost of operations which not only includes health insurance, but other indirect costs such as utilities, custodial and maintenance expenses.

Exhibit 7-14
Comparative District Food Service Staff
Health Insurance Costs

District	Health Insurance Costs Funding
Hamilton-Wenham	Food Service Revolving Account
Manchester-Essex	General Fund
Pentucket	General Fund
Groton-Dunstable	Food Service Revenue pays portion (30%)
Nashoba	General Fund
Mendon-Upton	General Fund

Source: HWRSD Food Service Survey.

The purpose of this exhibit is to reflect peer district practices, but is not a recommendation of Evergreen consultants to not consider from the true cost of operations practices for self-supporting activities.

FISCAL IMPACT

Based on the HWRSD analysis and projected cost savings for labor (salary/benefits), HWRSD would be saving approximately $85,500 per year by combining both operations. This estimate is only for labor; other cost savings will occur as well.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Consolidate Cafeterias at Secondary Schools	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500

FINDING

Each year the Food Service Department prepares an Annual Performance Report which is presented to the School Committee. The report covers topics such as a department overview with key facts; special accomplishments; and administration which address finances and expenditures. The report also contains professional development, policies and procedures, department goals for the year, menu development, nutrition education, wellness, operations covering student preference determination/sanitation, and food safety/facility and equipment/purchasing

Annual reports on performance are effective methods of communication to stakeholders. The recent initiative of the Government Accounting Standards Board is directed towards establishing national standards for performance reporting as a way of work for the public sector. Although this statement is currently optional, it is expected that this type of reporting will become mandatory in the near future. It would be Evergreen's recommendation that HWRSD obtain a copy of this document and utilize its recommendations for performance reporting.

COMMENDATION

The Food Service Department is commended for its initiative to prepare and present an Annual Operational Performance Report to the HWRSD School Committee.

FINDING

During on-site interviews and review of organizational processes, it was noted that the food service operation struggles to find volunteers to assist in the lunchrooms of the schools. Volunteers are typically placed and directed to the classroom or to the curriculum and instruction.

As food service establishes its website and implements effective and timely communications to parents and the community, opportunities will be enhanced to initiate more community involvement and interaction beyond existing efforts.

Priorities of the various Friends organizations are also typically directed to the educational enrichment activities, technology, and other instructional areas of interest. The Friends organizations are valuable community resources for many types of support.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-8:

Coordinate efforts with the Friends organizations to develop community volunteers for lunchrooms.

The Food Service Director has initiated efforts to attend as many Friends organizations at the various schools as possible during the year. Interaction with the Friends organizations is an excellent method of reaching out to the community to solicit support in both volunteer time as well as requests for funding support for activities that will benefit most if not all students.

It would be beneficial for the Food Service Director to reach out to other community organizations on an ongoing basis to engage the community in addressing district needs. The Food Service Department already works with the seniors in the community which should provide a valuable resource for such volunteer efforts. Offering 'grandparents' a free meal funded by donations, can serve as an incentive to foster improved volunteer participation.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The National School Nutrition Association provides a program entitled "Keys to Excellence" which helps its members assess their school nutrition operations against national standards in four key areas of:

- administration;
- communication and marketing;
- nutrition and nutritional education; and
- operations.

HWRSD utilizes this program and it was one reason why HWRSD received the 2009-10 District of Excellence in Child Nutrition Award as the only school district in Massachusetts.

A magazine article as well as the local newspaper have highlighted the Food Service Department's accomplishments and provided positive media coverage to the school district highlighting its efficiency and effectiveness.

COMMENDATION

HWRSD is commended for its focus on nutrition and operational effectiveness and for receiving national recognition from the National School Nutrition Association for its efforts.

7.3 STUDENT PARTICIPATION

School food programs earn revenues through meal prices charged to students and adults, reimbursements from the federal government for each meal served that meets specifications, and in some cases, through catering operations. The programs reduce their costs by participating in the Child Nutrition Commodity Program, whereby they receive food products for free.

During 2009-10 fiscal year, the Food Service Department conducted a Breakfast and Lunch Price Survey of other districts which is reflected as **Exhibit 7-15**. The HWRSD survey included two of the Evergreen comparison districts, those being Pentucket and Manchester-Essex. HWRSD lunch rates are higher than both districts.

Exhibit 7-16 reflects a 'Five-Year History of Breakfast, Lunch and Snack Rates' for students, adults and others. During 2008-09, lunch prices for students went from $2.50 to $3.00.

Exhibit 7-17 represents 'Full Pay Prices for Student and Adults for Breakfast and Lunch' at each of the HWRSD schools. Prices are consistent across the school district.

HWRSD has a significantly small free and reduced population which minimizes the Food Service Department's options for qualifying for additional federal and possibly state resources. **Exhibit 7-18** reflects free and reduced lunch participation for comparison school districts used in Evergreen's study. It is evident from the data that generally the higher the enrollment, the higher the free and reduced percentage. HWRSD does not appear to be significantly out of line although its reduced lunch percentage for 2009-10 is lower than Mendon-Upton which has about 800 more students. HWRSD has almost as many as Nashoba who has over 1,200 more students. HWRSD is considerably lower in all categories, including the statewide average.

Both the Evergreen survey and the Food Service Department internal survey highlighted the need to address participation as the key issue facing the Food Service Department.

FINDING

The majority of school food revenues derive from student meal participation. All students who select a full meal—whether paying full price, a reduced price, or receiving a free meal—generate reimbursement funds**.**

Based on the Food Service Department's Annual Performance Report, the Free and Reduced Lunch Program was comprised of 109 students and 65 families, and the percent of participation was approximately 5.4 percent for 2009-10. In 2008-09, the percentage was 5.75 percent.

In 2007, one of the most widely used food services management manuals published industry standards for student lunch participation. These are compared to HWRSD rates in **Exhibit 7-19** for the month of September 2009. In comparing these recent rates with those for the 2010-11 school year, Evergreen found the figures to be similar. Data reflect that the HWRSD Food Service Department is struggling to positively affect its participation rates to increase levels of support for the lunch program. **Exhibit 7-19** shows how far below the national averages, the district is in relation to grade-level participation rates.

Exhibit 7-15
HWRSD
Breakfast & Lunch Price Comparison Survey
2009-10 School Year

BREAKFAST & LUNCH PRICE SURVEY					PRICE OF:							PRICE OF:		
School District	Enrollment	# of Schools	% of Free & Reduced	Elem School Grade K	Elem School Lunch	Middle School Lunch	High School Lunch	Adult Lunch	Dessert Included in Price	Price of 8 oz Milk	Price of 10 oz Milk	Elem School Brkfst	Middle School Brkfst	High School Brkfst
Danvers	3708	7	10%	$2.75	$2.75	$2.75	$2.75	$3.75	No	0.7	NA	NA	NA	NA
Essex-Agriculture	455	1	20%	N	N	N	$2.00	$3.00	Y	0.65	$0.75	N	N	$1.25
Hamilton-Wenham	2007	5	5%	$3.00	$3.00	$3.00	3	$3.75	most days	0.5	$0.65	n/a	n/a	$1.75
Ipswich	2156	4	11%	$2.50	$2.50	$2.75	2.75	$3.25	some days	0.5	$0.75	$1.50	$1.75	$1.75
Lynnfield	2307	4	3%	$2.00	$3.00	$3.00	3	$4.00	Y	0.75	$0.75	$2.00	$2.00	$2.00
Manchester-Essex	1450	3	3%	$2.25	$2.25	2.50-2.75	2.50-2.75	$3.50	fruit	0.65	$0.75	$1.25	$1.25	$1.25
Marblehead Charter	230	1	3%	n/a	$3.75	$3.75	n/a	$4.50	yes	0.75	n/a	$2.50	$2.50	
Pentucket	3369	6	9%	$2.00	$2.00	$2.50	$2.50	$3.25	yes, if offered	0.5	$0.75	n/a	$1.25	n/a

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-16
Five-Year History of
Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack Rates for Student and Adults

Category	2010-11	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07
Breakfast-students	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Lunch-students	3.00	3.00	Jan 2009 increase to 3.00	2.50	2.50
Lunch – Adults	3.75	3.75			
Snacks- range	.25 –1.50	.25 –1.50	.25 –1.50	.25 –1.50	.25 –1.50

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-17
Full-Pay Prices for Student and Adults for Breakfast and Lunch
2010-11 School Year

Category	HWRHS	MRMS	Winthrop	Cutler	Buker
Breakfast-students	1.75	NA	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lunch-students	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Lunch – Adults	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Adult Breakfast	Ala carte only				

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-18
HWRSD
Free and Reduced Comparison Districts
2009-10

District	Free and Reduced Percentage		
	Enrollment	Free Lunch	Reduced Lunch
Hamilton-Wenham	2,039	3.5%	1.4%
Groten-Dunstable	2,745	1.5%	0.4%
Manchester-Essex	764	3.0%	0.8%
Mendon-Upton	2,804	3.8%	1.3%
Nashoba	3,260	5.6%	1.9%
Pentucket	3,176	7.0%	2.7%
Statewide Average	2,465	27.4%	5.6%

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-19
Industry Standard and HWRSD Lunch Participation Percentages
September 2009

School	Industry Standard	HWRSD Data for September 2009
HWR High School	50%	22%
Miles River Middle School	60%	38%
Winthrop Elementary	70%	47%
Cutler Elementary	70%	42%
Buker Elementary	70%	40%

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions and Pannell-Martin, School Foodservice Management, 2007. HWRSD data provided by Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-20 compares participation levels in September 2009 to September 2010 as well as in March and April 2010 for each school site. The middle school enrollment is down slightly and so is the meal participation from September 2009. Elementary schools reflect a slight decline in enrollment and participation. Both Cutler and Buker show an increase in enrollment, but a decrease in participation level. As can be seen, the participation levels for HWRSD have significant opportunities for improvement.

Exhibit 7-20
Food Service Lunch
Participation Rates by Campus

Date	HWRHS	MRMS	Winthrop	Cutler	Buker
Sept. 2010	25%	36%	41%	39%	39%
June 2010	15%	34%	42%	50%	43%
May 2010	23%	33%	44%	46%	44%
April 2010	23%	35%	49%	49%	43%
Sept. 2009	22%	38%	47%	42%	40%
Percent Free and Reduced 2009	3%	6%	5%	7%	8%

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

* No Senior class in June/ no lunch during exam week

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-9:

Pursue planned and focused efforts to increase participation rates by a minimum of 5 percent per year cumulatively for five years.

The recommendation relates to **Recommendation 7-6**. Participation levels in the food service operation are critical to the financial health of HWRSD. Recent surveys indicate opportunities to improve 'timely and effective communication' regarding what is available for lunch. Better distribution and marketing of menu options appears to be an opportunity.

Implementing more direct involvement with students, conducting food tests, and serving on selection panels at the middle school and high school are options to explore. Working with Friends to discuss the issue, while working together to eliminate the 'brown bag' lunches and potentially providing more lunchroom options, are areas of opportunity to be pursued. It would be potentially beneficial for Food Service Managers to reach out to professional organizations, and seek ideas and suggestions for creative ways to improve participation levels.

In summary, improved communication efforts and better marketing are essential. Efforts with students directly and with Friends and community outreach initiatives such as attending Friends' meetings and sharing and obtaining feedback. Obtaining access to a Food Service website for communication will go a long way given the community preference for information sharing by electronic means. Continued efforts to improve the quality and student perception of the meals themselves are important. Implementation of a POS software system will provide even more support to enhance and initiate efforts to improve participation levels.

FISCAL IMPACT

Participation rates are significantly under industry standards for all schools as reflected in **Exhibit 7-19**. The average percentage increase necessary to bring all schools within the expected range of industry standard would equate to an average 26 percent increase. The percentage increase calculation is based on the September 2009 lunch participation figures noted in **Exhibit 7-6**.

It should be noted there is very minor difference from the 2009 to 2010 performance.

Buker Elementary has a 30 percent difference from the standard with both Cutler Elementary and HWRHS 28 percent below the standard. Winthrop Elementary has 23 percent difference and Miles River Middle School is 22 percent below industry standard in participation levels.

Increasing overall participation rates by a minimum of 26 percent will generate approximately $225,315 in additional revenue over the five-year period.

A total 681 lunches were served per day for September 2009 for all five schools and for the month a total of 12,939 . Increasing by 5 percent would add approximately 646 additional lunches per month for approximately nine months or an additional 5,814 lunches being served at $3.00 per lunch for an annual increase of approximately $17,442 for fiscal year 2011-12 (5,814/x 9 x $3).

The 2012-13 year would add another 5 percent or approximately 938 additional lunches for 9 months or an additional 8,442 lunches at $3 per lunch for a total annual increase of $25,326 (938 x 9 x $3).

The 2013-14 year would add another 6 percent or approximately 1,631 additional lunches per month for nine months or an additional 1,4678 lunches at $3 or an annual increase of $44,037 (1,631 x 9 x $3).

The 2014-15 year would add another 5 percent or approximately 2,094 additional lunches per month for nine months or an additional 18,846 990 lunches at $3 or an annual increase of $56,538 (2,094 x 9 x $3).

The 2015-16 year would add another 5 percent or approximately 3,036 additional lunches per month for 9 months or an additional 27,324 lunches at $3 or an annual increase of $81,972 3,036 x 9 160 x 9 x $3). This fiscal year reaches the cumulative plan total of 26 percent overall increase in participation levels over the five-year period. It should be noted that, in 2013-14, a 6 percent increase providing adequate time for the operation to implement initiatives to achieve the one year higher percentage level of participation. It should also be noted that participation rates on a national basis are a gauge of performance and individual characteristics of each school district must be considered in the operational process and implementation of improvements.

The five-year total increase in revenue is approximately $225,315. As participation rates are increased associated costs are also offset against the anticipated revenue. Primary costs associated with these activities that should be considered include the estimated cost of food as a percent of revenue (estimated at approximately 29.9 percent currently) as well as supplies and materials as a percent of revenue(estimated at 2.1 percent currently). Thus each year's projected increase in revenue is reduced by 32 percent for associated costs.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Improve Participation by a Minimum of 26 Percent	$11,861	$17,222	$29,945	$38,446	$55,741

FINDING

Students eligible to participate in the Food Service Internship Program have an option of working in the lunchroom program for on-the-job experience. The Food Service Director is a guest speaker in each of the Chefs/Nutrition classes (at the high school and three elementary schools) to present an overview and history of the school lunch program to increase student awareness. The Director provides students time to interact and be heard about the food service operation. The school offerings at lunch will be adjusted if quality feedback is provided and it does not compromise the nutritional values of the program.

The Director has been conducting classroom presentations for approximately five years. The program enables the Director to help students understand the role of food in schools through a historical perspective generating enthusiasm for wellness and for the food and health requirements of healthy living.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Food Service Department is commended for its Food Service Chef Internship Program for students.

FINDING

Participation efforts can be enhanced by providing students with an opportunity to become part of a student taste testing control and selection group who have an opportunity to taste test and product test items. Students could participate in selecting items to be incorporated into the food service lunch program. Currently students have an opportunity to try new products coming through the lunch line as part of a samples trail, but the program does not provide special recognition to the group of students who represent their peers, and who feel more like part of the decision-making process.

The Food Service Department has initiated other communication efforts in the community to share positive experiences about the food service program; such as 'today's school lunch' and the Buker 'fruit and vegetable program'—both highlighted in the local newspaper.

The Food Service Department continues to pursue opportunities to generate parental involvement in the Food Service Program. One such outreach is the initiative entitled "Eat with Your Child Day" which is aimed at encouraging parents to come to school at least one day each year to eat lunch with their children and experience what it is like to have lunch at school. The program started at Buker in 2004-05 and expanded to Winthrop in 2005-06. During 2009-10, Buker with an enrollment of approximately 256, had approximately 150 family members (roughly 59%) join their children for lunch. At Winthrop, with an enrollment of approximately 296 students, 92 family members (about 31%) joined their children.

This type of analysis and sharing of data are important for increasing awareness, and parental and staff participation in the lunchroom experience for students. An analysis of ongoing programs and their success rate is important to the Food Service Department and the community in general. This information would be useful for the Annual Performance Report shared with the School Committee.

Initiatives generate their own challenges and one hurdle the Food Service Department continues to address is for the parents, who participate, to purchase their lunch in the cafeteria. The purpose of the participation is to have parents experience a quality nutritional meal while at the same time providing a role model for students and making the individual student proud to have their parents show a genuine interest in the child's lunch experience.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Food Service Department is commended for its outreach efforts to parents with its 'eat with your child day' initiative.

FINDING

HWRSD is a member of the Metro North Purchasing Collaborative which represents a group of area school districts that pool their purchasing power to obtain a better price and level of service. The HWRSD Director of Food Service serves as President of the Co-op. Some of the bid items obtained for the current year through the co-op include groceries and snacks, bread, frozen

novelties (ice cream) drinks, paper, produce, bagels, vending, milk, pizza, equipment repair refrigeration, dish machines, cash registers, commodities, and chemicals based on the state bid.

The vendor awarded the grocery 'bid due to lowest price' is not necessarily the most acceptable vendor by some school districts who have issues with delivery of damaged goods and timing of deliveries. Procurement requirements sometimes create challenges for school district operations. Better monitoring and timely follow-up resolution of issues and concerns with vendors are important to the efficiency of the operation.

The district's active participation in the Food Service Metro North Collaborative improves efficiency and effectiveness opportunities for the district.

COMMENDATION

HWRSD is commended for its active cost saving participation in the Food Service Metro North Collaborative.

7.4 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

MGL Chapter 71 Section 72 and Chapter 69 Section 1C address food service and the creation of a separate revolving fund for food service revenue and expenses. Food Service is a self-supporting operation and typically requires separate funding accountability within school district financial tracking and reporting.

Catering services for the Food Service Department are provided for both internal and external events. The services provided for 2009-10 generated approximately $7,000 and covered the following areas:

Internal

- New teacher orientation
- Superintendent welcome breakfast
- Superintendent holiday gathering
- Superintendent end of year BBQ
- Superintendent retiree receptions
- Individual requests by school or department

External

- Hamilton Town Elections
- Wenham Town Hall Events
- Wenham COA Events

Daily cafeteria collections are deposited at the bank after Food Service Managers reconcile their deposits based on cash register readings. Managers record information on the FS-9 form 'Daily Receipt Report' which is forwarded to the Food Service Director weekly for consolidation and submission to the Treasurer with required documentation. It was noted previously that the

HWRSD Food Service Department handles approximately $8,000 per day in cash collections which must be properly documented and accounted for in the process.

A school-by-school analysis is necessary in order to determine specific reasons for problems. Adjustments to staffing, menu planning, portion control, and food specification should help most situations to improve the financial circumstances of a troubled operation. In many cases, school districts have considerable USDA commodities that can be used creatively in generating cost savings. Unfortunately, HWRSD is not a school district that has a high qualifying free and reduced population; thus, it receives very little commodity allocations.

Labor costs are an important element in the financial equation of a food service operation. In HWRSD, analysis shows quickly that a disproportionately high number of employees and time/hours for meals being prepared are evident. This should be a red flag in monthly data collection and analysis dictating the need to make timely corrective actions.

HWRSD prepares monthly cash flow statements as well as profit and loss analysis statements. These documents must be examined monthly, and timely decisions made to correct noticeable negative trends. Every revenue source and expenditure tied to the food service program should be evaluated continuously.

Exhibits 7-21 and **7-22** show the profit and loss statements for 2008-09 and 2009-10. The HWRSD Food Service Department submits online to the State these two documents for reporting purposes. Internally, the Food Service Department prepares its own Cash Flow Report, breaking down its income and expenditures by month, which reflects the cost of health insurance as a separate item. The State Cash Flow Statement incorporates Health Insurance in the line item entitled 'Labor.'

Evergreen consultants reviewed the 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 Cash Flow Reports along with the State Cash Flow Statements for the same years.

Unlike other departments in the school district, the Food Service Department should be a self-contained operation that generates revenue and keeps expenditures within its revenue sources. The changing cost of goods and participation levels in the food service operation make it difficult to balance. With negotiated agreements, it may be difficult to have much flexibility in adjusting staffing or labor costs to meet operational changes or economic impacts not anticipated. Consideration of this requirement may need to be addressed in the contract negotiations process to provide the operation with more flexibility. In a business climate, an organization would raise prices to offset increases; in the food service operation, it is difficult to raise meal prices in the middle of the year, and many times, even in the beginning. Raising meal prices to the student population may well lose participation in the school environment.

Exhibit 7-23 reflects the cafeteria fund history showing the profit and loss status as well as the consistent deterioration of the food service fund balance. Also reflected is the amount of health insurance costs represented in the profit and loss picture. The dramatic increase in health insurance costs is typical around the country in general. This exhibit reflects the overall continuing declining balance of the food service operation, and the reason why the school district has had to transfer dollars almost every year from the General Operating Fund.

Exhibit 7-21
HWRSD Profit and Loss
2008-09 School Year

INCOME	Year-to-Date
Sales	$547,072.15
Reimbursements Earned	$68,182.36
Other*	$65,572.67
Interest	$2,817.38
Total Income	**$683,644.56**
EXPENSES	
Cost of Food	
Beginning inventory (PF)	$5,839.22
Beginning inventory (CF)	$893.96
Purchases	$216,003.03
Purchases (commodity)	$2,502.07
Total Food Available	$225,238.28
Ending inventory (PF)	$5,110.69
Ending inventory (CF)	$574.37
Total Cost of Food	$219,553.22
Cost of Food as % of Rev	$0.32
Cost of Supplies	
Beginning inventory	$498.35
Purchases	$16,343.35
Ending inventory	$1,760.99
Total Cost of Supplies	$15,080.71
Cost of Labor (payroll)	$315,090.61
Cost of Health Insurance*	$108,058.16
Misc Expenses	$9,264.51
Other Expenses	$12,715.57
Phone	$1,066.59
Total Expenses	**$680,829.37**
Profit/Loss	**$2,815.19**

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

*Due to high health insurance costs charged to the Food Service Department, district funds were transferred in the amount of $65,000 to cover food service deficit.

Exhibit 7-22
HWRSD Profit and Loss Statement
2009-10 School Year

Category	Year to Date
INCOME	
Sales	$491,992.66
Reimbursements	$67,694.03
Other	$0.00
Interest	$10.22
Total Income	**$559,696.91**
EXPENSES	
Cost of Food	
Beginning inventory (PF)	$5,110.69
Beginning inventory (CF)	$574.37
Purchases	$179,780.16
Purchases (commodity)	$2,025.99
Commodity freight charge	$0.00
Total Food Available	$187,491.21
Ending inventory (PF)	$5,270.56
Ending inventory (CF)	$507.45
Total cost of Food	$181,713.20
Cost of Supplies	
Beginning inventory	$1,760.99
Purchases	$14,648.69
Ending inventory	$3,211.69
Total Cost of Supplies	$13,197.99
Cost of Labor	$309,548.74
Cost of Health Insurance	$110,724.80
Misc Expenses	$3,319.65
Other Expenses	$9,642.35
Phone	$848.49
Total Expense	**$628,995.22**
Profit/Loss	($69,298.31)

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 7-23
HWRSD Food Service
Fund History
2001-02 through 2009-10 Fiscal Years

Year	Profit/Loss	Fund Balance	Health Insurance Expense
		$65,468.66	
2001-02	($34,321.46)		$46,915.76
		$31,147.20	
2002-03	$15,217.78		$43,490.22
		$46,364.98	
2003-04	$9,275.12		$40,083.46
		$55,640.10	
2004-05	($35,728.88)		$66,813.47
		$19,911.22	
2005-06	($27,780.16)		$77,394.91
		($7,868.94)	
Adjusted	($160.79)		
		($8,029.73)	
2006-07	($13,599.23)		$88,836.29
		($21,628.96)	
2007-08	($26,597.12)		$97,104.65
		($48,226.08)	
Transfer from General Fund		$47,699.00	$108,467.72
Year End 2008		$0.00	$0.00
2008-09	($66,986.70)	($66,986.70)	$108,058.16
Transfer from General Fund		$65,000.00	
Year End 2009		($1,986.70)	
2009-10	($63,472.92)	($65,459.62)	$101,875.87
Transfer from General Fund		$65,459.62	
Year End 2010		-	
		0	

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

FINDING

The debate over private verses public management of food service is a constant discussion, but an alternative to be considered if the district is postured to be faced with increasing losses and an operation that cannot be sustained. Instead of waiting to let privatization issues surface in the district, a proactive approach would be to establish an evaluation system and ongoing dialogue to determine the status of the district operation on a regular basis.

Recent news articles have indicated that the some Boston school districts are considering a move to outsourcing their food service operations. What HWRSD needs to assess regularly is what a

private contractor can do that the district can not do, and what the district can do to prevent such a situation in the first place.

By conducting an analysis and evaluation on a regular basis, HWRSD should benefit from the exercise and end up making program improvements. It is important to examine closely customer-student relations and satisfaction. The district must pay close attention to menu items, menu and food appearance, presentation, and student participation.

Some of these items were concerns by students in the recent internal survey. Children ages 5-18 have everchanging food preferences, and it is in the district's best interest to understand those changing patterns and to be supportive. Surveying students and not implementing the findings will negatively affect participation and support for the lunch program.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-10:

Create, implement, and report results of a formal evaluation process to annually review the food service operation versus outsourcing alternatives.

To avoid conducting this annual evaluation in isolation, the Food Service Department and HWRSD would be better served if the process would include a knowledgeable business partner or two in the community.

Engaging the community in this activity is another way of gaining community involvement in the food service operation. During interviews, it was indicated that the district has difficulty getting local farmers to participate and contribute to the district's objectives. This may be an opportunity to work with this segment of the community and generate a higher level of interest in becoming more involved in the school district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. If the school district, when analyzing the total cost of operation, cannot restructure its food service program to be profitable, it would be a practical and valid business decision to give more serious consideration to the benefits of outsourcing the food service operation.

FINDING

Generating additional revenue for food service operations is limited. Therefore, having options (such as catering and utilizing vending machines) is important to help sustain gaps in covering operational costs**.** It takes constant research and professional networking to find and share creative ideas to enhance the food service operation.

Exhibit 7-24 reflects the vending profits obtained over the past three years. School districts have limited flexibility in creating revenue streams. Sustaining the food service operations is important for all the reasons previously reflected in the Massachusetts School Nutrition Task Force Report for "shaping a child's nutritional health and educational experience."

Exhibit 7-24
Vending Profits in the
HWRSD Food Service Department

Fiscal Year	Month	Amount	
2007-08	September	453.82	some months combined
	October	525.79	
	November	613.3	
	December	151.32	
	January	0	
	February	225.61	
	March	345.42	
	April	282.87	
	May	0	
	June	1207.79	
Total Collection		**$3,805.92**	
2008-09	September	0	
	October	220.69	
	November	177.07	
	December	0	
	January	298.64	
	February	0	
	March	278.97	
	April	280.01	
	May	63.44	
	June	0	
Total Collection		**$1,318.82**	
2009-10	September	0	
	October	10.19	
	November	0	
	December	0	
	January	0	
	February	288.52	Changed to new program, other product returned for credit
	March	289.11	
	April	148.04	
	May	503.95	
	June	190.12	
Total Collection		**$1,429.93**	**
2010-11	September	623.47	*

Source: HWRSD Food Service Department, October 2010.

* Reflects through September 2010.
** Food service changed to the new program in February 2010

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-11:

Add additional food service vending machines to the middle school campus.

During on-site observations and interviews, Evergreen found that the food service operation was considering adding an additional vending machine to the middle school campus. It is not uncommon for individual schools to use vending machines in selected areas to help generate funds for other purposes, thus providing teachers and staff with flexibility to fund other needs. The bigger picture to consider for the school and district is the vital role the food service

operation plays in providing students with healthy options to better prepare them to learn while sustaining a profitable operation which is has not been able to do for some time now.

Evergreen recommends that HWRSD consider placing two vending machines on the middle school campus. One healthy snack machine, that would average revenues of approximately $209, and a second vending machine of juice and water which would generate revenues of approximately $103.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources and will generate additional revenue for the food service operation.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Add Two Vending Machines	$312	$312	$312	$312	$312

FINDING

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, issued a report in April 2008 entitled "School Lunch/Breakfast Cost Study: Report #CN-08-MCII" as part of the Nutrition Assistance Program Report Series. The report outlines a brief discussion of 'unreported costs' and 'indirect costs' which both impact food service operations across the country depending on the school district's methodology and state requirements.

Many school districts in the country use indirect cost rates which can be applied to the food service operation. This same indirect cost rate is also typically applied to federal programs and grants as a method of capturing administrative and operational costs in handling various programs and supporting services. According to the report, several school districts do not report indirect costs as a food service expense. Indirect costs represent overhead expenses that are not typical or practical to identify with a specific function such as food service. This logic in the report does not address cost reporting requirements of various states as well as specific accounting requirements for capturing 'total cost of ownership' for a program or a project.

The report states "most school districts incur some costs in support of their food service operation that are not charged." In some cases it states, "school districts chose to bear these costs as a way to subsidize the operation or the operation had insufficient funds to cover all expected costs." Costs absorbed by districts and not reflected as a cost of doing business within food service are considered 'unreported costs' for the food service operation.

Program accountability, grant requirements, and the operational costs of doing business imply that efforts should be in place to properly identify the true cost of operations in order to make sound and effective decisions.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 7-12:

Identify indirect and unreported costs, and apply valid costs and charges to the HWRSD food service operation.

Most school districts treat the food service operation as an enterprise account which requires that the operation be self-sustaining. The logic of this concept is that if the operation cannot pay for itself, then consideration should be given to other alternative ways of doing business.

In order to determine if the food service operation is self-sustaining, it is important to record all appropriate costs of doing business within the financial reporting structure of the operation. In order to effectively present the full cost of the operation, the costs for indirect support should be incorporated in the process.

Knowing that the existing condition of the food service operation is already not profitable, transferring funds from the general operating fund to make additional charges, will only add to the existing continued deficits.

Food service operations are permitted by law to carry approximately a three-month fund balance for operational purposes and many school districts posture themselves to operate in that fashion. Every district has its unique set of circumstances and, for HWRSD, the poor participation for the programs along with the low existing free and reduced population are significant contributing factors which limit operational flexibility.

Based on fiscal analyses provided by HWRSD, the areas of utility costs, custodial services costs, and various maintenance charges are currently not being proportionately charged to the food service operation. Yet in Evergreen's opinion, they should since these are full costs to operate the food service program.

FISCAL IMPACT

A cost analysis of the 2009-10 fiscal year indicates that HWRSD spent approximately:

- $651,849 for custodial expenses;
- $532,984 for utilities; and
- $269,944 for maintenance costs.

The food service operation maintains approximately 25,770 square feet of working space out of a district total square footage figure of 364,460 square feet districtwide for all schools. The food service square footage represents approximately seven percent of the total districtwide square footage for schools. Utilizing this methodology is an acceptable way of allocating various costs back to an operation.

Applying the seven percent to the total utility costs for 2009-10 would amount to approximately $37,308 to be charged to food service. Some school districts provide separate meters to track

food service actual costs for various metered utilities to avoid the need to prorate costs. This same seven percent applied to the total maintenance costs would equate to approximately $18,896. Many school districts use a work order process for providing routine maintenance and special maintenance requests as a method of having valid documentation for prioritizing workloads and for properly charging programs, grants and other functions their proportionate costs.

Custodial charges can be calculated assuming an average hourly rate of a custodian of $18.44 taking into consideration it takes approximately two hours per day to clean a school food service operation. Considering there are five schools, and there are 176 work days, the associated costs for food service would be approximately $32,454.

Consolidating maintenance costs, utility charges, and custodial costs, the combined charges to be applied to food service would be approximately $88,658.

HWRSD should strive to capture these indirect costs in the food service budget fully by the 2013-14 school year—with half the costs by the 2012-13 school year. If this can not be accomplished internally, the outsourcing option should be seriously explored.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Account for and Support Indirect Costs	$0	$44,329	$88,658	$88,658	$88,658

CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

8.0 TRANSPORTATION

The American School Bus Council (ASBC) represents both public and private transportation providers responsible for pupil transportation. The Council includes such members as the National Association for Pupil Transportation, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, the National School Transportation Association, Blue Bird Corporation and others.

The Council began in 2006 and operates with a mission "to educate parents, school officials and lawmakers about the essential role the yellow school bus plays in the safety, health, security and readiness of America's school children." The Council "is committed to providing safe, effective, efficient and healthy transportation for the more than 26 million school children who ride more than 480,000 school buses each day."

Exhibit 8-1 reflects some national statistics related to pupil transportation. The data presented by the ASBC provides the average citizen with a better understanding of the significance of student transportation for public education and the educational process.

Exhibit 8-1
American School Bus Council
Transportation Data

ASBC estimates the number of school buses in the U.S.	480,000
Average miles traveled per year per bus	12,000
Total mileage for all buses	5,760,000,000
School buses transport 26 million of the 50 million students who attend school each day (ASBC estimates)	26,000,000
The number of students transported by each school bus	54
Average number of students transported per car if a school bus is not available (ASBC estimates)	1.5
The number of cars needed to transport students currently riding on one school bus	36
The number of cars needed to transport students currently riding on all school buses in the U.S.	17,333,333
Average fuel use per school bus per year (gallons)	1,714
Annual cost of fuel per child transported by school bus	$43
Total U.S. savings in fuel by students riding school buses (gallons)	2,297,142,797
Total U.S. savings in fuel cost per year by students riding school buses (gallons)	$6,097,028,413

Source: American School Bus Council.org, 2010.

According to Massachusetts General Law, HWRSD is entitled to receive reimbursement for valid documented transportation costs. The rate for reimbursement is approximately 57.8 percent.

Exhibit 8-2 reflects reimbursement dollars between HWRSD and its peer comparison school districts for the 2009-10 fiscal year. Reimbursement dollars for HWRSD appear to be in line with the districts geographic and rural routes for student transportation. HWRSD reimbursement dollars are approximately $143,000 below the statewide average.

Exhibit 8-2
Transportation Reimbursement in Comparison School Districts
2009-10 School Year

School District	2009-10 Entitlement	Reimbursement	Reimbursement @ 57.795%	Final 2009-10 Reimbursement	First Payment 2009-10	Second Payment 2009-10	Third Payment 2009-10
Hamilton-Wenham	$545,359	$315,190	$315,190	$315,190	$79,077	$79,077	$157,036
Groton-Dunstable	$924,564	$534,352	$534,352	$534,352	$0.00	$0.00	$534,352
Manchester_Essex	$205,915	$119,009	$119,009	$119,009	$0.00	$0.00	$119,009
Mendon-Upton	$1,027,296	$593,726	$593,726	$593,726	$148,958	$148,958	$295,810
Nashoba	$1,311,193	$757,804	$757,804	$757,804	$190,123	$190,193	$377,558
Pentucket	$752,017	$434,628	$434,628	$434,628	$109,042	$109,042	$216,544
Average	**$794,391**	**$459,118**	**$459,118**	**$459,118**	**$87,867**	**$87,867**	**$283,385**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2010.

Based on research efforts, it is evident the State of Massachusetts requires very few performance and operational efficiency data metrics to be reported making benchmarking comparisons difficult with state-reported data.

HWRSD contracts its student transportation services to SALTER Transportation, Inc in Newbury, Massachusetts. Although the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is in compliance with Massachusetts Department of Education regulations, Evergreen found areas that should be improved as they relate to the transportation function. Initiating recommended improvements outlined in this chapter should increase efficiency and operational effectiveness as well as more accurate reporting.

Chapter 8 presents Evergreen's findings, commendations, and recommendations for the transportation operation in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. The three sections presented in this chapter are:

8.1 Organization and Staffing
8.2 Planning, Policies, and Procedures
8.3 Operational Effectiveness

The management of HWRSD student transportation is dictated by the fact that the school district outsources it transportation services to SALTER Transportation, Inc. SALTER Transportation currently utilizes 14 buses and provides 14 certified school bus drivers who work four hours per day. SALTER Transportation reports that the turnover rate for the past three years for bus drivers and non-bus drivers has averaged 14 percent.

In addition, SALTER provides six buses for extra runs each morning and evening for elementary school transfers which allow students to take a bus from one school to another school to pick up their primary bus to deliver them safe and sound to their final home location.

Exhibit 8-3 shows the transfer bus process for HWRSD elementary schools.

Exhibit 8-3
HWRSD Transfer Buses at Elementary Schools
2010-11 School Year

Transfer Points	
AM	
Rt #14	Winthrop - Cutler
Rt # 8	Winthrop - Buker
Rt #10	Buker - Cutler
Rt # 5	Buker - Winthrop
Rt # 3	Cutler - Winthrop
Rt # 6	Cutler - Buker
PM	
Rt # 3	Winthrop - Cutler
Rt # 5	Winthrop - Buker
Rt # 10	Cutler - Buker
Rt # 11	Cutler - Winthrop
Rt # 9	Buker - Winthrop
Rt #4	Buker - Cutler

Source: SALTER Transportation, Inc. October 2010.

In addition to HWRSD, SALTER Transportation contracts with other school districts. Some of these districts include Manchester-Essex, Ipswich, Newburyport, Amesbury, and Peabody with a combined bus fleet in excess of 100 vehicles. All comparison districts also outsource their transportation services as reflected in **Exhibit 8-4.**

Exhibit 8-4
Transportation in Comparison School Districts

District	Outsource Transportation	Outsource to Who?	Cost of Last Transportation Contract	Term of Contract
Groton-Dunstable	Yes(All Regular and some Special Ed	Ddee Bus Service	Based on usage-different tiers 3 year total $3,067,711 5 year total $5,533,936	3 years
Manchester-Essex	Yes	Manchester routes run by Salter Transportation. Essex routes handled by Gloucester Public Schools and for one new route, it is run by Salter as well.	FY -11: Salter contract is for $130,860 + $5,600 for Kindergarten early release days, plus additional runs for athletic/activities on contract basis. The FY -11 Gloucester contract is for $175K.	1 year
Mendon-Upton	Yes	Tellstone & Sons- Located in Blackstone MA	NA	NA
Nashoba	Yes	First Student Bus Company	Approximately $1,500,000 per year	Contract Length – 7/1/09- 6/30/2011 with an option of a 2 year extension
Pentucket	Yes	Laidlaw Bus Service	Approximately $1 million	3 years, with the option to extend to years four and five.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, November 2010.

The contractor uses Easybus transportation software which provides scheduling/route management functionality as well as field trip functionality, fleet maintenance, and personnel management.

HWRSD maintains two buses to serve its special needs students. Both buses were under contract for lease purchase with the oldest bus lease just being retired. The school district has just lease purchased a 35-passenger diesel school bus with wheelchair lift under a five-year lease for a total cost of $83,512.

In 1996, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued "Guidelines for Student Transportation Planning and Policy Development for School Administrators." The guidelines document indicates that state statutes establish the responsibility of the School Committee to provide transportation services for students transported to and from home and school, and to and from educational programs. The document further states that a written policy statement is required, widely disseminated and clearly understood, and serves as a basis for issuing operating directives.

The Massachusetts Department of Education also recommended that school districts establish and maintain an essential data and records management process. The State identified a minimum list of essential information which should be maintained:

- list of students transported on each bus, with scheduled time for loading and unloading;
- any change of status of any student during school year;
- all necessary student info for filing state transportation reports;
- monthly and annual record of total mileage of each bus;
- record of mileage of each bus on extracurricular activities, field trips, and excursions;
- grouping of all transportation expenditures in one ledger; and
- records giving complete information regarding school bus accidents.

Included in the guidelines are criteria to assist school districts in determining whether or not a transportation program is economical and efficient.

The HWRSD Blue Ribbon Committee Report recommendations were factored into this chapter review process. Considerations were given to ways to make more efficient use of resources, looking for opportunities to improve effectiveness and efficiency of programs, and analyzing ways to improve productivity while looking for possible ways to raise revenue and balance cost savings.

Evergreen conducted a survey of HWRSD central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers as part of this operational audit. Opinions and attitudes gathered at the time of the diagnostic review, although not a complete picture of the transportation function, are valuable observations. Employees were asked questions focusing on school arrival time, sufficient number of buses, field trip support, transportation efficiency, and safety and bus driver operations. Responses to the survey were compared to peer districts in Evergreen's survey database.

Exhibits 8-5 through **8-7** provide the survey results for HWRSD central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers compared to school districts in Evergreen's survey database.

Exhibit 8-5 summarizes central office administrator results compared to peers. As can be seen, overall, central office administrators are satisfied with student transportation services. One of the lowest ratings is on bus drivers handling discipline issues on buses. Nonetheless, HWRSD administrators do not have the same level of satisfaction as the peer group on some variables. **Exhibit 8-5** also indicates that buses deliver students to school on time, there are sufficient buses and bus drivers to meet extracurricular needs, bus service is dependable, students feel safe riding buses, and bus ride times are not too long. The issue of discipline being handled by bus drivers is not only an issue in HWRSD and its peer comparisons; it is also an issue existing at many other school districts where Evergreen has performed similar assessments.

Exhibit 8-5
Transportation Comparison Survey Responses
HWRSD Central Office Administrators
2009-10 School Year

Survey Statement	Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0.0%	83.3%	12.4%	61.6%
There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	66.7%	0.0%	43.8%	45.3%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.0%	83.3%	12.6%	63.3%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	50.0%	0.0%	63.4%	17.2%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	16.7%	0.0%	31.0%	46.8%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0.0%	66.7%	14.2%	58.1%
Bus ride times are too long.	0.0%	66.7%	13.2%	19.2%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

Exhibit 8-6 summarizes school administrator (principal/assistant principal) results compared to peer school districts. This exhibit shows overall satisfaction with student transportation services with the exception of bus drivers not handling discipline issues effectively. The overall satisfaction with HWRSD transportation services is very high and shows a greater overall satisfaction level than the peer comparison group. In summary, responses by school administrators to survey questions show satisfaction with student transportation services, but once again not with the handling of discipline issues on buses.

Exhibit 8-7 shows the results of the HWRSD teacher survey and also shows comparisons in Evergreen's survey database. HWRSD teacher responses are in line with both the central administration and the school administrator responses. Teachers response rates on transportation services are acceptable and are almost evenly split on the handling of discipline issues on the bus. Peer districts appear to have more of an issue with requesting field trips efficiently; teachers had the most issues with scheduling field trips. Teachers are typically closer to delivery of

transportation services than central office administrators or school administrators, and generally have a better perception of transportation-related services.

Exhibit 8-6
Transportation Comparison Survey Responses
HWRSD School Administrators
2009-10 School Year

Survey Statement	Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0.0%	100.0%	13.1%	61.8%
There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	800%	20.0%	46.8%	45.4%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.0%	100.0%	13.4%	64.9%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	88.0%	0.0%	66.2%	17.3%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	20.0%	40.0%	36.7%	48.0%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	0.0%	80.0%	15.0%	61.6%
Bus ride times are too long.	0.0%	20.0%	30.9%	37.8%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

Exhibit 8-7
Transportation Comparison Survey Responses
HWRSD Teachers
2009-10 School Year

Survey Statement	Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District		Comparison Districts in Evergreen's Survey Database	
	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	9.3%	84.1%	12.6%	68.8%
There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	41.7%	22.2%	45.4%	28.6%
Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.0%	69.5%	6.6%	63.5%
The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	39.3%	19.6%	57.4%	16.3%
Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	16.7%	14.8%	27.8%	19.0%
Students do not feel safe riding school division buses.	4.6%	40.7%	10.9%	49.5%

Source: Evergreen Solutions Survey Results, 2010.

In summary, the three surveys show overall satisfaction with the transportation function as assessed by HWRSD central office administrators, school administrators, and teachers. It is important to point out that the ratings given by this group have a tendency to be somewhat higher than average. In addition, HWRSD shares the same challenges of school districts nationally with bus driver discipline of students.

During interviews, SALTER Transportation representatives stated that they provide inservice training in accordance with applicable laws including First Aid/CPR classes. Training also includes pre- and post-trip inspections processes, safe bus operations, protecting young riders, student management, emergency evacuations, danger zones, railroad crossings, safe bus stops and several other safety areas.

Preventative maintenance inspections of each bus are required every 60 days or 3,000 miles and they have a specific checklist for compliance that must be completed. According to 540 CMR 21.00, semi-annual safety inspections of school pupil transport vehicles are required and SALTER Transportation is in compliance. SALTER Transportation indicates that the average miles traveled per year per bus is approximately 8,300 miles. The average fuel consumption for the 14 buses in operation is between 7 and 7.5 MPG depending on winter or summer months. Each of the 14 buses is a diesel bus. The average cost for the fuel amounts to $3.02 per gallon for the current price.

When asked for the average distance from home to school for bus riders in the district, SALTER Transportation indicated they had no data to determine the average distance.

Extracurricular field trip requests are received by SALTER from the school requesting a quote for the field trip. The contractor communicates the data to the requesting school for a decision. Athletic trips schedules are typically sent by the Athletic Director directly to SALTER Transportation for coordination. The school district issues a purchase order to SALTER Transportation and then the company schedules the trips. The contractor assigns drivers for each trip requested.

SALTER Transportation estimates that the 2009-10 costs for athletic trips were approximately $62,705, extracurricular trips cost approximately $14,723, and special field trips cost $13,482 for a total cost of slightly more than $90,000 for the year.

According to the contractor, student discipline typically involves a first incident verbal warning followed by completion of formal bus conduct reports for the second incident. A written report is submitted to the principal at the school for discipline measures. According to SALTER Transportation, over the past three years, there have been between 28 and 40 discipline reports per year.

8.1 ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

HWRSD maintains two certified drivers to cover the special education transportation requirements for the district. One driver works seven hours per day and the second works eight hours per day. Within HWRSD, an employee must work at least 20 hours per week to quality for benefits.

SALTER Transportation maintains 14 certified drivers and necessary substitutes as required by the contract. The certified drivers work approximately four hours per day and are typically not provided benefits. As stated previously, turnover within the contracted drivers and other staff over the past three years has averaged 14 percent.

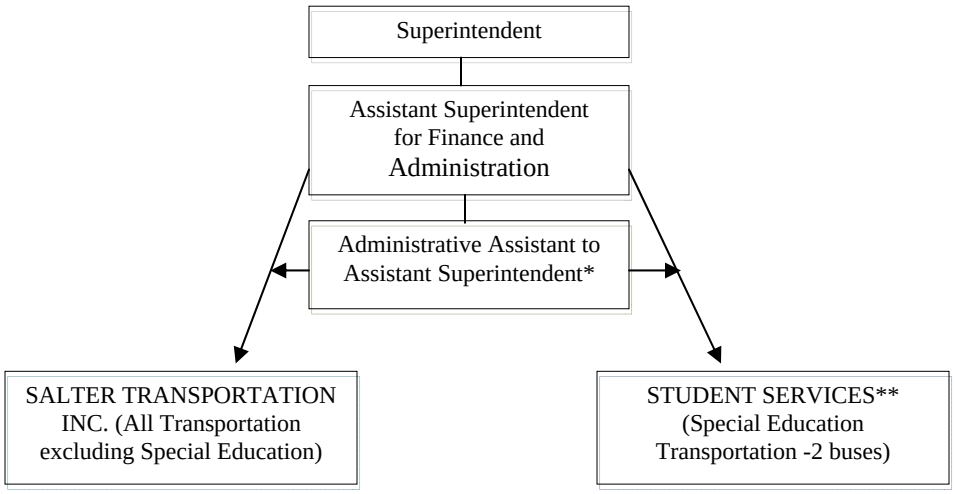
HWRSD maintains contracted services for all of its regular routes and handles SPED internally through the oversight of the Director of Student Services.

FINDING

Based on interviews and review of provided documentation, the current arrangement for managing the total district transportation program appears at times to be dysfunctional. The primary costs associated with the regular routes, extracurricular, and other special routes are maintained by the outside contract with SALTER Transportation, Inc. All special education needs identified by student IEPs (individual education plans) are handled within the school district with two buses for in-district services and individual contracts with three other firms to provide out-of-district transportation services. Expenditure for out-of-district special education costs appears to be more than costs for in-district special education ridership costs as reflected on Schedule 7, Pupil Transportation Reimbursement end-of-year reporting.

An attempt to create an organizational alignment structure to describe the existing oversight is reflected in **Exhibit 8-8**.

Exhibit 8-8
HWRSD Transportation Services
Organizational Alignment



*Note: Transportation Responsibilities:

- parental interface
- SALTER interface
- Special Education Transportation interface
- Extracurricular Trip activity interface w/teachers, coaches, etc.
- Assist with bidding process for contracts
- Hire Special Education drivers and purchase equipment

**Student Services contracts directly with:

1. MASS TRAN
2. LBK
3. NORTH SHCORE EDUC CONSORTIUM

For transportation out-of-district, other responsibilities include establishing routes and schedule, assigning student routes and administering and managing SPED transportation for HWRSD.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, October 2010.

The existing process has been complicated by recent turnover in administrative management positions within the district. The organizational alignment chart reflects some of the current district responsibilities managed by the various areas providing oversight and involvement in the process.

During Evergreen's on-site review, observations, and interviews, it became apparent that multiple individuals at SALTER Transportation interact with the district with the Dispatcher being the individual having the most direct contact.

During the interview with SALTER, several names were shared with various responsibilities within the contractor's organization. During discussions with HWRSD staff, they identified other persons for points of contact for various situations. The contract indicates:

> *The contractor must maintain an office in the local area or a telephone connection through which the Assistant Superintendent of Schools may make immediate contact with the owner or his agent during hours in which schools are in operation. The contractor or his agent must be willing to appear for conferences when necessary or requested. The contractor shall designate by name and position a particular member who shall be assigned on a daily basis to coordinate transportation arrangements under the contract and to carry out request or instructions.*

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-1:

Establish one consistent formal point of contact for SALTER transportation services.

Having interviewed both the Dispatcher and the owner of SALTER Transportation, Inc., there appears to be some element of uncertainty as to the specific roles required by the current contract. The Contractor has several individuals who have specific responsibilities for the various transportation activities of the contract. The HWRSD also has identified several individuals who coordinate work with the Contractor and resolve issues and concerns.

As stated previously the school district's turnover has added to the situation and, without a more formalized way of work, with specific names, responsibilities and phone numbers for timely notification and follow-up, valuable time may be lost in trying to resolve issues. The working arrangement should delineate expected response times to various types of situations and the timelines in the contractual documents must be followed in order for all parties to effectively provide transportation services.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

8.2 PLANNING, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Policy H8007 "Student Transportation Policy" was adopted June 1982 and revised in February 1999. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District states in Policy H8007 that "text for the current policy (adopted February 18, 1999) was drawn from M.G.L. c.71 & 16C which specifically addresses transportation by regional school districts."

The policy states that the aim of the district is:

> *…to provide a safe and efficient way of transporting all of our students to and from school. Given the rural nature of the towns of Hamilton and Wenham, and that several direct routes to the district's schools lack sidewalks, HWRSD will provide transportation services in compliance to both statutory requirements and the HWRSD agreement.*

Policy H8015 outlines requirements for school-sponsored field trips.

> *The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee recognizes that it is desirable and valuable, on occasion, to supplement and extend classroom activities with voluntary and optional domestic and international academic and extracurricular field trips to broaden perspectives and educational experiences of students. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee encourages activities that augment classroom instruction and promote healthy social development.*

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education sets forth the policy intent regarding measurable distance provisions set forth in M.G.L. c71s.68.

FINDING

The routing and scheduling function is second only to the safety area in determining the effectiveness of a transportation system. Routing determines the total number of routes, which in combination with scheduling of bell times for the various schools, dictates the total number of buses required. The total route bus count drives nearly every expense associated with transportation. The better the contractor validates routes and schedules school buses, the more efficient transportation services become.

Exhibit 8-9 reflects the current SALTER Transportation school bus inventory utilized by the contractor to service HWRSD.

According to SALTER Transportation, when they schedule and determine routes they factor into the decisions the Massachusetts General Law requirements for transporting of students as well as the School Board Policy H8007. SALTER states that "in addition to time, distance, school start and dismissal times, bus stops are ideally designated at the safest possible location(s) and at intervals to minimize quick starts and stops which add time to routes (sometimes called deadhead time)".

Exhibit 8-10 represents the bus count average number of riders, the route numbers, and the two-way mileage for each route.

Exhibit 8-9
SALTER Transportation School Bus Inventory
in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District

Route	Vehicle Number	Vehicle Year	Chassis	Year Purchased	Capacity
1	96	2007	INTL	8/1/2009	77 pass school bus
2	95	2007	INTL	8/1/2009	77 pass school bus
3	93	2011	INTL	08/21/2010	71 pass school bus
4	85	2008	INTL	7/31/2009	71 pass school bus
5	84	2008	INTL	7/31/2009	71 pass school bus
6	72	2010	INTL	8/1/2009	71 pass school bus
7	71	2010	INTL	8/1/2009	71 pass school bus
8	44	2006	INTL	7/27/2005	71 pass school bus
9	40	2006	INTL	7/27/2005	71 pass school bus
10	29	2007	INTL	7/25/2006	71 pass school bus
11	26	2006	INTL	7/28/2005	71 pass school bus
12	24	2007	INTL	7/25/2006	71 pass school bus
13	22	2007	INTL	7/25/2006	71 pass school bus
14	04	2006	INTL	6/30/2005	71 pass school bus

Source: SALTER Transportation, Inc., October 2010.

Exhibit 8-10
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Bus Count Average*
Fall 2010

Bus #	Route #	High/Middle Grades 6-12	Elementary Grades K-5	2 –way Mileage
93	1	55	35	42
96	2	50	na	38
26	3	48	55	46
22	4	43	52	44
24	5	50	38	44
40	6	51	45	54
72	7	54	40	48
44	8	62	52	52
84	9	56	57	58
71	10	62	54	46
85	11	53	55	50
95	12	58	na	36
29	13	40	36	60
4	14	49	33	46

Source: Slater Transportation, Inc. October 2010.

*Note: All buses are 71 passengers except buses 95 and 96 are 77-passengers buses

The contractor indicated that:

> *…routes are developed year to year using the end of school year routes. Next school year routes are fist developed by moving a grade up to the next level, adding the new kindergarten incoming class, or any new registered students. Once the grade movement is added, stops are deleted or added according to student addresses accordingly. Stop consideration is given to kindergarten addresses first (closest to bus stops), conditions and type of road whether rural, sidewalks, heavily traveled, ability to safely cross street if required, and school assignment.*

According to the contract, and as stated by SALTER Transportation managers, all routes are approved by the school district prior to being finalized.

During on-site interviews and discussions, it was highlighted that opportunities exist for improvements in the operational processes in place with SALTER Transportation. Although developing of transportation routes is a joint effort between the school district and the transportation contractor, it is the primary responsibility of the contactor to develop the final school routes for each school year.

HRWSD submits all names and addresses of kindergarten children and other appropriate students in a timely fashion to the transportation contractor. The transportation contractor uses the information to determine stop and pick up points as well as validation of assigned routes. The bid specifications for transportation services indicate that the "Superintendent or his designee approves all routes". The specifications further state, "all bus routes and time schedules shall be established every year no later than August 1, by the Contractor, in full coordination with the Assistant Superintendent of Schools."

Once the routes have been confirmed by the transportation contractor, they are submitted to the school district for distribution and communication for the ensuing school year. The school district takes the contractor's established routes for the new school year and publishes the information in two local newspapers as well as placing the routes on the local web channel and on the school district website.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-2:

Formally reconcile annual transportation routes prior to communicating to stakeholders.

During the process of communicating established routes for the previous school year, it became evident by the number of concerned parent calls coming into the district office that the routes, as established, would require considerable adjusting. Telephone conversations and e-mail exchange appear to be the basis for route and scheduling consensus.

Without some formal process and documentation between the HWRSD and SALTER Transportation to discuss and validate routes prior to communicating to the community and other stakeholders, the school district only finds out that there are issues after the fact when concerned parents call the school district. Both HWRSD and SALTER Transportation would be more effective if there was a final face-to-face review and sign-off of routes.

The primary point of contact for parent concerns with established routes should be the transportation contractor. The bid specifications are silent as to who the primary point of contact is for parents when issues surface regarding routes.

The current school year may well be an exception, given there were changes in administrative staff responsible for monitoring and signing off on the activity. This situation highlights an even greater need for an established and formal sign-off process between both parties, and to communicate the correct point of contact for parents to call should issues surface with routes for pick-up and drop-off of children.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

One of the goals highlighted by Massachusetts Department of Education "is contribute to increased safety efficiency and economy in the development and operation of an improved school program." School committees must establish detailed policies within the framework of the state and federal requirements. One of the general rules noted to be followed stated, "Policies must be kept up to date with changing conditions and changes in the state law."

The guidelines specify that school districts, in establishing written policies, at a minimum should include the following 11 considerations:

- specify the extent of the transportation services to be provided;
- describe rules of behavior for all transported students, including discipline procedures;
- designate the person responsible for enforcement of rules of behavior;
- outline procedures for use of buses for extracurricular activities and other groups;
- establish requirements for employment of transportation personnel;
- establish policies to conserve use of energy;
- establish policy regarding students standing on buses;
- establish different beginning and closing hours for elementary and secondary levels to permit multiple bus runs;
- outline availability and use of late buses;
- use larger capacity buses where sufficient number of students are riding without making riding time too long; and
- make a careful analysis of all bus routes to reduce deadhead mileage.

A request to SALTER Transportation for deadhead historical mileage data resulted in 'no data on file to determine' the requested information.

HWRSD Policy H8007 states that it will provide transportation services to students if the distance from their residence and the school or nearest bus stop exceeds the following guidelines:

Grade Level	Distance to School or Bus Stop
K-2	½ mile
3-5	¾ mile
6-8	1 mile
9-12	1.25 miles

The school district policy has not been updated since 1999. The policy indicates that transportation will be provided at the expense of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. HWRSD's policy indicates it will comply with its Regional Agreement which states "transportation shall be provided by the regional school district in accordance with the General Laws of Massachusetts."

The Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Education set forth directions that provide both equitable and effective means of transporting children in the school district. Chapter 71, Section 68, of M.G.L. states, "if the distance between a child's residence and the school he is entitled to attend exceeds two miles and the nearest school bus stop is more than one mile from such residence and the students are in grades kindergarten through grade 6, the district must provide transportation."

Regional school districts are reimbursed under the provisions of Chapter 71, Sections 7A, 7B, 16C or Chapter 74 Section 8A only for distances in excess of 1.5 miles.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-3:

Update the HWRSD student transportation policy, and submit accurate data to the State.

The current transportation policy generally covers the basic requirements in the state guidelines for establishment of transportation policies. There are other school district transportation policies that more specifically address what is outlined in the State Guidelines and should be referenced for useful format and content adjustments. Newburyport Public Schools online transportation policy provides one example of a policy with more content as outlined in state's recommended guidelines.

An additional area to be revisited within the HWRSD transportation policy is the decision for the district to cover the expense for transporting students well below the legal requirement for reimbursement of 1.5 miles. Understanding the rural geographic nature of the school district presents challenges, and it is important for the school district to explore all avenues of cost avoidance or revenue opportunities lost during difficult budgetary decision making. Unfortunately, the current transportation contractor indicated they do not keep track of miles under the 1.5 mile requirement. The school district policy reflects transportation from .5 miles up to 1.25 miles which is a considerable difference from the State's reimbursement guidelines of 1.5 miles.

Safety and security of students is paramount in all activities conducted by the school district. Without an assessment of the actual circumstances for transported students in relation to the

state's reimbursement guidelines, there may well be opportunities for capturing state reimbursement without sacrificing the safety and security of students.

In this same area, the State of Massachusetts does allow school districts to charge fees for transporting of students within certain restrictions. In fact, the Newburyport School Committee is one district that adopted a fee-based busing policy for "non-eligible" students.

It is recommended that this aspect of the policy be reviewed at least on an annual basis to formally determine potential opportunities for revenue generation.

FISCAL IMPACT

The submission of accurate data in the State's Pupil and Financial Report relating to reimbursable and non-reimbursable students in Schedule 7 has been incomplete since 2005-06. A process for identifying transported students below the reimbursable 1.5 mile limit must be established. During the 2005-06 school year, it was reported that 299 students did not meet the reimbursable criteria which means they were more than likely living within the 1.5 mile reimbursable requirement. Schedule 7 of the end-of-year report noted that approximately $99,654 was not reimbursable.

Almost five years has passed since the 2005-06 report was filed identifying non-reimbursable students. The 2009-10 draft report obtained by Evergreen also did not reflect any non-reimbursable students or related costs. Identification of students riding pupil transportation within the 1.5 mile reimbursement limit is not currently maintained by SALTER Transportation. The identification of this student population is important data for ongoing decision making and potential revisions to policy, procedures, and practice.

Without valid data to review and analyze, it is difficult for staff to develop recommendations to the School Committee that may entail a policy change. Both SALTER and HWRSD should establish a collaborative way of work in collecting and documenting these important data.

Based on the 2005-06 information which indicated 1,969 total students were transported and the 2010 end of year report reflecting 1,493 total students were transported, there has been a reduction in transported students of approximately 25 percent. Applying the same 25 percent reduction to the $99,654 would indicate the current year non-reimbursable dollars should be somewhere in the neighborhood of approximately $75,000.

In the absence of specific data, it is difficult to conclude what adjustments should be recommended to the existing ridership transportation policy. The district and SALTER Transportation need to conduct a thorough analysis of the policy limits and the specific data to determine where opportunities may exist for cost savings.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Generate Valid Data and Modify Board Policy	$0	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000

FINDING

Transportation Policy H8007 states it is the district's aim "to provide a safe and efficient way of transporting all of our students to and from school."

During on-site interviews with both SALTER Transportation staff and HWRSD staff, in relation to the process for establishing hazardous routes, it became apparent the existing process is dependent upon parent or bus driver notification of unsafe conditions either to SALTER dispatch or HWRSD administration offices. Collaborative discussions take place between both organizations to make decisions when to consider a situation hazardous and /or unsafe.

Requests for written documentation on criteria used to establish hazardous routes were unsuccessful. In fact, it was stated that neither organization maintains formal written criteria for assessing situations and making the determination whether a route should be considered hazardous or unsafe.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-4:

Document hazardous route criteria in HWRSD for official records.

Numerous situations occur within the district's transportation operation annually that necessitate individual collaborative decisions and discussions among HWRSD and SALTER staff.

It is important that the district formally document its reason for authorizing hazardous routes. Consistency is important to avoid confusion or even potential legal ramifications created if a lack of consistency in applying criteria exists. Should such decisions be contested by a concerned parent or other vested stakeholder, the ability to provide consistently documented criteria will be critical.

Both HWRSD and SALTER Transportation should establish a written process documenting all criteria used by both parties. Written criteria will serve as a point of reference for all current or future employees who are required to make these decisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Organizations interested in improving efficiency and effectiveness will improve their capacity to obtain quality, accurate, relevant, reliable and timely data in order to assist in decision making. Success in all areas, including transportation, depends on the ability to meet customer needs, to improve the quality and level of service to stakeholders, and to reduce expenditures where feasible.

Establishing and utilizing key performance indicators enables a school district to benchmark its programs and services. Indicators help establish an element of uniformity while creating opportunities for accurate comparisons to peer school district transportation operations.

Outsourcing pupil transportation services creates additional challenges to a school district to obtain the necessary information and data to enable better decision making.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's "Pupil Transportation Guide" addresses areas to be addressed by individual school districts. The Guide indicates that "bus routes must be structured so the total time a student spends on the bus is minimal.

The Guide states "to ensure a school district's transportation program is operating efficiently, it is recommended that an assessment and evaluation of the program is done on a regular basis." In addition, it expects that a transportation accounting system would be put in place to maintain documentation and effective recordkeeping. Even with contracted transportation services, a school district must still maintain accountability for the effectiveness of the process and maintain credible records for effective decision making.

The State Guide recommends that records be kept for regular instructional and non-route trips that reflect number of miles per trip, cost of gas,oil,wages and other operating costs. In many instances, the contractor would document these data, but a summary of such information should be requested and analyzed by the school district.

The part of the guide which discusses the system of accounting, the Department of Education recommends that the school district obtain essential data and records, and maintain proper accountability for having an effective and efficient process in place.

The State Guide provides some criteria to help in determining whether or not a district's program is economical and efficient. These criteria include:

- document the topography of the school district;
- maintain the number of multiple runs by bus, length of bus routes, and time on the bus;
- state capacity of each bus and ridership of each bus (number of unoccupied seat spaces);
- determine the ratio between the number of high school and elementary students transported; and
- identify the number of special routes for kindergarten and special education students.

Elsewhere within the Guide, it is recommended that analyzing deadhead miles and the cost per year for transportation services be examined.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-5:

Establish quarterly reporting from SALTER Transportation to HWRSD on key performance indicators.

The items outlined within the Guide for Transportation documented by the State Department of Education should be a minimum requirement for establishing an ongoing reporting of key performance indicators. This KPI reporting system should be an integral part of the contractor's requirements.

Additional areas to consider can be found in **Exhibit 8-11**.

Exhibit 8-11
Safety, Cost Effectiveness, Training, and Maintenance Performance Indicators

Performance Area	Performance Indicator
Safety	• Accidents per 100,000 miles • Incidents per 100,000 miles • Pre-performance checks • Safety Orientations
Cost Effectiveness	• Average rider trip time in minutes • Driver absentee rate • On-time performance • Open routes due to unfilled positions • Operation cost per mile for buses and other vehicles • Bus and vehicle replacement costs • Fuel (amount used and cost) • Parts replacement and dollar amounts • Labor hours and labor costs
Training	• Driver Training • Safety Training • Student Discipline Training
Maintenance Performance	• Miles between road calls • Percent of preventive maintenance completed on time • Operational rate/percentage for buses and vehicles • Driver requested bus repairs

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, November 2009.

Some criteria data were provided by SALTER Transportation, Inc. upon request and other elements were not readily provided. This is indicative of the need to establish an ongoing reporting expectation of key transportation data in a mutually agreed upon format that will enable both parties to have a better understanding of the effectiveness of the transportation service being provided to the community.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

8.3 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

On June 8, 2010, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and SALTER Transportation, Inc., entered into its second three-year contract for transportation services. The contract provided for 14 school buses to be used for transporting students within the school district.

In addition to regular routes, the contract required transporting of students for field trips, athletic teams, late buses, and other special purpose activities to be designated by the Superintendent or the School Committee.

The total cost of the three-year contract amounted to $2,116,920 compared to the prior three-year contract totaling $2,034,006—this represents approximately a 4 percent increase.

HWRSD is still accountable for compliance and cannot assign liability for errors that result in fiscal sanctions for non-compliance to a transportation contractor.

Exhibit 8-12 displays a three-year comparison of the transportation budget for HWRSD. The exhibit shows regular costs from SPED costs. The budget from 2007-08 to 2009-10 represents an increase of approximately 1.7 percent.

Exhibit 8-12
Transportation Budget on the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District
Regular and Special Education
2007-08 thru 2009-10 Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	Special Education Costs	Regular Route Costs
2009-10	*$409,137 **$34,000	$645,764
2008-09	*$409,137 **$13,340	$628,832
2007-08	*$409,137 **$13,340	$635,072

Source: Hamilton Wenham Regional School District Grants Management Report. October 2010.

* Maintenance ,Bus Monitors, Bus Drivers, Contract Service
** Bus Lease, Purch Pmt/Bus replacement Costs (2009-10 only)

FINDING

In addition to the transportation contract itself, all documents (such as the Instructions to Bidders, the Proposal Form, General Conditions, General Specifications along with other documents) are incorporated as part of the official documents for contract performance.

Item 20 in the Contract specifies that:

> *…at any time during normal business hours, and as often as the District may deem it reasonably necessary, there shall be available in the office of the Contractor for the purpose of audit, examination, and/or to make excerpts or transcript all records, contracts, invoices, materials, payrolls, records of personnel, conditions of employment and other data relating to all matters covered by this Agreement.*

Item 12 of the Invitation for Bid entitled Rule for Award of Contract states the contract shall be "awarded to the responsive and responsible bidder with the lowest three-year grand total."

Although the General Conditions require the contractor to make a written report to the Assistant Superintendent and to the Superintendent of Schools within 24 hours, of all accidents in which contractor's equipment may become involved, the contractor indicated he does not submit these records unless specifically requested. The same General Conditions state the contractor "will report any traffic citations received by drivers while operating a loaded school bus to the Assistant Superintendent." The contractor indicated they do not report any incident unless specifically requested.

Within the transportation specifications, it is indicated that the HWRSD transports approximately 1,200 students of which 646 are middle school/high school and 546 are elementary students.

The equipment specifications state the buses must be Type C conventional school buses of not more than six years old at any time during the life of the contract, and the seating capacity must not be less than 71 school pupils. The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in Chapter 90 detail the safety, registration, inspection, operation and speed limits for school buses that must be followed by the contractor.

Written reports of conditions of buses are required to be submitted during the first week of September, January, and May, and presented to the Superintendent no later than five days following date of inspection. The contractor indicated he does not provide these reports unless specifically requested.

Within 30 days after a contract is signed and awarded, the Contractor must provide the Assistant Superintendent of Schools or designee a completed CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) request forms for all regular and substitute drivers. The contractor indicated this was not done within this timeline and unless requested.

Item H under Drivers states "drivers will be required to fill out a student count, mileage and time slips for regular runs upon request of the district." These data are not submitted.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-6:

Review, monitor, and implement all reporting requirements authorized in the SALTER bid specifications and contract.

As reflected in the finding discussed above, there are numerous areas within the binding contract that require actions to be taken by the contractor. Based on interviews conducted on-site, as well as documentation, the contractor is not providing the data unless specifically requested. It should be detailed in writing to the contractor that each of these items are expected on a regular basis as specified in the signed agreement.

The transportation guidelines provided by the Department of Education delineate specific areas of transportation operations that should provide an assessment of an effective and efficient operation. These factors should be incorporated into an ongoing reporting process with the Contractor to keep the school district more timely informed as to the value of its contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In the environment of a small school district with multiple years of budgetary adjustments, it becomes increasingly difficult for less staff to continue to meet levels of service and increasing demands. Unfunded mandates—federal and state—only add to the complex issues that must be addressed on an ongoing basis in public education environments.

HWRSD has experienced turnover in administrative staff in the central office which has emphasized the need to have effective processes in place that better ensure transfer of knowledge can effectively be implemented.

HWRSD has, in at least their job descriptions, indicated responsibility to a position as the "Keeper of the Record." During on-site reviews and interviews with staff, it became apparent that there are gaps of knowledge in available access to needed records that would make new individuals assuming a position more productive and effective if a better structure were in place and managed for compliance.

A direct result of this inconsistency has resulted in a lapse in continuation of necessary data to comply with accurate state-reporting requirements. Specific discussions were held with staff concerning end-of-year reports required by the state which included incorrect identification of reimbursable and non-reimbursable data for Schedule 7 on Pupil Transportation Reimbursement.

Exhibit 8-13 reflects a comparison of transportation reimbursement dollars for 2008-09 and 2009-10. The analysis displays regular transportation separately from special education transportation costs. The analysis indicates that the data collected from the State Schedule 7 End-of-Year-Report has no non-reimbursable students and dollars identified.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-7:

Accurately document and report reimbursable verses non-reimbursable students for the State's End-of-Year Report.

Exhibit 8-13
HWRSD Pupil Transportation Reimbursement
2008-09 and 2009-10 Fiscal Years

Type	2008-09*	2009-10*
Regular Transportation	$545,359	$643,146
Special Education		
In-District	$72,640	$89,761
Out of- District	$208,766	$182,901
Total	$826,765	$915,808

Source: HWRSD Schedule & End of Year Reports.

*No non-reimbursable expenses reported.

During the 2005-06 school year, HWRSD filed a Schedule 7 for Pupil Transportation Reimbursement. Within the report, the district identified approximately 299 non-reimbursable riders which amounted to approximately $99,654 of non-reimbursable expenditures. An organizational change in 2006-07 created reassignment of the report responsibility, and since 2006-07, the HWRSD has not identified any non-reimbursable riders or non-reimbursable expenditures. Knowing HWRSD's current transportation policy pays from .5 miles, up to 1.25 miles and the reimbursement from the State starts at 1.5 miles, it is highly unlikely that there are no non-reimbursable riders.

After considerable discussion with staff, it was generally agreed that the process for identifying non-reimbursable riders was not continued into the 2006-07 fiscal year and should have been. HWRSD should implement the prior process, at a minimum, and obtain the documentation necessary in order to properly classify non-reimbursable riders and associated costs. In addition, the school district should make an attempt to correct reports that require adjustments when determined to be valid.

This situation is one important example of documentation which is lacking key processes that should be conducted annually within the district in the transportation operation.

A specific position should be designated as the Keeper of the Records for all matters related to HWRSD transportation operations—whether outsourced or maintained in-house. Important processes should be written down formally and maintained in both manual records and online for internal staff access. HWRSD needs to implement better control of transportation records management.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The Director of Student Services is the primary area of responsibility for maintaining the management and oversight of the two district (lease-purchased), 35-passenger buses used to transport special education students. The budget for this department contains approximately

$14,000 per year to cover lease-purchased payments. In addition, the annual budget covers bus monitor's salaries, vehicle maintenance, bus driver salaries and contracted services for out-of-district student transportation costs.

The total budget for special education transportation, including the lease purchase payment, is approximately $240,000 per year. In 2007-08, contracted transportation services transported 22 out-of-district students at a cost of $360,212 for a cost per student of $16,373. In 2008-09, outside services transported 19 out-of-district students at a cost of $208,766 for a cost per student of $10,987. In 2009-10, outside services transported 17 out-of-district students at a cost of $182,901 and for a cost per student of $10,758.

Regular transported students in 2007-08 were 1,409; in 2008-09, 1,527 students; in 2009-10, 1,493 students were transported. The costs were $615,776 in 2007-08, and $643,146 for 2009-10. The cost per student was $437 in 2007-08 and $430 in 2009-10. The special education costs per student in 2007-08 were $2,536 and, in 2009-10, these were $5,984. As can be seen, the amount of special education students transported in 2007-08 was 23 compared to 15 students in 2009-10. Costs increased and ridership went down for the special education transportation in the district.

The Department of Student Services' primary focus is to "oversee the effective implementation of comprehensive programs and services throughout the regional district to meet the diverse needs of identified special needs students."

During on-site interviews, it was indicated, that from time-to-time, a cost analysis is conducted within the district to determine the feasibility of continuing to maintain special education transportation in-house or consider adding the responsibility to the existing outsourced transportation contract. Although requested, the actual cost analysis was not available for Evergreen's review.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-8:

Conduct a formal documented review and analysis of special education transportation.

Oversight of a transportation operation requires a considerable different skill set unlike the normal responsibilities of the Director of Student Services. Requirements to stay current in state and federal law make effective management of the special education transportation operation very important.

Requirements for bus and student safety, scheduling and route establishment, driver certification and education, proper maintenance, and monitoring of transportation costs for efficiency can easily lead to performance concerns, and even legal issues, if requirements are overlooked or not timely implemented.

Although a cost analysis was conducted to determine the feasibility of continuing special education transportation in-house, it was not available to Evergreen consultants or to staff who have the primary responsibility for the transportation of special education students. It is

important that HWRSD staff establish a more formal method of analyzing the cost of SPED remaining in-house versus consideration to outsource the activity. Based on feedback from staff, several staff were involved in the prior determination to keep the special education transportation in-house.

By creating a more formal process, and including more individuals in the discussion and distribution of the analysis, the school district can be in a better position to make a timelier and quality decision based on collective input and documented analysis. The Director of Student Services already serves as the keeper of the records for special education, and this type of critical analysis should definitely be part of the department records.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD maintains two buses for transporting of special education students. Special education students are transported both in district and out-of-district. The primary responsibility for determining special education routes resides with the Director of Student Services.

The Director also directly contracts currently with three firms to transport students to other locations. The firms currently under contract are:

- LBK Transportation;
- MASSTran; and
- Northshore Education Consortium.

An expenditure analysis of LBK indicates HWRSD has spent approximately $359,000 with the firm since 2007-08. A similar analysis of MASSTran shows a total expenditure of approximately $217,000 for the same time period. The total expenditures for the two firms reviewed amounted to approximately $576,000. No analysis was available for Northshore Education Consortium.

The current job description for the Director of Student Services indicates no area of responsibility for being the primary office for the coordination of special education transportation services.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 8-9:

Revise the job description of the Director of Student Services to include responsibilities for special education transportation.

Efforts required include being responsible for coordination of transportation services for special education students, including scheduling of the routes, and management and oversight of the two district buses—this is a significant job responsibility that requires knowledge of state general laws and regulations related to the safety and maintenance of buses to transport students.

If this responsibility is to remain assigned to this position, it is appropriate that the expectations be identified within the director's job description.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with the existing resources.

CHAPTER 9:
TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

9.0 TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Two decades ago, technology was viewed as an accessory to successful public education, and even for many private businesses. Now, however, technology has evolved into a critical component of every agency providing services in the public and private sector. Effectively implemented, technology drives the analysis and evaluation of efficiencies and processes, and allows school district leaders and teachers to make data-driven decisions that positively impact the educational services provided to students and employees alike. Rarely can a school district become as effective and efficient as the potential of its employees would allow without many of their processes being automated and bringing technology to the forefront within the organization.

According to leaders and staff members across the district, for years the IT Department within the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD) has experienced steady growth. The present IT Coordinator has made great strides in infrastructure, planning, and implementation of both administrative and instructional technology assets. With that being said, there are still a number of opportunities for improvement in these areas.

Chapter 9 reviews staffing, organization, systems, and policies related to administration and implementation of technology resources in HWRSD and includes four major sections:

9.1 Organization and Staffing
9.2 Technology Planning and Management
9.3 Staff Development
9.4 Systems and Operations

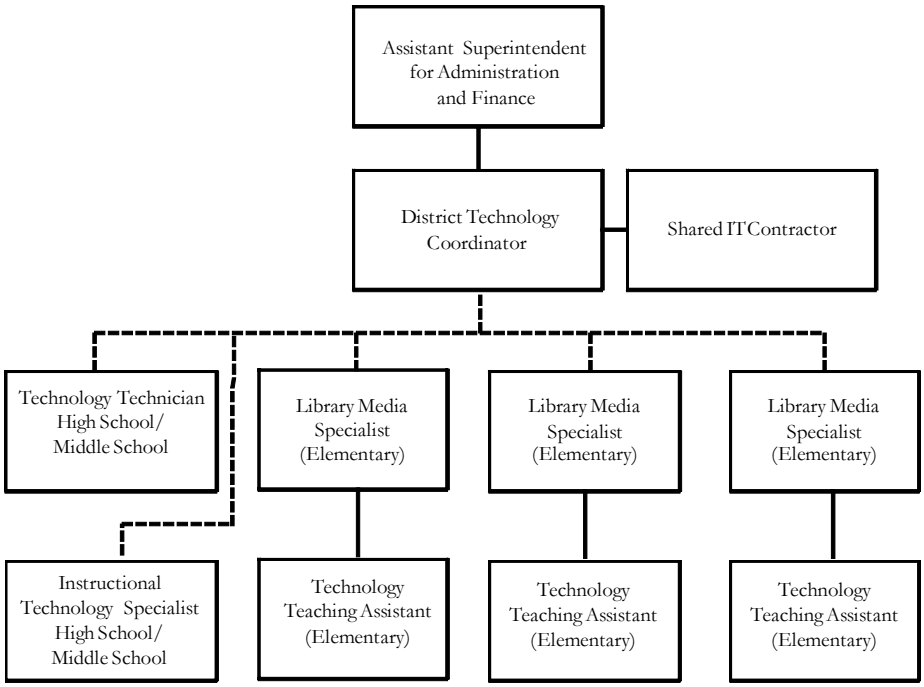
9.1 ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

Ideally, technology is one area of a school district that supports all administrative and instructional personnel in a positive manner, allowing them to conduct business in a way that maximizes the effectiveness of all resources. Organizing technology resources to effectively achieve this outcome can be challenging, but is necessary for success. Not only does it require appropriate staffing levels, but also the necessary skills, tools, and leadership.

The current organization structure for supporting technology in HWRSD is shown in **Exhibit 9-1**. As can be seen, the Technology Coordinator reports to the Assistant Superintendent and generally oversees all technology activities in the district.

Technology at each school is a mixed responsibility and capability based on the knowledge and experience of the individuals in these roles. The high school/middle school campus has a full-time IT staff supporting the Technology Coordinator in that there is a Technology Technician and an Instructional Technology Specialist. The secondary schools are unique in that the two individuals assigned to technology duties are not responsible for classroom teaching activities. Their sole responsibilities are the support, repair, implementation, and troubleshooting of campus-based technology resources.

Exhibit 9-1
Technology Organizational Structure
in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District



Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

The Technology Technician is principally responsible for technology support and troubleshooting as well as management of the campus network, servers, and user accounts. The Instructional Technology Specialist, on the other hand, is responsible for assisting teachers and students in the integration of technology resources into instructional roles. In addition, the Specialist is the primary party responsible for professional development and training of teachers in the use of instructional technology, such as the use of SMART boards.

The primary challenges with the current organizational structure of information technology are that it:

- is very informal—there is no real IT Department; and
- lacks the inherent accountability and reporting relationships of a true IT Department.

FINDING

HWRSD maintains an outsourcing relationship with an external subcontractor. The subcontractor services are shared between the district and the towns of Hamilton and Wenham. The district pays the contractor $27,583 per year for its portion of his services. He is paid additional fees by the towns of Hamilton and Wenham. The original goal of this relationship was for the towns to work together to provide IT resources to the district. The contractor now lives in

Arizona, works approximately five hours per week on HWRSD business, and spends one week per month on-site as required in his contract.

The contract states the following:

> *On-site visits shall occur monthly. At least one eight hour day per month and as needed through telephone or via email.*

The contractor spends the majority of his time managing the accounting system for the district. In the past, this person has been responsible for short-term projects dealing with network hardware and fiber cable. At present, there is no extra project in process. The contractor supports broader goals related to creating consistency of IT operations between the towns and the schools. He spends his time ensuring that the district's systems have minimal downtime. Given the remote location of this contractor, he is able to take advantage of advances in telecommuting technology; however, given the approximate five hours of work spent per week on district business, the contractor would most likely be more effective as an employee or local contractor.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-1:

Eliminate the district's relationship with the external contractor.

In order for HWRSD to take full control of its technology assets, while preparing for future technological investment, this relationship should be eliminated. The tasks and activities associated with this contractor could easily be duplicated by a half-time technology employee in a more cost effective manner.

FISCAL IMPACT

The annual savings for the HWRSD portion of the contract is $27,583.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate IT Contractor	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583

FINDING

While HWRSD has nine employees who have technology responsibilities; only one of them operates at a district level. The HWRSD Technology Coordinator responds to requests for help from all schools and the central office in addition to managing the broader IT infrastructure and planning activities. Only three of the nine employees spend 100 percent of their time in direct support of administrative or instructional IT operations. These persons include the District Technology Coordinator, and the two individuals at the combined high school/middle school campus (one Technology Technician and one Instructional Technology Specialist).

The elementary school employees, who work with computers and technology, are doing so in a shared capacity with teaching and library responsibilities. The Library Media Specialists and Technology Teacher Assistants at each elementary school are unequally trained and variably qualified to handle front-line technology support requests. They are operating at approximately one quarter the capacity of a full-time technology specialist each, especially considering that they are responsible or in contact with only one location, as opposed to being service providers to the entire district.

These variables cause inconsistency in how technical support is handled across HWRSD. While some individuals contact their school's Library Media Specialist or Technology Teacher Assistant for help with printing issues, network access, or other hardware or software problems, others contact the HWRSD Technology Coordinator directly. Meanwhile, at the combined middle and high school campus, all requests for help come first to the Technology Technician or the Instructional Technology Specialist, and if there is an issue beyond the capabilities of these two individuals, the request is sent to the District Technology Coordinator.

In determining whether or not these staffing levels are sufficient, comparing them to best practice standards is helpful. Several organizations maintain staffing rubrics and one that is easiest to understand is the International Society for Technology in Education. The ISTE is an organization that focuses on educational technology which makes them particularly applicable to the HWRSD. The rubric identifies the efficiency of technology based on the ratio of IT technicians to the number of computers in service. The ISTE staffing matrix appears in **Exhibit 9-2.**

Exhibit 9-2
ISTE Technology Support Index Rubric for Staffing

Index Area	Efficiency of Technology			
	Low	Moderate	Satisfactory	High
Technician Staffing to Computer Ratio (# of computers: technician)	250:1	150:1 to 250:1	75:1 to 150:1	Less than 75:1

Source: www.iste.org, 2009.

According to a systems inventory provided by the Technology Coordinator, HWRSD maintains 804 computers across its various locations. It would be misleading to state that HWRSD has nine full-time technology employees due to the variety of responsibilities of those individuals at the elementary locations. The school locations are not technologically self-supporting from a technical support perspective. Many requests are made to the Technology Coordinator if they surpass the abilities of the Library Media Specialists or Technology Teacher Assistants.

Based on interviews with these individuals and with other district leaders, Evergreen estimates that, at the elementary level, the combined efforts and time available to the Technology Teacher Assistant and the Library Media Specialist positions equal approximately .66 FTE per school. This may naturally vary from week to week depending on the activities taking place; however, it is evident that these two positions do not hold full-time responsibility in the administration of technology resources or in the repair and maintenance at their schools. Their interaction with technology assets comes primarily in a teaching capacity while any administrative role is

primarily reactive and generally basic in nature. Taken across the entire district, this means that there are a total of approximately 2 FTE in the elementary schools and two more FTE at the combined middle and high school campus, and combined with the 1 FTE in the HWRSD Technology Coordinator, there is a total of approximately 5 FTE for 804 computers or a ratio of 161:1. This ratio is in the "moderate" range. Replacing the current contracted part-time technology person with a district-employed FTE would improve that ratio to the satisfactory range according to the ISTE scale.

In a survey of peer districts conducted by Evergreen, it was revealed that all responding organizations have at least two district IT staff members who are responsible for repair, maintenance, installation, and technical support of district workstations and other hardware. **Exhibit 9-3** illustrates the ratios of workstations to district IT staff for four of the five peer school districts. Unfortunately, data pertaining to the staffing ratios in the Nashoba Regional School District were not provided.

Exhibit 9-3
Ratio of Workstations to Districtwide IT Staff
for HWRSD and Peer Districts

School District	Workstation Count	Districtwide IT Staff	Workstation to Districtwide IT Staff Ratio
Hamilton-Wenham	**800**	**1**	**800:1**
Groton-Dunstable	1,300	2	650:1
Manchester-Essex	750	2	375:1
Mendon-Upton	600	2	300:1
Nashoba	--	--	-
Pentucket	1,200	2	600:1

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

With a ratio of 800:1, HWRSD is less staffed from a districtwide perspective than any of their peers represented here. The prevalent situation observed here is for these districts to have two districtwide IT staff members who respond to the types of inquiries that the District Technology Coordinator is handling alone at present. However, the two full-time IT employees at the secondary schools, should be considered and greatly reduce this ratio.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-2:

Hire a half-time Computer Support Technician who would report to the HWRSD Technology Coordinator.

If the district is going to improve its level of IT service to the various schools and departments with regard to hardware service and maintenance, a part-time technician needs to be added. Moreover, that employee should have the time and resources necessary to provide high quality customer service. If technical support is provided by internal staff, then the person would serve to contribute to those services.

Exhibit 9-4 shows a sample of the proposed duties of the part-time Computer Support Technician. This is a sample of potential duties. According to feedback from staff members and leaders of the district, other activities such as content management of the HWRSD website, should also fit within this role.

Exhibit 9-4
Proposed Computer Support Technician Responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Computer Support Technician	• Respond to service requests from the central office and school locations. • Troubleshoot and repair hardware, software, and network equipment. • Install new equipment. • Rehabilitate used equipment for redeployment. • Responsible for all data backup systems.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

Evergreen estimates that adding the part-time Computer Support Technician will require $30,000 per year.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Hire Technician	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)

FINDING

HWDSD could best ensure that its administrative and operational technology needs are being addressed by having a formally organized IT function that is divided into operational areas. In a public education environment, the two clear areas of emphasis are administrative technology and instructional technology integration.

The current technology operational model is informal. Technology is managed by a cadre of people with varying levels of availability, ability, training and experience. Even with these limited resources, the HWRSD Technology Coordinator has achieved great studies in technology infrastructure and educational integration of technology. As one example, the district recently installed SMART boards in every classroom.

By formalizing the IT reporting relationships and creating a more unified Technology Department, HWRSD will benefit in several ways:

- accountability for work performed;
- regular technology planning meetings to better orient the technology resources in more strategic directions; and
- clearer understanding of existing knowledge among technology staff.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for the advances made in its network and technology infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-3:

Create an IT organizational infrastructure to formalize responsibilities, reporting relationships, and work flows to encourage consistency and accountability in technology.

While the district may be too small to necessitate a comprehensive IT Department, some formal recognition of this important unit of service delivery is necessary to ensure long-term success. HWRSD lacks a structure in this critical area. Creating a more formal plan for how work is organized should ensure accountability and improve the overall quality of service delivery for the unit.

The Assistant Superintendent would hold ultimate authority over major decisions and the part-time Computer Support Technician should report directly to the HWRSD Technology Coordinator. The school-based employees within the IT unit would still formally report to their principals; however, they should primarily work with the IT unit. In order to conduct effective performance evaluations of these employees, the principals should consult with the HWRSD Technology Coordinator to gather data on their technology-related performance.

The district should ensure that IT employee performance is evaluated by a supervisor who is sufficiently knowledgeable to offer an accurate assessment.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

9.2 TECHNOLOGY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Successful technology planning is the foundation for successful technology implementation and development. HWRSD technology is not simply a stand-alone program; it is a long-term, ongoing effort that affects every aspect of district operations. The technology planning process is complicated. There are many factors to consider, including internal and external service delivery, legislated data reporting, funding, training, and staffing for support and maintenance.

On average, technology plans should cover between three to five years. By analyzing current trends in system demographics and available technology, planners can predict what the needs of the system will be and what technology will be available to fill those needs. Technology, however, is the fastest changing segment of our society, so frequent updates and revisions of any technology plan are required.

FINDING

HWRSD has a technology plan for 2009 through 2011. This three-year plan contains the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Technology Plan Mission and Vision
- Current Status
- Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School
- Miles River Middle School
- Buker Elementary School
- Cutler Elementary School
- Winthrop Elementary School
- District Office
- Appendix A: Technology Action Plans
- Appendix B: HWRSD Proposed Technology Budgets (2009-2011)

The present plan is organized appropriately; however, it lacks many detail. The plan contains information pertaining to such vital areas as infrastructure and management, staffing, professional development, budget and special education; however, cumulatively, less than two pages of the report are dedicated to these districtwide issues. The information is covered, but not addressed in great detail. A more comprehensive plan is needed with stated goals and objectives in each of these areas.

The most helpful aspects of the present plan are the individual Technology Action Plans in Appendix A. These show clear steps necessary to achieve the stated goals and objectives using a series of initiatives and activities, including budget impact, hardware and software costs. These action plans provide the School Committee and the internal leadership with the information they require to ensure that they stay on track for these activities.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for developing a multi-year Technology Plan which attempts to address critical areas of needed development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 9-4:

Create a Technology Planning Committee comprised of leaders from across the district to assess future IT needs.

In many ways, the HWRSD Technology Coordinator has insufficient formal mechanisms in place to help him achieve the technology goals of the district. With technology taking such a primary role in the present education of HWRSD students, help is needed in order to most effectively plan for future needs.

The proposed Technology Planning Committee should play a role in shaping the future direction of IT in HWRSD. It is important for this group to extend beyond the typical boundaries of the IT unit. It should be inclusive of leaders from areas such as transportation, food service, guidance, and each school in the district.

The Technology Planning Committee should begin the process of development of the next effective multi-year Technology Plan in early 2011 for implementation in early 2012. The Assistant Superintendent and the Technology Coordinator should work together to develop a preliminary list of committee members. Members on the Technology Planning Committee should serve for pre-determined periods of time, most likely one year, after which they may exit the Committee or continue as a member for an additional year.

The Committee should meet more frequently at first, in order to gather data and come to agreement on where the district stands with regard to all aspects of technology. The Technology Planning Committee should spend its first meeting or two establishing working procedures. Some formal meeting structure would likely benefit the group and ensure that all members are afforded equal opportunity to share.

Recommendation 9-5:

Prepare a comprehensive multi-year Technology Plan which focuses on strategy and more fully explores areas which the present plan either excludes or provides for no strategic direction.

A more comprehensive Technology Plan would allow for reliable prediction of future IT needs, including more effective budget planning of IT expenses. The Technology Planning Committee should make its primary objective to create this Technology Plan.

The new plan should more fully develop the areas pertaining to infrastructure, staffing, professional development, budget, and special education. The plan should also incorporate specific discussions of instructional integration of technology districtwide, and outline system platform planning.

At present, the district is supporting active computer labs for both PC-based computers as well as for Macintosh computers. Members of the district's workforce hold a diverse set of opinions on what platform is best. This issue should be considered by the Technology Planning Committee as well as included in the district's Technology Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

These recommendations can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD has teamed with the towns of Hamilton and Wenham to implement a comprehensive fiber optic network which provides interconnectivity between all municipal and school buildings. This high speed network provides opportunities for the district and the towns to create economies

of scale in the sharing of technology resources. Such sharing of hardware and software resources is likely to provide cost savings over time as it becomes more prevalent, and duplication or triplication of such efforts is eliminated. This sharing of resources needs to be specifically accounted for in the technology planning process.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton Wenham Regional School District is commended for implementing a high speed fiber optic network which provides connectivity to all municipal and school buildings.

FINDING

HWRSD does not possess a comprehensive, information technology disaster recovery plan. Interviews with staff revealed that there are actions being taken that support a technology disaster recovery plan—such as regular backups of major systems—but there is no formal document or procedure to be followed in case of emergency. The key element missing from the informal approach being used now is the lack of a business continuity plan. In essence, after a disaster occurs, questions need to be answered such as:

- Where will information technology operations be housed?
- How soon could it operational?
- What is the resource allocation necessary to be successful?

The development of a comprehensive disaster recovery plan is a critical element of IT operations that cannot be ignored.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-6:

Develop a disaster recovery plan to cover critical systems in the event of interruption of service.

The essential elements of a disaster recovery plan include a disaster recovery team; a list of persons to contact after a disaster; and an assessment of critical district functions, essential office equipment, and staffing needed immediately to recover from a disaster. A disaster recovery plan must include contingency and back-up plans for information technology. This plan could be developed jointly with the towns of Hamilton and Wenham.

Exhibit 9-5 lists the components of an example disaster recovery plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

The creation of the disaster recovery plan can be implemented with existing resources.

Exhibit 9-5
Example of Elements in a Disaster Recovery Plan

Step	Details
Build the disaster recovery team.	• Select a disaster recovery team that includes key policymakers, building management, end-users, key outside contractors, and technical staff.
Obtain and/or approximate key information.	• Develop an exhaustive list of critical activities performed within the District. • Develop an estimate of the minimum physical space and equipment necessary for restoring essential operations. • Develop a timeframe for starting initial operations after a security incident. • Develop a list of key personnel and their responsibilities.
Perform and/or delegate key duties.	• Develop an inventory of all assets including data, software, hardware, documentation and supplies. • Set up a reciprocal agreement with comparable organizations to share each other's equipment or lease backup equipment to allow the district to operate critical functions in the event of a disaster. • Make plans to procure hardware, software and other equipment as necessary to ensure that critical operations are resumed as soon as possible. • Establish procedures for obtaining off-site backup records. • Locate support resources that might be needed (e.g., equipment repair, trucking, and cleaning companies). • Arrange with vendors to provide priority delivery for emergency orders. • Identify data recovery specialists and establish emergency agreements.
Specify details within the plan.	• Identify individual roles and responsibilities by name and job title so that everyone knows exactly what needs to be done. • Define actions to be taken in advance of an occurrence or undesirable event. • Define actions to be taken at the onset of an undesirable event to limit damage, loss, and compromised data integrity. • Identify actions to be taken to restore critical functions. • Define actions to be taken to reestablish normal operations.
Test the plan.	• Test the plan frequently and completely. • Analyze the results to improve the plan and identify further needs.
Deal with damage appropriately.	• If a disaster actually occurs, document all costs and videotape the damage. • Be prepared to overcome downtime on your own; insurance settlements can take time to resolve.
Consider other significant issues.	• Do not make a plan unnecessarily complicated. • Make one individual responsible for maintaining the plan, but have it structured so that others are authorized and prepared to implement it if needed. • Update the plan regularly and whenever changes are made to your system.

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010 with adaptation from the Technology and Security Task Force, National Forum on Education Statistics, "Safeguarding your Technology."

FINDING

Methods of performing day-to-day tasks (such as system installation, software updates, technical support request handling, etc.) have been developed informally over time in HWRSD. This is equally true for more technical and labor intensive IT efforts as well such as daily backups, email account administration, server reboot processes, and network troubleshooting steps. There are no written procedures for conducting the essential business related to technology.

Written technology procedures provide essential information in the event of a prolonged absence of the key person or persons responsible for core IT functions. For example, if the HWRSD Technology Coordinator were to leave the district or miss many days or weeks of work for any reason, there are no centralized written instructions for how to conduct IT functions.

This situation places the district in unnecessary jeopardy of lost productivity as HWRSD would undoubtedly need to identify people capable of stepping into that role in the short term. Without written procedures for these core functions, it may be required that a temporary contractor be brought in to administer some operations. At this point, the financial impact of such an absence becomes significant.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-7:

Create a Technology Procedures Manual.

As a minimum, technology procedures should be documented and distributed electronically for the following areas:

- software installation and license maintenance;
- equipment connectivity;
- equipment maintenance, repair, and replacement;
- virus prevention, spyware, and firewall software (basic security);
- backup requirements and procedures;
- disaster recovery activities and storage requirements;
- technical support transactions and expectations; and
- customization, reporting, and system procedures.

The creation of a HWRSD Technology Procedures Manual should be managed by the IT Unit, and each team member should contribute to their area of responsibility. The draft document should be circulated to all IT staff for feedback and then to other users. The document should then be finalized and made available in an electronic format.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

At present, no performance metrics exist for evaluating the efficiency of IT operations. To ensure the future success of the HWRSD IT Department, such metrics should be quantified and analyzed.

Performance metrics are an invaluable tool for assessing operational unit performance and communicating the level of output to leaders and staff. Performance measures (metrics) were defined by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) as an assessment of an organization's performance, including measures of:

- **Productivity** - quantifies the outputs and inputs of an organization and expresses the two as a ratio. Generally, the ratio is expressed as output to input (for example, inspections per staff-day).
- **Effectiveness** - determines the relationship of an organization's outputs to what an organization is intended to accomplish.
- **Quality** - examines an output or the process by which an output is produced. Quality is indicated by attributes such as accuracy (or error rate), thoroughness, and complexity.
- **Timeliness** - evaluates the time involved producing an appropriate output.

When designing measures, the following characteristics should be kept in mind:

- validity;
- reliability;
- easily understandable by the consumer;
- comprehensive of the district's operations;
- diagnostic in nature;
- sensitive to the cost of collection; and
- focused on those factors that are more controllable by the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-8:

Develop and implement performance measures for assessing administrative and instructional technology outcomes.

The Technology Coordinator should examine which metrics are currently available based on work area. From discussions with employees, Evergreen consultants found very few metrics available because the district has no tracking software for help desk type requests.

Some of the thematic areas for initial metrics include:

- satisfaction (annual and transactional satisfaction with service received);
- availability (hardware, software, major tools, accessibility);

- utilization (bandwidth, hardware, network);
- support need (cases, type, response time, resolution); and
- security (unauthorized access).

The data should be tracked on a regular basis and a quarterly report should be circulated to staff. An annual report should be prepared for the district, and the results presented to the HWRSD School Committee.

Once these initial metrics are added, HWRSD should expand its analysis to incorporate higher-level performance metrics. A good example of factors behind these higher level metrics was produced by the State Technology Directors Association (SETDA) and the Metiri Group. The document, *Key Questions Driving the Common Data Elements Framework on Technology*, assists schools to determine the type of concepts to measure accomplishments of *No Child Left Behind*.

Exhibit 9-6 details the major elements for assessing NCLB technology requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

One of the primary vectors by which efficiency/effectiveness data are gathered and analyzed is by tracking help desk support tickets. The district currently possesses no automated system for gathering, organizing, prioritizing, or measuring the success and timeliness of technical support requests.

In many ways, the HWRSD technology operation is simple and automation has not been necessary; however, when one considers that the district currently has over 800 computers in five locations on at least two different platforms, tracking, and control over these activities becomes a desirable option.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-9:

Analyze a help desk ticket tracking system for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

Recent advances in this field and competition in the market have created many cost effective, off-the-shelf products that can easily be integrated into the district's existing infrastructure. Many of these systems contain features, such as automatic email ticket generation, which would be of particular use in the HWRSD. IT employees are spending much of their time moving about the district interacting with the various end-users and hardware environments, and such a system would track productivity.

Exhibit 9-6
Common Data Elements for Assessing NCLB Technology Requirements

A. Student Impact

1. Is student academic achievement improving where technology is being used effectively? [In what academic areas? At what grade levels? For which student populations?]
2. Are students acquiring 21st century skills where technology is being used effectively? [In what academic areas? At what grade levels? For which student populations?]
3. Are students more engaged in learning where technology is being used effectively? [In what academic areas? At what grade levels? For which student populations?]
4. Are students demonstrating proficiency in technological literacy (e.g. performance reviews, assessment of student products, observations)?

B. Conditions Essential to Effective Uses of Technology

Condition 1: Effective Practice in Teaching and Learning with Technology

1. How and with what frequency are students using technology to advance academic achievement? Is this usage based on theory, research and best practices?
2. Are teachers/schools adopting technology uses systematically?
3. Are schools measuring student gains in technological literacy (esp. in 8th grade) and the impacts on student achievement as a result of technology use? If so, are there measured gains in either due to effective use of technology? How are best practices with technology identified and shared?
4. Are teachers employing classroom management systems in which students access and use technology efficiently, with high degrees of self-direction?
5. How are best/effective practices with technology identified and shared?

Condition 2: Educator Proficiency in Effective Practice with Technology

1. Are teachers suitably proficient and familiar with technology to strategically incorporate effective uses of technology into their classroom and professional practices? How are they acquiring such proficiencies?
2. Are teachers skilled in designing standards-based curricula that maximize the impact of technology on learning and promote the development of 21st century skills?
3. Are teachers able to use technology to support student assessment?
4. Do teachers have strategies for evaluating technology-supported student learning?
5. Do teachers use technology to informally and formally participate in professional development opportunities?

Condition 3: Robust Access, Anywhere Anytime

1. Is the equipment available in the instructional setting sufficient and appropriately placed for students and teachers?
2. Is equipment available for use by administrators and support staff?
3. Does the infrastructure have the capacity to support the school's technology needs?
4. Does access extend beyond the school day and outside the school facility for both students and teachers?
5. Are software and online services strategically deployed and sufficient to address unmet needs of learners and educators both during and beyond the school day/environment?
6. Is virtual learning strategically available and sufficient to address needs of learners and educators both during and beyond the school day/environment?
7. Does the school/district provide adequate and timely support for hardware, software, and instructional application?
8. Is technology being used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system (i.e., increased access to data for decision making by all educators)?

Exhibit 9-6 (Continued)
Common Data Elements for Assessing NCLB Technology Requirements

Condition 4: Digital Age Equity

1. Has the school/district ensured that socioeconomic status is not a barrier to readiness for the digital age?
2. Has the school/district ensured that gender is not a barrier to readiness for the digital age?
3. Has the school/district ensured that race is not a barrier to readiness for the digital age?
4. Has the school or district ensured that special needs populations have sufficient and appropriate access to technologies that will support their learning?
5. Do all students have access to a range of high-quality technology uses within the curriculum, regardless of the schools or classrooms they attend?

Condition 5: Vision, Systems Thinking, and Leadership with Technology

Vision. Is the school/district vision aligned to today's knowledge-based, digital age? Are all stakeholders committed to the vision?

Digital Age Standards and Assessment. Do student standards reflect the 21st century skills? Are curricula, instruction, and assessments aligned to these standards?

Systems Thinking. Is the school/district transforming itself into a high-performance system capable of achieving an equitable, 21st century vision? Is the system formally adopting uses of technology to become more effective, efficient, and "real-time" in communication, management, and leadership?

Culture of Validated, Research-based Innovation. Are effective, research-based uses of technology supported, encouraged, and actively developed through policies, informal actions, and easy access to technology?

Community Connections. Are there formal, technology-related structures and processes in the school/district that engage parents, community members, school faculty, and learners in meaningful exchanges, interactions, and partnerships to advance the vision?

Administrator Proficiency. Are administrators prepared to use technology effectively? Are administrators leading the school/district toward more effective uses of technology in teaching, learning, and managing?

Professional Development. Does the school/district provide comprehensive professional growth opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other staff that build their capacity to advance the vision? Is professional development and the measure of its effectiveness closely linked to student performance?

Data-Driven Decision Making and Accountability. Has the school/district established metrics and benchmarks for effective uses of technology at the student, educator, and system levels? Does the school/district collect and analyze data to track progress and correlate findings? Is decision making at all levels informed and influenced by the results of this data collection?

Comprehensive, Prioritized Funding. Does the school/district address the full cost of technology as a regular part of its budget? Is funding prioritized to promote equity across and within schools to establish high-impact, student-centered uses of technology and to provide the support systems necessary to sustain them?

Source: State Technology Directors Association (SETDA) and the Metiri Group, 2004.

The administration of this system should be the primary responsibility of the Technology Coordinator. The Coordinator should be responsible for first responder duties where he could triage the request, determine its priority, and assign it a scheduled date and time for action. Many tracking systems provide methods for end-users to submit detailed request tickets which gather basic information regarding the problem, thus equipping the technician to more effectively address the issue on the first interaction, and reducing repeat visits to address the same problem.

Help desk ticket tracking systems have an established track record of improving the quality of service, efficiency of operations, and customer satisfaction. In a district the size of HWRSD, a system designed for small-medium sized businesses would be more than sufficient.

FISCAL IMPACT

A ticket tracking package could be purchased for approximately $5,000. Many software providers offer discounts for educational entities and HWRSD may be able to leverage these for savings. Although it is difficult to project, these systems have the capability of paying for themselves in efficiency gains in a few short years.

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Purchase IT Tracking Package	($5,000)	$0	$0	$0	$0

9.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Training in the use of technology is the most critical factor in determining whether that technology is used effectively or even used at all. Administrative and technical staff must be able to use effectively the technology available to them. Training must be ongoing; the technology environment is continuously evolving, and departments must keep pace with the evolution.

FINDING

Technology training receives minimal focus in the district. One exception is in the recent installation and training that occurred when SMART boards were installed in each classroom. The Technology Technician at the middle and high school is more proactive in providing professional development activities for teachers and administrators at this campus, but new training opportunities have not been a top priority. Experience shows that one of the first areas where budgets are curtailed in tough economic times is training and continuing education.

In a survey of teachers in both HWRSD and peer districts conducted by Evergreen, nearly a quarter of teachers (24.5 percent) in HWRSD *strongly disagree* or *disagree* with the statement that teachers receive adequate training in the area of integrating technology into the classroom. This is nearly twice as many as answered in the same way in peer districts (13.7 percent). This is significant because it indicates that a quarter of HWRSD teachers are not as confident in their ability to integrate technology into the instructional process. The district and its supporting community organizations are making commitments to bring technology into the classroom at an impressive rate. A more substantial training program will ensure a better level of utilization of the resources being so heavily invested in.

The benefits of a well-trained technology staff include:

- improved productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of service by helping employees develop and better utilize their talents, skills and potential;
- knowledge, skills and abilities so that staff become better qualified to perform the duties of their present jobs and advance to more responsible positions;
- enhanced managers and supervisors capabilities at organizing and developing effective management systems for the accomplishment of the school district's goals and objectives; and
- heightened employee satisfaction and reduced personnel turnover.

Off-site training can be very expensive and time consuming. However, in some cases, it is necessary. Other sources of training are available and should be used in a consistent manner. The Internet is a source of free or more cost effective training. Technology vendors, for instance, routinely offer free training materials about their products, ranging from paper publications to DVDs to Webinars.

Higher education institutions are often open to partnering relationships with school districts to facilitate training. Pursuing these types of opportunities can provide low cost or free training to HWRSD employees.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-10:

Develop a more detailed technology training expectation for HWRSD staff.

HWRSD staff would benefit considerably from additional IT training. Developing more explicit and rigorous expectations for technological expertise to further automate operations will ensure that all employees are maximizing their resources, being challenged, and providing the highest quality of service possible. This is particularly important in the area of instructional technology integration. HWRSD has invested heavily in this area in recent years, and reports from teachers, and administrators indicate that this technology is being inconsistently implemented. To some extent, this factor has caused frustration for parents of children in the schools. Two areas where this was especially noted were the SMART boards and entire grade books.

First, with regard to SMART boards, some teachers are reportedly refusing to use these tools because they are perceived as too complicated or not worth the trouble.

The second area where this was reportedly an issue was in the use of the Ed-Line, online grade-book portal for parents. This technology makes it possible for parents to remain much more informed as to school activities, assignments, grades and progress reports online, in real time. Interviewees reported that some teachers are choosing not to use this software. This causes great frustration for parents who want to be equally informed about their children's classes and grades.

These systems are designed to be user friendly and reasonably simple to operate. Evergreen consultants believe that use of this web portal software should be a requirement of teachers, and teachers should receive all the training necessary to bring about an appropriate level of comfort with the software.

A structured, competency-based plan should be developed for both IT and instructional staff. The training plan should include each level in the organization and training opportunities that support professional development. Clear milestones should be established to guide each employee over the life of his or her career in the district. Web-based training opportunities should be identified and tied directly into the competency plan. HWRSD should focus on free training opportunities wherever possible.

FISCAL IMPACT

Focusing on free training opportunities will result in these expectations and opportunities being leveraged at little or no direct cost to the district.

9.4 SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS

Often times, small changes to existing systems or policies can greatly improve the efficiency of operations in technology. Technology has proven itself as an invaluable asset to organizations all over the world, and is the operational foundation of the globalization movement. HWRSD has fallen into a pattern of not fully using its available technology resources, particularly in the area of instructional integration.

FINDING

While the technology infrastructure, systems, connectivity and quality of the IT systems themselves have progressed greatly over the last several years, the physical facilities housing technology have not sufficiently kept pace. Technology assets throughout the district were generally observed to be of average to above average quality.

At the middle and high school, a server/network control room exists adjacent to the main library facility. This room serves a dual role as the office space for the Technology Technician and the Instructional Technology Specialist. The room is climate controlled and kept cool to account for the heat generated by the computer units. This room is kept locked.

In other locations in the middle school and high school facility, server and network equipment are kept in closets on both the first and second floors of the facility. At least two of these closets were observed to have their doors ajar during school hours, thus making them susceptible to mischief, accidental damage, vandalism, or even theft. These facilities should be kept locked for security purposes. One of the rooms was observed to be noticeably warm and one might surmise that the door is being kept open to allow for ventilation of a room not equipped with air conditioning equipment for the hardware present.

Similar conditions were observed at the elementary schools (where the age of the facilities and their lack of specific retro-fitting for technology needs) has led to less than desirable storage environments for sensitive hardware components.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-11:

Incorporate technology storage needs into facility revision plans to accommodate the specific demands of technology maintenance and safe keeping.

It is unclear what the future direction of the district's facilities is; however, modern server and network technology was not designed to operate in extreme heat or with limited air flow. Operating hardware in these irregular climatic conditions will shorten the life-span of IT equipment and make it more prone to failure. Expenses associated with the unplanned replacement of technology equipment could be in the tens of thousands of dollars depending on the piece of equipment which fails and staff time associated with its replacement and reconfiguration.

FISCAL IMPACT

The precise cost of addressing these concerns would be difficult to estimate; however, to address the cooling needs of these technology closets, stand-alone, self-contained, air conditioning units can be purchased and installed by district staff at a reasonable expense depending on the providers present on the approved vendor contract. This factor should be included in the Facilities Master Plan recommended in **Chapter 6**.

FINDING

Three years ago, HWRSD took the bold step of installing a unified, modern telephone system from AVAYA at the middle school and high school. This was a significant initiative that has had benefits for the staff at this location. Prior to the implementation of the new phone system, phones operated on different extensions, and some lines were unable to be transferred within the district.

The telephone system is designed to be a hybrid system that can be upgraded in the future to switch over to VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). The AVAYA system should serve the needs of the district for many years to come. While HWRSD has made strides at the middle school/high school, the system in place at the elementary schools is older and outdated. This need is not critical, however, and could be slated for upgrade at the same time as any future building renovations. It would make the most sense for the district to continue future compatibility with the AVAYA system at the middle school and high school.

Similar to the district, the Town of Wenham has purchased an AVAYA telephone system as well and has implemented limited parts of the VoIP specifically for the purpose of future integration with the HWRSD system. While this bridge has not yet been crossed, it is understood that the Town of Hamilton expects that they will soon also need to purchase a new telephone system

which would be a logical time to consider integration plans and the purchase of its own AVAYA equipment.

The advantages of a common telephone system are evident in that telephone connectivity among organizations, conference calling, and voicemail systems could all be centrally controlled, thus eliminating duplication of efforts in the management of multiple independent systems.

COMMENDATION

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is commended for installing a unified modern telephone system to simplify telephonic connectivity.

FINDING

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District has no formal IT monitoring for system maintenance. Preventative maintenance is often free or nearly free, and can dramatically increase the lifespan of computer systems. The district is conducting regular software updates and basic maintenance operations, but the formalization and accountability that comes with an official checklist is needed and cannot easily be replicated.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-12:

Develop and implement a Preventative Maintenance Checklist as a foundation for a districtwide annual maintenance plan for HWRSD computers.

An example preventative maintenance checklist for computers and IT equipment is displayed in **Exhibit 9-7**. The list is not all encompassing but a good start, and the exhibit includes both hardware maintenance as well as software maintenance. Hardware maintenance preserves the length of service of the internal components of a machine, while software maintenance activities can preserve the speed of the computer.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

The HWRSD IT Department maintains an inventory of hardware for the various locations, including counts of desktops, laptops, servers, and printers by location. The inventory presented does not include such details as person to whom they are assigned to nor equipment serial numbers.

Exhibit 9-7
Sample Preventative Maintenance Checklist

□	Blow Out Keyboard
□	Blow Out Back of CPU Unit; Fan
□	Blow Out Printer
□	Clean Print Heads With Alcohol
□	Clean Monitor Screens and Glare Covers
□	Empty Downloads Folder
□	Empty Cookies Folder
□	Empty History Folder
□	Delete Downloaded and Non District Owned Programs
□	Empty Recycle Bin
□	Install New Edition Norton Antivirus Software
□	Run Antivirus Software
□	Install Ad-Aware Software
□	Run Ad-Aware Software
□	Remind Workers to Delete Files that they no Longer Use
□	Remind Workers that Downloads Will Affect The Performance of the Machine.
□	Have Worker Sign Computer Use and Terms Agreement

Source: Created by Evergreen Solutions, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 9-13:

Develop a detailed technology inventory matrix which lists individual components, serial numbers, and item locations.

Proper control over IT assets beyond a basic count is important for planning purposes, inventory repair tracking, and replacement scheduling. Loss prevention of IT assets, particularly with so many components unsecured, is an important task the district must undertake.

FISCAL IMPACT

The technology inventory can be created at no cost.

CHAPTER 10:
ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

10.0 ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The comprehensive educational mission of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is the driving force behind the district's athletic program and extracurricular activities. School activities represent an integral part of the total educational process.

High school athletic and extracurricular programs often serve as one of the best dropout prevention activities for students in their educational journey. If communities compared the costs of expensive drug prevention programs and other crisis intervention programs to the costs associated with students engaged and focused on an area of interest in either athletics or other extracurricular activities they would readily see the return on investment.

Chapter 10 is organized into three sections:

10.1 Overview of Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
10.2 Policies and Procedures
10.3 Organization and Management

During the comprehensive diagnostic phase of this study, which included dozens of interviews, Evergreen consultants were advised that the major issues to be addressed were in athletics and not in non-athletic activities. Thus, our analysis based on the primary areas of interest from all feedback which was for HWRSD athletics programs, their fee structure, and the Athletic Director's position.

Non-Athletic Extracurricular Activities are covered by negotiated contract as reflected on page 56 and 57 of the 2007-10 "Agreement between the HWRSD Committee and the HWRSD Education Association. Non-athletic extracurricular activities are typically addressed in school districts by adding a stipend to an existing position to accomplish the function. These stipends were already obligated within the existing contract through fiscal year 2010, as noted on pages 56-57 of the existing contract.

Exhibit 10-4 in this chapter reflects what was available at the state level in terms of "Statewide Extracurricular Participation in Other Activities." As can be seen, there are approximately 58 different non-athletic extracurricular activities reflected for the high school, middle school, and elementary schools in HWRSD. These activities are compensated by the use of stipends for work performed. The total cost of these activities stipends was approximately $103,595 for fiscal year 2010.

10.1 OVERVIEW OF ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) is the primary statewide organization serving school athletics. Part of the mission of this organization states:

> *We will promote interschool athletics that provide lifelong and life-quality learning experiences to students while enhancing their achievement of educational goals.*

Exhibits 10-1 and **10-2** compare peer district sports participation by sport. The numbers shown for all sports indicate HWRSD has more male participants than two of the five peer districts. The female participation for HWRSD is more than four of the peer districts.

The MIAA Handbook states that successful interscholastic athletic programs directly or indirectly foster important life skill values of:

- accepting success graciously;
- accountability;
- citizenship and sportsmanship;
- confidence;
- handling disappointment;
- leadership skills;
- organizational skills;
- performing under pressure;
- persistence;
- respect;
- responsibility;
- sacrificing for the common good;
- self-discipline;
- social skills;
- teamwork;
- work ethic; and
- striving to excellence.

Within the State of Massachusetts, athletic participation encompasses 322 public schools and 52 non-public schools representing a total student enrollment of approximately 302,769; almost equally divided between boys and girls with an MIAA calculated participation rate of approximately 72.2 percent.

Exhibits 10-3 and **10-4** outline the magnitude of the statewide athletic and extracurricular activities as reported for 2009-10 by MIAA.
Out of the approximate 33 recognized sports participation activities, HWRSD participates in about 23 sports activities for boys and girls combined. HWRSD provides activities that represent an extension of the classroom. The role of parents/guardians is also paramount to each student's educational life journey to provide each student with proper nutrition, appropriate rest and the necessary attention to school, learning and grades.

HWRSD, like most communities, has very active and involved booster organizations to help support the various activities offered in the school district. Boosters are parents, coaches, friends, and alumni who all work together in support of the HWRSD student athletes.

Exhibit 10-5 reflects the active booster organizations supporting activities within HWRSD.

Exhibit 10-1
Sports Participation by School - Male
2009-10 School Year

District	Baseball	Basketball	Cross Country	Field Hockey	Football - 11 Player	Golf	Gymnastics	Ice Hockey	Lacrosse	Skiing - Nordic	Skiing - Alpine	Soccer	Softball - Fastpitch	Swimming and Diving	Tennis	Track & Field - Indoor	Track & Field - Outdoor	Volleyball	Wrestling
Hamilton-Wenham Regional HS	**33**	**26**	**39**	**0**	**39**	**16**	**7**	**12**	**47**	**0**	**0**	**41**	**0**	**13**	**18**	**45**	**63**	**0**	**14**
Groton-Dunstable Regional HS	32	44	45	0	70	18	0	40	48	0	12	72	0	0	16	0	55	0	0
Manchester-Essex Regional HS	37	35	32	0	46	17	0	0	35	0	20	35	0	22	28	6	0	0	0
Mendon-Upton Nipmuc Regional HS	36	36	20	0	78	12	0	22	44	0	0	34	0	0	0	36	40	0	0
Nashoba Regional HS	35	37	29	0	85	35	0	32	56	8	13	39	0	0	12	44	85	26	16
Pentucket Regional HS	44	38	75	0	74	18	0	29	35	0	0	41	0	0	16	0	52	0	19
Total	217	216	240	0	392	116	7	135	265	8	45	262	0	35	90	131	295	26	49

Source: Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, 2010.

Exhibit 10-2
Sports Participation by School – Female
2009-10 School Year

District	Baseball	Basketball	Cross Country	Field Hockey	Football - 11 Player	Golf	Gymnastics	Ice Hockey	Lacrosse	Skiing - Nordic	Skiing - Alpine	Soccer	Softball - Fastpitch	Swimming and Diving	Tennis	Track & Field - Indoor	Track & Field - Outdoor	Volleyball	Wrestling
Hamilton-Wenham Regional HS	**0**	**26**	**33**	**38**	**0**	**0**	**19**	**0**	**42**	**0**	**0**	**43**	**0**	**17**	**17**	**40**	**65**	**26**	**0**
Groton-Dunstable Regional HS	0	39	34	34	0	12	0	0	36	0	12	55	28	0	16	0	35	36	0
Manchester-Essex Regional HS	0	33	6	53	0	0	4	5	31	0	11	32	33	28	18	15	0	0	0
Mendon-Upton Nipmuc Regional	0	22	20	36	0	1	0	0	34	0	0	40	30	0	0	30	38	0	0
Nashoba Regional HS	0	33	38	33	0	0	0	0	48	12	10	33	28	0	16	27	47	0	0
Pentucket Regional HS	0	36	75	56	0	0	0	1	41	0	0	36	31	0	15	75	43	0	0
Total	0	189	206	250	0	13	23	6	232	12	33	239	150	45	82	187	228	62	0

Source: Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, 2010.

Exhibit 10-3
Statewide Extracurricular Participation in Sports
2009-10 School Year

Sport	Total Schools	Total Males	Total Schools	Total Females
Baseball	351	13,267	0	6
Basketball	362	12,155	362	10,047
Cross Country	317	6,436	311	5,111
Field Hockey	0	36	214	8,107
Football - 11 Player	328	20,626	0	18
Golf	285	4,345	26	551
Gymnastics	8	305	94	1,287
Ice Hockey	297	7,267	100	1,795
Lacrosse	186	8,673	155	6,276
Skiing - Nordic	21	288	20	289
Skiing - Alpine	74	1,009	70	865
Soccer	353	13,278	315	12,922
Softball - Fastpitch	0	0	351	10,608
Swimming and Diving	175	2,804	176	4,146
Tennis	261	3,749	278	4,281
Track & Field - Indoor	245	9,216	243	8,498
Track & Field - Outdoor	313	13,131	313	12,821
Volleyball	100	2,235	271	7,514
Wrestling	211	4,516	0	84
Total	**3,887**	**123,336**	**3,299**	**95,226**

Source: Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, 2010.

Exhibit 10-4
Statewide Extracurricular Participation in Other Activities
2009-10 School Year

Activity	Male Participation	Female Participation
Music		
Band	6,938	6,294
Orchestra	1,509	1,908
Vocal	4,011	7,892
Speech		
Debate: Policy	864	721
Lincoln-Douglas	122	68
Theatre	5,165	7,881
Individual Events	205	190
Decathlon	202	148
Group Interpretation	88	130
Other	1,064	979
Spirit		
Cheerleaders	68	7,415
Dance Team	64	1,363
Other	n/a	n/a
Total	**20,300**	**34,989**

Source: Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, 2010.

Exhibit 10-5
HWRSD Booster Organizations
(Friends of ……..)

1	Sports
2	Cheerleading-Female
3	Cross Country
4	Field Hockey
5	Football
6	Golf
7	Soccer-Boys
8	Soccer-Girls
9	Volleyball
10	Basketball-Boys
11	Basketball -Girls
12	Gymnastics
13	Indoor Track
14	Swim
15	Wrestling
16	Baseball
17	Lacrosse-Boys
18	Lacrosse- Girls
19	Tennis Boys
20	Tennis-Girls
21	Track

Source: HWRSD Athletic Department, October 2010.

The individual sporting and extracurricular events depend on boosters to raise money to fund projects, to buy equipment, to support fee costs, to assist in the cost of uniforms, to provide supportive scholarships, when feasible, and numerous other activities that help make these programs successful. It is part of the investment in student's educational process and long-term future in the community and society.

During 2010, a statewide survey was conducted as a 'Survey of Fees' being charged by school districts for student athletic activities. **Exhibit 10-6** presents the results of the recent survey. As can be seen, all comparison districts with the exception of Nashoba and HWRSD have a cap on their fees. HWRSD is the only district funded 100 percent by user fees, within the comparison districts, according to the survey.

10.2 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School is a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) which provides many of the state's rules for participation in interscholastic programs. In addition to the MIAA rules and procedures, the HWRSD also has its established rules as well.

The school district has developed an Athletic Program Handbook which provides information, policies and procedures for high school athletes and parents as well as coaches, staff, and other stakeholders in interscholastic activities.

Exhibit 10-6
Massachusetts Public Schools
Survey of Fees
2009-10 School Year

School District	Sports Fees	Details	Activity Fees	Details	Bus Fees	Details
Hamilton-Wenham	$300-$700 average $1,311 football	Funded 100% by users fees No family cap; these offset by donations, etc.	Net $65 after donations elementary $50	High school most 100% funded & other 20 funded, middle school $127 to $1,168; elementary $110-$183		$200 high school parking
Groton-Dunstable	$275/ sp/season $100 extra for Ice Hockey	HS $1,000 family max middle school $200/sp/season	$150	$150 Elementary Band Fee		$100 high school parking
Manchester-Essex	$295/student	$590 family cap				
Mendon-Upton Regional	$120/sport	$425 family limit per year				
Nashoba Regional	$1150/sport high school	$50/sport MS No cap	Varies	Any other fees are set by individual principals		$75 student parking fee
Pentucket Regional	$200 to $350	$850 Ice Hockey JV & V $400 Football JV & V $1,000 family cap	$15 to $100	Family cap	$180 Reg: $100 AM-PM; $90 Winter Pass	$180 high school parking

Source: Compiled and Updated by Dick and Sharon Hawkins: SuperEDNet.com, 2010.

The HWRSD Handbook states, "The interscholastic athletic program is an integral part of a student's total education and development." The Handbook goes on to state, "it is the responsibility of our coaches, student athletes and their parents to become familiar with our athletic code which presents the rules, regulations and policies of the athletic department."

Some of the components of the Athletic Handbook include the following:

- Philosophy for Athletics at each Level
- Protocol to follow when a Parent has a Complaint against a Coach
- Athletic Code
- Important MIAA Rules
- MGL Chapter 269,Section 7 "Crime of Hazing,Definition,Penalty"
- Academic Eligibility
- School Attendance
- Truancy from School
- Guidelines for Athletic Practices and Games
- Athletic Activity Fee
- Reimbursement Policy for Student Fees
- Head Injuries and Concussions
- Fundraising

Of significant importance are the components in the Athletic Code which addresses eligibility—a requirement for a 'yellow' Parental Consent Card for permission to participate; a requirement for a 'green' Student Athlete Emergency Information Card to be used by trainers as necessary; and all students must pass a physical exam.

The section on Athletic Fee Reimbursement states three circumstances under which no refund will be provided to parents/guardians. These include:

- The athlete is dismissed from the team due to disciplinary problems.
- The athlete is dismissed from the team due to scholastic deficiencies.
- The athlete withdraws from a team past the 'sufficient enrollment' date.

The School Committee utilizes Policy H8015 to govern school-sponsored field trips and Policy D4002 on private funding. Both of these policies affect the athletic and extracurricular activities of the school district. Transportation services and private funding are important aspects of the success of these programs within the district.

FINDING

Increasing pressure across the county for continued tough budgetary decisions, with hard economic times creating reduced revenues and increased costs, have impacted school districts ability to continue to fund athletic programs.

Today's parents demand a full array of curricular and extracurricular activities to enhance their children's experiences. In Spring 2007, the HWRSD School Committee was faced with the same difficult decision to eliminate several district-funded athletic programs and increase the athletic fee at the same time. Instead, at the demand of the community, to keep all sports, HWRSD implemented its program of 'pay to play' at 100 percent of the cost of the athletic programs.

As a result of the implementation of the new fee structure, it became apparent that some athletic programs could not be self-sustaining due to insufficient student participation. One of the HWRSD athletic programs, boy's ice hockey, was such a casualty. The Athletic Director arrived at an alternative way to offer the program to HWRSD students by working with a neighboring school district to form a Co-op Team. This option provided HWRSD students a considerably reduced fee for participation, and allowed the boys to continue to play hockey although not representing HWRSD. Another Co-op program exists for gymnastics.

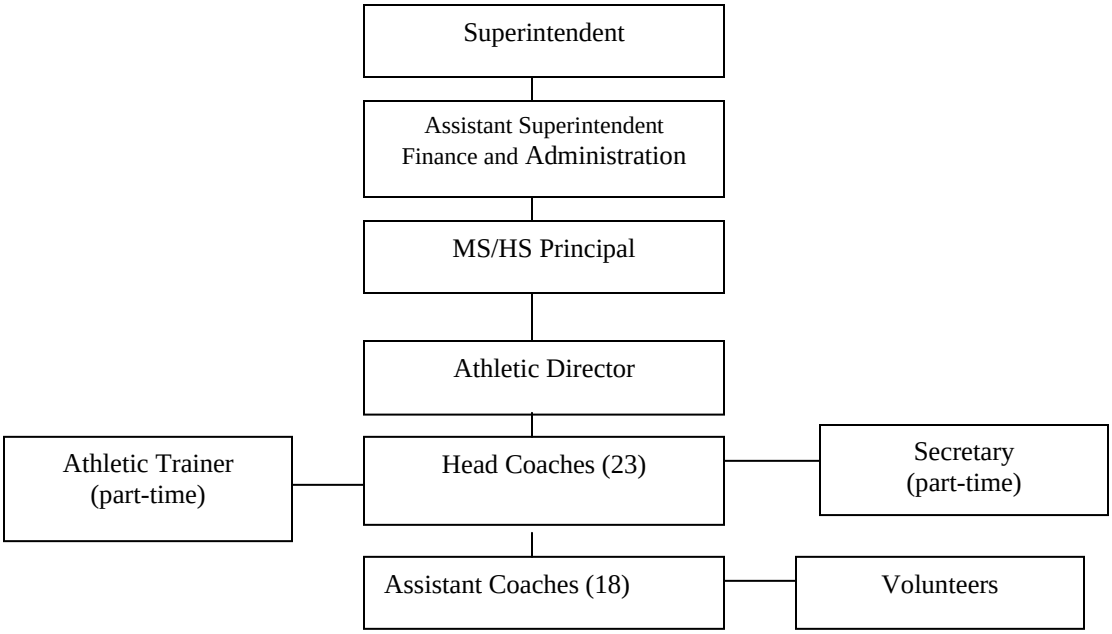
COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Athletic Department is commended for its innovative approach to develop the co-op program with a neighboring school district to maintain athletic student participation opportunities.

10.3 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The HWRSD athletic organizational alignment is displayed is **Exhibit 10-7**. Of continued interest within the community are at-large concerns about an ongoing necessity for a full-time Athletic Director to manage and administer HWRSD athletic programs. The position became full-time in 2005. At this time, the school district's athletic program was only covering 50 percent of the operating costs with the rest of the funding coming from the HWRSD General Fund.

Exhibit 10-7
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Organizational Chart for Athletics



Source: HWRSD Athletic Department, 2010.

HWRSD, as a community, chose to maintain its existing 23 athletic programs and to find a solution for making the programs self-supporting. In 2001, HWRSD was charging approximately $200 per student athlete to participate in its athletic program of choice.

Exhibits 10-8 and **10-9** reflect the 2010 and 2011 Athletic User Fee Summary data which highlights several important aspects of the HWRSD Athletic Program. The analysis reflects the 23 existing athletic programs as well as the three co-op teams with surrounding districts now supporting students to play ice hockey and gymnastics. The analyses show each sport's final user fee and how the fee was determined.

The 2010 fiscal year user fees ranged from a low of $200 for indoor track to a high of $940 for football. User fee revised data were not available at this time for spring sports.

Exhibit 10-8
Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School
2009-10 Athletic User Fee Summary

Sport	Semester	2009-10 Cost	Required Number of Students	2009-10 Fee (100%)	Left from 2009-10	Private Funding		Revised 2009-10 Cost	Revised 2009-10 User Fee
FALL						6/12/09			
Cross Country	Fall	$20,519	45	$456	*$7,127*			*13392*	*298*
Field Hockey	Fall	$17,919	28	$640	*$5,524*			*12395*	*443*
Football	Fall	$58,828	48	$1226	*$1,750*	$12,000		*$45,078*	*940*
Cheerleading	Fall	$7,563	20	$378	*0*			*$7,563*	*378*
Golf	Fall	$7,137	14	$510	*$2,537*			*4600*	*329*
Soccer – Boys'	Fall	$16,561	40	$414	*0*			*16561*	*414*
Soccer – Girls'	Fall	$16,511	40	$413	*$3,342*			*13169*	*330*
Volleyball	Fall	$15,541	24	$648	*$1,610*	$1,920		*12,011*	*501*
WINTER						10/8/09			
Basketball – Boys'	Winter	$16,876	25	$675	1895			14,981	600
Basketball – Girls'	Winter	$16,876	25	$675	2509			14,367	575
Cheerleading	Winter	$6,153	20	$308	873			5,280	264
Ice Hockey – Boys' *Co-op Team w/Salem*	Winter				---			---	---
Indoor Track	Winter	$20,694	85	$243	4000			16,694	200
Ice Hockey – Girls' *Co-op Team w/Masco*	Winter				---			---	---
Swimming	Winter	$14,044	30	$468	5737			8,307	277
Wrestling	Winter	$17,244	23	$750	7600			9,644	420
Gymnastics *Co-op Team w/Manchester-Essex*	Winter	$6,316	18	$351	2517			3,799	211
SPRING						2/3/10			
Baseball	Spring	$20,935	32	$654	328			$20,607	644
Lacrosse – Boys'	Spring	$18,205	45	$405	651			$17,554	390
Lacrosse – Girls'	Spring	$16,861	35	$482	2793			$14,067	402
Softball	Spring	$16,339	25	$654					
Tennis – Boys'	Spring	$7,342	14	$524	0			$7,342	524
Tennis – Girls'	Spring	$7,342	14	$524	2404			$4,938	353
Track & Field	Spring	$35,788	100	$358	7387			$28,401	284

Source: HWRSD Athletic Department, October 2010.

Exhibit 10-9
Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School
Athletic User Fee Summary
for 2010-11 School Year

Sport	Semester	2010-11 Cost	Required Number of Students	2010-11 Fee (100%)	Left from 2009-10	Private Funding		Revised 2010-11 Cost	Revised 2010-11 User Fee
FALL									
Cross Country	Fall	$21,032	45	467	$10,173			241	$242
Field Hockey	Fall	$17,853	28	638	$4,977			460	$460
Football	Fall	$54,882	45	1220	$10,042	$6000		997	$864
Cheerleading	Fall	$7,117	20	356	$1,860			263	$263
Golf	Fall	$7,351	14	525	$969			456	$456
Soccer – Boys'	Fall	$17,458	40	437	$747			418	$418
Soccer – Girls'	Fall	$17,058	40	427	$1,357	$900		393	$370
Volleyball	Fall	$15,789	25	632	$998	$1375		592	$537
WINTER									
Basketball – Boys'	Winter	$17,169	25	687	$4563			505	$505
Basketball – Girls'	Winter	$17,169	25	687	$2084			604	$604
Cheerleading	Winter	$7,017	20	351	$1961			253	$253
Ice Hockey – Boys' *Co-op Team @ Salem*	Winter								
Indoor Track	Winter	$22,564	75	301	$898	0		300	$300
Ice Hockey – Girls' *Co-op Team @ Masco*	Winter								
Swimming	Winter	$14,216	28	508	$3327			389	$389
Wrestling	Winter	$15,785	23	686	$8208			330	$330
Gymnastics Co-op Team w/Manchester-Essex	Winter	$9,614	22	437	$3214			291	$291
SPRING									
Baseball	Spring	$20,458	32		$1478				
Lacrosse – Boys'	Spring	$21,645	45		$1.57				
Lacrosse – Girls'	Spring	$17,125	35		$3719				
Tennis – Boys'	Spring	$7,596	14		$4261				
Tennis – Girls'	Spring	$7.596	14		$2387				
Track & Field	Spring	$36,246	90		$7657				

Source: HWRHS Athletic Department, October 2010.

As can be determined from the details of the athletic expenses, the costs of the programs cover transportation, officials, field lining, supplies/assets, contract services, personnel, salaries and other expenses. **Exhibits 10-10** and **10-11** define the details of expenses to maintain HWRSD athletic programs.

Exhibit 10-10
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
2009-10 Athletic Expenses

Sport	Transportation (1)	Officials (2)	Field Lining	Supplies/ Assets	Contract Services (3)	Personnel (4)	Salaries (5)	Other Expenses (6)	Total
Baseball	$2,904	$2,516	$1,854	$1,500	$0	$0	$12,161		$20,935
Basketball, Boys	$2,904	$2,260	$0	$1,000	$0	$1,338	$9,374		$16,876
Basketball, Girls	$2,904	$2,260	$0	$1,000	$0	$1,338	$9,374		$16,876
Cheerleading (F)	$3,112	$0	$0	$350	$390	$0	$3,711		$7,563
Cheerleading (W)	$1,792	$0	$0	$350	$300	$0	$3,711		$6,153
Cross Country	$6,608	$0	$0	$1,100	$650	$0	$12,161		$20,519
Field Hockey	$3,168	$2,666	$1,400	$1,060	$400	$500	$8,725		$17,919
Football	$3,960	$2,994	$6,847	$6,124	$7,998	$3,090	$27,815		$58,828
Golf	$2,376	$0	$0	$1,050	$0	$0	$3,711		$7,137
Gymnastics	$1,056	$840	$0	$309	$200	$200	$3,711		$6,316
Indoor Track	$6,096	$0	$0	$650	$3,004	$0	$10,944		$20,694
Lacrosse, Boys	$2,640	$2,410	$1,900	$2,060	$0	$470	$8,725		$18,205
Lacrosse, Girls	$2,376	$2,260	$1,760	$1,500	$0	$240	$8,725		$16,861
Soccer, Boys	$2,376	$2,260	$1,700	$1,100	$0	$400	$8,725		$16,561
Soccer, Girls	$2,376	$2,260	$1,650	$1,100	$0	$400	$8,725		$16,511
Softball	$2,640	$2,214	$1,300	$1,280	$0	$180	$8,725		$16,339
Swimming	$1,320	$976	$0	$900	$4,726	$0	$6,122		$14,044
Tennis, Boys	$2,376	$0	$0	$1,015	$240	$0	$3,711		$7,342
Tennis, Girls	$2,376	$0	$0	$1,015	$240	$0	$3,711		$7,342
Track & Field	$7,136	$0	$1,700	$2,575	$600	$1,685	$22,092		$35,788
Volleyball	$2,904	$2,516	$0	$1,236	$130	$30	$8,725		$15,541
Wrestling	$2,776	$2,202	$0	$1,442	$400	$1,050	$9,374		$17,244
All Sports 100% User Fee Supported									**$381,594**
Administration	$0	$1,784	$0	$4,166	$41,034	$0	$113,958	$1,500	$162,442
Total									**$162,442**
Total Athletics Costs	**$68,176**	**$32,418**	**$20,111**	**$33,882**	**$60,312**	**$10,921**	**$316,716**	**$1,500**	**$544,036**

Source: HWRHS Athletic Department, October 2010

(1) - as per transportation contract
(2) - fees set by MIAA
(3) - facilities rentals, entry fees, uniform cleaning, etc.
(4) - judges, timers, police, etc.
(5) - contractual coaches stipends
(6) - CAL meetings, etc.

Exhibit 10-11
Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
2010-11 Athletic Expenses

Sport	Number	Transportation (1)	Officials (2)	Field Lining	Supplies/ Assets	Contract Services (3)	Personnel (4)	Salaries (5)	Other Expenses (6)	Total
Baseball	32	$3,288	$2,516	$0	$1,550	$700	$0	$12,404		$20,458
Basketball, Boys	25	$3,014	$2,260	$0	$1,030	$228	$1,075	$9,562		$17,169
Basketball, Girls	25	$3,014	$2,260	$0	$1,030	$228	$1,075	$9,562		$17,169
Cheerleading (F)	20	$1,822	$0	$0	$360	$1,150	$0	$3,785		$7,117
Cheerleading (W)	20	$1,822	$0	$0	$360	$1,050	$0	$3,785		$7,017
Cross Country	45	$6,828	$0	$0	$1,150	$650	$0	$12,404		$21,032
Field Hockey	28	$3,288	$2,666	$0	$1,100	$1,400	$500	$8,899		$17,853
Football	45	$2,740	$3,074	$0	$6,307	$13,790	$600	$28,371		$54,882
Golf	14	$2,466	$0	$0	$1,100	$0	$0	$3,785		$7,351
Gymnastics	22	$1,096	$1,008	$0	$325	$3,200	$200	$3,785		$9,614
Indoor Track	75	$7,632	$0	$0	$700	$3,070	$0	$11,162		$22,564
Lacrosse, Boys	45	$2,740	$2,410	$0	$2,121	$1,500	$470	$12,404		$21,645
Lacrosse, Girls	35	$2,466	$2,260	$0	$1,500	$1,760	$240	$8,899		$17,125
Soccer, Boys	40	$2,466	$2,660	$0	$1,133	$1,900	$400	$8,899		$17,458
Soccer, Girls	40	$2,466	$2,260	$0	$1,133	$1,900	$400	$8,899		$17,058
Swimming	28	$1,370	$976	$0	$900	$4,726	$0	$6,244		$14,216
Tennis, Boys	14	$2,466	$0	$0	$1,045	$300	$0	$3,785		$7,596
Tennis, Girls	14	$2,466	$0	$0	$1,045	$300	$0	$3,785		$7,596
Track & Field	90	$7,376	$0	$0	$2,652	$2,000	$1,685	$22,533		$36,246
Volleyball	25	$3,014	$2,516	$0	$1,200	$130	$30	$8,899		$15,789
Wrestling	23	$1,644	$2,125	$0	$1,200	$400	$855	$9,561		$15,785
All Sports 100% User Fee Supported										**$372,740**
Administration		$0	$1,799	$0	$4,649	$46,496	$0	$113,958	$1,600	$168,502
Total										**$168,502**
Total Athletics Costs		**$65,484**	**$30,790**	**$0**	**$33,590**	**$86,878**	**$7,530**	**$315,370**	**$1,600**	**$541,242**

Source: HWRSD Athletic Department, October 2010

(1) - as per transportation contract
(2) - fees set by MIAA
(3) - facilities rentals, entry fees, uniform cleaning, etc.
(4) - judges, timers, etc.
(5) - contractual coaches stipends
(6) - CAL meetings, etc.

The top five highest cost athletic programs for 2009-10 were football, track and field, baseball, cross-country and indoor track. The top two expense categories include salaries and transportation.

The top five highest cost athletic programs for 2010-11 were almost the same as 2009-10 with baseball being replaced by lacrosse for boys. The top two expense categories were slightly different as well with salaries and contracted services ranked as one and two for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

FINDING

All school districts provide stipends (sometimes called supplements) to various individuals for taking on additional assignments within an operation. The stipends of interest in this discussion relate to coaches and to assistant coaches which are articulated in the Agreement between the HWRSD School Committee and the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Education Association for 2007-2010**.**

Exhibit 10-12 reflects the stipends as noted in the HWRSD agreement. **Exhibit 10-13** displays comparison district stipend schedules for cross reference. It is important that school districts take the initiative to maintain comparison data with peer school districts in an attempt to benchmark the differences and to establish a standard for the school district. It may not be defensible for one school district to be paying twice as much for the same stipend in the neighboring town in a different school district. Without verifying this type of supplemental funding, it is possible to be paying costs that do not match the current rates of pay for the services being performed.

Exhibit 10-12
Athletic Stipends in HWRSD
2010 Fiscal Year

Sport	Years of Experience			
	0	1	2	3
Cat. I-Football				
Head	$6,328	$7,255	$8,320	$8,611
Assistant	$3,531	$4,045	$4,638	$4,801
Cat. II-Basketball & Wrestling				
Head	$4,189	$4,795	$5,490	$5,682
Assistant	$2,723	$3,116	$3,569	$3,692
Cat. IIA-Track				
Head – (Coordinator)	$5,388	$6,175	$7,077	$7,324
Assistant	$2,723	$3,116	$3,569	$3,692
Cat. III-Baseball, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Ice Hockey, Softball, Soccer, Lacrosse, Volley Ball				
Head	$3,901	$4,464	$5,110	$5,289
Assistant	$2,535	$2,900	$3,320	$3,436
Cat. IV-Cheerleading, Golf, Swimming, Gymnastics, Indoor Track, Tennis				
Head	$2,749	$3,139	$3,586	$3,711
Assistant	$1,786	$2,039	$2,329	$2,411

Source: HWRSC/HWREA 2007-2010 Contact: Appendix E.

Manchester-Essex (MESD) participates in approximately 23 athletic events too. MESD only has about 72 percent of the enrollment reported by HWRSD. MESD has approximately 197 less athletes competing in the athletic activities**.**

Exhibit 10-13
Manchester Essex Regional School District
Athletic Stipends
2010-11 School Year

Sport	Years of Experience			
	0	1	2	3
Group 1-Football				
Head Coach	NA	$7,077	$7,404	$7,734
JV /Assistant Coach	NA	$3,729	$3,992	$4,254
Group II-Basketball , Ice Hockey, Wrestling				
Head Coach	NA	$4,441	$4,838	$5,234
JV/Assistant Coach	NA	$2,888	$3,197	$3,506
Group III-Soccer, Field Hokey, Baseball, Softball, Track				
Head Coach	NA	$3,889	$4,286	$4,682
JV/Assistant Coach	NA	$2,519	$2,830	$3,137
Group IV-Golf, Sailing, Cross Country, Tennis, Swimming				
Head Coach	NA	$2,445	$2,909	$3,368
JV/Assistant Coach	NA	$1,538	$1,897	$2,256
Cat. V-Cheerleading				
Head Coach (Per Season	NA	NA	NA	$1,911

Source: Manchester Essex Regional School District Website, October, 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-1:

Develop and maintain annual comparative data related to stipends in peer school districts.

The Athletics Director should maintain comparable statistics. The first step in this process is for the HWRSD Leadership Team to agree on what will be the comparison school districts as a standard for all comparisons regardless of the functional area of the school district.

This comparison group is the standard, but does not pre-empt an area of the organization for including additional comparison districts that, for the specific purpose, may be more closely aligned. The collection and analysis of the data is one step in the process. Once the data are analyzed, a report should be developed and shared at a minimum with the Leadership Team as part of the annual decision-making process which has budgetary implications.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

In February 2009, the School Committee reviewed the Athletic User Fee to determine whether the school district budget could support these costs. Given the continued economic climate and dwindling state revenues and local taxes, it was voted unanimously to keep the current user fees at 100 percent.

Exhibit 10-14 compares the past three years of expenses for districtwide athletic programs with a three-year average expense of $506,236.

Exhibit 10-14
Hamilton Wenham Regional School District
Expense Fund 205 Athletics

Fiscal Year	Budget
2009-10	$508,614
2008-09	$483,860
2007-08	$526,234
Average	**$506,236**

Source: HWRHS Athletic Department, October 2010.

At the same February meeting, the School Committee discussed the issue of athletic gate receipt distributions and how the collected funds are used in the district. One member had proposed to have the district's general fund operating budget add funds to support a portion of the athletic scholarships which would allow more gate receipts to be directed to the sport that generated the revenue.

The final decision was to keep the School Committee's May 2006 policy in place with "one-third of the gate receipts allocated to the sport for which they were collected to decrease its annual user fee; one-third of the gate receipts allocated to the scholarship account for all athletic programs; and one-third of the gate receipts allocated to the athletic revolving fund so needed capital equipment items can be acquired for all athletic programs."

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-2:

Evaluate the gate receipt process annually and make recommendations as appropriate.

Effective utilization of the gate receipts is important to the success of the total athletic program and the credibility of the operation. The Athletic Department has first-hand knowledge of how gate receipts are actually being used and how effective the allocations are being distributed and earmarked. Circumstances change frequently and unanticipated needs surface that may dictate realignment of the current allocation process.

A detailed analysis of the gate receipts, and how the dollars are being spent, are important variables. These should be collected, maintained, and shared as appropriate. This information provides data for effective decision making related to the HWRSD Athletic Program for the school district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

HWRSD has invested in funding a full-time Athletic Director to maintain a quality Athletic Program. Several program components warrant effective tracking and monitoring within the Athletic Department. Tracking the importance of various details based on their relative materiality and volatility allows the district to direct its planning efforts toward items that will have the biggest impact on meeting strategic objectives. Based on data requested and obtained from the Athletics Department, the quality of data being tracked and documented is in place.

Currently, other directors (such as the Food Service Director) provide an Annual Performance Report to the School Committee outlining numerous activities, highlights, issues/concerns, budget analysis, legislative impacts, performance results, and a state of the union-type address related to a specific function.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-3:

Develop a formal annual performance report on Athletics for the School Committee.

The School Committee and the community at large need to continually understand the impact and scope of the athletic and extracurricular programs and its ongoing challenges and results. One of the most informative and effective ways of providing oversight to the program is to obtain at a minimum an annual report of the state of the program.

In July 14, 2010, the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued its suggested *Guidelines for Voluntary Reporting of Service Efforts and Accomplishment Performance Information*. The document is intended to provide the public sector with a framework for effective external communication of performance information. The document had six qualitative characteristics which need to become the basis for reporting of all performance information by school districts and other public sector organizations.

The six characteristics are:

- relevance;
- understandability;
- comparability;

- timeliness;
- consistency; and
- reliability.

Evergreen recommends that HWRSD obtain a copy of this document and incorporate it as part of its way of work in terms of reporting on performance results. The Athletic Department can use the Food Service Performance Report as a starting point and guideline on how to structure an Annual Performance Report for the Superintendent and School Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Prior to 2005, HWRSD operated its Athletic Program with a part-time Athletic Director. Several years ago, the HWRSD community exhibited a high level of interest in demanding a full array of curricular and extracurricular activities to enhance the opportunities for their children.

Under the current approximate 23 athletic programs conducted by HWRSD, the requirements and demands for a full-time Athletic Director become self-evident and are briefly noted in the listing of responsibilities of the current position for HWRSD:

- scheduling of buses for activities;
- responding to phone calls and messages;
- mandating adjustments to protocols and procedures;
- accommodating the shortage of athletic facilities and fields, and the need to control rotating schedules;
- responding to increased legal demands (such as head concussions and hazing requirements);
- scheduling officials for events;
- lining fields for sporting events;
- managing a budget that buys uniforms and equipment, and the requirements necessitated by these procurement activities;
- facilitating effective communication between various groups;
- implementing effective policies and procedures;

- meeting regularly with coaches and athletic personnel;
- integrating parents into programs;
- monitoring federal, state, MIAA laws and regulations for compliance;
- developing an annual athletic calendar of events;
- coordinating, collecting and disbursing user fees;
- hiring team physicians and policemen;
- arranging hosting of visiting teams;
- providing oversight of home game ticket sales and proper accounting for funds collected;
- coordinating the maintenance program for the limited facilities and fields;
- helping to develop specifications for selected purchases;
- overseeing maintenance, cleanliness, and security of the high school buildings and grounds;
- providing seasonal evaluation of coaches;
- recruiting and hiring; and
- facilitating proper maintenance of all records.

These responsibilities created considerable need for increased openness and dialogue with parents and the community on an ongoing basis and underscored the need for a full-time Athletic Director. Helping parents get organized into fundraising organizations was another key component of this new position and a key element of making the continuation of athletics programs a success.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation 10-4:

Maintain a full-time Athletic Director in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

The high profile of athletics within the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District requires proper attention to providing the necessary management and oversight of the programs currently in place.

The school district is operating with its 100 percent pay to play athletic fee to fully fund its athletic programs. The demands of this process necessitated the ongoing coordination of the

activities with parents and concerned community members. It is important to maintain the level of service provided by a full-time Athletic Director.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources

FINDING

When the Hamilton-Wenham community had an opportunity to reduce its athletic programs they opted to find a way to fully fund all programs. Out of this budget crisis, the fully-funded, pay-to-play concept was created.

The implementation of this 100 percent user fee program did not come without its share of challenges. It took considerable effort to develop ideas on how to help offset the increases in the costs for families. The district also had to find a way to create 'opportunity scholarships' for students who could not afford to pay the higher fees.

Taking the initiative to develop a series of co-op programs with surrounding communities to allow students in programs set to be discontinued exemplified even more the collaborative approach being taken by all stakeholders to make the program successful.

COMMENDATION

The HWRSD Athletic Department is commended for its successful implementation of the 100 percent pay-to-play program to maintain effective sports programs for students.

CHAPTER 11:
COSTS AND SAVINGS SUMMARY

11.0 COSTS AND SAVINGS SUMMARY

The Evergreen Team has developed 124 recommendations in this report. Twenty-eight (28) of the recommendations have fiscal implications. **Exhibit 11-1** shows the total costs and savings for study recommendations that have a fiscal impact. As can be seen, the total net savings is approximately $16.5 million over five years for operational efficiencies in HWRSD. It is important to keep in mind that the identified savings and costs are incremental and cumulative.

Exhibit 11-1
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year
Over Five Years Recommendations

Cost Savings	Years					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
TOTAL SAVINGS	**$3,539,184**	**$4,114,645**	**$4,091,930**	**$4,104,264**	**$4,129,392**	**$19,979,415**	
TOTAL COST	**($631,000)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($3,441,456)**	**($55,000)**
TOTAL NET SAVINGS	**$2,908,184**	**$3,412,031**	**$3,389,316**	**$3,401,650**	**$3,426,778**	**$16,537,959**	
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS AND ONE-TIME SAVINGS							**$16,482,959**

Exhibit 11-2 shows costs and savings by chapter for recommendations in Chapters 2 through 10. Some of these savings will have an immediate direct impact whereas others are estimated projections.

Note: It is important for the reader to keep in mind that these are projected costs and savings based on Evergreen's analysis. Nonetheless, Evergreen believes that HWRSD leaders should determine when the savings will occur and how much savings can be achieved on an annually basis.

There are 96 additional recommendations in this report that do not have a fiscal impact. These recommendations are included in Chapters 2 through 10 of the full report.

Exhibit 11-2
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 2: DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE								
2-9	Staff Secondary Schools with Two Principals and One High School Assistant Principal	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($15,000)	($75,000)	
Chapter 2 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($15,000)**	**($75,000)**	**$0**
CHAPTER 3: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT								
None								
Chapter 3 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT								
4-2	Account for Special Funds	$150,000	$150,000	$0	$0	$0	$300,000	
4-3	Continue to Explore Shared Services Opportunities	$0	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$400,000	
4-4	Establish Policy that does not Allow Accounts to Have Negative Balances	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$27,836	$139,180	
4-5	Develop and Document a Cost Methodology	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$69,185	$345,925	
4-9	Reduce General Fund Expenditures	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$1,703,132	$8,515,660	
Chapter 4 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$1,950,153**	**$2,050,153**	**$1,900,153**	**$1,900,153**	**$1,900,153**	**$9,700,765**	**$0**

Exhibit 11-2 (Continued)
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 5: EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT								
5-8	Reduce High School Planning Time	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$93,098	$465,490	
5-9	Eliminate 17.4 Teaching Positions	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$1,246,084	$6,230,420	
5-10	Reduce Special Education Teachers	$0	$329,424	$329,424	$329,424	$329,424	$1,317,696	
5-11	Eliminate Four (4) Traffic Control Stipends Eliminate Fourteen (14) Bus Duty Stipends Eliminate Two (2) Substitute Dispatcher Supplements	$20,992	$20,992	$20,992	$20,992	$20,992	$104,960	
5-17	Eliminate One Nurse Position	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$51,698	$258,490	
5-18	Add a Middle School Guidance Counselor	$0	($71,614)	($71,614)	($71,614)	($71,614)	($286,456)	
5-20	Change Compensation for National Board Certification	$15,332	$19,165	$22,998	$26,831	$30,664	$114,990	
Chapter 5 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$1,427,204**	**$1,688,847**	**$1,692,680**	**$1,696,513**	**$1,700,346**	**$8,205,590**	**$0**
CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES								
6-1	Prepare a Five-Year Facilities Master Plan	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($20,000)
6-10	Fund Building Maintenance at Two Percent	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($584,000)	($2,920,000)	
6-11	Purse HWRSD Participation in DPW Merger	$4,000	$12,000	$16,000	$16,000	$20,000	$68,000	

Exhibit 11-2 (Continued)
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 6: FACILITIES								
6-12	Select and Implement a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMS)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($2,000)	($10,000)	
6-13	Implementation Best Practices for Community Use of Facilities	$16,000	$16,000	$16,000	$16,000	$16,000	$80,000	
Chapter 6 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**($562,000)**	**($554,000)**	**($487,600)**	**($487,600)**	**($483,600)**	**($2,574,800)**	**($20,000)**
CHAPTER 7: FOOD SERVICE								
7-3	Develop and Implement plan to Meet Minimum MPLH Standards	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$12,571	$62,855	
7-5	Purchase POS System	$0	$9,514	$9,514	$9,514	$9,514	$38,056	($30,000)
7-7	Consolidate Cafeterias at Secondary Schools	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$85,500	$427,500	
7-9	Improve Participation by Minimum of 26 Percent	$11,861	$17,222	$29,945	$38,446	$55,741	$153,215	
7-11	Add Two Vending Machines	$312	$312	$312	$312	$312	$1,560	
7-12	Account for and Support Indirect Costs	$0	$44,329	$88,658	$88,658	$88,658	$310,303	
Chapter 7 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$110,244**	**$169,448**	**$226,500**	**$235,001**	**$252,296**	**$993,489**	**($30,000)**
CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION								
8-3	Generate Valid Data and Modify Board Policy	$0	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$300,000	
Chapter 8 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$0**	**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$300,000**	**$0**

Exhibit 11-2 (Continued)
Summary of Annual Costs and Savings by Year

Chapter/Recommendation		Estimated (Cost)/Savings					Total 5-Year (Costs) or Savings	One-Time (Costs) or Savings
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16		
CHAPTER 9: TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT								
9-1	Eliminate IT Contractor	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$27,583	$137,915	
9-2	Hire Technician	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($30,000)	($150,000)	
9-9	Purchase IT Tracking Package	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	($5,000)
Chapter 9 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($2,417)**	**($12,085)**	**($5,000)**
CHAPTER 10: ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES								
None								
Chapter 10 Subtotal (Cost)/Savings		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
TOTAL COST		**($631,000)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($702,614)**	**($3,441,456)**	**($55,000)**
TOTAL SAVINGS		**$3,539,184**	**$4,114,645**	**$4,091,930**	**$4,104,264**	**$4,129,392**	**$19,979,415**	
TOTAL NET SAVINGS		**$2,908,184**	**$3,412,031**	**$3,389,316**	**$3,401,650**	**$3,426,778**	**$16,537,959**	
TOTAL FIVE-YEAR NET SAVINGS AND ONE TIME SAVINGS								**$16,482,959**

APPENDIX:
SURVEY RESULTS

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
Central Office Administrators
Compared to Peers

B. District Administration

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
4. The district's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	85.7%	0.0%	85.8%	4.7%
5. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the district's strategic plan.	83.3%	0.0%	94.3%	1.4%
6. School committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school district.	83.3%	16.7%	73.9%	22.0%
7. School committee members know and understand the operations of the school district.	66.7%	33.3%	72.4%	23.6%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	66.7%	0.0%	79.9%	7.4%
9. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	66.7%	0.0%	76.1%	8.6%
10. The district administration is efficient.	83.3%	16.7%	76.5%	12.1%
11. The district administration supports the educational process.	100.0%	0.0%	81.6%	8.7%
12. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the district.	66.7%	16.7%	85.3%	6.8%
13. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	83.3%	16.7%	75.5%	15.7%
14. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	83.3%	16.7%	80.7%	11.4%
15. Most administrative practices in the school district are highly efficient and effective.	83.3%	0.0%	75.8%	11.7%
16. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	66.7%	33.3%	77.5%	12.1%
17. School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100.0%	0.0%	85.0%	10.5%
18. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	50.0%	16.7%	50.6%	33.4%
19. Bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	16.7%	66.7%	20.3%	67.0%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
20. The school district has too many layers of administrators.	0.0%	83.3%	10.1%	72.3%
21. District administrators provide quality service to schools.	100.0%	0.0%	90.1%	6.9%

C. INSTRUCTION

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
22. The district uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	33.3%	16.7%	20.6%	31.9%
23. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	50.0%	0.0%	35.5%	10.6%
24. The district has effective special programs for the following:				
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	33.3%	33.3%	72.5%	10.5%
b. Special Education	66.7%	0.0%	72.6%	12.1%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	0.0%	33.3%	64.8%	6.2%
d. Advanced Placement	50.0%	16.7%	67.5%	6.4%
e. Alternative Education	50.0%	16.7%	62.3%	12.1%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	33.3%	16.7%	59.4%	14.9%
g. Career and Vocational	16.7%	33.3%	69.7%	14.4%
h. Dropout Prevention	50.0%	0.0%	45.1%	20.5%
25. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	66.7%	0.0%	59.7%	16.9%
26. Teacher turnover is low.	83.3%	0.0%	48.6%	29.0%
27. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	66.7%	0.0%	69.6%	15.7%
28. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	66.7%	0.0%	64.3%	17.8%
29. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	50.0%	33.3%	71.1%	18.2%
30. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	50.0%	16.7%	79.7%	12.0%
31. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	50.0%	16.7%	20.6%	52.9%
32. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	66.7%	0.0%	25.9%	37.1%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
33. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	50.0%	0.0%	63.5%	23.7%
34. Our schools can be described as "good places to learn."	83.3%	0.0%	82.7%	7.7%
35. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school district.	33.3%	16.7%	80.2%	7.3%

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
36. Salary levels in the school district are competitive.	66.7%	16.7%	34.5%	49.1%
37. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	50.0%	50.0%	41.4%	40.2%
38. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	16.7%	33.3%	42.8%	34.0%
39. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	33.3%	33.3%	52.1%	32.3%
40. The district has a good orientation program for new employees.	83.3%	16.7%	70.0%	16.0%
41. The district accurately projects future staffing needs.	66.7%	0.0%	47.1%	30.8%
42. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	66.7%	0.0%	44.5%	22.4%
43. District employees receive annual performance evaluations.	100.0%	0.0%	68.1%	21.4%
44. The district rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	83.3%	16.7%	27.4%	47.8%
45. I am satisfied with my job in the school district.	100.0%	0.0%	76.0%	2.6%
46. I am actively looking for a job outside the school district.	0.0%	83.3%	4.2%	67.9%
47. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	66.7%	0.0%	49.1%	16.8%
48. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	16.7%	50.0%	12.3%	73.8%
49. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	33.3%	50.0%	24.1%	69.3%

E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
50. The district regularly communicates with parents.	83.3%	0.0%	71.0%	10.3%
51. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	50.0%	16.7%	55.5%	30.4%
52. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	66.7%	0.0%	66.2%	20.8%
53. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	66.7%	0.0%	52.0%	26.0%
54. The school district explains test results to parents.	66.7%	0.0%	56.3%	28.3%
55. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	66.7%	0.0%	51.8%	25.7%
56. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	66.7%	16.7%	70.0%	6.0%

F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
57. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the committee provide input into facility planning.	50.0%	0.0%	61.4%	17.3%
58. Schools are clean.	100.0%	0.0%	85.0%	10.0%
59. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	83.3%	16.7%	53.5%	38.6%
60. Schools are well-maintained.	83.3%	16.7%	80.5%	12.8%
61. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	83.3%	16.7%	62.3%	28.5%
62. District facilities are open for community use.	100.0%	0.0%	78.2%	4.5%
63. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	100.0%	0.0%	77.7%	12.0%
64. The district has an effective energy management program.	50.0%	0.0%	58.7%	19.0%

G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
65. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	83.3%	0.0%	51.7%	17.2%
66. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	83.3%	0.0%	46.8%	15.4%
67. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school district.	83.3%	0.0%	82.6%	7.6%
68. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	66.7%	33.3%	45.7%	16.8%
69. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	100.0%	0.0%	82.4%	2.5%
70. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	83.3%	0.0%	70.4%	1.9%

H. PURCHASING

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
71. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	100.0%	0.0%	65.2%	19.3%
72. The school district purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest possible cost.	100.0%	0.0%	59.3%	14.9%
73. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	66.7%	33.3%	50.5%	18.2%
74. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	50.0%	0.0%	78.2%	8.3%

I. TRANSPORTATION

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
75. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0.0%	83.3%	12.4%	61.6%
76. There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	66.7%	0.0%	43.8%	45.3%
77. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.0%	83.3%	12.6%	63.3%
78. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	50.0%	0.0%	63.4%	17.2%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
79. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	16.7%	0.0%	31.0%	46.8%
80. Students do not feel safe riding school district buses.	0.0%	66.7%	14.2%	58.1%
81. Bus ride times are too long.	0.0%	66.7%	13.2%	19.2%

J. FOOD SERVICES

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
82. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	83.3%	16.7%	55.7%	17.7%
83. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	16.7%	33.3%	71.4%	12.0%
84. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	66.7%	33.3%	41.9%	26.1%
85. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	66.7%	16.7%	80.0%	10.0%
86. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	100.0%	0.0%	84.3%	11.0%
87. Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunches.	0.0%	100.0%	30.0%	30.0%
88. Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	33.3%	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%

K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
89. Students regularly use computers.	100.0%	0.0%	89.4%	5.8%
90. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	66.7%	16.7%	81.7%	6.8%
91. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	66.7%	16.7%	87.7%	2.9%
92. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	83.3%	0.0%	79.2%	7.7%
93. The district Web site is a useful tool.	66.7%	33.3%	85.1%	8.6%
94. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	83.3%	16.7%	89.6%	6.9%
95. The school district provides adequate instructional technology.	50.0%	16.7%	83.3%	7.3%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
96. The school district provides adequate administrative technology.	66.7%	33.3%	86.5%	10.4%
97. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	83.3%	16.7%	92.8%	6.4%
98. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	100.0%	0.0%	85.2%	5.3%
99. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	80.0%	20.0%	46.9%	33.6%

L. OVERALL OPERATIONS

School District Operation	HWRSD		Peers	
	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding
a. Strategic Planning	33.3%	50.0%	55.2%	34.7%
b. Curriculum Planning	16.7%	33.3%	57.4%	30.6%
c. Facilities Planning	33.3%	50.0%	59.4%	25.2%
d. Budgeting	16.7%	66.7%	57.5%	36.5%
e. Financial Management	16.7%	66.7%	54.9%	39.2%
f. Asset Management	50.0%	33.3%	66.4%	25.7%
g. Risk Management	16.7%	50.0%	54.9%	28.4%
h. Community Relations	33.3%	66.7%	38.1%	37.3%
i. Program Evaluation	33.3%	33.3%	48.5%	28.6%
j. Instructional Coordination	16.7%	33.3%	61.5%	22.7%
k. Student Support Services	0.0%	66.7%	60.5%	21.6%
l. Federal Programs Coordination	16.7%	33.3%	56.4%	24.8%
m. Instructional Technology	33.3%	33.3%	53.0%	32.9%
n. Administrative Technology	16.7%	50.0%	58.1%	31.7%
o. Grants Administration	16.7%	50.0%	53.3%	29.2%
p. Personnel Recruitment	50.0%	16.7%	60.3%	28.9%
q. Personnel Selection	0.0%	66.7%	57.2%	23.2%
r. Personnel Evaluation	16.7%	50.0%	60.9%	21.3%

School District Operation	HWRSD		Peers	
	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding
s. Personnel Retention	0.0%	80.0%	77.9%	13.9%
t. Professional Development	0.0%	83.3%	57.9%	33.3%
u. Safety And Security	0.0%	83.3%	56.9%	31.5%
v. Facilities Maintenance	16.7%	83.3%	52.2%	36.0%
w. Custodial Services	0.0%	100.0%	50.8%	35.9%
x. Food Services	16.7%	83.3%	28.5%	52.8%
y. Transportation	0.0%	66.7%	33.4%	45.5%

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District
School Administrators
Compared to Peers

B. District Administration

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
4. The district's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	60.0%	40.0%	90.6%	5.0%
5. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the district's strategic plan.	80.0%	20.0%	82.0%	0.0%
6. School committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school district.	40.0%	20.0%	57.3%	32.5%
7. School committee members know and understand the operations of the school district.	20.0%	40.0%	65.3%	28.2%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	100.0%	0.0%	84.4%	5.9%
9. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	80.0%	0.0%	86.5%	6.8%
10. The district administration is efficient.	100.0%	0.0%	65.5%	15.2%
11. The district administration supports the educational process.	100.0%	0.0%	85.2%	5.1%
12. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the district.	100.0%	0.0%	66.0%	21.6%
13. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	100.0%	0.0%	87.3%	10.0%
14. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	100.0%	0.0%	93.7%	3.7%
15. Most administrative practices in the school district are highly efficient and effective.	80.0%	20.0%	70.2%	13.0%
16. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	100.0%	0.0%	68.6%	14.8%
17. School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	100.0%	0.0%	83.2%	5.5%
18. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	20.0%	40.0%	44.8%	32.2%
19. Bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	60.0%	40.0%	35.0%	44.6%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
20. The school district has too many layers of administrators.	0.0%	100.0%	9.6%	55.8%
21. District administrators provide quality service to schools.	100.0%	0.0%	74.9%	12.6%

C. INSTRUCTION

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
22. The district uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	80.0%	20.0%	64.4%	28.4%
23. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	60.0%	0.0%	55.8%	27.6%
24. The district has effective special programs for the following:				
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	40.0%	40.0%	70.2%	12.0%
b. Special Education	100.0%	0.0%	77.5%	10.4%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	0.0%	20.0%	62.3%	6.9%
d. Advanced Placement	40.0%	40.0%	69.6%	4.9%
e. Alternative Education	80.0%	0.0%	60.5%	19.1%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	20.0%	60.0%	64.7%	16.5%
g. Career and Vocational	0.0%	40.0%	39.0%	28.2%
h. Dropout Prevention	60.0%	20.0%	39.7%	20.8%
25. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	80.0%	20.0%	86.7%	8.5%
26. Teacher turnover is low.	80.0%	20.0%	53.0%	37.9%
27. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	80.0%	20.0%	68.3%	21.0%
28. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	100.0%	0.0%	41.6%	52.7%
29. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	100.0%	0.0%	88.8%	10.8%
30. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	100.0%	0.0%	95.5%	0.0%
31. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	80.0%	0.0%	51.4%	35.8%
32. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	80.0%	20.0%	80.6%	15.1%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
33. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	60.0%	40.0%	62.3%	31.7%
34. Our schools can be described as "good places to learn."	100.0%	0.0%	87.0%	4.1%
35. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school district.	100.0%	0.0%	76.2%	0.5%

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
36. Salary levels in the school district are competitive.	80.0%	20.0%	32.9%	41.1%
37. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	60.0%	20.0%	22.2%	50.0%
38. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	80.0%	0.0%	63.3%	23.6%
39. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	80.0%	0.0%	65.0%	18.7%
40. The district has a good orientation program for new employees.	40.0%	60.0%	76.2%	14.3%
41. The district accurately projects future staffing needs.	60.0%	40.0%	59.4%	20.9%
42. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	40.0%	20.0%	61.6%	22.9%
43. District employees receive annual performance evaluations.	100.0%	0.0%	81.1%	1.7%
44. The district rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	40.0%	40.0%	36.1%	34.3%
45. I am satisfied with my job in the school district.	60.0%	20.0%	74.7%	1.4%
46. I am actively looking for a job outside the school district.	0.0%	80.0%	8.3%	53.3%
47. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	60.0%	0.0%	67.8%	1.9%
48. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	20.0%	80.0%	16.3%	64.8%
49. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	40.0%	60.0%	53.1%	35.9%

E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
50. The district regularly communicates with parents.	100.0%	0.0%	92.8%	2.3%
51. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	60.0%	20.0%	48.1%	29.4%
52. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	80.0%	0.0%	72.1%	25.0%
53. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	80.0%	20.0%	56.2%	28.9%
54. The school district explains test results to parents.	80.0%	0.0%	61.5%	32.0%
55. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	80.0%	0.0%	80.3%	13.6%
56. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	60.0%	20.0%	86.0%	8.2%

F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
57. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the committee provide input into facility planning.	75.0%	0.0%	81.2%	8.7%
58. Schools are clean.	100.0%	0.0%	78.2%	17.4%
59. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	50.0%	50.0%	55.7%	39.0%
60. Schools are well-maintained.	100.0%	0.0%	71.4%	28.1%
61. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	75.0%	25.0%	69.4%	25.1%
62. District facilities are open for community use.	100.0%	0.0%	88.5%	0.3%
63. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	100.0%	0.0%	71.0%	14.8%
64. The district has an effective energy management program.	0.0%	0.0%	64.9%	14.5%

G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
65. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	80.0%	20.0%	69.3%	14.6%
66. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	60.0%	0.0%	63.1%	25.5%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
67. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school district.	60.0%	20.0%	63.3%	15.1%
68. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	80.0%	20.0%	49.5%	15.2%
69. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	60.0%	40.0%	73.4%	5.9%
70. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	40.0%	0.0%	66.0%	0.0%

H. PURCHASING

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
71. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	80.0%	0.0%	77.3%	7.9%
72. The school district purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest possible cost.	80.0%	20.0%	59.7%	6.3%
73. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	60.0%	20.0%	66.6%	11.2%
74. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	0.0%	40.0%	53.7%	17.4%

I. TRANSPORTATION

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
75. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	0.0%	100.0%	13.1%	61.8%
76. There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	80.0%	20.0%	46.8%	45.4%
77. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.0%	100.0%	13.4%	64.9%
78. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	80.0%	0.0%	66.2%	17.3%
79. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	20.0%	40.0%	36.7%	48.0%
80. Students do not feel safe riding school district buses.	0.0%	80.0%	15.0%	61.6%
81. Bus ride times are too long.	0.0%	20.0%	30.9%	37.8%

J. FOOD SERVICES

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
82. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	80.0%	20.0%	57.2%	18.2%
83. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	60.0%	40.0%	73.9%	12.5%
84. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	29.2%
85. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	40.0%	0.0%	92.3%	7.7%
86. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	80.0%	20.0%	86.0%	10.4%
87. Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunches.	20.0%	60.0%	23.1%	76.9%
88. Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	60.0%	0.0%	23.1%	69.2%

K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
89. Students regularly use computers.	100.0%	0.0%	87.9%	9.8%
90. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	80.0%	20.0%	84.8%	5.9%
91. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%	0.0%
92. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	100.0%	0.0%	75.6%	16.9%
93. The district Web site is a useful tool.	40.0%	40.0%	99.6%	0.2%
94. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	60.0%	20.0%	99.0%	0.9%
95. The school district provides adequate instructional technology.	60.0%	40.0%	90.7%	9.1%
96. The school district provides adequate administrative technology.	60.0%	40.0%	90.5%	9.0%
97. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	40.0%	60.0%	98.8%	1.0%
98. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	60.0%	40.0%	88.3%	11.7%
99. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	80.0%	20.0%	68.2%	10.3%

L. OVERALL OPERATIONS

School District Operation	HWRSD		Peers	
	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding
a. Strategic Planning	100.0%	0.0%	44.8%	49.6%
b. Curriculum Planning	40.0%	60.0%	47.9%	50.2%
c. Facilities Planning	40.0%	60.0%	43.3%	50.6%
d. Budgeting	40.0%	60.0%	29.5%	65.4%
e. Financial Management	20.0%	80.0%	37.4%	58.9%
f. Asset Management	20.0%	40.0%	29.4%	37.2%
g. Risk Management	0.0%	40.0%	24.2%	54.1%
h. Community Relations	60.0%	40.0%	33.8%	43.4%
i. Program Evaluation	20.0%	80.0%	29.3%	65.3%
j. Instructional Coordination	20.0%	80.0%	25.2%	69.2%
k. Student Support Services	0.0%	100.0%	50.8%	41.2%
l. Federal Programs Coordination	0.0%	100.0%	44.8%	53.0%
m. Instructional Technology	60.0%	40.0%	44.6%	52.0%
n. Administrative Technology	40.0%	60.0%	32.6%	47.7%
o. Grants Administration	0.0%	40.0%	56.0%	38.2%
p. Personnel Recruitment	20.0%	80.0%	43.7%	32.4%
q. Personnel Selection	0.0%	100.0%	38.2%	39.0%
r. Personnel Evaluation	60.0%	40.0%	54.5%	35.6%
s. Personnel Retention	0.0%	100.0%	49.6%	47.0%
t. Professional Development	60.0%	40.0%	59.3%	45.9%
u. Safety And Security	40.0%	60.0%	52.7%	44.0%
v. Facilities Maintenance	40.0%	60.0%	56.5%	40.1%
w. Custodial Services	20.0%	80.0%	29.0%	51.5%
x. Food Services	20.0%	80.0%	34.2%	43.9%
y. Transportation	20.0%	80.0%	44.8%	49.6%

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Teachers Compared to Peers

B. District Administration

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
4. The district's strategic plan guides daily decision making.	49.1%	19.0%	67.2%	9.3%
5. I know how my work activities and objectives tie to the district's strategic plan.	59.1%	22.6%	78.0%	8.4%
6. School committee members know and understand the educational needs of students in the school district.	35.0%	45.3%	52.5%	32.4%
7. School committee members know and understand the operations of the school district.	34.8%	38.3%	58.8%	24.9%
8. The Superintendent is a respected and effective instructional leader.	28.4%	4.3%	72.3%	19.3%
9. The Superintendent is a respected and effective business manager.	24.1%	4.3%	71.7%	17.3%
10. The district administration is efficient.	49.6%	24.3%	63.5%	22.8%
11. The district administration supports the educational process.	67.0%	13.9%	77.8%	13.5%
12. School-based personnel play an important role in making decisions that affect schools in the district.	49.1%	34.5%	60.6%	23.1%
13. Principals are effective instructional leaders in their schools.	52.2%	29.6%	76.4%	19.0%
14. Principals are effective managers of the staff and teachers in their schools.	61.7%	27.0%	77.7%	18.4%
15. Most administrative practices in the school district are highly efficient and effective.	43.0%	34.2%	58.8%	19.5%
16. Administrative decisions are made promptly and decisively.	44.3%	33.9%	58.6%	19.8%
17. School district administrators are easily accessible and open to input.	59.6%	27.2%	64.2%	18.9%
18. Authority for administrative decisions is delegated to the lowest possible level.	21.6%	33.6%	29.2%	20.9%
19. Bottlenecks exist in many administrative processes that cause unnecessary time delays.	38.9%	26.5%	29.5%	31.5%
20. The school district has too many layers of administrators.	37.4%	35.7%	29.2%	36.2%
21. District administrators provide quality service to schools.	55.7%	17.4%	61.8%	16.0%

C. INSTRUCTION

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
22. The district uses detailed classroom-level data for instructional decision-making.	55.9%	22.5%	47.1%	33.1%
23. Students find curriculum, course selections, and lessons relevant to their needs and interests.	73.0%	10.8%	48.9%	34.7%
24. The district has effective special programs for the following:				
a. Honors/Gifted and Talented Education	31.3%	49.1%	63.0%	23.0%
b. Special Education	92.9%	4.5%	66.2%	25.6%
c. Head Start and Even Start Programs	14.4%	11.7%	59.0%	6.5%
d. Advanced Placement	43.8%	14.3%	57.8%	11.8%
e. Alternative Education	50.9%	14.3%	50.8%	23.7%
f. English as Second Language (ESL)	27.7%	21.4%	48.2%	24.6%
g. Career and Vocational	11.6%	39.3%	50.4%	20.0%
h. Dropout Prevention	45.5%	8.0%	36.6%	25.2%
25. Parents are immediately notified if a child is absent from school.	71.4%	8.0%	59.1%	16.7%
26. Teacher turnover is low.	59.5%	35.1%	36.9%	49.1%
27. Educational programs are regularly and objectively evaluated.	52.7%	24.5%	60.1%	18.3%
28. Teacher openings are filled quickly.	79.5%	8.9%	57.7%	26.3%
29. Teachers are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	82.9%	7.2%	86.7%	7.1%
30. Principals are held accountable for ensuring students learn.	64.3%	13.4%	75.8%	11.7%
31. Teachers are given the skills and knowledge to effectively differentiate instruction for each student.	71.4%	21.4%	57.8%	31.3%
32. Teachers/teacher groups use data to tailor learning experiences for individual students/student groups.	75.0%	14.3%	71.6%	18.7%
33. All schools have equal access to educational materials such as computers, television monitors, and science labs.	58.0%	25.0%	48.4%	34.8%
34. Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	98.2%	0.9%	83.0%	8.4%
35. NCLB has been effectively implemented in our school district.	52.7%	6.3%	60.4%	8.4%

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
36. Salary levels in the school district are competitive.	46.5%	42.9%	33.5%	53.1%
37. My salary level is adequate for my level of work and experience.	47.7%	43.2%	30.0%	61.1%
38. Teachers who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	30.6%	33.3%	28.9%	37.0%
39. Staff who do not meet expected work standards are disciplined.	31.3%	28.6%	27.7%	34.6%
40. The district has a good orientation program for new employees.	59.1%	24.5%	48.1%	24.8%
41. The district accurately projects future staffing needs.	41.1%	35.7%	45.9%	24.2%
42. The district has an effective employee recruitment program.	28.6%	23.2%	41.3%	21.0%
43. District employees receive annual performance evaluations.	66.1%	22.3%	86.2%	3.6%
44. The district rewards competence and experience, and provides qualifications needed for promotion.	29.5%	41.1%	30.0%	43.8%
45. I am satisfied with my job in the school district.	82.9%	7.2%	81.0%	9.6%
46. I am actively looking for a job outside the school district.	4.5%	74.1%	21.6%	63.0%
47. The district has a fair and timely grievance process.	30.0%	7.3%	28.7%	14.7%
48. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for teachers.	34.8%	50.0%	25.1%	57.7%
49. There are not enough high quality professional development opportunities for school administrators.	8.1%	16.2%	11.4%	30.7%

E. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
50. The district regularly communicates with parents.	88.3%	4.5%	74.0%	9.4%
51. Parents play an active role in decision-making in our schools.	73.6%	7.3%	44.3%	31.0%
52. Teachers regularly communicate with the parents of the students they teach.	90.1%	5.4%	83.5%	13.4%
53. Most parents seem to know what goes on in our schools.	70.6%	18.3%	50.8%	30.9%
54. The school district explains test results to parents.	60.4%	8.1%	51.8%	31.9%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
55. Schools have plenty of volunteers to help student and school programs.	67.3%	10.9%	35.0%	46.9%
56. At least some local businesses are actively involved in supporting our schools.	36.0%	16.2%	62.1%	20.8%

F. FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
57. Parents, citizens, students, faculty, staff and the committee provide input into facility planning.	27.9%	27.0%	53.4%	21.6%
58. Schools are clean.	83.8%	13.5%	61.6%	29.2%
59. Our schools have sufficient space and facilities to support the instructional programs.	52.3%	43.2%	44.1%	46.9%
60. Schools are well-maintained.	66.7%	23.4%	58.9%	32.9%
61. Repairs are made in a timely manner.	46.8%	35.1%	49.5%	41.0%
62. District facilities are open for community use.	69.4%	3.6%	65.7%	8.4%
63. Emergency maintenance is handled promptly.	70.3%	9.0%	67.2%	15.8%
64. The district has an effective energy management program.	17.1%	27.0%	50.4%	18.7%

G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
65. Site-based budgeting is used effectively to extend the involvement of principals and teachers.	24.5%	30.9%	44.8%	23.7%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
66. Campus administrators are well trained in fiscal management techniques.	20.9%	6.4%	47.5%	7.1%
67. Funds are managed wisely to support education in the school district.	28.2%	31.8%	43.2%	23.6%
68. The district's financial reports are easy to understand and read.	20.9%	30.0%	26.3%	15.2%
69. Campus and program administrators have sufficient access to the financial data they need.	17.3%	8.2%	37.9%	4.8%
70. Financial reports are made available to community members when asked.	34.5%	3.6%	35.5%	2.6%

H. PURCHASING

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
71. The Purchasing Office gets me what I need when I need it.	50.9%	20.4%	55.1%	23.5%
72. The school district purchases the highest quality materials and equipment at the lowest possible cost.	42.6%	18.5%	39.4%	19.1%
73. The purchase order process is efficient and effective.	46.3%	36.1%	55.0%	22.4%
74. The district provides teachers and administrators an easy-to-use standard list of supplies and equipment.	42.6%	33.3%	43.1%	31.2%

I. TRANSPORTATION

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
75. Students are often late arriving to and/or departing from school because the buses do not arrive to school on time.	9.3%	84.1%	12.6%	68.8%
76. There are sufficient buses and drivers to meet extracurricular needs of students.	41.7%	22.2%	45.4%	28.6%
77. Buses are often broken down, disrupting services.	0.0%	69.5%	6.6%	63.5%
78. The process for requesting a field trip is efficient and effective.	39.3%	19.6%	57.4%	16.3%
79. Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the buses.	16.7%	14.8%	27.8%	19.0%
80. Students do not feel safe riding school district buses.	4.6%	40.7%	10.9%	49.5%
81. Bus ride times are too long.	16.8%	20.5%	22.4%	22.5%

J. FOOD SERVICES

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
82. The Food Services Department provides nutritious and appealing meals and snacks.	65.4%	21.5%	42.6%	33.4%
83. Vending machines are not available to students during lunch periods.	47.2%	22.2%	64.3%	18.0%
84. Snacks and drinks available through the vending machines are nutritious.	17.8%	15.0%	24.6%	32.8%
85. Bus riders get to school with enough time to eat breakfast.	11.2%	11.2%	75.4%	6.9%
86. Cafeterias are calm environments in which to eat.	34.3%	47.2%	37.8%	38.0%

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
87. Students spend too long waiting in line to get their lunches.	26.9%	40.7%	41.1%	34.9%
88. Many students bring their lunch from home every day.	45.8%	8.4%	10.3%	54.9%

K. TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Survey Statement	HWRSD		Peers	
	SA + A	SD + D	SA + A	SD + D
89. Students regularly use computers.	88.8%	9.4%	81.2%	14.0%
90. Teachers receive training in how to integrate technology into the classroom.	72.6%	24.5%	80.6%	13.7%
91. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom.	97.2%	0.9%	90.8%	3.7%
92. Teachers know how to use computers in the classroom.	88.0%	9.3%	74.5%	10.4%
93. The district Web site is a useful tool.	69.4%	13.9%	80.5%	7.9%
94. I get assistance quickly when I have a computer problem.	69.4%	26.9%	67.1%	25.9%
95. The school district provides adequate instructional technology.	58.3%	29.6%	73.9%	20.8%
96. The school district provides adequate administrative technology.	30.6%	17.6%	59.7%	12.1%
97. I have adequate equipment and computer support to conduct my work.	61.7%	33.6%	71.0%	25.0%
98. Teachers and students have fast and easy access to the Internet.	62.0%	26.9%	69.8%	18.3%
99. Most administrative process (purchasing, payroll etc.) are done on-line.	58.3%	11.2%	27.9%	10.9%

L. OVERALL OPERATIONS

School District Operation	HWRSD		Peers	
	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding	Need Major/Some Improvement	Adequate/ Outstanding
a. Strategic Planning	32.3%	27.3%	37.1%	37.8%
b. Curriculum Planning	36.4%	52.5%	43.0%	50.1%
c. Facilities Planning	35.4%	25.3%	33.3%	37.1%
d. Budgeting	44.0%	20.0%	50.4%	28.0%
e. Financial Management	34.0%	20.0%	36.0%	34.1%
f. Asset Management	19.0%	12.0%	43.9%	18.3%
g. Risk Management	16.0%	15.0%	22.7%	37.1%
h. Community Relations	42.0%	42.0%	47.7%	42.5%
i. Program Evaluation	32.0%	45.0%	36.5%	44.4%
j. Instructional Coordination	35.4%	48.5%	49.1%	37.6%
k. Student Support Services	24.0%	68.0%	55.6%	33.9%
l. Federal Programs Coordination	12.1%	19.2%	34.7%	45.4%
m. Instructional Technology	39.0%	50.0%	41.5%	52.3%
n. Administrative Technology	19.2%	31.3%	3.9%	6.1%
o. Grants Administration	16.2%	31.3%	24.6%	31.7%
p. Personnel Recruitment	17.0%	43.0%	32.5%	41.8%
q. Personnel Selection	16.2%	62.6%	34.3%	45.0%
r. Personnel Evaluation	30.7%	60.4%	34.9%	55.0%
s. Personnel Retention	33.7%	45.5%	39.5%	46.5%
t. Professional Development	44.0%	54.0%	40.3%	53.6%
u. Safety And Security	11.9%	81.2%	26.5%	29.0%
v. Facilities Maintenance	34.0%	62.0%	33.0%	46.1%
w. Custodial Services	19.8%	77.2%	38.1%	54.6%
x. Food Services	21.8%	67.3%	24.5%	30.6%
y. Transportation	12.1%	62.6%	23.0%	59.7%